



Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Questions Frequently Asked by the Assessor

1. What is Recognition of Prior Learning?

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a way that people can get their existing skills and knowledge formally recognised, without having to attend training or do further study.

Any formal qualifications that a person holds should be taken account when they apply for recognition.

2. What is the difference between RPL, Recognition of Current Competency (RCC), Credit Transfer and National Recognition?

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)

RPL involves the assessment of previously unrecognised skills and knowledge an individual has achieved outside formal education and training. RPL is an assessment process that assesses the individual's non formal and informal learning to determine the extent to which that individual has achieved the required learning outcomes or competency.

(AVETMISS definition, January 2007)

RECOGNITION OF CURRENT COMPETENCY (RCC)

RCC applies if a client has previously successfully completed the requirements for a unit of competency or module and is now required to be reassessed to ensure that the competence is being maintained. In this case no extra skill or competencies are nationally recognised.

(AVETMISS definition, January 2007)

The costs for candidates undertaking RCC should be calculated on a commercial basis.

CREDIT TRANSFER

Credit Transfer applies when a person has completed formal training in units/modules and wishes to have this recognised as being equivalent to other units/modules. If there is a demonstrated documented equivalence the Credit Transfer process will provide the recognition.

NATIONAL RECOGNITION

RTOs must recognise the AQF qualifications and statements of attainment issued by all other RTOs, thereby enabling national recognition of the qualifications and statements of attainment issued to any person (AQTF 2007). Previously this was known as "Mutual Recognition".

3. What is the difference between informal, non formal and formal learning?

FORMAL LEARNING

Formal Learning refers to learning that takes place through a structured program that has been formally approved and recognised and results in the attainment of formal qualifications or credit for units/subjects.

NON-FORMAL LEARNING

Non-formal learning refers to learning that has been acquired through courses, workshops or other training programs that did not lead to a formal qualification or partial qualification. For example, courses or workshops undertaken in the workplace or by a professional body.

INFORMAL LEARNING

Informal learning refers to any skills or knowledge developed without receiving any actual training. For example through work experience, hobbies, or other social and leisure activities.

4. Does RPL have the same requirements as other assessment?

Yes! The assessment process must be as rigorous (but no more or no less rigorous) as any other assessment. The type of evidence you require of a candidate may vary from that required of a student in class, but basically RPL is an assessment like any other assessment

5. What codes should be used for RPL?

TAFE Colleges use the following codes:

Enrolment code	Delivery code	Result code
FE or RR	R	PR (RPL granted) or UR (RPL not granted)

Private RTOs use the following codes:

Enrolment code	Delivery code	Result code
(Private RTOs implement their own systems)	90	6 (RPL granted) or 7 (RPL not granted)

6. What does RPL cost a candidate?

The fees payable by RPL candidates are defined in the annual *VET Fees and Charges Policy*.

Australian citizens residing in Western Australia and those on certain types of visas are eligible for government subsidised training and assessment (including RPL). The Department of Immigration and Citizenship (T: 131 881) can provide advice on whether a candidate's visa type entitles them to government subsidised training and assessment.

Candidates enrolling for RPL that is government subsidised will pay fees for each unit of competency they enrol in. The cost per unit varies depending on the length of the unit and whether the candidate is eligible for concessional rates. For 2009, the cost per unit ranges from \$7 to \$124. In any one semester the maximum fees a candidate will pay are \$570 (non concessional rate) or \$285 (concessional rate).

If a student is not eligible for government subsidised RPL or if the qualification the student is interested in is not government subsidised, the fees should be calculated on a commercial basis.

Note: RPL course fee exemptions and concessions were announced in the May 2009 State budget and apply as of 1 July 2009. A Fact Sheet about this initiative has been sent to all RTOs.

7. When a student comes back to redo First Aid, should the fees charged be on a commercial basis?

Once the initial training has occurred and a student is deemed competent, it is then the student's responsibility to maintain their skills and knowledge. Hence if a student needs to demonstrate their First Aid skills are being maintained and in order to do this enrolls in a first aid course via a unit of competency or a module, the fees charged should be calculated on a commercial basis.

8. Are there any situations where a student enrolled for RPL that is government subsidised can be charged resource fees?

No, the VET Fees and Charges in 2009 Policy (6.1.3) states

*"The resource fee covers materials purchased by the RTO to be consumed or transformed by students in the course of **instruction**."*

As RPL does not involve instruction, resources fees should not be charged.

9. If a student enrolls for RPL and is not successful, will they have to pay again?

Yes, the student will need to enrol in class and pay for the enrolment.

Students need to receive sound advice from assessors/RTOs to minimise the chances of their RPL application being unsuccessful.

10. Is there public funding available for Recognition of Prior Learning?

For TAFE Colleges public funding forms part of existing profile delivery funding. Colleges should contact their Planning Officer for further information.

For private RTOs currently contracted by the Department of Education and Training to deliver Training Services, costs associated with conducting RPL form part of the Contract.

11. If a person wants RPL for a publicly funded qualification that has pre-requisite units of competency, is RPL for the pre-requisite units funded?

If the qualification has mandated pre-requisite units of competency, RPL for these units will be funded. The pre-requisite units will form part of the qualification requirements.

12. I have a trainee who can complete more than 50% of her course via RPL. Does this mean she is not eligible for the traineeship?

The traineeship pathway is best suited to those for whom significant training will be required to achieve the skills and knowledge. If this is not the case, the traineeship may not be the best option and the candidate/employee should be guided towards undertaking RPL and any gap training via the institutional pathway.

