



BTEC Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

Principles

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 of work or several units of work, through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess and so therefore not need to develop through a course of learning.

RPL also enables recognition of achievement from a range of activities using any appropriate assessment methodology. Provided that the assessment requirements of a given unit or qualification have been met, the use of RPL is acceptable for accrediting a unit, units or a whole qualification. Evidence of learning must be valid, current and reliable.

Endon High School encourages the use of RPL where it is of value to our learners in facilitating assessment and in ensuring that valid work, experience and knowledge gained previously is valued and counted. 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.

Aims

To ensure that RPL is a valid method of enabling individuals to claim credit for units, irrespective of how and where their learning took place and that there should be no difference between the achievement of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of a unit through prior learning than through a formal programme of study.

To ensure that RPL policies, processes, procedures, practices and decisions will be transparent, rigorous, reliable, fair and accessible to all individuals so that everyone can be confident of the decisions and outcomes.

To ensure that RPL is a learner-centred, voluntary process whereby the individual will 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.

To ensure that the process of assessment for RPL is subject to the same quality assurance and monitoring standards as any other form of assessment and that the award of credit through RPL will not be distinguished from any other credits awarded.

To ensure that 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.

To ensure that 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.

Practice

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

Route 1 – Submit a portfolio of evidence based on previous relevant knowledge, skills and competences which will 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.

Endon High School advocates a six-stage procedure for RPL as set out below with the process of RPL involving learners from the moment they consider making a claim, supporting them through to the result of the assessment. The School will notify the accrediting body about claims for credit through RPL and will keep records of RPL for three years.

Stage 1: General awareness about claiming credit through quality information, advice and guidance. Programme leaders will include RPL procedures in their induction sessions.

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 and subsidies.

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 or units.

Stage 3: Assessment/documentation of evidence

Assessment as part of RPL 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: Awarding credit

The School will be responsible for awarding credit and issuing certificates after taking advice from the accrediting body. The procedure will be the same as for other forms of assessment.

Stage 5: 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 6: 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 (see appeals policy) within the centre.

Prior learning and achievement must be current to be used by the learner, which will normally be within the last three years, this means three years starting from the date of the original award to the point at which the learner registers on the course for which the claim will be made.

A maximum percentage claimed of a qualification through RPL will be decided by the programme leader and not in conflict with the accrediting board's guidance and criteria. Factors taken into account will be :-

If the award of credit leads to a licence to practice, health and safety requirements, regulated professions or work placements.

Additionally, RPL will not be used where units and qualifications are subject to external assessment.

Ratified by Governors: February 2018

To be reviewed every 3 years – next review February 2021