

# Higher Education Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure

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## Purpose

This procedure governs the granting and rescinding of credit towards Federation University Australia's Higher Education awards on the basis of prior non-formal learning, through the recognition of prior learning (RPL) process.

RPL/Credit can accelerate student progress, completion and mobility, however, the integrity of Federation University awards is paramount and credit will not be granted if it would impair the integrity of the award, or reduce a student's likelihood of success in the course.

## Scope

### 1. Overview

This procedure applies to higher education students in undergraduate, postgraduate (coursework), enabling and foundation courses at Federation University. This procedure is for the HE RPL process - recognition of relevant non-formal and informal prior learning and experiences in Higher Education through HE RPL assessment for credit. This procedure should be read in conjunction with the Course Credit Application for International Students Procedure for international student credit applications.

This procedure does not apply to students seeking credit transfer for higher degrees by research, credit for formal prior coursework learning (refer LT2031 [Higher Education Academic Credit Transfer Procedure](#)) nor VET students (refer LT1290 [VET Recognition of Prior Learning \(RPL\) and Credit Transfer Assessment Procedure](#)). It does not apply to applications for short courses, or units with a value of less than 15 credit points or that are not eligible for credit.

This procedure also does not apply to students for whom pathway credit is automatically granted on entry to a course as approved in the course rules, or where recognition of prior learning is used as the basis for admission into an undergraduate or postgraduate (coursework) course of study.

### 2. Types of Credit

1. In order to protect the integrity of awards and assessment, formal credit is only available for a unit as a whole, not parts thereof.
2. Credit may be approved in the form of specified credit-based on assessment of prior relevant and current informal and non-formal learning deemed to be similar to the learning outcomes of the unit for which credit is sought.

### 3. Eligibility for credit

- i. A student is eligible for credit sought through the HE RPL process for assessment of informal or non-formal learning that is:
  - a. Relevant
  - b. Equivalent (at least 80%) to current knowledge and/or practices; and
  - c. Satisfies the current learning or competency outcomes of the course.
- ii. Credit approval sought through the HE RPL process for assessment of informal and non-formal learning is:
  - a. Only available for evidence of informal and non-formal learning that is deemed current by the credit assessor. A specified time limit for currency of evidence may be set by the Institute and approved by the Curriculum Committee (CC) in disciplines where knowledge changes more rapidly.
  - b. Available towards a Federation University award regardless of the location at which the course is taught.
- iii. When considering overseas qualifications, the awarding of credit through the HE RPL process must be guided by the Course Coordinator (or Institute-nominated assessor) in the relevant Institute, who may consult with the International Office for advice.
- iv. Supporting evidence provided as part of the HE RPL application will be measured against the learning outcomes of the unit for which the student has applied for credit through the HE RPL process. Examples of the types of evidence documents that can be used as part of the RPL application process are detailed in the table below.

TYPES OF RPL/CREDIT EVIDENCE	EXPLANATION	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
Formal learning	Courses that were formally organised and assessed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certificates</li> <li>• Transcripts of results</li> <li>• Syllabi</li> <li>• Research reports/thesis</li> </ul>
Non-formal learning	Training events which were organised but did not necessarily have assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Descriptions of courses</li> <li>• Certificates of attendance</li> <li>• Samples of materials</li> </ul>
Informal learning/self-managed learning	Learning you achieved that was not organised by others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Published work</li> <li>• Voluntary activities</li> <li>• Self-study schemes</li> <li>• Relevant recreational activities/hobbies</li> </ul>
Work history and job descriptions	Aspects of your paid and voluntary work that are relevant to the unit of study.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job descriptions</li> <li>• Responsibilities</li> <li>• Curriculum Vitae</li> <li>• Professional accreditations/licences</li> </ul>
Samples of work	If there is physical evidence of your prior learning other than certificates etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reports, Project plans</li> <li>• Designs, Photographs</li> <li>• Completed documents</li> </ul>
Reports from employers/managers	If there is no tangible evidence of your learning it may be possible to arrange verification from third parties/ employers/managers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letters of verification</li> <li>• References</li> <li>• Records from HR Departments</li> </ul>

- v. Decisions regarding HE RPL applications will be:
  - a. Timely
  - b. Evidence-based and transparent
  - c. Fair and consistent
  - d. Academically defensible
  - e. Will take into account the student's ability to successfully meet the learning outcomes of the qualification.
- vi. Credit will not be approved if it impinges upon the integrity of the award and requirements of the relevant discipline.

