



# Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy and Procedure





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## 1. Introduction

This policy aims to ensure that Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is assessed fully and fairly, and complies with Awarding Organisation expectations and regulations.

## 2. Scope of policy

This policy applies to all RPL activities undertaken by Aspiration Training. This policy and procedure cannot be viewed in isolation and must be read in conjunction with the following documents and policies:

- Awarding Organisation Centre Guidance
- Awarding Organisation Quality Assurance Guidance
- Awarding Organisation Recognition of Prior Learning Guidance
- ATL Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy
- ATL Learner Handbook
- ATL Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy
- ATL Initial Assessment Policy

## 3. Impact of the Learner

The implementation of this policy will enable the learner to use previous learning and achievement towards part of a qualification once it has been reviewed and judged as meeting the required assessment criteria.

## 4. Definitions

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is an assessment process which makes use of evidence of a learner's previous achievements to demonstrate competence or achievement within a unit or qualification. The learner needs to demonstrate that, through knowledge, understanding or skills they already have, they do not need to repeat the course or complete extra assessment activity

This previous learning can only be used towards a qualification when it has been judged as meeting the required standards and / or assessment criteria by a member of staff who has been acknowledged by the relevant Awarding Organisation as being competent to do so (the RPL Assessor).

The RPL Assessor must be satisfied that the evidence submitted is:

- **Valid**

The evidence genuinely demonstrates that the demands of the learning outcome have been met. For RPL, currency of evidence will be of particular concern.

- **Current**

The evidence provided reflects current working knowledge, skills and behaviours.

- **Reliable**

The evidence obtained through RPL should be such that the same assessment decision would be reached were the assessment to be repeated by another member of qualified staff.

- **Authentic**

The evidence submitted must be the genuine work of the learner alone. If the evidence submitted may be the result of the work of a team, it would only be acceptable if the learning outcome was related to team / joint working, but not if it was being used as evidence of an activity which should have been carried out individually.

- **Sufficient**

There must be enough evidence to fully meet the requirements of the learning outcome(s) being considered. If there is insufficient evidence to fully meet requirements, then evidence obtained through RPL must be complemented by additional evidence gained through other suitable assessment method(s) before requirements/outcomes can be said to have been met.

RPL cannot be used for external assessment, set exams or set assignments.

RPL is not normally used to provide evidence against achievement for an entire qualification. This would be called an exemption and is usually used where a learner must gain a specified qualification for a particular purpose (for example, as an entry requirement for further study, employment or registration). Learners wishing to be considered for an exemption should contact the relevant Awarding Organisation directly.

## **5. Procedure for assessing RPL**

### **5.1 Awareness, information and guidance:**

RPL should be discussed with learners prior to enrolment, giving them the opportunity to consider whether they might be able to use RPL to claim units for their past learning and or experience. If the learner is eligible for RPL, the following should be explained to them:

- The process of claiming a unit using RPL
- The support and guidance available
- How long the process is likely to take
- How to Appeal against an RPL decision
- Any costs involved

Evidence provided by the learner for the purposes of RPL should be checked for eligibility, by the RPL Assessor, before the learner commences their course of study.

### **5.2 Evidence gathering**

A learner should be registered with the relevant Awarding Organisation as soon as they start to officially gather evidence. The evidence gathered needs to meet the standards of the unit, or part of a unit, that the evidence is being used for. Evidence from a learner's past experience could include:

- Home or family life
- Non-certificated education or learning
- Paid work
- Community or voluntary work

### **5.3 Assessing and documenting evidence:**

If a learner wishes to submit evidence of prior learning for RPL purposes, the Standards Verifier / External Examiner / External Quality Assurer must be informed before any RPL assessment activity commences.

The assessment strategy, where stated, for each qualification must be followed.

