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**THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE**

**SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE EMPLOYMENT, WORKPLACE  
RELATIONS AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**INQUIRY INTO CURRENT AND FUTURE SKILLS NEEDS**

This submission addresses the fifth term of reference:

- (e) *strategies to anticipate the vocational education and training needs flowing from industry restructuring and redundancies, and any recommended improvements;*

The University has identified five major points which should be addressed. Examples of ways in which the University is working towards addressing these issues are provided below. However, the University acknowledges that there is still a great deal to achieve.

The following submission is brief and a more detailed submission can be provided if required.

**1. Articulation between Tertiary and Higher Education Institutions**

The University acknowledges the need for clear articulation, particularly between VET institutions and Universities and from one University to another, with recognition of appropriate knowledge and skills.

**Example**

The annual publication, *Moving On* outlines the formalised articulation agreements with the Hunter Institute of TAFE and the University of Newcastle. The 2003 edition, which provides details of articulation arrangements, not only with TAFE NSW, but also with institutions such as Australian Institute of Management; APM Training Institute; Avondale College; Baptist Community Services; CB Alexander Agricultural College "Tocal"; Central Coast Area Health Service; Central Coast Community College; Hunter Area Health Service; John Hunter Hospital; and Open Training and Education Network (OTEN) is available on the University's website at <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/credit/>.

**2. Articulation between Schools and Universities**

Similar issues apply, but to a lesser extent between Schools and the University. This more often takes the form of acceleration than articulation.

**Examples**

Bachelor of Mathematics students with an outstanding record in Higher School Certificate Extension 2 Mathematics may enter an accelerated program which allows them to complete the program in five semesters instead of six.

The University is also expanding opportunities for students to complete University courses (subjects) during their final years of High School.

**3. Industry-Based Education and Training**

Greater attention needs to be given to industry-based education and training in the form of recognition of prior and concurrent learning.

**Example**

The University's Policy on Recognition of Prior Learning is attached.

**4. Need to maintain and Update the knowledge and skills of the workforce**

There is a need for Government and Industry to provide support for training and further learning to maintain and update the skills of the workforce.

## **5. Need for retraining and support for career changes**

There is also a need for Government and Industry to provide retraining and support for career changes in response to industry restructuring and redundancies.

### **Example**

In 1998, the University introduced an innovative retraining program to meet the needs of retrenched staff from the Newcastle Rod, Bar and Wire Products Division of BHP. The program, which built on the skills and knowledge of the workers to retrain them as teachers, mainly in the area of Technological and Applied Studies, involved collaboration between the University of Newcastle, BHP Rod, Bar and Wire Products Division, and the NSW Department of School Education and Training.

The program has received two National Teaching Awards, one for collaboration with industry, and one for the provision of educational services to the region. The program has since been expanded to include other employees in trade occupations.

**Professor Brian English**  
**Deputy Vice-Chancellor**

**29 April 2003**

# The University of Newcastle

## Policy on Recognition of Prior Learning

1. The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) defines "Recognition of Prior Learning" (RPL) as admission to, or academic credit for, a course of study based on previous, non-academic life experience.
2. The University acknowledges that RPL can have a significant role in providing wider access to university study by recognising learning which has occurred outside institutional settings, including training and experience which is acquired through employment or community service.
3. The University, consistent with the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee guidelines, believes that access and equity for students are improved by RPL.
4. Prior Learning assessed by the University may be used to satisfy, or partially satisfy, course admission criteria, and/or may be used to gain exemptions as part of some programs.
5. An applicant for RPL must, by any advertised closing date for admission, submit detailed supporting documentation.
6. Whereas credit for formal studies previously undertaken may be granted through the University's policy on Credit Transfer, in assessing Prior Learning the University will take account of:
  - Courses provided by professional bodies, enterprises, private educational providers; and
  - Learning from work and other forms of practical experience; and
  - Learning from life experience.
7. Admission to university is competitive. The assessment of an application for RPL does not imply a guaranteed enrolment in a program at the University of Newcastle.