



Portfolio of Evidence for Experience - Guidelines

IN REGOGNITION OF NON-FORMAL & INFORMAL PRIOR LEARNING

Contents

Prior learning recognised.....	2
What do I need to know?.....	2
Before making an application for Advanced Standing:.....	2
About unit content and learning outcomes.....	3
Should I apply for Advanced Standing?	4
What types of supporting documents should I provide?	4
Do supporting documents need to be certified or translated?.....	5
RPL Portfolio of Evidence for Experience Form	5
How do I write statements demonstrating my capabilities?.....	5
Lower-order thinking skills.....	6
Higher-order thinking skills.....	6
A sample statement describing my capabilities	6
Part 1: General statement about the criterion.....	7
Part 2: Contextualised examples to support the criterion.....	7
Part 3: Link to study and job in hand.	7
How will experiential knowledge and skills be assessed?	7
Appendix A – Bloom's Digital Taxonomy Verbs	8
References	9

Prior learning recognised

Southern Cross University (SCU) recognises that some people bring substantial knowledge, skills and experience to their university study. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a way to use your know-how and abilities to get a formal qualification. It involves assessing your current knowledge, skills and experience and considering other qualifications you may already have so you don't waste time relearning things you already know how to do.

The [Advanced Standing and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy, Procedures](#) and [Schedule 1](#) of the Procedures govern how Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) occurs for:

- **Formal learning** – learning gained through study in a structured, accredited program that leads to the full or partial achievement of a qualification; and/or
- **Non-formal learning** – learning gained through study in a structured, non-accredited program (such as a short course, seminar, on-the-job training or professional development) that does NOT lead to a qualification; and/or
- **Informal learning** – learning gained through years of paid or voluntary experience, professional standing or performance.

What do I need to know?

If you are applying to have your **non-formal or informal learning** recognised, this **Guide** will help you to complete the **RPL Portfolio of Evidence Form** by:

- identifying units (subjects) in your SCU course that have content (topics) and learning outcomes that you already know, understand and can do, for which credit may be sought;
- describing the knowledge, understanding and skills you already have and their application; and
- gathering a range of supporting documents (evidence) that verify the level and currency of your knowledge, understanding and skills to support your application for Advanced Standing.

Before making an application for Advanced Standing:

1. Search for your [SCU course](#).
2. Read the course-specific **RPL Guide** (if applicable).

Some SCU courses have a course RPL Guide that identifies any limits on the type of prior learning or the amount of credit. A link to the course RPL Guide is in the course information under the heading **Credit for prior learning**.

Credit for prior learning

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is available for this course. For more information please view the [Bachelor of Midwifery RPL Guide](#).

3. Become familiar with **Course Requirements**, the **Course Structure** and the units of study.

Course structure

Schedule of units

Course progressions

Unit Code	Unit Title
HLTH1004	The Reflective Learner and Health Science Scholar
MIDW1003	Foundations of Midwifery

4. Click on the **Schedule of units** button to view the units in the course. The Schedule contains core (compulsory) units of study. Some courses also have major, specialisation or elective unit options.
5. To view unit content and learning outcomes, click on any **Unit code** link (such as [HLTH1004](#) - The Reflective Learner and Health Science Scholar) or perform a [Unit Search](#). Browse uni-wide elective units by selecting a Uni-wide elective in the advanced filter of the Unit Search.
6. Download and save the [Portfolio of Evidence for Experience - Form](#) available from [How to apply](#).

About unit content and learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are clear statements of learning achievement expressed in terms of what learners are expected to know, understand and be able to demonstrate on completion of a unit (Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2013; Macquarie University, n.d.).

According to John Biggs and Catherine Tang (2007), learning outcomes link teaching intentions and the assessment of student learning.

Unit content

1. The reflective adult learner
2. Academic integrity
3. Academic writing
4. Critical thinking and reading
5. Digital literacy
6. Communication in professional health care settings

Learning outcomes
<

On completion of this unit, students should be able to:

1	reflect on own learning as a scholar and a future health professional
2	demonstrate critical thinking by considering a range of perspectives when addressing issues or problems relevant to health disciplines
3	demonstrate foundational digital literacy and academic writing skills with application of the core values of academic integrity within the health care setting
4	communicate in a way relevant to the health profession and with cultural safety awareness

Learning outcomes align with course **graduate attributes** that embody the generic characteristics, qualities and skills a graduate will potentially contribute to society (Barnett, 1990), beyond the disciplinary requirements reflected in the learning outcomes. So by attaining particular learning outcomes, learners also master the necessary [graduate attributes](#).

