Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This Policy aims to ensure Macquarie University (the University) applies a consistent, equitable and transparent approach to the Recognition of Prior Learning for the purposes of determining whether an Applicant meets the requirements for admission into a Course and/or in the granting of Credit within a Course.

(2) This Policy aims to facilitate the Recognition of Prior Learning while preserving the integrity and distinctiveness of the University's Award Courses and ensuring the granting of Credit does not disadvantage a student through insufficient preparedness to undertake remaining study.

Scope

(3) This Policy applies to all Award Courses of the University and the following non-award programs offered by the Macquarie University College:

a. Standard Foundation and Intensive Programs;
b. Masters Qualifying Programs; and
c. UniReady Program.

(4) This Policy does not apply to Recognition of Prior Learning within non-award programs of study other than those stipulated in clause 3, although some non-award programs may be used for Recognition of Prior Learning within Award Courses.

Section 2 - Policy

(5) Recognition of Prior Learning is a process that involves the University assessing an individual's Prior Learning (including Formal, Informal and Non-Formal learning) to determine eligibility for admission to a Course and/or the granting of Credit within a Course.

(6) Prospective and current students may apply for Recognition of Prior Learning:

a. as part of an application for admission to the University;
b. during their Course;
c. prior to undertaking an approved Macquarie University outbound mobility program, including study abroad, exchange or study tour; or
d. prior to undertaking approved concurrent study at another Australian University.

(7) The assessment of Prior Learning for the purposes of admission and/or the granting of Credit within a Course will be evidence-based, equitable and academically defensible.

(8) Assessment of Prior Learning will be made on the merit of each individual case based on whether this learning is:

a. relevant: supporting the achievement of learning outcomes of a Course and/or Unit;

b. appropriate: of an acceptable quality, sufficient depth and/or breadth, and acceptable tertiary level; and
c. current: aligning sufficiently with contemporary knowledge and/or skills.

(9) Prior Learning that has been attained within ten years will generally be considered current; however Prior Learning will be assessed against current University standards, and contemporary learning within the field, discipline or subject area.

(10) In some cases, Prior Learning that has been completed within ten years may not be considered sufficiently current, such as where there have been significant advancements in a field. Alternatively, the University may recognise Prior Learning attained more than ten years ago if the student can demonstrate that this learning:

a. remains relevant, fit for purpose and in alignment with contemporary knowledge and/or skills within the field, discipline or subject area; and
b. is of a comparative level and standard to contemporary tertiary education.

(11) Currency requirements will generally be waived for Unspecified Credit if there is sufficient evidence of relevancy and appropriateness.

(12) The precise nature of the assessment may vary across Courses. The University may, at its discretion, set additional requirements for the assessment of Prior Learning, including, but not limited to, testing, interviews, and/or a portfolio submission.

(13) Recognition of Prior Learning may be assessed according to a formal Articulation or Credit arrangement.

(14) Credit granted based on Prior Learning completed externally to Macquarie University is not recorded with a grade and does not contribute to the Weighted Average Mark (WAM) of the Macquarie University Award.

(15) Credit based on prior Formal Learning is only granted for completed units/subjects or Awards where the final grade is a Pass or equivalent, or higher.

(16) Prior approval of Credit for students undertaking outbound study abroad, exchange, or study tours, or concurrent study at another institution, will only be granted where the student has successfully completed all the requirements of this approved study, such as achieving a final grade of a Pass or equivalent, and higher.

(17) Credit granted by another institution based on Prior Learning is not automatically transferable to Macquarie University.

(18) Prospective and current students seeking to apply for Recognition of Prior Learning for the purpose of admission and/or the granting of Credit are encouraged to seek advice prior to or at the time of application.

(19) To support the Recognition of Prior Learning process, the University will maintain:

a. a Credit Transfer Register to record unit equivalency precedents; and
b. an Articulation Register to record formal Articulation or similar Credit related arrangements.

Recognition of Prior Learning for the purposes of Admission to a Course

(20) The University assesses all applications for admission according to the Admission Policy.

(21) The University will assess Prior Learning to determine whether an Applicant meets specific eligibility requirements for admission to a Course, provided the Prior Learning is current and relevant to the admission requirements of the Course.