#### 4. Restrictions on Credit Approved through HE RPL Process

- i. In order to preserve the integrity of the University's awards and learning outcomes, no student shall be exempted from passing assessments from more than two-thirds of the course and must achieve a minimum number of credit points in their course through study in the course. Specifically through the HE RPL process, the maximum total credit that can be approved in a course of study is up to 60 credit points. In exceptional circumstances additional RPL may be considered. Additional RPL requires approval at Curriculum Committee and noting at Academic Board.
- ii. The University may exclude or deny credit approval sought through the HE RPL process towards core, final or capstone units in a course where these units are considered to be the culmination of the course and are

essential to the student's achievements of the award capabilities or learning outcomes. Courses and/or units may also be excluded from the HE RPL process due to accreditation requirements.

- iii. Requests to rescind credit previously approved through the HE RPL process will not be accepted after the commencement of the final semester of enrolment. Requests for the rescission of credit should be identified as early as possible to allow time for review, approval and adjustments to study planning and should be received prior to the end of the first semester of enrolment. Rescission will only be approved for legitimate academic reasons such as, but not limited to, the following:
  - a. The unit(s) are no longer required to meet course/accreditation requirements.
  - b. The approval of credit has impacted on the student's ability to complete core course requirements.
  - c. The student's study plans have changed.

## 5. Student Responsibilities

1. Students are responsible for understanding the implications that the approval of credit through the HE RPL process will have on their visa and/or professional accreditation.

## 6. Impact of credit upon grade point average

1. A student's grade point average (GPA) is calculated by results specific to the Federation University course enrolled in, and accordingly credits approved through HE RPL assessment are not included in the GPA calculation.

## 7. Appeal and Review

- i. A student may appeal a HE RPL assessment decision according to the process and grounds set out in the [Student Appeal Procedure](#) and University Regulation 5.2, within 7 days of being notified of the decision.
- ii. As per [Student Appeal Procedure](#) and University Regulation 5.2, Academic Board will appoint an Appeals Committee that, after allowing the person or student an opportunity to be heard or to make a written submission, may:
  - i. Dismiss an appeal; or
  - ii. Make a recommendation regarding granting of credit to the appropriate Dean (or equivalent).

## 8. Maintaining Quality of HE RPL Assessments

1. Academic judgment is required for assessing credit through the HE RPL process. HE RPL credit assessments are reviewed and assessed by Course Coordinators or other equivalent assessors as nominated by Institutes to preserve the integrity of the courses and meet legislative requirements relating to learning outcomes.

## Legislative Context

- [Federation University Act 2010](#)
- [Federation University Statute 2021](#)
  - Part 5 - Division 1 - Academic Board
  - Part 6 - Student Admission, Conduct and Exclusion
  - Part 8 - Awards, Titles and Honorary Degrees
- [Federation University Australia Academic Regulations](#)
- [Federation University Australia \(Students\) Regulations](#)
- [Australian Qualifications Framework AQF](#)

- [Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency \(TEQSA\) Threshold Standards 2021](#)

## Definitions

Term	Definition
<b>Non-formal learning</b>	Learning that takes place through a structured course of instruction but does not lead to the attainment of a formal qualification or award.
<b>Informal learning</b>	Learning that results from work-related, social, family, hobby or leisure activities.
<b>Credit</b>	The value assigned for the recognition of equivalence in content and learning outcomes between different types of learning and/or qualifications. Credit reduces the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification and may be through credit transfer, articulation, recognition of prior learning or advanced standing.
<b>HE RPL Assessment</b>	A process to determine the amount of credit an applicant is eligible for based on prior study, and/or relevant experience, course structure (core units/majors/minors, etc), student's choice of major and limits for credit.
<b>Credit Points</b>	The value attached to each unit of study. Most Higher Education units have a credit point value of 15 but credit points per unit can range from 5 to 60.

