

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY

Strategic Outcomes	<p>We will provide opportunities to access and progress through education and training at all levels.</p> <p>We will enable communities to grow and develop through local education and training.</p> <p>We will enable people to build their independence and confidence in a supportive environment.</p>
Responsibility	Vice Principal, Learning and Skills
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RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY

POLICY

The principles of the Recognition of Prior Learning are defined by SQA as:

“To recognise prior learning as a method of assessing whether a learner’s experience and achievements meet the evidence requirements (i.e. standards) of a SQA Unit or Units and which may or may not have been developed through a course of learning”.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is not a new process and 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. The College will use the single term Recognition of Prior Learning in this policy to encompass all of the above.

REFERENCES

SQA Recognition of Prior Learning Policy Statement
Assessment Policy
Assessment Appeals Procedure
SQA Core Skills Bulletin (September 2010)
Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and Process (Pearson)

Recognising Prior Learning

Evidence to support prior learning assessment decisions must be valid, reliable and of equal rigour to the standard assessment of the Unit concerned. This means that the evidence should broadly match the evidence requirements specified in the Unit and reflect the SCQF/QCF level and credit value attached to the Unit.

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
- current (this is not time specific and will depend on the topic. It relates to the candidate currently having the skills and the skills being current in relation to the industry sector)
- reliable.

Learners may gain knowledge and skills acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts. Formal learning is learning certificated by a recognised awarding or professional body; non-formal learning includes learning such as employer's in-house training courses, which may or

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may not be assessed and/or certificated; finally, informal learning is learning based on experience from a variety of environments which is not formally assessed.

Assessment Approach

The recognition of prior learning may be used to assess complete or partial Units. Where evidence of prior learning only partially meets the evidence requirements of a Unit, other methods of assessment should be used to complete the outstanding requirements. The minimum level of awarding and certification will be a complete Unit.

Previously attained qualifications may be used as evidence of prior learning as long as they have been awarded by a recognised awarding body or professional body. It will be the College's responsibility to ensure that the content, level of demand and assessment approach of the prior attained qualification broadly matches the evidence requirements specified in the Unit(s). A qualification certificate on its own is unlikely to be sufficient evidence for assessment and verification purposes. This should be supported by module descriptors or equivalent, which provide information on the level, demand, content and assessment of the previously attained qualification.

The assessment of prior learning WILL be subject to the same internal verification by the College as other methods of assessment. Awarding bodies will also adopt the same approach to quality assurance as any other method of assessment. Appeals from learners will follow the same process applicable to standard assessment of the Unit(s) or Group Award and/or Centre type concerned.

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 ask for the demonstration of skills to check competence. Please note that the assessment strategy for each qualification must be adhered to.

Where evidence is assessed to be only sufficient to cover one or more learning outcomes, or to partly meet the needs of a learning outcome, then additional assessment methods should be used to generate sufficient evidence to be able to award the learning outcome(s) for the whole unit.

The recognition of prior learning is **not** an exemption from a Unit(s) within a Group Award. Candidates should to be entered for the Unit(s) and/or Group Award as normal.

Evidence to support prior learning decisions needs to ensure the currency of the learner's knowledge, skills and achievement within the context of the Unit(s) being assessed. Awarding bodies do not set a general time limit for the currency of evidence of prior learning or experience. Currency is likely to differ depending on the sector. Supplementary questioning may be undertaken by assessors in order to ascertain the currency of a learner's prior learning or experience.

The recognition of prior learning can be considered in relation to the internal assessment of one or more Units in the following types of SQA Group Award:

- Higher National Certificate and Diplomas (except Graded Units)
- Professional Development Awards
- Scottish Vocational Qualifications
- National Progression Awards
- National Certificates

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- Skills for Work Awards
- In some instances, a full Group Award may be achieved through the recognition of prior learning. However, it is unlikely that a learner would have the appropriate prior learning and experience to meet all the requirements of a full Group Award.

There are situations where the recognition of prior learning **may not** be used as a method of assessing in SQA Units and assessments. There is information on the SQA website regarding this.

<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/67029.html>

SQA provide further details for Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer in SQA Group Awards.

<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/67029.html>

The recognition of prior learning **may not** be used as a method of assessing in the following types of Pearson BTEC/EDEXCEL Units and assessments:

- any unit or qualification assessed by external assessment only. This is because such units are subject to specific evidence requirements.

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Core Skills (SQA)

Specific information on the recognition of prior attained Core Skills may be found on the SQA website.

<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/83916.html>

The College has agreed the following APL mapping for SQA Core Skills:

Core Skill Subject	Core Skill Component on learner's CSP	Core Skill Unit APL
Numeracy	Using Graphical Information	Using Graphical Information
	Using Number	Using Number
Communication	Oral Communication	Speaking and Listening
	Written Communication	Reading and Writing
Information Technology	Accessing Information	Accessing Information
	Providing/Creating Information	Processing Information

The Recognition of Prior Learning Process

Stage 1 Awareness, information and guidance

Prior to and/or during induction a learner should be made aware of RPL and the possibility that they may be able to claim credit for some of their previous learning. If the learner wishes to pursue this, they will need to know the:

- Policy and process of claiming achievement by using RPL
- Sources of support and guidance available to them
- Timelines, appeals processes and any fees involved

Stage 2 Pre-assessment: gathering evidence and giving information.

At this stage, the learner has the responsibility of collecting evidence against the requirements of the relevant unit(s). In some cases the development of an assessment plan and tracking document or similar may be required, to support the learner through the process. The evidence gathered will need to meet the standards of the unit, or part of unit, that the evidence is being used for.

Stage 3 Assessment/documentation of evidence

Assessment as part of RPL is a structured process for gathering and reviewing evidence and making judgments about a learner's prior learning and experience in relation to current unit standards. The assessor may be looking at previous awarding body certification with the corresponding unit specifications and/or National Occupational Standards (NOS); work experience records, validated by managers; previous portfolios of evidence put together by the learner or

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essays and reports validated as being the learner's own unaided work. Assessment must be valid, current and reliable to ensure the integrity of the award of credit and, as above, the evidence gathered needs to meet the standards of the unit, or part of unit, that the evidence is being used for. The assessment process will be subject to the College's quality assurance procedures for internal verification as well as the awarding body's external quality assurance procedures. Evidenced gathered through RPL should be clearly referenced and sign posted to aid internal assessment and internal and external verification/moderation.

Stage 4 – Claiming certification

Once the internal and external quality assurance procedures have been successfully completed, certification claims can be made using the standard College process for recording learner results and processing onto the awarding body. Assessment and internal verification records, along with any additional RPL records completed, should be retained for the standard retention period (in line with the awarding body requirements) following certification.

The assessor must ensure that all learning outcomes and assessment criteria being claimed for each unit are achieved and that the records of assessment are maintained in the usual way.

Stage 5 – Appeal

As with any assessment decision, if a learner wishes to appeal against a decision made about their assessment they need to follow the College's Assessment Appeals Procedure.

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All Staff
Quality Manual
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