The **unit content** and **learning outcomes** are the essential criteria to address through the statements you will write about the depth and breadth of your knowledge, skills and experience.

When describing what you already know, understand and can consistently do concerning a unit learning outcome, it is critical to provide contextual examples from your experience instead of simply making general statements about the criterion.

You can also use what you know from history, literature, industry standards, academic papers and text and current media as examples to demonstrate your understanding, as long as you cite in-text and reference appropriately.

Should I apply for Advanced Standing?

Answering positively to these questions will indicate whether you should continue with your application and evidence gathering.

Consider:

1. What paid or voluntary work, projects, on-the-job training, professional development, or seminars have I completed that might be relevant to the unit/s for which credit is sought?
2. What other community-based or domestic tasks have I contributed to that may also be relevant?
3. How recently did I learn or utilise my skills and knowledge? - Are they current in terms of staying safe and legal? - Can I show that I have continued to use and further develop them?
4. What documents and other forms of evidence do I possess to demonstrate:
 - a. the knowledge and skills I have attained;
 - b. that I can consistently perform these skills and transfer existing knowledge and skills to new tasks and settings;
 - c. my ability to research and critically analyse issues to solve problems or create new information; and
 - d. readiness for self-directed learning (where I become a self-motivated, autonomous learner responsible for planning, initiating, and evaluating my learning efforts).

What types of supporting documents should I provide?

The RPL assessment process is as rigorous as any other assessment. However, the type of evidence that you need to provide may be different from regular class assessments. Importantly, the RPL process is flexible. You can discuss what evidence you should provide with your Course Coordinator. For example:

1. A **resume** or **curriculum vitae** detailing past and current experiences, including dates and hours of service for the positions or roles you have held;
2. A **Statement of Attendance/Participation** or **Certificate** verifying successful completion of a non-accredited course, credential or professional development program; **plus**
3. A detailed description of the non-accredited course, seminar, credential or program; **plus**
4. Detailed module/topic outlines, including learning outcomes or performance criteria (if applicable); **plus**
5. Other **primary and secondary evidence** from the [supporting documents](#) listed under the heading "What supporting documents verify current professional experience and expertise?".



Credit will likely be awarded if your statements and evidence are sufficient and your experience is relevant, proficient and current.

Do supporting documents need to be certified or translated?

In some circumstances, you may need to provide [certified copies](#) of original documents. An [authorised English translation](#) must accompany all non-English documents.

RPL Portfolio of Evidence for Experience Form

The Form provides the following:

- Fields to record your name, contact details, student ID and the Southern Cross course relevant to the unit/s for which RPL is sought;
- A checklist and textbox to list your supporting documents as Appendices;
- An applicant declaration;
- Space for unit content (topics) and learning outcomes to be included; and
- Textboxes that accommodate statements evidencing how, when and where the learning outcomes were achieved and remain current.

Unless otherwise stated in your course RPL Guide, each statement must be 400 words (+ or – 10%) per learning outcome and should:

1. Incorporate performance verbs to describe the levels of cognition you have attained in thinking, learning and understanding;
2. Include specific examples of non-formal or informal experiences demonstrating the understanding and capabilities achieved, including the ways currency of knowledge and skills were maintained;
3. Contain reflections on what you have learnt, how you might approach these tasks differently next time and what your priorities for future learning will be;
4. Acknowledge the ideas and works of others using in-text citations and referencing – for assistance, view the SCU [Quick Guides](#) about writing at University and [Referencing videos](#); and
5. Use [Grammarly](#) for editing.

How do I write statements demonstrating my capabilities?

Watch [Bloom's Taxonomy & Learning Objectives](#) video to unpack learning outcomes and learn more about using performance verbs to describe the levels of cognition attained in thinking, learning, understanding and performing unit learning outcomes.

To expand upon the skills associated with each taxonomy level now that technology is engrained and essential for learning, view [E-Learning with Bloom's Revised Taxonomy](#) and [How Technology Affects it - Bloom's Digital Taxonomy](#).

Finally, refer to [Appendix A – Bloom's Digital Taxonomy Verbs](#). Lee Crockett's (2011) infographic reveals that the lower level of awareness, known as lower-order thinking skills (LOTS), is remembering, understanding and applying. Higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) involve more profound levels of cognition like analysis, evaluation and creation.

You'll notice that learning outcomes start with and may include multiple performance verbs to indicate the levels of knowledge, skills and reasoning needed to meet unit requirements.

For instance, on successful completion of the hypothetical unit **ACCT1070 - Accounting for Business**, a graduate will be able to:

LOTS LEARNING OUTCOME	HOTS LEARNING OUTCOME
1. Describe the regulatory, social and ethical context of the business environment	2. Record basic business transactions and produce the four key financial statements
4. Apply basic costing, budgeting, working capital and capital investment techniques to organisational decision-making	5. Distinguish and compare alternative sources of business financing
6. Discuss the measurement of organisational performance	

Lower-order thinking skills

Learning outcomes 1, 4 and 6 require lower-order thinking skills. When referring to [Appendix A](#), the word '**describing**' is situated in the left-hand, red column at the remember level of cognition. Being able to define a term requires us to recall what has been learnt, demonstrating the lowest level of awareness.

Before explaining an idea or situation, we must initially understand it. Hence, the words '**discussing** and **distinguishing**' are found in the second purple column at the understanding level. They are an example of the second lowest level of cognition.

Applying what we know and understand is slightly more complicated but still classified in the upper levels of lower-order thinking. Therefore '**applying**' is listed in the third orange column at the application level. As we move from left to right, utilising words from the red, orange and purple columns to describe what we know, understand and can do, we are effectively communicating the ways our level of cognition is rising.

Higher-order thinking skills

Learning outcomes 2 and 5 require higher-order thinking skills. If tasked with writing a statement about how your current capabilities already fulfil learning outcomes 2 and 5 requirements, you would:

1. Identify and classify the performance verbs in the learning outcome (such as **produce** and **compare**); and
2. Select performance verbs from the [Appendix A](#) columns representing the same level of cognition (which for this scenario are the **analysing** and **creating** levels) to describe what you know, understand and can perform concerning the learning outcome.

The assessor evaluating your application will compare the level of cognition described in your statement to the supporting evidence to verify your claim and determine if there is a correlation regarding the level of cognition.

Within your statements, remember to address the unit content or topics and discipline-related information contained in the learning outcome. If you refer to ideas or information created by another person, cite and reference their work using an appropriate referencing style. For further assistance, view the [Southern Cross Referencing Guides](#).

A sample statement describing my capabilities

Below is a three-part structure outlining how you might address the unit topics associated with learning outcomes. Let's say the learning outcome criterion involves demonstrating the development of analytical and research skills in HR management.

Part 1: General statement about the criterion.

Start with a broad sentence or two about meeting the criterion. Make sure you use the language of the criterion so that the reader knows you are talking about the right discipline, knowledge and skill set.

Example:

My well-developed analytical and research skills have been demonstrated during five years as an academic research assistant and in implementing a government grants program. In both roles, I benchmarked industry standards and researched and analysed various quality sources to compile current information about complex social issues, including homelessness, Indigenous disadvantage, and literacy problems.

Part 2: Contextualised examples to support the criterion.

The examples are specific instances of applying research and analytical skills. They can be structured using the SAR model:

- **Situation:** Briefly outline the example's context and your role.
- **Action:** Give details of what you did, how and why.
- **Result:** Briefly outline the result, which could be a tangible item, such as a report. If this result is measurable, include quantitative (e.g. numbers, cost) and qualitative (e.g. standards) measures.

Example:

While Project Officer for the Community Grants Program, I researched and analysed options for a consultative process with community groups. My role was to prepare an executive briefing paper that identified opportunities and recommended a course of action with a scheduled implementation review.

I reviewed eight consultative processes used by various government agencies, three recommended by private consultants and completed a literature review covering the last ten years. Using a set of criteria I established based on this material, I summarised the processes, selected four that best met the Community Grants Program needs, evaluated them based on the requirements and recommended one. My recommendation was accepted by the executive, with commendations on the quality of the briefing paper. I am now developing a strategy for introducing this option into the program.

Part 3: Link to study and job in hand.

Suppose there is a gap between the examples provided and the learning discipline. In that case, you may wish to close with a short statement that signals the transferability of your knowledge and skills to the proposed field of study and employment opportunities and discuss any learning reflections and future learning directions.

Example:

I anticipate that these research and analysis skills will readily transfer to researching and analysing strategic HR issues such as staff engagement, talent management, training needs analysis and workplace planning. The most remarkable learning experience during this process was the importance of evaluating quality sources to obtain reliable data. As I continue through postgraduate studies, I am keen to expand my knowledge of different research methodologies to include Indigenous knowledge and research methods.

Remember to keep your statement within 10% (+ or -) of the required word count.

How will experiential knowledge and skills be assessed?

