

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy

OCTOBER 2023

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the recognition of non-certificated learning towards a full (not partial) unit or qualification. The RPL process must be negotiated with the centre and must be claimed as part of a course. The centre is 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 study, therefore RPL appears on certificates as credit-bearing.

Definitions

The centre must determine which category the learners evidence fits into:

Exemption

'The facility for a learner to claim exemption from some of the achievement requirements of a regulated qualification, using evidence of certificated, non-regulated achievement deemed to be of equivalent value.'

Equivalent Unit(s)

'A unit/units from a different qualification or submitted by another recognised organisation that is/are deemed to be of equivalent value and so can count towards a qualification in place of designated mandatory or optional units from it.'

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

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 they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning.

There are three ways of assessing RPL evidence which may be open to the learner:

1. Submit a portfolio of evidence based on previous relevant knowledge, skills and competences which must be assessed against the assessment criteria of the unit(s) for which RPL is being sought to ensure that all learning outcomes have been achieved.
2. Undertake the same assessments as learners following a formal course of learning and assessment that lead to award of the unit or qualification. The assessments may be undertaken without attending teaching sessions.
3. Assessment through a summative assessment against a unit or full qualification. It is important to

note that RPL is an alternative route to achievement and not an easy option or shortcut.

Evidence must be produced for RPL which is subject to the same assessment and quality assurance requirements as applied to evidence produced as part of a training programme/course. '

Audience

The intended audience for this document is:

- Centre staff responsible for Quality Assurance;
- Assessors;
- Internal Verifiers;
- Quality Reviewers and External Verifiers;
- Key stakeholders involved in qualification development;
- Qualifications Regulators.

This policy applies to:

- Qualifications approved under the UK qualification regulators

Policy

Qualifi seeks to enable learners to avoid duplication of learning and assessment for the purposes of awarding credit. There are three ways that this can be managed; exemption, equivalency and recognition of prior learning:

Exemption

Exemption is the recognition of certificated, non-regulated achievement; for example, certificated regulated qualification achievement. Exemptions are not recognised by the award of credit and appear on certificates without a credit value.

Equivalency

Equivalency is the transfer of credit from a unit, or units, from within the recognised qualification framework. To be counted as an equivalency a unit must have the same credit value (or greater) and be at the same level (or higher) than the unit, or units, to be claimed. Equivalencies are not recognised by the award of credit and appear on certificates without a credit value.

Acceptable exemptions and equivalencies will be included in the rules of combination of a qualification.

Currency

Prior learning and achievement must be current to be used by the learner, which will normally be within the last three years. For exemptions and equivalencies, this means three years start from the date of the original award to the point at which the learner registers with the centre on the course for which the claim will be made. Credit awarded as part of exemption, equivalency or RPL cannot be carried forward beyond three years from the original award.

Restrictions on Recognition

For exemption and equivalency:

- A maximum of 70% of a qualification can normally be achieved through exemption or equivalency. At least 30% should be gained through new learning;
- 60% of credit within a qualification will normally be achieved at the level of the qualification.

For RPL:

RPL can be used to claim full units and qualifications. However, Qualifi reserves the right to exclude the use of RPL in cases such as:

- licence to practice;
- health and safety requirements;
- regulated professions;
- work placements.

Additionally, RPL cannot be used where units and qualifications are subject to external assessment.

Procedure for RPL

Qualifi advocates a six-stage procedure for RPL as set out below. The process of RPL involves learners from the moment they consider making a claim for credit and supports them through to the result of the assessment.

A centre that wishes to apply for RPL or other transfer of credit on behalf of the learner, must submit the relevant learner data using the Qualifi RPL/Transfer of Credit application. This document is available on the Qualifi [online portal](#) in the Documents (Learner Data for RPL Claim v1 Jan 2017).

