



Pearson

# Recognition of prior learning policy and process

**Quality Services and Governance**

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## Who and what is this policy for:

This policy is for centre staff who are planning to use Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as evidence towards the achievement of Pearson's vocational qualifications.

This policy sets out how and when RPL can be used as a method of assessment for Pearson's vocational qualifications. It includes guidance on how the RPL process can be managed. If you have any queries on this policy, please contact [vocationalqualityadvisors@pearson.com](mailto:vocationalqualityadvisors@pearson.com)

# Pearson Education Ltd – Our Mission and Values

Welcome to Pearson, the world's leading learning company. We have a simple mission: to help people make more of their lives through learning. Whether it's at home, in the classroom or in the workplace, learning is the key to improving our life chances. We are the UK's largest awarding body and we are regulated by Ofqual (England), SQA Accreditation (Scotland), CCEA Regulation (Northern Ireland) and Qualifications Wales (Wales). We offer academic and vocational qualifications that are globally recognised and benchmarked, with educational excellence rooted in names like Edexcel, BTEC, and LCCI.

Our regulatory policies are integral to our approach and articulate in a consistent way how we meet regulatory requirements. These policies are designed to support centres and learners with the design, delivery and award of Pearson qualifications and services.

## 1. Scope of policy

- 1.1 **You can apply** Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) to **internally assessed parts** of our vocational qualifications, including those on the Regulated Qualifications Framework, Self-Regulated Framework (SRF) and other national frameworks in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- 1.2 The use of **recognition of prior learning is optional**. But, if you choose to apply it, you need to have an internal policy on RPL and the proper resources to do so.
- 1.3 **You cannot use RPL for external assessment, set exams or set assignments.**

## 2. Policy statement

### What is Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)?

- 2.1 RPL is about using a learner's evidence of earlier learning and achievement towards part of a qualification. An assessor will review whether the evidence is enough to show that a learner has met the assessment requirements for a current qualification. The learner will need to show that through knowledge, understanding or skills they already have, they do not need to repeat the course or complete extra assessment activity.
- 2.2 If there is evidence that the learner has previously shown the knowledge, skills or understanding required by a qualification, this may be used towards achieving that qualification. Evidence of previous learning or achievement must be:
  - valid and current;
  - reliable;
  - authentic; and
  - sufficient.

- 2.3** 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). If you or your learners think that they are entitled to an exemption, we recommend you refer to the organisation which has specified the original qualification requirement. If a particular qualification is specified as an entry requirement to a qualification offered by us, we will list any appropriate exemptions in our specification.

### 3. Can learners use a previously achieved certificate towards a qualification?

- 3.1** Occasionally we will map or give guidance to show shared content across units or qualifications (for example, First Aid Certificates). In these cases, a learner may use a previously achieved certificate as evidence without them having to repeat learning or assessment.
- 3.2** If we have not mapped qualifications, you will need to map and check that the learners' previous certificated achievement meets the current qualifications assessment criteria. It is important that you keep a record of the mapping so that we can confirm that it is valid.
- 3.3** No extra assessment will be needed if a learner's previously achieved certificate or qualification meets the requirements of a whole unit.
- 3.4** Any Pearson higher education award (carrying academic credit) which has been certificated, cannot be used as prior learning to contribute to the achievement of another Pearson higher education award of an equivalent level. As such, any part of a Level 5 Higher National Diploma that has been certificated cannot be used towards the achievement of an additional level 5 Higher National Diploma.

### 4. An example of the RPL process

#### Centre preparation

- Check that you have staff with expertise to support and assure the RPL process

#### Stage 1: Awareness, information and guidance

- Before enrolling the learner, discuss with them the option of using RPL to claim units for some of their past learning or experience. If the learner is interested in this, you should explain to them:
  - The process of claiming a unit using RPL.
  - The support and guidance that is available.
  - How long the process will take, how to appeal and any costs included.
- You should check that the evidence provided by the learner for RPL has been achieved before the start of their course of study.

