

**For the attention of the
Basic Skills Tutor, Essential Skills tutors,
Learning Support Tutors.**

April 2012

Qualifications

Essential Skills Practitioners
And
Supporting Adults and Young People in Essential
Skills

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Level **2 and 3**
Number **8375 and 9300**

This news article contains important information:

- Qualifications update
- Events
- Recognition of Prior Learning policy document

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Essential Skills Practitioners (8375) and Supporting Adults and Young People in Essential Skills (9300)

These qualifications are now live and the supporting documentation is available on the relevant qualification webpages:

Essential Skills Practitioners

<http://www.cityandguilds.com/68959.html?s=4>

Supporting Adults and Young People in Essential Skills

<http://www.cityandguilds.com/70376.html?s=4>

We are currently developing webinars and FAQs to support our centres with the delivery of these qualifications. They will be available on the qualification webpages soon.

Events

Award in Understanding the External Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice **(New)**

Achieve your External Quality Assurance Qualifications.

We are running a series of chargeable training events with an assessed task that leads to achievement of Unit 404 Award, designed for anyone who is interested in finding out about External Quality Assurance or anyone already working as an External Quality Assurer (EQA).

For further information or to book please visit the events webpage.

[Level 4 Award in Understanding the External Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice](#)

Level 3 Diploma in Social Media for Business (7513)

City & Guilds would like to invite you to the launch of our brand new Level 3 Diploma in Social Media for Business. There will be key speakers from industry as well as a chance to meet organisations and attend workshops by Microsoft, CIW and a Social Media guru.

To reserve a space on the 9th May 2012 please contact customer_events@cityandguilds.com and use event code SME090512SM.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Policy document

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide support, clarification and guidance to City & Guilds centres and assessors on the institute's policies regarding the recognition of a learners' previous work related achievements and / or qualifications.

Audience

The information in this document is for all users of City & Guilds qualifications. It is of particular relevance to those responsible for supporting learners in their choice of qualification and to those responsible for planning, making and quality assuring assessment.

Scope

This document applies to all qualifications on credit-based frameworks. These include the Qualifications and Credit Framework, the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW)¹.

¹ Also known as, *Fframwaith Credydau a Chymwysterau Cymru (FfCChC)*

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

RPL Defined

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a form of assessment which makes use of evidence of a learner's **previous non - certificated achievements** to demonstrate competence or achievement within a unit or qualification.

Through the RPL process, evidence of a candidate's previous achievement (learning) is assessed against the learning outcomes of a unit.

The Regulatory Arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework gives the following definition of RPL:

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 so not need to develop through a course of learning.

A similar definition is given by The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework which provides the following explanation:

The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the process for recognising learning that has its source in experience and/or previous formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts. This includes knowledge and skills gained within school, college and university and outside formal learning situations such as through life and work experiences.

When to use RPL

The RPL process is relevant where an individual has evidence of having previously learnt something but has never received formal recognition for it through a qualification or other form of certification.

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

- domestic / family life
- education and training
- work activities
- community or voluntary activities.

Assessment of RPL Evidence

RPL is one of many assessment methods permissible in the Framework. Evidence obtained through RPL must therefore meet the same rigorous quality criteria that other assessment methods must conform to. It remains the role of assessors and quality assurance staff to ensure that evidence is:

Valid:

Does the evidence genuinely demonstrate that the demands of the learning outcome have been met? For RPL, currency of evidence will be of particular

concern. Does, for example, the evidence meet up-to-date demands or is it representative of practice that has significantly changed?

Authentic:

This involves consideration of whether the evidence being examined is genuinely the work of the learner. For example, the evidence may have been produced by somebody else, or may be the result of the work of a team. In the latter case, this would 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, or learning outcomes being considered. If there is insufficient evidence to fully meet requirements, then evidence obtained through RPL must be complemented by evidence gained through other suitable assessment method(s) before requirements can be said to have been met.

Reliable:

The evidence obtained through RPL should be such that an assessor would arrive at the same assessment decision, were the assessment to be repeated.

Outcomes of RPL

Within the Framework if individuals can produce relevant evidence, that meets learning outcome requirements then, recognition can be given for their existing knowledge, understanding or skills.

Ofqual has recently issued a statement¹ qualifying the use of RPL by explaining:

Learners are unlikely to have all the evidence they need to achieve a full unit and may need to produce additional evidence. Evidence used for RPL is not time-limited but assessors must determine whether it is valid and authentic. RPL may be used in conjunction with other assessment methods such as examination of recent products, professional discussion or observation to assess current performance.

