



## COURSE CREDIT AND RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

**POLICY NUMBER:** NC18-PP005

**RESPONSIBILITY:** OPERATIONS MANAGER

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#### 1. Scope of Policy and Procedure

This document supports the granting of credit to students with recognised Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualifications and Statements of Attainment issued by any other Australian registered education provider, as required under Clause 3.5 of the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015:

*Clause 3.5: The RTO accepts and provides credit to learners for units of competency and/or modules (unless licensing or regulatory requirements prevent this) where these are evidenced by:*

- (i) AQF certification documentation issued by any other RTO or AQF authorised issuing organisation, or
- (ii) Authenticated VET transcripts issued by the Registrar.

This document supports the granting of credit to students with international qualifications/ statements of attainment (or their equivalent) which are deemed to be equivalent to the unit(s) /module(s) which the student is applying for course credit.

This document outlines WAIFS policy and process for students to be granted recognition of prior learning if they have suitable prior training and/or experience.

West Australian Institute of Further Studies (WAIFS) will ensure that clear information about course credit and/or Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is provided to each student prior to enrolment.

Credit Transfer is a process that provides students with agreed and consistent credit outcomes for components of a qualification based on identified equivalence in content and learning outcomes between matched qualifications (National Quality Council Training Packages glossary).

Recognition of Prior Learning (or RPL) is an assessment process that involves assessment of an individual's relevant prior learning (including formal, informal and non-formal learning) to determine the credit outcomes of an individual application for credit (National Quality Council Training Packages glossary).

#### 2. Relevant standards, acts and legislations

National Code 2018, Standard 2: Recruitment of an overseas student

2.1 Prior to accepting an overseas student or intending overseas student for enrolment in a course, the registered provider must make comprehensive, current and plain English information available to the overseas student or intending overseas students on:

- 2.1.1 The requirements for an overseas student's acceptance into a course including the minimum level of English proficiency, educational qualifications or work experience required, and course credit (if applicable)

2.3 The registered provider must have and implement a documented policy and process for assessing and recording recognition of prior learning (RPL), and granting and recording course credit, if it intends to assess RPL or grant course credit. The decision to assess prior learning or grant course credit must preserve the integrity of the award to which it applies and comply with requirements of the underpinning educational framework of the course.



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2.4 If the registered provider grants RPL or course credit to an overseas student, the registered provider must give a written record of the decision to the overseas student to accept and retain the written record of acceptance for two years after the overseas student ceases to be an accepted student.

2.5 If the registered provider grants the overseas student RPL or course credit that reduces the overseas student's course length, the provider must:

2.5.1 Inform the student of the reduced course duration following granting of RPL and ensure the confirmation of enrolment (CoE) is issued only for the reduced duration of the course.

2.5.2 Report any change in course duration in PRISMS if RPL or course credit is granted after the overseas student's visa is granted.

According to the AQF National Principles and Operational Guidelines, RPL can be used in two ways:

- A combination of a training program meeting the requirements of an endorsed Training Package or a training program meeting the requirements of an accredited course delivered by a Registered Training Organisation, plus recognition of prior learning including credit transfer and/or experience;
- The recognition of prior learning that provides evidence of the achievement of the competencies for the qualification.

### 3. Credit Transfer

If a student has completed units/modules/competencies that are the same (or deemed equivalent) either in a different course, or at another registered education provider (either in Australia or internationally) they may be eligible to apply for and be granted course credit.

#### Policy and Procedure

Applications for course credit transfer will only be accepted if:

- (i) Course Credit Application form is submitted with supporting documents, and
- (ii) The student is enrolled in an approved course of WAIFS. How does a candidate start the process?

#### How does a candidate start the process?

**Step 1:** Complete a Course Credit Application Form and Return to WAIFS and provide supporting documentation

**Step 2:** Discuss with Trainer/Assessor (if required) – initial interview with the assessor/self-evaluation process

**Step 3:** Course credit Outcome will be notified by WAIFS followed by detailed instructions

#### Step 1 – Course Credit Application

An application for Course Credit Transfer form is available on WAIFS' website or at reception on campus, the application for Credit Transfer needs to be completed along with any supporting documents and submitted to [admissions@waifs.wa.edu.au](mailto:admissions@waifs.wa.edu.au) or returned back to WAIFS' reception.

