



Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy & Procedures

Purpose

The purpose of this document is;

- to ensure Turtle CYP's compliance with General Conditions of Recognition¹ for recognition of Prior Learning and to ensure results for a qualification are based on sufficient evidence;
- to ensure Turtle CYP's compliance with the following SQA Accreditation Regulatory Principles (SQA 2014).

Scope

This policy applies to all units and qualifications, where RPL is permitted, approved by the regulatory authorities in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

If a learner presents or the initial assessment identifies, the possibility of RPL and the qualification allows the use of RPL, then an assessment of the prior learning will be carried out. Centres may choose to implement it.

Statement of Policy

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Recognition of Prior Learning is a process of assessment leading to the award of credit that considers whether a learner can demonstrate that they meet the assessment requirements for a unit/qualification through knowledge, understanding or skills they can evidence that they already possess, and which do not require further development at the identified level through a course of learning.

The RPL process is relevant to individuals who can evidence that they have previously gained knowledge or understanding or achieved a skill or competence relevant to their current programme of study.

Evidence may be drawn from various aspects of a learner's prior learning including, but not exclusively:

- education and training;
- work activities;
- community or voluntary activities;
- previous accreditations of qualifications.

Any appropriate assessment methodology may be used in the Recognition of Prior Learning Process. Provided that the assessment requirements of a specific unit or qualification have been met, the use of RPL is acceptable for use towards the accreditation of a single unit, units or a whole qualification, although the latter will be untypical of the use of the process as it would be very unusual for a learner to be able to offer prior achievement that totally matches every aspect of a qualification's assessment requirements. Partial unit accreditation is not possible.

Any evidence submitted for the Recognition of Prior Learning must be:

- Valid;
- Reliable;
- Current;
- Authentic.

The use of the Recognition of Prior Learning will be used where it is of value to Turtle CYP and learners in facilitating the assessment of previously uncertificated learning. Turtle CYP will follow the procedures described below and keep auditable records.

All evidence will be evaluated using the stipulated learning outcomes and assessment criteria in the unit, units or qualification being claimed. In assessing a unit using RPL the assessor must be satisfied that the evidence produced by the learner meets the assessment standard established by the learning outcomes and related assessment criteria. This will be carried out by either a tutor or assessor with the appropriate expertise and knowledge to undertake this.

If there is any doubt of the currency of any evidence provided the assessor may use questions to check understanding and may ask for the demonstration of skills to check competence through a formal observation. It is essential that the assessment strategy for

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each unit, units or qualification is adhered to. Where evidence is assessed and found to be only sufficient to cover one or more learning outcomes, or to meet partially the requirements of any learning outcomes, then additional assessment methods should be used to generate sufficient evidence to be able to award the learning outcome(s) for the whole unit.

Principles of RPL

The Recognition of Prior Learning is a valid method of enabling individuals to claim credit for units and qualifications irrespective of how the learning took place and the assessments were undertaken. There is no difference between the achievement of the required standards, i.e. learning outcomes and assessment criteria being met at the required level, gained through prior learning, or via experience, or through a formal programme of study.

The Recognition of Prior Learning must comply with all regulatory requirements for assessment, Recognition of Prior Learning policies, processes, procedures. Practices and decisions should be transparent, rigorous, reliable, sufficient, fair and accessible to individuals and stakeholders to ensure that users can be confident of the fidelity of the assessment decisions and outcomes of the Recognition of Prior Learning. In effect, RPL is just another assessment methodology and therefore subject to all the usual requirements relating to assessment.

The Recognition of Prior Learning is a learner-centred voluntary process. The individual should be offered advice on the nature and range of evidence considered appropriate to support a claim for assessing the Recognition of Prior Learning and be given guidance and support to make his or her claim. It remains the role of the assessor and quality staff to ensure that assessment criteria are only deemed to have been met where assessment is valid; reliable and fit for purpose and where evidence is adequate, sufficient and authentic.

The process of the Recognition of Prior Learning is subject to the same standard of scrutiny through the application of existing quality assurance and monitoring processes as any other form of learning and assessment and should be included within the centre's IQA strategy, policies and evidenced within the IQA sample.

Assessment methods for the Recognition of Prior Learning must be of equal rigour as other assessment methods, must be fit for purpose and relate to the evidence of learning.

Implementation

Stage 1: Awareness raising regarding claiming of credit, information, advice and guidance

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Once learners have committed themselves to having their learning considered for the purposes of the Recognition of Prior Learning they will receive information, guidance and support on:

- how to claim credit via the Recognition of Prior Learning process;
- sources of professional support and guidance available to individuals and employers;
- the administrative processes for Recognition of Prior Learning applications;
- timelines, appeals processes, and any fees involved;
- the currency of existing credits, qualification, experience, skills or competence (Does the evidence relate to current learning? Have the skills and knowledge been applied regularly to maintain levels of application/practice and understanding in line with unit learning outcomes and assessment criteria and identified unit level?).

Where centres and/or professional, statutory or regulatory bodies have specific requirements and/or time limits for the currency of evidence, certification, or demonstration of learning, these should be made clear and transparent.

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

When an individual has decided to pursue a Recognition of Prior Learning route towards achievement, they will be fully informed of the Recognition of Prior Learning process and will have 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 have an assessment plan developed with support from the assessor. The evidence required for the award of credit will depend on the purpose, learning outcomes and assessment criteria for the relevant units.

Stage 3: Assessment / documentation of evidence

Assessment as part of the Recognition of Prior Learning Framework is a structured process for gathering and reviewing evidence and making judgements about a learners' prior learning and experience in relation to unit standards.

Assessment will be valid, reliable with consideration given to issues of inclusion to ensure the integrity of units and qualifications and the Recognition of Prior Learning system as a whole.

All evidence submitted for RPL will be referenced and signposted clearly in order to facilitate internal assessment, internal verification and external verification.

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The assessment process for the Recognition of Prior Learning will be subject to the same quality assurance processes as any other part of the assessment process. Learners' work which contributes towards their claim for credit via the Recognition of Prior Learning process will be internally and externally verified, and all achievement documented as for conventional learner achievement. All Recognition of Prior Learning – related achievement should be identified as such in all documentation.

Stage 4: Feedback

After the assessment, the assessor will give feedback to the learner, discussing the results and giving support and guidance on the options available to the learner. If the decision has been not to award credit(s) the learners will have to undertake the current standard assessment for those unit(s).

Stage 5: Awarding credit

The awarding organisation is responsible for awarding credit and not Turtle CYP. Following the same procedure as for other forms of assessment, the credit will be recorded in the learner record. Credit claimed via Recognition of Prior Learning will be identified as such to ensure that the appropriate amounts identified in rules of combination for qualifications are not exceeded. This will be recorded as the Recognition of Prior Learning as opposed to standard assessment methods and on the claims for credit towards a full qualification. Certificates, where appropriate, may be awarded with the Recognition of Prior Learning credits being identified as such and the Recognition of Prior Learning will be recognised on credit transcripts.

Stage 6: Appeal

Learners can appeal against a decision made about their claim for credit via the Recognition of Prior Learning process. The appeals process is explained in Turtle CYP's learner handbook. If the learner is still not happy about a decision, they have the right of appeal to the awarding organisation.

Collating information on the use of RPL

In order to quantify the use of the Recognition of Prior Learning process, external verifiers will be required to identify the provision where Recognition of Prior Learning has been applied.

The Recognition of Prior Learning assessments will be included in standardisation and evaluation activities so that processes are reviewed, and approaches improved on the basis of user feedback.

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