COURSE CREDIT POLICY AND PROCEDURE (RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING)

1 PURPOSE
To outline the policy and procedures for applications for course credit.

2 SCOPE
This policy applies to all students enrolled within Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses of study offered by the Registered Training Organisation, Study Group Australia Pty Limited, trading as the Australian Institute of Applied Sciences (the Institute).

3 TERMS AND DEFINITIONS
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is an assessment process that involves assessment of an individual’s relevant prior learning (including formal, informal and non-formal learning) to determine the credit outcomes of an individual application for course credit.

Formal Learning is the learning that takes place through a structured program of learning delivered by a registered education provider, and which leads to the full or partial achievement of an officially accredited qualification.

Informal Learning is learning gained through work, social, family, hobby or leisure activities and experiences.

Non-formal learning refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of learning, but does not directly lead to full or partial achievement of an officially accredited qualification.

Currency relates to the applicant’s ability to demonstrate current industry skills, knowledge and understanding, so the evidence provided should be from either the present or the very recent past (i.e. within the last 5 years).

4 POLICY
The Institute applies a systematic institution-wide approach to the granting of course credit which does not unfairly advantage or disadvantage any existing or prospective student. Students are not required to repeat learning activities, regardless of how or where the learning was acquired, providing that the learning is current and relevant to the competencies within a unit applicable to the qualification in which they are or seek to be enrolled. These learning experiences include the individual’s relevant formal, informal and non-formal learning.

Credit applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis and in a timely manner to ensure that all candidates are able to make well-informed choices about study options, pathways and alternatives by taking into account the credit they can expect.

Students need to be aware that many tertiary institutions will not grant credit for subjects against which another provider has already granted credit based on informal/non-formal learning. The Institute may allow this, but an RPL assessment process and standard RPL fees will apply.

The Institute performs the Recognition of Prior Formal Learning function free of charge as part of its enrolment service and where the application is submitted before the commencement of the relevant unit. Irrespective of outcome, a service fee applies to each subject within an application received on or after the day of commencement of the relevant unit, unless the candidate is eligible for the VET FEE-HELP deferred payment option (refer Section 5 below).

Where the process relates to the Recognition of Prior Informal or Non-formal Learning, a service fee applies to each subject, irrespective of outcome or time of submission, unless the candidate is eligible for the VET FEE-HELP deferred payment option (refer Section 5 below).
Candidates are required to complete the appropriate section of the Application for Skills Recognition and provide supportive evidence appropriate to the type of prior learning. This evidence will be assessed and, if necessary, an interview held at which the candidate may provide additional evidence of the relevant competencies or demonstrate the relevant skills. For overseas applicants and those not living within reasonable travel distance to an Institute campus, this interview and/or demonstration may be conducted by telephone or on-campus after arrival.

The Institute reserves the right not to recognise part or all of any previous experience if the assessor believes that the competencies or knowledge demonstrated and recorded fall significantly short of the industry standard as stated within the relevant National Training Package or Accredited Course. In such a case, the candidate will be required to complete further training in the unit.

There is no limit to the amount of RPL that can be granted to any one student; a full qualification can be attained in this way. Your Student Enrolment Advisor will be able to provide you with information of the special RPL fee that would apply in such circumstances.

5 VET FEE-HELP ELIGIBLE COURSES

A Unit of Study within a VET FEE-HELP (VFH) eligible program consists of one subject into which is embedded one or more national units of competency. Applications for RPL must apply to all units of competency within the VFH Unit of Study. As stated below, differing conditions will apply, depending on whether the RPL involves assessment of formal, or informal and non-formal prior learning.

Irrespective of the type of prior learning or the outcome of the application, if the application is received after the published Census Date of the VFH Unit of Study, a service fee will not be charged. The VFH Unit of Study’s published tuition fee will apply, unless Special Circumstances are applicable. This is the case whether or not the eligible local student selects the VFH option of deferred payments.

5.1 Prior formal learning

Applications for recognition of prior formal learning for an entire VFH Unit of Study will be processed free of charge if they are submitted and approved prior to close of business of that VFH Unit of Study’s published Census Date. The student will not be required to participate in the subject, and no tuition fee will apply.

5.2 Prior informal or non-formal learning

If credit is granted on the basis of informal or non-formal learning for all units of competency within a VFH Unit of Study, and substantial time/effort was involved in the assessment process, the RPL Fee shown on the relevant Schedule of Fees will apply. (The Schedule of Fees is published on the Institute’s website.)

