AUT UNIVERSITY

Recognition of Nonformal Prior Learning (RNPL)
Portfolio Preparation Guide

CONTENTS

Recognition of Nonformal Prior Learning (RNPL) is a process for AUT to recognise and grant academic credit for what you have already learned or developed (current skills and knowledge) from any one or a combination of the following:

- Life experience (e.g. elder care, service to community)
- Work experience (e.g. things you learned or skills developed in a work role)
- Teaching yourself (e.g. research, hobby)
- Training on the job (e.g. industry courses, in-service training, staff development, seminars/workshops)
- Formal courses (e.g. school, polytechnic, university)

This guide has been developed to assist you to gather your documentation to present as a portfolio for RNPL assessment.

Please check with the paper leader to ensure that portfolio presentation is the correct method of assessment for the paper for which you seek credit.
There are other methods used such as challenge exams and interviews.

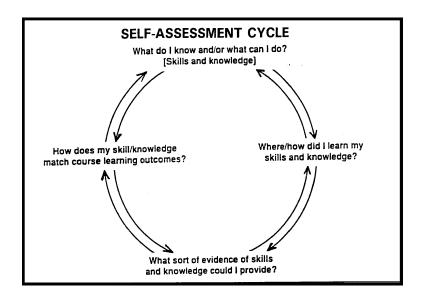This guide is divided into two sections:

- **Section A** to help you **identify** your prior learning (self-assessment)
- **Section B** to help you **prepare** a portfolio for assessment

Section A Self-Assessment: Identify your prior learning

There are 4 essential components for identifying your relevant prior skills and knowledge:

1. Identify your current skills and knowledge
2. Describe how you learned or developed your skills and knowledge
3. Identify evidence that you have the skills and knowledge
4. Identify how your skills and knowledge correspond to the learning outcomes in the paper for which you seek credit

These all form part of the Self-Assessment Cycle.

SELF-ASSESSMENT CYCLE

What do I know and/or what can I do?
[Skills and knowledge]

How does my skill/knowledge match course learning outcomes?

Where/how did I learn my skills and knowledge?

What sort of evidence of skills and knowledge could I provide?

You may start anywhere in the cycle and move around in either direction, depending on those aspects you find easiest to identify. You may need to go round the cycle several times.

If you already know which paper you would like to seek credit for, then you could begin with the learning outcomes for the paper and move on from there.

> 1. **Identify your current skills and knowledge**
> 2. **Describe how you have learned these**

Perhaps you would like to begin by building up a general picture of your skills and knowledge. In this case, you could begin by looking at various areas of your life, such as work experience. By analysing each job you have held, you can identify your prior knowledge and skills. Contact University Career Services if you need assistance.

Use the worksheets at the end of Section A to record the results of your self-assessment (Columns 1 &2).

Life experience	Worksheet 1
Work experience	Worksheet 2
Teaching yourself	Worksheet 3
Training on the job	Worksheet 4
Formal study	Worksheet 5

3. Identify Evidence of Your Skills and Knowledge

Whether you are applying for a job or seeking credit for a paper you need to be able to provide evidence that you possess the skills and knowledge that you claim. In the case of NfRPL, you must provide evidence that meets the criteria of the Examination Board. Sources of evidence include:

Direct evidence something you have made or produced yourself such as:

- a financial report
- a computer programme
- a garment
- an article or report
- a technical drawing
- photograph
- DVD

Indirect evidence of your skills and knowledge. This may include:

i. A CV or an account of your experience in a particular or a variety of roles and/or a detailed narration/essay of your experience and reflection on that experience, i.e. what you did and what you learned.

ii. Letter(s) of Validation
Letter(s) from a credible and trustworthy source (usually someone who supervised or mentored you) providing verification of your claims to learning. This letter must specifically state the knowledge and skills you claim. It is not necessarily equivalent to a letter of recommendation.

Note: letters of recommendation from your family, friends or co-workers, will not be accepted as proof of learning. Examples of credible sources include:

- your previous or current employer
- community leader
- previous teacher
- sports leader
- local councillor
- church leader

What makes for a "good" letter or validation?

To be of most value, the letter should be on organisational letterhead (if applicable) and be written by the person who has direct knowledge of the learning for which the applicant has claimed NfRPL. It should contain:

- The name of the applicant
- The dates of employment, or of the time the applicant has been known to you
- The position the applicant held; or the capacity in which the applicant has been known
- The writer's relationship to the applicant
- For each claim to knowledge, skill, or attributes a statement of verification (if agreed) that the applicant can unsupervised, perform the skills to the level indicated; or has the attitudes for the knowledge claimed
- It will also be helpful if the writer includes comments on the quality of the applicant's performance in respect of each claim
- The letter must be signed by the writer, who should indicate the position he/she holds, or held, in relation to the applicant
- The writer should not testify to any claim for which the applicant does not have full competence, where the writer does not agree to the applicant's claim, it may be helpful to describe the level of skill or knowledge that the applicant has attained

To help you request a letter of validation see the sample request letter below:

26 Castle Street
Onehunga
Auckland

30 October 2003

Mrs M Johnson
Maggie's Café
81 Gourmet Crescent
Auckland

Dear Mrs Johnson

I am applying for recognition of prior learning at AUT University. This is a process by which I hope to gain credit for the skills and knowledge which I have learned and shown while working as a cook in your café.

I have attached a list of my claims to learning which have to be validated. I would appreciate your help by verifying some or all of my claims.

If at all possible, could you reply to my request by (insert date), sending the letter to my address as shown above.

 Many thanks for your assistance with this.

Yours sincerely

Bettie Cooks

Claim to Learning by Bettie Cooks

I claim to have the following learning/skills:

1.   Understand and apply safe practices in all kitchen and restaurant procedures
2   Identify and apply hygienic cleaning practices in kitchens and restaurants
3   Demonstrate skill and understanding in the preparation and cooking of the following:

> (a) Soups, stocks and sauces
> (b) Poultry and feathered game
> (c) Meat
> (d) Fish and shell fish
> (e) Larder
> (f) Eggs
> (g) Fruit and vegetables
> (h) Baking, desserts and pastry

iii.   Evidence of training/education
Transcripts, certifications or statements of your education and training. Wherever possible include the course outlines or course description information.

iv.   Documents which recognise your expertise, such as:
Licences, awards, prizes, memberships of professional bodies, newspaper or journal articles.

v.   Records of your work performance, such as:
Appraisals, references, supervisor's report

Use the worksheets at the end of Section A to record the results of your self-assessment (Column 3).

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4.   Identify how your skills and knowledge correspond to the learning outcomes in the paper for which you seek credit

Step 1: Review the learning outcomes from the paper descriptor you have obtained. (See example of a paper descriptor next page).

Step 2: For each outcome:

- Identify the knowledge and skill you have learned that match this learning outcome. Refer back to your worksheets in Section A.
- Ensure that you have obtained or can obtain the necessary evidence to prove that you have the skills and knowledge.
- Repeat for each paper for which you are seeking credit.

Step 3: If you are confident that you have met the learning outcomes and have sufficient evidence to support this, go on to Step 4. If you are uncertain as to whether or not you have met all the learning outcomes, make an appointment to discuss this with your programme leader or the paper leader to obtain advice. Bring all your worksheets and evidence to the meeting.

Step 4: Assemble your evidence

- Write to people from whom you want to obtain letters of validation. See Appendix II for help with this.
- Obtain certified copies of official documents, e.g. academic records from another teaching institute, or submit originals.
- Attach any written evidence behind the page where it is mentioned, or include it as an appendix with an appropriate cross reference.
- Include work samples where practical. If products of your experience are not able to be sent in with your portfolio (e.g. too large/permanently fixed) give details as to when, where and how these can be evaluated.
- If computer applications are involved, give clear instructions as to how programmes can be accessed; what hardware is necessary (if not standard).

Use the worksheets to record the results of your self-assessment (Col 4).

Paper Descriptor
A 2-5 page document that outlines the major content and components of an AUT Paper. This is generally provided to the student at the beginning of the

Auckland University of Technology
Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences

PAPER DESCRIPTOR:

Each paper is allocated a **POINTS** value which signifies its contribution to the qualification (one year of full time study equates to 120 points. Each point represents a notional 10 hours of learning (contact or self directed). At AUT papers are specified in points which are in multiples of fifteen, with 15 points normally being the smallest possible unit e.g. 15, 30, 45 points.