The University compares the full-time equivalent hours of service in a professional or voluntary capacity or life's passions to National occupational standards, using the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO). The indicative skill level and years of full-time equivalent service in an Australian occupation have a direct and consistent relationship to the [Australian Qualification Framework \(AQF\) Qualification Levels](#) and the amount of credit applicable under [Schedule 1](#) of the Procedures.

Appendix A – Bloom's Digital Taxonomy Verbs

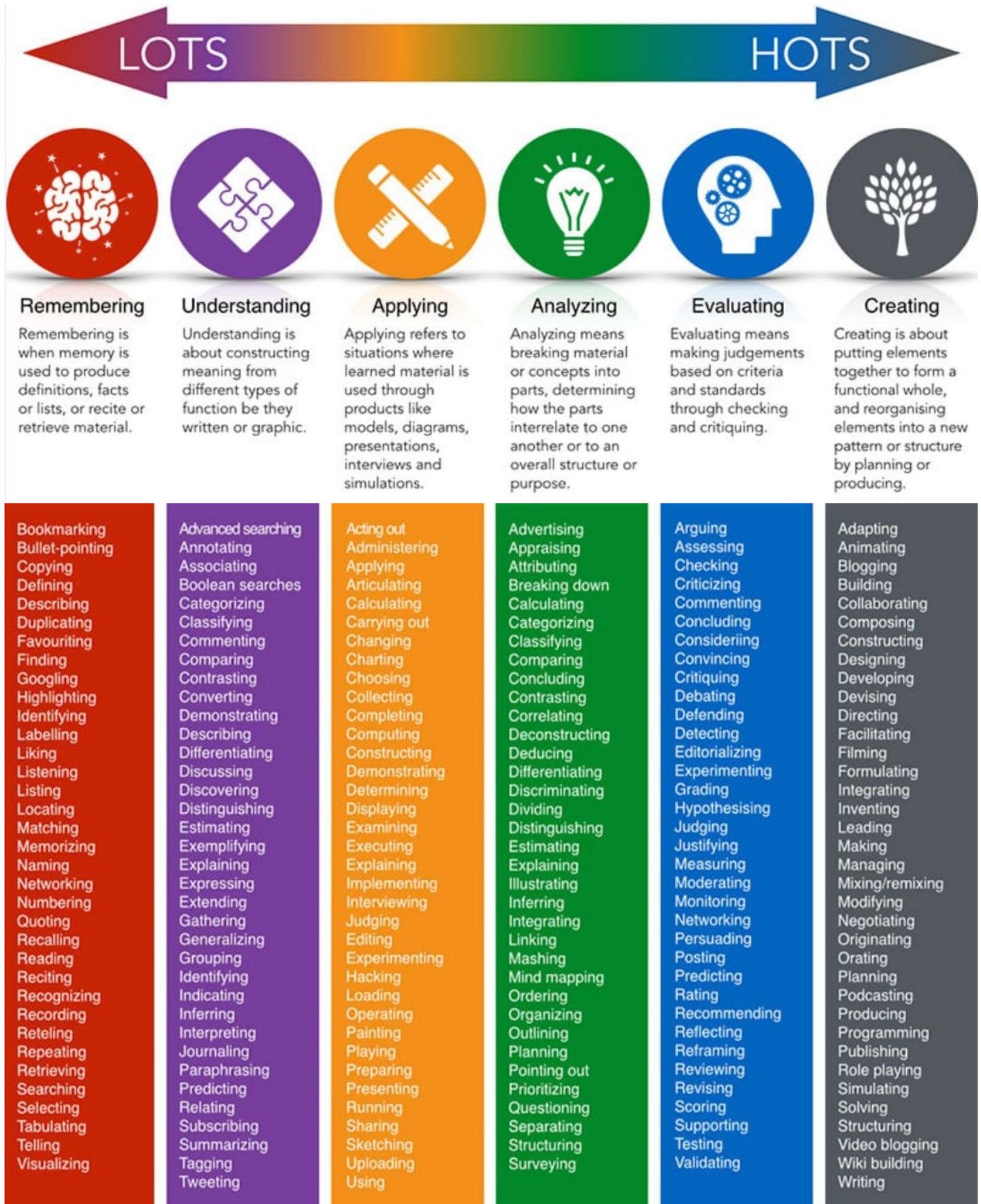


Figure 1. Bloom's Digital Taxonomy Verbs. Adapted from *Global Digital Citizen Foundation*, globaldigitalcitizen.org, 2017, Retrieved from <https://globaldigitalcitizen.org/blooms-digital-taxonomy-verbs>. Copyright 2017 by Global Digital Citizen Foundation. Reprinted with permission.

References

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