


RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) HANDBOOK



THE RPL
HANDBOOK EXPLAINS THE
PROCESS TO FOLLOW
WHEN CONSIDERING AN
ASSESSMENT ONLY
PATHWAY

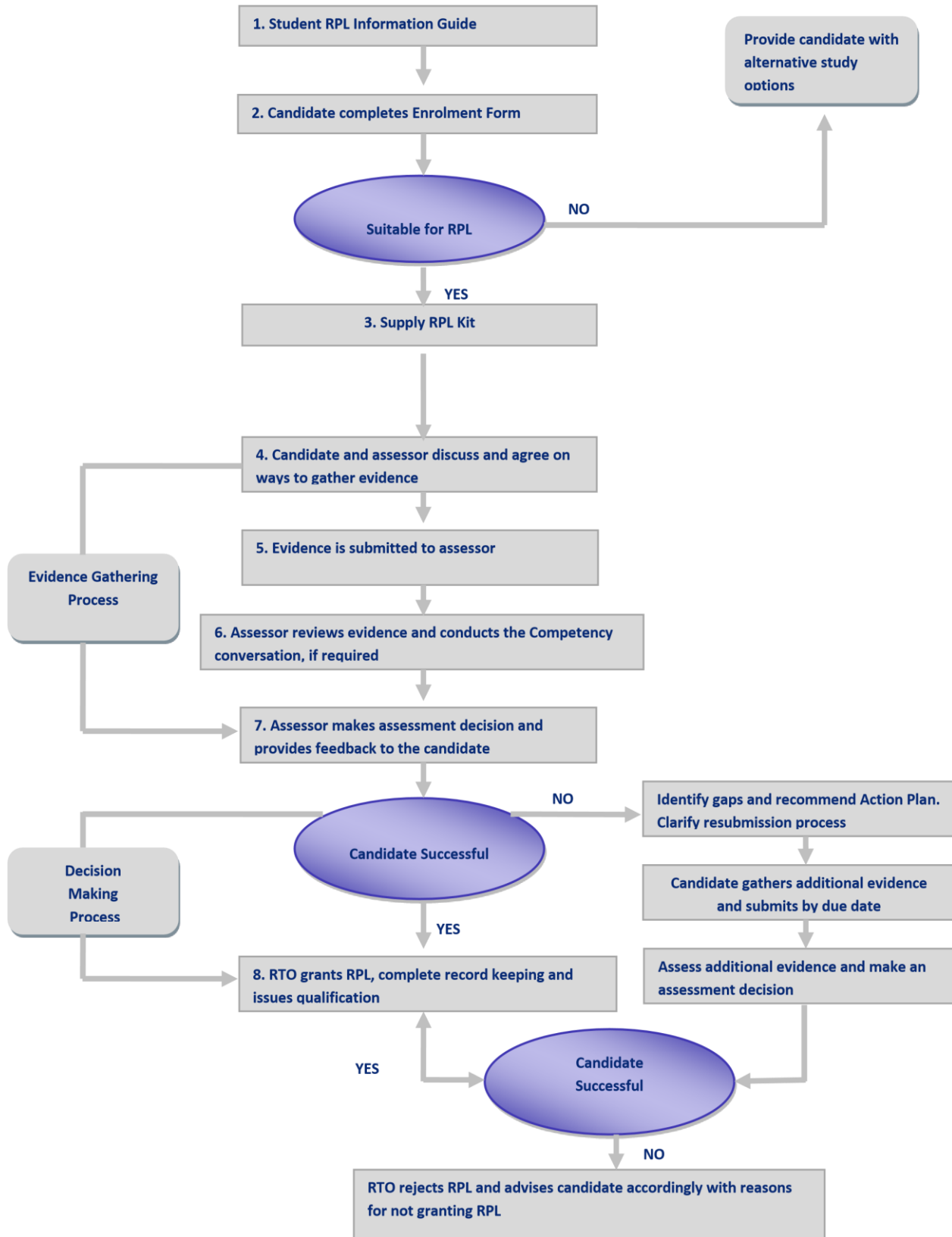
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RPL Flow Chart



RPL Information

This document provides information on how a Recognition process works. It contains the following:

- Getting started – provides an understanding of our Recognition of Prior Learning process
- Evidence and forms – requirements for gathering and presentation of evidence
- Professional Conversation – outlines what occurs during the professional conversation
- Definitions – terms that may be used during the Recognition process are explained
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) – responses to frequently asked questions
- Examples – provides examples of information/evidence collected during this process

Applicants need to think carefully about the advantage between a training and assessment pathway as opposed to seeking recognition of prior learning. This is particularly important if it has been some time since gaining the skills and experience for which recognition is sought.