Paper Title:	Knowledge Enquiry & Communication
Code:	555301
Points:	15
Prerequisites:	Nil
Corequisites:	Nil
Programme/s attached to:	AK3313, AK3324, AK3384, AK3410, AK3452, AK3521, AK3730, AK3657, AK3713

Prescriptor

Introduces students to principles of communication, knowledge construction, academic and scientific literacy.

Learning Outcomes

1. Define the modes of enquiry in different disciplines
2. Apply enquiry approaches to a range of concepts
3. Critically evaluate arguments and opinions
4. Articulate and defend a point of view
5. Engage in modes of communication that support professional relationships

Learning Outcome: A set of statements in a paper descriptor that specify what students should be able to demonstrate as a result of their learning. They identify practical skills, thinking skills, knowledge and attitudes relevant to a given subject. They are, in effect, statements of competence or capability.

Content

- Modes of Enquiry (Research Methods)
- Knowledge construction (Guest Lecturers)
- Enquiry Based Learning (process)
- Academic Literacy (Reading for meaning, writing for purpose and audience)
- Information Literacy (Computer skills, IT media, library sourcing)
- Communication skills (Verbal/Non verbal, collaborative engagement)

Learning and Teaching Strategies

A range of **modes of enquiry** that characterise academic disciplines in the faculty will be used to provide a foundation for development of students' ability to **engage in enquiry** and **analysis of research.** Enquiry will stimulate **critical awareness** of the ways in which knowledge is created and applied and develop competence in **written** and **verbal communication** as a basis for specialised learning in a degree programme.

Assessment Processes and Methods

Participation in online activities
Assessment of writing skills
Assessment of verbal communication skills

Recognition of Prior Learning

Prior Formal Learning

Details and AUT regulations regarding application for recognition of formal prior learning may be found in the AUT Academic Calendar.

Prior Non-formal Learning

The details and AUT regulations regarding applications for recognition of non-formal prior learning may be found in the AUT Academic Calendar.

Learning Resources

Recommended reading

Perrin, R. (2006). *Guide to APA style* (2nd ed.). USA: Houghton Mifflin.

WORKSHEET 1 LIFE EXPERIENCE

List any experiences that have helped you to gain skills and knowledge relevant to your application. This may include being a parent, involvement in school committees, organising a family business, accounts, involvements in any hobby groups, team, club, society, association or community organisations, building a house, travel and conferences.

THINGS YOU HAVE DONE, e.g.	What you learned or developed, e.g.	Evidence, e.g.,	Relates to Learning Outcome
• run a household • cared for children • worked on a voluntary basis for the local primary school	• Time management • Budgeting • Project management	Letter from school principal volunteer service award Plunket workshops	

WORKSHEET 2 **WORK EXPERIENCE**

Indicate any work experience, either full-time or part-time, including any voluntary or unpaid work. Start with the most recent experience.

Position, e.g.	What you learned or developed, e.g.	Evidence, e.g.	Relates to Learning Outcome
Team Leader ABC Consultants Queen Street, Auckland Jan 2009—present	• Communication skills • Conflict resolution, • Negotiation • Teamwork skills	Letter from employer Guide to staff development that I wrote	

WORKSHEET 3 TEACHING YOURSELF

List any things that you have done to gain skills and knowledge relevant to your application. This may include private study, research, computer aided instruction or publication of any work.

Things you have done, e.g. Created a movie of our family through 4 generations by scanning and touching up photos, creating a storyboard, developing the movie in Movie Maker	Things you have learned, e.g. • Scanning • Photoshop • Organising Photos • Storyboarding • Movie Maker	Evidence Movie Files	Relates to Learning Outcome

WORKSHEET 4 TRAINING ON THE JOB

List any training/courses provided through your workplace. This may include induction training, staff development programmes, seminars (in-house or outside consultants) or conferences.

