

Recognition of Prior Learning

Policy and Process

Version 3.0

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For external use



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Approval

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1. Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) Policy and Process

The RPL policy and process is for centres (including training providers) looking to utilise a candidate's prior knowledge and/or achievement towards the completion of a qualification.

1.1. RPL

Recognised prior learning (RPL) is a process which can potentially make use of a candidate's previous learning/experience as evidence towards internal assessment e.g. portfolio.

Through the RPL process, evidence of a candidate's previous learning is mapped against the relevant learning outcomes or assessment criteria. RPL **cannot** be used as an exemption from completing any City & Guilds set assessment or external assessment.

All centres planning to offer RPL must have a written policy outlining their process, including their appeals process, which aligns with City & Guilds RPL policy.

1.2. When to use RPL

The RPL process is not applicable for all qualifications or assessments. Where RPL is allowed this will be specified in the qualification documentation, e.g. qualification handbook.

Where RPL is allowed in a qualification, the following process must be followed in the correct order to ensure all requirements are met.

City & Guilds supports the use of RPL for internal assessment in some qualifications, for example, where assessment is through a portfolio of evidence. For example, it may be possible to use evidence of knowledge and/or skills produced through previous practice towards a portfolio for qualifications assessing occupational competence.

RPL can be used as evidence of previous experience or learning which can count towards achievement of internal assessment.

RPL should be considered as part of the centre's initial assessment of a candidate, to identify any previous experience, knowledge and/or skills demonstrated that might be suitable for RPL.

Evidence can draw on any aspect of a candidate's prior experience including:

- education and training e.g. from a previous centre
- work activities
- community or voluntary activities
- domestic/family life.

1.3. Apprenticeship Assessment Plans

In line with the Department for Education's reforms to apprenticeship assessment, to give greater flexibility and proportionate assessment approaches, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) will continue to be an integral and permitted component within the reformed Apprenticeship Assessment Plans.

The associated funding rules explicitly maintain the requirement for providers to recognise relevant prior learning and experience when determining programme duration and price, ensuring that apprentices are not retaught knowledge, skills, or behaviours they already possess. As future revisions to assessment plans are phased in, the organisation will ensure that its RPL processes remain fully aligned with regulatory and awarding-body expectations, including the ongoing need for evidence to be valid, authentic, current, and sufficient.

1.4. Future Qualification Reforms

This policy will remain applicable to all current and future City & Guilds qualifications where Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) is permitted under regulatory guidance. As qualification reforms are introduced, the organisation will ensure that RPL processes continue to align with the awarding body's expectations, including the need for evidence to be valid, authentic, current, and sufficient. Internal procedures will be reviewed and updated as necessary to reflect changes in assessment strategies or qualification specifications, ensuring learners can continue to receive appropriate recognition for prior experience where it meets the required standards.

2. RPL Process

2.1. Stage 1: Awareness, information and guidance

During initial candidate onboarding, the centre should discuss with the candidate any potential applicable areas of prior learning that may contribute to meeting the assessment criteria of their qualification.

Candidates should be made aware:

- of what evidence, knowledge and skills may be used for RPL,
- that they are not exempt from any assessment and the full assessment criteria and evidence requirements of the qualification must still to be met,
- that RPL cannot be used in place of any externally set assessments e.g. assignments and/or exams.

2.2. Stage 2: Initial candidate assessment

During the initial candidate assessment, the centre assessor will need to:

- work with the candidate to identify any areas of recent prior learning or experience that is suitable for RPL, if RPL is permitted for the qualification,
- plan how the RPL will be reviewed and mapped to the unit content e.g. learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
- provide feedback on any decision(s) to the candidate, confirming the decision and giving guidance on the available options, particularly in situations where the decision has been to not allow RPL. If candidates wish to appeal an RPL assessment decision, they must follow their centre's internal appeals procedure.

Criteria used when deciding about the appropriateness of RPL must include level, validity, authenticity, currency, sufficiency and reliability.

The Centre Assessor must be appropriately qualified and/or have the relevant level of expertise to conduct the mapping and assessment of the RPL for the qualification, in line with the qualification requirements.

If it is determined the use of RPL is appropriate, this needs to be built into the candidates individual learning plan.

2.3. Stage 3: Declaration to City & Guilds

A Declaration of Recognised Prior Learning (DoRPL) form must be completed and submitted to City & Guilds when RPL is being applied, this can be submitted for each candidate or for the cohort, where multiple learners will be applying RPL. The form can be accessed [here](#).

A copy of this form should be included in the learner portfolio along with the individual learning plan.

2.4. Stage 4: Assessment and documenting evidence

The assessment should be carried out in accordance with qualification requirements.

The Centre Assessor should:

- maintain appropriate records, including records of candidates submitting RPL and records of how RPL evidence maps to qualification criteria/standard,
- ensure that candidates are aware of their right to access the centre appeals process should they feel the assessment decision was unfair.

If RPL is being used as evidence, this must be assessed to the same rigorous standard as expected for all internal assessments meeting the requirements for validity, authenticity, currency, sufficiency and reliability.

All assessments must be carried out by Assessors with relevant levels of expertise and qualifications to meet the requirements of the qualification assessment and the staffing requirements for the qualification concerned.

2.5. Stage 5: Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)

If RPL is being used as evidence, this must be subject to the same quality assurance requirements.

The IQA strategy and process must ensure that records of RPL, including individual learning plans and all assessment records including mapping are included in IQA sampling.

2.6. Stage 6: External Quality Assurance

The records of all assessment decisions made using RPL must be made available to the External Quality Assurer (EQA) for sampling during external quality assurance activity.

To support this Centres must clearly identify candidates where RPL has been used in learner tracking documentation uploaded to the Sampling Form CA2 in Walled Garden during the planning stages before the sampling activities.

2.7. Need support with RPL?

If you have any questions, your Centre's allocated EQA (External Quality Assurer) will be able to assist you.

Alternatively, you can contact the Centre Quality team at Quality@cityandguilds.com.

For qualification-specific queries, our [Technical Advisors](#) are also available to support Centres.

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