## Stage 2: Pre assessment, gathering evidence and giving information

- Register your learner as soon as they officially start to gather evidence.
- To help the learner in gathering evidence you could create an assessment plan or tracking document.
- 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 learners past experience could include:
  - Home or family life
  - Non certificated education or learning
  - Paid work
  - Community or voluntary work.

## Stage 3: Assessing and documenting evidence

### Assessing

- **Tell your Standards Verifier/External Examiner, before any monitoring activity starts, if you have applied RPL** for any particular units or learners. Your Standards Verifier/External Examiner may include these in their sample.
- A learner's past achievement that would show evidence of up-to-date 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.
- The assessment strategy, where stated, for each qualification must also be followed.
- Assessment as part of RPL is a structured process for gathering and reviewing evidence and making judgements about a learners 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.
- Standards Verifiers or External Examiners are not required to give feedback on an assignment brief or task if you choose to set one.
- Evaluate all the evidence using the learning outcomes and assessment criteria from the qualification or unit being claimed. In assessing a unit using RPL the assessor must be satisfied that the evidence from the learner meets the standard for all of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
- If we have published assessment or grading criteria, you should review the evidence against all of the criteria.
- **If you find gaps in the learners work through RPL, then you will need to use more assessment methods to create enough evidence** to be able to award the learning outcome for the whole unit.

### Documenting evidence

- Keep records of assessment against prior learning and make sure these are available for verification.
- Evidence collected through the RPL process needs to be assessed and verified through the same quality assurance procedures that your centre uses for any other internal assessment methods.

#### Stage 4: Outcomes of the RPL process

- Once you've checked a learner's evidence and made an assessment decision, it is important that feedback is given to the learner including the assessment decision and what options are available to the learner if you have decided not to award the unit or qualification.
- You should check that the learner understands how they can appeal if they do not agree with the assessment decision.
- If the learner wants to make a complaint they can do so using our [Pearson Qualifications Website](#)
- If the learner can show that they have met all the learning outcomes and assessment criteria using RPL they will be able to claim for the unit or qualification.
- If we identify that all unit requirements have not been met, we will:
  - ask you to provide more evidence, or
  - ask the learner to complete the standard assessment requirements if they want to achieve the qualification.

#### Stage 5: Claiming certificates

- You can claim certificates once the quality assurance processes have been successfully completed using the standard procedures.
- After certification you need to keep the assessment and internal verification records, along with any extra RPL records for three years.

#### Stage 6: Appeals

- If a learner wants to appeal against a decision made about their assessment they first need to follow your centre's policy and procedures and then our [Enquiries and Appeals about Pearson vocational qualifications policy](#).

## 5. Feedback and complaints process

- 5.1** We welcome your feedback, which helps us to improve the products and services we provide. We know that sometimes things go wrong, but if they do, we want to try to stop them from happening again. If you'd like to give us your feedback or you're unhappy with the service you can [email us using our online form](#).

## 6. Regulatory references

- 6.1 UK regulators require all awarding organisations to establish and maintain their compliance with regulatory conditions and criteria. As part of this process, policies that relate to Pearson's status as an awarding organisation will reference any particular conditions and criteria that they address.
- 6.2 This policy addresses the following regulatory criteria and conditions:

### Ofqual/CCEA Regulation/Qualifications Wales General Conditions of Recognition September 2016

Recognition of Prior Learning	E10
Results for a qualification must be based on sufficient evidence	H5

### Guidance to the General Conditions of Recognition, July 2016

Recognition of prior learning	Guidance on Condition E10
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### SQA Accreditation Regulatory Principles (2014)

The awarding body shall ensure that it has the necessary arrangements and resources for the effective delivery, assessment and quality assurance of SQA accredited qualifications	10
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## 7. Policy review date

- 7.1 This policy will be reviewed in July 2018.

## 8. Useful contacts

- 8.1 If you have any queries on this policy, please contact [vocationalqualitystandards@pearson.com](mailto:vocationalqualitystandards@pearson.com)