Things you have done, e.g. Attended a week long workshop on motivational interviewing	Things you have learned, e.g. - Change cycle theory - Questioning methods - How to work with resistance	Evidence Certificate Reference from employer	Relates to Learning Outcome

WORKSHEET 5 **FORMAL STUDY**

List any papers that you have done at school, polytechnic, university or with a private provider that are relevant to your application. **Please Note:** Do not include any papers for which you have already received or intend to apply for Formal RPL credit.

Year, e.g. 2007	Name of Paper & Provider e.g. The Treaty of Waitangi, Waikato Institute of Technology	Level e.g. 4	Results e.g. A-	Evidence e.g. Transcript and paper outline	Relates to Learning Outcome #3 Demonstrate understanding of the implication of the Treaty of Waitangi in health care delivery

SELF-ASSESSMENT GUIDE CHECKLIST

I have….

☐ identified my skills and knowledge

☐ identified the situations where I have learned or developed my skills and knowledge

☐ identified "good" evidence (either direct or indirect) of my skills and knowledge

☐ identified AUT paper(s) with learning outcomes which contain all the skills and knowledge I can claim for this NfRPL application

☐ clearly shown how my evidence is related to each learning outcome

☐ …or can obtain evidence to support my claim

If you have all of these components completed, you are now ready to assemble the portfolio.

There is a non-refundable fee of $76.30 for the assessment of RNPL. This fee must be paid in advance of the assessment. You can pay this online at http://arion.aut.ac.nz. In addition, there will be a fee of $10 per credit point for any paper for which you are successful in gaining RNPL credit.

Section B: Preparing your Assessment Portfolio

The Nonformal RPL portfolio is a collection of documents (paper-based or digital) in which you present the details of your learning based on past experiences and accomplishments, together with the evidence that proves that you know and can do what you claim.

In the portfolio you will describe what you know and can do and how this knowledge and skill relates to the learning outcomes of the paper(s) for which you are seeking credit. You may also demonstrate your understanding of any concepts or principles relevant to these papers through narrative or essay.

Portfolio assessment is a process conducted by AUT academic staff which determines the equivalence between a student's prior learning and learning outcomes of a paper to be evaluated for granting of academic credit.

A portfolio must be compiled for each paper for which you seek credit.

Use the information you have identified and gathered in Part A to complete your portfolio. The following format is recommended:

1. Portfolio Assessment Declaration Form. Print or copy this and insert it as the cover sheet of your portfolio (see next page).

2. Table of contents outlining the contents and organisation of your portfolio.

3. Your curriculum vitae (CV). Contact University Career Services if you need assistance.

4. A section which lists each learning outcome, identifies how you have met that learning outcome and names the evidence that you are providing. e.g.,

Learning outcome 1: Analyse and critique recovery models

> *Having worked in the mental health field for 5 years (refer to CV), I have learned about a variety of recovery models, including (name these). I successfully completed a training programme in 2002 (see certificate) and have also co-presented a workshop on this at last year's national conference (see letter of validation from employer). Below I will outline the different models of recovery, illustrating the strengths and weaknesses of each…….(insert here).*

5. A section for certificates, diplomas, letters of validation/references, etc.

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Nonformal Recognition of Prior Learning (NfRPL)
Portfolio Assessment Declaration Form

Name: _____   Student ID _____

Programme: _____

Name of programme leader: _____

Paper for which you are seeking credit:

_____   _____   _____
PAPER CODE   PAPER TITLE   POINTS

☐ The Nonformal RPL Application Fee has been paid

All written evidence should be included in your portfolio/assessment. Photocopies must be verified as a true copy. You should ask a justice of the peace, notary public or an official of the institution that issued the original document to provide the verification.

NON-VERIFIED COPIES CANNOT BE ACCEPTED

I DECLARE ALL THE INFORMATION I HAVE SUPPLIED IN THIS ASSESSMENT SUBMISSION TO BE TRUE AND COMPLETE AND I MAKE THIS SOLEMN DECLARATION CONSCIENTIOUSLY BELIEVING THAT SAME TO BE TRUE AND VIRTUE OF THE OATHS AND DECLARATIONS ACT 1957.

Signature _____   Date _____