

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy

Document Area	Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement
Document Function/ Owner	Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar
Author	Academic Quality Assurance & Enhancement Team qaet@atu.ie
Required Approval	Academic Council

Issued Document Location

Internal Staff Portal / Hub	Yes (default repository)	
Internal Student Portal / Hub	Yes	
ATU Website	Yes	
Issue Date	27/6/2023	
	Effective Date 27/6/2023	

Table of Contents

1.	Purpose	4
2.	Scope	5
3.	External Reference Documents	6
4.	Policy	7
4.1	Guiding Values and Principles	. 7
4.1.1	Learner-Centredness	7
4.1.2	Quality Assurance	7
4.2	Definitions and Terminology	. 8
4.2.1.	Formal Learning/Certified Learning	8
4.2.1.	1 Recognition of Prior Certified Learning (RPCL)	9
4.2.2	Non-formal Learning/Experiential Learning	9
4.2.3	Informal Learning/Experiential Learning	9
4.2.3.	1 Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL)	9
4.3	The RPL Process	10
4.3.1	Functions of RPL	10
4.3.1.	1 RPL for Entry and Advanced Entry	10
4.3.1.	2 RPL for ECTS Credits and Exemptions	10
4.3.1.	2.1 RPCL for Module Exemptions	11
4.3.1.	2.2 RPEL for Module Exemptions	11
4.3.1.	3 RPL for an Additional Major Award	11
4.3.2	Stages in the RPL process	12
4.4	Assessment of RPL	14
4.4.1	Principles Guiding the Assessment of Prior Learning	14
4.4.2	Criteria for Assessment	14
4.4.3	Outcome of the RPL Assessment Process	15
4.4.3.	1 Successful Outcome	15
4.4.3.	1.1 Validation and Notification of Successful Outcome	15
4.4.3.	2 Unsuccessful Outcome	15
4.4.4	Appeals	16
45	Roles and Responsibilities	16

DOC. No: Policy AQAE009

Rev No: 000

5.	Associated Documents Generated by this Policy	18
5.1	Procedures	18
5.2	Forms	18
6.	Revision History	18

1. Purpose

The Mission of Atlantic Technological University (ATU) highlights the importance of lifelong learning to the realisation of its Vision to 'provide the highest quality education, to inspire people and accelerate sustainable economic, social, and cultural development of the region and beyond'.

The concept of lifelong learning acknowledges that an individual's knowledge, skills and competencies encompass a broad spectrum of learning and that such learning can take place through a variety of formal, informal, or non-formal routes. The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) involves a process by which prior learning is made visible and formally valued. It provides a means by which prior learning can be identified, assessed, and recognised by ATU as part of its programmes, courses, and/or modules on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). This makes it possible for an individual to build on learning achieved elsewhere and to be rewarded for it.

ATU recognises that RPL is an important factor in supporting access to and participation in higher education, and for which practice we have a strong track-record. RPL is an important element of the EU strategy for widening access to formal qualifications and supporting lifelong and life-wide learning (Cedefop, 2023). In Ireland, its potential for increasing access to and participation in higher education is set out in the *National Access Plan 2022-28* (HEA, 2022). ATU is committed to supporting national developments for RPL as well as access, transfer, and progression in higher education, whilst simultaneously ensuring the standards and academic integrity of our education programmes. ATU's commitment to RPL also demonstrates our responsibility to Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (UN, 2015) which aims to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'.

In ATU, we recognise that learning occurs in a wide variety of contexts, including paid work, involvement in social, community or voluntary activities, or learning through life experience generally. We also recognise the importance of giving equal value to all these forms of learning, as this enables individuals to be supported to enter, participate in, and progress through higher education. This principle is aligned to the NFQ goals which aim to recognise all learning achievements through supporting the development of alternative and flexible pathways to awards, and by facilitating the assessment and recognition of prior learning.