Where an applicant seeks Credit Transfer prior to enrolment or up to week 4 of their course (time frame will be calculated from the confirmation of enrolment start date of the course), the fee for that unit will generally be exempted unless the unit has been superseded and is not equivalent to the new unit (then fees calculation will be subject to the letter of offer). If the Credit Transfer application is submitted after week 4 of their CoE start date of the course, Credit Transfer may be granted, however it does not qualify for a refund or fee adjustment.

Some examples of documentary evidence that can support the process include but not limit to:

1. Certificate/Statement of Attainment
2. Academic Transcript

Note: the original copy of the evidence needs to be sighted by one of WAIFS' staff or a certified copy must be provided.

#### Step 2 – Meeting with Trainer/Assessor (if required)

If there are any issues, Trainer/Assessor or the appropriate staff at WAIFS (e.g. Student Support Officer) will organise a meeting to discuss with the candidate. For example, if there is special timetable that needs to be arranged; or the Credit Transfer approval would potential affect the candidate's course duration.

If WAIFS grants the course credit which leads to a shortening of the student's course before the student visa is granted, the student will be informed and the CoE will indicate the actual net course duration for the course.



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If the course credit granted will not affect the duration of the course, WAIFS records the course credit in the student's file but does not need to take any other action.

If the course credit granted will affect the duration of the course, the Manager, Student Administration (MSA) records a change of course duration on PRISMS. To do this, the MSA uses the Student Course Variation function, and indicates that the student has requested a change to the existing enrolment. The MSA then chooses 'transfer student into same course' and then changes the end date of the course. This process will result in the creation of a new CoE (with the revised end date) and the cancellation of the original CoE.

The MSA will report the change of course duration to Department of Home Affairs (DoHA) via PRISMS within 31 days after the event as specified under Section 19 (1A) (b) of the ESOS Act.

If the course credit transfer is granted, tuition fees to the value of that subject's worth will be deducted from the total course cost and reflected in the letter of offer; OR if after enrolment and payment instalments apply, the last instalment will be amended; OR if total course fee has been paid a refund will apply according to WAIFS' Refund and Cancellation Policy (available at [www.waifs.wa.edu.au](http://www.waifs.wa.edu.au)).

### Step 3 – Course Credit Assessment outcome

Appropriate department of WAIFS (e.g. Business Department) will assess the Course Credit Transfer request and approve/decline the Credit Transfer request and let the candidate know through an email confirmation within 3 working days.

Students are required to sign (or otherwise accept) the unit Coversheet. (If a student does not accept the amount of course credit granted, they are informed that they can access the WAIFS Complaints and Appeals process). A copy of unit Coversheet will be kept on the student's file.

### 4. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

RPL may use different assessment methods, but they should be no less and no more rigorous than conventional methods of assessing competence in the VET sector.

To recognise prior learning it is necessary to:

- Ensure that candidates know that RPL provides an alternative pathway to course attendance (through the availability of this policy on the WAIFS website)
- Determine in consultation with the candidate, the learning, skills and knowledge that the candidate is able to demonstrate against the learning outcomes or performance criteria of the course or qualification for which the candidate is seeking entry or the award of credit.
- Determine whether any further evidence is needed to support the claim of competence and arrange for appropriate additional learning experiences or gap training where appropriate.
- Conduct an assessment(s) that confirm(s) competence.

To make RPL a user-friendly assessment pathway, assessors need to adopt a flexible and interactive approach, and provide information, advice and feedback to RPL candidates in the same way that they provide support and assistance to all candidates seeking to have their skills developed and assessed.

It is particularly important when candidates are not engaged in a structured learning program that they receive advice about what is required of them and that they are not being constricted by inappropriately applied paper-based or knowledge-based assessment methods.

The nature of the support provided may differ from the support which is made available to other candidates, but the level and quality of that support will influence outcomes for candidates seeking RPL in the same ways as it influences other candidates.

