
Recognition of Prior Informal Learning (RPL) Policy

Academic Policy Group

1 Purpose

In certain circumstances, it is appropriate for the University to grant credit to a student on the basis of skills, learning and experience that they have acquired in a non-formal setting prior to undertaking a VUW qualification. This policy, together with the relevant provisions in the [Assessment Statute](#), set out the principles and procedures for the award of such credit.

2 Organisational Scope

This is a University-wide policy.

3 Definitions

For purposes of this policy, unless otherwise stated, the following definitions shall apply:

RPL:	Recognition of prior informal learning.
Informal Learning	Learning that occurs outside accredited courses or qualifications. This may include for example work-place training, marae-based learning or independent learning.

4 Policy Content and Guidelines

4.1 Principles for the award of RPL credit

- Assessment of prior learning is carried out by the University, and any credit awarded is regarded as full VUW credit in terms of meeting prerequisite or degree requirements.
- Credit may only be awarded in courses that have been approved for RPL credit by the Academic Committee in accordance with section 4.2 below.
- Credit may only be awarded for courses currently listed on the Schedule to a VUW qualification.
- Credit is normally awarded at 100-level only. RPL credit may not be awarded at 400- or 500- level.
- Credit is awarded for prior learning that satisfies the course outcomes as set out in the relevant course outline. In particular this must include an adequate theoretical basis. Credit is not awarded purely on the basis of practical experience.

Note: Where a student's prior experience has adequately prepared them for direct entry to an advanced course or graduate programme, but it is not appropriate to grant RPL credit, this can be dealt with using the provisions in the [Personal Courses of Study Statute \(Victoria University of Wellington Calendar, Section C\)](#) sections 2 or 9, or the entry requirements for individual

graduate programmes. A student who has completed course work at another institution may apply for transfer credit under the [Credit Transfer Statute](#).

4.2 Approval of courses for RPL credit

- (a) Any School wishing to be able to award RPL credit for a course or courses must submit an RPL proposal for approval by the relevant faculty board and the Academic Committee. The RPL proposal must include:
 - (i) The justification for offering RPL credit for the course. This might include information on how students can obtain appropriate learning independently, and why there is a demand for RPL credit.
 - (ii) The criteria under which a candidate is permitted to apply for RPL credit in the course.
 - (iii) The assessment process to be used, including a statement on how it ensures the student has met the learning outcomes for the course.
- (b) Following approval of a course(s) for RPL credit, the Head of School must provide a brief annual report to Academic Committee on the RPL credit awarded, and any relevant issues that arose.

4.3 Assessment procedures

- (a) The proposed assessment procedure must be fair, valid and transparent, and must allow determination of whether the applicant's knowledge, experience and skills satisfy the course objectives. Typically assessment involves one or more of:
 - (i) A challenge exam, where the applicant undertakes the same or equivalent assessment to that of students enrolled in the course, or
 - (ii) An oral examination in which the applicant's knowledge and learning are determined through an interview process. Information on the nature of such an interview, and the staff involved should be included, or
 - (iii) A portfolio detailing the relevant experiences of the applicant, identifying the learning achieved in those experiences, and providing supporting evidence such as letters or testimonials from employers or supervisors.

4.4 Award of RPL credit

- (a) Once a course has been approved for RPL credit, assessment of applicants is carried out within the School, and decisions on the award of RPL credit to individual students are made by the relevant Associate Dean on the recommendation of the Head of School.
- (b) Decisions may be appealed to the Convener of the Academic Committee.

5 Legislative Compliance

Though the University is required to manage its policy documentation within a legislative framework; there is no specific legislation directing this policy.

6 References

[Assessment Statute](#)

[Credit Transfer Statute](#)

[Personal Courses of Study Statute \(Victoria University of Wellington Calendar, Section C\)](#)

Previous version: [archived Recognition of Prior Informal Learning Policy 20080701](#)

7 Appendices

[Appendix A: Courses currently approved for RPL credit](#)

8 Approval Agency

Academic Board

9 Approval Dates

This policy was originally approved on: 28 April 2005

This version was approved on: 28 April 2005

This version was reviewed on: 2 July 2008

This version takes effect from: 2 July 2008

This policy will be reviewed by: 2 July 2011

10 Policy Sponsor

Assistant Vice Chancellor (Academic)

11 Contact Person

The following person may be approached on a routine basis in relation to this policy:

Jenny Christie
Academic Policy Manager
Extension 5191