This *Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy* ensures that assessment of prior learning at ATU is approached and facilitated in a manner that is fair, equitable and transparent; and upholds the quality assurance standards and academic integrity of all programmes of study offered and awards made by ATU. The policy is intended to be consistently applied, and to support, encourage and recognise lifelong learning, and thus, to contribute to the realisation of the Mission of ATU.

This policy sets out the principles and practice of recognition of RPL at ATU, and includes the following:

- reference documents,
- the values and principles that guide RPL at ATU,
- definitions and terms associated with RPL,
- the process and criteria used by ATU for the assessment of prior learning, and
- roles, responsibilities, and decision-making structures relating to RPL.

ATU is committed to the principles of transparency, equity, and fairness in RPL and to the principle of valuing all learning regardless of the mode or source of its acquisition. Therefore, RPL is fully embedded in ATU's Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement Framework. This policy should be reviewed in conjunction with other related quality assurance policies and procedures including the following:

- AQAE004 Programme Design Policy
- AQAE005 Marks and Standards Policy

Other related policies to be developed will address admissions, access, transfer and progression, and intra-campus transfer.

2. Scope

This policy applies to prospective students and registered students on undergraduate and postgraduate programmes at ATU who have prior learning experience/s which they are seeking to have validated.

RPL can enable individuals to build on prior learning to achieve qualifications including Major, Minor, Supplemental and Special Purpose awards at undergraduate or postgraduate level at ATU. RPL focuses on making visible the *outcome* of learning and provides for the validation for learning that is achieved through a variety of formal, informal, or non-formal routes.

RPL can be used by applicants to:

- gain entry or advanced entry to a programme of study, and
- gain credits and exemptions from modules which form part of a programme of study.

This *Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy* applies to all ATU programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. However, limitations to RPL may be applied for

some programmes. In these exceptions, information on these limitations must be approved through the validation or review process and must be communicated clearly to the applicant.

The following arrangements are outside the scope of the policy:

- admission routes that are covered by another policy or other pre-established arrangement and which involve more than one student, including ATU Access programmes,
- programme transfers at the undergraduate level, and
- intra-campus programme transfer.

3. External Reference Documents

The following documents have informed the development of this policy and are available at the ATU Quality Assurance (QA) Document Repository:

- Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning (Council of the European Union, 2012)
- European Commission European Inventory on Validation of Non-formal and Informal learning 2014: Country Report Ireland (European Commission, 2014) https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2014/87062 IE.pdf
- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG, 2015)
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Core Quality Assurance Guidelines (QQI, 2016)
- QQI Principles and Operational Guidelines for the Recognition of Prior Learning in Further and Higher Education and Training (NQAI, 2005/2016)
- The National Access Plan: A Strategic Action Plan for Equity of Access, Participation and Success in Higher Education 2022-2028 (HEA, 2022)
- Framework for the Recognition of Prior Learning in Higher Education (IUI and THEA, 2022)
- European Guidelines for Validating Non-formal and Informal Learning (3rd edition) (Cedefop, 2023)

4. Policy

4.1 Guiding Values and Principles

At ATU, we use the following definition of RPL:

'RPL incorporates prior formal, informal and non-formal learning and that which is validated within the context of a specified destination award from level one to ten on the national framework of qualifications' (European Commission, 2014; p.3.)

Two core values underpin ATU's approach to RPL: *learner-centredness* and *quality* assurance. These are informed by best practice nationally and internationally.

4.1.1 Learner-Centredness

In the context of RPL, this value places the student (learner) at the centre of RPL. At ATU, the following nine principles inform and guide our approach to, and practice of RPL:

- The learner is central to the RPL process
- The RPL process at ATU will respect and value the uniqueness of an individual's learning pathway and learning
- Participation in an RPL validation process is voluntary
- Information on RPL will be made available on the ATU website and accessible to learners
- Information, advice, and a specific contact point will be available for each stage of the RPL process to assist the learner in making an informed decision
- The RPL process will be conducted in a manner that is consistent, fair, transparent, and non-discriminatory
- Clear and evidence-based processes will be available to all learners (and, by extension, to all who participate in the RPL process)
- A diverse range of assessment mechanisms will be used to assess RPL, informed by Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles, thereby allowing applicants to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways
- An appeals procedure will be provided to support RPL applications.

