



Policy Document

Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

Initial Assessment procedure

Last updated March 2019

Section 1

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is an assessment process which makes use of evidence of a learner's previous achievements, knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess to demonstrate competence or achievement against a unit or qualification. Through the RPL process, evidence of a learner's previous achievement (learning) is assessed against the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of a unit.

The definition of RPL is quite specific and relates to assessment of experience, knowledge, understanding or skills leading to the award of credit. Assessment for RPL is conducted against the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of a unit and is subject to exactly the same internal and external quality assurance requirements as any other kind of assessment.

This policy document also outlines the procedure for the Initial Assessment Process.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a method of assessment [which leads to the award of a qualification or unit] that considers whether learners can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a qualification or unit through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess and rather than through a course of learning. RPL enables recognition of achievement from a range of activities. Provided that the assessment requirements of a given unit or qualification have been met, the use of RPL is acceptable for accrediting a unit, units or a whole qualification. Partial unit completion is not acceptable. Evidence of learning must be:

Valid - Does the evidence genuinely demonstrate that the demands of the learning outcome(s) and assessment criteria have been met?

Authentic - Is the evidence being examined is genuinely the work of the learner.

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.

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.

There is no difference between achievement of the required standards by RPL and achievement through a formal programme of study.

Where appropriate RPL can be used to claim credit for a learners achievements. This process can give them either a part or full qualification irrespective of how their skills and knowledge were learnt. Content as well as assessment can be used as RPL. This recognises that learning occurs in many different contexts as well as from formal learning or training or from the work place. Assessment of the learning must be valid and reliable to ensure the integrity of the award of unit(s) and the evidence gathered needs to meet the requirements of the unit, or part of unit, that the evidence is being used for.

A learner can RPL Evolve test results but they must have undertaken the Evolve assessment in the first instance.

Section 2

Process

The purpose of this policy is to enable the learner(s) to record and assess their knowledge, understanding and skills acquired from their work experiences and training against the requirements of a qualification.

The policy states that learner(s) can do this using a range of evidence including, for example;

- CPD log
- A portfolio of evidence put together by the learner showing the prior learning undertaken
- Evidence of their learning for example, having completed an assessment.

The evidence can be 100% mapped to the assessment criteria. This piece of assessment would need to have been assessed and internally quality assured.

Evidence will be recorded within the apprentices Personal Learning Record (PLR) and ILP. Details will also be added to the commitment statement.

Complete a skills and knowledge gap analysis:

All potential apprentices complete a skill scan prior to being enrolled on any apprenticeship programme. This skills scan will identify and analyse skills gaps and identify actions that need to be implemented to resolve them. The process will ensure that the full occupational profile, skills, knowledge and behaviours are addressed.

This will assess and identify the gaps in an apprentices skills, knowledge and behaviours that are needed to complete their chosen apprenticeship. This information will help develop individual learning objectives to support completion of the apprenticeship.

The skill scan identifies areas that will need to have specific actions taken to ensure that the apprentice can achieve outcomes as defined within the standard and programme.

Key roles in the RPL Process

The process is carried out by staff with the relevant expertise to meet the requirements of the delivery and assessment for the qualification they are working with.

- Occupationally competent assessors will assess if the evidence fully meets the assessment requirements of the unit within the qualification, record the assessment process and then record their judgement
- An occupationally competent IQA must carry out a final internal quality assurance check in order to ensure validity and consistency in the assessment judgements and record their findings

The RPL Process

Outline the steps to be taken when using RPL. These may include the following:

- Induction of learner(s) into the requirements of Recognition of Prior Learning
- Pre-assessment – advice, support and mentoring for gathering of evidence
- Assessment of evidence against unit standard by a competent assessor
- Feedback to the Learner following the assessment process
- IQA of the assessment process
- Claim of Credit from awarding organisation.

Outcome

If individuals can produce relevant evidence, that meets the requirements of the qualification then, recognition can be given for their existing knowledge, understanding or skills.

If an individual can 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 work must be undertaken by the learner. All assessment criteria must be met in order for an assessment decision to be reached.

Maths & English requirement

Some apprenticeship standards may require learners to hold Maths and English qualifications at level 1 or 2, dependant on the standard. All learners will have to engage in an initial assessment of knowledge which is designed to give an accurate, up to date picture of current levels of performance and ability. These assessments can be administered;

- Online through services such as BKS or Dynamic Learning
- Through paper-based assessment

If a learner has RPL of achievement of these qualifications, then acceptable evidence must be seen and approved as a true original by a qualified member of the assessment team. This evidence must meet the acceptable evidence requirements of the Apprenticeship Certificates England (ACE) requirements.

Qualifications from non-UK countries will need to be assessed for recognition and comparison of international qualifications and skills.

UK NARIC is the designated United Kingdom national agency for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications and skills. It performs this official function on behalf of the UK Government.

The UK NARIC Statement of Comparability is a document that can be used in support of your international qualifications.

It guides universities, colleges, employers and professional bodies on how your qualifications (including professional qualifications) relate to UK qualifications and certificates.

It is not a compulsory document, but it can be specifically requested by an organisation.