

# Recognition of Prior Learning [RPL] Policy

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish the principles and processes by which ICAT assesses applications for course credit based on recognition of prior learning. The policy will ensure ICAT maintains academic standards for all courses and complies with the TEQSA Threshold Standards 2021, the *Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000* and the *National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018*.

## Scope

This policy applies to all domestic and international students and potential students who request course credit towards an undergraduate or postgraduate course of study at ICAT in recognition of prior learning for course(s) undertaken at another institution or as an ICAT graduate. This policy also applies to college staff who assess and process course credit requests.

All applications for admission to a course of study at ICAT based on recognition of previous study or work/professional experiences are assessed in accordance with the college *Admissions Policies*. Eligibility for admission based on prior learning does not guarantee eligibility for course credit.

## Related Policies and Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following college policies and documents:

- Admissions Policies for Domestic and International Students
- Monitoring Academic Progression Policy
- Complaints & Appeals Policy
- Application for Course Credit in Recognition of Prior Learning

All documents referenced in this policy can be accessed via the [Forms & Policies](#) section at the bottom of the homepage of the college website and Handbook section of the Moodle Student Portal via [myicat.edu.au](http://myicat.edu.au).

## Definition of Key Terms

### "Advanced Standing"

- Is the grade applied in recognition of previous study or experiences that can be credited towards a qualification.

### "Articulation"

- is the process that enables students to progress from a completed qualification to another with admission and/or credit in a defined qualification pathway. This includes progression from a nested Diploma award into the corresponding bachelor's degree award at ICAT via the college defined pathway.

### "Award"

- means the qualification resulting from the successful completion of a specific program of study.

### "Credit"

- means the value assigned for the recognition of equivalence in content and learning outcomes between different types of learning and/or qualifications. Credit reduces the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification and may be through credit transfer, articulation, recognition of prior learning or advanced standing.

### "Learning Outcomes"

- the expression of the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate because of learning.

#### **"Qualification"**

- means an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualification as the result of an accredited complete program of learning that leads to formal certification that a graduate has achieved learning outcomes as described in the AQF.

#### **"Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)"**

- means the assessment process that involves assessment of an individual's relevant prior learning (including formal, informal, and non-formal learning) to determine or credit outcomes of an individual application for credit.

## **Principles**

### **Recognition of Prior Learning**

Recognition of prior learning is an assessment process used to determine the extent to which a student has achieved the required learning outcomes of a unit of study via previous study or work/professional experience and is eligible to receive credit at ICAT. This may result in the granting of credit via the grade of 'Advanced Standing' (AS) in a specific unit and exemption from that unit.

Granting of credit must not disadvantage the student in achieving the expected learning outcomes for the course, and the integrity of the course of study and qualification must be maintained. ICAT will recognise prior learning for course credit under the following circumstances:

#### **1. Previous Study**

**Formal Learning:** Formal learning is learning that takes place through a structured program of learning that leads to the full or partial achievement of an officially accredited qualification under the Australian Qualifications Framework (or recognised overseas institution), including:

- completed higher education subjects or qualifications
- completed VET subjects or qualifications at Diploma level

Note that subjects from undergraduate courses will not be accepted for course credit in a postgraduate course of study at ICAT.

**Non-Formal Learning:** Non-formal learning refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of learning but does not lead to an officially accredited qualification.

#### **2. Work & Professional experiences**

Also referred to as Informal Learning gained through work or professional experiences. Claims for recognition of learning through work and professional experience must meet the following criteria:

**Authenticity** the applicant can demonstrate the learning outcomes that are being claimed

**Currency** the learning outcomes are still valid and performable

**Quality** the learning has reached an acceptable level and equivalent to the respective AQF level

**Relevance** the learning is applicable to the subject claimed

**Transferability** the learning outcome can be applied outside the context in which it was learned  
**Comparability** the learning is comparable in content with the subject(s) in which credit is sought

The onus is on the applicant to provide evidence to demonstrate the required knowledge and skills have been gained through professional and/or professional experiences.