4.1.2 Quality Assurance

As a Designated Awarding Body, ATU is responsible for the establishment of our quality assurance and enhancement policies and procedures, as articulated in *AQAE001 Policy for Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement (AQAE) Framework*. Accordingly, RPL is underpinned by both internal and external quality assurance and enhancement processes. This core value of quality assurance in RPL is underpinned by nine principles, as follows:

• The RPL process is fully embedded in the quality assurance procedures of ATU and is aligned with the NFQ. External moderation of RPL practice will be undertaken once during the life cycle of an Academic Council

- ATU's policies and procedures relating to RPL are accessible and re-evaluated periodically
- RPL will apply to all modules, in all programmes, at all NFQ levels, in all modes of study, and in all disciplines of study. Where exceptions arise due to professional, statutory, and regulatory body requirements, the modules, programmes, or awards that cannot be achieved based on RPL will be clearly specified in the programme documentation
- A module is the smallest unit that will be considered for RPL. Credit will not be awarded for part of a module. Learning will be assessed and recognised, and credits may be awarded against a single or multiple modules
- Processes and practices for RPL will be clearly documented on the ATU website, including timeframes, deadlines, support systems, and fees where relevant
- Appropriate user-friendly information and advice will be readily available to all involved in the RPL process
- The assessment of prior learning is an academic activity and will be performed primarily by the ATU academic staff
- The documentation submitted by learners for assessment as evidence of prior learning must be authentic, current, valid and sufficient.
- In relation to formal learning, it is not possible to receive credit more than once for a single accomplishment of learning.

In ATU, prior learning can only be used *once* for entry/access *or* module exemptions, i.e., an applicant cannot use prior learning to gain entry/access to a programme and then seek module exemptions on that programme based on the same prior learning.

4.2 Definitions and Terminology

RPL covers different types of learning. Several different terms are used to describe these different types of learning, as follows:

4.2.1. Formal Learning/Certified Learning

Formal learning takes place through programmes or courses of study that are quality assured, assessed and delivered in an organised, formal way by education providers, and that attract awards or credits. Formal learning is also referred to as *certified learning* or *accredited learning*.

4.2.1.1 Recognition of Prior Certified Learning (RPCL)

Prior certified learning is learning that has already been accredited by an awarding institute. Prior certified learning can also include international qualifications. Where RPCL is being sought by an applicant, they are required to provide the relevant module/programme syllabus and a certified transcript of results.

4.2.2 Non-formal Learning/Experiential Learning

Non-formal learning is learning which takes place alongside or outside of the mainstream systems of education and training. It may be assessed but does not normally lead to formal certification on the NFQ. Non-formal learning includes learning and training activities that are undertaken in the workplace, voluntary sector, or community-based settings. Non-formal learning is also referred to as *experiential learning*.

4.2.3 Informal Learning/Experiential Learning

Informal learning takes place through life and work experience. It does not lead to certification. Informal learning is also referred to as *experiential learning*.

4.2.3.1 Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL)

Prior experiential learning is learning acquired from experience, learning acquired in the workplace or learning achieved from non-accredited bodies. Where RPEL is being sought by an applicant, they normally must produce a *Portfolio of Evidence* to support their claim for access, exemption, or credit.

The **European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)** is an academic credit system based on the estimated student workload required to achieve the objectives and learning outcomes of a module or programme of study. A **module** is a discrete unit of study and carries a credit weighting in accordance with the ECTS. At ATU, all modules account for a minimum of 5 ECTS credits, or whole multiples thereof.