This means that if an individual can meet all the learning outcomes and assessment criteria in a unit, then they can claim credit for that unit solely on the basis of their RPL achievement.

If however, evidence from RPL is only sufficient to cover one or more learning outcomes, or to partly meet the need of a learning outcome, then additional assessment methods should be employed to generate the sufficient evidence required to make a safe assessment decision.

Since evidence from RPL is similar to that derived via any other acceptable assessment method, where the standard of a unit is met by evidence obtained from, or partly from RPL, credit can be claimed.

Funding for RPL

In terms of funding the Skills Funding Agency states:

The current policy is that a reduction in funding is expected only where 50% or more of the assessment is carried out through RPL, and there is a 50% reduction in funding for those parts of the qualification achieved through RPL.²

For publicly funded programmes of training, this means that where RPL accounts for half or over half of the evidence generated for a unit, the specific unit or units concerned, will see a 50% reduction in funding.

It should be noted that the reduction would not apply to the whole qualification in general, but is applied in relation to the proportion of the qualification for which RPL has been used.

RPL Process

Centres wishing to undertake RPL must ensure that:

- it is carried out by designated staff with relevant levels of expertise to meet the requirements of the assessment strategy / guidance for the qualification concerned.

The methods of assessment used will be determined by the assessment strategy for the qualification being assessed but might, for example, include:

- examination of documents,
- witness testimony
- reflective accounts
- professional discussion.

The RPL assessment should be carried out as an entire process. This means that the assessor should:

- Plan with the learner
- Make a formal assessment decision
- Feedback assessment decisions to the learner, confirming decision and giving guidance on the available options (particularly in situations where the decision has been not to award credit.)
- Maintain appropriate records
- Ensure that learners are aware of their right to access the appeals process should they feel the assessment decision was unfair

The assessor **must** ensure that all learning outcomes and assessment criteria being claimed are covered and that records of assessment are maintained in the usual way. The process must be subject to the same quality assurance requirements as any other assessment method.

¹ Frequently Asked Questions on the General Conditions of Recognition and Recognition Criteria, 11th January 2012

² Skills Funding Agency Frequently Asked Questions, Transition to the Framework, <http://qcfiguide.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/q--a.aspx>

Glossary of terms related to the recognition of work-related experience and achievements in the Framework

Policy document

Purpose

This document has been prepared to assist City & Guilds centres, assessors and quality assurance staff in their implementation of the institute's policies regarding the recognition of a learners' previous work related experience and achievements

This document provides short explanations of:

- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
- Exemptions
- Equivalent Units
- Credit Accumulation and Transfer & Credit Transfer
- Qualification Legacy
- Predecessor Qualification
- Shared Units

City & Guilds encourages the use of these processes where they are of value to learners and /or centres.

Audience

The information in this document is applicable to all City & Guilds qualifications. The information will be of particular relevance to those responsible for supporting learners in their choice of qualification and to those responsible for planning, carrying out and quality assuring assessment.

It is likely that this information will also therefore have implications for the work of those involved with learning delivery.

Scope

This document applies to all qualifications on credit-based frameworks. These include the Qualifications and Credit Framework, the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW)¹.

¹ Also known as, *Fframwaith Credydau a Chymwysterau Cymru (FFCChC)*

Recognition of Prior Learning

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a method of assessment that considers whether an individual can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, skills and / or competence that they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning. **RPL is appropriate for use where an individual's learning has not been formally recognised.**

The knowledge, understanding and/or or skills in question may have been acquired in any area of life, for example, domestic / family life, education and training, work related activities, community or voluntary activities.

Evidence from RPL processes is similar to that which is generated by any other assessment method permitted by a qualification. Learners can therefore use RPL to generate evidence for one or more learning outcomes. In many instances, RPL alone will be insufficient to cover all the learning outcomes in a unit.

As long as all the composite learning outcomes have been met, an individual can claim credit for units where RPL has been used to generate all or some of the evidence required.

Exemptions

The Qualifications and Credit Framework describes an exemption as:

The facility for a learner to claim exemption from some of the achievement requirements of a Framework qualification using evidence of certificated, non-Framework achievement deemed to be of equivalent value.

This means that certificated qualifications that were obtained outside of the Framework can used as evidence for part or all of a qualification.

The assessor must make sure that the components of the certificated qualification are sufficient to cover the requirements of all the learning outcomes, unit or units that it is being examined against.

