The Youth Development Academy

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Introduction

As part of our commitment to quality assurance, The Youth Development Academy seeks to provide learners with guidance and support to help them achieve their learning and development goals while meeting any regulatory requirements. Our policies are reviewed on a yearly basis to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. This policy is about prior learning and recommends ways a learner can meet any requirement while avoiding repetition of learning and assessment.

Qualifications in Scope

This policy applies to all our Vocational qualifications.

Policy Statement

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.

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:

- valid
- reliable

The Youth Development Academy require the use of RPL where it is of value to learners in facilitating assessment. Vocational courses in subject areas which use RPL must follow these principles and keep appropriate records.

Terminology

RPL policies and procedures have 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)

Principles of RPL:

Principle 1

RPL is a valid method of enabling individuals to claim credit for units, 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 or through a formal programme of study.

Principle 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.

Principle 3

RPL is a learner-centered, 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.

Principle 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.

Principle 5

Assessment methods for RPL must be of equal rigour to other assessment methods, be fit for purpose and relate to the evidence of learning. Credit may be claimed for any unit 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. RPL is also of value to learners transferring across various learning programmes who have relevant learning but do not hold relevant credits or certificates. This may include learners transferring from NQF to QCF to RQF specifications.

Amplification

RPL can be used where a learner has not had their prior learning formally recognised. If a learner has certificated learning, then they should apply for exemption, not RPL. RPL focuses on assessment and awarding of credit for prior learning which may count as evidence towards:

- a unit accumulated towards a full qualification
- unit or units recognised by an awarding organisation Certificate of Achievement
- a full awarding organisation recognised qualification

Where units are assessed against assessment criteria or grading criteria, then all evidence must be evaluated using the stipulated criteria. In assessing a unit using RPL the assessor must be satisfied that the evidence produced by the learner meets the assessment standard established by the learning outcome and its related assessment criteria. Subject areas must have personnel with appropriate expertise and knowledge to facilitate this and IV the process.

Most often RPL will be used for units. It is acceptable to claim for an entire qualification through RPL although this is not the norm. However, it would be unusual for a learner to be able to offer prior achievement that completely matches every aspect of qualification assessment requirements.

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, and for competence. Note also that the assessment strategy for each qualification must be adhered to. The RPL process is not concerned with allowing for exceptional entry to, or exemption from, a programme of study.

The RPL process does not allow the recognition of any unit assessed by external assessment only because such units are subject to specific evidence requirements.

Subjects wishing to carry out RPL must ensure that:

- Learners are registered as soon as they formally start to gather evidence
- Records of assessment are maintained, as for any other unit/qualification
- Certification and claims are made according to normal procedures
- All relevant evidence is assessed before assessment decisions are confirmed
- There are designated personnel with the appropriate expertise to support and assure the RPL process.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, or if there is a change in legal or other business related requirement.

Review date	Description	Reviewed by	Next Review date
08 July 2019	Recognizing Prior Learning Policy	SMT Team	06 July 2020
07 July 2020		SMT Team	07 July 2021
05 July 2021		SMT Team	04 July 2022
5 July 2022		SMT Team	05 July 2023