

# **University of Jaffna**

## **Policy on Credit Transfer and Lateral Entry**

### **1.0. Background**

The university policy on Credit Transfer and later Entry is developed to accommodate the commission circular number 05/2021 (dated April 7, 2021) titled Recognition of Prior Learning, Credit Transfer and Lateral in the Context of SLQF 2015. The Circular is effective from 12.03.2021.

The higher education system in Sri Lanka has undergone various changes over the last few years. This is based on the reflections of the national and global demands of and changes in academic arena. State universities in the country follow common regulations with autonomy, to certain extent, in the mode of operation and implementation of various academic programmes. Standardizing all the universities based on common academic merits is one of the prime goals in Quality Assurance and Accreditation. The Curriculum Development Process outlined under Sri Lanka Qualification Framework (SLQF) recommends for a Credit Transfer Policy at each National University.

With the addition of more universities and faculties, there will always be the need for inter university collaboration for teaching and learning. Thus, universities may have to change over to a choice-based credit system. This means students will have more choice and flexibility in selecting courses and subjects of their interest. This will also ensure that existing expertise and resources can be made available to all student community. It will also enable more flexibility across the current humanities-science divide apparent at many universities. At present, students in most universities across Sri Lanka have a limited choice of courses within their major/principal subjects. A fluid credit transfer and lateral entry system will mean that students will have greater chances of admission and choice of courses. With this background a Policy on Credit Transfer and Later Entry is Developed for the University of Jaffna.

### **2.0. Purpose of policy**

- 2.1 The University of Jaffna (hereinafter referred to as UoJ) acknowledges the need to provide effective and equitable student pathways for study from the other universities.
- 2.2 This policy provides a framework, set of principles and procedures for determining credit transfer and RPL at the undergraduate level

### **3.0 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**

Formal arrangements for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) enable universities to offer students advanced placement on a given course of study, based on evidence of prior learning in subject areas relevant to the course of study. It is a mechanism that allows the credit awarded by one higher education institute (HEI) to be recognized, quantified, and included in the credit requirements for a program delivered by another HEI or between programs offered by the same HEI.

## 4.0 Credit transfer, course exemptions and lateral entry

RPL may take the form of credit transfer or course exemptions, also sometimes referred to as lateral entry. It involves the evaluation of a student's transcript, course outlines and other relevant information. Credit values give information about the amount of learning and academic demands of that learning. Although the principle behind RPL is simple, issues involved in the formulation of a credit accumulation and transfer scheme are complex.

The Australian credit transfer system, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation system, the Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework, credit accumulation and transfer schemes in the United Kingdom, and the ASEAN credit transfer systems all facilitate the credit transfer process between participant countries. They have developed a common conversion system that facilitates the credit transfer process.

## 5.0 RPL in the Sri Lankan context

RPL may be considered in award of qualifications at any of SLQF Levels 4 to 7 (sub-degree and first degree levels). However, in order to practice RPL, the entire structure for the programme(s) of study leading to the qualification(s) awarded by the university must be specified in detail, with clear indication of entry and exit points and/or intermediate awards in the course documents approved by the university authorities and the University Grants Commission.

**Credit Transfer** to a study programme (e.g., SP-A) implies that courses completed in a different study programme (e.g., SP-B) are recognized as courses completed under SP-A, with rational mapping of courses and assignment of grades. This is easily achieved if both study programmes follow the same credit system. **Course exemptions** imply that a student is exempted from following a course (or courses) within the programme of study due to knowledge, skills or competencies gained by following equivalent courses within or outside the university, which are not considered for credit transfer.

Both forms of RPL are practiced even now in some of the state universities in Sri Lanka. This concept paper sets out guidance for doing so in a consistent manner in all Sri Lankan universities in awarding their qualifications.

## 6.0 Students eligible for RPL

The following categories of students are recommended for the purposes of credit transfer or course exemption:

### 6.1 Students who wish to undertake a short period of study in a foreign university

Full-time undergraduate students registered in a state university following the regular admissions process may be offered an opportunity to study in a foreign university for a specified period of time (e.g., one or more semesters), under a Memorandum of Understanding regarding student exchange between the two universities. In this situation, students are expected to return to their home university, which will award the degree, and this home university will accept transfer of credits earned in the

foreign university. If the two universities do not follow the same credit system, a suitable method should be specified for mapping of courses and assignment of grades and approved by the University Senate or equivalent academic authority.