Exemptions allow the recognition of qualifications (i.e. formally recognised achievements) obtained outside of the Framework; however unlike RPL, they do not attract credits.

Note that in certain circumstances, exemption from unit assessment may also apply where a candidate can show evidence of having achieved a unit forming part of an earlier Framework version of the same qualification. As the Framework is still relatively new, these types of exemptions are likely to have been infrequent; however the frequency of their occurrence will probably increase over time.

Since individual Framework units may or may not be substantially changed after a qualification review, exemptions may or may not be granted depending on the degree of change to the unit. The fact that a unit title may have stayed the same

in a new version of a qualification does not mean that the learning outcomes in that qualification have stayed the same.

Exemptions do not attract credit, as the skills knowledge and / or competences described in the unit will have already have been recognised in the credit system.

Equivalent Units

Equivalent units are different Framework units which, when compared, are judged to be equal to or greater than the content of another. An equivalent unit needs to be of the same credit value or higher and the same level or higher.

Equivalent units will look different but in short the content will be deemed to be identical or beyond and above the content required.

If a learner has achieved a Framework unit (either singly or as part of a wider qualification) and this unit is judged to be equal to or greater than the content of a unit in a qualification they want to progress. The unit that they want to progress can be claimed on the basis of having an equivalent unit.

Use of an equivalent unit will not attract additional credit, as the skills knowledge and / or competences described in the unit will have already have been recognised in the credit system.

Credit Accumulation and Transfer & Credit Transfer

The Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSiS) provide the following definitions:

Credit accumulation and transfer (CAT) is the system by which learners can accumulate and transfer credits over a period of time, in differing locations and contexts, in order to gain qualifications.

Credit transfer is the process of using credit(s) awarded in the context of one qualification or awarded by a different awarding organisation towards the achievement requirements of another qualification¹

CAT is therefore the term used to describe the system which supports credit transfer. Credit transfer gives recognition to the fact that some units are the same, irrespective of the fact that they appear in different qualifications. This recognition promotes progression within and between industries and avoids unnecessary duplication of learning.

Credit transfer is relevant where a unit in a qualification is the same as a unit in another qualification.

A practical example of credit transfer would be a learner who achieves an award which is comprised of units 'A, B & C' transferring their credits to progress towards a certificate comprised of 'A, B, C, D and E'. In this case the units in the award have been nested in the certificate enabling the recognition of the previously achieved units.

If on the other hand a learner registered for the Certificate containing units 'A, B, C, D and E' without having done the award, but then withdrew from their programme of learning after completing only 'A, B & C', they could transfer their credits and consequently obtain the Award.

Qualification Legacy

Legacy is the term used to describe qualifications on the NQF which were then superseded by newer equivalent qualifications on the Framework.

During the migration from the NQF to the Framework units needed to take on a structure appropriate to the Framework. There are a variety of structural differences between the two frameworks including different level descriptors. A level 4 qualification in the NQF is not therefore automatically equivalent to a level 4 qualification in the Framework. A tariff of legacy qualifications is often used to show the (equivalence of old qualifications in the new framework.

Predecessor Qualification

A predecessor qualification is the name given to the qualification, or unit before the current. The A1 and V1 for example are the predecessor qualifications to the TAQA qualifications.

Shared Units

Most units in the Framework are 'shared' units. This means that the unit title and reference number is available on the Framework for use by another Awarding Organisation. Shared units encourage progression and promote 'credit transfer' discussed above. It should be noted that the assessment requirements for the same shared unit may be different in different qualifications. This is because within the Framework assessment requirements are set by the individual Awarding Organisations, in relation to the Assessment Strategy provided for individual qualifications.

Units in the Framework can also be 'restricted' units, which mean that they are not available for by other Awarding Organisations. Restricted units do not encourage credit transfer and are less common, but in some cases they are required because of specific circumstances associated with their development.

Transitional Arrangements

Transitional arrangements are provisions which have been made for dealing with the move from the National Qualification Framework (NQF) to the Framework i.e. moving from N/SVQs to Framework qualifications. These may be for example, interim funding arrangements, or time allowances for learners registered on N/SVQs to complete their N/SVQ even though new registrations may not be permitted. There are different completion times for different qualifications as these are set in relation to the specific needs of the industry and the currency and typical duration over which a qualification is achieved.

¹ Learning and Skills Improvement Service, accessed 10/2/12,
<http://repository.excellencegateway.org.uk/fedora/objects/import-pdf:1322/datastreams/PDF/content>