### 3. Articulation

Articulation is a formal arrangement approved by the Academic Board that enables students to progress from one qualification to a particular course of study at ICAT with a specified amount of credit. For example, graduates of a nested Diploma qualification at ICAT can articulate into the corresponding bachelor's degree award course.

Formal articulation agreements with other institutions are listed on the college website.

Students are not permitted to articulate from one degree to another if the original degree has been conferred and awarded. Students articulating between programs should graduate with one degree only. In extenuating circumstances, as identified by the Director of Education and brought to the Academic Board, exemptions to this are permitted.

### Currency of Prior Learning

The knowledge and skills gained because of prior learning and experiences must be current and relevant in the context of the course in which the applicant is enrolled. As disciplinary knowledge and practices change, it is necessary to set a currency limit to ensure previous learning is undertaken in a timeframe that enables students to achieve course outcomes.

#### **The maximum timeframe for previous study or work and professional experience is five years.**

The acceptance of qualifications and experiences outside this timeframe is at the discretion of the Director of Education when assessing an application for credit.

### Applying for Credit

Applicants seeking course credit for recognition of prior learning must apply using the college '*Application for Course Credit in Recognition of Prior Learning Form*' which can be downloaded from [Forms & Policies](#) section at the bottom of the college website home page or the Handbook section of the Moodle Student Portal.

### Granting Course Credit

Credit is granted when it is determined that there is equivalence of discipline, content and learning outcomes between the knowledge and skills gained from prior learning (previous formal or non-formal study, or work and professional experience) and the unit of study at ICAT for which credit is

being sought. In granting credit, ICAT must be assured that all requirements of the course of study will be fulfilled and aligns with ICAT's reputation and academic standing in the sector. As such, each Application for Credit is assessed on a case-by-case basis.

In assessing an application for credit, the following factors will be considered when determining equivalency:

- course and/or unit outcomes
- volume of learning
- depth and breadth of course content
- assessment methods
- reference and reading materials
- resources and facilities such as equipment, library, computer labs, software etc.
- academic results
- substantiated relevant and current professional and/or professional experience

Where course credit is granted, the student will be awarded the grade 'Advanced Standing' (AS) and is exempt from attending and completing that unit to complete the qualification. A student may also submit an application to rescind credit where necessary, after consultation from either Program/Course Coordinator and/or Director of Education.

### **Credit Limitations**

Credit is not granted for failed or incomplete units of study. A Conceded Pass (or equivalent) is not considered as successful completion and therefore ineligible for credit.

Credit and/or exemptions awarded at another institution cannot be used for credit towards a ICAT qualification.

Credit is not granted towards postgraduate courses for prior learning from undergraduate courses or units of study.

The maximum number of units for which exemption may be granted is 50% of the total credit points for the course, less, where professional accreditation limits the maximum credit that can be granted. At their discretion, the Director of Education may recognise credit beyond 50% in cases where the applicant was previously a student at ICAT and is enrolling in a new course of study at ICAT. In other cases, the Director of Education must recommend credit recognition beyond 50% to the Academic Board for their approval.

Partial credit is not granted.

### **Course Credit & Implications for International Student Visas**

International students should be aware that receiving credit for four or more units of study may affect the course duration and therefore the length of their student visa.

ICAT will advise students to seek advice from Immigration on the impact of their visa, where a CoE is reduced in duration due to the granting of recognition of prior learning.

Where course credit changes the expected completion date and therefore shortens the expected duration of the course of study for an international student, ICAT will:

- a) adjust the course duration in the Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) when course credit is granted at the time of admission ie. prior to the issue of the student visa
- b) report the change in course duration to the Department of Education, Skills, and Employment via PRISMS in accordance with Standard 8 of the *National Code 2018* when course credit is granted after admission and the original CoE.
- c) where academic advanced standing is held, provide the option for students to complete other units in lieu of the core units where they have existing qualifications, to keep students enrolled for the duration of the course.

