



Recognition of Prior Professional Learning (RPL)

Policy and Procedures

1. Purpose and Scope

1.1 Purpose

This document establishes the policy and procedures for the Recognition of Prior Professional Learning (RPL) at GenevaTech Business School (GTBS). It provides a transparent, rigorous, and equitable framework through which learners may convert validated prior learning — acquired through formal, non-formal, or informal means — into academic credit towards GTBS qualifications.

The policy aims to:

1. Promote lifelong learning by recognizing learning wherever and however it is acquired.
2. Enhance access and equity by providing alternative pathways into and through higher education.
3. Reduce duplication of learning by granting credit for demonstrated achievement of learning outcomes.
4. Maintain academic standards by ensuring RPL assessment is as rigorous as assessment within the program.
5. Ensure regulatory compliance with Swiss, European, and UK frameworks, and the requirements of accreditation bodies.

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to all GTBS academic and professional programs, including:

Program Category	RPL Applicable
EdTech Certification Series	Yes (within defined limits)
EdTech Diploma Series (Level 4, 5)	Yes
Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA)	Yes

Program Category	RPL Applicable
Master of Business Administration (MBA)	Yes
CPD Courses	Yes (where assessed)

This policy does not apply to:

- Individual CPD courses (unless credit-bearing)
- The Capstone Dissertation/Project of any program
- Any module or component explicitly excluded by the Academic Council

1.3 Intended Audience

Audience	Use
Prospective and current learners	Understanding of RPL eligibility and process
Faculty and assessors	Assessment standards and procedures
RPL Panel and Academic Council	Decision-making framework
Quality assurance bodies	Verification of compliance
Accreditation bodies	Evidence of rigorous RPL practice

2. Definitions and Abbreviations

Term	Definition
Academic Council	The final authority for all RPL credit awards at GTBS
Accreditation Bodies	AMBA, EQUIS, AACSB (and others as applicable)
AACSB	Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business
AMBA	Association of MBAs
Capstone	The final independent research or applied project of a program
Certificated Learning	Learning validated by a formal qualification or certification
Challenge Assessment	Examination, project, or practical assessment set by GTBS
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ESG	European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
EQUIS	EFMD Quality Improvement System
Experiential Learning	Learning acquired through professional practice and life experience
GTBS	GenevaTech Business School, Switzerland
Informal Learning	Learning resulting from daily activities, work, family, or leisure

Term	Definition
nqf.ch-HS	Swiss Qualifications Framework for Higher Education
Non-formal Learning	Learning embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning
QF-EHEA	Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area
RPL	Recognition of Prior Professional Learning
RPL Panel	The body that assesses RPL applications and recommends credit awards
RQF	Regulated Qualifications Framework (England, UK)
TQT	Total Qualification Time

3. Policy Statement

GTBS is committed to the recognition of prior professional learning as a mechanism for:

1. Widening access to higher education for individuals from diverse backgrounds.
2. Accelerating progression for learners who have already achieved relevant learning outcomes.
3. Enhancing equity by valuing learning acquired outside formal academic settings.
4. Maintaining standards through rigorous, outcome-based assessment.
5. Complying fully with Swiss, European, and UK regulatory requirements and accreditation body expectations.

RPL at GTBS is:

- Outcome-based — credit is awarded for demonstrated achievement of learning outcomes, not for time spent or certificates held.
- Rigorous — assessment is as demanding as within the program.
- Transparent — criteria, processes, and evidence requirements are published.
- Equitable — available to all eligible candidates without discrimination.
- Capped — subject to maximum credit limits that preserve program integrity.
- Governed — all awards are ratified by the Academic Council.

4. Regulatory Framework and Compliance

4.1 Swiss Regulatory Context

There are no unified national RPL regulations for Higher Education Institutions in Switzerland. There is a national procedure only for secondary vocational education diplomas. The coordination of validation arrangements throughout Switzerland is ensured by SERI, although educational institutions retain a high degree of autonomy in the higher education sector. There is no accreditation system in place for institutions involved in validation.

In the universities or Universities of Applied Sciences where validation of non-formal and informal learning is practiced, the recognized learning outcomes give a right to obtain corresponding ECTS credits. These credits are registered in the study plan of the student.

Compliance Statement: GTBS RPL policy operates within the Swiss institutional autonomy framework, applying ECTS credits to validated learning outcomes in line with nqf.ch-HS and Bologna principles.

4.2 European Regulatory Context

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) Users' Guide is the official guide for the use of ECTS, maintained by the European Commission and adopted by ministers of the European Higher Education Area. The current version is from 2015, with a revision process initiated by the Tirana Ministerial Conference (May 2024).