### Policy and Procedure

Applications for recognition of prior learning will only be accepted if:

- (i) Recognition of Prior Learning Application form is submitted with supporting documents, and
- (ii) The student is enrolled in an approved course of WAIFS, and
- (iii) The appropriate fee has been paid (an AUD\$230 application fee is applicable for international students and fee for service domestic students to start the process).



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### How does a candidate start the process?

**Step 1:** Complete a Recognition of Prior Learning Application Form, and return it to WAIFS along with supporting documentation and the payment receipt

**Step 2:** Discuss with Trainer/Assessor (if required) – initial interview with the assessor/self-evaluation process

**Step 3:** RPL outcome will be notified by WAIFS followed by detailed instructions

### Step 1 – RPL Application

An application for Recognition of Prior Learning form is available on WAIFS' website or at reception on campus, the application for Recognition of Prior Learning needs to be completed and submitted to [admissions@waifs.wa.edu.au](mailto:admissions@waifs.wa.edu.au) or returned back to WAIFS' reception.

An AUD\$230 application fee is applicable to start the process. The application fee must be provided with the completed application form and requested evidence. There is no refund of the application fee even if the student be deemed as unsuccessful in RPL.

Where an applicant seeks RPL prior to enrolment or up to week 4 of their course (time frame will be calculated from the confirmation of enrolment start date of the course), the fee for that unit will generally be 50% of the normal unit fee unless more gap training will be required (then fees calculation will be subject to the letter of offer). If the RPL application is submitted after week 4 of their CoE start date of the course, RPL may be granted, however it does not qualify for a refund or fee adjustment.

As noted in "Recognition of Prior Learning: An Assessment Resource for VET practitioners" 5th Edition 2013 <http://www.voced.edu.au/content/ngv%3A65728> it is better to use plain English (not training package terminology) and the application form is therefore a simple one.

Some examples of documentary evidence that can support the process include but not limit to:

- General employment document
- Resume
- Position description or job description
- Results of any assessments, certificate, statement of attainment, transcript
- Details of in-house courses, training programs, orientation, induction
- References or letters from employers and or supervisors
- Workplace documents
- Diaries/task sheets
- Samples of documents that you have produced
- Emails/letters
- Occupational Health & Safety documentation
- Copies of presentations

These items may be used to support the candidate's claim to competency throughout the RPL process. However, they should not be seen as a sole or sufficient determinant of competence, which is more properly and effectively assessed through interaction, dialogue and the practical demonstration of tasks.

Our Assessor will assist candidates during the RPL process to determine exactly what evidence is required. Candidates will also need to supply contact details of one or two work referees who can confirm the currency of skills and knowledge.

### Note: Confidentiality issues

It is important that sensitive information is not included as part of your Supporting Documentation. You may need authorisation from your supervisor to use some of your evidence, so it is always best to check the privacy and confidentiality policies of the organisation. Client names should be deleted and financial figures or other personal details should be blacked out and made unidentifiable.

### Step 2 – Conversation with Assessor or Practical demonstration of your skills

An assessor will review the information you have provided (usually with the candidate) and begin to match up the candidate's skills to the units/subjects in the qualification. At the point of the initial interview, the candidate will have the opportunity to discuss and identify his or her previous experience with the assessor who will understand the industry experience and conduct a competency conversation. The candidate will be required to answer business related questions to identify the current skills.



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This component of the RPL assessment process provides an opportunity for the candidate and the assessor to have a professional conversation about the candidate's required knowledge and skills.

It may comprise a series of direct questions or could be a list of topics for discussion drawn from the list of required skills and knowledge. Discussion around topics may provide an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate a broader area of knowledge and experience and may elicit more information than direct questioning. Appropriate responses to questions or topics that should be covered in the conversation should be included as these will support the assessor in probing for more specific information.

If the applicant is not able to attend the initial interview with the assessor and it is intended that if an applicant thinks they may be eligible for RPL they complete the form and might be given a self-evaluation tool where they can more accurately assess their 'prior learning' against the training package requirements for the unit/s in which they are applying for RPL. The self-evaluation tool provides an opportunity for the candidate to self-determine their level of experience and knowledge in the relevant industry. It also provides an overview of the level of the candidate's background experience to assist the assessor to determine if the candidate is likely to be a successful candidate for RPL. It is also an important first step in identifying where the candidate may have gaps in training skills and knowledge and to decide whether to proceed with the RPL process.

