

Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

Approval body Dean and Admissions

Owner Director of Admissions

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This policy outlines the purpose and meaning of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and details the processes for applying, assessing and granting RPL to applicants.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process that allows students, based on experience and demonstrated learning achieved prior to admission to BCA, to:
 - 2.1.1. Gain admission to a programme of study where formal admission requirements may not have been met.
 - 2.1.2. BCA does not accept outside transfer credits to satisfy module requirements within a postgraduate programme.
- 2.2. RPL involves the assessment of knowledge, skills and competence previously acquired. Prior Learning occurs in many contexts which include professional experience in the arts, exhibition records or non-academic learning.
- 2.3. The European Commission (2022) states that learning takes many shapes and forms and that it is generally categorised in three ways¹:
 - formal learning - normally takes place in formal education institutions, such as schools and universities, is typically certified by a qualification or diploma, planned and structured by learning objectives
 - non-formal learning - is usually structured, planned and occurs in the form of activities, such as in-company professional training, but does not always result in a diploma
 - informal learning - is experienced as part of diverse activities, unstructured, includes for example digital skills acquired through leisure activities
- 2.4. RPL allows for alternative forms of previous learning experience to qualify for entry

¹ <https://education.ec.europa.eu/news/recognition-of-prior-learning-in-europe>

3. RPL Usage at BCA

3.1. RPL can be used in BCA to:

3.1.1. Gain entry to the first year of a postgraduate programme of study where the applicant may not meet the standard academic requirements for entry.

3.1.2. RPL **cannot** be used for:

- Advanced entry to a course (i.e. into year 2 or year 3)
- Exemption from one or more modules on a course

4. General Principles

4.1. Recognising prior learning is an important factor in meeting commitments to expand diversity in background and experience within

BCA's base of students, to recognize alternative forms of formal and informal learning, to develop alternative routes into our programmes and to ensure a strong cohort of students.

4.2. BCA will ensure that information on RPL is easily available to applicants.

4.3. Our programme Admissions pages clearly list BCA's RPL process, eligibility, and how to apply. Each programme specification will also include any limitations or other specific requirements for making RPL applications for entry to or progression within that programme.

4.4. BCA will process RPL applications in a timely manner as part of the Admissions application review process. BCA will communicate with applicants to ensure they are updated on the progress of their application.

5. Academic and Quality Assurance overview

- 5.1. BCA will carry out the process of RPL in a transparent and equitable manner across all programmes.
- 5.2. BCA's Dean of Academics and Director of Admissions have responsibility for quality assurance and academic governance of RPL processes. The Dean of Academics will coordinate RPL applications and will work closely with the faculty across the College to ensure that the process is timely and equitable for each applicant.
- 5.3. BCA's Director of Admissions will keep record of:
 - 5.3.1. The number of RPL applications and to which programmes;
 - 5.3.2. The ratio of successful to unsuccessful applications;
 - 5.3.3. The completion rate of RPL applicants.

6. Application an Assessment process

- 6.1. For **Entry to the first year of a programme of study** where the applicant may not meet the standard academic requirements for entry:
 - 6.1.1. In the case of non-standard entry to any of our postgraduate programmes, applications are considered initially through the Admissions regulations and processes.
 - 6.1.2. In the case of non-standard admission to Year 1 of a PG programme, the Admissions Team will:
 - 6.1.2.1. Identify any applications that do not meet the minimum academic entry requirements and bring these to the attention of the Director of Admissions and Faculty application review committee for consideration of RPL.
 - 6.1.2.2. If, following interview and review of any supporting documentation, the Faculty committee wishes to progress the application they can recommend admission based on RPL, if the subsequent interview with the applicant is also successful.
 - 6.1.2.3. The Faculty will then request admission for the applicant to be confirmed by the Dean of Academics, and the Director of Admissions will notify the student with a letter of acceptance, any conditions to acceptance, and further steps towards enrolment. If the request for RPL, and therefore the application to the programme, is not successful, the applicant will be notified by the Director of Admissions by writing.

7. Application guidelines

- 7.1. Applicants are responsible for completing the RPL Application Form and collating the supporting evidence, including:
 - 7.1.1. Academic transcripts of previously completed degrees or programmes. This should include the learning outcomes and assessments completed, credits and level of the module or programme and when it was completed.
 - 7.1.2. Supporting documentation for non-formal or informal learning, such as portfolio of work, references or testimonials from employers, curators or workshop/atelier leaders.
 - 7.1.3. Other documentation that will provide assurance that the applicant has completed experience equivalent to skill-building, training or knowledge that would have been gained through listed BCA application requirements for entry to a postgraduate degree programme.

8. Appeals

- 8.1. Applicants who wish to appeal decisions of the RPL assessment should contact the Director of Admissions in writing, and include reasons and evidence for their appeal.
- 8.2. The appeal will then be reviewed by the Dean of Academics. If successful, then the applicant will receive an offer letter of acceptance. If the appeal is unsuccessful, the applicant will receive a letter notifying them of the denial and reasons for the decision.