

Hartlepool Jobs and Skills Service



Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

The Service is totally committed to an inclusive approach in the provision of appropriate learning opportunities and, to this end, emphasizes its responsibility to recognise prior learning and/or achievement.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a method of assessment 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 do not need to develop through a course of learning. It is used sparingly and can be applicable to adult learners returning to education.

RPL provides a route for the recognition of the achievements resulting from continuous learning. RPL enables recognition of achievement from a range of activities using any valid assessment methodology. Provided that the assessment requirements of a given unit or qualification have been met (through evidence that the relevant unit learning outcomes have been met by a learners' prior learning), the use of RPL is acceptable for accrediting a unit, units or a whole qualification. Evidence of learning must be valid and reliable.

The process of assessment for RPL applies the same quality assurance and quality monitoring standards as is any other form of assessment offered by the Service.

2. WHEN TO USE RPL

The Service will make use of RPL where an individual making application for admission as a learner has prior learning which has not been formally recognised. The Service recognises that the use of RPL is acceptable for accrediting a single unit, a group of units or a whole qualification.

The knowledge, understanding and/or skills used for accreditation may have been acquired in any area of life e.g. former education or training experiences, domestic or family life, work-related activities, or community or voluntary activities. So long as the composite learning outcomes have been met through the provision of appropriate evidence, a learner or prospective learner is able to claim credit for units where RPL has been used to generate some, or all, of that evidence.

3. ASSESSMENT OF RPL EVIDENCE

Assessment methods for RPL must be as rigorous as those used for other methods of assessment in that they must be fit for purpose and relate to the evidence of learning provided. It is possible to claim credit for any unit through RPL unless the assessment methods proscribed for that unit do not allow this. It is the responsibility of Tutor/Assessor and Internal Verifier under the supervision of the Tutor Coordinator to ensure that the evidence presented and accepted is:

- Valid: The evidence provided by the learner or potential learner must be a clear demonstration of conformity with the demands of the learning outcome.
- Current: It is essential that the evidence should be current i.e. that it should meet up-to-date demands and not be demonstrative of a practice which has significantly changed. The exact form of the evidence required will vary from qualification to qualification and will depend on the extent of the experience and the nature of the outcomes claimed. If there is any doubt about the currency of any evidence supplied then Tutor/Assessors and/or Verifiers will be allowed to use questions to check for understanding and for competence.
- Sufficient: Evidence must be sufficient fully to meet the requirements of the learning outcome/s. If the evidence offered is deemed to be insufficient then that RPL evidence must be supplemented by evidence generated through other appropriate assessment methods before the learning outcome can be said to have been met.
- Authentic: The evidence provided must have been produced only by the individual who presents it. As with any other form of assessment, it is important that the learner understands the meaning and implication of plagiarism and that a declaration of authenticity is provided.
- Reliable: Evidence provided in support of any RPL claim should be such that the individual assessing it would make the same decision if the assessment was to be repeated.

4. PROCEDURE

If the request for RPL rests on previous study, then the procedure set out immediately below will then apply:

- The first part of the process will involve checking the prior award's learning outcomes and unit content against the corresponding elements from which the learner is seeking exemption. This will be done by an appropriate Internal Verifier alongside the relevant Tutor/Assessor.
- The second part involves checking that any materials offered by the learner have, in fact, been produced by themselves. It should be noted that it is the learner, not the Service, who bears the responsibility for assembling appropriate evidence. The responsibility of the Service is to check the evidence presented, not to seek evidence on behalf of the learner.
- Once a file of evidence has been submitted then the Tutor Coordinator or an IV will be asked to map the evidence from the prior award, unit by unit, against the required level of qualification to ensure that they are covered by the evidence presented. If the Tutor Coordinator or IV is satisfied that the academic requirements are met, then a report will be prepared for the Senior Management Team (SMT). The final decision will rest with this SMT and ultimately the Service Manager.

If the RPL rests on practical experience and skills, then the method set out below may be used:

- The methods of assessment chosen will depend on the assessment strategy for the qualification unit being assessed and may include: examination of documents, witness testimony, reflective accounts or portfolios and professional discussion.
- Assessment should be planned with the learner, be the subject of formal decision making, be the focus of feedback and advice, be recorded in the same way as any other type of assessment, be verified in the same way as for other forms of assessment, be considered via the Service Appeals Policy if this is required, be subject to the normal Service certification process and be subject to the same quality assurance requirements as other assessments.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff who involved in the RPL process through the Hartlepool Jobs & Skills Service including Tutor/Assessors and Internal Verifiers must:

- Offer a range of learning opportunities designed to meet the needs of individual learners and potential learners.
- Design opportunities for individuals to gain whole, or parts of, qualifications without necessarily undertaking a formal programme of study.
- Identify existing competences during guidance and induction and thus offer, where appropriate, customised support for a claim for credit via RPL and then provide support throughout the claims process.
- Provide individuals with appropriate advice as to the nature and range of evidence appropriate to the support of a claim for RPL.
- Ensure that, in any claim for RPL, the evidence meets the learning outcomes specified by the Awarding Body.
- Ensure that any process of RPL assessment is subject to the same quality assurance and verification standards as any other form of assessment carried out within the Service.
- Ensure that all guidance and assessment for RPL is overseen by staff with sufficient relevant levels of experience and expertise to ensure that all the requirements for assessment are met.

If there are any queries on RPL then this should be raised with the relevant Tutor Coordinator or the Lead Officer – Skills.