1. Overview

In accordance with the requirements of the Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations, Sydney Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine ("SITCM") is committed to develop open and accessible guidelines to recognise a student’s prior learning toward a VET qualification or VET units of competency for which they are enrolled.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process which ensures that students commence VET study at a level that appropriately recognises their prior learning experiences, and are not required to repeat equivalent learning successfully undertaken in another context, including:

- Formal studies
- Work experience
- Life experience
- Non-accredited/accredited training programs

These learning are measured against the requirements of a unit of competence, in respect of both entry requirements and outcomes to be achieved. By removing the need for duplication of learning, RPL encourages an individual to continue upgrading their skills and knowledge through structured education and training towards formal qualifications and improved employment outcomes. This has benefits for the individual and industry.

2. Recognition guidelines

The following guidelines are to be followed when an RPL application is received:

- Any student is entitled to apply for RPL in a course or qualification in which they are currently enrolled.
- Students may not apply for RPL for units of competency or a qualification which are not included in SITCM’s scope of registration.
- Whilst students may apply for RPL at any time, they are encouraged to apply before commencing a training program. This will reduce unnecessary training and guide the student down a more efficient path to competence.
- Students who are currently enrolled in a training program are eligible to apply for RPL in that program at no additional charge.
- Assessment via RPL is to apply the principles of assessment and the rules of evidence.
- RPL may only be awarded for whole (i.e. not part) units of competency.

3. National Recognition

SITCM will recognise qualifications completed at other Registered Training Organisations. A student holding a valid qualification or statement of attainment including units delivered as part of a nationally recognised training package course or accredited course issued under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) will be deemed competent for those units based on RPL assessment procedures.
4. Evidence

Evidence is proof that the student has reached a level of performance that meets that outlined in the unit of competency. This evidence should be current (show that the student is still competent), authentic (it is the student’s own work) and be at a level of complexity that matches the unit of competency. A variety of evidence allows for sufficient evidence to make the assessment decision. Logically the evidence should be valid, i.e. relate directly to the unit of competency.

Forms of evidence toward RPL may include:

- Statements of results from both formal and informal training that you have completed
- Documentation of practical experiences in the workplace or the community including photo’s newspaper articles, reports etc
- Copies of projects that you have undertaken
- Documents you create that link your training and assessment to the units of competency

Students will usually need to combine several pieces of evidence together to get adequate cover for each unit. Inversely, a piece of evidence may be used to demonstrate competence across several units of competency. This means that a piece of evidence such as a set of meeting notes can show competence for more than one unit.

Well thought out portfolios of evidence will get the most out of every piece of evidence used that way, fewer individual pieces of evidence are needed to prove competence.

5. RPL Procedure

Step 1. Students who wish to apply for RPL should first carry out a self-assessment to determine their suitability for an RPL application (using the RPL Kit). This step is not compulsory but is strongly recommended.

Step 2. The applicant fills in a Recognition of Prior Learning Application Form, including the Title and Code of the Unit(s) of the course. Equivalencies claimed should meet the content and nominal hour’s criteria.

Step 3. The applicant should attach a portfolio of evidence to the application which could include certified copies of the relevant qualifications, transcripts, course outlines and other academic records including the title of the unit, duration (hours) of learning, results (marks and grades). Please note:

a. Evidence in a language other than English: supply a certified copy of the awards and transcripts in the original language, together with any English translations provided by the issuing institution or the overseas government PLUS a certified copy of a translation of the documents provided by an Australian authorised translator/interpreter service.

Step 4. Upon receipt of the submitted RPL application, the Associate Dean will review and assess the evidence, and may:

a. Verify the authenticity of original documents; or
b. Request the applicant to undertake an interview to answer verbal questions, complete practical assessment activities of skills and knowledge, and/or provide further documentary evidence in order to satisfy itself of a student’s current competence.

Step 5. The Associate Dean will provide written RPL assessment outcome to applicant with a RPL Application Notification of Results letter, including the procedure for the student to appeal the assessment outcome.

Step 6. If the student is not satisfied with the outcomes of an RPL, they may appeal the outcome (See Section 7).
Step 7. When all assessment and appeal processes have concluded, the Applicant will be required to “sign off” on the Notification of Results letter. The original letter will be placed in the applicant’s file and a copy given to the applicant.

6. International Students
No more than 50% of the course can be claimed through RPL.

If RPL is granted to the student prior to having their VISA granted the duration of the overall course will be reduced on the Electronic Confirmation of Enrolment (eCoE) with Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP).

If RPL is granted to the student after having their VISA granted, SITCM will report the variation in course length via PRISMS.

7. Appeals
A student may appeal against the outcomes of an RPL application. The grounds for appeal are that the decision is inconsistent with this policy. Appeals must be made in writing and lodged with the CEO within five working days of the student receiving written notification of the decision. The CEO will respond to the appeal within fourteen working days and may confirm or vary the decision. All decisions of the CEO in relation to appeals will be reviewed by the Executive Management Group.

If a student remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal against a decision regarding their RPL application they may utilise SITCM’s grievance handling procedures.

8. Related documentation
- RPL Kit
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Application Form

9. Publication and review
This policy will be made available to all prospective and existing students on SITCM’s website to enable them to make well-informed choices between alternative pathways. Prospective students will be advised in pre-enrolment materials and upon enrolment about this policy.

This policy will be regularly reviewed to maximise applicability to new and updated awards and to student and industry needs in line with section 4.3 of SITCM’s Quality Assurance Framework.

10. Version control

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