Credit means confirmation that a part of a qualification, consisting of a coherent set of learning outcomes, has been assessed and validated by a competent authority, according to an agreed standard. The recognition of the learning outcomes gained through non-formal and informal learning should be automatically followed by the award of the same number of ECTS credits attached to the corresponding part of the formal programme. Once the credits associated with a module have been awarded to a student, the student is **exempt** from any further assessment obligations in respect of that module.

4.3 The RPL Process

4.3.1 Functions of RPL

In ATU, RPL may be used to:

- Gain entry or advanced entry to a programme of study, subject to available places
- Gain credit and exemptions from modules which form part of a programme of study.

4.3.1.1 RPL for Entry and Advanced Entry

RPL may be used by an applicant to gain admission (entry) to a non-CAO programme where the learner may not have obtained the standard entry requirements. The learning may be formal (credited), non-formal or informal (experiential), or a combination of these.

RPL for advanced entry to an undergraduate or post-graduate programme will be considered where a learner, following assessment, is deemed to have learning equivalent to the overall learning of the previous stage(s) of the programme to which entry is sought. The learning may be formal (credited), non-formal or informal (experiential).

A Department may wish to grant entry or advanced entry to a student with RPCL or RPEL, but who may also be shown to have learning gaps. In this event, the student may be required to undertake bridging modules prior to entry as determined by the Assessor. In each case, the outcomes of the RPL process will be submitted to the Faculty Office, together with supporting documentation, with any learning gaps clearly defined.

Documentation and promotional materials for all ATU programmes, at all levels, will clearly state entry requirements, and highlight that RPL may be used for entry by applicants.

4.3.1.2 RPL for ECTS Credits and Exemptions

AT ATU, RPL for module credit/s and exemption/s will be considered for approval within the following limits:

For undergraduate and post-graduate taught programmes:

- Major awards (up to Level 8):
 - o up to a maximum of 60 credits in a non-award year
 - o up to a maximum of 30 credits in an award year
 - a capstone module is not eligible for RPL
- Major awards (at Level 9)
 - o up to a maximum of 50% of the credits for taught elements
 - o a dissertation/thesis module is not eligible for RPL

For research degree programmes (Level 9 and Level 10):

 RPCL will only be available up to 50% of the taught elements, where applicable

For Minor Awards and Special Purpose Awards (Levels 6-9):

o for programmes greater than 10 credits, up to a maximum of 50% of the credits

If the application comprises a combination of RPCL and RPEL, then the limits specified above will apply to the combined amount.

The process and timescales for seeking module exemptions will be published on ATU's website.

4.3.1.2.1 RPCL for Module Exemptions

Prior *certified* learning may entitle the student to get exemptions for a module/s on a programme, but not ECTS credits, as learning which has been previously accredited cannot be accredited again. Where an exemption based on RPCL is granted, the student will not be required to take the assessment for the module/s specified in the Approved Programme Schedule/s (APS), and a mark or grade shall not be allocated. In the award year, where a module exemption is granted, this module is excluded from the calculation of the award classification and a student is eligible to receive a classified award. Students who gain exemptions through RPCL cannot avail of compensation rules.

4.3.1.2.2 RPEL for Module Exemptions

Prior *experiential* learning may entitle a student to exemptions for a module/s on a programme, and ECTS credits shall be allocated to modules exempted on the basis of RPEL. RPEL credits will not be graded. In the award year, a module exempted as a result of RPEL will be excluded from the calculation of the GPA, and a student is eligible to receive a classified award. Students who gain exemptions through RPEL cannot avail of compensation rules.

Students who are granted module exemptions based on RPEL and who subsequently reconsider, shall have the right to decline a module exemption and to take the module in the taught mode, for which they will undertake assessment in accordance with the APS. Their decision must be communicated to the HoD before teaching week 4 of the module for which exemption was granted.