Applicants should be guided by the directions explained in this document and must satisfactorily complete the RPL Kit which is provided on enrolment to be successful in this recognition process. If your completed RPL Kit contains insufficient evidence, you will be given an opportunity to provide further evidence before a final decision is made. This evidence must be provided within 28 days of being notified.

Our Assessor's role in this process is to support you through the application and evidence gathering phase and provide specific advice or feedback on the preparation and presentation of evidence for assessment. Applications will not be accepted without submission of original or certified documentation presented in a well-arranged portfolio.

What is Recognition of Prior Learning? (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the formal process used to recognise and record a person's existing skills and knowledge, regardless of how these have been acquired. These skills may have been obtained through previous formal training, work experience or general life experience. Workers with existing skills but no formal recognition of those skills are often required to undertake unnecessary training to gain a qualification, which is inefficient for both employers and workers, delaying training completion, wasting training funds, and affecting the ability of workers to fill skilled positions in a timely way.

Recognition of Current Competency (RCC) applies if a candidate has previously, successfully completed the requirements of a unit of competency or module and is now re-assessed to ensure that competence has been maintained. This is particularly relevant if there is a requirement for a licence or ticket to carry out that skill area (e.g., first aid).

Why apply for RPL?

The advantages of an RPL/RCC process are:

- Being able to identify how your experience has provided you with the knowledge and skills of a nationally recognised unit of competency
- If you already have the competencies, you may not have to attend training
- You may become qualified in a shorter time
- You only complete training for skills/knowledge that are new and challenging
- You don't need to be trained in areas where you have proven skill or experience.

Recognition from other RTOs

Qualifications and Statements of Attainment from other RTOs or Higher Education Providers may also be recognised. Candidates are required to provide either the original or a certified copy of the Statement of Attainment or Transcript of Results for verification before recognition can occur.

How does it Work?

Our Recognition process encourages conversation (also known as a “professional conversation”) between an Assessor and a candidate that maximises the opportunities for providing evidence of competence.

Requirements for eligibility for recognition are:

- Formal qualifications provided as evidence must be able to be mapped across to the requirements of the competencies to be recognised. Qualifications that cannot be successfully mapped are dependent on the evidence provided and cannot be guaranteed
- Candidates must be able to provide additional evidence to verify the currency of skills and knowledge. Examples of evidence may include: a CV, 3rd Party verification, Position Descriptions, Workplace documents, and evidence of recent Professional Development
- Candidates may be required to attend a Competency Conversation with an Assessor about your current skills and knowledge. This process means the Assessor may:
 - Ask open questions to encourage the Candidate to talk about their past experiences and skills relevant to the competencies being assessed
 - Use active listening skills to identify indicators of further evidence required and asking appropriate questions to gain that evidence
 - Continuing the conversation to draw out further information to create a picture of the Candidate's skills and knowledge

- Comparing the information gained from the conversation with competency standards to determine if the required outcomes have been achieved
- Providing advice on the types of documents and evidence that can be provided
- Providing feedback on relevance of evidence provided
- Making decisions on whether the evidence provided is current, valid, sufficient, reliable, and authentic
- Documenting the conversation, evidence collected, and competency decisions made

How Results are Recorded

- Competent (C) – Candidate submits sufficient quality evidence to make a judgement of meeting the competencies
- More Evidence required (MER) - The evidence presented has not demonstrated competency and the Assessor will continue to work with the Candidate to develop an action plan so that competence can be achieved through the recognition process.

Support

Support is provided by your Assessor who can assist in deciding whether to proceed with the RPL at any point during the process. If your evidence is deemed inadequate and “More Evidence Required” (MER), your Assessor will work with you to determine the best course of action to address the gaps in your competency. This support will enable you to submit additional or better-quality evidence, or to decide on any suitable training you may require.

Complaints and Appeals Process

All Candidates have the right to appeal an assessment decision. Information on how to appeal is contained in the Student Handbook.

How is the application assessed?

