

# R1 - RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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## 1 PURPOSE

This policy outlines how **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** from informal learning is recognised. For credit transfer, please refer to the Credit Transfer Policy and Procedure.

## 2 BACKGROUND

BBI – The Australian Institute of Theological Education (BBI) is committed to quality learning and teaching, as reflected in its primarily educational mission. This policy supports BBI's commitment to Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as a means of providing wider access to university study and to improving access and equity for students.

## 3 SCOPE

This policy applies to all students and courses of study at BBI.

## 4 DEFINITIONS

**Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):** Recognition of prior learning refers to learning that has taken place outside of formal education and training, including knowledge, skills, competencies, and attributes which may have been learned during work experience, through involvement with community organizations or activities, or through sporting groups and activities, or through general life experience. The focus is on assessing applicant students to determine if they have met the learning outcomes or standards or competencies prescribed for a program.

**Non-Formal Study:** Refers to study that takes place through a structured program of learning but does not lead to an officially accredited qualification.

## 5 POLICY

BBI acknowledges that Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) (in contrast to Credit Transfer) focuses on qualities intrinsic to applicant students, rather than formal academically attested accomplishments. RPL can be applied for partial credit towards a BBI course. Where applications for RPL are successful, students will normally be awarded an amount of Unspecified Academic Credit towards their course of study. In acknowledgment that each BBI course has a particular area of focus that links to particular areas of competency which may be considered RPL, each BBI course has its specific RPL criteria written into its Admission Rules which note clearly how much Unspecified Academic Credit can be offered for RPL, and what constitutes RPL. RPL applications outside of these Admission Rules will not be considered.

#### *Determining RPL:*

In determining the applicability of recognition of prior learning, BBI will assess that students have met the learning outcomes or standards or competencies prescribed for a unit or course. This may require that assessment include (but not necessarily be limited to) methods such as:

1. preparation of a portfolio with examples of previous work;
2. letters from employers or community leaders explaining applicant experience, responsibilities, skills and capacities;
3. a reflective essay combined with other evidence, where the applicant explains what they have learned, how they learned it, and how it relates to their proposed program; or
4. a combination of all these methods.

Decisions about RPL are to be recommended by Course Coordinators and ratified by the Student Admissions Sub-Committee.

#### *Currency of Prior Learning:*

Only RPL which has been completed in the previous ten years will be considered suitable for credit.

## **6 PROCEDURE**

#### *Student Responsibilities:*

It is the student's responsibility to initiate the process of applying for RPL by filling out and submitting the Credit Application Form and requisite evidence either during their application process or within their first year of study (please also consult the Verification of Documents Policy).

For applications which relate to RPL, students must provide certified evidence of their prior learning. Whilst they may be asked for further information, their initial application must include the following:

- 1) A portfolio with examples of previous work which notes clearly how these relate to either specific unit outcomes, or course outcomes. Where admission criteria clearly specify allowances for RPL, student portfolios should demonstrate clear fulfilment of these criteria.
- 2) At least one letter from an employer or community leader explaining applicant experience, responsibilities, skills and capacities.

#### *BBI Responsibilities:*

The Registrar receives all Credit Application Forms, and processes them according to the following procedure:

- a. Where the credit application is for RPL, assesses this as per Schedule 1 for:
  - i. *Prima Facie* congruence with the RPL criteria listed in the Admission Rules for the student's course of study. Where this criterion is met, continue to (ii). Where it is not met, advise the Registrar that the application is to be rejected.
  - ii. Adequate evidence of meeting RPL requirements, understood as appropriate demonstration of fulfilling the requirements of RPL

listed in the Admission Rules through the submitted portfolio and supporting letters. Where this criterion is met, Unspecified Academic Credit is offered to the student for the number of credit points listed in the Admission Rules. Where it is not met, the Course Coordinator works with the Registrar to advise the student as to what further evidence needs to be provided.

- 2) The outcome of the student's RPL application is assigned a Credit Application Number and details of the application are stored confidentially and securely. The Registrar may refer to these details in accordance with 1) above.