Key developments to be addressed in the ECTS Users' Guide revision include:

- Lifelong learning — strengthening the position of ECTS as a universal credit system for lifelong learning
- Recognition of prior learning (RPL) — recognition of non-formal and informal learning as an EHEA commitment
- Terminology — change from “student” to “learner” throughout the text
- Awarding of credits — at higher education levels, ECTS credits are awarded by institutions subject to external quality assurance in line with ESG

The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) were formally adopted in 2005, with a revised edition published in 2015. ESG Standard 1.4 addresses student admission, progression, recognition, and certification, requiring fair recognition processes.

Compliance Statement: GTBS RPL policy aligns with the ECTS Users' Guide (2015), current revision developments, and ESG Standard 1.4 on recognition.

4.3 UK Regulatory Context

The UK Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) provides a structured way of recognizing qualifications based on level and size. Master's degrees are positioned at RQF Level 7, typically requiring 180 UK credits. In ECTS terms, this corresponds to 90 ECTS credits (the standard conversion being 2 UK credits = 1 ECTS).

Compliance Statement: GTBS RPL policy ensures UK RQF comparability for learners seeking UK articulation.

4.4 Accreditation Body Requirements

4.4.1 AMBA

AMBA imposes a cohort-level restriction: no more than 20% of a student cohort may be admitted with RPL and credit transfer.

AMBA has introduced a policy allowing “MBA-compatible” Postgraduate Certificate programs to account for up to 33% of MBA credits, transferable into a full MBA within five years.

Compliance Statement: GTBS RPL policy adopts a 30 ECTS cap for MBA programs (33.3% of 90 ECTS), at AMBA's 33% threshold, and caps RPL admissions at 20% of any cohort.

4.4.2 EQUIS

EQUIS evaluates whether programs are coherent, rigorous, and appropriate for the level. EQUIS does not prescribe a specific RPL cap but assesses program integrity and cohort experience.

Compliance Statement: GTBS RPL policy ensures that core modules and the Capstone are completed at GTBS, preserving program coherence.

4.4.3 AACSB

AACSB-accredited institutions typically restrict transfer credit to one-third or less of the program, ensuring at least two-thirds of requirements are earned in the graduate program.

Compliance Statement: GTBS RPL policy adopts credit caps at or below one-third of program volume, fully aligned with AACSB norms.

5. RPL Principles

The GTBS RPL framework is founded on the following principles:

#	Principle	Description
1	Learning outcomes, not learning inputs	Credit is awarded for demonstrated achievement of defined learning outcomes, not merely for time spent or certificates held
2	Rigor	RPL assessment is as demanding as assessment within the program
3	Transparency	Criteria, processes, and evidence requirements are published and consistently applied
4	Equity	RPL is available to all eligible candidates without discrimination
5	Capping	Maximum credit limits preserve program integrity
6	Academic Council authority	All RPL credit awards are ratified by the Academic Council
7	Currency	Prior learning must be current and relevant to the program learning outcomes
8	Authenticity	Evidence must be verifiable and attributable to the candidate
9	No double counting	Credit may not be awarded twice for the same learning
10	Systematic approach	A structured RPL process achieves better results than an individual, ad hoc process

6. Categories of Prior Learning

6.1 Certificated Learning

Formal qualifications and certifications awarded by recognized bodies.

Category	Examples	Typical RPL Range
Professional certifications	CFA, PMP, ACCA, CIMA, AWS, Microsoft, Cisco, Google	6–18 ECTS
Non-degree higher education	HND, Diplomas, Foundation Degrees	30–60 ECTS
GTBS/Innoversity EdTech qualifications	Certificate, Diploma, Professional Diploma, Advanced Diploma	Up to 42 ECTS
Employer-sponsored certifications	Corporate training programs with assessment	6–12 ECTS
Military and government training	Leadership, technical, management programs	6–24 ECTS

6.2 Experiential Learning

Learning acquired through professional practice, assessed through portfolio and/or challenge assessment.

Category	Examples	Typical RPL Range
Management experience	Team leadership, project management, operational responsibility	6–18 ECTS
Technical experience	Software development, data analysis, financial modeling	6–18 ECTS
Entrepreneurial experience	Venture creation, business ownership, consultancy	6–12 ECTS
Teaching and training experience	Curriculum design, instructional delivery, assessment	6–18 ECTS
Research and publication	Industry research, published articles, conference presentations	6–12 ECTS

6.3 Combined Learning

Candidates may present a combination of certificated and experiential learning. The Academic Council determines the total credit award based on the strength and relevance of the combined evidence.