The RPL assessment process should not be considered an ‘easy way’ to gain a qualification. It is not just a matter of providing evidence of time-served or an amount of experience.

Candidates need to be committed to supporting their case by locating and providing suitable evidence and documentation. This requires significant effort, and the time commitment should not be underestimated. The following general criteria will be considered when any RPL application is assessed.

Sufficiency

Has enough evidence been provided to enable the Assessor to make the decision whether to recognise the Candidate's skill and knowledge? To achieve sufficiency, it may be necessary to provide additional evidence, different forms of evidence, or undertake further assessment tasks.

Authenticity

Authenticity ensures the evidence of learning is honest and accurate. This means that documentation of a candidate's learning is genuine and that it represents learning by the applicant rather than someone else. Competency conversations can be a useful way of assuring the authenticity of evidence. Candidates are required to sign a declaration when submitting your portfolio of evidence to confirm its authenticity.

Currency

Evidence provided needs to confirm that the learning or ability is still current. For example, if you studied leadership theories in the 1990's you would probably not have the theoretical basis to be a good leader today. You need to demonstrate that learning or abilities have been maintained at an appropriate level.

Validity

Validity requires an assessment process such as RPL to assess what it is meant to be assessing. A Candidate's Portfolio will need to show how the presented evidence aligns to the required learning outcomes or competencies.

Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency of the assessment process. This means that the same judgement is likely to be made by different Assessors or by the same Assessor on different occasions. As it is possible for candidates to demonstrate their competency in a variety of ways, reliability requires clear assessment processes and Assessors to use sound judgement.

Fairness

Assessment is fair if it does not disadvantage an individual candidate. RPL assessment should not be more rigorous than that given to students undertaking a training and assessment pathway towards competency.

What's Next?

A portfolio is the term used to describe the information or evidence presented as demonstration of existing skills, knowledge, competencies, and personal attributes. A portfolio which supports your application for RPL. You will need to identify and use each piece of evidence to show how it matches the subject learning outcomes. The development of a portfolio of evidence will lead to a deeper understanding of your personal strengths (and weaknesses) and assist you in prioritising your personal, academic and career development.

Portfolio Evidence may include:

- Credentialed learning or qualifications from Universities, TAFE, or private RTOs
- Learning from non-credentialed courses: continuing education programs, in-house training, adult education courses
- Work experience in particular work roles; responsibility for specific organisational functions; involvement in action-learning projects; participation in professional development programs; on-the-job training
- Life experience, including participation in professional associations; organisational roles in community groups; personal study in specific skills or fields of knowledge; volunteer work
- DVD or video of you demonstrating the skills being assessed
- Any other evidence you feel adequately demonstrates your competence

The types of evidence described above are further classified as either/or direct and indirect evidence. It may help you to consider direct evidence as primary evidence and indirect evidence as secondary evidence.

Direct evidence

This is anything created by you, that is any work samples, which can be produced and authenticated.

Examples of direct evidence may include:

- Written documents - these are usually the easiest to access. They can be sample extracts from documents you have developed and written and can produce an authenticated copy (e.g., reports, business plan, budget document, discussion paper, issues paper, journal article, chart, proposal, marketing materials or brochures, training guides, projects, computer program, position description, policy or procedure, emails, memos, letters, and minutes of meetings that provide information about the processes you have followed?

- Certified copies of Certificates and Awards. Overseas certificates need to be officially translated and aligned by a recognised authority.
- Certified copies of Testamurs or statement of results from courses you have undertaken and/or successfully completed at a University, TAFE college or any other tertiary or private provider
- Certified copies of awards from professional bodies

Indirect evidence

This is anything reflecting the value of the work produced by you or other evidence about you or your role that confirms your ability to perform in the context of the competencies for which you are seeking recognition.

Examples of indirect evidence may include:

- a testimonial statement or statutory declaration from your supervisor or a senior company executive which identifies and acknowledges your knowledge, responsibilities, or abilities in relation to specific tasks or competencies
- a performance review report which identifies your strengths and achievements
- a published article about your achievements in the workplace
- a detailed job description for your current position or position(s) held previously
- a congratulatory letter from a customer or supplier which describes your abilities or good performance
- your annual subscription as evidence of active membership of a professional association
- reference/s from a recognised person within a professional body

Presentation of portfolio

Your Portfolio of Evidence should be presented professionally and include the following:

