

Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process of assessment which makes use of evidence of a learner's previous non-certificated achievements to demonstrate competence or achievement within a unit or qualification. The knowledge, understanding and/or skills in question may have been acquired in any area of life, for example, domestic / family life, education and training, work related activities, community or voluntary activities.

Evidence from RPL processes is similar to that which is generated by any other assessment method permitted by a qualification. Learners can therefore use RPL to generate evidence for one or more learning outcomes. As long as all the main learning outcomes have been met, an individual can claim credit for units where RPL has been used to generate all or some of the evidence required.

The rules of evidence apply to RPL as with all other evidence types, i.e. if the evidence provides proof of the learner's competence, then it is acceptable.

Assessors should always check with the awarding body, IQA or EQA when they are considering using RPL evidence.

To ensure the RPL is correctly monitored BLC will ensure the following:

- 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 various methods of assessment are usually determined by the assessment strategy for the qualification being assessed; these could include:

- Examination of documents
- Expert witness testimony
- Reflective accounts
- Professional discussion.
- Work experience records, validated by managers.
- Past portfolios of evidence or essays made by the learner.

For an effective RPL claim the assessor should:

- Plan with the learner to ensure the evidence submitted meets the assessment requirements
- 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.

Learners and assessors must be aware there are many differences between NQF and QCF frameworks. Therefore a Level 3 QCF qualification is not automatically equivalent to a NQF Level 3 qualification and the required content; even if they are similar units.

Date: October 2018

This policy will be reviewed every 12 months - FE Quality Enhancement Committee

