

**TITLE: RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING**

**POLICY STATEMENT:**

Red Deer College (RDC) recognizes prior learning of knowledge, skills, or competencies that have been acquired through any or all of the following: work, formal, informal, and non-formal learning.

**PURPOSE:**

This policy identifies the criteria that governs eligibility for granting credit and/or advanced placement for prior learning and sets out the process for applicants to obtain recognition.

**SCOPE:**

This policy applies to all applicants who have applied or have been admitted to a credit program at RDC.

**PRINCIPLES:**

Procedures and decisions at RDC:

1. Treat all persons fairly and respectfully.
2. Are non-discriminatory and non-intrusive.
3. Incorporate open, honest, and timely communication.
4. Are made in a timely manner.
5. Provide appropriate confidentiality and privacy.
6. Provide appropriate access to education.
7. Ensure that all persons have access to informed support regarding policies, procedures, rights, and responsibilities.
8. Operate with clear written expectations for conduct and handling of complaints.
9. Meet all accreditation standards.
10. Maintain and clearly state a high standard of instruction and administration in all areas of educational programs and services.
11. Are communicated in alternate forms to those who require such accommodation.

**Specifically for this policy:**

RDC applies the principles, with respect to the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), which have been developed and endorsed by the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer.

**DEFINITIONS:**

**Advanced Placement:** Recognizes learning that enables applicants to waive a prerequisite and register directly into a higher-level course, or acknowledges that the desired learning outcomes have been achieved in an equivalent course. Advanced Placement is applicable for applicants transferring courses across programs within RDC.

**Formal Learning:** Credit courses and programs offered at post-secondary institutions.

**Informal Learning:** Knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired through life and work experience.

**Non-formal Learning:** Non-credit courses, on-the-job training, and professional workshops.

**Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):** The processes that are used to identify, document, assess, and evaluate learning to provide recognition for the knowledge, skills, and competencies that people have acquired in their lives including formal learning, non-formal learning, and informal learning.

**Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Fees:** Non-refundable fees charged for assessing out-of-province transcripts, prior learning, including Advanced Placement, challenge examinations, and portfolios.

**Transfer Credit:** An advance credit awarded on the basis of successful completion of structured educational activities at a post-secondary institution. Transfer credit is determined by assessing the equivalency of the course presented to an existing credit course. Passing grades, as assigned by the sending institution, are accepted for transfer credit.

#### **GUIDELINE:**

1. Each School is responsible for outlining any restrictions in applicant access to Recognition of Prior Learning and for obtaining approval by Academic Council for publication in the Academic Calendar.

#### **PROCEDURE:**

1. Applicants are required to complete and submit the Recognition of Prior Learning application form to the Office of the Registrar.
2. **Recognition of Formal Learning:** The applicant must provide relevant supporting documentation of an equivalent course (usually in the form of an official transcript) acceptable to the College in order to receive Transfer Credit or Advanced Placement. Normally the Alberta (or other provincial) transfer guide(s) and academic calendar descriptions of courses are used to determine if the course may be formally recognized. Recognition may also be granted for learning experiences that are equivalent to an identified RDC course (i.e. practica or studio). In these cases, the applicant must provide documentation acceptable to the College.
3. **Recognition of Non-Formal and Informal Learning:** The applicant must provide any transcripts, course outlines, descriptions, or any other documentation necessary to support the prior learning application. Assessment may take the form of, but not be limited to, any of the following, as required:
  - 3.1. A portfolio: written summary of learning gained from Informal Learning experiences;
  - 3.2. Letters from employers and/or associates that support the applicant's claim of skill mastery;
  - 3.3. Photos and/or videos that demonstrate skills and products;

- 3.4. A list of references of people who can support the claims of mastery, within the context of the activity;
  - 3.5. A summary of group projects with a clear indication of skills mastered;
  - 3.6. Work assessment reports from the applicant's place of employment;
  - 3.7. Standardized tests: paper and pencil or computerized tests may be used to assess theoretical or applied knowledge relevant to the RDC curricula being reviewed for credit;
  - 3.8. Skills assessment: such an assessment is a demonstration of skills within a prescribed environment, i.e. laboratory or practicum setting, for the expressed purpose of assessing an individual's ability to meet learning outcome skills of an RDC course or program and obtain relevant RDC credit;
  - 3.9. Review of Employer-Based Training: review of private or public sector sponsored training programs – curriculum and learning outcomes are compared with the content of those courses which may be considered to be equivalent to courses offered at RDC. Academic credit may be granted when the courses and equivalent components are found to be highly compatible.
4. The assessors and the subject matter experts determine the manner in which the learning is assessed and recognized. It may be through any of the following methods:
    - 4.1 Advanced Placement: No grade is assigned and AP is indicated on the transcript.
    - 4.2 Prior Learning Credit: No grade is assigned and PL is indicated on the transcript.
    - 4.3 Challenge Exam: A grade is assigned and is indicated on the transcript along with a notation that the course was a challenge.
      - 4.3.1 A challenge examination process allows applicants to obtain a grade when prior learning is recognized. Applicants applying for a challenge exam must provide the appropriate supporting documentation, as determined by the assessors, outlining the learning experiences that qualify them to apply for the challenge examination. Upon approval by the assessor(s) the applicant registers in the challenge section of the course.
      - 4.3.2 Applicants who are approved to challenge a course may be required to write essays, assignments, or exams, to undertake demonstrations or auditions, or to undergo other forms of final evaluations that may normally be required of applicants registered in the course.
      - 4.3.3 Applicants may not challenge an RDC course for which they have already received a passing grade or a grade of WD. Applicants may challenge an RDC course which they have previously failed or withdrawn from, if, subsequent to taking the course, they have obtained another learning experience elsewhere.
      - 4.3.4 Applicants may not challenge a course for which Advanced Placement, Prior Learning Credit, or Transfer Credit has already been granted or which has been waived as a pre-requisite for a higher-level course.
      - 4.3.5 A challenge examination must be completed within the term in which the applicant is registered in the challenge section of the course and before the last day of final exams for that term. If the challenge examination is not completed a grade of F is assigned to the transcript with the notation.

4.3.6 Once the challenge examination is complete, the grade and notation “is assigned to the transcript. If the applicant is unable to complete the challenge examination before the last day of final exams, in the term in which they are registered for the challenge, they may apply to Withdraw from the challenge course. A grade of WD with the notation will be assigned to the transcript.

5. Recognition of Prior Learning decisions may be appealed to the Registrar. The Registrar’s decision is final.

**OFFICER RESPONSIBLE:** Chair of Academic Council

**RECOMMENDING AUTHORITY:** Academic Council

**CONSULTATION FOR REVIEW:** Assessment and Articulation Services, Registrar, School Councils. Students’ Association and Vice President Academic.

**POLICY REVIEW DATE:** March 2021

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** July 1, 2016

**REVISION HISTORY:** July 1, 2000 (Recognition of Prior Learning Standard Practice)  
July 1, 2002  
November 1, 2011 (Standard Practice revised and renamed Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition)  
July 1, 2016 (Policy renamed Recognition of Prior Learning)

**RELATED POLICIES:**

- [Appeals: Formal](#)
- [Appeals: Informal Resolution](#)
- [Assessment and Grading](#)
- [Assignment of Academic and Billing Credits to Courses](#)
- [Final Examinations](#)
- [Graduation, Certification, and Completion](#)
- [Transfer of Credit Courses and Programs](#)

**CONNECTION TO BOARD POLICIES:**

All RDC policies support relevant Board of Governors policies.