1. Preamble

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process that involves the identification, documentation, assessment and recognition of formal, (specifically transfer credit), informal and non-formal learning acquired through education, work and life experience.

The College's RPL services and system are coordinated and provided by the RPL Facilitator, RPL Advisor(s), Director for Student Life and Registrar, International Credential and Transfer Credit Officer, RPL assessors, the RPL Committee of cross-college representatives and designates from academic and support departments, and administration. The RPL system development and implementation is described in the Red River College RPL Strategic Plan and is integrated with the College's Strategic Plan.

To ensure the fairness and reliability of the RPL practices and process, the RPL processes at Red River College will follow the nine Guiding Principles for Quality RPL Practice in Canada as set forth by the Canadian Association of Prior Learning Assessment (CAPLA) and other emerging best practices.

2. Policy and Principles

Red River College (RRC) wishes to provide opportunities for students to get recognition for prior learning, and to enhance mobility between post-secondary institutions and between RRC programs. RRC wishes to ensure RPL is handled in a transparent manner.

Red River College will evaluate and grant credit to students for qualifying previous formal, informal and non-formal learning that is equivalent to College courses or programs. Recognized prior learning will be applied toward the requirements of College programs.
The learning to be credited will be consistent with current RRC course/program learning outcomes. The process will be administered in a way that ensures the College’s assessment of prior learning is valid, reliable, equitable, efficient and effective.

3. Definitions

In this Policy:

“Chair” refers to the Chair or equivalent (or their designate) of a College program.

“Dean” refers to the Dean or equivalent (or their designate) of a College school.

“Equated”, as used in Appendix A, means the same course learning outcomes, credit hours and assessment criteria and standards.

“Equivalent”, as used in Appendix A, means equal course learning outcomes that include all critical or essential components.

“Formal learning” means learning that is usually organized by professional educators and leads to a qualification or academic credential. It traditionally takes place in educational institutions such as colleges and universities. Recognition of formal learning typically leads to a transfer of credit.

“Informal learning” means learning that takes place through work and life experiences. Learning activities are not structured or officially evaluated.

“Non-formal learning” means learning usually offered by a sector, professional group or a company to deal with specific training needs. Formal assessment may or may not be included.

“Recognized post-secondary institutions” means a post-secondary institution that is authorized, registered and/or licensed by a government ministry/department responsible for education and/or quality-assurance/accrediting agencies in the jurisdiction in which the institution is located.

“Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)” refers to a set of processes that allow individuals to document, be assessed and gain recognition for their prior learning. The focus is on the learning rather than where or how the learning occurred. Knowledge, skills and abilities gained from life experiences may be formal, informal or non-formal.

4. Academic and Administrative Standards for RPL

4.1 The College processes used for evaluating prior learning include:

a) assessment of formal learning – i.e. assessment of educational documents and assessment of external courses using but not limited to course outlines and methods of evaluation.

b) assessment of informal learning – i.e. the assessment and verification of prior learning through portfolio or challenge processes such as written or oral examinations, interviews, projects, assignments, performance/skill demonstrations, evidence collections, product assessments.
c) assessment of non-formal learning – i.e. the assessment of external courses/programs from non-post-secondary organizations including business and industry.

4.2 Credit will be awarded for demonstrated learning, which includes knowledge, skills and abilities. It will not be awarded for experience alone.

4.3 Credit will be awarded for learning equivalent to the standards and criteria for the level required by the programs in which the credit is sought.

4.4 Credit will be awarded for learning which reflects both the theoretical and practical components in a balance consistent with the learning outcome requirements of courses/programs.

4.5 Credit will be awarded for prior learning that is appropriate to the program in which the individual is enrolled.

4.6 The assessment of competence levels and determination of credit awards will be made in a timely manner by the appropriate subject matter experts. Final approval for credit will be the responsibility of the Chair.

4.7 Credit for prior learning will be awarded upon meeting the established admission and registration requirements to gain admittance to a program/course.

4.8 A student may be given up to 75% credit in a program when credit for prior learning including the assessment of educational documents is awarded. If warranted, additional credits may be granted by the Dean in consultation with the Chair and the RPL Facilitator. Any remaining program requirements must be earned in actual studies through Red River College.

4.9 Where an accreditation agreement between the College and a regulatory authority exists, RPL processes will align with established guidelines.

4.10 Students have the opportunity to review their submitted evaluated work as outlined in the Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities Policy S1.

4.11 The appeal process for RPL will follow the Student Appeal Policy S3.

4.12 Initial RPL training and ongoing professional development will be provided to all staff involved in the RPL process as part of a quality RPL system.

4.13 Assessment procedures for Formal Learning, Informal Learning and Non Formal Learning will be established and updated from time to time by the RPL Facilitator in consultation with the Director of Student Life and Registrar, and shall be attached as Appendices to this Policy. In addition, the RPL Facilitator, in consultation with the Director of Student Life and Registrar, shall develop the Assessment of External Course from Non Post-Secondary Institutions Manual (the "Manual") and update same from time to time. The RPL Facilitator, in consultation with the Director, Student Life and Registrar, may establish such other procedures and manuals to address RPL issues as they may deem necessary.
5. Responsibilities

5.1 The RPL Facilitator/RPL Services and Director of Student Life and Registrar’s Office are responsible for the implementation, co-ordination, promotion, and monitoring of RPL activities and procedures. The RPL Facilitator will liaise with College staff to ensure consistent application and delivery across the range of College courses/programs. The RPL Services department will facilitate the system, including the provision of RPL training and professional development and will provide assistance with the development of resource materials and evaluation tools. The RPL Facilitator, in consultation with the Director, Student Life and Registrar, will develop and update the Manual, assessment procedures and such other procedures and manuals as they deem necessary in their sole discretion.

5.2 Staff at the Director of Student Life and Registrar’s Office, including the RPL Advisor(s) and the International Credential and Transfer Credit Officer will work with the Academic and RPL Services Departments to provide current and potential students with information and advice on RPL processes and practices. The Director of Student Life and Registrar’s Office will be responsible for maintaining the master list of “External Courses from Non Post-Secondary Institutions Approved for College Credit” in the College’s Transfer Credit database. This database will include approved courses for programs in all Schools, including the School of Continuing Education.

5.3 The College RPL Committee, constituted in accordance with its Terms of Reference, will act in an advisory capacity to the RPL Facilitator and Academic Departments regarding recognition of prior learning processes, resources and issues. The RPL Committee will regularly monitor, review, evaluate and revise RPL Policy to reflect changing needs and improvements in the assessment process and changes in the College’s mission and goals. At a minimum, this review will be completed every five years.

5.4 Deans are responsible to ensure quality RPL practice and may grant requests for RPL credit which exceed 75% course credit in a program. Deans are responsible for ensuring quality RPL practice and for ensuring Programs are aware of the RPL Policies including the review of appropriate external courses from non-post-secondary institutions. Upon recommendation of an approved Organization’s course(s) by the Chair, the Dean will review the Organization’s course(s) and grant approval as appropriate.

5.5 Chairs and academic departments, in consultation with the RPL Facilitator will determine their system for implementing recognition of prior learning in accordance with College Policy and available resources. The system may include: assessment of formal learning (i.e. educational documents) assessment of informal learning (i.e. evidence or portfolios, assessment of challenge processes) and assessment of non-formal learning (i.e. external courses/programs for College credit) Final approval for credit will be the responsibility of the program Chair.

5.6 Academic Department Staff, with assistance from the RPL Facilitator and the Director of Student Life and Registrar’s Office, will be responsible for the implementation of their RPL system to ensure accessible, consistent, valid,
credible and transparent RPL processes and practices. Each academic program/department will identify on the College program websites which courses have RPL processes available.

5.7 **Instructional Staff**, to whom responsibility is given to develop and conduct assessments of prior learning, will be identified by their Chair. Instructional staff will participate in RPL training and for the development and implementation of quality RPL practices. In compliance with College policy, instructors will identify opportunities for RPL when they create their course outlines.

5.8 **Students**, enrolled in or accepted to a RRC program will complete and submit relevant RPL forms (Transfer Credit or Challenge Process and/or Portfolio Assessment), pay any RPL fees, participate in the RPL process and will continue to attend classes until notified of a successful RPL result.

**RELATED POLICY AND STANDARDS**

- A5 Course Outline
- A20 Requirements for Graduation
- S1 Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities
- S3 Student Appeals

2.1 College Philosophy - Red River College Board of Governors Policy

- RRC RPL- A Quick Reference Guide for Faculty and Staff
- RPL Forms and Fee Range Guidelines
- RPL Assessment of External Courses from Non Post-Secondary Institutions for College Credit
- Procedures Manual
- RPL Strategic Plan
- RPL Committee Terms of Reference

Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment (CAPLA) - Guiding Principles for Quality RPL Practice in Canada (2015) – www.capla.ca
Appendix A - Assessment of Formal Learning Procedures

A.1 Assessment of formal learning for a student’s program may be internal transfer credit which includes courses completed in another RRC program and/or external transfer credit which is credit earned at other recognized post-secondary institutions in Canada or internationally.

