

CREDIT & RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY

Policy Number	AC10
Approving Authority	Academic Board
Date Implemented	October 2026
Current Version	5.0
Date of Review	October 2029
Responsible Officer	Director, Learning and Innovation
Contact Officer	Director, Learning and Innovation

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This policy sets out the principles and requirements for recognising previous study, training and experience towards accredited courses at NIDA.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to:

- (a) students enrolled in the following accredited courses:

UNDERGRADUATE COURSES (BFAS)	POSTGRADUATE COURSES (MFAS)	VOCATIONAL COURSES
☒	☒	☒

- (b) staff responsible for receiving, assessing and administering applications for recognition of prior learning.

3. PRINCIPLES

NIDA recognises that learning may be gained through formal, non-formal and informal pathways and is committed to providing students with opportunities to have relevant prior learning recognised.

3.1 Qualification integrity

- (a) Recognition of prior learning decisions maintain the quality and integrity of NIDA qualifications.
- (b) Credit is granted only where prior learning is equivalent to the learning outcomes and standards required by NIDA.
- (c) NIDA's highly collaborative conservatoire training model is considered when assessing applications.

3.2 Equity

- (a) Applications are assessed on their individual merits.
- (b) Decisions are based on verifiable evidence and academic judgement.
- (c) Students are treated equitably regardless of where or how their prior learning was acquired.

3.3 Transparency

- (a) Information about recognition of prior learning processes is accessible, clear and easy to understand.
- (b) Requirements, assessment criteria, decision-making and appeal processes are communicated clearly.
- (c) Appropriate records are kept of applications and decisions.

3.4 Student success

- (a) Decisions to grant recognition for prior learning do not disadvantage a student through insufficient preparedness to undertake remaining study.
- (b) Applications are considered in a timely manner, and students are informed of any impacts on course progression, course duration or visa requirements.

4. POLICY STATEMENTS

4.1 Recognition of prior learning may be granted for:

- (a) Formal learning: Learning gained through study at a recognised education or training provider.
- (b) Non-formal learning: learning gained through structured training, workshops or professional development.
- (c) Informal or Work -based learning: learning gained through work, professional practice and life experience.

- 4.2 Students apply for recognition of prior learning after accepting an offer to study at NIDA. Applications for recognition of prior learning will not be accepted from prospective students.
- 4.3 Students seeking recognition of prior learning must submit an application and provide evidence to support their request.
- 4.4 Any recognition of prior learning granted applies only to the course in which the student is enrolled at the time of the application. If a student transfers to a different NIDA course, they must submit a new recognition of prior learning application.
- 4.5 For international students, being granted recognition of prior learning may result in a change to duration of their course and impact their student visa. Students will be advised in writing if this occurs.
- 4.6 Students may request in writing to withdraw approved recognition of prior learning. If the request is approved, the student will be required to complete the relevant course requirements.
- 4.7 NIDA may withdraw recognition of prior learning granted where documentation provided by the student is proven to be fraudulent, false, or misleading.
- 4.8 Students may appeal a decision in relation to recognition of prior learning through the Student Complaints and Academic Appeals Policy.
- 4.9 Information about applying for recognition of prior learning is available on the NIDA website and in offer letters to applicants.

Higher Education Courses

- 4.10 Recognition of prior learning for a higher education course, is granted as credit for one or more subjects.
- 4.11 Applications should be submitted and assessed prior to the census date for the relevant subject/s. Submission deadlines are determined by the Director, Learning and Innovation.
- 4.12 The following limitations apply on the recognition of prior learning:
 - (a) The maximum amount of credit will be 120 credit points for undergraduate courses, and 60 credit points for postgraduate courses. A minimum amount of credit points must be completed at NIDA to qualify for a NIDA award.
 - (b) Credit will not normally be granted for prior learning, including formal, non-formal, and informal learning completed more than 10 years prior to the student's commencement at NIDA.
 - (c) For NIDA Masters qualifications, formal learning considered for recognition of prior learning must generally have been completed as part of a Masters course.
- 4.13 When credit is awarded:
 - (a) The grades received in the prior study are not included on the NIDA academic transcript.
 - (b) Students will not be eligible to audit the subject but may be permitted to attend specific classes at the discretion of the Director of Learning and Innovation.

- 4.14 The Director, Learning and Innovation assesses the application and determines an outcome. The Director, Learning and Innovation may delegate assessment of recognition of prior learning to a staff member with relevant academic qualifications and skills to assess the application.
- 4.15 The Director, Learning and Innovation, or delegate, will communicate the outcome in writing to:
- (a) The student.
 - (b) The Course Leader and Course Coordinator for the course the student is enrolled in.
 - (c) Student Services.

