



RPL, CAT AND ARTICULATION POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Da Vinci Institute is an accredited private higher distance education provider offering qualifications on NQF levels five to ten, which are registered on the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF). This policy forms part of the institutional Integrated Quality Management System and details the principles for ensuring that programme offerings adhere to required academic standards and empower students to contribute to the transformation of their communities, society, and the economy of the future. This approach is underpinned by the Business- and Community-based Action Learning discourse on the co-creation and distribution of relevant knowledge.

In line with the national imperative, as articulated through the values underpinning the Constitution of South Africa, The Institute aspires to promote social justice and equality by expanding access to higher education through a single co-ordinated system in higher education, to assist in building a fair, equitable, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa.

2. DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	The principles and processes through which the prior knowledge and skills of a person are made visible, mediated and assessed for the purposes of alternative access and admission, recognition and certification, or further learning and development.
Assessment	The process used to identify, gather and interpret information against the required competencies in a qualification or part-qualification in order to make a judgement about a learner's achievement. The assessment takes place against the learning outcomes of a programme
Credit Accumulation and Transfer	An arrangement whereby the diverse features of both credit accumulation and credit transfer are combined to facilitate lifelong learning and access to the workplace (Council on Higher Education, 2016)
Credit	The measure of the volume of learning required for a qualification, quantified as the number of notional study hours required for achieving the outcomes specified for the qualification
Programme	A structured and purposeful set of learning experiences that leads to a qualification
Qualification	A registered national qualification consisting of a planned combination of learning outcomes which has a defined purpose, intended to provide qualifying students with applied competence and a basis for further learning and which has been

Term	Definition
	assessed in terms of exit level outcomes, registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and certified and awarded by a recognised institution
Articulation	the facilitation of movement of learners between and within the three sub-frameworks of the NQF, between institutions and within institutions, in order to enable access, progression and mobility (Notice 505 of 2014, National Qualifications Framework Act, No. 67 of 2008. p.12; Articulation policy for the post-school education and training system of South Africa, January 2017.)

3. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The Institute is guided by the key national legislated policies in respect of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), including the policies espoused by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and the Council on Higher Education (CHE).

This policy is benchmarked against, and should be read in the context of the relevant legislation underpinning the principles against which institutional policies and operating procedures are developed, implemented and maintained. These include:

A. Regulatory Legislation

- I. Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (No. 108 of 1996)
- II. Criteria for Programme Accreditation (CHE, 2004)
- III. Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997)
- IV. Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) (CHE, 2013)
- V. National Development Plan (NDP) 2030
- VI. National Policy for the Implementation of the Recognition of Prior Learning (SAQA, 2013)
- VII. National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008 (No. 67 of 2008): Articulation policy for the post-school education and training system of South Africa (DHET, 2017)
- VIII. Recognition of Prior Learning Coordination Policy (DHET, 2016)
- IX. Recognition of Prior Learning, Credit Accumulation and Transfer, and Assessment (CHE, 2016)

B. Applicable Da Vinci documents:

- I. D2 - Application, Admission and Registration Policy.

4. SCOPE

The policy applies to The Institute's registered qualifications, to all students who apply for RPL, and staff governing the RPL process.

5. RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)

RPL is understood as 'the principles and processes through which the prior knowledge and skills of a person are made visible, mediated and assessed for the purposes of alternative access and admission, recognition and certification, or further learning and development' (South African Qualifications Authority, 2013). At The Institute, mediation will include a targeted intervention as preparation for the assessment.

RPL is granted based on an appropriate assessment against specified outcomes, in keeping with the Constitutional imperative and the before-mentioned national policies, taking into consideration the necessary preparation and guidance required to undertake such assessments. This is because 'assessment, [as] an integral feature of all forms of RPL, does not exist in isolation from a range of other strategies that allow for different sources of knowledge and forms of learning to be compared and judged' (South African Qualifications Authority, 2013).

The Institute distinguishes between the following forms of RPL:

5.1. RPL for Access

To provide an alternative access route into a programme of learning for those who do not meet the formal entry requirements for admission.

Each of The Institute's registered qualifications have specific academic admission requirements, as reflected in the Prospectus.