(22) Prior Learning for the purpose of admission to a Course will be considered relevant where:

a. there is evidence to demonstrate that the Applicant has achieved a standard of learning that is relevant and comparable to the admission requirements of the Course; and
b. the Applicant can demonstrate competency and readiness for tertiary studies.

(23) Recognition of Prior Learning for the purpose of admission to a Course does not guarantee admission to that Course, as there may be other entry requirements that must be met and/or a limited number of places within the Course.

(24) Recognition of Prior Learning for the purpose of admission to a Course does not change English language requirements.

(25) In some postgraduate Awards, Recognition of Prior Learning assessed at the time of admission may result in a variation to the duration of a Course through the nomination of one of the following Volume of Learning requirements:

a. 1 year (80 credit points); or
b. 1.5 years (120 credit points); or
c. 2 years (160 credit points).

These may be expressed as an 'admission point' or 'entry point' to the Course.

Granting of Credit within a Course

(26) The University will assess Prior Learning as being eligible for one of the following forms of Credit within a Course:

a. Specified Credit - the Applicant's Prior Learning is assessed as meeting the Learning Outcomes for a specific unit in a Course;
b. Unspecified Credit - the Applicant's Prior Learning is assessed as being at an appropriate level and standard relevant to the University's offerings for a unit that may be taken within the flexible zone of a Course; or
c. Block Credit - the Applicant's Prior Learning is assessed as being equivalent with the combined Learning Outcomes for a group of units within a Course. Block Credit may be Specified or Unspecified Credit.

(27) Professional accreditation and registration requirements may impact on whether Credit is available for some Courses. Courses with additional requirements for study are listed in the Academic Progression Policy - Schedule 2: Practical, Clinical and Professional Courses. Applicants seeking Recognition of Prior Learning within one of these courses are advised to seek advice prior to submitting an application.

(28) Recognition of Prior Learning will not be granted for any unit designated as a Capstone unit.

(29) Work experience alone will not be recognised for Credit for a unit that has a work-integrated learning component unless evidence can demonstrate that the student has met the required Unit Learning Outcomes.

(30) Where Credit is awarded based on Prior Learning undertaken externally to the University, a minimum amount of study must be completed at Macquarie University to qualify for a Macquarie University Award. For Courses or Programs of one year duration and longer (i.e., 80 credit points or more), a minimum of 50% of study must be undertaken at Macquarie University. A Course or Program of less than one year in duration (i.e., less than 80 credit points) must be completed in full at Macquarie University.

(31) Where a shorter duration of study has been granted through the nomination of an admission point with a lower Volume of Learning requirement, the amount of Credit granted for any remaining, currently unrecognised Prior Learning, may be limited. This is to ensure that the overall Volume of Learning undertaken at Macquarie University aligns with minimum requirements as outlined in clause 30.

(32) Credit granted towards a Bachelor degree on the basis of Prior Learning within a sub-bachelor qualification have maximum credit point equivalencies aligned to AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy which are:

AQF or equivalent level of previous qualification	Volume of Learning of previous qualification	Maximum credit within Macquarie Bachelor degree
Diploma (AQF 5)	1 year FTE	80 credit points
Diploma (AQF 5)	1.5 to 3 years FTE	120 credit points
Advanced Diploma/Associate Degree (AQF 6)	1.5 years FTE	120 credit points
Advanced Diploma/Associate Degree (AQF 6)	2 to 3 years FTE	160 credit points

Maximum credit will only be granted where this does not exceed the minimum requirement for 50% of study to be completed at Macquarie University.

(33) Maximum Credit limits do not apply where:

a. Credit is based on an Award that is approved as a Nested Award of the Macquarie University Course in which Credit is to be granted;
b. Credit is part of an approved Articulation or Dual Degree arrangement with another provider where a higher maximal Credit limit has been approved;
c. Credit is part of an approved Joint Institute, Joint Program or other transnational education arrangement provider where a higher maximal Credit limit has been approved; and
d. Credit is being transferred from another Macquarie University Course as part of an approved internal Course transfer that has been completed at Macquarie University where that Credit is current and relevant to the new Course.

