**Recognition for Prior Learning
Guide for Applicants**

Contents

Introduction

Welcome to the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process offered by the Australian Institute of Business (AIB).

RPL is the formal recognition of learning demonstrated through existing knowledge and skills. You could have achieved the knowledge and skills through:

- Previous formal or informal training / education (at an education institution, a training facility or a place of work)
- Work experience (paid and unpaid)
- Voluntary work
- Life experience

An applicant claims RPL by matching existing knowledge and skills with the learning outcomes of an AIB subject. The process involves the development of an RPL portfolio which clearly identifies existing learning and provides evidence of it. RPL will only be granted for a subject where all of the Learning Outcomes have been met.

This Guide outlines how to work out whether you might qualify for RPL (Section 1), how to put together an application (Section 2), how to submit the application (Section 3) and, finally, what happens after submission (Section 4). A copy of the RPL application form is provided in the appendix.

1. How to decide whether to apply for RPL

You yourself are in the best position to determine whether it is worthwhile to put in for an RPL claim.

You will need to compare your current knowledge / learning with AIB subject learning outcomes to identify whether they match. If your knowledge matches the learning outcomes of an AIB subject (and you have evidence to support it), then you are in a good position to make an effective claim for RPL.

Your AIB Course Advisor will be able to advise you about the RPL process. The Course Advisor can help you in your thinking process but will not be able to make the final decision whether or not you should apply for RPL.

1.1 Self-assessment

The steps to work out whether to apply for RPL include:

Step 1. **Identify the subject learning outcomes of AIB subject**

You can find information about all AIB subjects in The Fast-Track MBA – Subject Guide AU[1] available from the AIB website. You will find a synopsis and the learning outcomes in this document. The subject learning outcomes identify the knowledge/skills you are meant to have achieved on completion of the subject. The subject's content (encapsulated in the synopsis) helps identify the knowledge base that is used to meet the learning outcomes.

Step 2. **Make an honest assessment of your existing knowledge / skills**

You need to work out whether you have current knowledge and skills relevant to the learning outcomes. Hence, review your CV and current job description to see whether they show relevant current knowledge and skills.

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[1] *To ensure you have the most current version, please go to* **https://www.aib.edu.au/study-with-us/brochure-library/***, scroll down the page and click on "The Fast-Track MBA – Subject Guide"*

Step 3.   Review the subject learning outcomes in light of your experience

An RPL claim requires you to explicitly demonstrate how your current knowledge and skills overlap with each learning outcome of the subject. For each Learning Outcome, you will need to provide justification and evidence of how you meet each criteria. It is important to understand that you must meet <u>all</u> learning outcomes <u>in full</u>. An RPL claim will not be successful if you only meet some of the learning outcomes or if you meet the learning outcomes in part only.

Step 4.   Determine whether you have actual and sufficient evidence

Just matching learning outcomes and claiming knowledge / skills is not sufficient to achieve RPL. For an RPL claim to be successful you need to be able to back up your claim with evidence. You need to be able to present documentation (drawn from a wide range of documentary evidence, which may include examples of your professional written work) that clearly demonstrates your learning, knowledge and skills. For example artifacts that you have written or had significant contribution towards in the form of:

- Policies and procedures

- White papers

- Reports

- Company Literature

- Or other relevant documentation.

1.2   Making the decision

In order to have a reasonable chance of success with an RPL application, you should have a positive answer for each of the following questions:
- o   Does my prior learning (clearly) match subject learning outcomes?
- o   Do I have sufficient and robust evidence to support my claim?
- o   Am I willing to spend time/effort to develop an effective RPL application?
- o   Do I accept that a successful outcome of the RPL application is <u>not</u> guaranteed?

If you can confidently answer 'Yes' to the above questions, then you are in a good position to progress with an RPL application.

2. How to prepare an RPL claim: the RPL portfolio

2.1 The RPL Portfolio

The RPL process at AIB requires you to put together an RPL Portfolio. The RPL Portfolio comprises a number of standard items and also documentation which provides evidence to support your claim for RPL for one (or more) subjects. Specifically, the RPL Portfolio consists of:

- AIB's RPL Application Form Part 1 (i.e. cover sheet), Part 2 (i.e. actual RPL claim) and Part 3 (i.e. checklist)

- Curriculum Vitae (or resumé)

- Current job description

- Transcripts and certificates

- RPL claim(s) for AIB subject(s)

- Documentary evidence to support the RPL claim(s)

 The specific requirements are detailed in the following sections.

