Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

SCOPE
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) relates to learners providing evidence of prior learning that has not been formally acknowledged. This policy applies to all ILC Training qualifications with an awarding body or locally developed courses.

POLICY STATEMENT
This policy will ensure that it is clear on what does and does not constitute acceptable RPL.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
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
Valid	based on truth or reason; able to be accepted
Authentic	it is real, true, or what people say it is
Sufficient	enough for a particular purpose

Reliable	deserving trust; dependable
Assessor	someone whose job is to judge or decide the amount, value, quality, or importance of something, usually the Lead Trainer in the department

Policy Introduction

The Recognition of Prior Learning Policy establishes a process that assesses and validates an individual's prior learning, such as formal, informal and non-formal learning, to determine if the individual's knowledge, understanding or skills may then count towards a qualification.

ILC Training aims to create an environment for learners where they can apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and achieve further within their career, social life and more by building on previous achievements and qualifications to move forward.

Applying Recognition of Prior Learning

RPL can demonstrate competence or achievement within a unit or qualification. Through the RPL process, evidence of a learner's previous achievement (learning) is assessed against the assessment criteria of a unit.

Evidence used by learners must be current and valid and meet the assessment criteria of the qualification, and evidence must be reliable, whereby assessors consistently arrive at equivalent assessment decisions. Evidence obtained through RPL must therefore meet the same rigorous quality criteria that other assessment methods must meet.

Responsibilities

It remains the role of Assessors and quality assurance staff to ensure that 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 current practice requirements.

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 assessment criteria being considered. If there is insufficient evidence to fully meet requirements, then evidence obtained through RPL must be complemented by evidence gained through other suitable assessment method(s) before requirements 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, where the assessment to be repeated.

RPL Procedure
The assessor must ensure that:
It is carried out by designated staff with relevant levels of expertise to meet the requirements of the assessment strategy/guidance for the qualification concerned.

The methods of assessment used will be determined by the assessment strategy for the qualification being assessed but might, for example, include:
- Examination of documents
- Expert testimony
- Reflective accounts
- 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 decision and giving guidance on the available options
- Maintain appropriate records
- Ensure that learners are aware of their right to access the appeals process should they feel the assessment decision was unfair

- Ensure that all 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.

Examples of RPL evidence

Relevant documents, testimonies or reflections mapped across to the qualification's assessment criteria

Job descriptions or performance management feedback showing that the learner already has the suitable and current skills, knowledge and behaviours within the unit

Learners have evidence of recent prior study which meets assessment criteria of the current programme of study being undertaken in full

RPL must be included on the appropriate sampling plan as an assessment method as appropriate and subject to internal quality assurance (IQA).

Circumstances when prior learning will not be recognised
1. Learning that is similar to assessment criteria but which has been met at a level lower than the current programme of study being undertaken by the learner
2. Prior learning that is not current in meeting the qualification
3. Prior learning that has been referred by an Assessor
4. Prior learning that has not been assessed by an Assessor.

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 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 assessment criteria, or to partly meet the need of an assessment criteria, then additional assessment methods should be employed to generate the sufficient evidence required to make a safe assessment decision.

Knowledge, skills, behaviours and understanding must be current for RPL to be used and subject leads within assessors must decide if prior learning is up date for the relevant sector and subject areas. assessors may use questioning or other acceptable assessment strategies to check the depth and significance of prior learning. Assessment decisions based on RPL must be made by assessor staff with suitable occupational competence and subject expertise. Acknowledging evidence of previous learning is considered to be part of the internal assessment process and any decisions must be made clear to External Quality Assurers.

Exceptions
Exceptions are made only when an awarding body is involved in the RPL. In which case, the awarding body policy (if different from ILC Policy) takes precedence.

Related Policies and Other References
Credit Accumulation and Transfer Policy
Admissions and Induction Policy
Admissions Appeal Policy