

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

PP03 Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer

PURPOSE

Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) is a process where an individual can use their existing knowledge, skills and experiences gained through life experiences and/or other employment to demonstrate existing competency in particular unit/s. This Policy and Procedure is in place to inform applicants, enrolling students and National Indigenous Training Academy (NITA) staff of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Recognition of Current Competency (RCC) for any nationally recognised qualification or unit of competency (unit) offered, where appropriate.

This Policy and Procedure also outlines NITA's commitment to mutually recognising units of competencies, accredited courses, skill sets and full qualifications issued by other Registered Training Organisations (RTO), or AQF authorised issuing organisation or authenticated VET transcripts issued by the Registrar of Unique Student Identifier (unless licensing or regulatory requirements prevent this).

SCOPE

This Policy and Procedure ensures applicant and enrolling student's prior gained competencies, regardless of how they were obtained, are systematically assessed for recognition purposes in alignment with the rules of evidence, through an application process.

For the purposes of ease, RPL and RCC will be referred to as 'RPL' within this Policy and Procedure.

This Policy and Procedure falls within the following NITA Student Experience segment:

- Engage.

VET DEFINITIONS

ASQA stands for the Australian Skills Quality Authority, which is the national VET Regulator.

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) means the framework for regulated qualifications in the Australian education and training system, as agreed by the Commonwealth, State and Territory ministerial council with responsibility for higher education. For VET, it refers to all accredited training offered from Certificate I level through to Advanced Diploma levels however also includes the higher education post graduate qualifications through to doctorate level.

Credit Transfer (CT) refers to exemption from enrolment in a particular part of an accredited qualification as a result of previous academic studies of these unit of competency and where the completion of study is evidenced and verified by the RTO.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) means an assessment process that assesses an individual's formal, non-formal and informal learning to determine the extent to which that individual meets the requirements specified in the training package or VET accredited courses. It is closely linked to Recognition of Current Competencies, where:

- formal learning refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of instruction and is linked to the attainment of an AQF qualification or statement of attainment (for example, a Certificate, diploma or university degree)

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- non-formal learning refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of instructions, but does not lead to the attainment of an AQF qualification or statement of attainment (for example, in house professional development programs conducted by a business); and
- informal learning refers to learning that results through experience of work-related, social, family, hobby or leisure activities (for example the acquisition of interpersonal skills developed through several years as a sales representative).

RTO means Registered Training Organisation, commonly known as a Training Provider or Provider and has the meaning given as defined in the NVR Act 2011.

Unit of Competency means the specification of industry knowledge and skill and the application of that knowledge and skill to the standard of performance expected in the workplace as defined in the training package. All accredited training is grouped into individual units of competency, which form a full qualification or skill set.

VET means vocation education and training.

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A. RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING AND CURRENT COMPETENCIES

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is an assessment process (rather than a training process) in which the individual's formal, non-formal and informal learning is assessed. This assessment determines the extent to which that individual has achieved the required learning outcomes, competency outcomes or standards for entry to, and/or partial or total completion of a program of study.

In order to grant RPL, NITA assessors determine whether the RPL student is currently competent against the endorsed industry or enterprise competency standards or outcomes specified in Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) accredited qualifications and courses, through application of a range of assessment strategies.

NITA appreciate the value of workplace and industry experience and recognises that students will acquire vocational skills and knowledge from a variety of sources other than formal training. These skills are legitimate irrespective of how they were acquired and the RPL process is designed to provide validation of such relevant skills, without the need to repeat this learning should RPL be granted.

Information about RPL

Applicants who believe they have already obtained current skills and knowledge that would otherwise be covered in the qualification/unit of competence for which they intend to study, or where these skills and knowledge is identified by a trainer and assessor, will be encouraged to apply for RPL at the time of enrolment or at least 14 working days prior to the unit/s commencement to allow for sufficient assessment of the evidence submitted. Reference to RPL services is made available to the students through the **Application and Enrolment Information Sheet, Application and Enrolment Form** and the **Student Handbook**.

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A trainee may seek credit for all relevant training and industry experience, such as pre- vocational training or pre-apprenticeship training and for relevant units of competency and qualifications that they have already achieved through applying this Policy and Procedure and which may result in fewer units of competency needing to be completed for the qualification. NITA always offer RPL to the trainee when developing their **Training Plan**.

RPL applicants must in the first instance, complete and submit a **Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer Application Form**. This is issued by NITA's Recruitment Team as part of inbounding services or at induction by the Training Manager. From this point, the applicant will be assigned an assessor and issued with a qualification specific **RPL Applicant Assessment Tool Kit** for their completion.