## **6.2 Students who wish to undertake a short period of study (one or two semesters) in another state university**

Full-time undergraduate students registered in a state university may seek an opportunity to study in another state university for one or two semesters or follow specific course units which are not available in the home university. In this situation too, students would be provided documentation regarding completion of specific course units in the guest university, and the home university will accept transfer of these credits towards the degree to be awarded by the home university.

## **6.3 Students who wish to upgrade a sub-degree level qualification to a Bachelor's or Bachelor's Honours degree**

This category of students, who may seek admission as full-time undergraduates, or to external degree programmes in conventional universities, or to programmes of study offered by the Open University, may be granted admission to university to complete a programme of study directly related to a previous course of study. Such students may be allowed to transfer credits from the previous course of study, or be granted course exemptions if appropriate (i.e., lateral entry), subject to Principles 1 to 4 listed below.

## **7.0 Students not eligible for RPL**

Students who have registered for higher studies in a foreign university or a non-state higher education institution in Sri Lanka, cannot be considered for admission and RPL in a state university.

## **8.0 Principles to be followed in implementation of RPL**

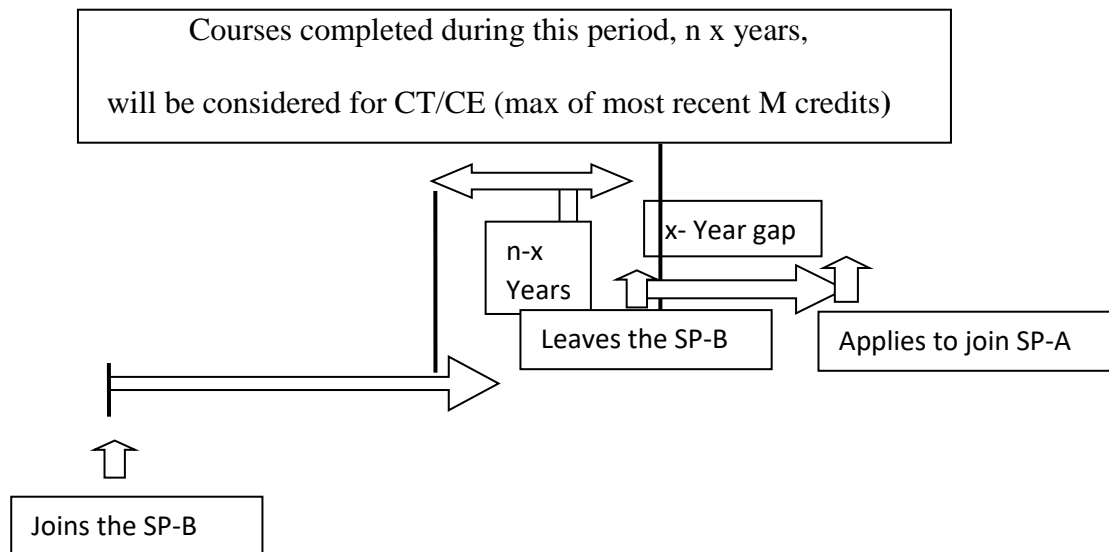
- **Principle 1.** Decisions regarding admission of students should be separate from decisions regarding RPL. The admissions process that decides whether students are eligible to enter a particular programme of study should be based on the minimum admission requirements stipulated by the university in accordance with SLQF 2015 and approved by the UGC. Students admitted to a programme of study after fulfilling approved entry requirements may be considered for RPL in order to determine which individual modules/ course units may be credited based on prior learning, and resultant advanced placement.
- **Principle 2.** Not more than 50% of the total volume of credits required for the qualification to be awarded should be considered under RPL (e.g., 45 of 90 credits for a Bachelor's degree or 60 of 120 credits required for a Bachelor's Honours degree). Thus, a minimum of 50% of the total volume of credits must be completed at the university awarding the qualification.
- **Principle 3.** Course exemptions based on RPL should not be granted for any of the course credits at the highest, level pertaining to an award, e.g., the fourth year of a

Bachelor's Honours degree. However, when courses in two different programmes of study have been clearly mapped, and a suitable method has been specified for assigning grades, and approved by the Senate of the university, credit transfer may be allowed even at the highest-level pertaining to an award.

