

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) POLICY & PROCEDURES

Policy Number: 1.6.2.38

Responsibility: DVC LTSS

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Policy Approved by: The Senate

1. Purpose

The University of the South Pacific will recognise and give credit for prior learning if such learning is relevant to a USP course and its standards, irrespective of where or how the learning has taken place. This policy covers recognition of prior learning that cannot be wholly attributed to formal courses of study successfully completed outside of the programme.

2. Responsibility

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor – Learning, Teaching & Student Services (DVC LTSS) is responsible for the development, compliance, monitoring, and review of the RPL Policy & Procedures.

3. Scope

The RPL Policy & Procedures apply to all students of the University who are admitted to a programme of study.

4. Exclusions

- a) The RPL Policy & Procedures shall not apply to students admitted to Pacific TAFE, which has its own policy and procedures for RPL. RPL shall not be granted to students unless they are first admitted into a programme in University;
- b) RPL does not apply to students seeking cross credit for formal qualifications obtained at a recognized university or other tertiary education provider. Such students should apply for cross credit in accordance with the University Credit Transfer Policy.

5. Related Policies & Documents

- 5.1 The Credit Points Policy
- 5.2 The Credit Transfer Policy
- 5.3 Programme Regulations & Requirements
- 5.4 Course outlines of courses for which RPL is sought.

6. Principles

The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy & Procedures provides the requirements and guiding principles for the recognition of prior learning as a process to evaluate learning acquired outside the classroom, for the following two purposes:

- 6.1 As a basis for providing an alternative pathway to accessing higher education without having any prior formal qualification; and
- 6.2 For the purpose of assigning academic credit for progression within a formal qualification.

The principle underpinning this Policy is to ensure that learners wanting to change the direction of their careers and their learning are offered an opportunity to have relevant previous learning recognized. The Policy supports the University's commitment to ensuring that all learners have equitable access to academic, professional and vocational education.

RPL is a process through which individuals seek academic credit for relevant skills and knowledge they have already acquired. Relevant learning can arise from life experience, formal or informal work experience, and/or formal and informal education or training, which may or may not have been assessed. It is important to appreciate that RPL is a process to assess the learning which results from that experience; it is not the recognition of experience alone.

7. Policy Requirements

Evaluation of prior learning involves mapping of learning outcomes from prior formal or non-formal learning to the relevant course, and shall adhere to the following:

- 7.1. RPL credit shall only be given for courses which may be credited towards the programme;
- 7.2. RPL shall be accessible to any individual with prior learning that can be assessed, whether from formal or informal education, training, work, or life experience;
- 7.3. RPL shall not be awarded for part of a course - it may only be awarded for a whole course;
- 7.4. RPL shall not be awarded for more than 50% of a given programme of study;
- 7.5. RPL shall not be awarded for a course of a postgraduate programme;
- 7.6. RPL shall not be awarded for the research component/thesis of any postgraduate programme;
- 7.7. Students seeking RPL, must provide evidence they have attained all the learning outcomes for the course or courses they seek RPL; The evidence provided for RPL must be current, typically the evidence must demonstrate that the learning/skills were gained no more than 7 years before the application;
- 7.8. Evidence provided in support of RPL for a course may come from different sources questioning (oral or written) observation of performance in work based and/or simulated environments, challenge examinations/assessments, consideration of third party reports and/or other documentation such as articles, reports, project material, papers, testimonials or other products prepared by the RPL applicant that relate to the learning outcomes of the relevant qualification component, consideration of a portfolio and review of contents, and participation in structured assessment activities that students normally would be required to undertake if they were enrolled in the course;

