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Recognition of Prior Learning Guidance



Recognition of Prior Learning Guidance

Purpose

This guidance applies to all Chartered Management Institute (CMI) Centres and Learners registered on a CMI qualification. This document aims to support and give clarification to Centres and their Learners on how CMI recognises Learners' previous achievements.

Introduction

This document applies to all qualifications on credit-based frameworks. These include the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW).

Regulatory Requirements

Regulations require CMI to publish guidance to Learners and CMI Centres on how CMI recognises Learners' previous achievements.

Scope

This procedure applies to all key stakeholders engaged with the CMI qualifications. This includes CMI Centres, Centre staff and CMI Learners.

Definition of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is an assessment process which makes use of the evidence from a Learner's previous non - certificated achievement(s) to demonstrate competence or achievement within a unit or qualification.

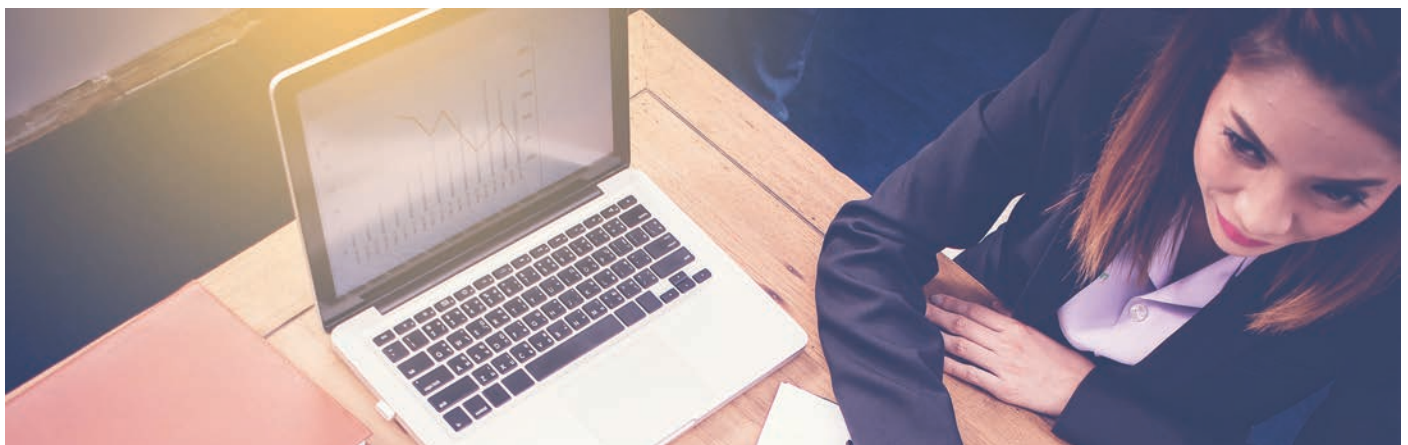
Through the RPL process, evidence of a Learner(s) previous achievement(s) (learning) is assessed against the assessment criteria of a unit.

The Regulatory Arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework gives the following definition of RPL and this definition is fully supported by the CQFW:

"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."

A similar definition is given by the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework which provides the following explanation:

"The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the process for recognising learning that has its source in experience and/or previous formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts. This includes knowledge and skills gained within school, college and university and outside formal learning situations such as through life and work experiences."



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When to use RPL

The RPL process is relevant where a learner has evidence of having previously learnt something but has never received formal recognition for it through a qualification or other form of certification.

Evidence can draw on any aspect of a Learner's prior experience including:

- Education and training;
- Work activities; and
- Community or voluntary activities.

Assessment of RPL Evidence

Evidence obtained through the RPL process must be assessed to the same rigorous quality as evidence obtained through any other process.

In no circumstance does the RPL process mean that any required qualification summative assessments can be avoided e.g. practical/theory tests or assignments. This is because the summative assessment is the process through which evidence (produced via any prior assessment method or through the RPL process) is evaluated.

RPL allows an individual to avoid unnecessary learning, meaning that they can present for summative assessment without repeating learning in areas where they will be able to show that they can meet the assessment criteria(s).

It remains the role of Assessors to ensure that assessment criteria are only deemed to have been met where evidence is:

Valid

Does the evidence genuinely demonstrate that the demands of the assessment criteria have been met? For RPL, currency of evidence will be of particular concern. Does, for example, the evidence meet up-to-date demands or is it representative of practice that has significantly changed? Evidence used for 3 CMI Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and Procedure RPL cannot date from more than 5 years before the date of application to the Centre for RPL and Assessors at the Centre must determine whether it is valid and authentic.

