4.10.1 Recognition of prior learning (RPL) and credit transfer

Policy number: 4.10.1  
Contact Officer: General Manager, Education & Training  
Approved by and date: College Management Group – 20 September 2012  
Date for Next Review: 12 months from approval for Contact Officer to review policy  
Related Policies/legislation: 4.20.1 Assessment

Overview

1. UQ College does not expect students to repeat learning that has been successfully completed at a similar level and standard elsewhere, where that work is substantially the same in content and standard as that required for the student’s current program of study at UQ College. Two types of prior learning may be recognised to enable students to gain credit towards a range of benefits in relation to their current programs of study.

Previous formal studies – refers to consideration granted with respect to courses and/or programs completed at this or another higher or secondary education institution but may include studies undertaken at TAFE or other accredited private learning organisations.

Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) – refers to previous informal studies that involved learning that is less structured in nature, or skills and knowledge acquired regardless of how or where they have been attained and that can be demonstrated to be equivalent to appropriate UQ College studies.

Credit for previous formal studies and recognised prior (informal) learning may be used to gain benefits in relation to:

a) Admission - prior formal and informal learning can be used for the admission requirements to a program including satisfaction of prerequisites or prior study.

b) Credit Transfer – where a number of units, up to a specified limit, may be granted towards a UQ College award, on the basis of either previous formal or informal learning.

c) Exemption - while no reduction in the total number of units required to satisfy program requirements is given for prior formal or informal learning, students do not have to complete some specified courses that may be core requirements in the program list.

UQ College will at all times ensure that its Awards meet the relevant program requirements and its students have demonstrated that the assessment standards have been met, thus ensuring the credibility and value of its Awards. This principle will apply to the consideration given to all RPL and Credit Transfer applications. UQ College will apply quality assurance principles to ensure that prior learning is of an appropriate standard to permit the granting of consideration with respect to admission, credit transfer or exemption.

Description

2.3 Credit Transfer

2.3.1 Where credit is transferred to a program, a number of units up to a specified limit, may be granted towards a UQ College award, on the basis of either previous formal or informal learning.
2.3.2 The type of credit transfer granted should depend on the program rules and structure of an individual program. The type/s of credit transfer granted for individual programs will be outlined in course guidelines and includes:

- **Specified** credit – which is granted when an exact or near exact equivalence to a UQ College course can be demonstrated. Specified credit is more commonly granted in set programs and/or for compulsory courses.

- **Unspecified** credit – which is granted when an exact or near exact equivalence cannot be demonstrated. Unspecified credit is also granted for elective courses.

- **Block** credit – which is granted as a specific number of units and may be granted on the basis of studies judged to be comparable to part of a given program. Block credit, sometimes referred to as “articulation credit” is often granted where formal agreements exist (eg students who completed an associate degree may gain credit for the first year or two of a degree program).

2.3.3 Where ever possible, specified credit should be granted.

2.3.4 Block credit should only be granted in cases of formal articulation agreements.

2.4 Exemption

The granting of an exemption on the basis of formal or informal learning does not reduce the number of units required to complete a student’s program but rather, allows prior formal or informal learning to be recognised as a substitute for a course or courses listed in the program requirements.

2.5 Consideration of Recognised Prior Learning (RPL)

2.5.1 Principles Underpinning RPL

When considering the use of RPL for the granting of credit for the purposes of credit transfer, admission or exemption, the following principles are applied:

- granting credit for RPL will be considered only when proof of experience equivalent to the UQ College course can be demonstrated;
- information about RPL should be readily available to prospective applicants and should include a clear statement of the learning or competency outcomes that will be applied in assessing RPL applications;
- assessment of RPL must be consistent and equitable for all students; and
- acceptable quality assurance principles must be applied to ensure that prior learning is of an appropriate standard to permit the granting of consideration with respect to admission, credit transfer or exemption.

2.5.2 Assessment of RPL

Assessment of RPL must fulfil the same criteria that are associated with assessment of learning outcomes in any conventional course: assessment must be valid, current, sufficient, reliable and authentic.

Assessment will be the responsibility of the Programs Coordinator. Assessment might rely on—

- a portfolio containing a range of supporting materials and evidence that demonstrate that the applicant has/does apply the assessment or learning outcome(s) which may include; formal letters of support from supervisors linked to role descriptions, professional development programs and workplace tasks;
- work-based assessments;
- examinations;
- projects;
- interviews;
- demonstrations; or
- some combination of the above.
It’s the responsibility of the RPL applicant to provide reasonable evidence to validate an RPL claim. There is a cost associated with assessing an RPL application. All costs will be detailed in the relevant course/program information.

2.6 Administrative Procedures

2.6.1 Decision Makers

The Programs Coordinator administering the program in which the student is enrolled makes decisions on:
- the granting of credit transfer/exemption for both formal and informal learning; and
- unless otherwise stipulated in the relevant Admission Rules, whether admission requirements have been satisfied on the basis of formal or informal learning.

