



## London Professional Academy

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Recognition Of Prior Learning Policy</b>
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## **Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to provide support, clarification and guidance regarding the recognition of a learners' previous achievements and / or qualifications.

## **Audience**

Although the information is of relevance to those responsible for supporting learners in their choice of qualification and to those responsible for planning, carrying out and quality assuring assessment. The information will also have relevance for those involved in teaching and learning.

## **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**

RPL Defined Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is an assessment process which makes use of evidence of a learner's previous non - certificated achievements to demonstrate competence or achievement within a unit or qualification. Through the RPL process, evidence of a candidate's previous achievement (learning) is assessed against the learning outcomes of a unit.

The Regulatory Arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework gives the following definition of RPL and this definition is fully supported by the CQFW:

***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.***

## **When to use RPL**



The RPL process is relevant where an individual has evidence of having previously learnt something but has never received formal recognition for it through a qualification or other form of certification.

Evidence can draw on any aspect of a candidate's prior experience including:

- domestic / family life
- education and training
- work activities
- community or voluntary activities.

### **Assessment of RPL Evidence**

Evidence obtained through the RPL process must be assessed, to the same rigorous quality as evidence obtained through any other process. In no circumstance does the 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 the RPL process) is evaluated.

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). 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:

#### **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?



### **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.

### **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. This is recognised as good practice by all the concerned regulators and Ofqual has recently issued a statement<sup>1</sup> reinforcing this:

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Assessment Policy and Guidance Document 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.

Evidence from RPL is similar to that derived via any other acceptable assessment method. This means that where the standard of a unit is met by evidence obtained wholly or partly from RPL, credit can be claimed.

## **RPL Process**

Centres wishing to undertake RPL must ensure that:

- it is carried out by designated staff with relevant levels of expertise 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 decisions 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.

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