(34) The amount of Credit able to be granted for an international student on a student visa may be limited to ensure adherence to the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (ESOS National Code).

(35) If a student transfers from one Macquarie University Course to another, Credit approved for the original Course based on Recognition of Prior Learning undertaken externally to Macquarie University may not automatically transfer to the new Course. Students are encouraged to seek advice on Recognition of Prior Learning when applying for internal Course transfer.

(36) Where possible, where a student is transferring from one Macquarie University Course to another, a re-evaluation of any previously granted Recognition of Prior Learning will be undertaken at the time of this transfer. However, a student may be required to provide further information to support this re-evaluation or to re-apply for Recognition of Prior Learning in the new Course if the information available does not fully support a transfer of previously granted Credit.

(37) Where Prior Learning has been undertaken at Macquarie University as part of an Award that has been conferred and recognition of this Prior Learning as Credit within the new Course results in minimum study requirements for the new Course not being met, the University may:

a. outline an alternate, appropriate and relevant study plan for the student that allows minimum study requirements for the new Award to be met; or
b. the student may be determined as not eligible for admission to the new Award due to the amount of overlap between the two Courses and an alternate study plan that is appropriate and relevant not being available.

Rescission of Credit

(38) Credit may be rescinded at the request of the student prior to, or after, Course commencement subject to the approval of the University.

(39) Credit may be rescinded by the University before or after Course commencement when this is academically justified, including, but not limited to, instances where:

a. this Credit forms part of an academic success intervention strategy for the student;
b. Credit granted was based on false or misleading information provided by the student;
c. where there has been a major revision to a Course and the Recognition of Prior Learning is no longer current or relevant, or results in minimum study requirements not being met; or
d. where a Course transfer has resulted in Prior Learning no longer being current, relevant or recognised as part of the new Course.

Appeal

(40) A student may appeal a decision regarding the assessment of Prior Learning for the purpose of admission and/or the granting of Credit within a Course and/or the Rescission of Credit in accordance with the Appeals Policy.

Section 3 - Procedures

Applications for Recognition of Prior Learning

(41) Applications for Recognition of Prior Learning that are submitted at a time other than during the admission process should be made within the approved Macquarie University system as published on the University website.

(42) Applicants must supply evidence to support their request for Recognition of Prior Learning that:

a. demonstrates learning is relevant, appropriate and current;
b. is aligned to the type of Credit being sought; and
c. demonstrates achievement or attainment of Prior Learning beyond simply participation or attendance.

(43) The University will publish deadlines for Recognition of Prior Learning applications seeking Credit within a Course for key upcoming sessions and terms. Where study is undertaken in a session or term not listed, Applicants should seek advice as to any specific deadlines for application submission.

(44) Current students may apply for Recognition of Prior Learning at any time during the Course. However, applications must be submitted prior to commencing study in the unit(s) against which Credit is sought and by the published application deadlines.

(45) Students undertaking an approved Macquarie University outbound mobility program must submit an application of their intended future learning during the academic approval or unit equivalency stage of the mobility process. Only approved learning may be granted Credit upon completion of the mobility program.

(46) Students seeking prior approval of the granting of Credit for concurrent study undertaken at another institution must submit an application prior to commencement of concurrent study and by the published deadlines. There is no guarantee that concurrent study will be eligible for Credit within a Course until approval has been formally granted.

Articulation and other Credit related arrangements

(47) For Recognition of Prior Learning for admission and/or Credit granting purposes, a formal Articulation or other

related Credit arrangement must evidence how the learning undertaken at the partner institution meets the relevant requirements for this recognition to be granted.

(48) A formal Articulation or other related Credit arrangement will require:

a. endorsement from the relevant Executive Dean/Director, Macquarie University College; and
b. approval of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

Assessment of Recognition of Prior Learning

(49) The University will endeavour to assess applications for Recognition of Prior Learning in a timely manner. However timely assessment may be affected by:

a. an incomplete application and/or insufficient evidence on which to make an assessment;
b. a complex application, particularly where Informal and/or Non- Formal Learning forms a significant part of the application; and/or
c. an application submitted after published application deadlines.

(50) Staff within Student Shared Services will be responsible for determining a student's total eligible Credit in accordance with the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy. They are authorised to:

a. grant Specified Credit where a valid precedent exists; and
b. evaluate an application for Unspecified Credit for relevance, appropriateness and currency and grant Unspecified Credit up to the maximum available for the relevant Course where justified; and
c. in the instance where an application for Specified Credit has been declined, review the application and grant Unspecified Credit as an alternate outcome where this is available and justified.

(51) Evaluation of Specified Credit where a precedent does not exist will be undertaken by the relevant Faculty/College.

Notification of Recognition of Prior Learning outcomes

(52) Applicants applying for Recognition of Prior Learning as part of admission will be notified of the outcome of this application within their letter of offer.

(53) Students applying for Recognition of Prior Learning for Credit during their Course will be notified of the outcome of this application and, where required, the reason for requests that are not approved.

(54) Credit granted within a Course will be recorded as Specified and/or Unspecified Credit on the student transcript.

Section 4 - Guidelines

(55) Nil.

Section 5 - Definitions

(56) The following definitions apply for the purpose of this Policy:

a. Applicant means a person who is making an application for Recognised Prior Learning under this Policy.
b. Articulation means a process that enables students to progress from a completed Award to another Award with

predetermined admission and/or Credit arrangements. Articulation is formalised by an approved institutional agreement.

c. Award means the qualification resulting from successful completion of a specific Course.
d. Block Credit means Credit granted towards a group of units defined for this purpose (such as the flexible zone, designated minor, foundation zone).
e. Credit means the value assigned for the recognition of equivalence in Learning Outcomes between different types of learning and/or Awards.
f. Credit Transfer means a process that provides students with consistent Credit outcomes for a unit, or units of a Course based on identified equivalence in Learning Outcomes.
g. Course means a sequence of study which leads to a higher education Award.
h. Formal Learning means learning that takes place through a structured program of learning that leads to the full or partial achievement of an officially accredited qualification (AQF Glossary of Terminology).
i. Informal Learning means learning gained through work, social, family, hobby or leisure activities and experiences. Unlike Formal or Non-Formal Learning, Informal Learning is not organised or externally structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support (AQF Glossary of Terminology).
j. Learning Outcomes means the expression of the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning (AQF Glossary of Terminology).
k. Level refers to the Level of an Award that reflects the relative complexity and/or depth of its Course Learning Outcomes and is expressed according to the various AQF Levels. The level at which a unit is taught indicates the amount of prior knowledge required to study it successfully.
l. Nested Award means a set of Macquarie University Awards approved by Academic Senate that forms stages within the highest Award, where each stage may operate as an entry and/or exit point. Nested Awards are designed to allow full Credit Transfer between the Macquarie University Awards.
m. Non-Formal Learning means learning that takes place through a structured program of learning but does not lead to an officially accredited qualification (AQF Glossary of Terminology).
n. Prior Learning means learning that is Formal, Informal and/or Non-Formal and which is evidenced, current and relevant, and has taken place:
    i. outside Macquarie University; and/or
    ii. within a completed Macquarie University Award.
o. Recognition of Prior Learning has the same meaning as in clause 5.
p. Rescission of Credit means a process whereby a Recognition of Prior Learning decision to grant Credit is overturned.
q. Specified Credit means Credit granted towards a specific unit or units of a Course.
r. Unspecified Credit means Credit granted towards a unit or a group of units in an option set or in the flexible zone. This Credit may be designated with a particular subject area or PACE classification.
s. Volume of Learning means a measure which identifies the notional duration of all activities required for the achievement of the Learning Outcomes specified for a Course. Volume of Learning is expressed in equivalent full-time years.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	25th March 2025
Review Date	25th March 2028
Approval Authority	Academic Senate
Approval Date	25th March 2025
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Rorden Wilkinson Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
Responsible Officer	Taryn Jones Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) +61 2 9850 2796
Enquiries Contact	Taryn Jones Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) +61 2 9850 2796

This document may be varied, withdrawn, or replaced at any time. Printed copies, or part thereof, are regarded as uncontrolled and should not be relied upon as the current version. It is the responsibility of the individual reading this document to always refer to Policy Central (https://policies.mq.edu.au) for the latest version.