A complete list of definitions relevant to this procedure is contained within the [Policy Central Glossary](#).

## Actions

### 1. Applying for HE RPL Assessment

	Activity	Responsibility	Steps
A	Understanding the implications of Higher Education RPL assessment	Student	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prior to applying for credit for a unit through the HE RPL process, students should be aware that credit approved through this process may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• affect professional accreditation and they should seek appropriate advice from the relevant accreditation body.</li> <li>• result in a shorter course duration.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. International students should be aware this may affect their visa conditions as the University will be required to inform Department of</li> </ol>

			<p>Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) of a revised course end date.</p> <p>3. Students should be aware that they may incur financial liability for units they are enrolled in for which credit is subsequently received if their credit application is submitted later than two weeks prior to census date of the relevant study period. Students may also be given a withdrawn grade which may affect their GPA, eligibility for a Commonwealth Supported Place and HELP loans. Credit applications submitted after this date may also impact a student's study plan/course duration.</p>
B	Submission of the Higher Education RPL Application Form	Student	<p>1. Students are encouraged to apply for HE RPL assessment for relevant non-formal and informal learning and experiences at least two months prior to the census date of the study period in which they would otherwise enrol in the unit for which credit is sought through the HE RPL process. For commencing students, this may be at the point of enrolment into the course of study or soon after.</p> <p>2. Submission of a Higher Education RPL application or any HE RPL related documentation after this timeframe or that are received later than two weeks prior to census date of the study period in which credit for a unit is being sought may result in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. incurring financial liability for units enrolled in for which credit is subsequently received and from which the student wishes to drop their unit enrolment, noting</li> </ol>

			<p>that students are liable for all fees associated with their unit enrolments after the relevant census date.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. impacting a student's study plan/course duration, noting that students are unable to enrol in new units after Week 2. This may impact on study load and on academic progression, where there are pre-requisite and co-requisite progression requirements. This is particularly important for international students where maintenance of load and visa end date conditions apply.</li> <li>c. incurring a withdrawn grade if applied after census date. If a late withdrawal grade is awarded this may affect a student's GPA, eligibility for a Commonwealth Supported Place and HELP loan.</li> <li>d. the HE RPL application may not be able to be processed due to delay in submission and timelines.</li> </ol> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. International students who apply for credit through HE RPL assessment after commencing their courses may have visa implications.</li> <li>4. Prior to completing an RPL Application Form, refer to the <a href="#">Academic Governance Policy</a>, <a href="#">Students and Support for Students Policy</a>, and the Scope of this procedure for details regarding the specific circumstances under which credit will, and will not, be approved.</li> <li>5. Complete a Higher Education Recognition of Prior Learning Form available online.</li> </ol>
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			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Students may seek informal advice from Student Administration (for domestic students), International Admissions (for international on-campus students) and Partner Quality and Accreditation (for international partner students) regarding the likelihood of being granted HE RPL credit in a specific unit. Such advice will be non-binding.</li> <li>7. Include all documentation specified on the application form. Supporting documentation to be provided should be translated into English where appropriate.</li> <li>8. If additional information is required, the student will be advised in writing of a timeframe within which the additional information needs to be submitted. Failure to supply this additional information within the timeframe requested in writing by the University may adversely impact the progress of the HE RPL application, including, but not limited to, the application being considered to have been submitted later than two weeks prior to census date of the relevant study period and the consequences outlined in 1(B)(2) above failing to be avoided.</li> <li>9. Higher Education RPL applications received no later than at least two months prior to census date of the relevant study period will be assessed and student's enrolment details adjusted prior to census date. HE RPL applications received after this date will be assessed, but students should be aware of</li> </ol>
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			the potential consequences outlined in 1 (B) (2) above.
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## 2. Assessing and Recording Higher Education RPL Applications

