Recognition of Informal and Non-Formal Learning Procedure

Section 1 - Document Context

(1) This procedure supports the implementation of the Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and must be read in conjunction with that document.

(2) The University of Newcastle (University) recognises prior learning including informal learning and non-formal learning undertaken by students.

Purpose

(3) This document outlines the requirements for assessing applications for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) on the basis of informal learning and non-formal learning.

Scope

(4) This procedure applies to the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for students enrolled in:

a. enabling programs;
b. undergraduate and postgraduate coursework programs; and
c. coursework programs offered by the University to students studying in Australia and offshore, including those in which students enrolled through a partner institution.

Audience

(5) This document must be read and understood by staff responsible for administering credit applications, and students submitting applications for credit on the basis of informal learning and/or non-formal learning.

Definitions

(6) In the context of this document:

Defined Term	Meaning
Authorised Officer	means the staff member with responsibility for processing the credit applications and corresponding outcomes for students.
Appeal Officer	means a staff member who has delegated authority to consider and determine the outcome of an appeal of an academic decision relating to credit.

Section 2 - Recognition of Informal and Non-formal

Learning

Principles

(7) Recognition of formal learning must be in accordance with the Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy.

(8) Applications for recognition of informal learning and non-formal learning will be assessed and will be granted where it is deemed that the student has met all learning outcomes for the course for which credit is sought in a relevant context.

(9) Multiple experiences and evidence of informal learning or non-formal learning may be assessed in combination to determine if the learning outcomes have been met.

(10) Where the majority of learning outcomes have been met, the Program Convenor may request additional evidence be provided or may conduct an interview to verify the attainment of the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills.

Section 3 - Applications and Supporting Documentation

(11) Applications seeking recognition for informal learning and non-formal learning must be made using the Recognition of Prior Learning Application Form (application).

(12) All supporting documentation for applications must be in English or accompanied by an English translation provided by an agency accepted by the Universities Admissions Centre (NSW and ACT) Pty Ltd (UAC).

(13) Applicants must:

a. ensure the authenticity of any supporting documentation; and
b. retain supporting documentation for six months from application;
c. produce the original supporting documentation if requested by the University.

(14) The University may take steps to verify the authenticity of any documentation provided. This may include seeking further information from parties relevant to the supporting documentation.

(15) The supply of false information, false or falsified documentation by a student to the University will result in the rejection of the application and/or the rescission of the credit granted. This may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Conduct Rule.

Assessment

(16) The Program Convenor will assess whether the informal learning or non-formal learning achieves the learning outcomes.

(17) Where applications do not contain sufficient or appropriate evidence to enable the Program Convenor to make a determination, the student may be requested to provide additional documentation. If additional documentation is not provided, the application will be denied.

Outcomes

(18) Applicants/students will be advised of the application outcome, including any reasons why credit has not been

granted.

(19) Where an International applicant/student is granted credit, a new offer of admission specifying the revised (if shortened) duration of the Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) will be issued.

(20) Credit outcomes will lapse if the applicant does not accept and enrol in the program within twelve months of the issuance of the application outcome. Where the outcome has lapsed, the applicant may re-apply, but the outcome of the original approval is not guaranteed.

Section 4 - Roles and Responsibilities

(21) Authorised officers with defined roles and responsibilities in the context of this document are:

Role	Responsibility
Program Convenor	1. Consider and determine the RPL applications on a case by case basis in accordance with the provisions of this document, the Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy, and the Program-Based Credit Limits and Currency. 2. Seek advice, as appropriate, if an application for credit is for a course(s) convened by another School.
Course Co-ordinator	Where consulted by the Program Convenor, make a recommendation related to the recognition of non-formal learning or Informal learning.
Associate Dean (Education)	Consider and determine the outcome of an application in the absence of or in place of the Program Convenor.
Deputy Head of College (Education)	Consider and determine the outcome of an application in the absence of or in place of the Program Convenor.
Relevant Global Office, Pathways and Academic Learning Support Centre staff, Newcastle Australia Institute of Higher Education (NAIHE) and Student Central staff.	1. Grant credit in line with any approval made by the Program Convenor. 2. Notify students of Program Convenor determinations. 3. Reject any applications that fall outside of the eligibility criteria set out in the Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and this procedure.

Section 5 - Relaxing Provision

(22) To provide for exceptional circumstances arising in any case, the President Academic Senate on the recommendation of a College Pro Vice-Chancellor, may relax a provision of this procedure provided that the relaxation:

a. does not compromise compliance with external obligations (including but not limited to contractual, legislative or accreditation requirements;
b. does not override a decision made under a formal delegation of authority;
c. does not replace a decision that is subject to a formal delegation of authority; and
d. gives due consideration to the principles of procedural fairness.

Section 6 - Appendices

(23) Program-Based Credit Limits and Currency

(24) Recognition of Prior Learning Application Form

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	12th November 2025
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Approval Date	11th November 2025
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Belinda Yourn Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global)
Enquiries Contact	John Radvan Senior Manager, Academic Governance & Compliance Student Central

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Enabling program" - A tertiary preparation program offered to domestic students.

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Applicant" - Where referring to a student, an applicant is an individual seeking entry to a program or course offered by the University or its partner organisation/s. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE)" - Means the document issued through the Australian Government's relevant department and associated systems, by authorised officers of the University that confirms that an international student is eligible to enrol in a course. The CoE is required under Commonwealth Legislation for the student visa.

"Course" - When referring to a course offered by the University, a course is a set of learning activities or learning opportunities with defined, assessed and recorded learning outcomes. A course will be identified by an alphanumeric course code and course title. Course types include core courses, compulsory courses, directed courses, capstone courses and electives. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Credit" - When referring to course credit, credit is the recognition of equivalence in content and learning outcomes between different types of learning and/or qualifications. Credit can reduce the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Student" - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

"Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)" - Means an assessment of an individual's prior learning to determine where credit will be granted. RPL includes formal, informal, and non-formal learning.

"Disciplinary action" - When used in relation to staff of the University, this is as defined in the applicable and current Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, or the staff member's employment contract. When used in relation to students of the University, this refers to the range of penalties that may be applied under the Student Conduct Rule.

"Learning outcome" - In accordance with the AQF definitions, the expression of a 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.

"Postgraduate" - Any qualification being at the level of Graduate Certificate or above.

"Program" - When referring to learning, a program is a sequence of approved learning, usually leading to an Award. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Program Convenor" - The academic staff member with overall responsibility for the management and quality of a program.

"School" - An organisational unit forming part of a College or Division, responsible for offering a particular course.

"Staff" - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

"Undergraduate" - Refers to any qualification up to and including the level of a Bachelor Honours degree.

"International applicant" - An applicant (as defined by the University) who is not an Australian citizen, Australian Permanent Resident or New Zealand citizen (or dual citizenship holders of either Australia or New Zealand). See also International Student.

"formal learning" - Learning that takes place through a structured program of learning that leads to full or partial achievement of an officially accredited qualification, course, or program.

"Informal learning" - Learning gained through work, social, family, hobby or leisure activities and experiences. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time, or learning support.

"non-formal learning" - Learning that takes place through a structured program of learning but does not lead to an officially accredited qualification.

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