7. RPL Credit Caps by Program Level

7.1 Credit Cap Rationale

The credit caps below are established to:

1. Preserve the integrity of each qualification
2. Ensure achievement of program-level learning outcomes
3. Maintain accreditation compliance
4. Protect the cohort experience for all learners

7.2 Credit Caps Table

Program	Total ECTS	Maximum RPL	% of Program	Minimum GTBS Study	Capstone RPL
EdTech Certification Series (per course)	90 hours	Non-credit	—	—	N/A
EdTech Diploma Series (Level 4)	12 ECTS	6 ECTS	50%	6 ECTS	N/A
EdTech Professional Diploma (Level 5)	18 ECTS	9 ECTS	50%	9 ECTS	N/A
EdTech Advanced Diploma	12 ECTS	6 ECTS	50%	6 ECTS	Excluded
BBA	180 ECTS	60 ECTS	33.3%	120 ECTS	Excluded
MBA	90 ECTS	30 ECTS	33.3%	60 ECTS	Excluded

Note: the EdTech Diploma Series caps at 50% due to their professional, applied nature and the substantial prior learning of target candidates. The BBA and MBA cap at 33.3% to align with AMBA and AACSB norms.

7.3 Special Provisions for the MBA

Parameter	Specification
Maximum RPL credit	30 ECTS
Proportion of program	33.3% of the 90 ECTS MBA
Minimum GTBS study	60 ECTS
Capstone	The Capstone (18 ECTS) cannot be awarded through RPL
Level 7 minimum	At least 45 ECTS at Level 7 must be completed at GTBS
Specialization minimum	At least 18 ECTS of the chosen specialization must be completed at GTBS
Cohort restriction	No more than 20% of any cohort may be admitted with RPL (AMBA requirement)

7.4 Special Provisions for the BBA

Parameter	Specification
Maximum RPL credit	60 ECTS
Proportion of program	33.3% of the 180 ECTS BBA
Minimum GTBS study	120 ECTS
Capstone	The Capstone (12 ECTS) cannot be awarded through RPL
Level 6 minimum	At least 60 ECTS at Level 6 must be completed at GTBS
Specialization minimum	At least 30 ECTS of the chosen specialization must be completed at GTBS

8. Eligibility Criteria

8.1 Who May Apply

Category	Description
Experienced professionals	Individuals with significant management or specialist experience
Certified practitioners	Holders of recognized professional certifications
EdTech qualification holders	Holders of GTBS/Innoversity EdTech qualifications
GTBS graduates	Graduates of GTBS programs seeking advanced standing
Non-degree postgraduate holders	Holders of postgraduate diplomas or certificates
Mature learners	Individuals aged 25+ with substantial professional experience

8.2 Eligibility Thresholds

Requirement	MBA	BBA	EdTech Diplomas
Minimum age	21	18	18
Minimum professional experience	3 years	2 years	1 year
Currency of learning	Within 10 years	Within 10 years	Within 10 years
Relevance	Must map to program learning outcomes	Must map to program learning outcomes	Must map to program learning outcomes
Evidence	Verifiable documentation and/or assessment	Verifiable documentation and/or assessment	Verifiable documentation and/or assessment
English proficiency	IELTS 6.5 or equivalent	IELTS 6.0 or equivalent	IELTS 6.0 or equivalent

8.3 Ineligible Learning

The following are not eligible for RPL:

Ineligible Category	Reason
Learning older than 10 years without evidence of currency	Fails currency principle
Unverifiable or self-declared learning	Fails authenticity principle
Learning unrelated to program outcomes	Fails relevance principle
Learning already credited towards another GTBS qualification	Fails no-double-counting principle
The Capstone Dissertation/Project	Reserved for GTBS study
Learning for which credit is sought at a level below EQF Level 4	Below program entry level

9. Evidence Requirements

9.1 General Evidence Standards

All RPL evidence must be:

Standard	Description
Authentic	Verifiably produced by the candidate
Current	Acquired within the last 10 years (unless demonstrably current)
Sufficient	Sufficient in quantity and quality to demonstrate learning outcomes
Relevant	Directly mapped to specific module learning outcomes
Verifiable	Supported by documentation, referees, or assessment

9.2 Evidence Types

Evidence Type	Examples
Certificates and transcripts	Qualification certificates, transcripts, certification records
Employer verification	Letters from employers confirming roles and responsibilities
Portfolio	Work samples, project reports, publications, artifacts
Reflective statement	Candidate's structured reflection on learning and its application
Challenge assessment	Examination, project, or practical assessment set by GTBS
Professional references	Testimonials from supervisors or clients
CPD records	Documented continuing professional development

9.3 Evidence Mapping

Candidates must submit an RPL Evidence Map that links each piece of evidence to specific module learning outcomes. The Evidence Map is the foundation of the RPL assessment.