	Activity	Responsibility	Steps
A	Assessing Higher Education RPL Application Form	<p>Student Administration for domestic students</p> <p>International Admissions Officers (for international on-campus students)</p> <p>Partner Quality and Accreditation (for international partner students)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Determine whether the student has provided a completed Higher Education RPL application form with sufficient information to assess their eligibility to apply for the HE RPL process.</li> <li>2. Liaise with the student if additional information is required to complete the Higher Education RPL application form.</li> <li>3. Advise the student in writing of a timeframe within which the additional information needs to be submitted. Failure to supply this additional information within the timeframe requested in writing by the University may adversely impact the progress of the HE RPL application, including, but not limited to, the application being considered to have been submitted later than two weeks prior to census date of the relevant study period and the consequences outlined in 1(B)(2) above failing to be avoided.</li> <li>4. Compile all relevant documents and send to the appropriate Course Coordinator (or nominee) for assessment (usually within 3 university working days).</li> </ol>
B	Assessing Higher Education RPL application and relevant supporting documentation	Course Coordinator (or Institute-nominated assessor) for domestic and international students	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make an assessment of the HE RPL application for the specific unit for which credit is being sought for, based on the following:</li> </ol>

			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Checking whether it meets the criteria for HE RPL assessment.</li> <li>b. Based on the supporting evidence submitted, use the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) to compare the learning outcomes (Knowledge, Skills, Application of knowledge and skills) gained in relevant non-formal and informal learning and experiences to those in the unit for which credit is being sought, taking into consideration the alignment of the curriculum (knowledge, application and skills) and assessment types for that particular unit. The equivalence must be at least 80% for each unit.</li> </ol> <p>2. Record decisions and notify Student Administration (for domestic students), International Admissions (for international on-campus students) or Partner Quality and Accreditation (for international partner students) of outcome of assessment.</p> <p>This assessment should be made within 20 University working days.</p> <p>Ensure the HE RPL Templates for assessing evidence is included in the notification of the outcome. This template will be attached to the student RPL application.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. In order to protect the integrity of awards and assessment, credit is only available for a unit/ subject as a whole, not parts thereof.</li> <li>4. Where the assessment is particularly complex and this</li> </ol>
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			cannot be achieved, the student should be advised of a revised timeframe. Where additional information is required from the student, advise the student in writing of a timeframe within which the additional information needs to be submitted. Failure to supply this additional information within the timeframe requested in writing by the University may adversely impact the progress of the credit application, including, but not limited to, the application being considered to have been submitted later than two weeks prior to census date of the relevant study period and the consequences outlined in 1(B)(2) above failing to be avoided.
C	Approving and documenting HE RPL outcome and decisions	Course Coordinator (or nominee)	1. Provide HE RPL assessment credit decisions to Registrar Services for recording as required.
D	Recording HE RPL assessment outcome and decisions	Student Administration (for domestic students)  International Admissions Officers (for international on-campus students)  Partner Quality and Accreditation (for international partner students)	1. Amend student's record in university-endorsed record management system to reflect the credit approved.  2. Place a copy of the HE RPL assessment outcome on the student's file.

### 3. Notifying Students of Higher Education RPL Assessment Outcomes and Decisions

	Activity	Responsibility	Steps
A	Notifying <b>domestic students</b> Higher Education RPL assessment outcome and decision	Student Administration or Partner Quality and Accreditation (for partner students)	1. Advise student whether their HE RPL application is successful/unsuccessful as outlined in Section 2B.  2. Where approved, notification should include an updated study plan showing the

			requirements fulfilled by the credit and the requirements remaining to be fulfilled for successful course completion.
B	Notifying <b>international students</b> Higher Education RPL assessment outcome and decision	International Admissions Officers (for international on-campus students)  Partner Quality and Accreditation (for international partner students)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where credit is approved for international students after their enrolment, advise the student of their HE RPL assessment credit status, normally before the end of the second week of study. The student is expected to reply within 10 working days authorising acceptance of the credit, however, if no response is received the credit will be approved and only rescinded if legitimate academic reasons are subsequently identified.</li> <li>Provide new ECOE if required.</li> </ol>

