

Henley Business School Limited (Incorporated in the United Kingdom)

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Document Type: Policy

Policy Category: Student administration

Last revision date	February 2026
Document owner	Academic and Governance Director
Date of policy review*	February 2030
Display staff intranet	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Display student portal	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Display public website	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

*unless otherwise indicated, this policy will still apply beyond the review date

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Introduction

This Policy recognises the prescriptions of the *South African Qualifications Authority Policy for Credit Accumulation and Transfer* within the National Qualifications Framework, the *Council on Higher Education Policy on Articulation into and within Higher Education (March 2023)*, the *Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF)*, and the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) Qualification Standard for Doctoral and Master's degrees.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance and ensure compliance with the processes for the recognition of prior learning (RPL) for prospective students seeking admission or credit exemption for any formal Henley Business School qualifications.

2. Scope

This policy informs Recognition of Prior Learning for all formal qualifications offered by Henley Business School Africa. It is the discretion of the School to determine if the prior learning is sufficient to meet the requirements of the applicable programme.

3. Policy statement

The School is committed to support the redressing of inequalities and support lifelong learning pathways through widening the access of learning opportunities.

4. Definitions

In this policy, the terms and abbreviations below are utilised, and the following meanings are ascribed to these terms and abbreviations in the context of RPL:

- **RPL** – Recognition of Prior Learning is the process whereby an applicant or students' prior knowledge or skills are assessed for the purpose of access or credits.
- **Prior Formal Learning** – the previous study at Henley Business School or another educational organisation which has been formally assessed and certified.
- **Prior Experiential Learning** – the non-certified acquisition of relevant skills and knowledge, gained through relevant experience (i.e. workplace-based learning) which is capable of being assessed and where necessary, assign a mark.
- **Workplace-based learning** – relates to the applicants or students' exposure and interactions within the workplace whereby they can demonstrate the ability to integrate knowledge, skills and attitudes at the same level of the programme to which they have submitted an RPL application.
- **Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC)** - Administrative responsibility for the implementation of policy is located within the TLC.
- **Diversity** - Includes factors such as gender, sexuality and sexual orientation, nationality, racial classification, disability, ethnicity, religion, age or socio-economic background.

5. Policy objectives

In pursuit of its commitment to widen access to, and participation in, higher education the School seeks to:

- Enhance access to education;
- Support diversity and excellence;

- Promote articulation by facilitating mobility between programmes of student; and
- Promote lifelong learning.

6. Policy principles

- RPL processes across the school must be context sensitive and reviewed by an approved committee.
- RPL is focused on accumulated knowledge and skills already acquired.
- RPL is part of the School's broader commitment to be socially responsive in alignment with regulatory requirements.
- RPL assessments shall adhere to the principles of validity, reliability, fairness, transparency and consistency as prescribed by SAQA

7. Policy provisions

7.1 RPL Committee

7.1.1 The RPL Committee is responsible for reviewing applications for RPL.

7.1.2 The RPL Committee should include the following members:

- The HODs from each academic unit or their nominated representative
- One or two other representatives from each academic unit
- A representative from the QA department
- A representative of the School's Admissions department

7.1.3 The Doctoral RPL Committee should include the following members:

- The Henley Africa Pro Dean for Research and Doctoral Programmes.
- Any two supervisors who currently supervise DBA students for Henley Africa (this can be a first, second, or combination of these supervisors). One of the supervisors should have supervised at least one Henley DBA student to completion.
- In the case of an RPL application for credit transfer and exemption, at least one relevant module convenor or tutor for each of the modules in question should also be included.
- A representative of the School's Admissions department.

7.1.4 Any decision taken by the committee should be based upon most of the committee members agreeing with the recommendation. The RPL Committee will review applications and make their recommendation onward to the Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC).

7.2 Evidence Review

7.2.1 The RPL Committee will consider all relevant evidence submitted by the applicant, including:

- The applicant's seniority.
- Responsibilities.
- Qualifications.
- Career progression.
- References.
- The overall quality of the application.

7.3 RPL as alternative route for admission

7.3.1 RPL applications for open programmes are managed centrally through the admissions office and in the case of Executive Education managed by the relevant admissions staff.

7.3.2 For doctoral programmes, RPL for admission is only considered in exceptional circumstances. The following documents are specifically required for doctoral programmes RPL applications:

- CV clearly articulating their senior management experience, evidence of independent research work, and research outputs.
- Higher education records, including detailed academic transcripts.
- A letter of good academic standing from the last institution they studied with.
- Evidence of independent research work and research outputs.
- A Doctoral Readiness statement (i.e., an essay of 2000 words) outlining how prior work and outputs have prepared the applicant for doctoral level study.

