

Recognition of Prior Learning Guidance

Approved:	August 2024
Review by	August 2025
Authorised by	C Gavaghan (CEO)

1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide support, clarification, and guidance to Trainers regarding the recognition of a learner's previous achievements and/or qualifications. The Policy for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) has been written to be open, transparent, and clear in its purpose, scope, and implementation.

2. Policy Statement

The policy will ensure that the Training Provider is clear on what does and does not constitute acceptable prior learning for recognition.

3. Scope

This policy will apply to all courses however the Quality Manager is responsible for checking RPL is applicable for the Awarding Organisation being used.

4. Roles/Responsibilities

Compliance with this policy lies with the Quality Manager and any interpretations or clarifications required will be supplied by the Quality Manager or Awarding Organisation.

5. Definition of Recognition of Prior Learning

RPL is a method of assessment [leading to the award of credit] that considers whether learners can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess and so not need to develop through a course of learning (Regulatory Arrangement for the Qualifications and Credit Framework).

6. Acceptable evidence of RPL

- Learners have successfully completed the assessment criteria for a whole or part of a unit within a qualification
- Learners have evidence of recent prior study which meets assessment criteria of the current programme of study being undertaken in full
- RPL must be included on the appropriate sampling plan as an assessment method as appropriate and subject to internal quality assurance

7. Circumstances when prior learning will not be recognised:

- Learning that is similar to assessment criteria but which has been met at a level lower than the current programme of study being undertaken by the learner

- Prior learning that is more than two (2) years old
- Prior learning that has been referred by an assessor
- Prior learning that has not been assessed by an assessor

8. Assessment of RPL Evidence

8.1 RPL allows an individual to avoid unnecessary learning, meaning that they can present for summative assessment without repeating learning in areas where they will be able to show that they can meet the learning outcome(s).

8.2 Evidence obtained through RPL process must be assessed, to the same rigorous quality as evidence obtained through any other process. In no circumstances does RPL process mean that any required qualification summative assessments can be avoided e.g., mandatory exams, practical/theory tests, or assignments. This is because the prescribed summative assessment is the process through which evidence, produced via any prior assessment method or through RPL process, is evaluated.

8.3 All prior learning that is submitted as evidence by a learner must be complemented by a professional discussion to make sure the learner's knowledge or the application of this knowledge meets the requirements of the assessment criteria.

8.4 The assessor receiving the learner's prior learning must be satisfied that the evidence provided meets the assessment criteria for which it has been submitted and where evidence from prior learning is weak, the receiving assessor must plan further work with the learner as appropriate.

8.5 It remains the role of assessors and quality assurance staff to ensure that learning outcomes are only deemed to have been met where evidence is:

8.5.1 Valid:

Does the evidence genuinely demonstrate that the demands of the learning outcome have been met? For RPL, currency of evidence will be of particular concern. Does, for example, the evidence meet up-to-date demands or is it representative of practice that has significantly changed?

8.5.2 Authentic:

This involves consideration of whether the evidence being examined is genuinely the work of the learner. For example, the evidence may have been produced by somebody else, or may be the result of the work of a

team. In the latter case, this would be acceptable if the learning outcome was related to team / joint working, but not if it was being used as evidence of an activity which should have been carried out individually.

8.5.3 *Sufficient:*

There must be enough evidence to fully meet the requirements of the learning outcome, or learning outcomes being considered. If there is insufficient evidence to fully meet requirements, then evidence obtained through RPL must be complemented by additional evidence gained through other suitable assessment method(s) before requirements/outcomes can be said to have been met.

8.5.4 *Reliable:*

The evidence obtained through RPL should be such that an assessor would arrive at the same assessment decision, were the assessment to be repeated.

9. Outcomes of RPL

If individuals can produce relevant evidence, that meets learning outcome requirements then, recognition can be given for their existing knowledge, understanding or skills. If an individual can demonstrate that they meet all the learning outcomes and assessment criteria in a unit, then they can claim credit for that unit solely on the basis of their RPL achievement. If, however, evidence from RPL is only sufficient to cover one or more learning outcomes, or to partly meet the need of a learning outcome, then additional assessment methods should be employed to generate sufficient evidence on which to base a safe assessment decision.

10. RPL Process

Trainers wishing to use RPL must ensure that it is carried out diligently and appropriately in consultation with the Quality Manager, to meet the requirements of the assessment strategy/guidance for the qualification concerned.

The methods of assessment used will be determined by the assessment strategy for the qualification being assessed and might, for example, include:

- examination of documents,
- expert witness testimony
- reflective accounts
- professional discussion.

The RPL assessment should be carried out as an entire process. This means that the assessor should:

- Plan with the learner
- Make a formal assessment decision
- Feedback assessment decisions to the learner, confirming decision and giving guidance on the available options (particularly in situations where the decision has been not to award credit.)
- Maintain appropriate records
- Ensure that learners are aware of their right to access the appeals process should they feel the assessment decision was unfair

The assessor **must** ensure that all learning outcomes and assessment criteria being claimed are covered and that records of assessment are maintained in the usual way. The process must be subject to the same quality assurance requirements as any other assessment method.

11. Funding

The Education & Skills Funding Agency is clear that funding must not be claimed for any part of a learner's learning aim or programme that duplicates provision they have received from any other source. They state:

Funds must not be used to pay for training for skills, knowledge and behaviours already attained by the apprentice. We may take action to recover apprenticeship funding where this happens.

You must assess the individual's prior learning and experience before starting the apprenticeship. You must quantify and evidence the proportion of prior learning already attained, quantify the proportion of off-the-job training content that will not be covered, and quantify the amount that the funding will be reduced by.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Apprentice name:	Date:
Framework/Standard:	Level:
Assessor:	

The assessment undertaken for unit <number>, <title> on <full course name> has met the requirements for the unit called <number>, <title> delivered on <full course name>. The assessment has been deemed sufficient, valid, and reliable to meet the conditions for recognition of prior learning.

The assessment has been authenticated by a professional discussion between the apprentice and assessor / the assessment of the apprentice has been conducted for the two qualifications at the same time [delete as appropriate]

Apprentice signature	Date:
Assessor signature:	Date:
IQA signature:	Date: