

## Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Procedures

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<b>QAS Owner:</b>	Manager, Academic Governance
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<b>Versions:</b>	<p>Version 2 has a minor update to the timeframe for RPL processing. As such, Version 2 did not require ETAB approval.</p> <p>Version 3: Minor update to reflect current QCI role and supplementary evidence provision in accordance with the annual policy review (Feb-14) Version 3 did not require ETAB approval.</p> <p>Version 4: Changes to reflect VET FEE HELP update. Version 4 Endorsed by ETAB 8 July 2015.</p> <p>Version 5: Minor changes to reflect current organisational changes and process of managing.</p>

<b>Scope:</b>	<b>Course Type</b>	All
	<b>RTOs:</b>	Open Colleges Pty Ltd Integrated Care and Management Training Pty Ltd College of Fashion Design Pty Ltd
	<b>Partner RTOs</b>	Yes

### Communication:

All Policies, Procedures, Forms and Guidelines are loaded into the Quality Management System (QMS) in Firefly. This will automatically update documents in OCTiVE and OpenSpace. Updates are communicated to staff through Firefly Chatter, Trainers and Assessors through OCTiVE News and students through the Student Lounge in OpenSpace.

## 1. Definition of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

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, when or where the learning occurred. RPL is the acknowledgment of skills and knowledge obtained through formal training, work experience and/or life experience.

The main focus of RPL is the learning outcomes of these experiences, not how, when or where the learning occurred. This is a crucial underlining principle of RPL—it makes the distinction between formal and informal training unnecessary by focusing on outcomes rather than the location of learning. RPL offers a new dimension to education by incorporating the breadth of an individual's experience as they relate to our vocational courses.

**Credit Transfer** is a form of RPL and provides a means for students to gain credit in an NRT qualification on the basis of completed components of another NRT qualification or other formal learning. The RPL Application process covers both RPL and Credit Transfer.

## 2. Purpose of RPL

The purpose of RPL is to identify and assess the accumulated learning experiences of a learner in relation to clearly defined vocational outcomes. Vocational outcomes form the benchmark against which prior learning is valued. In the case of education or training, these are the course outcomes defined by the curriculum or Training Package. RPL assesses an individual against these benchmarks. To be granted RPL, the student's experience must be measured against a series of already established benchmarks. You simply need to assess individual sets of experience against these benchmarks to determine whether RPL can be granted.

## 3. Benefits of RPL

- Confirming competence for a workplace position;
- Confirming eligibility for entry into a qualification;
- Ensuring that learners do not have to relearn skills and knowledge they already hold;
- Reducing the amount of time required to acquire a qualification;
- Ensuring that training time is spent acquiring new skills and competencies.

## 4. The RPL Process

The stages of the RPL process are:

- Candidate requests an RPL information kit;
- RPL Application kit is emailed to candidate;
- Candidate to decide if they wish to apply for RPL; confirms their acceptance by returning the completed application form ;
- Candidate gathers suitable evidence to support the application;
- Candidate sends the evidence to Open Colleges;
- Application is sent to the Program Manager for initial review;
- Program Manager assigns an assessor to assess the application;
- Application is assessed by an Open Colleges assessor;
- Assessor forwards the results back to the Program Manager for final review and confirmation of assessment outcome;
- Program Manager forwards the outcome to the Admissions Team for further processing; and
- Admissions Officer advises the candidate of the outcome.

## **5. Supporting Candidates through the RPL Process**

If a candidate requires any assistance throughout the RPL application process a member of the Student Support Division will provide assistance and guidance.

## **6. Submitting an RPL Application**

To apply for RPL candidates complete an RPL Application Form and attach all the evidence gathered to support their application. The more relevant evidence provided the better understanding the assessor will have to the level of skills and knowledge the candidate possesses. Candidates are to include evidence that directly relates to the units of competency being applied for within the qualification.

When candidates wish to apply for Recognition an RPL Information Kit which includes the RPL Application Form can be requested by the Course and Careers Advisor at the enrolment stage and/or Student Support Team after enrolment through a Firefly case to the Admissions Team.

There is an RPL Assessment Fee is outlined in DC1.3 Schedule of Administrative Fees. This fee is required to be paid before Open Colleges will begin processing the application for RPL. This fee is not applicable to VET FEE HELP Enabled Courses.

## **7. Assessing RPL applications**

The RPL process involves the candidate gathering evidence to enable the assessor to make a decision on the candidate's competency. When the candidate has provided this evidence it is compared with the competency standards and the RPL Assessor will decide whether sufficient evidence has been provided to determine the extent to which the candidate has achieved the required learning outcomes or standards.

## 8. Types of Evidence and Documentation

The evidence Open Colleges requires falls into two broad categories:

### Official Documents

This includes:

- Job Description - the job the candidate is currently doing or relevant previous positions;
- Work and Training History – usually in form of a CV, will give the assessor an idea of the candidates previous experience.

### Supporting Evidence

This is evidence that support the experience the candidate has laid out in their Work and Training History.