2.2 Curriculum Vitae

An RPL Portfolio requires an appropriate and up-to-date curriculum vitae (CV) or resumé. The CV presents an overall picture of your work history and provides the introduction to (and contextual information for) the RPL Portfolio.

If you have an existing CV, use it as a starting point; an existing CV is likely to need additional work to make it appropriate for the RPL Portfolio.   In order to gain the most from your claim it is important that your CV provides as full a picture as possible of activities relevant to your claim. Include the following items in your CV, starting with the most recent activity and working backwards:

- education (post-secondary school only)

- employment (may include in-house training and staff development courses). List all relevant employment and other major activities as sources of the learning. For each item of employment, give a brief description of the job and achievements in the role.

- unpaid work (may include domestic as well as voluntary work). Only include this item if it is relevant to the subject for which you seek RPL. For each item of unpaid work, give a brief description of the activity highlighting the relevance to the RPL claim.

- publications if any (give full references)

2.3 Current job description

An RPL Portfolio requires the job description(s) for your current work. The term 'job description' literally means a 'description' of the work you do, whether it is paid or unpaid. The job description(s) you submit in the RPL Portfolio should present a clear picture of your <u>current</u> roles, responsibilities and achievements. An organisation chart showing your position could usefully complement the job description.

Where applicable, a formal job description will be your starting point.   A formal job description may not cover all that you do and may not emphasize the knowledge and skills you have to use in order to carry out the job. Amend your job description so that it clearly describes your current work in line with the Subject Learning Outcomes. Think about all that you really do in your job(s). If you were to hand over your job to someone tomorrow, how would you describe your roles and responsibilities to them so they could do what you do? Make sure this is reflected in the job description you prepare for the RPL Portfolio.

Where you do not have a formal job description or when you are not in paid employment, you need to write your own job description. If you have more than one current job, or have been in your current job for less than a year, you will need to prepare a job description for each of the jobs you have held in the last 12 months. Remember that the purpose is to present a clear and full picture of the work you currently do, that assist AIB to clearly map your experience against the subject learning outcomes.

2.4 Transcripts and certificates

An RPL Portfolio may include transcripts and certificates - if they are relevant and recent to support your application. Only include relevant transcripts / certificates; a good case for RPL presents a clearly focussed RPL Portfolio. Also, focus on recent transcripts and certificates; only learning that is current and up to date is relevant for RPL.

Official transcripts relating to formally accredited study at higher education level. You may already have done a relevant course which is formally accredited and recognised as being at higher education level. Only include official transcripts and certificates which meet <u>all</u> of the following requirements:

- Relating to officially accredited study. Officially accredited study will have been formally assessed and you will have a certificate or transcript specifying the education level as well as the number of credit points (or amount of credit) completed.

- At higher education level. Note that not all courses entitled 'diploma' or 'certificate' will be at higher education level. It is important to check the level of learning. For example, you may have received a certificate for successfully completing a course at work, but this may not have a higher education credit rating. If in doubt, contact the training provider and ask for confirmation of the academic level of the course.

- Completed within the last five years. The certificate or transcript should show recent study since you want to demonstrate that you have current knowledge. If the study was completed a long time ago, the certificate is not necessarily relevant for the purpose of RPL assessment: you should then be focussing on your current and recent job description(s) to demonstrate you have and use the knowledge currently.

AIB recognises that some Higher Education Providers may have granted awards based on RPL. However, these certificates will not suffice as evidence of RPL. Applicants are required to provide alternative forms of evidence against AIB's specific subject learning outcomes.

Other (non-accredited) training certificates. You may have certificates of attendance relating to structured workshops or in-house training in the workforce. Such a certificate is not an officially accredited qualification: it does not provide evidence that particular learning outcomes were achieved and does not identify the level of those learning outcomes. However, such a certificate does provide an indication that you have done learning in the subject area. Hence, non-accredited training certificates may be useful in your RPL Portfolio.

If you would like to present non-accredited certificates, you will need to include both of the following:

- Certificates as evidence of initial learning. Certificates relating to non-accredited training may be included in the RPL Portfolio where relevant to the subject for which RPL is claimed. A transcript or certificate (of non-accredited learning) alone is not sufficient for the purpose of an RPL claim.

