



Midhurst Learning

# POLICIES

## Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and Procedure



RECOGNISE  
ACHIEVEMENT



VALUE  
EXPERIENCE



SUPPORT  
PROGRESSION



PROMOTE  
EQUALITY

RECOGNISING EXPERIENCE. VALIDATING POTENTIAL. INSPIRING FUTURES.

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### QUALITY

We strive for excellence in all that we do.



### INTEGRITY

We act with honesty, fairness and transparency.



### EMPOWERMENT

We empower individuals to reach their full potential.

## **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy**

### **Policy Statement**

The purpose of this policy is to provide clarification and guidance on implementing Midhurst Learning Campus' (MLC) policy regarding the recognition of a learner's previous achievements and /or qualifications. This policy is of relevance to those responsible for supporting learners in their choice of qualification and for those responsible for planning, advising, carrying out and quality assuring assessments. The information will also have relevance for those involved in teaching, learning and assessment.

It must be recognised that not all learners have access to formal learning. The main principles behind RPL are that an individual's prior achievements can be recognised and that a learner is not disadvantaged by unnecessarily having to repeat a course of learning.

This document applies to all qualifications on credit-based frameworks including the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).

### **Definition of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is an assessment process which makes use of evidence of a learner's previous non-certificated achievements to demonstrate competence or achievement within a unit or qualification.

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.

The use of RPL has been developed over time, which has led to the use of several 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; MLC uses the term Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

RPL 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 who qualification. Evidence of learning must be VARS:

- Valid – the work is relevant to the assessment criteria and shows the demands of the learning outcome have been met
- Authentic or Attributable – the work has been produced solely by the learner
- Reliable – an assessor would arrive at the same assessment decision relating to the evidence presented, were the assessment to be repeated
- Sufficient – there is enough evidence to fully meet to the learning outcome, if not then additional evidence must be gained through other suitable methods

RPL focuses on assessment and awarding of credit for prior learning which may count as evidence towards:

- A unit towards a full qualification
- Functional skills qualifications where elements of the qualification but not the full qualification have been achieved prior.

### When to Use RPL

The RPL process is relevant where an individual has evidence of having previously learned something but has never received formal recognition for it through a qualification of some other form of certification.

Evidence can draw on any aspect of a candidate's prior experience including:

- Work activities
- Education and training
- Community activities
- Voluntary activities
- Domestic/family life

### Outcomes of RPL

Where RPL is permitted for a qualification, MLC must undertake a RPL exercise to identify and evaluate whether the learner's previous evidence provided satisfies current assessment criteria and a decision made whether the evidence provided partly or fully maps against the unit being claimed.

If an individual can produce relevant evidence that meets learning outcome requirements, then recognition can be given for their existing knowledge, understanding or skills. MLC and the assessor must be satisfied that the evidence produced by the learners is VARS (as described above) and meets the assessment standard established by the learning outcomes and its related assessment criteria.

The prior achievement that would provide evidence of current knowledge, understanding and skills will vary from sector to sector. It will depend on the extent of the experience, technological

changes and the nature of the outcome claimed. If any of the evidence is in doubt, MLC and/or the assessor may use questions to check understanding, knowledge and/or competence.

If an individual can demonstrate that they meet all the learning outcomes and assessment criteria in a unit, they can claim credit for that unit solely on the basis of the RPL achievement. However, if 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 sufficient evidence on which to base a safe assessment decision.

In no circumstance does the RPL process mean that any required qualification summative assessments can be avoided e.g. mandatory exams, practical/theory tests or assignments. RPL allows an individual to avoid unnecessary learning, meaning that they can present for summative assessment without repeating learning in areas where they will be able to show that they can meet the learning outcomes.

## Process

When using RPL, the following must be ensured:

- RPL processes, procedures, practices and decisions should be transparent, rigorous, reliable, fair and accessible.
- Achievement must be identified prior to taking a qualification.
- Learners are registered as soon as they formally start to gather evidence and/or submit work.
- All relevant evidence is assessed before assessment decisions are confirmed.
- All evidence of RPL is retained for the purpose of Quality Assurance by MLC.
- A member of the senior management team at MLC and assessors must have the appropriate expertise to support the RPL process.
- The RPL process is not concerned with allowing for exceptional entry to, or exemption from, a programme of study.
- The process of assessment for RPL is subject to the same quality assurance and monitoring standards as any other form of assessment.

The RPL assessment should be carried out as an entire process. This means that MLC staff/assessor should:

- Plan with the learner.
- Make a formal assessment decision.
- Feedback assessment decisions to the learner, confirming the decision and giving guidance on the available options particularly in situations where the decision has been not to award credit.
- Maintain appropriate records.

- Ensure the learners are aware of their right to access the appeals process should they feel the assessment decision was unfair.

### **Examples of RPL Evidence**

RPL evidence may not, in some cases, cover all requirements of a unit and further methods of assessment may be necessary such as professional discussion or observation. MLC/assessors must ensure that any evidence presented is valid and authentic. Examples include:

- Documentation e.g. work products/artefacts, project plans, reports
- Audio Visual evidence e.g. photographs, videos/recordings
- Expert Witness testimonies
- Reflective accounts
- Professional discussion

### **Appeals**

The MLC appeals procedure applies to any assessment decision including RPL evidence.

### **Review Arrangements**

MLC will review the policy annually as part of our self-evaluation arrangements; amendments and review may be in response to feedback or good practice guidance issued by Regulators.