Vocational Education and Training Courses

- 4.16 Students in a vocational education and training course, may apply for:
- (a) Credit transfer based on successful completion of an equivalent unit of competency or module completed at another registered training organisation.
 - (b) Recognition for prior learning gained through previous training, work or life experience. Recognition for prior learning may be granted as:
 - credit for a unit of competency; or
 - exemption from an assessment component of a course.
- 4.17 Students should discuss their application with their Course Leader before applying. Due to the nature of NIDA's conservatoire training, each application is considered individually.
- 4.18 Applications should be submitted and assessed prior to the census date for the relevant term.
- 4.19 The following limitations apply on the recognition of prior learning:
- (a) Recognition of prior learning will not be granted for learning completed more than 10 years prior to the student's commencement at NIDA.
- 4.20 The Head of Vocational Education and Training assesses the application and determines an outcome. The Head of Vocational Education and Training may delegate assessment of recognition of prior learning to a staff member who meets the training and assessment credentials in the [Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Credential Policy](#).
- 4.21 The Head of Vocational Education and Training, or delegate, communicates the outcome of an application in writing to:
- (a) The student.
 - (b) The Course Leader and Course Coordinator for the course the student is enrolled in.
 - (c) Student Services.

5. RECORDKEEPING AND REPORTING

- 5.1 Applications assessed for recognition of prior learning are recorded in the Recognition of Prior Learning Register.
- 5.2 Any credit granted is recorded in the student system by Student Services.
- 5.3 Recognition of Prior Learning applications, assessment and outcomes are filed in the Student's File on Content Manager.
- 5.4 Retention and disposal of records is managed in accordance with NIDA's Records Retention and Disposal Authority.
- 5.5 The Director, Learning and Innovation, or delegate reports to Academic Board annually on
 - (a) The number of applications received.
 - (b) Application outcomes.
 - (c) Trends and issues identified, including whether granting of credit has impacted subsequently on student success.
 - (d) Recommendation for improvement where appropriate.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 6.1 Academic Board
 - (a) Approve policy on recognition of prior learning.
 - (b) Receive annual reports on the granting of recognition of prior learning.
 - (c) Use reports to monitor academic matters and address any underlying issues or emerging trends.
- 6.2 Director, Learning and Innovation
 - (a) Oversee implementation of recognition of prior learning policy, procedure and processes and ensure they are effective, robust and efficient.
 - (b) Assess and approve applications for recognition of prior learning for higher education courses or otherwise delegate to qualified personnel.
 - (c) Compile or delegate the preparation of an annual report for Academic Board on recognition of prior learning granted in higher education courses.
- 6.3 Head of Vocational Education and Training
 - (a) Assess and approve applications for recognition of prior learning for vocational education courses or otherwise delegate to qualified personnel.
- 6.4 Staff responsible for assessing recognition for prior learning applications
 - (a) Ensure the quality and integrity of NIDA qualifications and maintenance of NIDA academic standards.
 - (b) Ensure consistency in the assessment of recognition of prior learning.

6.5 Course Leaders

- (a) Support the implementation of approved recognition of prior learning decisions.

6.6 Student Services

- (a) Maintain the Recognition of Prior Learning Register and ensure records are stored appropriately in Content Manager.
- (b) Ensure information is accessible to prospective and current students.

6.7 Students

- (a) Submit applications in a timely manner and provide information that is not fraudulent or misleading.

7. DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
Accredited course	A course which leads to the award of a qualification identified under the Australian Qualifications Framework.
Credit	Credit is the value assigned for the recognition of equivalence in content and learning outcomes between different types of learning and/or qualifications. Credit reduces the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification.
Credit transfer	Recognition of successful completion of an equivalent unit of competency, module or subject completed at another recognised provider by a vocational education student.
Formal learning	Learning gained through study at a recognised education or training provider.
Informal learning	Learning gained through work, professional practice and life experience.
Non-formal learning	Learning gained through structured training, workshops or professional development.
Prospective student	A person interested in studying at NIDA in an accredited course.
Higher Education Course	A Bachelor or Masters qualification.
Recognition of Prior Learning	Recognition of prior learning 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 credit.
Vocational Education and Training Course	A Certificate or Diploma qualification.

8. RELATED DOCUMENTS

DOCUMENT	TITLE
Legislation	Australian Qualifications Framework
External Policy	Credential Policy
Legislation	FA462 Functional Retention and Disposal Authority
Legislation	Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
Legislation	National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018
Legislation	National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025
NIDA Policy	Student Complaints and Academic Appeals Policy
NIDA Policy	Course Regulations

9. CHANGE HISTORY

DATE	CHANGE DESCRIPTION	REASON FOR CHANGE	AUTHOR	VERSION
September 2026	Reduce duplication, update principles and definitions of types of learning, credit limitations, roles and responsibilities.	Policy review	Head of Quality and Compliance	5.0
August 2026	Update reference to Student Complaints and Academic Appeals Policy	New policy	Head of Quality and Compliance	4.2
December 2025	Editorial update to policy titles and review date	Approval of new policy review schedule by Academic Board October 2025	Academic Compliance Manager	4.1
September 2024	Reviewed wording. Updated information with regards to scope to	Policy Review	Student Services	3.0

make the inclusion
of vocational
courses more
transparent

July 2022	Reviewed wording and updated information around circumstances relating to RPL for international students	Review	Student Services	2.0
October 2018	Addition of credit linked to progression rules Addition of the information regarding the right to appeal Addition of assessment process criteria Information about international students and credit transfer constraints	Quality Assurance review of all P&P	Learning and Teaching	1.0