- Commentary presenting further insight. Commentary is required in order to present an insight into your learning and to demonstrate how you are currently using / applying (or

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have recently used / applied) the learning in your work. Hence, for each certificate or transcript included in this section of the RPL Portfolio, identify how you have used the learning in your work. You may want to include additional evidence to demonstrate your current knowledge base.

2.5   Detailed RPL claim for individual subject

The detailed RPL claim should be submitted using the formal RPL Application Form; a copy is provided in Appendix 1.

Identify the learning outcomes for the subject for which you want to claim RPL. For each of the learning outcomes you need to (1) demonstrate your learning and (2) provide evidence of your learning. List each subject learning outcome of a specific subject.
If you are applying for RPL for multiple subjects, you need to complete a separate claim for each subject.

2.5.1   Writing a commentary for each learning outcome

For each learning outcome you should demonstrate that you have the relevant learning (based on experience and accumulated knowledge) and that the learning is current.

Write a commentary (for each learning outcome) which shows that you have the learning identified in that learning outcome. Explain (for each learning outcome individually) how your current knowledge and learning meets the learning outcome.

Specifically, you need to (for each learning outcome):
- Clearly articulate your learning / knowledge; and
- Clarify the context in which your learning occurred (e.g. workplace, professional association, voluntary work, individual study); and
- Explain to what extent the knowledge is current; and
- Demonstrate progression in your learning (i.e. from simpler learning to more complex learning over time).

2.5.2   Providing evidence to support the commentary

For each learning outcome you have to include evidence which supports your commentary and which demonstrates the knowledge / skills for which you are claiming RPL. Make sure the evidence is clearly linked to the learning outcome by referring to the evidence in the

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commentary.

Remember that quantity of evidence does not equate with quantity or quality of learning. As a rough guide, it would be useful to have between two and four substantial pieces of evidence for each learning outcome.

It is often possible to find a piece of evidence that demonstrates several skills or that can be used for more than one learning outcome. If you choose to do this, make sure you cross reference well between the learning outcomes.

What can be used as evidence?

There are many types of evidence that you can potentially provide to substantiate your claim for RPL against specific learning outcomes. Common forms of evidence are:

- Documents / items you have produced yourself. You can include samples of work such as business plans, financial forecasts, proposals, reports, speeches, presentations, manuals.

- Documents from others highlighting your achievements. You can include statements by your employer regarding your work performance; performance review reports; correspondence you have received from colleagues or customers/clients.

- Discussion. You can outline (in writing) how you have demonstrated / applied learning, first obtained from a course, to your work or other activities. Certificates of achievement from courses may be used to supplement such discussion.

For a complete list of evidence required for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Assessment refer to the Articulation, Credit Transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure Clause 3.8.

Criteria for evidence used to support the RPL claim
The evidence presented as part of an RPL claim should meet these criteria:

- Relevance. Evidence must be directly related to the learning outcome it is used for. If you claim you have an ability or skill, your evidence is only valid if it illustrates that skill or ability.

- Currency. Evidence should be recent (and show a date, if possible). Where you are claiming for learning that took place some time ago, you should provide supplementary evidence to show that you still have the knowledge. Where your evidence is more than five years old, you should demonstrate that the learning has been in use more recently and, where appropriate, has been updated.

- <u>Authenticity</u>. It must be clear that any evidence submitted originates from you or refers specifically to you.

- <u>Sufficiency.</u> You must submit enough evidence to cover the range of the content within each learning outcome of the subject that you are seeking RPL for.

Ethical considerations when using evidence

Your work roles and information generated through your work are likely to be useful sources of evidence. It is possible that you may wish to use sensitive information originally gathered for a different purpose as evidence. Where this is the case, it is essential that you comply with the professional, legal or moral standards appropriate to the nature of the information used. It is your responsibility to find out what these standards are from appropriate sources.

You should always seek to protect any person or organisation named in your evidence by keeping them anonymous, unless you get written permission to use the names of individuals or organisations. If you intend to include confidential material as evidence you must:

- Ensure consent for the use of material is obtained from all people involved (such as team members or clients). Details of the consent obtained should be included with the evidence itself, for example through a signed letter on headed notepaper.

- Be sensitive to the implications of your evidence. Consider whether you are exposing internal problems or placing anyone in a bad light.

- Consider how to keep material as anonymous as possible.

- Always check the legal status of material before using it. If in doubt find an alternative form of evidence.

Should you have any further questions at this stage on the RPL process, please contact your Course Advisor for further guidance.