RPL Evidence Map Template:

Module Code	Module Title	Learning Outcomes Claimed	Evidence Provided	ECTS Claimed

10. Assessment Methodology

10.1 Assessment Approaches

GTBS employs a triangulated assessment approach to ensure rigor:

Approach	Description	When Used
Documentary assessment	Review of certificates, transcripts, portfolios, and employer verification	All RPL applications
Reflective assessment	Evaluation of the candidate's reflective statement linking experience to learning outcomes	All RPL applications
Challenge assessment	Examination, project, or practical assessment set by GTBS	Where documentary evidence is insufficient

10.2 Challenge Assessment

Where documentary evidence alone is insufficient, candidates may be required to complete a challenge assessment. This may take the form of:

Challenge Type	Description	Typical Duration
Written examination	Proctored online examination covering module outcomes	2–3 hours
Applied project	Work-based project demonstrating competency	4–6 weeks
Portfolio defense	Oral defense of portfolio before a panel	45–60 minutes
Practical assessment	Demonstration of technical or professional skills	Variable
Case analysis	Written analysis of a business case	3–5 days

Challenge assessments are assessed by GTBS faculty and moderated in accordance with standard quality assurance procedures.

10.3 Assessment Criteria

RPL assessment applies the same standards as program assessment:

Criterion	Requirement
Learning outcomes	All claimed learning outcomes must be demonstrably achieved
Level	Learning must be at EQF Level 4, 5, 6, or 7 as appropriate to the module
Depth	Learning must demonstrate the depth required by the module
Currency	Learning must be current and applicable
Authenticity	Evidence must be verifiable and attributable

10.4 Grading of RPL Credit

RPL credit is awarded on a pass/fail basis (or “Credit Awarded”). It does not carry a numerical grade and is not included in the calculation of the candidate's Grade Point Average (GPA). The transcript records the credit as “RPL – Credit Awarded.”

11. The RPL Process

11.1 Process Overview

1	Enquiry and Initial Advice <i>Candidate consults and explores RPL guidance</i>
2	Formal RPL Application <i>Submission of RPL application, Evidence Map, and portfolio</i>
3	Preliminary Review <i>RPL Coordinator checks completeness and eligibility</i>
4	Academic Assessment <i>Faculty assessors evaluate evidence against learning outcomes</i>
5	Challenge Assessment (if required) <i>Candidate completes examination, project, or defense</i>
6	RPL Panel Recommendation <i>RPL Panel reviews assessment and recommends credit award</i>
7	Academic Council Ratification <i>Academic Council approves, modifies, or rejects the recommendation</i>
8	Notification and Enrolment <i>Candidate notified; remaining program pathway confirmed</i>

11.2 Indicative Timelines

Stage	Indicative Duration
Enquiry to application	1–2 weeks
Application to preliminary review	5 working days
Preliminary review to academic assessment	15 working days

Stage	Indicative Duration
Challenge assessment (if required)	2–4 weeks
Assessment to RPL Panel recommendation	10 working days
Panel to Academic Council ratification	Next scheduled meeting (max. 4 weeks)
Ratification to notification	5 working days
Total (typical)	8–12 weeks

12. Governance and Decision-Making

12.1 Academic Council Authority

The Academic Council is the final authority for all RPL credit awards. Its role includes:

1. Ratifying all RPL credit awards recommended by the RPL Panel
2. Determining the final ECTS value of each award, within program caps
3. Approving the mapping of prior learning to specific modules
4. Establishing and revising RPL policy, criteria, and procedures
5. Monitoring RPL outcomes for consistency and equity
6. Reporting annually on RPL activity to the Academic Senate

12.2 Composition of the Academic Council

Member	Role
Dean (Chair)	Academic leadership
Head of Programs	Program oversight
Faculty representatives (2)	Subject expertise
Quality Assurance representative	Standards and compliance
Registrar (Secretary)	Records and process

12.3 RPL Panel

The Academic Council delegates preliminary assessment to an RPL Panel, comprising:

Member	Role
RPL Coordinator (Chair)	Process management
Subject specialist faculty (2)	Academic assessment
Industry practitioner	Professional relevance
Quality Assurance representative	Standards compliance

The RPL Panel makes recommendations to the Academic Council, which retains final authority.

