



UNIVERSITY
OF BAHRAIN

Prior Learning Recognition Policy

Authority / Owner of Policy: Vice President for Academic Affairs

Effective: November 12, 2025

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POLICY INFORMATION

Title:	Prior Learning Recognition Policy
Policy Description:	A set of regulations that govern the recognition of prior learning and encourage the acquisition of knowledge and skills outside the classroom, ensuring fairness and quality in the equivalency of academic and professional experiences.
Policy Scope:	☒ Academic ☐ Administrative ☐ Research ☒ Student ☐ general
Policy Status	☒ New policy ☐ Revision of existing policy
Approval Authority:	University of Bahrain Council
Authority/ Owner of Policy:	Vice President for Academic Affairs
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Document ID:	UOB-VP-AA-PO-001
Related Documents:	National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Handbook 2024 issued by the Education & Training Quality Authority. Study and Examinations Regulation at the University of Bahrain

Policy Stakeholders

☐ President

☒ Vice President

☐ Legal Advisor

☒ Deans

☒ Directors

☒ Faculty members

☒ Students

☐ Admin Staff

☐ All University Affiliates

1 Definitions

Prior Learning Recognition The assessment of knowledge, skills, and competencies that individuals have acquired through non-formal and informal learning, which is used to grant credit hours toward obtaining a qualification.

Formal Learning Structured learning that typically occurs within organized educational environments, where the learner's goal is to acquire knowledge, skills and/or competencies, often associated with obtaining a qualification or certificate. Examples include learning in higher education institutions, training centers, and schools.

Informal Learning Learning that takes place outside of organized or formal learning environments, where the learner acquires knowledge and/or skills and/or competencies, and is often self-directed. Examples include learning that occurs in daily life through experiences, observations, and interactions.

Non-Formal Learning Structured learning that occurs outside of formal education and training systems but still has specific learning objectives. It is often more flexible than formal education, allowing participants to learn at their own pace, according to their needs and interests. It does not typically lead to a formal qualification or certificate and includes activities such as training workshops, personal development programs, and community service programs.

Learning Outcomes	Data that describes the significant achievements learners will accomplish, defined in terms of knowledge, skills, and competencies.
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2 Policy Purpose

This policy aims to establish a comprehensive and systematic institutional framework for Prior Learning Recognition at the University of Bahrain. It ensures the acknowledgment and valuation of knowledge and skills acquired through various forms of formal, informal, and non-formal learning. The policy contributes to promoting the principle of lifelong learning, expanding access and continuing education opportunities, and supporting flexible educational and career pathways for students and learners from diverse backgrounds. This is achieved while guaranteeing adherence to national quality standards and the requirements of the National Qualifications Framework.

3 Policy Scope

This policy applies to all applicants to the University of Bahrain who seek recognition of their prior learning, whether for admission to academic programs or for obtaining credit equivalency for course units within a specific program.

4 Policy Statement

4.1 Policy Statement

The University of Bahrain is committed to providing fair and equitable opportunities for students to have their prior learning and experiences recognized. The University implements rigorous and reliable assessment processes to ensure that recognized learning is equivalent to the learning outcomes of its academic programs and courses.

4.2 General Principles

The following key principles form the foundation of this policy:

- Ensure that all procedures for the Recognition of Prior Learning are fair, transparent, and accessible to all applicants.
- Confirm that assessment processes are rigorous, reliable, and aligned with the standards of the National Qualifications Framework.
- Provide support and guidance to applicants throughout the Recognition of Prior Learning process.
- Offer flexible pathways for students to continue their education and professional development.

4.3 Assessment and Equivalency

4.3.1 Assessment Methods

Methods for assessing prior learning vary depending on the nature of the learning outcomes being evaluated. These may include written examinations, practical assessments, or personal portfolios containing documented evidence of the knowledge, skills, and competencies the learner has acquired from previous experiences.

4.3.2 Validity and Recency

The validity and recency of the learner's knowledge and skills are assessed based on the nature of the field of specialization and its rate of development. This evaluation is an integral part of the Prior Learning Recognition process to ensure that the learner's experiences are still current and relevant to the required academic or professional field.

4.3.3 Maximum Equivalency

The equivalency granted through prior learning recognition must not exceed 50% of the total requirements of the academic program. Furthermore, equivalency may not be granted for core graduation requirement courses or mandatory practical training projects except with the approval of the College Council.

4.3.4 Grades

Upon recognition of a qualification or course through prior learning, the learner is granted a "Pass/Exempt" status if all conditions are met. The grade for the recognized qualification or course is not included in the learner's cumulative GPA. This ensures the fairness of academic assessment and standardizes GPA calculation criteria across the university.

5 Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Vice President for Academic Affairs

The Vice President for Academic Affairs oversees the overall implementation of the Prior Learning Recognition policy and is responsible for the following tasks:

1. Supervising the execution of the policy and monitoring the adherence of relevant colleges and departments to its application.
2. Reviewing periodic reports issued by the Deanship of Admission and Registration regarding the policy's implementation and its outcomes.
3. Ensuring the integration of Prior Learning Recognition processes with other admission and academic equivalency policies.

