

Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

Definition

The Regulatory Arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) provides the following definition of RPL and this definition:

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is 'a method of assessment that considers whether a learner can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills that they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning'.

A similar definition is provided by The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework: The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the process for recognising learning that has its source in experience and/or previous formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts. This includes knowledge and skills gained within school, college and university and outside formal learning situations such as through life and work experiences.

In the context of the QCF, the definition of RPL is quite specific and relates to assessment 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 within the QCF.

We are responsible for assessment and claiming credit. There is no difference between achievement of the required standards by RPL and achievement through a formal programme of learning.

Process

- The RPL process enables the learner/s to record their knowledge, understanding and skills acquired from their work experiences and training.
- Learner/s can do this using their CPD log. Where appropriate this can be used to claim credit for their achievements. This process can give them either a part or full qualification irrespective of how their skills and knowledge were learnt.
- There are two contexts of RPL: one is where a portfolio of evidence is put together by the learner showing the prior learning undertaken – the learner would then need to complete the ILM assessments in order to gain the qualification, the second is where the learner has evidence of their learning which also shows they have completed an assessment (non-ILM) which can be 100% mapped to the ILM assessment criteria.
- If a learner believes they can meet the criteria they need to submit their full evidence and portfolio, and the module criteria to which it relates to us
- We shall then review the portfolio and evidence and consult with ILM if necessary
- A full decision with reasons will be given within 15 working days

This piece of assessment like our ILM ones would have been assessed and internally quality assured by the centre. Regulations require us to promote RPL as an option to learners. However, it is certainly not always an easier, cheaper or quicker route to a qualification.

Outcomes

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 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. This is recognised as good practice by all the concerned regulators and Ofqual has a statement which reinforces this: 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. Since evidence from RPL is similar to that derived via any other acceptable assessment method, where the standard of a unit is met by evidence obtained from, or partly from RPL, credit can be claimed.