- RPL Kit which provides Candidate Instructions for completing the Kit and includes the following:
 - RPL Declaration – It is essential that you sign the declaration on this form which confirms the authenticity of the work submitted. The submitted work must be your own.
 - RPL Details – Provide your contact details and the details of the nationally recognised products you are seeking recognition for
 - RPL Evidence Matrix – documents the if the evidence provided is satisfactory or if more evidence is required for each competency standard relates each piece of evidence to the relevant learning outcomes
 - RPL Result – a document that relates each piece of evidence to the relevant learning outcomes

- A brief autobiographical narrative (or CV) – this should simply explain who you are, what you have done, the context of your learning experiences and any other factors that will support your case for recognition against the specific competencies.

Once you are satisfied that you have completed all the RPL Kit requirements, submit your portfolio for review by an Assessor.

Interview

After your RPL Kit and Portfolio of Evidence has been assessed, you may be required to attend a professional conversation with an Assessor to provide more evidence before a final judgement of competence is made.

You will be provided with feedback on the evidence already provided, discuss your work history and previous experience, and determine an action plan if further is required.

Within 14 days from the interview the Assessor will contact you with feedback on the result of your RPL application and whether any further information or training is required.

A Statement of Attainment is issued for all completed competencies.

All documentation prepared and completed during the RPL process is retained and securely maintained.

Definitions

Applicant	Person who would like to receive a statement of attainment for recognition of their current work experience and/or previous qualifications (RPL)
Assessment	When a person provides evidence to a qualified Assessor. The Assessor makes judgements on whether the evidence provided is sufficient to demonstrate that the person is currently competent in the required competency standards and outcomes specified in the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF). Required tasks are documented in the competency standards listed in the relevant industry training package
Assessment methods	Techniques used to gather different types of evidence. This is when a person is asked to answer questions, write reports, complete activities, perform tasks in the workplace that are observed by an Assessor, provide documentation detailing work tasks or projects that have been completed in the workplace and examples of work provided in a portfolio
Assessment process	<p>This process includes the following steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant is provided with relevant information to prepare for assessment • Training is provided when required • Relevant assessment methods are completed by the participant and provided to the Assessor • Assessor makes judgements on whether the participant is competent • Feedback is provided to person on whether they are successful in demonstrating their competence • Statement of attainment is processed and provided to the successful candidate
Assessor	Person qualified to undertake the assessment process with the participant for the relevant competencies being recognised with the RPL process
Candidate	Person who is enrolled to undertake training, assessment, or recognition of prior learning

Recognition	Recognition is a term that includes Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Recognition of Current Competency (RCC) and Skills Recognition. All terms refer to recognition of competencies currently held, regardless of how, when or where the learning occurred. Under the Australian
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Frequently asked Questions(FAQs)

1. “You can’t get a complete qualification through recognition – only a percentage of it”.

Yes, you can.

The key is to ensure there is sufficient quality evidence for the assessor to make an informed decision. If the candidate has all the required competencies and can prove this, the whole qualification can be awarded through a recognition process.

2. “You can only get recognition if you have documentary evidence – a portfolio of paperwork”.

No, Recognition is about recognising existing knowledge and skills. This may take the form of some documentary evidence but can also include other forms of evidence such as observation and questioning.

3. “Recognition is so difficult; you’d be better off doing the course”.

Good practice is about offering a choice of pathways to the candidate, none of which should be more difficult than the other, depending on the candidate’s experience. The recognition process should be rigorous, but the learning and assessment pathway should be just as rigorous.

4. “Recognition is a ‘high risk’ activity for RTOs”

Recognition carries no more risk than any other form of assessment or other services that the RTO may offer, provided it is carried out effectively.

5. “Qualifications achieved through recognition are not of a similar standing to those achieved through training.”

Under the National Skills Framework it does not matter how the qualification was obtained. It is still a nationally recognised qualification. If the recognition process is as rigorous as any other assessment process, there should be no more than the usual differences between qualified people.

6. “Recognition has to be a long and complicated process.”

No, it doesn’t; but it is a process, as is all learning and assessment. The process should suit the candidate’s needs and therefore be flexible. The length of the process may depend on the amount of recognition sought by the candidate and the type/s of evidence to be collected.

7. “Recognition is too expensive for RTOs”.

Recognition should be costed as any other service provided by the RTO and reasonable fees should apply. In some cases, Recognition is funded as part of government funded programs.