RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1 PURPOSE
To outline the policy and procedures for applications for course credit.

2 SCOPE
This policy applies to all students enrolled within Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses of study offered by the Registered Training Organisation, Study Group Australia Pty Limited (RTO No. 5806), trading as Martin College, the Australian Institute of Applied Sciences, and ACPE Academy, and its Licensed Partner Organisations, all of the above from here on collectively referred to as ‘the College’.

3 DEFINITIONS
Currency relates to the applicant’s ability to demonstrate current industry skills, knowledge and understanding, so the evidence provided should be from either the present or the very recent past (i.e. within the last 5 years).

Formal Learning takes place through a structured program of learning delivered by a registered education provider, and which leads to the full or partial achievement of an officially accredited qualification.

Informal Learning is that gained through work, social, family, hobby or leisure activities and experiences.

Licensed Partner Organisations means any organisation that provides services on behalf of Study Group Australia Pty Limited, including training, assessment, related educational and support services, and/or any activities related to the recruitment of prospective learners. As the Registered Training Organisation, Study Group Australia Pty Limited is responsible for ensuring all such services provided to Students are in accordance with statutory obligations.

Non-formal learning takes place through a structured program of learning, but does not directly lead to full or partial achievement of an officially accredited qualification, e.g. business in-house training programmes.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process that involves assessment of an individual’s prior learning (including formal, informal and non-formal learning) to determine the extent to which that individual’s previous learning is equivalent to the learning outcomes of the components of another qualification.

4 POLICY
The College applies a systematic approach to the granting of course credit which does not unfairly advantage or disadvantage any existing or prospective student. Students are not required to repeat learning activities, regardless of how or where the learning was acquired, providing the learning is current and relevant to the competencies applicable to the qualification in which they are or seek to be enrolled. These learning experiences include the individual’s relevant formal, informal and non-formal learning.

Applications for Recognition of Prior Learning will be considered on a case-by-case basis and in a timely manner to ensure that all applicants are able to make well-informed choices about study options, pathways and alternatives by taking into account the credit they can expect.
Applicants are required to complete the appropriate section of the Application for Recognition of Prior Learning and provide evidence in support of each unit of competency/subject for which RPL is sought. Forms of evidence may include:

- High School transcripts;
- Uni/TAFE/other provider’s transcripts;
- course subject outlines;
- detailed Résumé (CV) with referee details;
- results/statements of attendance/certificates relating to business in-house courses, workshops and seminars;
- position descriptions;
- relevant licences;
- references/Statements of Service/letters of support from past employers (these must be on the relevant company letterhead, dated and signed);
- diaries/task sheets/job sheets/log books; and
- membership of relevant professional associations, etc.

All evidence presented must be written in the English language. It is the applicant’s responsibility to have the documents translated into English by a recognised authority, such as an official translator or government official.

This evidence will be assessed and, if necessary, an interview held at which the applicant may provide additional evidence of the relevant competencies or demonstrate the relevant skills. For overseas applicants and those not living within reasonable travel distance to a College campus, this interview may be conducted by telephone and/or demonstration given on arrival at the campus. In such circumstances, prior to the telephone interview commencing the student must provide the College with a copy of all of the supportive evidence; these documents must have been verified by a Justice of the Peace or equivalent authority as being true copies of the original.

The College reserves the right not to recognise part or all of any previous experience if the assessor believes that the competencies or knowledge demonstrated and recorded fall significantly short of the industry standard as stated within the relevant National Training Package or accredited course. In such a case, the applicant will be required to complete further related training.

There is no limit to the amount of RPL that can be granted to any one student. A full qualification can be attained in this way, and a special RPL fee would apply in such circumstances. This fee will vary, depending on the course tuition fees, and the type of prior learning. Information is available from the Student Enrolment Advisor.

Applicants need to be aware that many tertiary institutions will not grant credit for subjects against which another registered education provider has already granted credit. The College may allow this, but an RPL assessment process and standard RPL fees will apply.

5 STUDENTS ENROLLING IN COURSES THAT ARE NOT APPROVED FOR VET FEE-HELP, AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENT VISA HOLDERS

The College will perform the Recognition of Prior Formal Learning assessment free of charge as part of its admission process and also where the application is submitted before the commencement of the relevant subject. However, a service fee will apply to each subject within an application received on or after the day of that subject’s commencement, irrespective of the outcome of the application.

Where the process relates to the Recognition of Prior Informal or Non-formal Learning, a service fee applies to each subject, irrespective of outcome or time of submission.
6 STUDENTS ENROLLING IN VET FEE-HELP ELIGIBLE COURSES

6.1 Prior Formal Learning
Applications for Recognition of Prior Formal Learning for an entire VFH Unit of Study will be processed free of charge if they are submitted and approved prior to close of business of that VFH Unit of Study's Census Date. The student will not be required to continue to participate in that VFH Unit of Study and no tuition fee will apply.