Assessment as part of RPL is a structured process for gathering and reviewing evidence and making judgements about a learner's past learning and experience in relation to unit standards. The Assessor may look at:

- Work experience records, validated by managers
- Past portfolios of evidence or essays made by the learner
- Reports validated as being the learner's own unaided work
- Expert witness testimonies
- Professional discussions
- New assignment briefs or tasks that have been created to fill any gaps in the learner's work (NB: Standards Verifiers or External Examiners are not required to give feedback on an assignment brief or task if you choose to set one as part of RPL)

A learner's past achievement that would show evidence of current knowledge, understanding and skills varies between industries. It depends on the range of their experience, technological changes and the nature of the outcome claimed. The Assessor may ask questions, or ask a learner to show them skills, to check that their understanding and skills are current.

No extra assessment is needed if a learner's previously achieved certificate or qualification meets the requirements of a whole unit.

Some Awarding Organisations provide guidance as to how shared content across units or qualifications should be mapped to assessment criteria, eg First Aid Certificates. If this is available from the Awarding Organisation it should be applied in place of any other form of assessment. If gaps are found in the submitted evidence, additional assessment methods will need to be employed to create enough evidence to satisfy the learning outcome(s) for the whole unit.

If the Awarding Organisation has not mapped the unit or qualification, the RPL Assessor will need to check that the submitted evidence meets the current qualification assessment criteria.

The RPL Assessor should evaluate all the evidence submitted using the learning outcomes and assessment criteria from the qualification or unit being claimed. In assessing a unit using RPL the RPL Assessor must be satisfied that the evidence from the learner meets the standard for all of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

Evidence collected through the RPL process needs to be assessed and verified through the same quality assurance procedures used for any other internal assessment methods.

#### **5.4 Outcomes of the RPL process:**

When a learner's evidence has been assessed and an assessment decision has been made it is important that feedback is given to the learner, including the assessment decision and what options are available to the learner if it has been decided not to award the unit or qualification.

Where appropriate, a learner's length of stay and programme price may be adjusted in line with the RPL evidence provided and ATL's Initial Assessment Policy.

If a learner is able to successfully demonstrate that they have met all the learning outcomes and assessment criteria using RPL they will be able to claim for the relevant unit(s). As a result, the duration of a programme may be reduced but must not be reduced beyond the programme's stipulated minimum duration.

If the learner does not agree with the decision, the evidence should be referred to the Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) for that qualification for review. If, after the IQA review, the learner still does not agree, the evidence should be referred to the Awarding Organisation's External Quality Assurer (EQA) / Standards Verifier (SV) / External Examiner (EE).

If a learner wishes to make a complaint, they should be referred to the ATL Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy.

#### **All RPL decisions are subject to Awarding Organisation agreement.**

Learners applying for RPL must be advised that if, at any point, the Awarding Organisation does not consider all unit requirements to have been met, they are able to:

- Ask the learner to provide more evidence, or
- Ask the learner to complete the standard assessment requirements if they want to achieve the qualification

#### **5.5 Claiming certificates:**

Certificates may be claimed once the quality assurance processes have been successfully completed using standard procedures.

Following certification, RPL records must be kept for at least 3 years.

## **6. Roles and responsibilities**

### **6.1 Board of Directors**

- Ensuring Aspiration Training is fully compliant with legal requirements
- Ensuring Aspiration Training is fully compliant with funding, regulatory and statutory requirements
- Ensuring effective implementation of this policy
- Ensuring this policy is reviewed on a regular basis

### **6.2 Managers**

- Ensuring this policy is fully supported by their organisation
- Ensuring that all employees are aware of this policy and receive adequate training to ensure its implementation
- Ensuring that all RPL evidence is subject to regular IQA scrutiny

### 6.3 Staff

- Ensuring this policy is applied to all instance where RPL may be applicable
- Ensuring that all RPL evidence is subject to regular IQA scrutiny

## 7. Communication

This policy is available on the Aspiration Training website and may be provided in hard copy upon request. This policy is available in Welsh on request,

## 8. Monitoring and review processes

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, or when statutory guidance changes, to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the organisation and its stakeholders. The review will be conducted by the Aspiration Training Operational Board of Directors.

## 9. Contact Details:

If you would like to discuss this policy further, please contact:

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