



Academic Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

Policy Owner	Academic Dean
Approving Authority	Academic Board
Implementation Responsibility	Academic Dean
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1. Purpose

This policy outlines the approach of the Sydney Polytechnic Institute (SPI) to grant and record Academic Credit or Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for previous studies completed by students at:

- An Australian registered education Institution offering AQF Level 7 or above courses.
- A recognised Higher Education Institution in Australia or overseas.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all applicants who wish to enrol and study in a higher education award Course offered by SPI.

3. Definitions

Academic Credit is the value assigned for the recognition of equivalence in content and learning outcomes for both SPI awarded and non-SPI awarded courses. Academic credit reduces the amount of formal learning required to achieve a qualification and is normally described with reference to specific subjects within the course.

An applicant can be either a domestic or an international student.

Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) is a document, provided electronically, which is issued by the registered provider to intending overseas students and which must accompany their application for a student visa. It confirms the overseas student's eligibility to enrol in the particular course of the registered provider (National Code 2018).

Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS) is a system that provides Australian education providers with the CoE facilities in compliance with the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Legislation.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process that involves an assessment of formal, informal and non-formal learning to determine the amount of credit that a student may be offered in accordance with *TEQSA Guidance Note: Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning*. RPL may enable a student to complete an award in a shorter time than published on the SPI website.

4. Principles

- (a) Recognition for prior learning is granted on a consistent basis ensuring students are not disadvantaged in achieving the learning outcomes of the course (see Section 4(c)). The integrity of



the course of study and the qualification is always maintained in accordance with Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) 2021 Standard 1.2, HESF 7.2.2 (a) and (d) and 7.3.2 (g) in relation to the publicly-available information.

- (b) Students may obtain academic credit for up to 50% of Units of study in a specified Course, provided that the Units of study under consideration are deemed as equivalent to the SPI curriculum. It will be incumbent on the applicant to supply relevant information to support an application for academic credit and/or RPL. Relevant information includes website information on Unit outlines, contents of the unit, unit learning outcomes, assessments and delivery duration of the unit. SPI may contact the prior institution for verification, if necessary. Such applications must be made prior to a student accepting an offer to study at SPI, except where this is not reasonably practical in which case it must be made as soon as is practically possible on commencement of studies.
- (c) A documented process will be implemented by SPI, to record assessing the RPL and/or academic credit accompanied by the reasons and decisions. The information will be recorded in its entirety on the Student Management System. This information will provide a relevant precedence database to inform consistent decision-making relevant to RPL and academic credit. Students can check their course credits at any time on the Student Management System.
- (d) Applicants will receive written advice on the result of their RPL applications (see Section 5.4).
- (e) For international students, if the granted academic credit reduces the course length, SPI must:
 - Inform the applicant of the reduced course duration following the granting of RPL, and report the changes in PRISMS in accordance with Standard 2.5 of the National Code 2018, within 14 working days of the decision being made for the application.
 - If the academic credit is approved prior to the granting of the student visa, the CoE will be updated to reflect the reduced course duration;
 - If the academic credit is granted after the granting of the student visa, the change of Course duration will be reported via PRISMS.
- (f) Note that academic credit granted towards a course does not make the enrolment guaranteed. Course enrolment requirement and English Language Proficiency remains the same regardless of credit eligibility.

5. Procedures

Applications for Academic Credit and RPL must be completed via the submission of the SPI Academic Credit and RPL Application Form. This form can be found on the SPI website.

Students who wish to apply for Academic Credit and RPL should firstly indicate this intention on their Student Application form. Applicants should then provide evidence via the Academic Credit and RPL Application Form.

Applicants' responsibilities include ensuring that the evidence they submit is valid and demonstrates their completion of learning outcomes or course content, and the timely submission of the application.

Students may be contacted by the SPI Admissions Team for further documentation or evidence as part of the assessment process. Furthermore, SPI reserves the right to contact any relevant external organisations in order to verify the provided evidence.

SPI staff must, as part of the application process, ensure that the assessment of academic credit and RPL is fair, transparent, and in accordance with all relevant policies and procedures. Furthermore, SPI staff are responsible for ensuring that the database of qualifications (see Section 4c and 5.3.3) is



updated once the application has been approved to ensure that credit precedents are maintained and relevant.

