



# Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy

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## **RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) POLICY**

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

The purpose of this policy is to set out the process and guidance for FCGE. The process aims to provide accurate recognition and evidencing of knowledge, understanding and skills that have previously been achieved and/or certificated. The policy will support those who are directly involved with planning, advising and delivering learning.

Not all learners have access to formal learning. The main principles behind RPL are that an individual's prior achievements can be recognized and that a learner is not disadvantaged by unnecessarily having to repeat a course of learning.

### **REGULATORY REQUIREMENT**

This policy is written in accordance with our regulatory requirements including,

- Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition June 2016 - Condition: E10
- Qualification Wales Standard Conditions of Recognition – Condition E10
- CCEA General Conditions of Recognition February 2016 – Condition E10
- SQA Accreditation's Regulatory Principles (2014) – Principle 10

### **DEFINITION OF RECOGNITION PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)**

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 or qualification through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning.

The use of RPL has been developed over time, which has led to the use of a number of terms to describe the process. Among the most common are:

- Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)
- Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)
- Accreditation of Prior Achievement (APA)
- Accreditation of Prior Learning and Achievement (APLA)

These terms broadly describe the same process; FCGE uses the term Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

RPL enables recognition of achievement from a range of activities using any appropriate assessment methodology. Provided that the assessment requirements of a given unit or qualification have been met, the use of RPL is acceptable for accrediting a unit, units or a whole qualification. Evidence of learning must be VACS:

- Valid – the work is relevant to the assessment criteria
- Authentic or Attributable – the work has been produced solely by the learner
- Current – the work is still relevant at the time of assessment
- Sufficient – the work covers all the assessment criteria

RPL focuses on assessment and awarding of credit for prior learning which may count as evidence towards:

- A unit accumulated towards a full FCGE qualification
- A full FCGE qualification
- This also can include functional skills qualifications; where elements of the qualification but not the full qualification have been achieved prior.

## PROCESS

Where RPL is permitted for a qualification, the **College** must undertake a RPL mapping exercise to identify and evaluate whether the learner's previous evidence provided, satisfies current assessment criteria and a decision made whether the evidence provided partly or fully maps against the qualification or unit being claimed.

Where units are assessed using RPL, then all evidence must be evaluated using the stipulated criteria from the qualification or unit being claimed. In assessing a unit using RPL, the college assessor must be satisfied that the evidence produced by the learners is VACS (as above) and meets the assessment standard established by the learning outcomes and its related assessment criteria.

The prior achievement that would provide evidence of current knowledge, understanding and skills will vary from sector to sector. It will depend on the extent of the experience, technological changes and the nature of the outcome claimed. If the currency of any evidence is in doubt, the assessor may use questions to check understanding, knowledge and/or competence. Where there is an assessment strategy/plan for a qualification, this must be adhered to at all times.

If a college wishes to use RPL, the following must be ensured:

- RPL processes, procedures, practices and decisions should be transparent, rigorous, reliable, fair and accessible.
- Achievement must be identified prior to taking a qualification.
- Learners are registered as soon as they formally start to gather evidence.
- All evidence of RPL is retained for the purpose of External Quality Assurance by FCGE.
- Certification and claims are made according to normal procedures.
- All relevant evidence is assessed before assessment decisions are confirmed.
- Assessors must have the appropriate expertise in order to support the RPL process.
- The process is not concerned with allowing for exceptional entry to, or exemption from, a program of study.
- The process of assessment for RPL is subject to the same quality assurance and monitoring standards as any other form of assessment.

## EXAMPLES OF RPL EVIDENCE

RPL evidence may not, in some cases, cover all requirements of a unit and further methods of assessment may be necessary such as professional discussion or observation. Assessors must ensure that any evidence presented is valid and authentic. Examples include:

- Documentation e.g. work products/artefacts, project plans, commissioning reports, design documents
- Audi Visual evidence e.g. photographs, videos
- Expert Witness testimonies
- Reflective Accounts
- Professional discussion

## REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

FCGE will review the policy annually as part of our self-evaluation arrangements; amendment and review may also be in response to feedback requests or good practice guidance issued by Regulators, to align with their FCGE and complaints process.

## CONTACT US

If you have any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact us

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