If the application is received and approved after the published Census Date of the VFH Unit of Study, a service fee will not be charged. Instead, the VFH Unit of Study’s published tuition fee will apply, unless Special Consideration is applicable. This remains the case, irrespective of whether or not the eligible local student selects the VFH option of deferred payments. The student will not be required to continue to participate in that VFH Unit of Study.

The VFH Unit of Study tuition fees and Census Dates are published on the College website within the VET FEE-HELP Schedules of Fees.

6.2 Prior Informal or Non-formal Learning
If an application for Recognition of Prior Informal or Non-formal Learning is submitted and approved prior to close of business of that VFH Unit of Study’s Census Date, and substantial time/effort was involved in the assessment process, the RPL Fee shown on the relevant published Schedule of Fees will apply. The student will not be required to continue to participate in that VFH Unit of Study.

If the application is received and approved after the published Census Date of the VFH Unit of Study, a service fee will not be charged. Instead, the VFH Unit of Study’s published tuition fee will apply, unless Special Consideration is applicable. This remains the case, irrespective of whether or not the eligible local student selects the VFH option of deferred payments. The student will not be required to continue to participate in that VFH Unit of Study.

The Unit of Study tuition fees, RPL Fees and Census Dates are published on the College websites within the VET FEE-HELP Schedules of Fees.

7 APPLICATION PROCEDURE AS PART OF ENROLMENT
Applications for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) are administered by the Admissions team during the enrolment process, and by the Academic Team Leader or Director of Studies if submitted after the commencement of the VET course of study. Candidates are encouraged to discuss any prior learning they may have with the Admissions Team (or Director of Studies for commenced students) who can provide further guidance if needed in relation to the process shown below.

7.1 Application at the Time of Admission
a. Candidates should think carefully about what expertise has been acquired over time, in particular whether they have ‘depth’ of knowledge and/or strong skills in specific areas. (In most cases, national Units of Competency will require more than just a basic or introductory knowledge of an area.) They should then consult with their agent, or the Student Enrolment Advisor for advice in relation to the process, and for details of the service fee that may apply.

b. If the candidate wishes to proceed with the application, he/she should obtain a relevant application form from their agent or the Student Enrolment Advisor who will also provide additional guidance if needed.

c. Once the application form has been completed by the candidate, it should be submitted to the College.

d. Applications must be accompanied by evidence in support of each unit of competency/subject; types of acceptable evidence are listed in Section 4 above.

e. All evidence must be in the English language.
f. The RPL assessment will include the verification of the currency, relevance, and authenticity of the documents submitted. Overseas and domestic academic qualifications presented for an application for course credit will be authenticated by:

- original documents (i.e. award and transcript of results) being provided by the applicant to the authorised College representative; or
- copies of the original documents (i.e. award and transcript of results) being provided by the applicant which have been either:
  - notarised by a Justice of the Peace or equivalent authority; or
  - verified as a true copy of the original documents by an authorised College representative.

Should the assessor suspect that the academic document presented has been altered or fraudulently created, contact will be made with the conferring institution to validate the claims of the candidate.

All claimed work experience must be relevant to the qualification, and should be within the last five years of the date of application. Statements of Service provided must be on official company letterhead, providing contact details of the employer. Past and current employers are contacted to verify applicable work experience on a case-by-case basis.

g. This evidence will be assessed, and if necessary, an interview will be held at which the candidate may provide additional evidence of the relevant competencies or demonstrate the relevant skills. For overseas candidates or others not living within reasonable travel distance to a College campus, this interview may be conducted by telephone and/or demonstration given on-campus after arrival. In such circumstances, the applicant must have provided the College with certified copies of the supportive evidence prior to the telephone interview commencing.

h. After this assessment process, the College will provide written notification explaining the units for which credit has been granted, and those which have been declined and why.

i. If the candidate is dissatisfied with the outcome, he/she has the option to appeal against the decision, but must do so within twenty (20) working days of the date nominated on the written notification. Alternatively, additional evidence can be supplied by a specified date.

j. The outcomes of the application will be recorded within the College database, and a copy of the submission documents retained within the candidate’s file as evidence of the assessment process.

k. Should the candidate be of international origins and an adjustment to the nominal duration of the training be required, the Department of Immigration and Border Protection will be advised via PRISMS as this will be relevant to the Student Visa. (Refer The National Code 2007, Standard 12.)

7.2 Application after commencement of Course

a. Students should think carefully about what expertise has been acquired over time, in particular whether they have ‘depth’ of knowledge and/or strong skills in specific areas. (In most cases, national Units of Competency will require more than just a basic or introductory knowledge of an area.) They should then consult with the Academic Team Leader or Director of Studies for advice in relation to the process, and for details of the service fee that may apply.

b. If the student wishes to proceed with the application, he/she should obtain a relevant application form from the Academic Team Leader or Director of Studies, who will also provide additional guidance if needed.

