

POLICY · POL / RPL

Recognition of Prior Learning *Policy.*

The AI Board's policy and procedure for claiming Recognition of Prior Learning — a method of assessment that considers whether a learner can demonstrate they already meet the assessment requirements for a unit.

SECTION 01

Introduction

This document sets out the policy and procedure for claiming recognition of prior learning (RPL), which is defined by Ofqual as "a method of assessment that considers whether a learner can demonstrate that they meet the assessment requirements for a unit, through knowledge, understanding and skills they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning".

Centres should not confuse RPL with entry criteria needed to enrol for a qualification. The entry criteria – which centres must use to support judgements on whether a learner should embark on a programme of study – are stated in the relevant qualification specification documents. The processes associated with RPL relate to recognition of achievement and subsequent certification for a The AI Board qualification. As such the processes are conducted in centres but certification sits within the responsibilities of The AI Board.

SECTION 02

Policy Statement

The AI Board seeks to enable learners to avoid duplication of learning and assessment and has developed this policy in order to support that aim. Evidence obtained through the RPL process must be assessed to the same rigorous quality as evidence obtained through any other process.

SECTION 03

Recognition of Prior Learning

It may be that a learner has already attained the knowledge, skills and/or understanding needed to meet the standards stated in the assessment criteria of a qualification unit, through (the following list are examples of sources for the recognition of prior learning, but are not meant to be exclusive and other sources may be utilised by the Centre):

- running their own business
- domestic or other aspects of family life
- previous or current employment

in relevant voluntary work or leisure activities

in education or training e.g. higher education or adult education courses

from independent study

A key matter in the use of any recognition of prior learning activities is that the learning which is to be utilised is not undertaken via a recognised qualification (where either the Credit Transfer or Exemption routes should be considered).

Evidence obtained through the RPL process must be assessed to the same rigorous quality as evidence obtained through any other process.

It is recognised that provided the standards and assessment requirements of a given unit, parts of a unit or qualification have been met, the use of RPL is acceptable for achievement of the part of a unit, units or a qualification which is being claimed. The AI Board believes that learners should not need to repeat learning where there is valid and reliable evidence to show that the Learning Outcomes in a unit have been met at the standards stated by the assessment criteria.

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:

Current: 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?

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.

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.

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.

Current: Does the evidence relate to activities where the evidence of that learning is of a contemporary nature?

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.

Ofqual have stated: Learners are unlikely to have all the evidence they need to achieve a full unit and may need to produce additional evidence. Evidence used for RPL is not time-limited but assessors must determine whether it is valid and authentic. RPL may be used in conjunction with other assessment methods such as examination of recent products, professional discussion or observation to assess current performance.

RPL can be applied to learners who are transferring from one learning programme to another. They may have embarked on a course and completed work, but they have not gained credits or qualifications.

RPL for a whole qualification is not the norm and is only likely to occur in exceptional circumstances. Furthermore, the RPL process cannot allow for the accreditation of any externally assessed units, which learners may already have achieved.

SECTION 04

The RPL Process in The AI Board Centres

- 1 The RPL process should be carried out by designated staff with relevant levels of expertise to meet the requirements of the assessment strategy / guidance for the qualification concerned.
- 2 The main focus of the process is assessment and therefore responsibilities for decisions on RPL belong with assessors in centres. The assessors may come from different subject areas depending on the nature of the RPL claim, but there must be a consistent approach which follows the centre's RPL policy.
- 3 In order to plan for the use of RPL as part of their assessment activities, centres must have a robust internal policy and learners must be informed about the RPL process at the centre; this policy must be made available if requested.
- 4 A learner wishing to use RPL must firstly meet with an assessor. The assessor needs to be experienced and have the relevant specialist subject knowledge. Where there is a small group of learners who wish to learn more about RPL and how it applies to them the first meeting may involve more than one person.
- 5 For any learner wishing to claim RPL, the starting point is to reflect on their experience. The learner should be advised to think about their experience from a variety of situations including those listed above in the introduction.
- 6 It is extremely important that the learner must be provided with the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the The AI Board unit/s at the beginning of this process. Moreover, it is important for the mentor to ensure that the learner understands the assessment criteria associated with individual unit(s) they wish to claim. It is only then that they will be able to work towards assembling the relevant evidence.
- 7 All learners must be given appropriate advice and guidance on the evidence that will enable them to achieve the standards required, if they wish to claim RPL. It is helpful if examples of how to present evidence are provided to facilitate understanding and portfolio compilation.
- 8 The learner must compile a portfolio of evidence to support their claim for RPL so at the outset he/she is aware of all the information that must be contained in a file. This may include:
 - a CV or other resumes
 - a summary of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria claimed
 - a commentary identifying prior achievement against individual learning outcomes and assessment criteria
 - full evidence against each assessment criterion claimed

- 9 When submitting learner results to The AI Board the centre must clearly identify where RPL has been used. The EQA at The AI Board will review the evidence as part of the normal sampling activity to ensure the correct process has been followed and the standards have been met.

SECTION 05

Assessing the Evidence

The assessor will examine the portfolio systematically for its completeness. He/she will ensure that the evidence relates to the assessment criteria of the unit(s) being claimed by the learner and that there are no gaps in the evidence. As aforementioned, the assessor will be looking for evidence that is valid, authentic, current, relevant and sufficient. 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 and/or professional discussion.

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.

The assessor will check that the evidence presented:

is the work of the learner

is appropriate to the standards being assessed

represents sufficient breadth and quality to be appropriate to the standards to which it applies (if the assessor is not satisfied with the evidence submitted it will be necessary to seek additional evidence from the learner)

is sufficiently contemporary enough to meet the requirements of the assessment criteria

is of a standard which equates to that demanded by a normal study route

It should be noted that separate evidence is not required for each unit assessment criterion; indeed, learners may present a small number of complex pieces of evidence to demonstrate achievement of a number of unit assessment requirements. However, the evidence needs to be clearly mapped by the learner, and checked by the assessor, so there is no ambiguity.

It may be that testing is required to ensure the learner has this knowledge claimed if there is insufficient evidence of the RPL. Oral testing may be used as this is appropriate for the RPL process but, in addition, it may be necessary to ask learners to complete an assignment or perform a demonstration. A combination of these methods may be used. Evidence of the oral testing should be submitted as part of the portfolio of evidence.

The assessor must maintain full records of the time they spend with the learner and the decisions taken.

SECTION 06

Appeals

Where a learner or centre wishes to appeal the outcome of the RPL process they should follow the procedure in the The AI Board Enquiries and Appeals Policy.

SECTION 07

Review

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Version Control

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