RPL for Access can be obtained via one of the following routes:

- a) In cases where there is a lack of academic qualifications but an abundance of relevant knowledge and skills (acquired through inter-alia, work experience related to the field of study, formal and informal learning, etc.), such experiences will be formally assessed to determine if they equate to the minimum admission requirements of a programme. The Institute will require the candidate to undertake an assessment designed for RPL candidates, which, if the outcomes are met, results in admission to a level-appropriate qualification.
- b) The Institute will also grant access to candidates through mature age exemption. Candidates will be provisionally accepted on condition that they pass the first module of the programme. On successful completion of the first module, the provisional status will automatically be converted to full acceptance. Refer to the 'RPL for Access' routes applicable to the different qualification types in Appendix A.

- c) The Institute will grant access to candidates having achieved another NQF level 4 equivalent qualification with the completion of 4 subjects, with a minimum of 40% in each subject, to an NQF 5 to NQF 7 qualification. Refer to the 'RPL for Access' routes applicable to the different qualification types in Appendix A.

In line with the current CHE guidelines, not more than 10% of a cohort of students in a programme will be admitted via RPL for access, unless otherwise approved by the Council on Higher Education (CHE, 2016).

5.2. RPL for Exemption

A prospective student might have gained knowledge in specific areas (as related to a specific module(s) within a qualification offered by The Institute) through informal learning and non-formal learning. If this knowledge is closely related to the learning outcomes of a module(s) of a Da Vinci qualification that the candidate wants to enrol for, the student may want to apply for RPL for exemption. In this case, the candidate's knowledge will be compared to the learning outcomes of a particular module(s) to be exempted from completing the module. Once the assessment is done, The Institute may grant exemption for a module/s, not exceeding 50% of the credit value of the qualification.

'Exemption' will appear under the 'Achievement' for the module(s) on the student's transcript.

5.3. Application

RPL candidates are required to complete an RPL application form, detailing the basis upon which prior learning should be recognised as related to each of the qualifications offered by The Institute.

5.4. Assessment

An appropriate qualified staff member and/or subject matter expert will assess the evidence provided against the specific learning outcomes of the modules (in the case of RPL for exemption) and/or programme level descriptors (in the case of RPL for access) and make a recommendation in this regard. The assessment will be moderated by subject matter experts. Candidates have the right to appeal an outcome. The appeals process is stipulated in the Appeals Policy, available on the website www.davinci.ac.za

The assessment principles as articulated in the Assessment and Moderation Policy will apply.

If a student appeals, they have the opportunity to resubmit evidence under the guidance of an appropriate qualified staff member.

5.5.Types of competencies assessed during the RPL process

The following competencies are assessed:

- a) Practical competence - A person's demonstrated ability to perform a specified set of tasks
- b) Foundational competence - A person's demonstrated understanding of what she/he is doing and why she/he is doing it
- c) Reflexive competence - A person's ability to integrate actions with the understanding of the action so that she/he learn from those actions and adapts to the changes as and when they are required.

The competencies should align to the level descriptors for, and the learning outcomes of, the qualification.

5.6.Candidate support

The following support will be offered to students who wish to pursue the RPL route for access or exemption:

Guidelines will be provided to assist in the preparation of the portfolio/critical review essay

Candidates will be provided with the outcomes and associated assessment criteria pertaining to the RPL evaluation as per the required NQF qualification level

Candidates will receive advice and guidance from suitably qualified academic and support staff throughout the preparation of the portfolio/critical review essay.

6. CREDIT ACCUMULATION AND TRANSFER (CAT)

“The recognition of credits for the purposes of transfer from one qualification to another is determined by the nature of the qualifications, the relationship between them, the nature, complexity, and extent of the curricula associated with the specific subjects to be recognised for exemption and/or inclusion, and the nature of the assessment used” (Council on Higher Education, 2016).

6.1.Principles

For Credit Transfer, the following applies:

- a) Where the same module has been successfully completed in an accredited programme at another registered higher educational institution, credit will be granted for work completed – provided appropriate comparisons can be

performed. 'Exemption' will appear under the 'Achievement' for the module on the student's transcripts.

- b) Credit transfer will be considered for subject areas in relation to the qualification and the modules that make up the qualification.
- c) If a student has successfully completed a particular iteration of a Da Vinci qualification and then wishes to complete the elective stream from another iteration, those electives will be awarded as credits for non-qualification purposes.
- d) In line with CHE guidelines, currently, not more than 50% of the credits towards a Da Vinci qualification can be transferred from a qualification completed at another accredited programme of a registered higher education institution.
- e) Any and all credits for an incomplete qualification at The Institute may be recognised as meeting part of the requirements for a different qualification or may be recognised as meeting part of the requirements for the same qualification.

Refer to Annexure B of this policy for the rules on Credit Accumulation and Transfer.

6.2. Application

Prospective students should complete the relevant application form for credit accumulation and transfer available online. www.davinci.ac.za

6.3. Assessment

An appropriate qualified staff member and/or subject matter expert will assess the evidence provided against the specified outcome/s and make a recommendation for CAT to the RPL panel. The RPL panel provides quarterly feedback on CAT approvals to the Senate.

6.4. Outcome

Based on an appropriate comparison between the curriculum and the evidence submitted, the candidate will be granted or denied exemption.

7. RPL AND CAT SUPPORT FUNCTIONS

7.1. Admissions Office

The Admissions Office receives the requests for RPL for Access, Exemption and/or CAT and is required to:

- a) Receive the required documentation from the prospective student
- b) Submit the request/s to the Registrar for screening and evaluation
- c) Amend the relevant online registration form and payment contract.

7.2. Registry

The Registrar facilitates the evaluation process for RPL and/or CAT, and is required to:

- a) Present the requests for RPL for access, RPL for Exemption and/or CAT to the RPL panel for consideration and approval
- b) Liaise with the Head of Programme on the Subject Matter Experts required to evaluate whether the necessary learning outcomes have been met based on the evidence supplied
- c) Introduce the successful candidate(s) to the relevant programme co-ordinator(s)
- d) Present a quarterly report on RPL for Access, RPL for Exemption and/or CAT, to Senate
- e) Present a yearly report on the academic success of RPL students

7.3. Procedure

The following procedures apply:

- a) RPL for Access
- b) RPL for Exemption
- c) Credit Accumulation and Articulation

8. ARTICULATION

The Institute accepts articulation of learning in respect of cognate qualifications as follows:

- a) With respect to articulation with the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework (GFETQSF), The Institute accepts the National Senior Certificate (NSC) or NQF4 equivalent qualifications, in accordance with the entry requirements of The Institute
- b) With respect to the Occupations Qualifications Sub-framework (OQSF), The Institute will consider articulation into Da Vinci programmes if the candidate's previous qualifications are related to:
 - I. Business Management
 - II. Management of Technology
 - III. Management of Innovation
 - IV. Management of People
 - V. Management of Systems
 - VI. Managerial Leadership Development.

9. REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

Regular review and amendment of this policy will be done in line with the approved institutional and regulatory requirements, when required or every three years. This will take place in consultation with the relevant quality assurance structures at departmental and institutional level, under the auspices of the official custodian of this policy, namely the Executive Dean.

10. REFERENCES

Council on Higher Education (CHE). 2013. The Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework. CHE, Pretoria.

Council on Higher Education, 2016. Recognition of Prior Learning, Credit Accumulation and Transfer, and Assessment. [Online] Available at: <http://www.che.ac.za/sites/default/files/RPL-CAT%20Assessment%20Policy%20Document.pdf>

Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). 2016. Recognition of Prior Learning Coordination Policy. Government Gazette 39876.

Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). 2017. Articulation policy for the post-school education and training system of South Africa, National Gazettes, No. 40545 of 13 January, 2017

South African Qualifications Authority. 2013. National Policy for the Implementation of the Recognition of Prior Learning. SAQA, Pretoria.

South African Qualifications Authority. 2014, National Qualifications Framework Act, No. 67 of 2008. Notice 505 of 2014.

11. APPENDIX A

The RPL for Access criteria per qualification are outlined below.

RPL for Access to a Higher Certificate

If the candidate seeks entry without the prerequisite qualifications:

The candidate must demonstrate suitability for admission as per The Institutional RPL policy and is at the Senate's discretion on a case-by-case basis. For more details contact the Registrar on 011 608 1331 or registry@davinci.ac.za.

RPL for Access can be obtained via one of the following routes:

- I. In cases where there is a lack of academic qualifications but an abundance of relevant knowledge and skills (acquired through inter-alia, work experience related to the field of study, formal and informal learning, etc.), such knowledge and experiences will be formally assessed to determine if a prospective candidate equates to the minimum admission requirements of this programme. The Institute will allow the candidate to undertake an assessment designed for RPL candidates at NQF level 4, which, if successful, will result in admission to the Higher Certificate programme at Da Vinci. The assessment will include a demonstration of understanding of the relevant level descriptors at NQF level 4, which will be used to guide the process. Evidence of relevant

publications, presentations or relevant working experience could be considered in the process.

- II. The Institute will also allow candidates access through mature age exemption, granting the candidates provisional acceptance, conditional on passing the first module of the programme. On successful completion of the first module, the provisional status will automatically be converted to full acceptance. Mature age exemption includes the following:
 - a. Candidates having attained the age of 23 before or during the first year of registration, with a Senior Certificate or equivalent, with three years' work experience and a proven ability relating to the proposed programme, as well as adequate communicative skills in English
 - b. Candidates having attained the age of 45 before or during the first year of registration
- III. Candidates having achieved another NQF level 4 equivalent qualification with the completion of 4 subjects with a minimum of 40% in each subject.

In the event that a prospective student is unsuccessful in completing the above, The Institute will discuss alternative options with the candidate.

RPL for Access to a Bachelor of Commerce Degree

If the candidate seeks entry without the prerequisite qualifications:

The candidate must demonstrate suitability for admission as per The Institutional RPL policy and is at the Senate's discretion on a case-by-case basis. For more details, contact the Registrar on 011 608 1331 or registry@davinci.ac.za.

RPL for Access can be obtained via one of the following routes:

- I. In cases where there is a lack of academic qualifications but an abundance of relevant knowledge and skills (acquired through inter-alia, work experience related to the field of study, formal and informal learning, etc.), such knowledge and experiences will be formally assessed to determine if a prospective candidate equates to the minimum admission requirements of this programme. The Institute will allow the candidate to undertake an assessment designed for RPL candidates at NQF level 4, which if successful, will result in admission to the Bachelor of Commerce programme at Da Vinci. The assessment will include a demonstration of understanding of the relevant level descriptors, which will be used to guide the process. Evidence of relevant

publications, presentations or relevant working experience could be considered in the process.

- II. The Institute will also allow candidates access through mature age exemption, granting the candidates provisional acceptance, conditional on passing the first module of the programme. On successful completion of the first module, the provisional status will automatically be converted to full acceptance. Mature age exemption includes the following:
 - a. Candidates having attained the age of 23 before or during the first year of registration, with a Senior Certificate or equivalent, with a minimum of 40% in at least four higher or standard grade subjects (at least three of which shall have been passed simultaneously and one of which shall be a higher grade subject)
 - b. Candidates having attained the age of 45 before or during the first year of registration
- III. Candidates having achieved another NQF level 4 qualification with the completion of 4 subjects with a minimum of 40% in each subject.

In the event that a prospective student is unsuccessful in completing the above, The Institute will discuss alternative options with the candidate.

RPL for Access to a Postgraduate Diploma

Candidates seeking entry without the prerequisite qualifications:

The candidates must demonstrate suitability for admission as per The Institutional RPL policy and is at the Senate's discretion on a case-by-case basis. For more details, contact the Registrar on 011 608 1331 or registry@davinci.ac.za.

In cases where there is a lack of academic qualifications but an abundance of relevant knowledge and skills (acquired through inter-alia, work experience related to the field of study, formal and informal learning, etc.), such knowledge and experiences will be formally assessed to determine if the prospective candidate equates to the minimum admission requirements of this programme at Da Vinci. The Institute will allow the candidate to undertake an assessment designed for RPL candidates at NQF level 7, which if successful, will result in admission to the Postgraduate Diploma programme. The assessment will include a demonstration of understanding of the relevant level descriptors at NQF level 7, which will be used to guide the process. Evidence of relevant publications, presentations or relevant working experience could be considered in the process.

In the event that a prospective student is unsuccessful in completing the above, The Institute will discuss alternative options with the candidate.

RPL for Access to a Master's Degree

Candidates seeking entry without the prerequisite qualifications:

The candidates must demonstrate suitability for admission as per The Institutional RPL policy and is at the Senate's discretion on a case-by-case basis. For more details contact the Registrar on 011 608 1331 or registry@davinci.ac.za.

In cases where there is a lack of academic qualifications but an abundance of relevant knowledge and skills (acquired through inter-alia, work experience related to the field of study, formal and informal learning, etc.), such knowledge and experiences will be formally assessed to determine if the prospective candidate equates to the minimum admission requirements of this programme at Da Vinci. The Institute will allow the candidate to undertake an assessment designed for RPL candidates at NQF level 8, which if successful, will result in admission to the Master's programme. The assessment will include a demonstration of understanding of the relevant level descriptors at NQF level 8, which will be used to guide the process. Evidence of relevant publications, presentations or relevant working experience could be considered in the process.

In the event that a prospective student is unsuccessful in completing the above, The Institute will discuss alternative options with the candidate.

RPL for Access to a Doctoral Degree

Candidates seeking entry without the prerequisite qualifications:

The candidate must demonstrate suitability for admission as per The Institutional RPL policy and is at the Senate's discretion on a case-by-case basis. For more details contact the Registrar on 011 608 1331 or registry@davinci.ac.za. Candidates requesting RPL for access must do so before commencement of the programme. Not more than 10% of a cohort in an academic year may be admitted via RPL.

In cases where there is a lack of academic qualifications but an abundance of relevant knowledge and skills (acquired through inter-alia, work experience related to the field of study, including formal and informal learning), such knowledge and experiences will be formally assessed to determine if a prospective candidate equates to the minimum admission requirements of this programme. Evidence of relevant publications, presentations or relevant working experience could be considered during the process.

Once a prospective candidate has met the regulatory and institutional admission requirements for the Master's programme, The Institute will allow the candidate to

undertake an assessment designed for RPL candidates being a Critical Review of the field of study (distinguished at 75%) in which the prospective candidate is involved, at NQF level 9. This assessment will include a demonstration of understanding of the relevant level descriptors, which will be used to guide the process. In addition, the prospective doctoral candidate will be required to conclude the following modules in the Master's programme at a minimum of 75% at first attempt respectively, namely Management of Technology, Management of Innovation, Management of People, Systems Thinking, and a Research Methodology module at NQF level 9. In addition hereto the candidate must complete his or her research proposal with a final mark of a minimum of 75% at first attempt. Throughout the process, the candidate's academic progress will be monitored. Once these requirements have been met, the Head of Programme for postgraduate programmes must provide a motivation to the Senate for consideration for admitting the student to the Doctoral programme, indicating the exceptional contribution that this research study could make at a Doctoral level. This decision is at the Senate's discretion and will be final.

In the event that a prospective candidate is unsuccessful, the student would need to complete the Master's programme.

12. APPENDIX B

Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) Rules

- a) Where a similar module(s) has been successfully completed at another higher education institution that is both registered and accredited, the student would be exempted from submitting the relevant assignments. 'Exemption' will appear in the place of an 'achievement' on the student's transcript. There will be no cost for such module(s)
- b) Credit transfer will be considered for subject areas in relation to the qualification, and the modules that make up the qualification, if the subject areas coincide with the modules that the student chooses to register for.
- c) If a student has successfully completed a particular iteration of a Da Vinci qualification and then wishes to complete electives from another iteration, those electives will be awarded for non-qualification purposes.
- d) A maximum of 50% of the credits of a completed qualification at another accredited and registered higher education institution may be transferred to a qualification at The Institute.
- e) Short courses offered outside the HEQSF are non-credit bearing and, thus, individuals who register for and attend such short courses are not awarded credits against any level on the National Qualification Framework (NQF). This means no credit will be accumulated and/or transferred from such short courses. However, proof of valid assessment of the outcomes of short courses may be considered as part of a portfolio of evidence in respect of RPL.
- f) The same set of credits cannot be transferred to more than one qualification within an institution.