5.2 College Council

The College Council assumes the supervisory and approval role in Prior Learning Recognition procedures and is responsible for the following tasks:

1. Establishing the academic regulations for course equivalency across the various programs offered by the college.
2. Reviewing reports from the Prior Learning Assessment Committees formed in response to submitted applications.
3. Discussing and approving recommendations issued by the academic committees in accordance with established policies and procedures, and ensuring that the Prior Learning Assessment Committee's recommendations adhere to the maximum equivalency limit (50% of the academic program requirements) set by the university policy.

4. Submitting approved decisions to the Deanship of Admission and Registration to complete the necessary procedures and record the exemptions or equivalencies in the students' official records.

5.3 Prior Learning Assessment Committees in Colleges and Academic Departments

The head of the academic department shall form an annual committee named the "Prior Learning Assessment Committee" at the beginning of the academic year. This committee shall include members from various scientific specializations within the department and may seek the assistance of individuals from inside or outside the college as it deems necessary to accomplish its tasks. The committee is responsible for the following:

1. Receiving and reviewing prior learning applications for admission to academic programs or for course equivalency within the department's programs.
2. Evaluating the evidence and documents submitted by the learner (such as portfolios, certificates, and practical experiences) against the approved learning outcomes.
3. Ensuring that the recognized content aligns with the equivalency regulations established by the College Council.
4. Adhering to the policy stipulation that approved equivalencies do not exceed 50% of the total requirements of the academic program.
5. Preparing a report containing the final recommendations for the approval or rejection of equivalencies and submitting it to the department head for subsequent presentation to the College Council for approval.

5.4 Deanship of Admission and Registration

The Deanship of Admission and Registration undertakes the executive and administrative tasks related to recording the results of Prior Learning Recognition in students' academic records. Its responsibilities include:

1. Receiving applications for Prior Learning Recognition through the Student Information Management System, verifying that admission conditions and supporting documents are met, and forwarding them to the relevant college.
2. Receiving the approved decisions of the College Council regarding the outcomes of the prior learning assessment.
3. Entering the approved exemptions or equivalencies into the student's official academic record, clearly indicating that they result from Prior Learning Recognition.
4. Preparing periodic internal reports and submitting them to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. These reports include statistics on equivalencies granted through prior learning to support review and improvement processes.

6 Policy Procedures

6.1 Student Application Submission

The student submits a formal application expressing their desire for Prior Learning Recognition to the Deanship of Admission and Registration through the Student Information System. The application must be accompanied by all supporting evidence and documents (e.g., certificates, training records, portfolios, experience descriptions, previous assessment results, or any other supporting documents).

The Deanship verifies the application's completeness and forwards it to the relevant college for evaluation and approval.

6.2 Evidence Assessment by the Committee

The committee reviews the submitted evidence and compares it against the learning outcomes of the course or program for which equivalency is requested, in accordance with the established regulations..

6.3 Preparation of Recommendation Report

The committee prepares a detailed report including:

- A. Decisions (Approval/Rejection/Proposed Exemptions)
- B. Equivalent courses, if any
- C. Percentage of program exemption
- D. Evaluation justifications

6.4 Report Approval by the College Council

The committee's report is presented to the College Council at its first official meeting for review and endorsement, after ensuring its alignment with the controls and provisions of this policy.

6.5 Sending Decisions to the Deanship of Admission and Registration

After approval by the College Council, the Dean of the College forwards the decisions to the Deanship of Admission and Registration to complete the procedures and record the equivalency results.

6.6 Recording Prior Learning Results in the Academic Record

The Deanship of Admission and Registration undertakes the following:

- A. Entering the exempted or equivalent credit hours into the academic system.
- B. Ensuring that these equivalencies are not included in the calculation of the student's cumulative GPA.

6.7 Archiving Application and Assessment Documents

The College and the Deanship of Admission and Registration retain copies of prior learning recognition applications, reports, recommendations, and approved decisions within the students' academic files and for internal audit purposes.

6.8 Reporting and Follow-up

The Deanship of Admission and Registration prepares periodic reports including statistics on prior learning applications and equivalency rates. These are submitted to the Vice President for Academic Affairs for the purpose of evaluation and continuous policy development.

6.9 Appealing Prior Learning Recognition Results

The learner has the right to submit a written appeal against the result of their prior learning recognition application assessment within ten (10) working days from the date of being notified of the decision.

The appeal is submitted to the Dean of the relevant college, who refers it to an independent academic committee, different from the one that conducted the initial assessment, to review all relevant evidence and documents.

The committee's recommendation is raised to the College Council to approve the final decision. This decision is considered final and binding for all parties.

7 Contact Information

For further assistance regarding the implementation of this procedure, inquiries can be directed to the Vice President for Academic Affairs Office:

Email: vpacademic@uob.edu.bh

Telephone: 17438138