4.3.1.3 RPL for an Additional Major Award

A learner may apply to gain an additional major award in the same generic area of study. To obtain an additional major award at the same level, the award must involve the attainment of new learning outcomes by the student (i.e., post-award achievement).

The *minimum volume* of newly certified learning required of a candidate who is seeking to qualify for an additional major award *at the same level* within the same generic area of study is set out in Table 1. It should be noted that repeating learning that is substantially equivalent to previously certified learning is not included in the calculation of post-award credit.

Award held	Award sought	Additional ECTS required	
Level 6	Level 6	A minimum of 60 credits at level 6	
Level 7	Level 7	A minimum of 60 credits at level 7	
Level 8	Level 8	A minimum of 120 credits, at least 60 of which must be at level 8	
Level 9	Level 9	A minimum of 60 credits at level 9	

Table 1: Minimum volume of new learning required for additional new major award

If the area of specialisation of the post-award achievement is not substantially different, and/or if the associated credit is insufficient for granting a new major award, where applicable, the applicant may be granted a minor, special-purpose or supplemental award or Single Module Certificate.

4.3.2 Stages in the RPL process

Applications for RPL must be initiated by an applicant or student. ATU will provide support and mentoring for RPL applicants throughout the process.

The process of RPL at ATU involves **five stages** as follows:

Stage 1: Information

During this stage, the learner obtains accessible, user-friendly information about what is possible and how the RPL process works for entry, advanced entry, and module exemptions for their chosen programme of study at ATU. Information on processes and practices for RPL will be clearly documented on the ATU website. This will include details of the application process, the stages within it and associated timeframes, and the types of evidence that will be required to support an application for RPL.

Stage 2: Identification

During this stage, the learner explores and identifies their prior learning in relation to a programme's entry requirements or the learning outcomes of a module/s with a view to making an application for formal recognition. The applicant must complete an application form, available from the ATU website. The learner will be supported at this stage by the RPL Unit and/or an RPL Mentor nominated by the Head of Department (HoD) that provides the programme for which the application for RPL is being considered.

Stage 3: Documentation

This stage makes visible the applicant's learning in the context of the application. The applicant, supported by their Mentor/RPL Unit prepares a *Portfolio of Evidence* for submission.

For applicants seeking validation of certified learning (RPCL), the *Portfolio of Evidence* must include:

- any certification (academic qualifications) already obtained by the applicant
- details of modules/programmes already completed (i.e., duration of study, learning outcomes, assessment techniques, examination results).

For applicants seeking validation of prior experiential learning (RPEL), the *Portfolio of Evidence* should typically include:

details of non-formal and informal learning undertaken (e.g., details of attendance at short courses; samples of materials; voluntary work, including roles and responsibilities; paid work history, including roles and responsibilities; employer references). In accordance with UDL principles, the material comprising the *Portfolio of Evidence* may be presented in a variety of formats which enables applicants to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways.

For the learner, this stage involves a reflective process and gathering relevant materials to substantiate their application.

Stage 4: Assessment

RPL assessment procedures must establish an applicant's capacity to succeed in a programme if offered entry, advanced entry, or module exemptions.

Where RPL is used to apply for entry to a programme, the relevant Award Standard at the required level for entry shall be used to assess whether the learner has the competences needed to succeed in the programme. Where RPL is used to apply for advanced entry to a programme or for module exemptions, the applicant's prior learning must be assessed against the Learning Outcomes of the relevant stage/module/s of the programme for which advanced entry/module exemptions are being sought.

The learner's application must be assessed by an RPL Assessor, appointed by the HoD. The RPL Assessor reviews the *Portfolio of Evidence* to compare the learning outcomes exhibited by the *Portfolio of Evidence* to the learning outcomes of the module(s)/stage, for which the applicant is seeking an exemption(s)/entry (as per criteria outlined in 4.4.2).

DOC. No: Policy AQAE009

Rev No: 000

RPL (either certified or experiential) will only be granted if the evidence supplied by the learner demonstrates that learning outcomes have already been achieved.