2.6.2 Assessment of applications from students

Programs Coordinators assess applications from students, including prospective students for credit transfer and exemption. Course/program guidelines and procedures may include the delegation of credit assessment to course/program teachers. RPL assessment will comply with any relevant regulation.

2.6.3 Lodgement of Applications

All applications for credit or exemption should be completed using the UQ College application form. Applications should be submitted to the relevant Programs Coordinator. Incomplete applications may be rejected.

2.6.4 Supporting Documentation

UQ College students need not submit additional documentation if the prior formal learning for which they are seeking credit transfer or exemption is from a UQ College program. Students who transfer to UQ College from another institution or who request credit transfer or exemption based on RPL must also supply:
- up-to-date, official academic records/transcripts. Evidence should be in the form of original documents, or copies certified true by the issuing institution, a Justice of the Peace, or a Commissioner for Declarations; and
- a certified detailed description of the course or courses (extended syllabus with a week-by-week list of topics covered in each course, aims and objectives, contact hours, texts and references, and methods of assessment/grading criteria). N.B. – applications that include any off shore courses will require an Australian equivalence assessment by an accredited Australian assessor to be approved by UQ College. There will be a cost to an applicant, associated with this particular assessment.
- for required supporting documentation for credit or exemption based on RPL, see Section 2.5.2 - Assessment of RPL above.

2.6.5 Submission of applications and notification of outcome

Applications for credit transfer or exemption should be submitted as soon as necessary documentation is complete, but no later than 10 working days before the start of the trimester in which the course will be offered in the student’s program of study.

Program Coordinators will notify students of the outcome of their application as soon as practicable, but no later than four weeks after lodgement of a complete application and prior to any applicable census date.

Students must be formally notified of the outcome of their application. Notification may be provided either electronically or via a formal letter.
2.7 UQ College Responsibilities

2.7.1 General

General Manager, Education & Training should –
- Maintain the Credit Transfer Database;
- Regularly audit credit transfer processes, precedents and decisions, involving both formal and informal prior learning.

Programs Coordinators should –
- establish procedures to ensure timely consideration of applications, including the maximum turnaround time for consideration of the application and notification to the applicant;
- receive and assess applications for credit transfer/exemption including those for RPL observing any applicable regulation;
- while taking into account relevant program requirements and rules, grant credit transfer for work already undertaken of a comparable standard to enable the student to complete the program in a minimum time;
- wherever possible, grant in the form of specified credit;
- record the credit transfer or exemption on the student's official academic transcript;
- record precedents in the Credit Transfer Database to ensure a transparent, equitable and consistent treatment of all applications;
- keep adequate records of applications and decisions;
- forward the original application for credit transfer (including credit for RPL) and exemption, including all supporting documentation to the Manager, Corporate & Student Services.

2.7.2 Articulation of Policies and Requirements

Programs Coordinators should:
- ensure that credit transfer guidelines and credit transfer precedents are regularly reviewed, transparent and readily accessible by students and staff;
- provide a clear statement of the learning or competency outcomes that will be applied to assessing RPL applications and of quality assurance procedures; and
- publish widely (preferably in “handbook” format and on the web)
  - clearly articulated information on the type and extent of credit transfer that may be granted for each of its programs/courses in accordance with UQ College rules and policies.
- restrictions and limitation on credit transfer (e.g. time limits; consideration of credit for informal prior learning)
- information on the criteria used and matters taken into account when applications are being assessed
- details of documentation required in support of applications for credit transfer or exemption
- indicate that eligibility for credit transfer or exemption does not guarantee a place in a program.

2.7.3 Monitoring of Decisions and Review of Policy

General Manager, Education & Training should -
- audit every three years, credit transfer precedents and decisions on credit transfer/exemption including that for RPL;
- review regularly, the validity and equity of guidelines and criteria for the assessment of applications for credit transfer/exemption including that for RPL in light of approved UQ College policy and, where appropriate, establish new criteria;
- oversee the progress of students who have been granted credit transfer, to help ensure equity and consistency in decision making; and
- maintain a credit transfer database including the:
  - name of the institution whose courses have been assessed for credit transfer
  - year in which the course was completed
  - year in which credit transfer was granted.
- name of the academic staff member who performed the assessment
- the name and student number (if applicable) of the student
- report regularly to the Academic Board on the application of the policy.

2.8 Rescinding of credit

Once a decision has been made to grant credit or an exemption, the General Manager, Education & Training cannot rescind the decision in the absence of a patent error or fraud.

3. Records Management

The General Manager, Education & Training is responsible for developing and maintaining the Credit Transfer Database.

Programs Coordinators are responsible for
- recording the credit transfer or exemption on the student's official academic transcript;
- recording precedents in the Credit Transfer Database to ensure a transparent, equitable and consistent treatment of all applications;
- keeping adequate records of applications and decisions;
- forwarding the original application for credit transfer (including credit for RPL) and exemption, including all supporting documentation to the Manager, Corporate & Student Services.

**Modification History**

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