5.1 Academic Credit

Academic Credit will be awarded to successful applicants on the basis of their previously attained learning outcomes and course content. All applications for Academic Credit should be completed before enrolment or at orientation, except where this is not reasonably practical. Academic Credit is granted only if;

- students granted such credit are not disadvantaged in terms of achieving the expected learning outcomes for the Course of study or qualification at SPI; and;
- the integrity of the Course of study and the qualification is maintained.

5.2 Recognition of Prior Learning

When students apply to enter a SPI Course, they can indicate if they are seeking Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) on the Application Form. Students need to further specify on the 'RPL Application Form', the prior learning they are seeking recognition for and provide the Admissions Team with the necessary supporting evidence.

Given the variety of learning associated with RPL, students are required to contact the Admissions Team to ascertain the evidence requirements applicable to their RPL application.

An initial RPL assessment is to be conducted by the Academic Dean and the outcome of this assessment is articulated in the Offer Letter to the student based on the completed RPL Application Form. If international students apply for RPL after their admission to SPI (see Section 5.1), then this may have an impact on the duration specified in their Confirmation of Enrolment resulting in the need to be adjusted in accordance with TEQSA, CRICOS and any other relevant requirements.

5.3 Assessment of Academic Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning

5.3.1 For formal (conferred) award qualifications

Where studies have been undertaken and an award has been conferred, then students may receive a maximum of one-third credit (round down to the nearest credit points equivalent to the number of units) to the higher level of the nested course that they have been admitted to:

- a) For students applying for RPL in a 48cp Graduate Diploma (AQF8), based on previously completing a 24cp Graduate Certificate (AQF8) in a cognate discipline or equivalent, the maximum permissible reduction in the volume of learning is 12 credit points.
- b) For students applying for RPL in a 96cp Masters degree (AQF9), based on previously completing a 24cp Graduate Certificate (AQF8) in a cognate discipline or equivalent, the maximum permissible reduction in the volume of learning is 24 credit points.
- c) For students applying for RPL in a 96cp Masters degree (AQF9), based on previously completing a 48cp Graduate Diploma (AQF8) in a cognate discipline or equivalent, the maximum permissible reduction in the volume of learning is 30 credit points.

To ensure that students' learning and knowledge is recent and relevant, any prior

conferred learning submitted for recognition must have been completed within 5 years of the applicant's enrolment at SPI.

For Non-award Study

In cases where a student has completed studies at SPI but has not received an award by SPI, the student may apply to change enrolment in another SPI course (subject to admission criteria). Permission is required from the Academic Dean for students to change their enrolment and receive academic credit for studies already completed. The student may have their credits transferred in full as part of the change of enrolment. Prerequisites for this process are:

- a) 24 completed credit points or more from the currently enrolled course;
- b) Satisfaction of the necessary admissions requirements for the change to the enrolment.

5.3.2 Recognition of Prior Learning for informal learning, including relevant extensive expert professional experience or other informal learning relevant to the content of the course.

No RPL will be granted for prior learning that was completed more than 5 years from the time of initial enrolment.

RPL applications will be assessed to calculate the number of subjects and credits to be granted. This process takes into consideration other relevant informal learning and is subject to the submission of accurate and satisfactory evidence. Limits to and information on this process can be found in Sections 4 and 5.3.1.

5.4 A database of qualifications from foreign and international education institutions will be maintained by SPI, along with assessments regarding whether such qualifications satisfy AQF levels and equivalent SPI courses. Bi-annual reviews will be conducted by an external independent body, and annual reports will be submitted to the Academic Board.

5.5 Applications for RPL which involve consideration of foreign or international and/or non-AQF qualifications not previously assessed or documented in the SPI database must include relevant information in English regarding the qualification/prior learning and undergo an assessment by a qualified expert regarding an equivalence to AQF descriptors and levels.

5.6 Assessment Procedure and Decision Rules

5.6.1 Assessment of Academic Credit and RPL applications must be conducted by the Academic Dean and/or a delegated SPI staff member. The Academic Board is responsible for the approval and review of related policies and procedures.