In making decisions on RPL, an Assessor may require an applicant to undertake an assessment activity to ensure that learning achieved is equivalent to the stated module/s or programme learning outcomes. The assessment activity may employ a range of techniques as appropriate to the theory and practice of the discipline area of the programme for which entry/exemption is being sought, and with due regard to UDL principles.

If the Assessor concludes that the learning outcomes have been achieved, then an exemption may be awarded, or entry granted.

Stage 5: Certification If the application is successful, the learner will receive formal recognition (i.e., acknowledgement) or certification which will result in entry/advanced entry to programme or exemption for programme module/modules.

4.4 Assessment of RPL

4.4.1 Principles Guiding the Assessment of Prior Learning

The following principles inform and guide the assessment of prior learning at ATU:

- 1. Assessment of prior learning will follow consistent, precise, and unambiguous assessment criteria to ensure that the process is transparent, equitable and fair for all applicants.
- 2. Decisions on recognition of prior learning must be based on sound academic judgement of evidence provided against relevant learning outcomes.
- 3. The RPL assessment approach and process must have sufficient flexibility to allow for adaptation to different discipline areas and different types of prior learning. The use of a range of assessment tools (e.g., written examinations, essays, interviews, demonstrations, simulations), appropriate to the discipline and the needs of the applicant, is encouraged.
- 4. Assessors and Mentors involved in the RPL process will be provided with training and support in fulfilling their different duties.
- 5. RPL assessments must be conducted in reasonable stipulated timeframes.

4.4.2 Criteria for Assessment

The assessment of prior learning at ATU is considered an academic activity and will be performed by academic staff who have undertaken relevant training to become RPL Assessors. The following criteria will be used by Assessors to help them to determine if the evidence of learning presented is appropriate and fit for purpose:

Validity: Does the prior learning presented meet the learning outcomes required by
the relevant academic unit? Is the academic level of the prior learning being
presented in line with the level descriptors for the programme for which RPL is being
sought? This should be equivalent to the standard expected of other students and
the standards associated with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and
its awards.

- **Sufficiency**: Is there enough evidence to demonstrate that the learning outcomes have been achieved?
- **Authenticity:** Is it clear that the prior learning evidence provided is that of the applicant?
- **Reliability:** Is the evidence of prior learning presented reliable?
- **Currency**: Is the prior learning achieved and being assessed current? Is it up to date with current knowledge and practice of the discipline?

4.4.3 Outcome of the RPL Assessment Process

4.4.3.1 Successful Outcome

A successful outcome of the RPL assessment process will result in either:

- the granting of admission to a specific academic programme within ATU,
- advanced academic standing within a programme of study, or
- module exemptions if the required standards of learning have been met.

4.4.3.1.1 Validation and Notification of Successful Outcome

All successful RPL decisions for module exemptions must be signed off by the relevant HoD, who will advise the Faculty Office of same. In the case of entry and advanced entry applications, the RPL Unit will inform the applicant of the outcome of the RPL assessment process. In the case of module exemptions, communication to the student will be via the Faculty/Department office.

4.4.3.2 Unsuccessful Outcome

An unsuccessful outcome of the RPL assessment process means that the applicant does not meet the minimum eligibility criteria for access/advanced entry/credits/exemptions for a programme of study. In the event of an unsuccessful outcome for entry/advanced entry, the applicant will not be granted admission or advanced academic standing to the programme, and guidance and support on other options will be provided to the applicant. The RPL Unit will inform the applicant of the outcome of the assessment process in this case. In the event of an unsuccessful outcome for module/s exemptions, the student must attend the module and take the assessment as per the APS. The Faculty Office will communicate the outcome to the student.