3.   How to submit the RPL Portfolio

Once you have completed your RPL Portfolio, you are ready to submit. You need to forward the RPL Portfolio with all documentation to your Course Adviser.

Note that an RPL application must normally be submitted at least **4 weeks prior to commencement of the course**. Late applications will be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Applicants will receive the outcome of their RPL application in writing and generally this will be provided within 15 business days.

4. What happens after submission

Your Course Adviser forwards your RPL Portfolio to AIB Admissions who coordinate assessment.

4.1 Assessment of the RPL Portfolio

Assessment involves individual assessment of the RPL Portfolio by an academic in the relevant subject area. In some instances, the applicant may be contacted by the Academic to seek further information. After the initial assessment the RPL Portfolio will be reviewed by a second academic who act as moderator.

The recommendation(s) from the academics is reviewed by the Academic Dean which makes the final decision about the outcome of each RPL Portfolio. Once the process is finalised the Course Adviser will be notified and thus the Course Adviser will be able to contact you with information about the outcome.

4.2 The outcome of assessment of the RPL Portfolio

The outcome of RPL assessment is normally one of the following:
- o RPL granted
- o Request for further information
- o RPL not granted

RPL granted. Where RPL is granted, the RPL assessment is recorded and you can progress with your studies in the knowledge that you do not need to enrol in the subject.

Request for further information. A request for further information implies that the RPL Portfolio is assessed as incomplete and that the existing RPL Portfolio did not enable the academics and/or the Academic Dean to make an assessment. A request for further information normally specifies what needs to be done to improve the RPL Portfolio to enable re-assessment. The applicant, together with the Course Adviser, is advised to follow the directions from the Academic Dean and re-submit. Such re-submission does not incur additional fees.

RPL not granted. When RPL is not granted, feedback is provided by the Academic Dean to explain why the claim was not successful.

4.3   Appealing the RPL decision

The outcome of any RPL assessment is based on three stages of assessment (by the subject academic, a moderator and the Academic Dean). The RPL assessment process is robust and hence AIB is confident about the outcome of RPL assessment.

If you genuinely consider the outcome of an RPL assessment to be incorrect, you may request re-assessment. However, in order to qualify for re-assessment, you are required to present additional and relevant information to clearly improve your RPL Portfolio and strengthen your claim. There is no guarantee that a re-assessment (with additional documentation) will yield a different outcome.

The outcome of the RPL re-assessment is final. However, if you believe the RPL assessment process was not followed appropriately, you have the right to appeal by following Stage 1 – Formal Grievance of the Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure. Please be aware that the appeals process is designed to review whether the due process was followed and whether the policies and procedures of the RPL process were complied with during the RPL assessment process.

Appendix 1 – Application form

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING APPLICATION FORM

The following form must accompany your RPL application. The RPL application form has 2 Parts:

- Part 1 is a cover sheet that you complete once only.

- Part 2 must be completed for each subject you wish to claim RPL for.

- Part 3 is a checklist and requires you to identify all evidentiary documentation you are submitting with the application form.

Refer to the RPL Applicant Guide for assistance to complete this form.

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING
Application Form

PART 1 – Student Information

Surname: **First name:**

Address:

Email: **Date of birth:**

Phone (work):   **Mobile:**

Qualification:

I hereby certify that the information provided and the documentation attached is true and correct.

Signed: **Date:**

PART 2 – Recognition for Prior Learning Claim

This part must be completed for each subject that you wish to claim RPL for.

Student name:

Subject title:

Subject code:

RPL claim against subject learning outcomes (SLOs)
List each of the subject learning outcomes. Then, present your claim in writing against each of the learning outcomes AND list the documents you are submitting as evidence for each of the learning outcomes.

#	*On completion of this subject the participants should be able to:*
1	*First learning outcome:* <..copy here the first learning outcome of the subject..> *My claim:* ………………… *Evidence supplied:* ……………
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

PART 3 – Checklist and details of all documentary evidence

Evidence supplied for subject listed above
Please list the evidence that you have supplied. Attach all evidence listed on this form

Up-to-date CV	☐
Letter(s) of employment/Current job description (s)	☐
Letters of reference from employers (verifying your knowledge, skill and experience)	☐
Relevant awards / certificates *(please provide details below)*	☐
-	☐
-	☐
-	☐
Other evidence *(please provide details):*	☐
-	☐
-	☐
-	☐
-	☐
-	☐
-	☐