## **7 RELAXING PROVISION**

To provide for exceptional circumstances arising in any particular case, the Academic Dean may relax any provision of this procedure and report such decisions to Academic Board.

## **8 RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

N/A

## **9 KEY RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- *Provider Course Accreditation Standard 3.3* requires that 'credit for previous studies or skills (including articulation, recognition of prior learning and credit arrangements) is consistent with the Qualification Standards and preserves the integrity of the higher education award to which it applies.'
- *Qualification Standard 3.1* requires that 'the higher education provider has clear, accessible and transparent policies and processes to provide award pathways and credit arrangements for students.'
- *Qualification Standard 3.2* requires that 'the higher education provider can demonstrate that its decision to give credit into or towards an award is information based, equitable, transparent, timely and academically defensible'.
- *Qualification Standard 3.5* requires that 'in determining credit towards awards, the higher education provider ensures it takes into account the comparability and equivalence of the learning outcomes, volume of learning, program of study including content, and learning and assessment approaches.'
- *Qualification Standard 3.6* requires that 'the higher education provider ensures it maintain publicly available registers of their formalised agreements and common credit transfer articulation pathways.'
- Review of Previous Study Instrument (Schedule 1)
- Verification of Documents Policy
- Credit Transfer Policy and Procedure

## 9 NOTES

Contact Officer	Academic Dean
Implementation Officer/s	Academic Dean / Registrar
Approval Authority / Authorities	Executive Team / Academic Board
Date Approved	16/10/2016
Date of Commencement	16/10/2016 (Operational as at approval of ET)
Date for Review	24 MONTHS AFTER COMMENCEMENT
Amendment History	3/11/16 – Relaxing Provision was included.
Key Stakeholders	Faculty & Sessional Academics / Students
Associated Documents	Schedule 1 – Review of Previous Study Instrument

## SCHEDULE 1

### Review of Previous Study Instrument

To be completed by the Course Coordinator

Student Name:

Student Number:

Credit Application Number:

Institution at which Previous Study was undertaken:

Details of previous study for which credit is being sought (unit code, title):

**NB – for RPL, proceed directly to Part 3.**

#### **Part 1 – Background Information and Specific Credit:**

1. The unit is at an appropriate AQF level (y/n – if y, continue. If n, reject)
2. The unit outcomes are sufficiently congruent with the BBI unit *include BBI unit title here* (y/n and free text – if y, continue. If n, consider for Part 2 - Unspecified Academic Credit)
3. The unit content is sufficiently congruent with the BBI unit (y/n and free text – if y, continue. If n, consider for Unspecified Academic Credit)
4. The volume of learning is sufficiently congruent with the BBI unit (y/n and free text – if y, continue. If n, reject)
5. The unit's assessment tasks are similar in demand to the BBI unit and assess similar competencies (y/n and free text – if y, continue, if n, reject)

#### **Part 2 – Unspecified Academic Credit**

1. The unit outcomes are congruent with the Course Specific Graduate Outcomes for the student's course of study (y/n and free text – if y, continue. If n, reject).
2. The unit content is sufficiently congruent with what would be expected of a BBI unit (y/n and free text – if y, continue. If n, reject)
3. The volume of learning is sufficiently congruent with what would be expected of a BBI unit (y/n and free text – if y, continue. If n, reject)
4. The unit's assessment tasks are similar in demand to what would be expected of a BBI unit and assess similar competencies (y/n and free text – if y, continue, if n, reject).

#### **Part 3 – Recognition of Prior Learning**

1. *Prima Facie*, the student's case for RPL aligns with the rules set out in the Admission Rules for their course (y/n and free text – if y, continue. If n, reject).
2. The documentation submitted by the student is adequate to assess their RPL, in accordance with the Admission Rules (y/n and free text – if y, continue. If n, contact the Registrar and request further documentation from the student).
3. The student's documentation demonstrates that they fulfil the requirements for RPL set out in the Admission Rules (y/n and free text – if y, continue. If n, reject).

SIGNATURE

DATE