For the research output requirement, the applicant should provide either:

- One publication in a journal indexed on the Academic Journal Guide (<https://charteredabs.org/academic-journal-guide/academic-journal-guide-2024>), which includes an empirical component and lists the applicant as an author; or
- Two chapters in peer-reviewed books focusing on business and/or management topics, which includes an empirical component and lists the applicant as an author.

7.3.3 All RPL applications are subject to a fee as advertised on the School's website to ensure that external examinations are undertaken.

7.3.4 All RPL applications are approved by the RPL committee which is a formal sub-committee of the Teaching and Learning Committee.

7.3.5 All approved RPL applications are presented to the Teaching and Learning Committee for ratification.

7.3.6 Applicants and students wishing to be considered for RPL, are required to complete the RPL application form to be considered. The latest version of the RPL application form can be located on the public drive.

7.3.7 Not more than 10% of a cohort of students in a programme can be admitted through RPL as per the legislative requirements.

7.3.8 All RPL applications need to comply with the minimum requirements of the intended programme of study. In the case of doctoral programmes, applicants must meet a minimum of 10 years Senior management experience coupled with exceptional research outputs.

7.4 RPL for exemption from modules (credit)

7.4.1 RPL for exemption recognises skills and knowledge gained through workplace-based learning and prior learning whether formal, informal or non-formal.

7.4.2 RPL for exemption is not considered on doctoral programmes other than the professional doctorate where coursework is undertaken. For the Professional DBA, applications for credit exemption are considered only if:

- The applicant has already completed doctoral level (South African NQF Level 10) work elsewhere.
 - This work must have been undertaken by an AACSB, AMBA and/or EQUIS accredited institute.
- 7.4.3 Where a student applies for RPL in relation to a particular module/s but still wishes to receive training, this will be permitted. The granting of RPL shall not automatically qualify for a rebate of fees.
- 7.4.4 The evidence for acceptance of prior workplace-based learning must demonstrate that it meets the coverage of the relevant modules in terms of the content, module outcomes and is at the appropriate level of the module.
- 7.4.5 Exemption from individual modules is normally not possible where the module is regarded as a “major”.
- 7.4.6 RPL-based exemptions shall not exceed 50% of the modules or courses for a particular qualification. At least 50% of credits must be completed at the institution awarding the qualification. In the case of a Professional DBA, this is limited to 40% of the total coursework credits.
- 7.4.7 No qualification on the HEQSF shall be awarded solely on the basis of RPL as legislated.
- 7.4.8 No credits shall be awarded for modules or courses that a student is exempted from doing on the basis of RPL. A student who, on the basis of RPL, is exempted from doing some modules or courses in a qualification will complete the qualification with a total number of credits that is less than the required number of credits for the qualification in line with the legislation.
- 7.4.9 Applications for exemption should preferably be made prior to entry, but not later than the end of the fifth week following commencement of the programme.
- 7.4.10 For each qualification, there shall be a period of time beyond which any prior certificated learning will not be acceptable for exemption. The Programme Coordinator will make recommendations to the Teaching and Learning Committee for approval.
- 7.4.11 Applications for exemption supported by an academic unit must be submitted to the Teaching and Learning Committee for approval and recording.
- 7.4.12 An application for exemption may be rejected at any stage, but the applicant will have the right of a single appeal to the Teaching and Learning Committee.
- 7.4.13 For the DBA, this policy provision applies only to the following credit bearing modules:
- Introduction to Academic Research (MDD2IAR2)
 - Introduction to Design and Methodology (MDD2RDM2)
 - Introduction to Qualitative Methods (MDD2QLA2)
 - Introduction to Quantitative Methods (MDD2QTA2)
- RPL for exemption does not apply to the following non-credit bearing modules:
- Personal Development (MDD2PD1)
 - Finalising the Thesis – Contribution and Impact (MDD2RC11)