Stage 1: General awareness about claiming credit – information, advice and guidance

Once individuals who have decided to reflect on their learning will need to know about:

- the process of claiming credit through RPL
- the sources of professional support and guidance available to individuals and employers
- the administrative processes for RPL applications
- timelines, appeals processes and any fees and subsidies.

Stage 2: Pre-assessment – gathering evidence and giving information

An individual may decide to make his or her learning visible and to claim credit. This stage is vital to ensure that the learner is fully informed of the RPL process and has sufficient support to make a viable claim and to make decisions about evidence collection and presentation for assessment.

During this stage the learner will carry out the evidence collection and develop an assessment plan. The evidence required for the award of credit will depend on the purpose, learning outcomes and assessment criteria for the relevant unit(s) within a regulated qualification framework.

Stage 3: Assessment/documentation of evidence

Assessment as part of RPL and within a regulated qualification framework is a structured process for gathering and reviewing evidence and making judgments about a learner's prior learning and experience in relation to unit criteria and learning outcomes.

Assessment must be valid and reliable to ensure the integrity of units and qualifications and the RPL

system as a whole. The assessment process for RPL must be subject to the same quality assurance processes of awarding organisations as any other part of the assessment process.

If there can be RPL of a particular unit, the learner should be aware that if they are registering for a qualification which is higher than their original qualification, they may still be expected to demonstrate their skills and knowledge at a suitable level.

Stage 4: Awarding Credit

Qualifi, is responsible for awarding credit and issuing certificates. The procedure is the same as for other forms of assessment.

Stage 5: Feedback

After the assessment the assessor will need to give feedback to the learner, discussing the results and giving support and guidance on the options available to the learner, which may include, for example, further learning and development.

Stage 6: Appeal

If learners wish to appeal against a decision made about their claim for credit they would need to follow the standard appeals processes that exist within the centre.

Procedure for Exemptions and Equivalencies

Exemptions and equivalencies are included in the rules of combination for a qualification, and centres must register learners against the appropriate exemption and/or equivalency unit(s). Claims for credit are made through the usual Recommendation for the Award of Credit process.

To keep records of valid claims through exemptions and equivalencies for three years.

Policy Responsibility and Review

This policy will be reviewed as and when necessary in response to user and stakeholder feedback, changes in practice, requirements of the Qualifications Regulators or external agencies or changes in legislation. The review will ensure that procedures continue to be consistent with the regulatory criteria and are applied properly and fairly.

Mapping Grid

This grid should be completed by the Centre and approved by the Qualifi External Quality Assurer (EQA).

Guidance

- This mapping grid must be completed by the centre on behalf of the learner for units for which exemption is sought.
- Centers must map the content of the previously certificated units or Learning Outcomes against the units or criteria for which exemption is sought.
- There must be a minimum 70% overlap between units or Learning Outcomes for Qualifi to consider approving the request for exemption.
- The mapping activity must be conducted at the learning outcome or assessment criteria level. •

This mapping grid must be made available to the Qualifi External Quality Assurer for inspection and the External Quality Assurer should approve all exemptions.

Centre Information	
Centre Name	
Centre Number	
Key Contact for RPL Mapping	
Key Contact Role in Centre	
Key Contact telephone Number	
Key Contact e mail address	

Learner Information	
Learner Name	
Learner Qualifi Registration Number	

Prior Certification Information to be used for exemption	
Qualification achieved & level	
QAN	
Awarding Organisation	
Date achieved	
Training Provider	

Qualifi Qualification to be mapped against for exemption	
Qualification & level	
QAN	

Centre Declaration

I can confirm the above Learner(s) have provided original certificate(s) and or transcripts for the original qualification(s) achieved	
Name	
Signature	
Date	

Mapping Grid		
Prior Achievement	Mapped against Qualifi	
Unit Name and reference Number:	Unit Name and reference Number:	
Prior Achievement Learning outcomes	Qualifi Learning outcomes	Evidence provided
EQA Feedback and % allocated Action Plan if applicable		

Action Plan if Applicable

Approved/ Not approved	EQA Signature	Date
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