

Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

SMART AWARD
BEECHWOOD HOUSE, TANNERS LANE, BERKSWELL, COVENTRY CV7

Recognition of Prior Learning Policy



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1. Scope

Smart Awards recognises that learners may begin a programme of learning with some previous experience.

This policy is designed to provide guidance to centres, instructors, assessors, EQAs, IQAs and learners regarding recognition of prior learning (RPL) so that learners can achieve without duplicating any previous learning or assessment they have undertaken.

2. Responsibilities

This RPL policy applies to all centres, instructors, assessors, EQAs, IQAs and learners.

Smart Awards staff and or its representatives are responsible for maintenance, review and improvement of this policy.

3. Principles

Smart Awards has identified the following principles which underpin all assessments:

- **Validity** ensures assessment measures what it claims to measure, the evidence match the competences, the skills, knowledge and expertise that are being demonstrated by the learner at the appropriate level
- **Reliability** refers to the accuracy with which an assessment is measured. A reliable assessment consistently gives the same results under similar conditions ensuring different assessors place a similar value on the evidence provided and make similar judgments when confronted with the same evidence
- A **fair** assessment, in addition to being valid and reliable, provides equity of opportunity for learners in line with equality legislation
- **Quality** is a key principle in ensuring the credibility and status of Smart Awards accreditation
- **Sufficiency** is the amount of evidence to cover all the aspects of the required criteria
- **Authenticity** refers to the ownership of the evidence. Assessors need to be confident that the work submitted really is the result of the learners' own effort and expertise
- **Currency** refers to the date of the evidence. Assessors must be sure that the evidence submitted by the learner is recent enough to be considered a measure of the current levels of competence.

4. What is recognition of prior learning (RPL)?

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a method of assessment that considers whether learners can demonstrate that they can meet assessment requirements through the knowledge, understanding or skills that they already possess.

Using RPL for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning involves a review of past experiences. It also includes learning gained through training in the workplace, the community and in the voluntary sector.

RPL does not cover previously certificated learning which is recognised as part of credit accumulation and transfer.

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RPL can be used where learners can demonstrate that through their experience, they have already gained the relevant knowledge and skills required.

People can gain a range of knowledge and skills through reflecting on their experience in order to identify relevant achievement. They should think about experience gained at work in any relevant voluntary work and leisure activities formal or informal education and training for example, adult education courses or in-company training from independent study.

Where evidence presented in support of a claim of RPL is strongly convincing, it may be deemed sufficient for the purpose of certification. If the evidence is less convincing, but nevertheless substantial, 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

5. Using RPL

Centres may use RPL as appropriate and must have processes regarding RPL that are transparent, rigorous, reliable, fair and accessible to learners. Centres should offer advice and guidance to learners on the type of evidence considered appropriate to support a claim for RPL.

Centres must have personnel with appropriate expertise and knowledge to facilitate RPL. All relevant evidence must be assessed against the assessment criteria before decisions are confirmed. In assessing using RPL the assessor must be satisfied that the evidence produced by the learners meets the required standard. Centres must keep appropriate records of assessment and evidence.