#### 4. Appealing Unsuccessful Higher Education RPL Assessment Outcomes and Decisions

	Activity	Responsibility	Steps
A	Appealing an unsuccessful Higher Education RPL assessment outcome and decision	Student	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As per the <a href="#">Students Regulations</a>, within 30 days of being notified of the decision, appeal to Institute Executive Dean in writing.</li> </ol>
B	Considering appeals	Student appeals committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As per the <a href="#">Students Regulations</a> appoint an Appeals Committee that, after allowing the person or student an opportunity to be heard or to make a written submission, may: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dismiss an appeal; or</li> <li>Make a recommendation regarding approval of credit to the appropriate Dean (or equivalent).</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

#### 5. Rescinding Credit Previously Approved through Higher Education RPL Assessment

	Activity	Responsibility	Steps
A	Applying for rescission of credit previously approved through the Higher Education RPL assessment process	Student	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Refer to the <a href="#">Academic Governance Policy</a>, <a href="#">Students and Support for Students Policy</a>, and the <a href="#">Higher Education Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure</a> for the conditions under which rescission may be approved.</li> <li>2. Apply in writing to University Registrar stating the reason for the request.</li> </ol>
B	Assessing rescission request	Executive Dean or equivalent	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Apply the <a href="#">Academic Governance Policy</a>, <a href="#">Students and Support for Students Policy</a>, and the Scope section of this procedure to determine whether to rescind credit.</li> <li>2. Notify Student Administration/ Partner Quality and Accreditation/ International Admissions.</li> </ol>
C	Notifying student of rescission assessment	Student Administration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Endeavour to keep student informed of progress at least every 10 University working days.</li> <li>2. Notify student of decision as per the previous section: Notifying Students of Credit Transfer Decisions.</li> </ol>
D	Recording a rescission	Student Administration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Amend student's record in university-endorsed record management system to reflect the credit rescinded.</li> <li>2. Place a copy of the rescission outcome on the student's file.</li> </ol>

## Supporting documents

- [Higher Education Enrolment Procedure](#)
- Higher Education Guide
- [Student Appeal Procedure](#)
- [Academic Governance Policy](#)
- [Students and Support for Students Policy](#)

## Forms

[Higher Education Recognition of Prior Learning Application Form](#)

[Higher Education Recognition of Prior Learning Requests](#)

## Forms.

- [Higher Education Template for assessing evidence](#) (DOCX 166.6kb)

## Responsibility

- Chief Learner Experience Officer, as *Approval Authority*, is responsible for monitoring the implementation, outcomes and scheduled review of this procedure.
- Director, Student Services and Registrar, as *Document Owner*, is responsible for maintaining the content of this procedure as delegated by Approval Authority.

## Promulgation

The [Higher Education Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure](#) will be communicated throughout the University community in the form of:

1. An Announcement Notice via 'FedNews' website and on the 'Recently Approved Documents' page of the 'Policies, Procedures and Forms' to alert the University-wide community of the approved Procedure.

## Implementation

The [Higher Education Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure](#) will be implemented throughout the University via:

1. Information Sessions; and/or
2. Training Sessions.

## Records management

Title	Location	Responsible Officer	Minimum Retention Period
Higher Education RPL Credit Application and Assessment	Student Administration or the University's approved records management system	Senior Manager Registrar Services or Associate Dean Student Administration and Deputy Registrar / Partner Quality and Accreditation	Destroy 7 years after course completion, withdrawal or deferment  Dispose of hardcopy records as per disposal process in <a href="#">Records Management Procedure</a>