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VLUK RECOGNITION OF PRIOR AND ADDITIONAL LEARNING POLICY 2022-2023

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide support, clarification and guidance on implementing the recognition of a learners' previous work related achievements and / or qualifications. The document explains VLUK's Assessment Policy on Recognition of prior learning (RPL).

This document applies to all qualifications on credit-based frameworks. These include the National Qualification Framework (NQF), the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), and the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW)¹.

2. TERMINOLOGY

RPL policies and procedures have been developed over time which has led to the use of a number of terms to describe the process. Among the most common are:

Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)

Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)

Accreditation of Prior Achievement (APA)

Accreditation of Prior Learning and Achievement (APLA).

These terms broadly describe the same process. VLUK uses the term Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

Note: RPL should not be confused with exemption, unit equivalency or credit accumulation and transfer.

3. RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING DEFINED

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a form of assessment which makes use of evidence of a learner's previous non - certificated achievements to demonstrate competence or achievement within a unit or qualification. Through the RPL process, evidence of a candidate's previous achievement (learning) is assessed against the learning outcomes of a unit.

The Regulatory Arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework gives the following definition of RPL

"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."

4. THE RPL PROCESS

Stage 1 - Awareness, information and guidance

Ahead of enrolling a potential learner, the possibility that they may be able to claim unit(s) for some of their previous learning and/or experience is raised with them.

Stage 2 - Pre-assessment, gathering evidence and giving information

At this stage the learner will carry out the process of collecting evidence against the requirements of the relevant unit(s). In some cases the development of an assessment plan and tracking document or similar may be required, to support the learner through the process. The evidence gathered will need to meet the standards of the unit, or part of a unit, that the evidence is being used for.

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 learners' prior learning and experience in relation to unit standards. The member of staff may be looking at work experience records; previous portfolios of evidence put together by the learner or essays and reports validated as being the learner's own unaided work.

Evidence can draw on any aspect of a learners prior experience including:

- domestic / family life
- education and training
- work activities
- community or voluntary activities

Assessment must be valid and reliable to ensure the integrity of the award of unit(s) and, as above, the evidence gathered needs to meet the standards of the unit, or part of unit, that the evidence is being used for.

If the collated evidence of RPL for a learner is judged by VLUK as not to be sufficient to meet all the requirements of the relevant unit(s), then the learner will have to complete the normal assessment for those unit(s) if they wish to be awarded the qualification.

The assessment process will be subject to the usual quality assurance procedures of VLUK, for example internal standardisation and internal verification. Evidence gathered through RPL should be clearly referenced and sign posted to aid internal assessment and internal and external verification.

Stage 4 - Claiming certification

RPL processes and evidence used by VLUK will be subject to the normal standards verification process. Pearson will check RPL via its external verification processes, and if VLUK identify that not all requirements for a unit have been met via the RPL evidence, then more evidence will be needed or the learner will have to undergo the normal assessment requirements.

Once the internal and external quality assurance procedures have been successfully completed, certification claims can be made by the VLUK. Assessment and internal verification records, along with any additional RPL records completed, should be retained for the standard three year period following certification.

The member of staff must ensure that all learning outcomes and assessment criteria being claimed for each unit are achieved and that the records of assessment are maintained in the usual way.

Stage 5 - Appeals

As with any assessment decision on procedural grounds; if a learner wishes to appeal against a decision made about their assessment they need to follow the standard VLUK policy and procedures.

5. OUTCOMES OF RPL

If learners can produce relevant evidence that meets learning outcome requirements then, recognition can be given for their existing knowledge, understanding or skills.

If a learner 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 learning outcomes, or to partly meet the need of a learning outcome, then additional assessment methods should be employed to generate the sufficient evidence required to make a safe assessment decision.

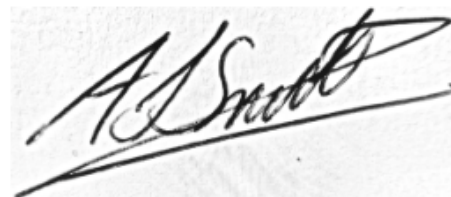
This is recognised as good practice by all the concerned regulators and Ofqual has recently issued a statement reinforcing this:

“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 examination of recent products, professional discussion or observation to assess current performance.”

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



CEO



Chair of Governors