13. Quality Assurance

13.1 Quality Mechanisms

Mechanism	Description
Published criteria	RPL criteria and processes published in the candidate handbook
Assessor training	RPL assessors trained and calibrated
Moderation	RPL assessment decisions sampled and moderated
Academic Council oversight	All awards ratified by the Academic Council
Annual review	RPL data reviewed annually for consistency and equity
External scrutiny	RPL processes included in ESG and accreditation reviews

13.2 Data and Reporting

The Registrar maintains records of:

- RPL applications received
- RPL credit awarded (by module and ECTS)
- Challenge assessments conducted
- Appeals and outcomes
- Demographic data (for equity monitoring)

An annual RPL report is presented to the Academic Senate.

13.3 Equity Monitoring

GTBS monitors RPL outcomes to ensure:

- No systemic bias by gender, nationality, age, or disability
- Consistent application of criteria across candidates
- Appropriate support for candidates from underrepresented groups

14. Grading and Transcript Notation

14.1 Grading

RPL credit is awarded on a pass/fail basis (“Credit Awarded”). It does not carry a numerical grade and is not included in the calculation of the candidate's Grade Point Average (GPA).

14.2 Transcript Notation

The transcript records RPL credit as: **“RPL – Credit Awarded”**

with the module code, module title, ECTS value, and date of award.

14.3 Credit Recognition

RPL credit is recognized for progression, completion, and award purposes. It carries the same academic weight as credit earned through GTBS study.

15. Fees

15.1 RPL Fee Structure (Indicative)

Item	Basis	Fee in CHF
RPL application	Per application	50
RPL assessment	Per module or per credit block or per ECTS assessed	50
RPL re-assessment	Per re-assessment	50
Appeal	Per appeal (refundable if upheld)	50

Specific fee amounts are determined by management and communicated through official fee schedules. RPL fees are separate from tuition fees for the remaining program.

15.2 Financial Considerations

- RPL reduces the total tuition payable by reducing the number of modules to be studied
- RPL fees are set at a level that reflects the assessment effort involved
- Scholarship support may be available for RPL fees in cases of financial need

16. Appeals

16.1 Right of Appeal

Candidates may appeal an RPL decision within 30 days of notification. Appeals are heard by the Appeals Panel (comprising members not involved in the original decision).

16.2 Grounds for Appeal

Ground	Description
Procedural error	The RPL process was not followed correctly
New evidence	Significant new evidence has become available
Disproportionate decision	The decision was unreasonable given the evidence

16.3 Appeals Panel

Element	Specification
Composition	Independent chair; academic member; practitioner member

Element	Specification
None involved in original decision	Yes
Outcome	Uphold; vary; remit for reconsideration; overturn
Finality	The Appeals Panel decision is final

17. Data Protection and Record-Keeping

17.1 Data Protection

RPL applications and records are handled in accordance with applicable data protection law. Candidates consent to the processing of their data for RPL assessment purposes.

17.2 Record-Keeping

The Registrar maintains RPL records for a minimum of 10 years from the date of the RPL decision. Records include:

- Application forms and Evidence Maps
- Assessment documentation
- Panel recommendations and Council decisions
- Appeal records

Annexes

Annex A – RPL Application Form (Summary)

Section	Fields
Personal details	Name, date of birth, nationality, contact
Identity verification	Government ID upload
Program applied for	Program name and level
RPL credit sought	Total ECTS claimed; modules mapped
Evidence summary	List of evidence types and sources
Declarations	Authenticity; consent to data processing
Fee payment	Confirmation

Annex B – RPL Evidence Map Template

Module Code	Module Title	Learning Outcomes Claimed	Evidence Provided	ECTS Claimed

Annex C – Challenge Assessment Request Form (Summary)

Section	Fields
Candidate details	Name, program, RPL application reference
Module(s) for challenge	Module code and title
Challenge type proposed	Examination / Project / Portfolio defense / Practical
Justification	Why documentary evidence is insufficient

Annex D – RPL Panel Recommendation Form (Summary)

Section	Fields
Candidate details	Name, program, application reference
Assessment summary	Evidence reviewed; challenge assessment outcome
Module-by-module recommendation	Module code, ECTS recommended, rationale
Total ECTS recommended	Sum of module recommendations
Panel recommendation	Approve / Modify / Defer / Reject
Panel signatures	Chair and members

Annex E – Summary of Credit Caps by Program

Program	Total ECTS	Max RPL	Min GTBS Study	Capstone RPL
EdTech Diploma (Level 4)	12	6	6	N/A
EdTech Professional Diploma (Level 5)	18	9	9	N/A
EdTech Advanced Diploma	12	6	6	Excluded
BBA	180	60	120	Excluded
MBA	90	30	60	Excluded