

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) POLICY

RPL is a process that enables people to receive formal recognition for skills and knowledge they already possess. RPL recognises that learning is continuous – at work, home and at leisure, as well as in the classroom and provides a route for the recognition of the achievements resulting from continuous learning.

RPL is an assessment process that enables recognition of achievement from a range of activities using any valid assessment methodology. Provided that the assessment requirements of a given unit have been met, the use of RPL is acceptable for recognising units that form the programme.

The 5 Stages of RPL

Stage 1: Application

- i. RPL learner contacts LWDW to request an RPL Learner Registration Form.
- ii. When the RPL learner completes and returns the Registration Form to us, LWDW will register the learner.
- iii. LWDW sends the learner and tutor the assessment criteria/ units.

Stage 2: Assembling an RPL claim

RPL learner activity The learner will:	RPL Tutor/Assessor activity The tutor/assessor will:
Reflect on relevant prior learning and achievement to identify evidence	Provide guidance to the learner
Establish an action and assessment plan	Identify and agree an action plan and assessment strategy with the RPL learner
Agree timescale with tutor/assessor	Provide guidance of timescale
Identify gaps in achievement	Map achievement and identify gaps
Provide evidence of achievement in a portfolio, for example this may be paper-based, electronic, video recorded evidence etc.	Determine and set the standard

This stage will be undertaken at the earliest opportunity once a learner is registered on a qualification, in order that they will not be disadvantaged if their RPL claim is not awarded.

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Stage 3: Assessing an RPL claim

RPL learner activity The learner will:	RPL Tutor/Assessor activity The tutor/assessor will:
Review action and assessment plan	Assess the evidence and check its authenticity
Possibly provide new evidence	Provide the learner with regular feedback
Submit final portfolio	Arrange Internal Assurance

Stage 4: Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) of an RPL claim

RPL learner activity The learner will:	Internal Quality Assurer activity The IQA will:
Receive feedback on the portfolio submitted	Ensure that the evidence is valid and has been correctly assessed
	Provide feedback tutor/assessor in the form of an IQA report
	Arrange external assessment (Crossfields Institute) of the RPL evidence

Stage 5: External Assessment carried out by Crossfields Institute

Detailed Outline of the 5-Stage Process

Stage 1 – Application

All learners working towards Crossfields Institute programmes must be registered for their programme with Crossfields Institute. Requests for registering RPL learners can be made at any time. The learner will be registered for the programme in the usual way. Crossfields Institute does not accept simultaneous application for a learner to be registered and to receive certification, thus commitment to the RPL process must be made early on.

Page 2 of 4

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RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) POLICY

Stage 2 – Assembling an RPL claim

Reflecting on Experience

The starting point for any learner wishing to claim for RPL is to reflect on their experience in order to identify relevant achievement. They should think about experience gained:

- At work
- In any relevant voluntary work and leisure activities
- In formal or informal education and training – for example, adult education courses or in-company training
- From independent study
- From home-based activities, such as care of the young, the elderly or the sick, or involvement in the family business

RPL learners will need to understand the relevant assessment requirements associated with the units they are claiming. Then they will be able to work towards assembling evidence to support these claims.

Identifying Gaps in Achievement

The assessment requirements of the programme are listed clearly on the unit descriptors. Use copies of these documents to identify and keep track of what has been achieved and what is still required of the learner.

Providing evidence of achievement – the Portfolio

Learners will need to provide evidence that shows that they have covered the requirements of the units. This will take the form of a portfolio, prepared by the learner, which sets out the programme assessment requirements claimed, together with any supporting evidence. The student will divide their portfolio (a three ring binder) into sections according to unit(s). The Unit Descriptor (which also serves as the evidence tracking sheet) must be at the front of each section. The portfolio MUST be paged numbered and cross-referenced to the Unit Descriptor, in order to make for straightforward inspection and signing off of portfolios.

Professional discussions or oral assessment can be used to contribute towards portfolio evidence, which must be documented and can be supported by audio/video recordings.

Separate evidence is not required for each assessment criterion. Where possible, learners should be encouraged to present a small number of complex pieces of evidence that demonstrate the achievement of a number of unit assessment requirements.

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Staff Guidance and Support

RPL learners will require considerable tutor encouragement and guidance in compiling their RPL evidence. Guiding RPL learners is a staff-intensive activity. While one-to-one contact is essential, there are advantages in holding workshops – both in economy of staff time and in helping to overcome any sense of isolation felt by the learners. Additional support with the RPL process may be provided by the Centre or by Crossfields Institute.

Most learners will be unfamiliar with the process of putting together an RPL claim. It is important that learners receive adequate advice and guidance on how to proceed. This will involve:

- Encouraging reflection and self-evaluation
- Helping to identify possible sources of achievement
- Helping to identify possible evidence of achievement
- Advising on the structure and presentation of evidence
- Explaining assessment requirements

Stage 3 – Assessing an RPL claim

The RPL tutor/assessor has the responsibility for ensuring that all the requirements of the programme have been met before applying for a certificate. The assessor should assess the RPL evidence, using the assessment criteria in the programme. In considering the evidence, the assessor needs to ask if it is authentic, current, relevant and sufficient (see below for definitions).

If on any account the assessor is not satisfied with the evidence submitted, it will be necessary to seek additional evidence.

Where evidence presented in support of a claim of RPL is strongly convincing, it may be deemed sufficient for the purpose of certification. If the evidence is less convincing, but nevertheless substantial, the learner might, where suitable:

- Undergo an oral assessment
- Complete an appropriate assignment
- Complete a written test
- Carry out a demonstration
- A combination of the above