Wherever relevant, trainers and assessors will also remind students of this option progressively throughout their time in training, in order to provide multiple opportunities for students to engage in the RPL process. Once again, the student must submit their RPL application no later than 14 working days prior to the unit/s commencement to allow for sufficient assessment of the evidence submitted.

RPL Fees

RPL applicants are advised that this service will incur a \$400 per unit assessment fee as part of the application – specifically on the **Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer Application Form**. Given the unique funding arrangement for NITA trainees, Voyages will fully pay any costs associated with RPL services.

Undertaking RPL Services - Principles

NITA acknowledges and ensures that the same rules and evidence and assessment principles as for all other assessment activities are adhered to in their delivery of RPL services. RPL services are always conducted with the same rigour as any other form of assessment and its RPL training product material is developed to align with the packaging rules of the relevant qualification.

The RPL student is required to collect sufficient and documented evidence of prior competency experiences and ensure that these are listed as evidence which is to be considered in the decision to grant RPL. This usually will include, but is not limited to, the provision of:

- documented self-appraisal of skills and knowledge (self-evaluation)
- a record of experience relevant to the intended qualification such as a resume
- evidence in the form of at least two Third Party Reports from previous employers - the assessor will make contact to validate the information provided and/or require further detail
- evidence in the form of prior qualifications (that may be redundant due to currency)
- where applicable and in accordance with the unit of competency requirements, practical and knowledge tests addressing the elements and performance criteria of the unit and the skills required as a minimum in the relevant qualification (through a competency conversation and practical skills assessment)
- for students who may not have access to previous employer/s, justification evidence can be obtained in the form of a referee testimonial from someone with the relevant industry, such as a business associate, or from other evidence like customer reviews. The person providing the evidence must be independent and able to provide unbiased judgement of the RPL applicant's workplace performance; and

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- for self-employed students, RPL evidence is reviewed on a case-by-case basis. In these instances, the assessor will retain justification evidence in the form of a referee testimonial from someone within the relevant industry, such as a business associate, or from other evidence like customer reviews. The person providing the evidence must be independent and able to provide unbiased judgement of the RPL applicant's workplace performance.

All employment evidence is verified by the assessor as part of the RPL service, in relation to the authenticity of employment and detailed the industry experience of, and qualifications held by, the letters' authors.

NITA has in place qualification specific **RPL Applicant Assessment Tool Kit** for each qualification on its scope of registration as the primary document that identifies critical aspects of evidence and the required skills and knowledge for units claimed. This **Tool Kit** lists the range of valid assessment evidence which is required to be considered in the decision to grant RPL for the student and links it to the relevant unit and qualification requirements. In turn, the assessor is supported to make appropriate judgements through referencing the qualification specific **RPL Assessor Assessment Tool Kit**.

NITA's RPL services are always conducted by a qualified assessor, assigned by the National Programs Manager.

Outcome of the RPL Service

Written advice of the outcome will be forwarded to the applicant/student within 3 days of the final decision.

For units that are granted RPL:

- the student is exempt from having to complete those units, and
- the units will contribute to the student's eligibility to obtain their full qualification.

Should the assessor deem that the student satisfies all the qualification/unit requirements, as outlined in the qualification specific **RPL Applicant Assessment Tool Kit**, he/she will:

- make the appropriate adjustments to the student's planned **Training Plan and Fee Schedule**
- advise the Training Manager and National Programs Manager so that full recognition is granted and the appropriate recording is made within aXcelerate, NITA's student management system, and that a review of the fees and charges is made with a refund organised if eligible, and
- store the student's completed **RPL Applicant Assessment Tool Kit** and accompanying evidence on the designated student file.

For all trainees, NITA will inform their Apprenticeship Network Provider (ANP) as the trainee's **Training Contract** (managed by the ANP) requires adjusting.

Should the assessor deem that the student does not fully satisfy all the qualification/unit requirements, as outlined in the qualification specific **RPL Applicant Assessment Tool Kit**, he/she will initially request further evidence to be assessed, and should that remain insufficient:

- recommend gap training and/or confirm the original training schedule
- advise the National Programs Manager so that the appropriate recording is made within aXcelerate
- ensure the documents are stored on the designated student file, and
- advise the student of NITA's **Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure**.

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NITA takes care to ensure that the sequence of any gap training and assessment and the RPL are in accordance with unit of competency requirements, whereby RPL is not granted for competencies where NITA provides training and assessment for the underpinning pre-requisite(s).