- g) All credits achieved from a part qualification and/or modules completed for non-qualification purposes, from a registered and accredited higher education institution, will be considered for credit transfer.

13. APPENDIX C

Procedure: Recognition of Prior Learning for Access

Procedure Code: D20-P1
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Procedure Description

This procedure document, *Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for Access*, is an alternative access route to a programme of learning for those who do not meet the formal entry requirements for admission. Candidates will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Step	Description	Notes
1	The applicant completes the RPL request form online and provides the necessary documentation around prior learning and work experience	Relevant documentation may include, among others, a CV.
2	The application will be evaluated by a RPL panel	
3	An eligible candidate will attend a RPL workshop where the RPL facilitator will guide and support the candidate through the RPL process	The workshop may be offered online
4	The RPL process includes a competency assessment, applicable to all programmes, and will be evaluated at the appropriate level	Multiple iterations for feedback are allowed prior to submission of the competency assessment. Referencing and other academic integrity requirements apply.

5	The submitted assessment is sent for marking to the relevant subject matter expert	A fee is payable with the submission of the assessment, which is communicated to the candidate on application
6	If the candidate is unsuccessful, they will have to complete a qualification at the NQF level below the NQF level of the qualification the candidate is wanting to access.	
7	If the applicant is successful in their assessment (a result of 50% or higher), the assessment is sent for internal moderation.	
8	On confirmation by the internal moderator of the positive result, the candidate will be granted full acceptance to the relevant programme.	
9	The outcome and decision taken for each applicant is documented on the academic report	
10	The successful applicant is guided back to the online registration portal to resume the registration process, where the candidate follows the same process as that of fully accepted student.	

14. APPENDIX D

Procedure: Recognition of Prior Learning for Exemption

Procedure Code: D20-P2
Version: 3
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Procedure Description

This procedure document, *Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for Exemption*, is related to an applicant's request for exemption of a module(s) within a learning programme

based on prior learning and working experience. Candidates will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Step	Description	Notes
1	The applicant completes the RPL request form online and provides the necessary documentation around prior learning and work experience	
2	The application will be evaluated by a RPL panel	
3	An eligible candidate will complete the modular assessment	Candidate to pay 20% of the module fee
4	If the candidate is unsuccessful, they will have to complete the module(s) in the programme.	The module fee is applicable in addition to the 20% of the module fee already paid
5	If the applicant is successful (a result of 50%) in their assessment, they will be exempt from enrolling for and completing the relevant module(s)	
6	The assessment is sent for internal moderation	
7	The outcome and decision taken for each applicant is documented on the RPL register	
8	The Admissions Office will communicate the outcome to the candidate and amend the candidate's registration form and payment contract accordingly.	
9	The successful applicant is guided back to the online registration portal to resume the registration process, where the candidate follows the same process as that of fully accepted student.	
10	The positive outcome is documented on the Academic Report	
11	The word 'exemption' will appear on the student's transcript, next to the applicable module(s)	

15. APPENDIX E

Procedure: Credit Transfer

Procedure Code: D20-P3
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30/06/2018	V1
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Procedure Description

This procedure document refers to Credit Transfer on a programme as outlined below.

Step	Description	Notes
1	The applicant completes the CAT request form online and provides the necessary documentation for credit for specific modules	
2	The application will be evaluated by a panel and where necessary a Subject Matter Expert	
3	If the applicant is successful they will be granted exemption from enrolling for and completing the relevant module(s)	The word 'exemption' will appear on the student's transcript, next to the applicable module(s)
4	The outcome and decision taken for each applicant is documented on the CAT register	
5	The Registrar communicates the outcome to the applicant	
6	The positive outcome is documented on the Academic Report	
7	The Admissions Office will amend the candidate's registration form and payment contract accordingly.	