A.2 Internal and external transfer credit may be given for courses completed within time frames prescribed by Policy A20 or other applicable College Policy.

A.3 Internal Transfer Credit for

(a) a course(s) which has been delivered through RRC will automatically be considered for credit in all RRC programs providing it is identical or equated to a specific program course. The letter grade will be used in the calculation of program and cumulative grade point averages.

(b) a course(s) which has been delivered through RRC and assessed as equivalent to a specific program course will receive a designation of "CR" and will not be included in the grade point calculation.

(c) RRC credits earned are included in the term grade point average in which they were earned.

(d) The internal transfer grade must meet or exceed the grade required for a pass in the RRC program for which it is being used.

A.4 External Transfer Credit

(a) Credits gained at another post-secondary institution may be transferred to RRC as external transfer credits, and where relevant, used as credits toward a College program.

(b) Courses submitted for external transfer credit from another post-secondary institution will be examined by the appropriate academic area who will determine its transferability. The minimum grade requirement is a C. This could be higher depending on grade progression requirements of the program.

(c) External transfer credits granted will appear in a separate section of the transcript as a designation of "CR" and will not be included in the grade point calculation. External transfer of credit will be awarded in the term in which it is relevant.
Appendix B - Assessment of Informal Learning Procedures

B.1 The College will provide opportunities, resources and quality RPL practices for the assessment of prior Informal Learning from work and life experiences. The RPL practices, processes and assessments of prior learning will be administered in a way that ensures rigorous, valid, fair, flexible, transparent and consistent assessment of prior learning.

B.2 Program Chairs/Managers or their designate will complete Section B of the Application for Challenge Process and/or Portfolio Assessment to approve the RPL process and fee and will provide the form to the RPL Advisor.

B.3 The College will record successful assessment of Informal Learning for courses in the student information system in the same way in which grades are normally transcribed. Grades may be recorded where assessment rubrics were used. Where this is not appropriate, the designation “CR” (Credit) will be used.

B.4 The College will record unsuccessful assessment of Informal Learning as “NC” (Not Complete) in the student information system.

B.5 Program Chairs/Managers or their designate will provide a completed “Results of Challenge Process and/or Portfolio Assessment” form to the RPL Advisor, appropriate student records representative, and to the student.

B.6 Students who have been unsuccessful in taking or challenging a course will require sufficient evidence of new learning and approval from the Chair to proceed with another assessment.
Appendix C - Assessment of Non Formal Learning Procedures

C.1 The College will follow procedures outlined in the Assessment of External Courses from Non Post-Secondary Institutions Manual (the “Manual”) to assess external courses from business, industry and other non post-secondary institutions. The RPL Facilitator will be responsible for updating the Manual as needed from time to time.

C.2 Both the organization who provided the non-formal learning and the organization’s course(s) must meet specific College requirements to be eligible for the assessment process. All procedures and requirements are outlined in the Manual.

C.3 The organization who provided the non-formal learning will be required to provide sufficient documentation and materials on the course(s) to be reviewed so that an assessment can be conducted.

C.4 The awarding of credit will be based on College-level learning and College equivalent course outcomes and content, materials, instruction, learner performance and evaluation.

C.5 The result of the assessment of an organization’s course(s) is a recommendation from the Assessor and the Chair regarding the awarding of credit.

The recommendation will be one of the following:

• the organization’s course(s) be recognized for credit by the College as equivalent to a particular College course(s); or

• the organization’s course(s) not be recognized for credit by the College.

C.6 Approved courses will be included in the College’s Transfer Credit database.

C.7 Credit(s) for approved organization course(s) will be recorded on the student’s transcript as a "CR" (i.e. credit).

C.8 If the College and/or organization who provided the non-formal learning make substantial changes to the designated courses(s), another assessment will be required.

C.9 All organizations with approved credit courses will be required to apply to the College every three years for renewal, or as noted in C.10.

C.10 Organizations with approved credit courses must obtain the College’s written approval to use their affiliation with the College, including the use of the College’s name or logo, in any materials or activities for commercial or promotional purposes.