

Policy Name : **Recognition for Prior Learning Policy**

Related Documents : MOHESR Outcome-based Evaluation Framework (OEF), ADEK Standards and Procedure for Higher Education Institutions in Abu Dhabi – 2023, ESG 2015 Standards.
ESG 2015 Standards – 1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and Certification

Section 1 : Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this Policy is to establish the academic standards, principles, and procedures governing the recognition of prior learning at ADSM. This Policy regulates the assessment of prior formal, non-formal, and informal learning, including learning gained through previous study, professional work, and life experience, where such learning may be equivalent to the learning outcomes of ADSM courses. This includes recognition of transfer credit from accredited programs and the assessment of other prior learning for possible academic recognition, in accordance with applicable institutional and CAA requirements.

Section 2 : Scope and applicability

- 2.1 This Policy shall apply to all applicants seeking Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) toward academic programs offered at ADSM, subject to approved institutional exclusions and program-specific restrictions.
- 2.2 This Policy shall be applied consistently across all relevant programs, disciplines, units, and courses.
- 2.3 Any program-specific limitations, exclusions, or special conditions applicable to RPL shall be clearly identified and published.
- 2.4 Any specific programs, concentrations, or regulated course components requiring separate treatment or exclusion shall be identified by ADSM and, where necessary, by the relevant subject matter experts.

Section 3 : Definitions

The following definition(s) apply to this policy:

- 3.1 **Prior Learning:** learning based on experiential or other non-classroom methodologies.
- 3.2 **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):** a process through which ADSM identifies and assesses the knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired by an individual through non-formal or informal learning against prescribed academic standards to grant academic credit toward a qualification.

Section 4 : Policy Statement

- 4.1 ADSM shall ensure that the RPL process is transparent, fair, consistent, academically rigorous, and evidence-based. Recognition shall be granted only on the basis of demonstrated learning outcomes and verified competencies. All RPL decisions shall preserve the academic standards, integrity, and quality of ADSM qualifications and shall be supported by appropriate advising, assessment, and quality assurance processes.

Section 5 : Exclusions

- 5.1. Thesis and Applied Project courses for all Master of Science Programs.
- 5.2. Signature Learning Experience (SLE) and the Consultancy-Based Research Project for the MBA Program.
- 5.3. The Dissertation courses for the DBA Program.
- 5.4. The Internship course for the BScM program.

Section 6 : Principles

- 6.1. RPL may be considered for prior formal, non-formal, and informal learning, **including but not limited to:**
- 6.1.1. previous study completed in accredited institutions.
 - 6.1.2. workplace learning.
 - 6.1.3. employer-based or professional training.
 - 6.1.4. executive education or continuing education.
 - 6.1.5. self-directed learning supported by evidence.
 - 6.1.6. other documented experiential learning.
- 6.2. Prior learning may be considered only where it is relevant to the course, module, unit, or qualification for which recognition is sought.
- 6.3. ADSM shall identify the courses, units, qualifications, or competencies for which RPL may be awarded, subject to approved exclusions and program-specific restrictions.
- 6.4. In addition to courses listed in Section 5 of this Policy, ADSM may exclude specific courses or curriculum components from RPL where direct institutional delivery and assessment are academically necessary.
- 6.5. Conditions for Recognition
- 6.5.1. RPL may be granted only where the evidence submitted directly relates to the relevant course, module, unit, or qualification.

- 6.5.2. The evidence must demonstrate that the applicant possesses the required knowledge, skills, and competencies.
- 6.5.3. Recognition shall be granted only where the applicant demonstrates achievement of all learning outcomes of the relevant course, module, unit, or qualification.
- 6.5.4. Partial recognition for an individual course shall not be permitted.
- 6.5.5. Prior learning presented for RPL must be current.
- 6.6. Academic Equivalence
 - 6.6.1. RPL credit shall be awarded only where prior learning is equivalent in level, breadth, depth, and learning outcomes to the relevant ADSM course or academic requirement.
 - 6.6.2. Equivalence judgments shall be based on academic evidence and course learning outcomes, and may require review by subject matter experts.
- 6.7. Assessment of Prior Learning
 - 6.7.1. Evidence submitted in support of an RPL application must be valid, reliable, current, authentic, and sufficient.
 - 6.7.2. The applicant bears responsibility for submitting complete and sufficient evidence in support of the RPL claim.
 - 6.7.3. Acceptable evidence may include, **but is not limited to**:
 - 6.7.3.1 official transcripts and qualification certificates,
 - 6.7.3.2 authenticated certificates of training or informal learning,
 - 6.7.3.3 portfolios,
 - 6.7.3.4 projects and work samples,
 - 6.7.3.5 official job descriptions and statements of duties,
 - 6.7.3.6 employer reference letters,
 - 6.7.3.7 reflective papers or similar written submissions
 - 6.7.3.8 any other verifiable documentation accepted by ADSM.
- 6.8. Forms of assessment used in the RPL process shall include challenge examinations and may also include one or more of the following:
 - 6.8.1. portfolio assessment,
 - 6.8.2. examinations or tests,

