

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) POLICY

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Last review: June 2021

Next review: June 2022

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a *method of assessment* [leading to the award of credit] *that considers whether learners 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.*

Regulatory arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework (Ofqual/08/3726)

Please note that RPL should not be confused with exemption and unit equivalency. Exemption is the facility for a learner to claim exemption from some of the achievement requirements of a qualification, using evidence of certificated achievement deemed to be of equivalent value. Unit equivalency is when a unit/units from a different qualification or submitted by another recognized 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.

RPL enables recognition of achievement from a range of activities using any appropriate assessment methodology. Provided that the assessment requirements of a given unit or qualification have been met, the use of RPL is acceptable for accrediting a unit, units or a whole qualification. Evidence of learning must be:

- Valid
- Reliable

Recognition of prior learning policies and procedures have developed over time which has led to the following terms being used to describe the process:

- Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)
- Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)
- Accreditation of Prior Achievement (APA)

These terms broadly describe the same process. DLD College will refer to the term Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as an overarching term for these processes.

This policy applies to all Pearson qualifications, including those on the National Qualification Framework (NQF), the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), Self-Regulated Framework (SRF) and other national frameworks in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and self-regulated qualifications. This policy does not apply to defined exemptions from examinations or other professional body requirements using BTEC Higher National achievements. For more information regarding these, please consult the BTEC Higher National Professional Recognition and Progression Directory available via www.edexcel.com.

The aims of this policy are:

- To allow candidates without formal qualifications to gain all or part of a qualification without having to undertake a formal learning programme
- To validate learning that has not previously been recognised formally

DLD College will:

- Register learners as soon as they formally start to gather evidence
- Maintain records of assessment against prior achievement
- Certificate claims according to the normal procedures (as outlined in the BTEC Registration and Certification Policy)
- Ensure that all relevant evidence is assessed before assessment decisions are confirmed
- Allocate course Co-ordinators as experts to provide support and assure the RPL process

The RPL Process:

Stage 1 – Awareness, information and guidance

Ahead of enrolling a potential learner, the possibility that they may be able to claim credit for some of their previous learning should be raised with them. If the learner is interested in this, they will need to know the:

- Process of claiming achievement by using RPL
- Sources of support and guidance available to them
- Timelines, appeals processes and any fees involved

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

At this stage the learner will carry out the process of collecting evidence against the requirements of the relevant unit(s). In some cases the development of an assessment plan and tracking document or similar may be required, to support the learner through the process. The evidence gathered will need to meet the standards of the unit, or part of unit, that the evidence is being used for.

Stage 3 – Assessment/documentation of evidence

Assessment as part of RPL is a structured process for gathering and reviewing evidence and making judgments about a learners' prior learning and experience in relation to unit standards. The assessor may be looking at work experience records, validated by managers; previous portfolios of evidence put together by the learner or essays and reports validated as being the learner's own unaided work.

Assessment must be valid and reliable to ensure the integrity of the award of credit and, as above, the evidence gathered needs to meet the standards of the unit, or part of unit, that the evidence is being used for. The assessment process will be subject to the DLD College quality assurance procedures, for example internal standardisation and internal verification as well as Pearson's quality assurance procedures. Evidenced gathered through RPL should be clearly referenced and sign posted to aid internal assessment and internal and external verification.

Stage 4 – Claiming certification

Once the internal and external quality assurance procedures have been successfully completed, certification claims can be made by the centre. Assessment and internal verification records, along with any additional RPL records completed, should be retained for the standard three-year period following certification. The assessor must ensure that all learning outcomes and assessment criteria being claimed for each unit are achieved and that the records of assessment are maintained in the usual way.

Stage 5 – Appeal

As with any assessment decision, if a learner wishes to appeal against a decision made about their assessment they need to follow the DLD College Coursework Appeals Policy.