

## Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure (VET)

Approved by: Executive Director Education Enablement

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## Section 1. Purpose

- 1.1 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is an assessment process that involves assessment of an individual's relevant prior learning and experience (including skills and knowledge obtained through formal and informal learning) to determine the extent to which the individual meets requirements specified in a training product.
- 1.2 This procedure:
  - a Is aligned to the requirements of the [Assessment](#) and [Recognition](#) policies and puts them into effect by specifying the RPL process to be followed at TAFE NSW.
  - b Ensures any RPL will maintain the integrity of the training product by implementing a consistent and transparent approach to the management, assessment and documentation of RPL, including where limits and exclusions are imposed.
  - c Ensures that where gaps are identified in a VET student's Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) evidence, appropriate support is provided by clearly outlining the required gap training, how it will be delivered, and any associated costs.
- 1.3 The procedure supports TAFE NSW to meet its obligations under the:
  - a [National Vocational Education and Training Regulator \(Outcome Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations\) 2025](#)
  - b [NSW Smart and Skilled Operating Guidelines](#)
  - c [Australian Qualifications Framework \(AQF\)](#)
  - d [Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2021](#)
  - e [National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018](#)

## Section 2. Scope and Audience

- 2.1 This procedure applies to TAFE NSW:
  - a All prospective, new, and current VET students.
  - b Staff involved in VET training, assessing, or processing RPL at TAFE NSW, including contractors and third parties.
  - c Training packages, courses, qualifications and units of competency are listed on the [National Training Register](#).
- 2.2 This procedure does not apply to:
  - a Applications for credit transfer (CT), which are managed using the Credit for Vocational Education and Training Procedure.
  - b RPL for Higher Education (HE) Qualifications, which is managed by the Higher Education Qualifications Pathways and Credit Procedure.

## Section 3. Procedure

### Types of learning that may be recognised

- 3.1 The following types of prior learning may be recognised:
- a Formal Learning is structured learning leading to an AQF qualification or statement of attainment.
  - b Non-Formal Learning is structured learning not leading to an AQF qualification.
  - c Informal Learning is learning through work-related, social, family, hobby, or leisure activities.

### Limits and exclusions

- 3.2 RPL will not be granted if regulatory, accreditation, or licensing requirements prohibit it.
- 3.3 TAFE NSW will not process RPL applications if it does not have an assessor (employed or engaged as a third-party) who is appropriately qualified and experienced to assess the specific competencies for which RPL is sought.
- 3.4 TAFE NSW will not process RPL applications where it is not financially viable to do so, including short and low-cost courses or where there is limited value for the student.
- 3.5 Where Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is not available, TAFE NSW will provide a justification explaining why RPL is not appropriate for prospective or enrolled students, or the training product.
- 3.6 RPL granted must adhere to the relevant training package rules listed on the [National Training Register](#), including where there are limitations or exclusions placed on imported units and electives.
- 3.7 A unit of competency is the smallest component of education and training for which RPL can be granted.
- 3.8 Provided there are no applicable limits or exclusions, RPL of 100% of a qualification may be granted.

### Information and guidance for students and staff

- 3.9 Information about RPL, including third party assessment arrangements are publicly available prior to and throughout enrolment and tailored to students and staff to support an accessible, effective, transparent, and consistent process.
- 3.10 The Student and Campus Services Branch, Student Support and Community Group will ensure that information about RPL is published directly on the TAFE NSW website and in student targeted publications.
- 3.11 Publicly available information should include:

- a The Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure (VET).
  - b How and when to apply for RPL, including the necessary application form/s.
  - c Who to contact to ask questions about RPL.
  - d The effect that RPL may have on the cost and duration of the qualification, contractual implications, any other fees that may apply, possible impacts on income support, visa requirements, graded courses, and eligibility for prizes or medals.
  - e RPL exclusions and limitations that may apply.
  - f RPL information specific to international students.
- 3.12 Publicly available information, except for these procedures, is to be reviewed on an annual basis and updated as required. The procedures will be reviewed every two years.

