

Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

1. Policy statement

1.1 This is part of a bigger national agenda to prevent learners from being assessed repeatedly for knowledge, skills or understanding that they already have.

1.2 It will allow those involved in STA learning programmes that already have the knowledge, skills or understanding, gained from continuous learning that may have occurred over a number of years or hours, to achieve the qualification without having to complete a course.

1.3 STA encourages the use of RPL across all of assessment locations, to recognise learners' previous achievements and/or experiences wherever these occur.

2. Status of the policy

2.1 This policy sets out our rules on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) ensuring compliance that must be satisfied in relation to the identification, obtaining, assessment and attainment of skills and knowledge attained during the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process.

2.2 Andy Day is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy and associated Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policies, processes and requirements of STA awarding organisations. Any questions or concerns about the operation of this policy should be referred in the first instance to the allocated Skills Tutor.

2.3 If you consider that this policy has not been followed in respect of recognising your prior achievements, skills and knowledge, you should raise the matter with the Andy Day.

3. Definition

3.1 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a method of assessment that considers whether a learner 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.

4. The principles of RPL

4.1 There are five principles to RPL which have been established.

These are as follows:

4.1.1 RPL is a valid method of enabling individuals to claim credit for units or full qualification in the QCF, irrespective of how their learning took place. There is no difference between the achievement of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of a unit through prior learning and through a formal programme of study.

4.1.2 RPL policies, processes, procedures, practices and decisions should be transparent, rigorous, reliable, fair and accessible to individuals and stakeholders to ensure that users can be confident of the decisions and outcomes of RPL.

4.1.3 RPL is a learner-centred, voluntary process. The individual should be offered advice on the nature and range of evidence considered appropriate to support a claim for credit through RPL, and be given guidance and support to make a claim.

4.1.4 The process of assessment for RPL is subject to the same quality assurance and monitoring standards as any other form of assessment. The award of credit through RPL will not be distinguished from any other credits awarded in the QCF.

4.1.5 Assessment methods for RPL must be of equal rigour as other assessment methods, be fit for purpose and relate to the evidence of learning. Credit may be claimed for any unit in the QCF through RPL unless the assessment requirements of the unit do not allow this, based on a rationale consistent with the aims and regulations of the framework.

5. What are the benefits of RPL?

5.1 Learner benefits:

- Reduces the duplication of learning
- Recognition of skills and/or knowledge gained without previous formal acknowledgement
- Learners can complete this without having to take time from work or attend a learning programme
- Learners can complete this as a method of up-skilling if they need to re-enter a workplace

5.2 Employer benefits:

- Enables the skills and competencies of staff to be recognised
- A method of retaining staff
- Allows for gaps and shortages in skill to be filled
- Allows for contribution and commitment to the development of the workforce

6. What is the difference between RPL and exemption?

6.1 The process of exemption is defined as the facility for a learner to claim exemption from some or all of the achievement requirements of a QCF qualification, using evidence of certificated achievement.

6.2 There is a clear distinction between the two processes under the QCF. The process of exemption is applied to formal achievement of qualifications and RPL to previously uncertified achievement.

6.3 The other key difference is that when exemption has been granted to a learner, no credits are awarded. The process solely allows the individual to access the next appropriate qualification. RPL however leads directly to the award of credit, leading to certification.

6.4 Exemption Recognition of Prior Learning

- No certification or award of credit
- Awarding of credit leading to certification
- No assessing takes place
- Applied solely to formal qualifications
- Applied to uncertified achievement

7. The RPL process

7.1 General awareness of RPL

7.1.1 It is a requirement of STA to ensure that all learners wishing to enrol onto a nationally recognised and accredited qualification are informed of the possibility of claiming credit.

7.1.2 This would occur during the initial stages of registration or during the induction period.

7.1.3 The learner would need to be informed of the process of claiming credit where necessary, the administrative processes for applications, timelines, and appeals procedures.

7.2 Pre-assessment

7.2.1 If the learner decides to proceed with the RPL route, it is important that the tutor provides information on the implications of their decision before commencing the collection of evidence.

7.2.2 The learner will need to agree to their understanding of the RPL process, provide sufficient evidence to make a viable claim, as well as be able to make decisions about evidence collection and presentation for assessment.

7.2.3 The learner will begin to gather evidence to meet the requirements of the unit(s).

7.2.4 The evidence requested must be able to meet the assessment standard of the unit(s) identified within the learning outcomes.

7.3 Assessment

7.3.1 The evidence submitted must be assessed to the same standard as any other QCF qualification, and must be subject to the same quality assurance procedures (i.e. internal verification) as any other assessment process.

7.3.2 Assessment must be valid and reliable to ensure the integrity of both the award of credit and the RPL process as a whole.

7.4 Feedback

7.4.1 After assessment has taken place, the assessor will be required to provide feedback to the learner, discussing the results and provide support or further guidance on options available for further development.

7.4.2 The assessor will provide an outcome as to whether the learner can be awarded credit for the unit(s).

The results will then be recorded on the LEARNING AGREEMENT form.

7.4.3 STA will claim RPL outcomes with relevant awarding organisations where required.

7.5 Internal Quality Assurance

7.5.1 RPL claims are to be submitted within STA portfolios with relevant supporting evidence for the purpose of internal quality assurance

7.5.2 Internal Quality Assurers are responsible for confirming the assessment decisions of Assessors prior to summative certification claims being made.

7.5.3 Declaration of Achievements must reflect full and accurate details of RPL claims

7.6 Data Processing

7.6.1 STA data team are responsible for inputting information relating to claims for RPL on MLS learner management system.

7.6.2 Individual Learner Records (ILR) must reflect the RPL being claimed

7.6.3 Evidence of RPL is scanned and uploaded onto MLS system

7.6.4 Evidence of RPL is stored at STA premises for the purpose of external audit.

7.7 Appeals

7.7.1 If the learner wishes to appeal against a decision which has been made by the assessor, they will need to follow STA' appeals procedures.