

# RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)

## Student information sheet



**MGSM**  
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

### PURPOSE

This document provides general information and advice to MGSM students and prospective students on how to efficiently and effectively apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) at MGSM. This Information Sheet should be read in conjunction with the RPL Management Plan.

### RPL AT MGSM AT A GLANCE

#### WHAT RPL IS USED FOR

RPL can be used to gain:

- entry/ admission into a MGSM program of study, or
- credit towards a unit/s in a MGSM program of study, or
- an exemption<sup>1</sup> towards a unit or units within a MGSM program.

#### TYPES OF RPL CONSIDERED

MGSM will consider an applicant's competency gained through non-formal, informal and formal learning contexts.

- **Non-formal learning** – occurs through a structured program of learning but does not lead to professionally accredited qualification,<sup>2</sup> such as a MOOC certificate, Executive or Community education/ training, etc.

- **Informal learning** – occurs through work, social, family, hobby or leisure activities and experiences including but not limited to volunteer experiences and self-employment. Unlike formal or non-formal learning, informal learning is not organised or externally structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support.<sup>3</sup>

- **Formal learning** – occurs through a structured program of learning that leads to the full or partial achievement of an officially accredited qualification,<sup>4</sup> such as a qualification from an educational institution e.g. another university, CPA or ICAA.

#### WHAT TO DO WHEN APPLYING FOR RPL

It is crucial that RPL applicants follow the following steps in preparing an RPL application:

- Read the RPL Management Plan and this Student Information Sheet.
- Reflect on your prior learning experiences and consider;
  - what evidence you might provide to support your application, and
  - to what extent your evidence demonstrates your competence in the area you seek RPL.
- Collect and prepare the required supporting evidence.<sup>5</sup>
- Complete the RPL application form, including the required documentary evidence and return to MGSM for consideration.

### CRITERIA TO BE MET WHEN MAKING AN RPL APPLICATION:

	For entry	For credit
Non-formal Informal	Applicants must <b>demonstrate</b> that their <b>prior learning</b> (level and depth of knowledge, skills and application of knowledge and skills) <b>satisfies the program specific 'For entry AQF level prior learning equivalence criteria'</b> in Appendix 1 of the RPL Management Plan, <b>by addressing how they meet relevant criteria in the RPL Self-Assessment Report.</b> The RPL Self-Assessment Report must also be <b>supported by a RPL Referee report</b> (Both report templates are available in the RPL application form).	Applicants must <b>demonstrate</b> that their <b>prior learning</b> , (level and depth of knowledge, skills and application of knowledge and skills) <b>satisfies at least one of the learning outcomes of the relevant MGSM program of study</b> , as set out in the 'For credit equivalence criteria,' Appendix 2 of the RPL Management Plan, <b>by addressing how they meet relevant criteria through the RPL Self-Assessment Report.</b> The RPL Self-Assessment Report must also be <b>supported by a RPL Referee report.</b> (Both reports templates are available in the RPL application form)
Formal	Applicants must <b>demonstrate</b> that they have the <b>relevant formal learning</b> , <b>by providing appropriate proof of completion</b> , e.g. Certified copy of transcript or testamur.	Applicants must <b>provide external course or unit outlines which closely resemble the MGSM units for which credit is sought.</b> For RPL to be granted there <b>must be at least a 75% match</b> in content and volume of learning between the external unit and the MGSM unit.

<sup>1</sup> Where an exemption from a unit is given, there is no grant of credit but the applicant may substitute the unit with another unit. This is known as a substitution at MGSM.  
Note: A substitution does not reduce the program volume of learning (length of study).

<sup>2</sup> Australian Qualifications Framework, Second Edition January 2013, Glossary of Terminology, page 98.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, page 96.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid page 95.

<sup>5</sup> RPL applicants are responsible for identifying, gathering and presenting evidence to demonstrate their competence.

<sup>6</sup> Applicants should note that in some instances, MGSM may seek to confirm the authenticity of evidence directly with the source. In such instances, the applicant's agreement and consent will be obtained.

## RPL APPLICATION DOCUMENT CHECKLIST

The table below outlines the documents that MGSM requires you to provide when applying for RPL. Provision of the outlined documents will give you the best chance for a successful RPL outcome.

RECOMMENDED DOCUMENTS TO BE PROVIDED BY THE APPLICANT								
Type of prior learning	RPL application form	CV	Self-assessment (e.g. RPL self – assessment report and/ or personal statement)	Testamur	Referee report(s)	Academic records (e.g. Transcript, certificate(s) of achievement or attendance)	Course outline(s)	Other evidence (e.g. Professional member)
Formal	✓			✓		✓	✓	
Non-formal	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Informal	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓

### DETAILED PROCESS TO FOLLOW WHEN APPLYING FOR RPL AT MGSM

- 1) Applicant decides to apply for RPL.
- 2) Applicant reviews MGSM RPL Management Plan **and** considers whether they meet the relevant criteria to apply for RPL.
- 3) Applicant identifies and determines the:
  - type of prior learning, i.e. formal, informal, non-formal, and
  - purpose for which RPL is sought, i.e. for admission or for credit.
- 4) Applicant downloads and completes the RPL application form available from the MGSM Website.
- 5) Applicant gathers supporting evidence and submits completed RPL application to MGSM by the application deadline published on the MGSM website.
- 6) Student Services Team receives completed RPL application from applicant.
- 7) Student Services Team conducts preliminary assessment to ensure application complete.
- 8) Student Services Team sends out an acknowledgement notice to the applicant (within 5 days of receipt of RPL application).
  - If an application is incomplete the Student Services team will advise the candidate that the application will not be assessed. In such instances, the RPL applicant would need to submit a new application should they want to progress their application to assessment stage.
- 9) If the RPL application is complete, the Student Services Team will send the RPL documentation for academic assessment.
- 10) Academic reviewer assesses the evidence as per RPL Management Plan and where appropriate seeks further information from applicant, via a competency conversation/interview.
- 11) Academic reviewer makes a decision and documents the reasons for the decision.
- 12) Record of decision and documentation returned to Student Services Team – for student notification and record management.
- 13) Student Services Team notifies applicant of RPL outcome and provides applicant with information regarding the next steps, e.g. how to appeal a decision or how to enrol.

### IMPORTANT APPLICANT NOTE

Do not enrol in a unit of study for which you are seeking RPL until an RPL decision has been made.

If you intend to:

- a) re-apply (due to the availability of new evidence), or
  - b) appeal an RPL decision (permissible on procedural grounds only)
- do not enrol in the relevant unit of study.

## DOCUMENTATION THAT YOU SHOULD PROVIDE TO SUPPORT YOUR RPL APPLICATION

You must submit supporting evidence to support your RPL application. The academic reviewer will review the documentation you provide to determine whether your prior learning adequately matches relevant MGSM admission requirements and/or learning outcomes for the purpose of a grant of RPL.

Ideally, you should submit a portfolio including (all or some of) the following documents with your RPL application:

- completed admission application form (required when applying for entry/ admission into MGSM)
- completed RPL application form
- CV/resume
- certified academic transcript/ statement of results
- certified testamur – i.e. official documentation confirming a qualification has been completed and granted
- full course/ unit outline (from the external institution) for each completed unit for which RPL is sought, including information about the textbooks used and the number of face to face teaching hours
- Statement of Personal Aims and Achievements (required when applying for entry)
- Referee Reports x2 (required when applying for entry)
- RPL Self-Assessment Report<sup>7</sup> – (s4.2 B of RPL application form) used to address MGSM's non-formal and informal performance equivalence criteria
- RPL Referee Report – (s5 of RPL application form) in which a third party reflects on the extent to which your prior non-formal and informal learning prepares you for the relevant MGSM program
- any other supporting evidence or documentation demonstrating your underpinning prior knowledge and skills.

## WHAT THE ACADEMIC REVIEWER WILL BE LOOKING FOR WHEN ASSESSING YOUR APPLICATION

To be granted RPL, an applicant must possess skills and knowledge that are:

- current – I.e. the prior learning has been attained within ten years from the date of the RPL application
  - relevant – that the prior learning matches relevant MGSM admission requirements and/or learning outcomes,
- and
- the applicant must provide sufficient, reliable evidence demonstrating their claims of competency.

As such, you should consider the following questions when preparing an RPL application and deciding what supporting evidence to provide:

- How current is my evidence?
- How valid/relevant is my evidence? I.e. is the prior learning at a standard comparable to the requirements for entry, exemption or credit in the relevant program of study or unit?<sup>8</sup>
- How sufficient is my evidence? Is it enough?
- How authentic is my evidence? Is it your work?
- How reliable is my evidence? Is it accurate?
- Can other evidence corroborate the evidence?
- Does the evidence cover the range of contexts referenced?
- Have you matched your evidence to relevant competencies? I.e., in the RPL Self-Assessment Report.

## KEY RPL APPLICANT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The applicant is responsible for:

- considering whether they meet the relevant criteria for an RPL grant (refer to RPL Management Plan for assistance)
- collating and preparing the necessary documentation required for an RPL application (to be provided in portfolio form) and for providing a complete RPL application to MGSM by the specified deadline
- ensuring that official evidence is provided to support any claims, for instance, all certificates and/or testamurs MUST BE certified by a Justice of the Peace or Public Notary
- providing further information or participating in subsequent assessment processes such as an interview, if required to do so.

## STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

Contact us at [studentservices@mgsm.edu.au](mailto:studentservices@mgsm.edu.au).

<sup>7</sup> The Self-Assessment Report is a reflective overview of the competencies and skills you have gained throughout your 'life-wide' experiences. In the Self-Assessment Report, you must demonstrate how your prior learning experiences satisfy the performance equivalence criteria of the program of study or unit for which RPL is sought.

<sup>8</sup> You should note that all MGSM RPL requirements are at graduate (formerly known as postgraduate) level. Specifically this means applicants must demonstrate competency at a Bachelor Degree, Level 7 or higher as required by the relevant MGSM unit or program of study.