- Certificates and transcripts from previously attained qualifications or courses (Justice of the Peace JP verified);
- Texts/papers/policies/blogs that candidates have written;
- Letters of support from professional references (these must be signed and dated);
- Performance appraisal documents;
- In-house observation/skills assessment tools.

All evidence provided must be signed off by the candidate's workplace supervisor to show authenticity.

### Presentation of the RPL Application

Open Colleges require candidates to make an effort to present their RPL Application in a manner that facilitates effective and efficient assessment. Faxed portfolios are discouraged as the print is often distorted and rendered unreadable in transmission.

## 9. RPL Application Allocations

Once Open Colleges receives the candidates **RPL Application** the Admissions Team will assign the case to the Program Manager within two business days. Only complete applications including receipt of the application fee will be assigned to the Program Manager.

The Admissions Team is responsible for managing all applications, which are logged through our student management system (Firefly). The RPL procedure has been streamlined to ensure a smoother, more transparent process that allows assessors, who are often remote to access, review and approve applications online.

The Admissions Team will send first-time RPL Assessor a training email titled '**Open Colleges Credit Transfer/RPL Process for Assessors**' which gives information and details for processing an RPL Application.

Two tutorial videos have been prepared, which assist staff with the understanding of the full RPL/Credit Transfer process. The tutorials can be accessed from the following links:

- General Process: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPY2mOmlkGM>

- RPL Process in our system Firefly:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6IZMVuMKI5Q>

## 10. Processing the RPL Application

- Once the Program Manager allocate an RPL Assessor to the RPL Application an email will be generated to the assessor to commence processing the application.
- The RPL Assessor is to click on the link to be able to process the application online.
- The RPL Assessor should determine an outcome for the application as either Granted or Not Granted and enter a comment as to the reasoning for the outcome.
- The RPL Assessor may contact the candidate regarding the application to clarify any details provided within the portfolio, if necessary.
- The RPL Assessor may Save a Draft and returns back when required. When the application is completed, the RPL Assessor clicks the Submit button.
- This will generate a workflow email to the Program Manager to review and confirm and submit the final outcome to the Admissions Team to finish the application process.
- The Admissions team will review the outcomes, and if they have any questions will contact the Program Manager.
- The Admissions team sends an email to the candidate notifying of the outcome.

Open Colleges understand that an RPL Application can be a complex and lengthy process and candidates are advised that an update or outcome on the application will be provided within 20 business days of assignment to an assessor.

## 11. Approved RPL

When the RPL application has been assessed students will be notified of the outcome in writing via email by the Admissions Team.

The RPL outcome if successful will include reference to any fees that may be credited from the candidate's course enrolment. If the application is successful, candidates will receive a tuition credit (discount) per competency granted as outlined in the attachment provided to candidates in the RPL Information Kit. This fee may be subject to variation without notice.

If candidates have any questions regarding their application they may contact the Admissions team for assistance.

## 12. Credit Transfer

Competencies completed at a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) can be used as credit towards a nationally recognised course or statement of attainment with Open Colleges (referred to as 'Credit Transfer'). Only competencies deemed equivalent to the Open Colleges course will be granted Credit Transfer.

### 13. Submitting a Credit Transfer Application

Candidates are required to provide the following:

- Supply evidence of completion of competencies by submitting a copy of certificates and transcripts from previously attained qualifications/courses which have been verified by a Justice of the Peace, to Open Colleges; and
- Pay the Credit Transfer Assessment Fee of \$150.00 which is non-refundable. The fee must be paid before Open Colleges will begin processing the application. If the candidate enrolls directly in an Open Colleges course the Credit Transfer Assessment Fee is waived.
- Once the application is received, the Admissions team will confirm the outcome of the application within 10 business days.
- If the candidate is successful, a tuition credit (discount) for each competency successfully granted will be received.

If the candidate has completed competencies through a previous course of study with **Open Colleges** they are required to:

- Email [admissions@opencolleges.edu.au](mailto:admissions@opencolleges.edu.au) with their contact details including student number and details of the course being applied for.
- There is no application fee or documentation required as we have the student records on file.
- The Admissions team will confirm the outcome to the candidate by return email within 10 business days.
- If the candidate is successful, a tuition credit (discount) for each competency successfully granted will be received.

### 14. 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 *Assessment Policy (PO5)* and *Assessment Procedure (PR5.1)* for further information about the appeals process.

#### Related Forms and Documents

	Location		
	OpenSpace	Website	QMS
<b>Procedures</b>			
PR5.1 Assessment Procedures	X	-	X
PR5.3 Assessment Records Procedures	X	-	X
PR5.5 Recognition of Prior Learning Procedures	X	-	X
<b>Forms</b>			
Application for Recognition (RPL) (FF)		-	
DC1.3 Schedule of Administrative Fees	X	X	X

**How can we improve this document?**

If you can identify opportunities for us to improve this document, please email [improvements@opencolleges.edu.au](mailto:improvements@opencolleges.edu.au). This request will automatically be logged on our Continuous Improvement Register. Please include the document reference number in your email and specific details about how we can improve the document.