Australian Government
Department of Education

Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships

Recognition of Prior Learning and Accelerated ITE Course Policy

1. Purpose

The Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships (CTS) Program Recognition of Prior Learning and Accelerated Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Course Policy (the policy) outlines the impact of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and accelerated ITE programs for individuals who are in receipt of a Commonwealth Teaching Scholarship.

This policy should be considered in conjunction with the CTS Grant Opportunity Guidelines (Scholarship Guidelines) for the relevant round, other CTS policies, and the Scholarship Agreement, which are available on the Scholarships website.

2. Background

Recognition of prior learning

RPL is a process where previous studies and/or work experience are recognised by a higher education provider (HEP) and counted towards an ITE program as credit or advanced standing. RPL may reduce the duration of an ITE program or may affect the study load of the student, depending on where the units are structured in the degree.

RPL may include:

- units of study taken at another higher education provider
- approved qualifications from a higher education institution
- in some cases, relevant work experience.

Accelerated Courses

HEPs may offer accelerated course options that enable students to complete an accredited ITE program in a shorter timeframe. For example, a typical 2-year Master of Teaching degree may be offered as a 1.5-year accelerated degree.

3. Consideration of RPL – Conditional Offer

A Conditional Offer is made subject to an applicant providing evidence of full-time enrolment for the full academic year in an accredited ITE program commencing in the first semester/study period of the relevant year (see the CTS Assessment and Selection Policy for further information on Conditional Offer requirements).

Where evidence of enrolment is submitted that indicates credit points have already been achieved, credit/advanced standing has been granted, or study load may be impacted by RPL, the Department will contact the applicant via email to seek confirmation and/or additional evidence of whether RPL has been granted.

The evidence provided will be assessed by the Department to determine if the RPL will impact scholarship funding.

The Department will advise the applicant of any impact on scholarship funding and the Commitment to Teach before making a formal scholarship offer.

4. Consideration of Accelerated ITE Courses – Conditional Offer

When accepting a Conditional Offer, applicants will be required to select the relevant course length from a list of options, reflecting the course details on the HEP website.

The course length selected will determine the expected completion date included in the Scholarship Agreement and the amount of scholarship funding the recipient will receive (see section 6 below).

If a scholarship recipient enrolled in an accelerated ITE program chooses to enrol in fewer units (while still maintaining a full-time study load) during their ITE program or transfers to an ITE program with a standard duration and this extends the length of their ITE program (for example, from 1.5 to 2 years for a postgraduate ITE program), no additional scholarship funding will be provided and the Commitment to Teach obligation will remain the same. The additional time taken to complete the course will reduce the time available to complete the Commitment to Teach.

If a recipient transfers from a standard duration course to an accelerated course (e.g. from a 4-year undergraduate ITE program to a 3.5-year accelerated program, or a 2-year postgraduate to a 1.5-year accelerated program), scholarship funding, and the Commitment to Teach length, will be reduced accordingly.

As set out in the Scholarship Guidelines and Scholarship Agreement, any changes to course duration are a Notifiable Event and recipients must submit a Notifiable Events form, available on the Scholarships website, if they are intending to vary their course duration.

5. RPL and Accelerated ITE Courses – Annual Reporting

As set out in the Scholarship Guidelines and Scholarship Agreement, recipients must report annually to the Department confirming their continued full-time enrolment across the full academic year in an accredited ITE program. Annual scholarship instalments are paid subject to this evidence being provided.

Where RPL has been granted or the recipient has transferred to an accelerated ITE program, and this appears to impact their study load or result in an earlier than expected completion date for their ITE program, then the recipient's scholarship funding may be reduced in accordance with Section 6 below and the Scholarship Agreement will be varied accordingly. The Department may contact the recipient via email to request further information if required.

6. Impact on Scholarship Funding

Scholarship funding is paid per year of study of an ITE program. Scholarship funding is paid in annual instalments of up to $10,000 based on evidence of full-time enrolment across the full academic year. Examples of possible impacts on scholarship funding from RPL or accelerating study are outlined below (this list is not exhaustive).

RPL

If any RPL granted shortens the duration of the ITE program, this will reduce scholarship funding.

- For example, if RPL granted towards a 4-year full-time undergraduate degree means the recipient will complete the degree in 3.5 years, the recipient will receive $35,000 in scholarship funding.

RPL that affects a recipient's ability to maintain a full-time study load across the academic year will reduce scholarship funding.

- For example, if RPL results in a recipient's study load in an academic year only equating to full-time for one half year then they would only be entitled to a half year payment of $5,000.

If a recipient's scholarship funding is reduced due to RPL granted towards the degree, the Commitment to Teach will also be reduced to match the length of the scholarship funding.

Accelerated Courses or Accelerating study

Recipients enrolled full-time across the academic year in accelerated ITE programs (both undergraduate and postgraduate) will have their scholarship funding reduced to match the number of years of study undertaken. For example, a recipient enrolled in an accelerated postgraduate ITE program of 1.5 years will have their scholarship funding reduced to $15,000 and Commitment to Teach reduced to 1.5 years.

Where a recipient, in a standard or accelerated course, chooses to overload their enrolment (for example, enrolling in additional units in a summer semester) which results in an earlier completion date or an inability to maintain a full-time study load in subsequent periods of study, they must

notify the Department, as this may impact scholarship funding and the length of the Commitment to Teach.

If a recipient overloads their enrolment after returning from an approved deferral period, this may affect the total amount of scholarship funding payable to the recipient (refer to the CTS Deferral Policy).

The Department's decision on the impact of RPL and accelerated courses on scholarship funding is final and there is no mechanism to appeal the decision.

7. Complaints

Any complaint about a decision made by the Department will be handled in accordance with the CTS Complaints Handling Policy.