4.4.4 Appeals

In the event of an unsuccessful outcome, the applicant has a right to appeal the decision on granting access/entry/exemption/credit based on RPL. If an applicant does not consider that due and fair process has been applied, an appeal may be lodged with the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar (VPAAR). The grounds for appeal include the following:

- New/additional information relevant to the application that was not available at the time of application becomes available, and
- Incorrect/incomplete information was submitted, which the applicant now wishes to revise.

An appeal should be made by email to the VPAAR within five working days of the initial decision.

The decision in relation to the appeal will be made within ten working days of receipt of the completed form.

There will be a cost associated with the appeal. This cost will be determined from year to year and will be set out in the annual fee schedule.

4.5 Roles and Responsibilities

The following outlines the roles and responsibilities of various individuals, academic units, and University functional areas involved in the RPL process¹.

The role played by staff in relation to mentoring and in assessing RPL applications should be clearly separated, i.e., a member of staff may not act as a Mentor and an Assessor for an applicant.

Vice President Academic Affairs & Registrar (VPAAR)

The Office of VPAAR has overall responsibility for admissions and examinations. Through the Quality Office, the VPAAR will facilitate quality assurance of the RPL process by providing appropriate oversight, to ensure that academic standards comparable to those attained on courses by traditional mode will be maintained and applied.

The Office of VPAAR will perform the following specific duties:

 Publish a schedule of dates for applications for RPL for entry/advanced entry to ATU programmes

¹ Specific delineation of roles and responsibilities are indicative, subject to the new ATU Organisational Structure

Process admissions and registration of students who have been granted RPL

- Provide training for staff RPL Mentors and RPL Assessors
- Conduct a periodic review of the RPL process and outcomes for Quality Assurance and tracking purposes
- Facilitate RPL appeal applications that challenge the outcomes of an RPL process
- Establish an RPL Governance Board to oversee RPL policy and its implementation university-wide
- Prepare an annual report detailing the extent to which this RPL Policy has been implemented across the University, for consideration by Academic Council.

Head of Department (HoD)

The HoD has overall responsibility for the verification of RPL outcomes. The HoD will:

- Nominate RPL Mentors from among academic staff in the department to guide and advise applicants to prepare their *Portfolios of Evidence*
- Nominate RPL Assessors from among academic staff in the department who have undergone Assessor training, and who are familiar with the modules of the programme for which RPL is being sought
- Liaise with the RPL Unit throughout the RPL process
- Advise the Faculty Office of RPL recommendations.

RPL Unit

The RPL Unit, identified on the ATU website, may be the first point of contact for an applicant seeking RPL for entry onto a programme of study. For applicants seeking to avail of RPL for access/advanced entry, a member of the RPL Unit will meet the applicant, discuss their prior learning experiences with them and guide the applicant through the RPL process. The RPL Unit will liaise with the HoD, Faculty Office, Admissions Office and Quality Office as required throughout the application process. The RPL Unit will communicate the outcome of RPL for entry and advanced entry to applicants.

RPL Mentor

An RPL Mentor is someone who has the necessary expertise to advise and counsel the applicant on the RPL process, and who is familiar with the contents of the programme being applied for/seeking exemptions from. A Mentor will have undertaken appropriate training for the role.

RPL Assessor

An RPL Assessor must be an academic who is qualified to deliver and assess the module/s for which exemptions are sought and should have completed RPL Assessor training.

Assessors shall normally be appointed by the HoD. The Assessor must submit the outcome

of the RPL process to the HoD, together with details of any learning gaps identified, and bridging modules that will be required to fill the gaps and prepare the learner to meet admission requirements.

4.6 Staff Support

ATU will provide RPL Assessors and RPL Mentors with training and support on an ongoing basis.

5. Associated Documents Generated by this Policy

- 5.1 Procedures
 - Procedure for Assessment of Prior Certified/Prior Experiential Learning
- 5.2 Forms
 - Module Exemption Form

6. Revision History

Revision No	Description of Change	Approval Date
000	New Policy Approved by Academic Council	14/06/2023