



# Recognition of Prior Learning and Achievement Policy and Procedure

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Acculearn Training Limited

T/A

Cranbrook College

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ACCULEARN

**Reviewed:** May 2022

# Recognition of Prior Learning and Achievement

## 1. Definitions

### **Exemption**

‘The facility for a learner to claim exemption from some of the achievement requirements of a QCF qualification, using evidence of certificated, non-QCF achievement deemed to be of equivalent value.’

### **Equivalent Unit/s**

‘A unit/units from a different qualification or submitted by another recognised organisation that is/are deemed to be of equivalent value and so can count towards a qualification in place of designated mandatory or optional units from it.’

### **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**

‘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 they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning.’

## 2. Audience

2.1. The intended audience for this document is:

- Acculearn staff responsible for Quality Assurance
- Assessors
- Internal Verifiers
- Quality Reviewers and External Verifiers
- Key stakeholders involved in qualification development
- Qualifications Regulators

2.2. This policy applies to:

Qualifications approved under the QCF

### 3. Policy

OCNLR seeks to enable learners to avoid duplication of learning and assessment for the purposes of awarding credit. There are three ways that this can be managed; exemption, equivalency and recognition of prior learning:

#### i. Exemption

Exemption is the recognition of certificated, non-QCF achievement; for example, certificated NOF achievement. Exemptions are not recognised by the award of credit and appear on certificates without a credit value.

#### ii. Equivalency

Equivalency is the transfer of credit from a unit, or units, from within QCF. To be counted as an equivalency a unit must have the same credit value (or greater) and be at the same level (or higher) than the unit, or units, to be claimed. Equivalencies are not recognised by the award of credit and appear on certificates without a credit value.

Acceptable exemptions and equivalencies will be included in the rules of combination of a qualification.

#### iii. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the recognition of non-certificated learning towards a full (*not partial*) unit or qualification. The RPL process must be negotiated with the centre and must be claimed as part of a course. The centre is responsible for assessment and claiming credit. There is no difference between achievement of the required standards by RPL and achievement through a formal programme of study, therefore RPL appears on certificates as credit-bearing.

There are three ways of recognising prior learning which may be open to the learner:

Route 1 - Submit a portfolio of evidence based on previous relevant knowledge, skills and competences which must be assessed against the

assessment criteria of the unit(s) for which RPL is being sought to ensure that all learning outcomes have been achieved.

Route 2 - Undertake the same assessments as learners following a formal course of learning and assessment that lead to award of the unit or qualification. The assessments may be undertaken without attending teaching sessions.

Route 3 - Assessment through a summative assessment against a unit or full qualification.

It is important to note that RPL is an alternative route to achievement and not an easy option or shortcut. Evidence must be produced for RPL which is subject to the same assessment and quality assurance requirements as applied to evidence produced as part of a course.

#### **4. Currency**

Prior learning and achievement must be current to be used by the learner, which will normally be within the last three years. For exemptions and equivalencies, this means three years start from the date of the original award to the point at which the learner registers with the centre on the course for which the claim will be made. Credit awarded as part of exemption, equivalency or RPL cannot be carried forward beyond three years from the original award.

#### **5. Restrictions On Recognition**

AccuLearn is a Teaching and Internal Assessment Organisation for some courses; not an Awarding Organisation. We aim to ensure that certificates are meaningful and valuable for learners and other stakeholders. To support this aim, the following guidelines are applied to the rules of combination for a qualification to restrict recognition of prior learning and achievement:

For exemption and equivalency:

A maximum of 70% of a qualification can normally be achieved through exemption or equivalency. At least 30% should be gained through new learning.

## **6. Procedure for RPL**

**6.1** The process of RPL involves learners from the moment they register on the course or consider making a claim and the Training Centre supports them through to the result of the assessment. Students are required to notify the Training Centre about claims for credit through RPL.

Stage 1: General awareness about claiming credit - information, advice and guidance.

Once individuals have made a decision to reflect on their learning they will need to know about:

- the process of claiming credit through RPL
- the sources of professional support and guidance available to individuals and employers
- the administrative processes for RPL applications
- timelines, appeals processes and any fees

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

An individual may decide to make his or her learning visible and to claim credit. This stage is vital to ensure that the learner is fully informed of the RPL process and has sufficient support to make a viable claim and to make decisions about evidence collection and presentation for assessment. During this stage the learner will carry out the evidence collection and develop an assessment plan. 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: Assessment/documentation of evidence

Assessment as part of RPL and within the QCF is a structured process for gathering and reviewing evidence and making judgements 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: Feedback

After the assessment the assessor will need to give feedback to the learner, discussing the results and giving support and guidance on the options available to the learner, which may include, for example, further learning and development.

#### Stage 5: Appeal

If learners wish to appeal against a decision made about their claim for credit they would need to follow the standard appeals processes that exist within the Awarding body.

### **7. Procedure For Exemptions and Equivalencies**

7.1 Exemptions and equivalencies are included in the rules of combination for a qualification, and the Training Centre registers learners against the appropriate exemption and/or equivalency unit(s). Claims for credit are made through the usual Recommendation for the Award of Credit process.

### **8. Policy Responsibility and Review**

8.1 The Training Centre will review the policy and procedure biennially and revise it as and when necessary in response to customer and stakeholder feedback, changes in practice, requirements of the Qualifications Regulators, Awarding body, external agencies or changes in legislation. The review



will ensure that procedures continue to be consistent with the regulatory criteria and are applied properly and fairly.

