



Recognition of Prior Learning Policy
2018/19

Policy name	Recognition of Prior Learning Policy 2018/19
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Through its policies and in its day to day work, the college is committed to promoting equality and fairness and combating discrimination. This applies to everyone, regardless of gender, racial or ethnic background, disability, religion, sexual orientation or age and embraces the college's legal responsibilities.

Recognition of Prior Learning 2018/19

Mission

To inspire, build confidence and prepare you for the life you want to live.

Vision

“We’ll believe in you”

Whatever your background, identity or experience of learning to date, we believe in you. We will support your achievement and success.

“We’ll take you further than you expect”

You’ll have the opportunity to choose from the widest possible range of courses in one place and we’ll stop at nothing to connect you with the best university, employer, or apprenticeship for you. And if you’re already working, we’ll help you to keep developing and growing.

“We’ll provide an inspirational environment for you”

You’ll experience a warm welcome from our community. You’ll grow in confidence, resilience and be ready for progression to the next step in your life, whether that’s further study, the world of work or your own unique adventure.

Values

For us to succeed in our mission and vision, the College has shared community values which help pull us together to act in agreed ways as part of an inspirational community:

We listen intently to the voice of those we serve and show unending commitment to continuous improvement and innovation.

We engage fully with the needs of the local community, employers and universities so we can secure your achievement, success and progression.

We respond quickly, so we’re always able to give you the best support, information, advice and guidance, just when you need it.

We celebrate together the successes and diversity of our community.

Purpose of this Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide opportunity for learners to meet requirements for any qualification that the College offers – that does not involve a national examination to evidence learning, while avoiding repetition of learning and assessment. As such GCE, GCSE, functional skills and the majority of our applied learning is not within the scope of the policy.

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 (Recognised Prior Learning) is the preferred term used by the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) and is adopted by the College; it can also be referred to under different names:

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

The Regulatory Arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) provides the following definition of 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 through knowledge, understanding or skills that they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning'.

In the context of the QCF, the definition of RPL is quite specific and relates to assessment leading to the award of credit. Assessment for RPL is conducted against the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of a unit and is subject to exactly the same internal and external quality assurance requirements as any other kind of assessment within the QCF.

There is no difference between achievement of the required standards by RPL and achievement through a formal programme of learning.

The College also acknowledges the Centre requirement for RPL defined by the Edexcel Examination' Board in that we will 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

Underpinning these requirements are the commitments to the principles of RPL, which the College adopts in full:

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-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.

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 specifications.

There are two contexts to RPL

- Where a portfolio of evidence is put together by the learner showing the prior learning undertaken. The learner would then need to complete the exam board's assessment in order to gain the unit/qualification.
- Where the learner has evidence of their learning that also shows they have completed an assessment that can be 100% mapped to the exam board's assessment criteria. This assessment would have been assessed and internally quality assured by the provider.

Stages of RPL

Stage 1: Information and guidance about claiming RPL credit.

Worthing College will provide support and advice to learners about:

- The process of claiming credit through RPL.
- The sources of Centre and external support and guidance available to learners.
- The administrative processes for RPL applications.
- The submission requirements to evidence RPL.
- Timelines, appeals processes and any fees and subsidies.

All learners who express an interest in RPL should be given timely and appropriate guidance about the principles, rules and processes involved in this type of accreditation.

Stage 2: Pre-assessment – evidence gathering.

During this stage, the learner will carry out the evidence collection. The evidence required for the award of credit will depend on the purpose, learning outcomes and assessment criteria for the relevant unit(s) within the QCF.

Stage 3: Documentation of evidence and assessment.

Assessment as part of RPL and within the QCF is a structured process for gathering and reviewing evidence and making judgments about a learner's prior learning and experience in relation to unit standards.

Assessment must be valid and reliable to ensure the integrity of units and qualifications and the RPL system as a whole. The assessment process for RPL must be subject to the same quality assurance processes of awarding organisations as any other part of the assessment process.

Stage 4: RPL Decision

The awarding board will be responsible for the RPL decision and where applicable awarding credit and ratifying certification.

Outcome

If individuals can produce relevant evidence, that meets learning outcome requirements then, recognition can be given for their existing knowledge, understanding or skills.

If an individual can meet all the learning outcomes and assessment criteria in a unit, then they can claim credit for that unit solely based on their RPL achievement.

If however, evidence from RPL is only sufficient to cover one or more learning outcomes, or to partly meet the need of a learning outcome then additional work must be undertaken by the learner. All assessment criteria must be met in order for an assessment decision to be reached.

This is recognised as good practice by all the concerned regulators and Ofqual has a statement that reinforces this:

Learners are unlikely to have all the evidence they need to achieve a full unit and may need to produce additional evidence. Evidence used for RPL is not time-limited but assessors must determine whether it is valid and authentic. RPL may be used in conjunction with other assessment methods such as examination of recent products, professional discussion or observation to assess current performance.

Since evidence from RPL is similar to that derived via any other acceptable assessment method, where the standard of a unit is met by evidence obtained from, or partly from RPL, credit can be claimed.

Continuous Improvement

Worthing College aims to continuously improve our processes and procedures and incorporate any feedback or learning we receive in relation to this policy. This policy shall be the subject of a two year review cycle or as necessary relative to awarding body requirements.