## RPL Toolkits

- 3.13 RPL toolkits are a set of resources located on the Learning Bank intended to support and explain the RPL process, contains documentation to be given to the student, and contains tools assessors will require to manage the RPL process.
- 3.14 RPL toolkits must be developed using the resources and templates made available.
- 3.15 Additional supporting documentation, which may include How Do I Guides, to assist staff involved in the RPL process will be maintained and made available on the TAFE NSW Staff Intranet. [Recognition of Prior Learning \(RPL\)](#)
- 3.16 Where available on Learning Back and appropriate, assessors are to use existing developed RPL toolkits. Where an RPL toolkit is not already available, assessors are to develop one using the templates and resources available.
- 3.17 Newly developed toolkits are to be uploaded to the Learning Bank.
- 3.18 When developing toolkits, assessors ensure quality and compliance by adhering to the principles of assessment and rules of evidence, as specified in the [Assessment Policy](#) and [Assessment Procedures](#).
- 3.19 RPL toolkits may also be created as part of a course development proposal, where analysis has determined the need for the toolkit to be created and it has been endorsed through the relevant approval process.
- 3.20 RPL documentation, practices and processes are validated and quality assured when assessments involving RPL are scheduled, as per the Assessment Validation Procedure. Where third parties conduct RPL on behalf of TAFE NSW, their practices are monitored and validated as part of the Third Party Agreement.

## Applications

- 3.21 Students may apply for RPL prior to enrolment and up until the start of the relevant teaching period.

- 3.22 Prior to applying for RPL, students should seek guidance about their application and supporting evidence from their Teacher or Head Teacher. The discussion should cover the following:
- a The application process and timeframes, criteria for assessing eligibility and the student's circumstances as relevant to their application.
  - b Advice on how to complete the application and the supporting evidence required.
  - c An explanation of the impact RPL may have on their course requirements, training plan and course duration. Where students are seeking RPL for electives, they should be informed that due to packaging rules, reporting and funding requirements, the granting of RPL for electives may prevent them from undertaking other electives or completing second streams.
  - d Advice that the student's fee may be re-calculated and if that occurs, that they will be provided with an amended fee notification via email.
- 3.23 To apply for RPL, a student is required to submit the following documentation to the Teacher or Head Teacher:
- a A Student RPL Toolkit, including a completed self-assessment of their eligibility for RPL.
  - b International Students must complete and submit the International Credit Transfer/Recognition of Prior Learning Form. All other students must submit an Enrolment Adjustment – Credit – Recognition of Prior Learning form.
  - c Supporting evidence, as outlined in clause 3.26.

### Assessment Process

- 3.24 Assessment of RPL is by appropriately qualified and experienced assessors, usually a Teacher or Head Teacher. Suitability is specified in the [Employee Qualifications Procedure](#) and the [Produce or Maintain an Individual Delivery Profile \(IDP\) Procedure](#).
- 3.25 When undertaking an assessment of RPL an assessor will follow the principles of assessment and rules of evidence specified in the Standards for RTOs [Outcome Standards](#) and the [Assessment Policy](#) and [Procedure](#).
- 3.26 For RPL to be granted, supporting evidence must be relevant and aligned to the training package and/or competency for which recognition is sought, and can include but is not limited to:
- a Demonstrated current skills.
  - b Informal or work or life experience.
  - c Qualifications previously obtained or commenced.
  - d Formal training that has been undertaken.
  - e Workplace evidence.

- f workplace reports.
  - g Portfolios.
  - h Photographs that identify the student doing relevant tasks.
  - i Evidence of completion of gap training (if required)
- 3.27 An assessor must review the submitted evidence against the relevant unit or units of competencies and determine whether the application and supporting evidence has:
- a Validity- assessment evidence is adequate, such that the assessor can be assured that the student possesses the skills and knowledge described in the training product, subject, or course.
  - b Sufficiency- the quality, quantity and relevance of the assessment evidence enables the assessor to make an informed judgement of the student's competency or attainment of the skills and knowledge described in the training product or course and subject learning outcomes.
  - c Authenticity- the assessor is assured that a student's assessment evidence is the original and genuine work of that student.
  - d Currency - the assessment evidence presented to the assessor documents and demonstrates the student's current skills and knowledge.
- 3.28 The assessment of RPL applications will also consider, for individual units, the specific work activities and the performance standards necessary for the workplace.
- 3.29 The assessor will:
- a Complete and sign the Student RPL Toolkit.
  - b Complete an RPL Unit Evidence Summary, which includes a mapping of the evidence to the units of competency.
  - c Submit the Student RPL Toolkit, Enrolment Adjustment – Credit – Recognition of Prior Learning form, RPL Unit Evidence Summary and supporting evidence to the Team Leader or Head for review and approval.