## Appeal

Applicants may appeal a decision for course credit in line with the college Complaints & Appeals Policy for Academic Matters. For details on the procedure for appealing a decision to deny credit, see [Procedure Step 5](#) below.

## Procedure

### 1. Submit an application to the Registrar

*Responsible: Applicant*

Applicants seeking course credit for recognition of prior learning or wishing to articulate from a ICAT Diploma to a Bachelor Degree course of study should download an 'Application for Course Credit in Recognition of Prior Learning' form from the [Forms & Policies](#) section at the bottom of the college website Home Page or Handbook section of the Moodle Student Portal via [myicat.edu.au](http://myicat.edu.au).

Applications are not accepted if incomplete, unsigned and/or without the required documentary evidence. It is the responsibility of the student to attach the required documentary evidence to support of their application as outlined below:

- **Previous Study**

Applicants must attach the following documentary evidence in relation to the unit(s) for which exemption or credit is sought based on relevant study completed within the previous five years:

- Academic transcript(s) including year completed and grades attained
- Course award and description
- Official unit outline from the time of study which shows:
  - learning outcomes
  - assessment tasks
  - study load
  - subject content
  - reference and reading materials

- **Work or Professional experience**

The applicant must attach supporting documentation in relation to the unit(s) for which exemption or credit is sought based on work or professional experience. This may include portfolios/work samples, position description, curriculum vitae, and references.

- **Articulation**

ICAT Diploma graduates seeking to articulate into a bachelor's degree course do not need to attach documentary evidence or complete Part C of the application form.

All documentary evidence should be copies of originals as certified by a Justice of the Peace or other ICAT approved authority. However, if this is not possible, the original documentation can be presented with the application and the Director of Education will take copies and witness them as being true copies of originals presented. Any international documentation in a language other than English must be translated to English.

Completed Applications should be submitted to the Admissions Team.

Applications in recognition of previous study or experience should be submitted at the time of enrolment (or application to study) where possible. Failing this, applications should be made ten days prior to the trimester's Commencement Date, but no later than five working days before the trimester's Census Day. Applications received after Census Date will only be considered for the following trimester.

Applications to articulate may be submitted in the last trimester of Diploma study and a decision will be made within ten working days after the release of final results.

It is recommended that the student to take a copy of their completed application form and supporting documentation for their records before submitting to the Manager Operations. ICAT is not responsible for taking or providing the applicant with a copy at the time of submission.

## **2. Check application for completeness**

*Responsible: ICAT (Admissions Team)*

The submitted '*Application for Course Credit in Recognition of Prior Learning*' form is checked for completeness by the Admissions Team. ICAT will only accept Completed Applications as eligible for assessment and will sign the *Lodgement Receipt* and return the front instructional sheet of the application form to the applicant as proof of submission.

## **3. Assessment of the completed application**

*Responsible: ICAT (Director of Operations)*

After the check for completeness, the Director of Education assesses the application. The review of the application is done against the assessment criteria as outlined in the **Course Credit**

**Recognition of Prior Learning Policy** and the Director of Education decides to grant or deny the application for course credit.

#### **4. Advise assessment decision in writing**

*Responsible: ICAT (Director of Education)*

Following assessment, the Director of Education advises the Admissions Team of its decision to grant or deny the application for course credit:

##### **a) Applications for course credit for previous study or work/professional experience**

The Admissions Team will advise the applicant of the decision in writing within ten working days of the receipt of the Completed Application. A longer time may be required during peak admission and enrolment times but will not exceed fifteen working days.

##### **b) Applications for course credit for articulation to a bachelor's degree award course**

The Admissions Team advises the applicant of the decision in writing within ten working days of the release of results by the Grade Release Committee.

