

# RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY

SMART AWARDS
Awarding Platform for Smart Qualifications

| Version Number | Date | Purpose of Change | Classification | Sign Off |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| V4.1 | 14/11/2025 | New formatting | Public | Kerry Ore |
| V4.2 | 05/11/2026 | Updates to section 9 | Public | Marc Henson |
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# 1. SCOPE

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

1.2. 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

4.1. This is policy is for qualifications offered by Smart Awards. This policy is for centres and learners accessing Smart Awards qualifications and related services and all those involved with the development, delivery and quality assurance of Smart Awards qualifications. Smart Awards has overall responsibility for ensuring this policy complies with our legal and ethical obligations, and that all those under our control comply with it. Smart Awards has the day-to-day responsibility for implementing this policy and for monitoring its use and effectiveness and dealing with any queries on its interpretation.

# 3. PRINCIPLES

3.1. 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)?

4.1. 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.

4.2. 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.

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

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

4.5. 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.

4.6. 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

5.1. 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.

5.2. 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.

# 6. REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

6.1. This policy is reviewed and revised annually in response to feedback, changes in legislation and guidance from the regulators, SQA Accreditation or Ofqual.

# 7. OFQUAL GENERAL CONDITIONS

7.1.D5.1: An awarding organisation must ensure that any qualification which it makes available, or proposes to make available, complies with any requirement relating to that qualification which is set out in a Regulatory Document.

7.2.D5.2: An awarding organisation must ensure that in the development, delivery and award of any qualification which it makes available, or proposes to make available, it has regard to any guidelines and principles of good practice relating to that qualification which are set out in a Regulatory Document.

# 8. QUALIFICATIONS SCOTLAND ACCREDITATION PRINCIPLES

8.1. Principle 12. The awarding body and its providers must ensure that they have the necessary arrangements and resources required to manage and administer qualification delivery and assessment.

8.2. Principle 14. The awarding body and its providers must ensure that its qualifications and their delivery and assessment are fair, inclusive and accessible to learners.

# 9. PROCESS FOR RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

| Process Step Description | Process | Person Responsibility | Organisation Responsibility |
|---|---|---|---|
| Notification issued to Smart Awards via Quartz Web | Process | Centre Manager | Centre |
| Review of evidence | Process | Assessor | Centre |
| Outcome of RPL | Decision | Assessor holds responsibility and experience to make decisions on RPL against Smart Awards criteria | Centre |
| Recognition of Prior Learner added to Quartz Web | Process | Centre Manager/Assessor | Centre |
| Stop | End | | Smart Awards |