**Note:** It is expected that applications will occur at the time of admission, or before commencement of the subject. If it is necessary to apply after commencement of the subject, it should be no later than the end of the first week of that subject.

c. Applications must be accompanied by evidence in support of each unit of competency/subject; types of acceptable evidence are listed in Section 4 above.

d. All evidence presented must be in the English language.
e. The RPL assessment will include the verification of the currency, relevance, and authenticity of the documents submitted. Overseas and domestic academic qualifications presented for an application for course credit will be authenticated by:
   - original documents (i.e. award and transcript of results) being provided by the applicant to the authorised College representative; or
   - copies of the original documents (i.e. award and transcript of results) being provided by the applicant which have been either:
     - notarised by a Justice of the Peace or equivalent authority; or
     - verified as a true copy of the original documents by an authorised College representative.

Should the College representative suspect that the academic document presented has been altered or fraudulently created, contact will be made with the conferring institution to validate the claims of the candidate.

All claimed work experience must be relevant to the qualification, and should be within the last five years of the date of application. Statements of Service provided must be on official company letterhead providing contact details of the employer. Past and current employers are contacted to verify applicable work experience on a case-by-case basis.

f. This evidence will be assessed, and if necessary, an interview will be held at which the candidate may provide additional evidence of the relevant competencies or demonstrate the relevant skills.

g. After this assessment process, the College will provide written notification explaining the units for which credit has been granted, and those which have been declined and why.

h. If the candidate is dissatisfied with the outcome, he/she has the option to appeal against the decision, but must do so within twenty (20) working days of the date nominated on the written notification. Alternatively, additional evidence can be supplied by a specified date.

i. If the applicant is currently enrolled in the subject, he/she must attend all scheduled classes until the written notification is received, and until he/she has signed and returned that to the Academic Team Leader or Director of Studies.

j. The outcomes of the application will be recorded within the College database, and a hard copy of the submission documents retained within the candidate’s file as evidence of the assessment process.

k. Should the candidate be of international origins and an adjustment to the nominal duration of the training be required, the Department of Immigration and Border Protection will be advised via PRISMS as this will be relevant to the Student Visa. (Refer The National Code 2007, Standard 12.)

8 EXTERNAL APPLICANTS

This section applies to applicants who are not enrolling at the time of seeking a Recognition of Prior Learning assessment.

The process commences with the applicant contacting the College to arrange an initial interview. At this interview, the College staff will discuss the process in more detail, and advise of the non-refundable fee applicable for each such application processed, where such a fee will allow for an assessment of up to four hours duration. Where assessment extends past four hours duration, the application will attract an additional fee for each additional hour or part thereof.

The College will then arrange for the applicant to meet with the appropriate staff members for the Assessment Interview. At this interview, the applicant may also be asked to provide additional evidence of current competencies. This could take the form of formal qualifications (credit transfer may apply), third party testimonials (e.g., letters from current and/or previous employers), and employment history. It is also possible that the applicant will be asked to complete formal assessments (assignments or exams), or a visit to his/her workplace may be arranged to undertake a practical assessment of relevant skills.
After this Assessment Interview and assessment process, where applicable, the College will provide a written report of those national units of competency which have successfully achieved recognition, and those which have been declined. For the latter, the applicant may seek to provide additional evidence, or lodge a formal written appeal with the College.

For those competencies that have been successfully achieved, a Statement of Attainment listing these will be issued by the College. If the applicant has demonstrated competency within the required units of competency of an entire qualification, the College will issue the relevant award.

If within three months of the issuing of the Assessment Report, the applicant chooses to enrol in a course at the College, the fees which have been paid for the RPL assessment will be credited towards his/her course.

The fees paid cover the assessment process, regardless of the amount of RPL that is successfully achieved during the process.

9 **TIME LIMITS FOR ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

a. Applications for credit against previous Formal learning will normally be assessed within five (5) working days providing all necessary documents have been submitted. A longer period may be required where full assessment is required, particularly at peak enrolment times.

b. Applications for Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Learning will normally be assessed within ten (10) working days. A longer period may be required at peak enrolment times.

10 **LIMITS ON CREDIT**

Credit entitlements will have an impact on the structure and perhaps the nominal length of the qualification. No two cases are the same, so candidates will need to discuss their special circumstances with the Student Enrolment Advisor, Academic Team Leader or Director of Studies.

Please note:

a. Unless specifically requested, enrolled students will not be issued formal documentation of the credits at the time of notification, as these will be listed on the documentation issued by the College on completion of their course.

b. It is very important for candidates to understand that they may not be successful in all that they request within their RPL application. The College’s assessors carry an obligation to be sure the applicants can currently demonstrate all aspects of the national units of competency applicable.