

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy

Introduction

1. Definition

FDQ defines Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as: a method of assessment, used to identify whether a learner can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements (by learning or attainment) for one or more Unit(s) of Assessment through skills, knowledge or understanding they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning.

FDQ publishes this RPL policy on its website; and ensures it is accessible to all users and potential users of FDQ assessment products.

RPL for qualifications

1. FDQ centres incorporate RPL into the design of their assessment strategies to facilitate the recognition of previous learning and/or experience. RPL is not mandatory however, FDQ approved centres must have a valid and current RPL policy.
2. RPL is an assessment process carried out to assess previous learning and experience. Evidence from past learner knowledge and experience may be included as valid evidence of attainment within (some) FDQ qualifications. RPL may also be used as a diagnostic tool to determine valid qualification choice and the most appropriate learning programme for learners. The process is therefore generally applied at time of learner induction.
3. The RPL assessment process is applied **prior** to a learner taking assessment for a FDQ unit or qualification.
4. RPL may be applied when the learner has gained relevant learning and/or experience but has not achieved a qualification. A wide variety of areas are acceptable as sources of RPL including:
 - Work skills and knowledge

- Education and training which may have resulted in an attendance or endorsed certificate
- On-the-job training and assessment as part of an employer's own training programme which may have internal training records
- Voluntary and community activities
- Home and domestic activities.

Evidence of RPL is acceptable from a variety of areas including:

- Learners' portfolios of work/projects/essays
- Expert witness testimony
- Professional discussion
- Employment evidence
- Learning programme certificates.

5. Once collated evidence of RPL is considered, assessment decisions must be recorded and communicated to learners. It is expected that the requirements for the assessment and collation of evidence as part of a RPL process meet the rigour established in FDQ requirements for other qualification assessment decisions. RPL assessment decisions must be carried out by suitably trained and/or experienced personnel. Documented RPL decisions must be available to centre internal quality assurance procedures and FDQ at any time including during FDQ external quality assurance activities.
6. The RPL process does not allow any specified qualification summative assessments to be avoided e.g. examinations, observations of learner performance practical/theory tests or assignments. The prescribed 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 preparation and learning, meaning that they can plan and present for summative assessment without repeating learning in areas where they will be able to show that they can meet assessment requirements e.g. learning outcomes.

7. RPL can be used to contribute towards a qualification or part qualification, unit or part unit, learning outcome or assessment criteria. Evidence collated as RPL must be assessed against the specified qualification learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Where evidence is valid, accurate, sufficient, consistent and reliable, attainment can be claimed solely on the basis of RPL achievement. However, where RPL evidence contributes to part achievement of a unit or qualification additional assessment evidence is needed. Specific qualification assessment strategies must be adhered to. All learners presenting evidence from past achievements must also be able to demonstrate currency of achievement. Where RPL evidence is being assessed against graded units only pass criteria can be awarded.

8. FDQ Appeals and Complaints procedure applies to all assessment decisions made as part of a RPL process.

RPL for End-point assessment products

9. It is FDQ policy to comply with the requirements of approved Standards and End-point Assessment Plans, some of which may not allow RPL evidence to be assessed for particular components of a given apprenticeship programme.

10. FDQ's EPA assessment strategies and guidance materials will clarify if and in which circumstances RPL can be claimed by apprentices.