- 6.8.3. interviews or oral assessment,
- 6.8.4. direct observation,
- 6.8.5. reflective papers or similar written submissions,
- 6.8.6. review of prior study completed elsewhere,
- 6.8.7. any other academically approved method.
- 6.9. The RPL Committee shall determine the appropriate assessment tools for assessing prior learning in each case.
- 6.10. Challenge examinations may take written or oral form, or such other approved form as determined by ADSM.
- 6.11. Credit Limits and Academic Rules
 - 6.11.1. Not more than fifty percent (50%) of the credit of an undergraduate program may be awarded through RPL, including transfer credit of formal learning, unless a higher percentage is approved by the CAA.
 - 6.11.2. Not more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the credit of a graduate program may be awarded through RPL, including transfer credit of formal learning, unless a higher percentage is approved by the CAA.
 - 6.11.3. Approval of RPL credit must occur prior to the student's enrolment in the program.
 - 6.11.4. No grades shall be assigned for RPL credit granted.
 - 6.11.5. RPL credit shall not be used in the calculation of the cumulative grade point average (CGPA).
 - 6.11.6. ADSM shall normally adhere to all CAA admission requirements, and RPL shall not replace required language proficiency standards

Section 7 : Procedures

- 7.1. ADSM shall establish an RPL Committee with appropriate academic knowledge and experience to oversee and evaluate RPL requests and applications. The RPL Committee shall:
 - 7.1.1. review RPL applications and supporting evidence,
 - 7.1.2. determine the appropriate assessment tools,
 - 7.1.3. recommend whether credit should be awarded,
 - 7.1.4. ensure consistency and academic integrity in RPL decisions,

- 7.1.5. refer cases to subject matter experts where necessary.
- 7.2. ADSM shall designate an RPL Coordinator or responsible administrative office to:
 - 7.2.1. receive and process applications,
 - 7.2.2. check completeness of documentation,
 - 7.2.3. coordinate academic review,
 - 7.2.4. communicate with applicants,
 - 7.2.5. maintain records.
- 7.3. The RPL process shall normally include:
 - 7.3.1. initial advising,
 - 7.3.2. submission of application,
 - 7.3.3. submission of supporting evidence,
 - 7.3.4. completeness review,
 - 7.3.5. academic assessment,
 - 7.3.6. decision,
 - 7.3.7. notification to the applicant,
 - 7.3.8. recording of approved credit,
 - 7.3.9. appeal, where applicable.
- 7.4. Applicants shall be given appropriate guidance on how to prepare and submit an RPL application.
- 7.5. Applicants shall be informed in writing of the outcome of the RPL application.
 - 7.5.1. The decision shall specify the credit awarded, if any, and the academic basis for the decision.
 - 7.5.2. Where recognition is denied, the applicant shall be informed of the reason for the decision and any available appeal process.
- 7.6. ADSM shall maintain a formal process for appealing an RPL decision. The appeal procedure shall specify:
 - 7.6.1. the time limit for submitting an appeal.
 - 7.6.2. the required contents of an appeal.
 - 7.6.3. the submission route.
 - 7.6.4. the authority responsible for deciding the appeal.
- 7.7. ADSM may permit re-evaluation where substantial new evidence becomes available, subject to the procedures and timelines stated in the RPL Application Guide.

- 7.8. ADSM may charge application or assessment fees for RPL. Any such fees, payment methods, and deadlines shall be published in the RPL Application Guide.
- 7.9. Records and Quality Assurance
 - 7.9.1. ADSM shall maintain a database of RPL decisions granted so that such decisions may serve as precedents in future decision-making, supporting consistency and efficiency.
 - 7.9.2. RPL assessment outcomes shall be integrated into the institutional quality assurance system.
 - 7.9.3. RPL records shall be maintained in accordance with applicable institutional recordkeeping requirements.
- 7.10. ADSM shall publish and maintain a detailed RPL Application Guide for learners seeking RPL. The Guide shall be written in clear language, be user-friendly, and be updated periodically. The Guide shall include, at minimum:
 - 7.10.1. eligibility criteria.
 - 7.10.2. process overview.
 - 7.10.3. documentation requirements.
 - 7.10.4. assessment criteria.
 - 7.10.5. fees and payment.
 - 7.10.6. appeals and re-evaluation.
 - 7.10.7. Advising.
 - 7.10.8. resources and support.
 - 7.10.9. frequently asked questions.
 - 7.10.10. forms, appendices, and glossary terms.

Section 8 : Responsibilities

- 8.1. The President shall cause this policy to be implemented.
- 8.2. The Academic Dean shall monitor the implementation of this policy and report violations.

Section 9 : Cancellations

- 9.1. Approval of this policy cancels P 404 – Recognition of Prior Learning Policy_v7.0.

Section 10 : Review Statement

10.1. ADSM's Policy Committee shall review this Policy at least annually. This Policy may be reviewed more frequently based on a request from the President, Policy Owner or in response to changes in applicable regulations and standards. Reviewed policies shall be recommended and approved in accordance with ADSM's P 110 – Policy on Policies.

Section 11 : Approval

Authorization / Ownership	Signature and Date
Policy Owner: Academic Dean	<i>Valerie Jean Lindsay</i>
Recommended by: Academic Council	Minutes of Meeting on 25/06/2026
Approved by: Executive Committee	Minutes of Meeting on 25/06/2026

Section 12 : Revision History

Revision No.	Effective Date	Description
0	17/03/2020	Policy First Approved
1	08/03/2021	Annual Review Completed
2	06/09/2021	Mapping to ESG 2015 Standards completed.
3	04/07/2022	Review Statement updated.
4	10/07/2023	Annual review completed
5	23/09/2024	Annual review completed.
6	07/11/2025	Annual review completed.
7	25/06/2026	Updated to detail ADSM's RPL process.

Next scheduled review: 25/06/2027

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