

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy

RPL is a process that enables learners to receive formal recognition for skills and knowledge they already possess. RPL recognises that learning is continuous – at work, home and at leisure, as well as in the classroom and provides a route for the recognition of achievement where the evidence is not directly created by assessment tasks for the specified qualification.

RPL enables recognition of achievement from a range of evidence using any valid assessment methodology. The qualification specification will make clear what evidence, if any, from outside the assessment tasks specified in the qualification or programme can be accepted or included as evidence of achievement.

In some cases a qualification may be mapped to other, equivalent, qualifications. In such cases there will be a statement in the qualification specification setting out what elements or complete qualifications can be used as evidence of achievement.

The 5 Steps of RPL

Step 1: Application

- i. A learner wishing to have their prior learning recognised and claim achievement contacts Crossfields Learning to request an RPL Learner Registration Form
- ii. When the learner completes and returns the Registration Form Crossfields Learning will register the learner
- iii. Crossfields Learning sends the learner the qualification specification and ensures that they are in contact with the relevant tutor/assessor

Step 2: Assembling an RPL claim

RPL learner activity	RPL Tutor/Assessor activity
The learner will:	The tutor/assessor will:
Reflect on experience to identify achievement	Provide guidance to the learner
Establish an action and assessment plan	Agree an action plan and assessment strategy with the RPL learner
Agree timescale with tutor/assessor	Provide guidance of timescale
Identify gaps in achievement	Map achievement and identify gaps
Provide evidence of achievement in a portfolio. This may be paper-based, electronic, video recorded evidence etc.	Determine if evidence is of appropriate scope and level

Step 3: Assessing an RPL claim

RPL learner activity The learner will:	RPL Tutor/Assessor activity The tutor/assessor will:
Review action and assessment plan	Assess the evidence and check its validity
Provide new evidence if required	Provide the learner with regular feedback
Acknowledge additional learning	Arrange additional learning
Submit final portfolio	Arrange Internal Quality Assurance

Step 4: Validating an RPL claim

RPL learner activity The learner will:	Internal Quality Assurer activity The IQA will:
Receive feedback on the portfolio submitted	Ensure that the evidence is valid, sufficient, authentic, reliable and current
	Provide feedback on assessment process to assessor(s)
	Arrange external quality assurance (Crossfields Institute) of the RPL evidence

Step 5: External Quality Assurance carried out by Crossfields Institute EQA

Detailed Outline of the 5-Step Process

Step 1 – Application

All learners wishing to achieve Crossfields Institute qualifications or programmes must be registered for their qualification or programme with Crossfields Institute. Requests for registering RPL learners can be made at any time. The learner will be registered for the qualification or programme in the usual way. Crossfields Institute does not accept simultaneous application for a learner to be registered and to receive certification, thus commitment to the RPL process must be made early on.

Step 2 – Assembling an RPL claim

Reflecting on Experience

The starting point for any learner wishing to claim for RPL is to reflect on their experience in order to identify relevant achievement. They should think about knowledge and experience gained:

- At work
- In any relevant voluntary work and leisure activities
- In formal or informal education and training – for example, adult education courses or in-company training
- From independent study
- From home-based activities, such as care of the young, the elderly or the sick, or involvement in the family business

RPL learners will need to understand the relevant assessment requirements associated with the qualification specification. Then they will be able to work towards assembling evidence to meet the requirements.

Identifying Gaps in Achievement

The assessment requirements of the qualification or programme are listed clearly in the specification. Learners and assessors should use this to identify and keep track of what has been achieved and what is still required of the learner.

Providing evidence of achievement – the Portfolio

Learners will need to provide evidence that shows that they have covered the requirements of the specification. This will take the form of a portfolio, prepared by the learner, which sets out the specification assessment requirements claimed, together with any supporting evidence. The assessment criteria from the specification (which also serve as the evidence tracking sheet) must be at the front of each section of the portfolio of evidence. The portfolio MUST be page numbered and cross-referenced to the assessment criteria, in order to make for straightforward assessment and quality assurance of portfolios.

Professional discussions may be used to contribute towards portfolio evidence, if allowed by the specification, and must be documented and supported by audio/video recordings.

Separate evidence is not required for each assessment criterion. Where possible, learners should be encouraged to present evidence that demonstrates the achievement of a number of assessment criteria.

Staff Guidance and Support

RPL learners will require considerable tutor/assessor/mentor encouragement and guidance in compiling their RPL evidence. Guiding RPL learners is a staff-intensive activity.

Most learners will be unfamiliar with the process of putting together an RPL claim. It is important that learners receive adequate advice and guidance on how to proceed. This will involve:

- Encouraging reflection and self-evaluation
- Helping to identify possible sources of achievement
- Helping to identify possible evidence of achievement
- Advising on the structure and presentation of evidence
- Explaining assessment requirements

Step 3 – Assessing an RPL claim

The RPL assessor has the responsibility for ensuring that all the requirements of the qualification specification have been met before applying for certification. The assessor should assess the RPL evidence, using the assessment criteria in the specification. In considering the evidence, the assessor needs to ask if it is valid, authentic, current, reliable and sufficient (see below for definitions).

If the assessor is not satisfied with the evidence submitted, it will be necessary to seek additional evidence.

- In this case the learner might, where suitable:
- Undergo an oral assessment
- Complete an appropriate assignment
- Complete a written test
- Carry out a demonstration
- A combination of the above

Steps 4 and 5 – Internally Quality Assuring an RPL Claim and External Quality Assurance carried out by Crossfields Institute

The Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) will sample RPL evidence in the same way that they sample other assessment evidence and assessment practice. It is important that RPL is not missed as part of the IQA sample when it occurs.

The External Quality Assurer (EQA) appointed by Crossfields Institute will expect to sample any RPL evidence and process as part of their quality review.

The evidence the learner provides is assessed against the following key criteria:

Validity: Does the evidence match the competences covered by the qualification or programme? Are the skills, knowledge and expertise being demonstrated by the learner at the appropriate level?

Sufficiency: Is the amount of evidence sufficient? Does it cover all the aspects being required by the specification?

Authenticity: This refers to the ownership of the evidence. Assessors need to be confident that the work submitted really is the result of the learner's own knowledge, expertise, skills and practice.

Reliability: does the evidence accurately reflect a level of knowledge, understanding or performance which is consistently demonstrated?

Currency: This refers to the age of the evidence. Assessors must be sure that the evidence submitted by learner is recent enough to be considered a measure of current levels of competence.

The learner will either be recommended for certification OR the portfolio with feedback will be returned to the RPL learner with a request for further evidence.

This policy will be reviewed every 12 months by Crossfields Learning's Director and/or Head of Centre.