Where an 'Application for Course Credit in Recognition of Prior Learning' is successful, ICAT will send the student an email advising the decision, the course credit(s) to be applied and any implications to course progression and/or course duration because of the credit. The student must sign and return a copy of this letter authorising the application of the course credit(s) to their enrolment before a grade of Advanced Standing will be applied and the Student Management System updated accordingly.

Where an 'Application for Course Credit in Recognition of Prior Learning' is denied, ICAT will not grant course credit. The applicant is sent a *Refusal of Course Credit Letter* outlining the reasons for decision and their rights to appeal the decision. Applicants wishing to make an appeal should refer to the college **Complaints & Appeals Policy**.

#### **5. Respond to the notification of decision**

*Responsible: Applicant*

##### **a) The applicant accepts the college decision**

Applicants who receive a written notification letter advising them of the decision to grant course credit, must formally accept the decision and acknowledge their understanding of any implications, by signing and returning a copy of the letter to the Director of Education.

On receipt of the signed letter, the Director of Education will apply a grade of 'Advanced Standing' in the Student Management System and adjust the enrolment accordingly. The student will be issued with a course map (and timetable in due course) to reflect the application of the course credit(s) in line with the process for admissions and enrolment. The process of enrolment cannot be finalised without the college receiving the signed authorisation by the student.

#### b) **The applicant elects to appeal the college decision**

Applicants who receive a written notification letter advising them of the decision to deny course credit may wish to appeal the decision and must do so within twenty working days from the deemed receipt of the notification letter. The first stage of the grievance and appeals process is to lodge a 'Formal Grievance Form' which can be downloaded from the FAQs section of the college website and the Handbook section of the Moodle Student Portal. Applicants wishing to lodge an appeal should refer to the college **Complaints & Appeals Policy**.

If the appeal is successful, Steps 4 and 5a in the procedure for course credit is applied. During the appeal process however, where the applicant has commenced study, they remain enrolled in their course of study and are bound by the ICAT policies. The student should continue to attend classes and submit assessments to ensure satisfactory course progression and completion of the course of study within the expected timeframe. Failure to do so may incur an academic and/or financial penalty and, for international students, result in a breach of the conditions of visa which ICAT will be required to report to the Department of Home Affairs in accordance with the *National Code 2018*.

### **6. Course credit is processed, and enrolment updated**

*Responsible: ICAT (Director of Education)*

On receipt of the acknowledgement letter which has been signed by the applicant signifying their acceptance of the course credit, the Director of Education assigns a grade of 'Advanced Standing' against the unit in the Student Management System and adjusts the enrolment accordingly. The student is issued with a course map (and timetable in due course) to reflect the application of the 'Advanced Standing' grade(s) in line with the process for admissions and enrolment.

Where four or more 'Advanced Standing' grades for an international student have been granted after the issue of their Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE), ICAT will report the change of course duration to the Department of Home Affairs via PRISMS and the length of the student's visa may be reduced. If a new student visa is issued by the Department of Home Affairs, a copy of the new visa must be provided to the Admissions Team before enrolment is finalised and the student is issued with a new course map (and timetable in due course).

A copy of the application, decision, and applicant authorisations, including the new student visa where applicable for an international student, is kept on the student file. In accordance with the Code, Standard 2.4, ICAT, when granting RPL will provide the student with a written record of the decision to accept and ICAT will retain the written record of acceptance for two years after the overseas student ceases to be a student.



### Change and Version Control

Version	Date Approved	Authored by	Approved by	Description
300521 V1.0	22 June 2021	QA Manager	Academic Board	Policy prior to change of Ownership
280423 V1.1	25 May 2023	Collaborative	Academic Board	Policy amended by new ownership to include contingent criteria to Articulation [Principles,3]
281123 V1.2	30 Nov 2023	Director of Operations and Compliance	Academic Board	Minor changes to include clear reference to the National Code for CRICOS purposes. A material name change made to Recognition of Prior Learning [RPL] Policy for clarity.

### Policy Information

Author:	Quality & Compliance Manager
Policy owner:	Director of Education
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