

rockschool®

Recognition of Prior Learning Policy



Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

1. Issue and review

The date of issue of this policy is June 2018. This policy will be reviewed annually.

2. The Scope of this Policy

Recognition of Prior Learning is defined as an opportunity for learners to present performance or accredited knowledge evidence which comes from a period prior to their registration. This is evidence of earlier learning and achievement towards part of an RSL qualification.

Recognition of Prior Learning can be applied to internally assessed parts of vocational qualifications. It **cannot** be applied to:

- Graded Music examinations.
- Performing Arts Awards examinations.
- Parts of externally assessed units in vocational qualifications.

It **can** be applied to:

- Full units in RSL qualifications (including those externally assessed) excluding Graded Music examinations.
- Part of internally assessed elements of RSL qualifications

All centres delivering RSL qualifications eligible for RPL must have a current RPL policy.

RPL does not apply to RSL qualifications which identify the achievement of specific qualifications as a minimum entry requirement.

3. Guidance for Centres

Centres are required to ensure that all staff assessing RPL have the required expertise to do so.

Prior to Registration

All centres should discuss the RPL policy with all prospective learners to raise awareness of the option and provide information and guidance. The areas that should be covered include:

- The process for applying for and claiming RPL
- The support available

Information should be collected from all prospective learners indicating what evidence may be available that could be used as RPL.



Using Certificates to Assess RPL

The centre must review the evidence presented by the learner to ascertain if there is sufficient to show that the learner has met the requirements for the current qualification at the appropriate level. This must be recorded for quality assurance purposes.

This can be done through certification. However, the learner will need to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding to prevent the need to repeat the assessment or course.

Learners' prior certificated¹ learning can be used as evidence for assessment criteria. Copies are only acceptable as evidence where the original certificates have been seen by the centre (countersigned).

When using certificates for RPL, it is vital to have the standards against which learners were originally assessed in order to cross reference the work between the two standards.

Evidence of previous learning or achievement, like other evidence, must be rigorously subjected to the assessment of its:

- Validity: does the evidence demonstrate that the demands of the assessment criteria/learning outcome has been met?
- Currency: does the evidence demonstrate that demands of the specification have been met and are up-to-date? See below for further guidance.
- Authenticity: can the evidence be unequivocally attributed to the learner?
- Sufficiency: is there enough evidence to fully meet the criteria/outcome

Other types of evidence

The evidence gathered needs to meet the standards of the specification that it will be used for. Evidence from a learner's past experience could include:

- Paid work
- Community or voluntary work
- Home life
- Education and training

Further evidence may include:

- Evidence of workplace practice, confirmed by workplace managers.
- Past portfolios of evidence created by the learner which remains current.
- Reports created by the learner and confirmed as authentic.
- Expert witness testimonies (i.e. workplace managers, specialists, lecturers/teachers)
- Professional discussions conducted with the learner to confirm their knowledge/skills
- New assignment briefs or tasks that have been created to fill any gaps in the evidence presented.

¹ Certificated is defined as the learner having passed a test or assessment and met the standard.

Whatever evidence is used it must be confirmed as valid, current, sufficient and authentic and subjected to the same rigour as any other type of evidence.



Cross Referencing

Centres will need to map individual assessment criteria to the appropriate/corresponding assessment criteria in RSL qualifications. This will mean that some assessment criteria will be met and others only partially met, some not at all. It is unlikely that learners will have all the evidence they need to achieve a full unit unless they have previously achieved the unit itself. A full record of the mapping must be kept for quality assurance purposes.

RPL can only be used for those assessment criteria that are fully met.

With this type of mapping, the assessment criteria have to match, or sufficient evidence to show that the learner has achieved the criteria with the work that they have done and access to the work that has been submitted for the original qualification, if available, may help. When mapping, grading criteria cannot be used unless the learner has met all assessment criteria.

Evidence for how and why an individual learner has achieved through RPL needs to have a substantial audit trail and is not a shortcut.

Creating a Template

Centres are advised to undertake a mapping exercise, using the assessment criteria for the most common qualifications seen as RPL and other paperwork to standardise the RPL process. This will need to identify assessment criteria that can be fully met, those that can be partially met and those that cannot be met at all by the commonly chosen units in each qualification.

RSL, on occasion, may map its qualifications across others in the market where content is common.

Creating an RPL Policy

All centres are required to have a current RPL policy to allow learners to use their prior learning productively in RSL qualifications.

Issues that need to be identified are as follows:

Currency

The currency of knowledge and practice will need to be assessed. Centres need to have a policy in place to cover the currency of certificates that will be accepted. Some centres have a policy in place to accept certificates no older than 2 years as it is deemed that the knowledge and skills of the learner will no longer be current after this time. However, centres are advised that certificates older than 5 years may require additional assessment of the learner's knowledge and skills against the current standard. Significant changes in practice or technology in under 2 years must also be considered to ensure that the assessment of the learner's practice is current. RSL require confirmation that currency and validity has been assessed.

Process



Questions to consider when devising an RPL process:

- How will the RPL be assessed?
- When can the learner present RPL? (during induction? At any time?)
- How should RPL be presented? Some centres have forms which need to be completed allowing for a record of assessment and internal verification to be kept.
- When will quality assurance on RPL assessment decisions take place?
- Do your Complaints and Appeals policies contain information on RPL?

All RPL should be subject to the same assessment processes as other forms of evidence and be subject to formal review and feedback. RSL will require access to this audit trail.

Quality Assurance

The centre will need to ensure that there is sufficient quality assurance in place to award RPL and you are advised to do this to ensure that RPL is being appropriately used across the centre. RSL will, through its Centre Advisors and External Quality Assurers require evidence of appropriate use of RPL throughout the centre.

Presenting RPL to RSL

RSL will require access to the audit trail for all RPL claimed in any centre and this will be done through the moderation process.

Certificates can only be claimed when the appropriate quality assurance processes are completed successfully.

Please consult the relevant Centre Handbook and Syllabus Document for further information.

4. Complaints and Appeals

RSL require all centres to have current complaints and appeals policies in place to ensure learners are able to appeal the assessment decision for RPL in the same way they can any other assessment decision. Should you wish to appeal or make a complaint concerning any decision made by RSL on RPL please consult the Appeals and Complaints Policies available at www.rslawards.com.

5. Regulation

This policy addresses the requirements in:

Ofqual Conditions of Recognition June 2016
CCEA Conditions of Recognition May 2017
Qualifications Wales Standard Conditions of Recognition March 2017
SQA Accreditation Regulatory Principles (2014)