The assessor might conduct a practical skills test at the candidate's workplace (if appropriate) or at another suitable venue (e.g. simulated workplace environment). This, again, is an opportunity to demonstrate the level of competence of the candidate. This assessment will be focused on skills that are required in the qualification and the assessor will identify the skills that he/she will want you to demonstrate.

Assessor instructions should indicate which questions/topics are critical to the assessment. An appropriate recording mechanism could be included—such as a purpose-built form and/or a digital recorder—to create a reliable record of the interview for later reference

It is very difficult for the assessor to take comprehensive notes, ask questions and listen at the same time. To overcome this problem, it is a good idea to use a digital recorder to record the interview. These are small, unobtrusive and easy to carry around if you conduct the interview on the move. The interview can be then stored by the assessor on the WAIFS shared drive. The assessor needs to remember to ask for the candidate's permission to record the interview and to remember to turn the recorder off if the candidate is discussing anything that may be sensitive or have security issues.

Recording the interview means that if the assessor is unsure after the interview that all aspects were covered adequately, they can easily check and arrange to reassess those topics. It also provides a good source of evidence if there is any dispute about the outcome of the RPL process.

The interview conducted in this manner is an informative and enjoyable experience that provides the assessor an opportunity to network with industry and communicate the RPL concept with others.

It quite often encourages others at the workplace to also enrol in RPL. It shows the professionalism of the well-prepared RPL assessor and the connection of WAIFS to the real workplace.

### Step 3 – RPL Assessment Outcome

Appropriate department of WAIFS (e.g. Business Department) will conduct a final assessment on the student's RPL request and approve/decline the RPL request and let the candidate know through an email confirmation within 3 working days.

Once the steps have been completed, the trainer can complete the unit RPL Coversheet and sign, which will include reasons for the amount of RPL given.

Students are required to sign (or otherwise accept) the unit RPL Coversheet. (If a student does not accept the amount of RPL granted, they are informed that they can access the WAIFS Complaints and Appeals process). A copy of unit RPL Coversheet will be kept on the student's file. If necessary the duration of study will be adjusted accordingly.

If WAIFS grants the RPL which leads to a shortening of the student's course before the student visa is granted, the student's CoE will indicate the actual net course duration for the course.



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The MSA will report the change of course duration to Department of Home Affairs (DoHA) via PRISMS within 31 days after the event as specified under Section 19. (1A) (b) of the ESOS Act.

If RPL is granted, tuition fees to a maximum of 50% of the value of that subject's worth will be deducted from the total course cost and reflected in the letter of offer; OR if after enrolment and payment instalments apply, the last instalment will be amended; OR if total course fee has been paid a refund will apply according to WAIFS' Refund and Cancellation Policy (available at [www.waifs.wa.edu.au](http://www.waifs.wa.edu.au)).

*Note: Recognition of prior learning (RPL) - and any course credit given as a result of the RPL process - are applicable only to the course in which the student is enrolled at the time of applying for RPL. If a student changes courses, any RPL/course credit granted will be reassessed to ensure that it still remains appropriate.*

### **Provision of further evidence or Gap Training**

To complement the record of steps 1-2, the candidate might be asked to provide further documentary evidence to support their competency profile as demonstrated in the prior stages of assessment. The types of documentary evidence that may be provided to further support the candidate's claim to competency are the same as those listed at the preparatory stage above, for instance, third-party verification reports, job logs, or photographs of work undertaken.

### **Information is to be provided to the candidate about the assessment process**

It will give particular advice regarding how the candidate can demonstrate their competence and any documentary evidence a candidate may wish to gather to support their application.

Each industry has unique documents that can provide evidence of experience and competence. However, the focus of the new streamlined holistic assessment process is to focus on demonstrated skills and knowledge and not to rely on documentary evidence as the main source of evidence. WAIFS' trainer/assessor will provide students very specific instructions what to provide and if there is any gap training/in class training required.