13. A student has enrolled in class and after 1 week decided that he already has the required skills and knowledge. If I assess his skills upfront, is this regarded as RPL?

Yes, this would be regarded as RPL if the training that has occurred is not significant. Once you have assessed the student, for those students who are successful, you need to make sure that the enrolment and delivery code are changed and that a correct reporting code that reflects an RPL assessment is used.

If the RPL is not successful the student should remain in class and complete training and assessment. The student would then be re-assessed at the conclusion of the training.

Each assessor will need to make the decision as to whether the situation should be deemed RPL or not. Generally if the training that has occurred is not significant, RPL is justified.

14. I am involved in assessing in the workplace. Some workplaces have a qualified trainer/assessor who does all the training and in some workplaces the supervisor does the training. As my RTO only does the assessing, is this considered to be RPL?

In these situations, if a student has enrolled prior to the training occurring, even though your RTO does not do the training it is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the training is completed to an appropriate standard. As the learning has not occurred prior to the student enrolling this would **not** be considered as RPL.

15. What does my RTO have to do so that it can offer RPL for Class A and Class B qualifications?

RTOs must have the AQF qualification listed on their scope of registration to offer RPL for Class A and Class B qualifications.

RTOs who are actively involved in the training and assessment of apprentices and have established links with industry are best placed to conduct RPL for Class A and B qualifications.

16. How will TAC audit the RPL process?

The Training Accreditation Council will audit RPL through the normal AQTF audit process.

17. I have a student who commenced their Class A qualification via RPL and then gained an apprenticeship to complete the qualification. When the student receives the certificate for the qualification will it indicate that the qualification was achieved through apprenticeship arrangements?

Yes, as the student was an apprentice at the time the qualification was completed, the certificate will indicate that the qualification was achieved through an apprenticeship arrangement.

18. I have a student that commenced a Class A qualification as an apprentice but the Contract of Training was terminated before completion. The student has come back to complete the qualification via the RPL pathway. Will the certificate for the qualification indicate that part of the qualification was completed through an apprenticeship arrangement-?

As the student will not be an apprentice at the time that the qualification is completed, the certificate will be silent on the pathway/s through which the qualification was achieved.

Note: There will be exceptions to this general rule. If an RPL applicant is on the Apprenticentre Out of Contract Register (they will be on this register for a maximum of 6 months after their apprenticeship is cancelled), the certificate can be issued to show that the qualification was achieved through an apprenticeship arrangement. For further information contact the Apprenticentre on 13 19 54.

19. Is there anything I need to know about offering RPL for qualifications with a licensed or regulated outcomes?

In areas where a qualification is linked to a licensed or regulated outcome, RTOs must meet that licensing/regulatory authority's requirements to ensure that the Recognition of Prior Learning process is appropriate.

RTOs should also ensure that they have considered any other legislative requirements related to the qualification in accordance with the requirements of the training package.

20. Are there any assessment tools to help me provide the RPL service?

The VETinfoNet website www.vetinfo.net.det.wa.edu.au has information on assessment tools that are available or under development. There is a link to the WestOne site where you can access free assessment resources.

21. How will people know my RTO offers RPL?

RTOs will be able to advertise RPL services to the public. In addition, RPL will also be actively promoted through relevant industry associations.

22. What role does the Career Development Centre have in the RPL process?

The Career Development Centre (CDC), located at City Central Building, Level 2, 166 Murray St, Perth acts as a point of contact for those wishing to access RPL. For those people interested in whole of qualification RPL, the CDC conducts an interview using Readiness Questions to determine if the person is a likely candidate for whole of qualification RPL.

If applicants seem likely to be able to attain the qualification through the RPL process, they are advised of RTOs that have the qualification on scope and hence can offer RPL, and are able to select one. The CDC will contact the RTO to set up an appointment. Applicants not likely to be successful are given career and training advice.

The CDC can be contacted on T: 1800 999 167.

23. I have an enquiry from a person who is in Australia on a 457 Visa. Can they enrol in RPL?

If the person is the primary holder of a 457 Visa, they are **not** eligible for publicly funded RPL or training. If the person wishes to enrol in RPL or training, the cost must be calculated on a fee for service commercial basis.

If the person is a secondary holder (eg spouse, partner dependant) of a 457 Visa they are eligible for government subsidised training and RPL.

The *VET Fees and Charges Policy* provides further information on the fees and charges applicable to temporary residents and international students.

24. What is TRA? Who can it help to have their skills recognised?

Trade Recognition Australia (TRA) is an assessment authority for a range of trades and associate professional occupations. TRA provides occupational skills assessment services for people intending to migrate to Australia and domestic skills assessments for Australian residents. Occupations assessed by TRA are listed on the Skilled Occupations List (SOL).

Those intending to migrate to Australia under a general skilled migration category must have had their skills assessed by the relevant Australian assessing authority before lodging an application with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC).

TRA issues Australian Recognised Trade Certificates (ARTCs) in metal and electrical trades to eligible Australian residents who have developed skills by means other than through an Australian apprenticeship. Occupations that are assessed by TRA are listed in the Trades Assessed List .

Further information can be obtained from the website www.deewr.gov.au/Skills/Programs/TRA

Since 1 September 2007, VETASSESS has led a group that assesses, in a limited number of trades, the skills of people intending to migrate to Australia from the United Kingdom, India, Sri Lanka, South Africa and the Philippines. If the VETASSESS assessment is successful, the person will be issued with an Australian qualification (for non-licensed trades) or an Offshore Technical Record (for licensed trades).

The VETASSESS process involves a self assessment, a paper based assessment and a practical assessment. Further information can be obtained from the VETASSESS website www.vetassess.com.au