Appealing the RPL Decision

All RPL applicants have the right to appeal any decision made about their RPL application, in accordance with NITA's **Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure**. Should their application not be successful, the National Programs Manager will provide further detail about this procedure as part of the written outcome advice of the application.

B. CREDIT TRANSFER

Students who have completed a nationally recognised qualification/unit that have the exact same code as a unit currently enrolled/enrolling within will be eligible for credit transfer for the particular unit(s) and will be referred to the Credit Transfer arrangement in place.

Information provided to NITA for the purposes of a credit transfer is verified by way of:

- USI transcript verification, or
- requests for certified copies of original documents, or
- validation with the issuing RTO.

In the case where the issuing RTO has closed, the NITA National Programs Manager will contact ASQA to seek a confirmation of previous studies.

Information about Credit Transfer

All applicants and enrolling students are informed of the availability of Credit Transfer and the evidence requirements prior to commencement of training, including referencing through the **Application and Enrolment Information Sheet, Application and Enrolment Form** and the **Student Handbook**.

If a student indicates on their **Application and Enrolment Form** or to a NITA staff member that they would like to apply for a Credit Transfer – they will then be provided with the **Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer Application Form** which the student must sign and return with supporting documents, to NITA's Recruitment or Administration Team.

Credit Transfer Fees

There is no cost associated to credit transfer services.

Credit Transfer Requirements

Students may apply for credit transfer at any time but are encouraged to apply before commencing the relevant unit/s of competency. Applications must be received at least 14 days prior to the unit/s commencement to allow time for verification of the evidence submitted.

Credit Transfer may only be awarded for whole units of competency. Where a partial credit is identified the applicant will be advised to seek **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** services.

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Credit Transfer arrangement is not contingent on the applicant demonstrating their currency. If the unit has been previously awarded and equivalence can be demonstrated, then the unit will be recognised.

Students cannot apply for Credit Transfer for units of competency or qualification which are not included in NITA's scope of registration unless they meet the packaging rules of the chosen qualification.

NITA's Credit Transfer services are always conducted by the Training Manager and approved by the NITA National Programs Manager.

Outcome of the Credit Transfer Service

Written advice of the outcome will be forwarded to the applicant/student within 3 days of the final decision.

For units that are granted credit transfer:

- the student is exempt from having to complete those units, and
- the units will contribute to the student's eligibility to obtain their full qualification.

Should the National Programs Manager confirm that the student satisfies all the qualification/unit requirements, the Training Manager will:

- make the appropriate adjustments to the student's planned **Training Plan** and **Fee Schedule**
- advise the NITA National Programs Manager so that full recognition is granted and the appropriate recording is made within aXcelerate, NITA's student management system, and that a review of the fees and charges is made, with a refund organised if required, and
- store the student's completed **Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer Application Form** and accompanying evidence on the designated student file.

For all trainees, NITA will inform their Apprenticeship Network Provider (ANP) as the trainee's **Training Contract** (managed by the ANP) requires adjusting.

Should the National Programs Manager deem that the student does not fully satisfy all the qualification/unit requirements, the Training Manager will initially request further evidence to be assessed, and should that remain insufficient:

- recommend gap training and/or confirm the original training schedule
- advise the NITA National Programs Manager so that the appropriate recording is made within aXcelerate
- ensure the documents are stored on the designated student file, and
- advise the student of NITA's **Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure**.

Appealing the Credit Transfer Decision

All Credit Transfer applicants have the right to appeal any decision made about their Credit Transfer application, in accordance with NITA's **Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure**. Should their application not be successful, the Training Manager will provide further detail about this procedure as part of the written outcome advice of the application.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

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PP03 Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer

Application and Enrolment Form
 Application and Enrolment Information Sheet
 Pre-Enrolment Document Checklist
 Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer Application Form
 Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer Confirmation of Outcome Letter Template
 SIT30622 Recognition of Prior Learning Applicant Kit
 SIT30622 Recognition of Prior Learning Assessor Guide
 Staff Handbook
 Student Handbook
 Trainee Fee Schedules
 Training Plan Template
 VET Delegations Register

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Application and Enrolment Policy and Procedure
 Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure
 Fair Treatment and Equal Opportunity Policy and Procedure
 Fees and Charges Policy and Procedure
 Quality Training and Assessment Policy and Procedure

PUBLISHING DETAILS

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RELEVANCE: Recruitment Team
 Training Manager
 NITA National Programs Manager
 Trainer/Assessor

APPROVED BY: NITA National Programs Manager

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|---------|------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| 1 | 30/06/2022 | Created | NITA Director |
| 2 | 17/08/2023 | Title revisions | NITA PCC |