7.5 RPL for credit accumulation and transfer (CAT)

- 7.5.1 RPL for credit accumulation and transfer recognises previous credits and qualifications.
- 7.5.2 The granting of RPL for credit accumulation or transfer shall not automatically qualify for a rebate of fees.
- 7.5.3 To be considered for credit transfer, a minimum of 80% of the same content needs to have been covered especially the module outcomes and is at the appropriate level of the module. Students must have also passed their previous studies to the satisfaction of the committee (obtaining a mark of no less than 60% for each module / course for which exemption is requested).
- 7.5.4 The originating institution must be accredited by a recognised national quality assurance authority or recognised by SAQA
- 7.5.5 The academic unit shall specify learning programmes and levels of study between which credits can be transferred, taking into account the nature of the qualifications, the relationship between them, as well as the nature, complexity and extent of the curricula associated with the specific subjects.
- 7.5.6 The applicant must submit the following on with the application form:
- All course outlines
 - Detailed results transcript
 - A letter of good academic standing from the originating institution
- 7.5.7 Each academic unit shall determine the period of time beyond which any prior certificated learning will not be accepted for study.
- 7.5.8 Any (or all) credits for an incomplete qualification may be recognised for another qualification at the School. For the Professional DBA, Applications for credit transfer are considered only if:
- The applicant has already completed doctoral level work elsewhere.
 - This work must have been undertaken by an AACSB, AMBA and/or EQUIS accredited institute.
- 7.5.9 Any (or all) credits for a programme(s) that does not lead to a full qualification may be recognised for a qualification at Henley.
- 7.5.10 A maximum of 50% of the credits of a completed qualification may be transferred to another qualification. At least 50% of credits must be completed at the institution awarding the qualification. In the case of a Professional DBA, this is limited to 40% of the total coursework credits.
- 7.5.11 For the DBA, this policy provision applies only to the following credit bearing modules:
- Introduction to Academic Research (MDD2IAR2)
 - Introduction to Design and Methodology (MDD2RDM2)
 - Introduction to Qualitative Methods (MDD2QLA2)
 - Introduction to Quantitative Methods (MDD2QTA2)
- RPL for credit accumulation and transfer do not apply to the following non-credit bearing modules:
- Personal Development (MDD2PD1)
 - Finalising the Thesis – Contribution and Impact (MDD2RCI1)

7.6 Allocation of credits/marks for RPL

- 7.6.1 In respect of exemptions, the student's record and transcript should indicate the modules or courses from which exemption has been granted.
- 7.6.2 In respect of transferred credits, appropriate modules or courses should be credited and the student's record and transcript should indicate these as "transferred credit".

7.7 RPL Procedure

- 7.7.1 An appropriate method of RPL assessment will need to be determined for each RPL application. If the assessment method in a specific module is not appropriate, then a different method will be necessary and can include one or more of: submission of a portfolio, essays, a written examination.
- 7.7.2 The student considers the learning they have achieved in the past, as well as their present learning needs in light of the learning outcomes of the programme they intend to study and of the modules within it. They conclude that they can realistically meet some or all of the learning outcomes using RPL. Sufficient time should be given for this.
- 7.7.3 The student assembles the evidence. In the case of credit transfer, the original or authenticated evidence of the mark or marks to be transferred should be included.
- 7.7.4 The portfolio of evidence is submitted for assessment.
- 7.7.5 The evidence is assessed by an internal assessor and by an external examiner.
- 7.7.6 The RPL application pack plus the external examiners feedback is presented to the RPL committee for review and should it be successful, it will be presented to the Teaching and Learning Committee. In some cases, the RPL committee may request an interview to be undertaken.
- 7.7.7 An RPL application may be rejected at any stage, but the applicant will have the right of appeal to the Teaching and Learning Committee.
- 7.7.8 RPL for admission for the Professional DBA. The following are additional procedures specific to the Professional DBA:
 - a. An interview will be conducted with the RPL committee once the above-mentioned set requirements are met. If the requirements are not met, an interview will not be granted.
 - b. The School may consider offering a pre-doctoral workshop or module for RPL candidates to bridge academic gaps, provided they meet the requirements and the student will be charged for this (as suggested in Section 3.3.1 of the revised HEQSF).

8. Monitoring and reporting

The Academic Board is accountable and responsible for establishing the required controls for the policy monitoring and reporting. Administrative responsibility for the implementation of the policy is located within the Teaching & Learning Committee (TLC).

9. Right of appeal

An unsuccessful RPL applicant may lodge an appeal in writing to the relevant admissions personnel which will be presented to the Teaching and Learning Committee if they are unhappy with the decision.

10. Supporting documents

National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996

Higher Education Act 101 of 1997

HEQSF Qualification Standards for Doctoral Degrees (November 2018)

HEQSF Qualification Standards for Master of Business Administration Degrees (May 2015)

DHET's published statutory admission requirements

SAQA's Policy for Credit Accumulation and Transfer within the National Qualifications Framework (Amended 2021)

SAQA's National Policy and Criteria for the Implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (Amended in March 2019)

Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF)

CHE Policy on Articulation into and within Higher Education (March 2023)

11. Associated documents

Language Policy

Teaching and Learning Committee Terms of Reference

12. Policy life cycle

This policy should be reviewed every four years or where required during the intervening period.