## Outcomes

- 3.30 The Team Leader or Head Teacher will review the application and supporting evidence, check that the assessment process has been correctly followed, and make a final decision on the RPL application.
- 3.31 The Team Leader or Head Teacher will:
- a Sign and date the Enrolment Adjustment – Credit – Recognition of Prior Learning form, indicating the RPL outcome.
  - b Update the student's enrolment record in the student management system by entering as appropriate the unit outcome of 'RPL'.

- c Advise the assessor that their review of the application is complete and details of the outcome.

## International Student Outcomes

- 3.32 RPL may affect an international students' ability to meet their visa obligations related to hours of study and/or course progress and completion date. Students should contact the Department of Home Affairs for advice.
- 3.33 The International Team will assess the impact of RPL on an international student's hours of study, fees and expected course completion date and ensure that appropriate action is taken in relation to advice to students, record keeping, notifications to students and any required reporting in PRISMS.

## Fees Recalculations

- 3.34 When RPL is applied to a student record (for both Fee for Services and subsidised training) the student's enrolment will be subject to a fee re-calculation to the value of 100% of the unit of competency fee for which the RPL has been granted.
- 3.35 Where RPL is granted for 100% of the units of competency in a course, and the fee reduced accordingly, an administration fee is payable by the student.
- 3.36 Granting RPL for a unit of competency for Smart and Skilled funded training will initiate a reduction of 50% of the student fee and subsidy for that competency.
- 3.37 The administration fee is subject to change. Information about the administration fee and any changes to it will be made available to students as per clause 3.11 d of this procedure.
- 3.38 The granting of RPL and subsequent fee re-calculation may have an impact on a Vocational Education and Training Student Loan (VSL) enrolment. Student Services are to refer to the VSL Written Directions available on the TAFE intranet page for specific information.
- 3.39 The International Team is responsible for recalculating the fees for international students and notifying the Finance Team, who will process required fee recalculations and refunds.
- 3.40 Domestic student fees are to be re-calculated by Student Services Operations and notification sent to the Finance Team.

## Notifications to students and acceptance of granted RPL

- 3.41 The assessor will advise students of the outcome of the RPL application in writing within 15 working days from the time the assessor received a complete application. Where RPL has not been granted, reasons must be provided in the written outcome.
- 3.42 The Head Teacher will amend the student's training plan with details of the RPL application and outcome. To accept and finalise the RPL, the student must sign and return the updated training plan to the assessor.

- 3.43 The assessor will upload the amended training plan to the student’s record in the relevant system and forward a copy of the amended training plan to the student.

## Appeals

- 3.44 Students may appeal an RPL assessment outcome via the [Assessment Appeals Policy](#) and [Procedure](#).

## Record keeping and retention of evidence

- 3.45 TAFE NSW is obligated to retain and appropriately store all documentation and supporting evidence for RPL applications, including evidence of verification, assessment, outcomes and communications with students. Details about appropriate retention practices and periods of retention are set out in the [Retention of Student Education Evidence Procedure](#).

## Section 4. Monitoring

- 4.1 Feedback and issues raised in relation to this procedure will be received, collated and monitored by the Responsible Officer and used to inform scheduled formal reviews and/or necessary interim amendments.
- 4.2 This procedure will undergo formal review every two years. In the interim, minor amendments and those required because of regulatory changes will be made on an as-needed basis and approved by the Accountable Officer.

