



POLICY

**RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING
AND CURRENT COMPETENCY**

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Relevant legislation	Higher Education Act 2008 Higher Education (Qualifications) Regulations 2010 Higher Education (Qualifications) (Amendment) 2013 Higher Education (Amendment) Act 2017
Related FHEC documents: procedures/guidelines, etc.	3-2 – Guidelines: Recognition of Prior Learning 1-1-M: <i>Standards and Guidelines for Higher Education Institutions</i> Fiji Higher Education Strategy

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1.0 POLICY OBJECTIVE

- 1.1 Accessible, equitable and robust processes for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Recognition of Current Competency (RCC) are essential in order to recognise the skills and competencies a learner already has and to facilitate effective progression to higher level study. In promoting RPL and RCC, the FHEC seeks to foster and safeguard the interests of students and parents and also of local higher education providers, by making educational opportunity as accessible as possible.
- 1.2 Normally, RPL involves evaluation of formal learning previously undertaken; RCC focuses on the evaluation of skills and knowledge obtained through practice and informal learning. Often the processes overlap.

2.0 POLICY

- 2.1 The Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC) requires all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to offer RPL assessment (and, where appropriate RCC assessment) to students and prospective students.
- 2.2 To ensure consistency, fairness and transparency, HEIs should establish a systematic, institution-wide approach to RPL, including policies and procedures that govern implementation.
- 2.3 RPL and RCC involve issuing organisations / HEIs undertaking an assessment of each individual who applies to determine the extent to which that individual's previous learning is equivalent to the learning outcomes of the components of the destination qualification.
- 2.4 It is the responsibility of the issuing organisations/HEIs to offer RPL and/or RCC assessment to students. Issuing organisations' RPL and/or RCC policies and practices must ensure that:
 - 2.4.1 Decisions about granting RPL or RCC take into account the individual students' likelihood of successfully achieving qualification outcomes;
 - 2.4.2 Students are offered suitable opportunities (e.g. exemption from components of programmes of study) to progress to qualification completion as fast as possible when they can demonstrate that they merit award of credit through RPL or RCC; and
 - 2.4.3 Ensure that the integrity of qualification outcomes is maintained.Similar principles will apply when RCC is also offered.
- 2.5 The typical RPL and RCC processes for providers consists of the following stages:
 - 2.5.1 Providing advice to students about the process;
 - 2.5.2 Identifying the evidence required;
 - 2.5.3 Providing students with sufficient information to enable them to prepare their evidence to meet the standard required for the RPL assessment process;
 - 2.5.4 Assessing using appropriate evidence-gathering methods and tools;
 - 2.5.5 Providing feedback to students;

- 2.5.6 Recording the outcome, and
 - 2.5.7 Reporting to key internal and external stakeholders.
- 2.6 RPL should be an integrated feature of the assessment and learning programme policies of the FHEC and HEIs and not an 'add-on' procedure.
 - 2.7 The learner seeking credits for previously acquired skills and knowledge must still comply with all the requirements as stated in unit standards or qualifications. Where a learner is found not yet competent in a specific area, the learner is provided support and training to address the identified gaps.
 - 2.8 Information on exemptions available to learners gaining successful RPL (and/or RCC) should be made available on programme literature prior to the start of the programme.
 - 2.9 The effectiveness of RPL and RCC policy implementation and procedures within HEIs shall be monitored and annually reviewed by the FHEC.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Fiji Qualifications Framework (FQF) facilitates the progression of students through qualifications by giving credit for learning outcomes they already have achieved. The process of awarding credit through RPL or RCC is designed to enhance pathways for students through to higher qualifications or employment, thereby supporting the outcomes sought by the Higher Education Strategy.
- 3.2 Credit outcomes may allow for entry into a qualification and/or provide credit towards the qualification. Credit given may reduce the time required for a student to achieve the qualification.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

Recognition of prior learning	The acknowledgement through evaluation of an individual's relevant prior learning of prescribed credit outcomes already achieved towards a qualification. Normally, the learning will be attested by the achievement of other relevant courses or credits and be achieved formally or non-formally. The process may contain elements of recognition of current competency.
Recognition of Current Competency	The acknowledgement through evaluation of an individual's current skills and knowledge and their equivalency to prescribed credit outcomes towards a qualification. Normally, the learning will have been achieved non-formally or informally. The process may contain elements of the recognition of prior learning.
Assessment	The process of collecting and evaluating evidence to establish the level of an individual's performance against prescribed learning outcomes.
Credit	Credit is the value assigned to the specific learning outcome, representing the notional learning time required to

	demonstrate that all the specified outcomes have been met. One credit is estimated to require 10 hours of notional learning.
Formal Learning:	The attainment of formal qualifications or part thereof for study undertaken at an accredited education provider within the Fiji Qualifications Framework (FQF)
Non- Formal Learning	Relevant skills, knowledge or competencies that have been acquired through non-accredited study with a provider other than a university or accredited education provider. It includes education or training provided through employer-based programs and professional bodies.
Informal Learning	Learning acquired in an informal context, such as through work and/or life experience
Learning or competency outcomes:	A learning or competency outcome is what a learner should know and/or be able to do as a result of being involved in a learning process. The learning should indicate a conceptual as well as a practical grasp of the knowledge or competency required and be applicable outside the environment in which it was acquired.
Higher Education Institution	An educational institution in or operating in Fiji that provides award-conferring post-secondary education or provides educational support services for students of other higher education institutions including overseas institutions, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) technical and vocational education and training centres; b) information technology centres; c) secretarial schools; d) language schools; e) hospitality training centres; f) educational agencies; g) caregiving training providers; h) performing arts and sports academies; i) religious educational institutions; j) colleges; and k) universities.

5.0 APPROVAL BY THE CHAIRPERSON, FIJI HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION



Dr Milika Sobey
Chairperson
Fiji Higher Education Commission

Date 22/06/17