6 PROCEDURE

Applications for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) are administered by the Admissions team during the enrolment process, and by the Student Progress Advisors if submitted after the commencement of the VET course of study. Candidates are encouraged to discuss any prior learning they may have with the Admissions Team and Student Progress Advisors who can provide further guidance if needed in relation to the process shown below.

a. At the time of enrolment, candidates should think carefully about what expertise has been acquired over time, in particular whether they have ‘depth’ of knowledge and/or strong skills in specific areas. (In most cases, national Units of Competency will require more than just a basic or introductory knowledge of an area.) They should then consult with their Agent, the International Office, or Student Enrolment Advisor. Advice will be provided in relation to the service fee that will apply.

b. If the candidate wishes to proceed with the application, he/she should obtain a relevant application form from their Agent, the International Office, or Student Enrolment Advisor.
c. Candidates who have already commenced their studies should consult with their Student Progress Advisor, who will provide the appropriate application form and additional guidance.

d. Once the application form has been completed by the candidate, it should be submitted as part of the Application for Admission for prospective students or to their Student Progress Advisor for current students. (For current students, it is expected that such applications would occur by the end of the first week of the relevant subject.)

e. Applications must be accompanied by original or certified copy documents (e.g. Awards, Statements of Attainment, subject descriptors from other education providers, work samples or letters on letterhead from current and/or previous employers.)

f. The RPL assessment will include the verification of the currency, equivalency, and authenticity of the documents submitted. Overseas and domestic academic qualifications presented for an application for course credit will be authenticated by:

- original documents (i.e. award and transcript of results) being provided by the candidate to the authorised Institute representative; or

- copies of the original documents (i.e. award and transcript of results) being provided by the candidate which have been either:
  - notarised by a Justice of the Peace or equivalent authority; or
  - verified as a true and correct copy of the original documents by an authorised Institute representative.

Should the Institute representative suspect that the academic document presented has been altered or fraudulently created, contact will be made with the conferring institution to validate the claims of the candidate.

All claimed work experience must be relevant to the qualification, and should be within the last five years of the date of application. Candidates must provide Statements of Service on official company letterhead providing contact details of the employer. Past employers are contacted to verify work experience on a case-by-case basis.

g. This evidence will be assessed, and if necessary, an interview will be held with the Faculty Head at which the candidate may provide additional evidence of the relevant competencies or demonstrate the relevant skills. For overseas candidates or others not living within reasonable travel distance to the Institute campus, this interview and/or demonstration may be conducted by telephone or on-campus after arrival.

h. After this assessment process, the Faculty Head will provide a written notification explaining the units for which credit has been granted, and those which have been declined and why.

i. If the candidate is dissatisfied with the outcome, he/she has the option to appeal against the decision, but must do so within twenty (20) working days of the date nominated on the written notification.

j. If the candidate is currently enrolled, he/she must attend all scheduled classes until the written notification in received, and until he/she has signed and returned that to the Student Progress Advisor.

k. The outcomes of the application will be recorded within the Institute database, and a hard copy of the submission documents retained within the candidate’s file as evidence of the assessment process.

l. Should the candidate be of international origins and an adjustment to the nominal duration of the training be required, the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) will be advised via PRISMS as this will be relevant to the Student Visa. (Refer The National Code 2007, Standard 12.)
TIME LIMITS FOR ASSESSMENT PROCESS

a. Applications for credit against previous formal learning will normally be assessed within five (5) working days providing all necessary documents have been submitted. A longer period may be required where full assessment is required, particularly at peak enrolment times.

b. Applications for recognition of non-formal and informal learning will normally be assessed within ten (10) working days. A longer period may be required at peak enrolment times.

LIMITS ON CREDIT

Credit entitlements will have an impact on the structure and perhaps the nominal length of the training for the qualification. No two cases are the same, so candidates will need to discuss their special circumstances with their Student Progress Advisor.

Please note:

a. Enrolled students will not be issued formal documentation of the credits at the time of notification, as these will be listed on the documentation issued by the Institute on completion of their course.

b. It is very important for candidates to understand that they may not be successful in all that they request within their RPL application. The Institute’s assessors carry an obligation to be sure the applicants can currently demonstrate all aspects of the national units of competency applicable.