Authentic

This involves consideration of whether the evidence being assessed is genuinely the work of the Learner. For example, the evidence may have been produced by somebody else, or may be the result of the work of a team. In the latter case, this would be acceptable if the assessment criteria was related to team / joint working, but not if it was being used as evidence of an activity which should have been carried out individually.

Sufficient

There must be enough evidence to fully meet the requirements of the assessment criteria or learning outcomes being considered. If there is insufficient evidence to fully meet requirements, then evidence obtained through RPL must be complemented by additional evidence gained through other suitable assessment method(s) before requirements/outcomes can be said to have been met.

Reliable

The evidence obtained through RPL should be such that an Assessor would arrive at the same assessment decision, were the assessment to be repeated.



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Outcomes of RPL

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

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

If, however, evidence from RPL is only sufficient to cover one or more learning outcomes or assessment criteria, or to partly meet the need of a learning outcome or assessment criteria, then additional assessment methods should be employed to generate sufficient evidence on which to base a safe assessment decision.

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 professional discussion or observation to assess current performance.

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

RPL Process

Centres wishing to undertake RPL must ensure that:

- It is carried out by CMI approved Centre staff with relevant levels of expertise to meet CMI requirements; and
- The centre has approval from their Quality Manager for any change to approved assessment methodology.

The methods of assessment used will be determined by the assessment strategy for the qualification being assessed and might, for example, include:

- Examination of documents;
- Expert witness testimony;
- Reflective accounts; and
- Professional discussion.

The RPL assessment should be carried out as an entire process. This means that the Assessor should:

- Plan with the Learner;
- Make a formal assessment decision;
- Feedback assessment decisions to the Learner, confirming decisions and giving guidance on the available options (particularly in situations where the decision has been not to award credit);
- Maintain appropriate records; and
- Ensure that Learners are aware of their right to access the appeals process should they feel the assessment decision was unfair.

The Assessor must ensure that all learning outcomes and assessment criteria being claimed are covered and that records of assessment are maintained in the usual way. The process must be subject to the same quality assurance requirements as any other assessment method.



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Clarification of related terms

Terms in this section

A range of terms and processes are frequently confused with RPL. Explanations of those that have been found to occur most frequently are shown below:

- Exemptions;
- Equivalent Units;
- Credit Accumulation and Transfer & Credit Transfer;
- Qualification Legacy;
- Predecessor Qualification; and
- Shared Units.

CMI encourages the use of these processes where they are of value to Learners and/or Centres.



Recognition of Prior Learning

Before looking at the terms that Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) tends to be confused with, it may be helpful to recap on the RPL definition. RPL is a process that considers whether an individual can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, skills and/or competence that they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning. RPL is appropriate for use where an individual's learning has not been formally recognised.

Exemptions

The Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) describes an exemption as:

“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.”

This means that certificated qualifications that were obtained outside of the QCF can be used as evidence for part/or all of a unit/qualification.

The Assessor must make sure that the components of the certificated qualification are sufficient to cover the requirements of all the learning outcomes and assessment criteria, unit or units that it is being compared to. Exemptions allow the recognition of qualifications (i.e. formally recognised achievements) obtained outside of the QCF; however unlike RPL, they do not attract credits.

Exemptions do not attract credit, as the skills, knowledge and/or competences described in the unit will have already have been recognised.

Equivalent Units

Equivalent units are different QCF units which, when compared, are judged to be equal to, or greater than the content of another. An equivalent unit needs to be of the same credit value (or higher) and the same level (or higher). Equivalent units will look different but, in short, the content will be deemed to be identical to, or beyond and above, the content required.

If a Learner has achieved a QCF unit (either singly or as part of a wider qualification), and this unit is judged to be equal to, or greater than, the content of a unit in a qualification they want to achieve, the unit that they want to achieve can be claimed on the basis of having an equivalent unit.

Use of an equivalent unit will not attract additional credit, as the skills knowledge and/or competences described in the unit will have already have been recognised in the credit system.

Appeals

All individuals have the right to appeal the decision taken by BBE in regards to the RPL process. This process must be actioned in conjunction with the appeals procedure which can be found at:

<https://www.bbetraining.co.uk/contact-us/policies>.