- 7.9. Assessment of RPL shall be based on, but not restricted to:
 - 7.9.1. Certificates of attainment for short courses
 - 7.9.2. Substantive, relevant, work experience, confirmed by a supervisor in writing
 - 7.9.3. Testimonials and or references from qualified people (e.g., professionals in the area of RPL) who know the applicants work thoroughly, clearly specifying skills and or knowledge
 - 7.9.4. Tests of competency such as English language proficiency, and numeracy
 - 7.9.5. Artifacts, outputs or performances that demonstrate acquisition of relevant knowledge or skills
 - 7.9.6. Publications, reports, documents, or commissioned work
 - 7.9.7. Other evidence that the RPL Evaluation Committee deems shows the applicant has achieved the learning outcomes for the course
- 7.10. A fee shall be charged for the evaluation of RPL (see the University Handbook & Calendar for current fees), but this fee shall not exceed the fee for enrolment in the course;
- 7.11. Applications for RPL shall be evaluated by a RPL Evaluation Committee in the relevant School of study, with the following composition:
 - 7.11.1. The HOS (Chair)
 - 7.11.2. A staff member with expertise in the discipline for which RPL is sought
 - 7.11.3. The Associate Dean Learning & Teaching for the Faculty
 - 7.11.4. One academic member from outside the School for which RPL is sought.

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) PROCEDURES

1. Definition

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is an acknowledgement that participants acquire skills and knowledge under many different conditions. For example, life experiences, short courses and volunteer work all contribute to the sum total of skills and knowledge a student may possess which may not be recognised or acknowledged by formal accreditation. RPL seeks to focus on and recognise the actual competencies held by a student, regardless of how, or where the learning occurred. RPL is the acknowledgment of skills and knowledge obtained through formal training, work experience and/or life experience.

2. Purpose

The RPL Procedures provides the formal mechanism for assessing students' knowledge and skills for the purpose of:

- Ensuring that learners do not have to relearn skills and knowledge they already hold;
- Reducing the amount of time required to acquire a qualification.

3. Scope

These Procedures apply to all students of the University seeking recognition for prior learning, as covered under the RPL Policy.

4. Related Policies & Documents

- 4.1. RPL Policy;
- 4.2. Academic Programmes and Teaching Quality Committees – Terms of Reference;
- 4.3. USP Handbook and Calendar;
- 4.4. Student Charter; and
- 4.5. Student Grievance Policy & Procedures.

5. Procedures

Students wishing to be considered for RPL, shall follow steps 5.1 to 5.9:

- 5.1 Applicant requests an RPL information kit;
- 5.2 RPL Application kit is emailed to applicant;
- 5.3 Applicant to decide if they wish to apply for RPL; confirms their acceptance by returning the completed application form;
- 5.4 Applicant gathers suitable evidence to support the application;
- 5.5 Applicant sends the evidence to the Faculty concerned;
- 5.6 Application is sent to the HOS for initial review;
- 5.7 HoS convenes the RPL Evaluation Committee to assess the application;
- 5.8 RPL Evaluation Committee Chair forwards the results to the GM SAS who will advise the Assessment and Enrolment Teams;
- 5.9 SAS advises the applicant of the outcome.

6. Supporting Candidates through the RPL Process

If an applicant requires any assistance throughout the RPL application process a member of the Student Learning Support Unit will provide assistance and guidance

7. Submitting an RPL Application

To apply for RPL, applicants must complete an RPL Application Form and provide a resume detailing relevant experience and non-formal learning activities (e.g., short non-credit courses). The HOS shall provide prompt feedback on whether or not the applicant is likely to be eligible for RPL.

The RPL Application Fee (FJ\$50) must be paid to the cashier before submission of the RPL Application Form to the HOS, and the receipt of payment is to be attached with the form.

If the HOS confirms the applicant's eligibility and they wish to apply for Recognition, an RPL Information Kit which includes the RPL Application Form can be requested after acceptance into the programme from the Enrolment Team at SAS.

The RPL Assessment Fee (FJ\$150) must be paid to the cashier before submission of the RPL Application Form to the HOS, and the receipt of payment is to be attached with the form.

The more relevant evidence provided the better understanding the assessor will have to the level of skills and knowledge the candidate possesses. Applicants are to include evidence that directly relates to learning outcomes being applied for within the course.

8. RPL/Credit Transfer Appeals Process

If the candidate is not satisfied with the assessment decision the right of appeal is available to all RPL candidates.

Please refer to the *Student Grievance Policy & Procedures* for further information about the appeals process.