## Section 5. Responsibilities

Position	Responsibility
Executive Director, Education Enablement (Accountable Officer)	Oversight of the development, review and amendment of this procedure, with the authority to approve revisions to the procedure to ensure alignment with regulatory and legislative requirements and current TAFE NSW operations.
Program Manager, Education Enablement (Responsible Officer)	Supports the Accountable Officer in the development, monitoring, review, amendment and implementation of this procedure, to ensure alignment with regulatory and legislative requirements and current TAFE NSW operations.
Assessor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide advice to student on RPL application process.</li> <li>• Assess the RPL application</li> <li>• Advise student of the outcome of the RPL application</li> <li>• Store records according to the process</li> <li>• Manages the RPL application process and assesses the student’s eligibility for RPL.</li> </ul>

Head Teacher or Team Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approves or rejects the RPL application.</li> <li>• Ensures the assessment process has been followed.</li> </ul>
Student	Provide sufficient evidence to meet the requirements outlined in the RPL Toolkit.
Student and Campus Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain website and external facing publications with current information relating to RPL.</li> <li>• Processes elements of the RPL application.</li> </ul>

## Section 6. Governance information

Governance	Details
Related policies	This procedure is governed by: <a href="#">Recognition Policy (VET)</a>
Related documents	This procedure is to be read together with: <a href="#">Assessment Policy</a> and <a href="#">Procedures</a> <a href="#">Assessment Appeals Policy</a> and <a href="#">Procedures</a> <a href="#">Employee Qualifications Procedure</a> <a href="#">Produce or Maintain an Individual Delivery Profile (IDP) Procedure</a> <a href="#">Retention of Student Education Evidence Procedure</a> Enrolment and Student Administration Policy <a href="#">International Student Management Policy</a> and <a href="#">Procedure</a>
Accountable Officer	Executive Director Education Enablement
Responsible Officer	Program Manager Education Enablement
Content Manager number	PROJ18/2655
Next review date	26 June 2027

## Section 7. Definitions

Word	Definition
Assessment	The process by which TAFE NSW, or a third-party delivering services on its behalf, collects evidence for the purposes of determining whether a student is competent to perform to the standard specified in the training product.

Word	Definition
Assessment Judgement	Means a determination of whether competency has been achieved by a VET student consistent with the training product and the TAFE NSW assessment system.
Assessor	Means a person who determines a VET student's competency for, or on behalf of TAFE NSW.
Elective	An elective unit refers to a unit of competency that students can choose to complete as part of their qualification. These units provide flexibility and allow students to tailor their education to better suit their interests and career goals
RPL Evidence	RPL Evidence may include Work Samples, Qualifications and Certificates, Employment Records, Training Records, Third-Party Reports and Self-Assessments.
Equivalent	An equivalent unit refers to a unit of competency that has been updated or superseded but is considered to have the same outcomes as the previous version as described on the National Register.
Imported	An imported unit refers to a unit of competency that is included in a qualification but originates from a different training package or accredited course.
Qualification	A nationally recognised certification awarded upon successful completion of a structured training program or recognition process.
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	An assessment process that involves assessment of an individual's relevant prior learning and experience (including skills and knowledge obtained through formal and informal learning) to determine the extent to which the individual meets requirements specified in the training product.
Third party	Any person who has an arrangement with an NVR registered training organisation to deliver services, but does not include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• employees of the organisation.</li> <li>• experts engaged by the organisation; or</li> <li>• government agencies and government funded agencies that refer VET students to the organisation and do not receive any payment from the organisation for doing so.</li> </ul>
Training Product	Means an AQF qualification, a skill set, a unit of competency, accredited short course or module.
Unit of Competency	Means the specification of the standards of performance required in the workplace as defined in a training product.

## Document history

No.	Effective	Approved by	Amendment
1.0	1 January 2019	Chief Education and Training	New procedure to align with commencement of the One RTO model (based on previous procedure WDETG18318).
2.0	17 April 2019		V.2. update
3.0	06 March 2020		V.3. update – minor
4.0	26 June 2025	Executive Director Education Enablement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operating Model changes and revisions to related policies and procedures</li> <li>Revised Outcome Standards</li> </ul>