

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Purpose

This procedure defines the process for handling applications for the recognition of existing skills, experiences, capabilities and the acceptance of results or competency outcomes judged under the authority of another Higher Education Provider (HEP) or Registered Training Organisation (RTO) within Australia.

Scope of Procedure

This procedure applies to all persons enrolled with the SSNT and all persons employed or contracted to the SSNT for the provision of lecturing, training and assessment services.

Responsible Authority

The Heads of Department, Co-ordinators and the Principal are responsible for meeting compliance against these requirements and the control and implementation of the relevant procedures.

Definitions

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

The process of equating an individual's prior learning with the capabilities and competency benchmarks identified within the AQF. Only prior learning relevant to learning objectives or competencies covered within the institution's approved courses or Scope of Registration can be considered by the SSNT under this process.

Exemption (Ex) An exemption will be granted where an application for credit transfer or mutual recognition (with evidence of previous authentic statements of results for equivalent assessment criteria) or RPL is fully approved.

Mutual Recognition (MR)

The acceptance of an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) credential (authenticated statement of results) as evidence of competence irrespective of the RTO or Australian Higher Education Provider (HEP) issuing the credential.

Recognition of Current Competence (RCC)

The process of determining whether an individual is currently competent according to the competency standards being assessed. This generally requires a skills assessment. It particularly applies where professional registration or industry licences are required for practitioners in the health industry.

Policy Statement

Under the compliance requirements for SSNT as a Higher Education Provider (HEP) and Registered Training Organisation (RTO) all students are to have access to information concerning credits and the assessment of existing knowledge, skills and attributes against award or course requirements, as a process of Recognition of Prior Learning, Exemption and/or Recognition of Current Competence.

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The SSNT assists students to ascertain if their skills and knowledge meet capability or competency requirements against the prescribed AQF standards. This process is defined as a series of instructions within the Quality System. Information prepared for students regarding access and opportunity to apply for Recognition is governed under the quality system and procedures providing instruction for the preparation of information and materials. This information is therefore subject to development, dissemination and review standards as part of our continuous improvements process.

As a minimum, information for students includes:

- Information regarding the recognition of knowledge, skills, capabilities and competence, which relates to previous study, work and life experiences.
- Application process for consideration and any required subject assessment fees.
- Availability of application support.
- Appeal processes.

Students are required to enrol in the subject and apply for a recognition assessment.

Sanctions

- External sanctions apply to this procedure. Any breach will be dealt with by the Principal.
- The Principal or his delegate must review reasons for non-conformance making reparation and/or changes as necessary to processes or information under distribution.

RPL PROCEDURE

The SSNT agrees to honour its obligations under the standards for mutual recognition and to offer information and opportunities relevant to this under Recognition of Prior Learning /Exemption to all students prior to enrolment.

- The SSNT ensures that RPL, Mutual Recognition, and where appropriate RCC policy information and procedures is available to students via the website, www.southernschool.com, the student services, library and student information.

Initial Application Procedure for RPL Assessment

- Applications for Exemptions/RPL/RCC/Credit Recognition must normally be submitted at the time of first enrolment in a course.
- Students are required to firstly enrol in the subject and apply for a recognition assessment. Direct credits/exemptions will not require a subject fee but an RPL subject assessment process will require a fee.
- Students/clients seeking access to the RPL assessment program are encouraged to seek as much information as possible about the process.
- As an initial step, potential applicants are given access to the objectives, learning outcomes and /or competencies under consideration, the application process and the subject assessment fees structure. These may need to be explained more fully by the Head of Department, Co-ordinator or Manager-Student Services.
- Students are encouraged to undertake an initial self-assessment against the prescribed standards and learning outcomes for which they are seeking recognition.
- Students wishing to proceed with their RPL application must obtain an Application Form, and are counselled as to the nature of the program and the student's

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responsibility as an applicant for RPL assessment.

- Students are advised that a variety of sources may be used with clearly documented authentic evidence to support their application across the three critical areas of life, work and formal study.
- When students are ready to submit their application, they are encouraged to seek confirmation regarding their level of preparation and to either seek more evidence or submit the application for consideration by the RPL staff.
- The SSNT's Application for RPL form (available on the website and at Student Services) should be completed and submitted to the Student Services Reception together with the required portfolio of documented evidence and the required subject assessment fee.
- The submitted evidence must support a minimum of 80% of the subject/unit's learning outcomes and performance criteria.
- All submitted evidence must be authentic, current, valid, sufficient and reliable in order to be accepted and considered for the assessment.

Receipt of Application

- Applications for RPL must be completed on the prescribed form (copy kept by the applicant) including a list of authentic, relevant materials offered in support of the application. These must be confirmed as they are cited by the administration/RPL staff. The citation must be dated and the relevant staff signature provided. (All original documents and materials are returned to the applicant immediately after citation).
- The original RPL application and cited copies of documents and materials are to be noted and forwarded to the Head of Department (HOD) or Co-ordinator for action.
- The applicant will be given a date of determination and instructed that the application result will be forwarded in writing along with Appeals information should it be required.