5.6.2 The assessment of Academic Credit and RPL applications and communication of outcomes to applicants must be completed in a timely manner (see Section 5.6).

5.6.3 In accordance with the SPI *Conflict of Interest Policy*, and to ensure an equitable assessment process, no assessor can have conflicts of interest with the applicant.

5.6.4 Documents provided as evidence during the application process by the applicant must be maintained in line with SPI's *Records and Information Management Policy*.

5.6.5 To ensure that the assessment of prior learning is fair, equitable and appropriate, the following standardised criteria must be applied by all assessors:



- 5.6.5.1 Content Coverage: topics and subjects covered by the nominated unit must be compared against the nominated SPI equivalent, including a comparison of learning outcomes.
 - 5.6.5.2 Volume of learning: volume of learning by the nominated unit must be compared against the nominated SPI equivalent and will be measured through metrics such as the number of hours of study or assessment tasks dedicated to a particular learning outcome.
 - 5.6.5.3 Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Level: the nominated unit's AQF level is to be compared with the nominated SPI equivalent.
 - 5.6.5.4 Assessment and Activities: type of assessments, activities and learning of the nominated unit is to be compared with the nominated SPI equivalent. This includes a consideration of the nominated external unit's inclusion of, where relevant, Work Integrated Learning, practical learning, theoretical learning, and group learning.
 - 5.6.6 In cases where formal learning qualifications are not assessed, and insufficient evidence is produced, the applicant may be required to undertake an assessment task overseen by the Academic Dean or a delegated assessor to demonstrate attainment of learning outcomes.
- 5.7 All evidence and documents provided in support of students' RPL applications must be provided in English. All provided documents are to be original documents or certified copies. Where documents, in their original form, are not available in English, a notary public certification of authenticity and official English translation must be provided with the copy. This includes previous student transcripts and unit outlines or any other relevant course details from the previous qualification. Any evidence and documents provided to SPI as part of this process will be copied and stored on the student file. Further information regarding the reproduction and storage of information can be found in the *SPI Records and Information Management Policy*.
- 5.8 After Student Services receive the valid Academic Credit / RPL application and supporting evidence, they will then submit the application to the Academic Dean (AD) for approval. The AD (or the delegated authority) will make a decision and notify the Student Service about the outcome and reasons with 10 working days from the receipt of a valid and complete application. Students will be advised by Student Services in writing of the decision with the reasons within 5 working days of the date of the decision being made.
- 5.9 All credits that have been granted will be identified in the student's record of results, and the academic transcript statement when it is issued. The Academic Credit / RPL for each unit will be recorded as follows:

Credit granted from other studies					
Course Name: [xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx]			Institute Delivered: [xxxxxxxxxxx University]		
Year	Unit Code	Unit Name	Marks	Grade	Credit Granted
2021	ABC601	xxxxxxxxxxxxx	N/A	N/A	6.0
2021	ABC602	xxxxxxxxxxxxx	N/A	N/A	6.0





5.10 Appeals

An appeal associated with RPL must be lodged with the Student Service Office within 20 working days of receipt of notification of the academic credit decision in accordance with the *Complaint and Grievance Resolution Policy and Procedure*. The appeal must set out the grounds for the appeal application. The CEO or the delegate, such as the Academic Dean, provided that this was not the original decision maker has the responsibility for this assessment and making the final decision.

Notes

Related Legislation:

ESOS Act
ESOS Act (2000) incorporating National Code 2018

Related Documents:

SPI Student Admissions and Enrolment Policy
SPI Student Deferral, Suspension & Cancellation Policy
SPI Overseas Student Transfer Policy and Procedure
SPI Student Progression, Exclusion and Graduation Policy
SPI Tuition Fees Payment and Refund Policy

Amendment History:

Version No.	Approved by	Effective date	Amendments
1.0	Academic Board	21/05/2021	New Policy
1.1	Academic Board	14/01/2022	Section 5 Procedures has been modified with the addition of applicants' responsibilities and "Assessment Procedure and Decision Rules"