- **Principle 4.** A limit must be placed on the time period for which RPL is permitted. It is recommended that RPL should be considered for not more than 10 years from the date of achieving the relevant learning outcomes.

## 9.0 Illustration

- A student having followed SP-B in a Higher Education Institute for a certain number of years, either completes that SP, or decides to stop it without completing it.
- After a certain period of time, say  $x$  years, this student applies for registration for SP-A in the same HEI, or another one, and seeks RPL based on the SP-B.
- The following figure illustrates how the credit transfer and/or course exemptions can be considered under RPL scheme subject to conditions stated above.



## **10.0 Guidance regarding implementation of credit transfer mechanisms**

### **10.1 Transfer of grades**

In order to facilitate transfer of grades from one institution to another, it is necessary for the home institution to provide the host not only the grades and the raw marks pertaining to the student requesting a transfer but also the raw marks of all the candidates who sat the relevant module examinations concurrently. This would enable the host institution to ascertain the position of the applicant in relation to the others.

### **10.2 Evaluation of the Transcript**

A student who is transferring credit from one university to another must obtain an academic transcript(s) listing the courses followed, grades and other attributes obtained from the institution attended. Each transcript and the listed courses should be evaluated by the CDRMC at the Faculty level to see if the courses followed satisfy the requirements of the receiving institution.

### **10.3 Arrangements for credit transfer and course exemption**

Potential students need reasonable assurance that they will be able to take education pathways which recognize previous work and study outcomes and give appropriate credit where they relate to further studies and increase opportunities for students with prior experience and qualifications to access higher education by facilitating student mobility. General information on relevant pathways should be provided to prospective students so that they are made aware of the opportunity and application process. This should cover means of obtaining further information to enable informed comparison of consequences of enrolment, in different courses.

Registered students should be able to access detailed information on credit transfer. Key information, including the date at which the information is current, should be made available in a single source/site, with links to more detailed information in other documents or sites as appropriate.

Each university will have to develop its own mechanism, by establishing a committee convened by the Academic division of the university, to draft suitable regulations and oversee the process.

### **10.4 Explanation of Terms**

Across the university, terms should be explained in "simple" language and using standardized terminology. Key terms used by the university should be defined and illustrated where appropriate with examples, both to reinforce understanding of the approach used by the institution and to encourage students to consider seeking credit transfer. These terms should be consistent with nationally agreed terminology. e.g., the Sri Lankan Qualifications Framework (SLQF).

## **10.5 Limits of Credit**

Academic rules, regulations and any results which set precedents that govern credit decisions should be "transparent". These should be accessible to potential applicants and clearly explained so that applicants know in advance where they stand. The respective CDRMC is responsible to provide necessary information for each study programme.

## **10.6 Contact Officers**

Information for students should include a list of contact officers with appropriate expertise and resources to advice on the process and likely outcomes of applications in individual programs. CDRMC should appoint a Contact Officer for each study programme to facilitate and/or advice applicants.

## **10.7 Credit Application form**

Students should be able to access the relevant credit application form on-line or as hard copy, including instructions for completing it. Students should not have to search separately for additional information to understand the terms used in the instructions. The evidence required to be submitted in support of the application should be spelt out along with a brief explanation of the rationale, e. g. to assure academic integrity. **A sample application process and application form are provided in the annexure.**

## **10.8 Similarity of Requirements for Evidence**

Requirements for supporting evidence should be similar across faculties, unless variations are approved by the institution.

## **10.9 Onus of Proof (Responsibility)**

In general, the responsibility for making a case for credit transfer and articulation rests with the applicant. Where formal arrangements exist between universities and/or other higher education institutions, information relevant to an individual's application should be verified through institutional systems where possible.

## **10.10 Timing of Lodgment and Processing**

Appropriate and reasonable time frames for the lodgment and processing of applications should be advertised to students.

## **10.11 Avenues of Appeal**

Grounds for appeal and procedures for appeal should be specified and be explained clearly to students. Appeal procedures should be consistent across the institution.