Determination of Competence

- Where an applicant has presented authentic evidence based on the attainment of a formal qualification, the HOD or Co-ordinator may verify 'equivalence' against the current standards and requirements, generally a minimum of 80%. The outcome will then be notified to the applicant as either "RPL / Exemption granted" or "RPL/ Exemption not granted".
- Where an applicant has presented evidence based on experience and access to opportunities in which capabilities or competence may have been achieved, the HOD or Co-ordinator may request an interview to discuss the application, and may request references and other documentation or a skills test in order to make a decision. Applicants would then be notified as either "RPL/Exemption/credit gained" or "RPL not gained".
- RPL/Exemption is for full units only. If partial RPL is awarded for certain learning outcomes and performance criteria or competency assessment the other remaining elements or competencies must be completed to achieve the full subject or unit and the full subject fee is payable.

Where an exemption of credit is not granted the HOD or Co-ordinator will provide details of the decision and:

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- Request further evidence
- Offer assessment
- Offer a right to appeal

Appeal

Should the applicant wish to appeal, they shall be encouraged to submit further evidence to an RPL panel of:

- Teachers with relevant expertise in course area – on staff
- Assessors – on staff
- Professional/Industry Expert – as applicable, (this may include a qualified representative from the applicant's employer).

The applicant will be advised of a date for an RPL interview and asked to bring supporting evidence, including any additional evidence as required. Where an applicant is unsuccessful on appeal, a counsellor or person who has not been on the RPL panel can assist the applicant to address the issues raised in rejection of the application.

RPL Subject Assessment Fees

RPL Subject Assessment fees are available on enrolment and with the application form. These are set at 50% of the subject fee. In the event that a partial RPL may be given for certain elements within a subject, a full subject fee is required to complete the full subject requirements. (Where a full exemption is given under Mutual Recognition if a student has a statement of results issued by another RTO, no assessment fee is required.)

Records

All records raised in relation to an application for RPL must be stored in the applicant's (student) file and archived accordingly. A register of RPL applications and outcomes should be kept according to privacy requirements for audit purposes.

Applicant's course file

Copies of the applicant's form that does not include relevant notations from the panel should be shredded to protect the applicant's privacy. Only the original application should remain on file with the list of cited documents and materials.

Recognition of Current Competence (RCC)

Current competence is considered by the HOD or Co-ordinator and an Approved Assessor in a formal written application.

Application

Applications for recognition of current competence are to be used where an assessment of skills is required or occupational licensing demands demonstration of capabilities or competence and is subject to time-based termination and renewals.

- An applicant for RCC must complete an application form providing all relevant documents and support materials. These should be verified, copied and the originals returned to the applicant.
- The applicant is to be notified of the assessment requirements and given all relevant materials including the assessment criteria. In some cases assessment requires

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evidence of competency under the national training authority and a portfolio of documented evidence (resume, referees, employer requests, expired licenses etc).

- An assessor must be booked for the assessment and the applicant notified of venue, equipment and resource requirements.

Determination

- The assessor will make the determination of competence under the authority of the school. This may include other state authorities if there are any regulatory or licensing arrangements.
- If the applicant is considered capable/competent, the assessor will arrange a competency document.
- If the applicant is not found to be capable/competent, they are to be advised of appeal processes, any re-testing legislation that applies, and where appropriate it may be recommended that 'gap training' be completed prior to re-assessment/testing.

Assessment Fees

Assessment fees for the subject are available with the application form. These are set at 50% of the subject fee. In the event that a partial RCC may be given for certain elements within a subject, a full subject fee is required to complete the full subject requirements.

Records

Records for RCC must be kept in a separate register by the HOD or Co-ordinator. If the applicant is a completing student or current student, the application and results should be added to their file.

Mutual Recognition

- Students seeking mutual recognition of AQF qualifications and/or Statements of Attainment issued by another Australian Higher Education Provider (HEP) or Registered Training Organisation, must complete an application for consideration and submit this along with verified copies of the qualification or statement of results to the HOD or Co-ordinator.
- The HOD or Co-ordinator will verify the authenticity of the qualifications by contacting the issuing RTO. The Application will be noted and the student advised of the outcome.
- Verified AQF qualifications are to be listed on the Mutual Recognition Register and where appropriate the student file updated as RPL, Exemption or Competent, as appropriate.
- Where qualifications cannot be verified as per the application, the student will be asked to provide further evidence.
- If a false claim is found to have been lodged, the student will be counselled by the HOD or Co-ordinator regarding the action and subsequent follow up response. Such incidences must be noted on the student file with necessary details, contacts and actions undertaken.

Template/Forms

- Application Form (RPL/RCC/Mutual Recognition)
- RPL/RCC/MR Register
- Appeals Form