- 11.1. Any grievances based on the credit transfer application or assessment shall be sent in written format addressed to the respective Dean of the Faculty within two weeks after the receipt of any decision pertaining to the credit transfer.
- 11.2. The grievances shall be forwarded to the Vice Chancellor by the Dean for any remedial action existing in the system of the University of Jaffna

## **12.0. Policy review**

The policy is subject to review based on the feedback obtained or when any institutional/ national/ international higher educational norms change.

## Annexure I

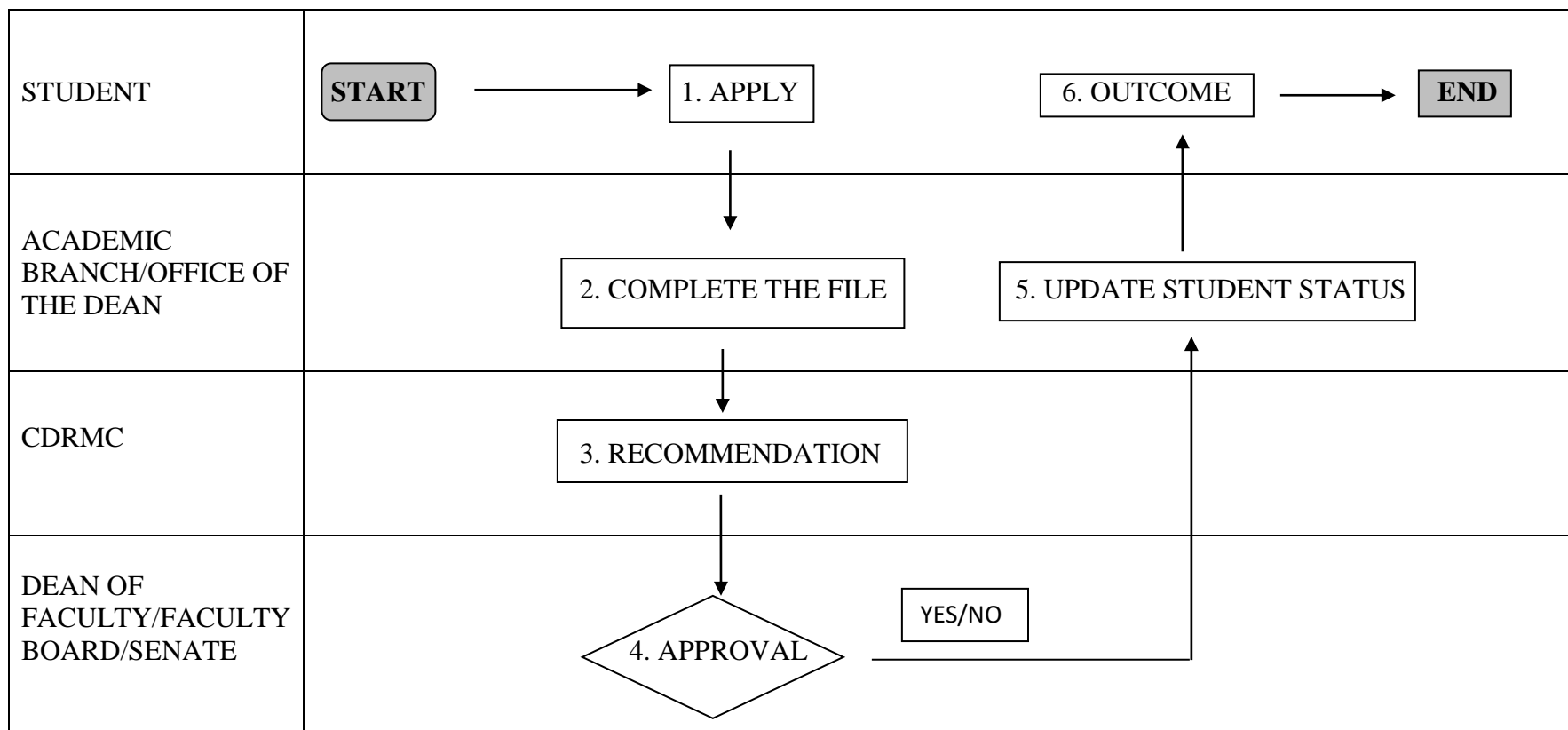
### Application Process: Credit Transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning

|                      |  |  |               |                |
|----------------------|--|--|---------------|----------------|
| University of Jaffna |  | Academic Branch  |               |                |
|                      |  | <b>Credit Transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning</b> |               |                |
| Doc. No              |  | Version: 1.0   | Revision: 0.0 | Effective Date |

| Ref No. | Description   | Form/Report   |
|---------|---|---|
| 1       | Announcement will be made at the beginning of an academic year to the new students on the timeline and process of applying for Credit Transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning. The timeline is 4 weeks prior to the semester commencement date. Student should submit the application to the academic branch of the University | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Student transcript from the previous institution</li><li>• Syllabus of the subject that student's applying the credit transfer of RPL</li><li>• Any other supportive document</li></ul> |
| 2       | The Faculty upon receiving the application from the Academic Branch will forward the application to the Departments concerned for recommendation and will be forwarded to the Faculty CDRMC   |   |
| 3       | Application with complete relevant documents will be evaluated by the CDRMC and recommendations will be submitted to the Dean for approval  |   |
| 4       | Applications that are approved and disapproved will be placed before the Faculty Board and the Senate for approvals   |   |
| 5       | Student will be notified the status of his/her application within 4 weeks of his application  |   |



|                      |  |  |               |                 |
|----------------------|--|--|---------------|-----------------|
| University of Jaffna |  | Academic Branch  |               |                 |
|                      |  | <b>Credit Transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning</b> |               |                 |
| Doc. No              |  | Version: 1.0   | Revision: 0.0 | Effective Date' |



**UNIVERSITY OF JAFFNA**  
**Credit Transfer and Higher Education Prior Learning Application Form**

| <b>Section 1: Student Information</b> |        |
|---------------------------------------|--------|
| Student Number                        |        |
| Date of Birth (dd/mm/yy)              |        |
| Family Name                           |        |
| Given Names                           |        |
| Faculty (University of Jaffna)        |        |
| Email Address                         |        |
| Are You an International Student      | Yes/No |

| <b>Section 2: Programme Information</b>                                       |         |
|---|---------|
| For which programme are you applying for credit?                              |         |
| Course Code   |         |
| Course Title  |         |
| Principal subject   |         |
| Are you currently enrolled in the course for which you are seeking RPL/credit | Yes/No  |
| Are you applying for RPL/credit on the basis of formal study                  | *Yes/No |

\*If yes provide certified copies of transcript of results

| Section 3: Vocational Education and higher Education RPL/credit |             |              |                                |             |              |                       |             |          |              |
|---|-------------|--------------|--------------------------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|----------|--------------|
| Student Number/Name   |             |              |                                |             |              | Name of the programme |             |          |              |
| Student to Complete   |             |              |                                |             |              | Faculty Use Only      |             |          |              |
| List Courses Successfully Completed                             |             |              | List Corresponding UoJ Courses |             |              | No of Credits         | Credit Type | Approved | Not Approved |
| <b>Higher Education RPL/Credit Application</b>                  |             |              |                                |             |              |                       |             |          |              |
| Institution   | Course Code | Course Title | Subject                        | Course Code | Course Title |                       |             |          |              |
|   |             |              |                                |             |              |                       |             |          |              |
|   |             |              |                                |             |              |                       |             |          |              |
|   |             |              |                                |             |              |                       |             |          |              |
| <b>Vocation Education RPL/Credit Application</b>                |             |              |                                |             |              |                       |             |          |              |
|   |             |              |                                |             |              |                       |             |          |              |
|   |             |              |                                |             |              |                       |             |          |              |
|   |             |              |                                |             |              |                       |             |          |              |
|   |             |              |                                |             |              |                       |             |          |              |
| Total   |             |              |                                |             |              |                       |             |          |              |

| Section 4: Approval    |             |                |                  |
|------------------------|-------------|----------------|------------------|
| Committee/Board/senate | Observation | Recommendation | Date & Signature |
| Head/Department        |             |                |                  |
| CDRMC                  |             |                |                  |
| Faculty Board          |             |                |                  |
| Dean                   |             |                |                  |
| Senate                 |             |                |                  |
| Vice Chancellor        |             |                |                  |

**Check List**
☐ Transcript Provided
 ☐ Academic History Provided
 ☐ Supportive Documents Provided