| **Procedure 4.3 Recognition of prior learning** | | | | | |
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## 1  Aim

The purpose of this policy is to enable recognition of achievement from a range of activities using any appropriate assessment methodology. Providing 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 whole qualification where the evidence is valid and reliable.

This procedure applies to all Pearson/BTEC qualifications, including those on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) and other national frameworks in Wales and Scotland and self-regulated qualifications. However, where learning is evidenced only through a national examination, the learner is required to sit this examination.

## 2  Operational description

RPL is a valid method of enabling individuals to claim credit for units, irrespective of how their learning took place. There is no difference between the achievement of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of a unit through prior learning or through a formal programme of study. The Academy will focus upon assessment and awarding of credit for prior learning which may count as evidence towards a unit accumulated towards a full BTEC qualification, a unit or units recognised by a Pearson Certificate of Achievement or a full BTEC qualification.

Students will be registered as soon as they formally start to gather evidence. Records of assessment will be maintained, as for any other unit/qualification and certification and claims made according to normal procedures. All relevant evidence will be assessed before assessment decisions are confirmed.

## 3  Responsibilities

The Academic Head is responsible for the quality assurance of the RPL process and, together with the Internal Verifier, will provide support for RPL claimants and maintain appropriate records

## 4  Process

RPL is a learner-centred, voluntary process. Individual student claimants will be offered advice on the nature and range of evidence considered appropriate, to support a claim for credit through RPL, and will be given guidance and support to make a claim.

The process of assessment for RPL is subject to the same quality assurance and monitoring standards as any other form of assessment. The award of credit through RPL will not be distinguished from any other credits awarded.

Assessment methods for RPL are of equal rigour to other assessment methods; they must be fit for purpose and relate to the evidence of learning. Credit may be claimed for any unit through RPL unless the assessment requirements of the unit do not allow this, based on a rationale consistent with the aims and regulations of the framework.

RPL is also of value to students transferring across various learning programmes who have relevant learning but do not hold relevant credits or certificates.

The use and application of RPL is of particular value to students without formal qualifications, who are either in employment, preparing to enter, or returning to employment. It enables them to gain all or part of a qualification without having to undertake a formal learning programme.

Where units are assessed against assessment criteria or grading criteria, then all evidence is evaluated using the stipulated criteria. In assessing a unit using RPL the assessor must be satisfied that the evidence produced by the student meets the assessment standard established by the learning outcome and its related assessment criteria.
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Most often RPL will be used for units. It is acceptable to claim for an entire qualification through RPL although this is not the norm. However, it would be unusual for a student to be able to offer prior achievement that completely matches every aspect of a qualification's assessment requirements.

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 the currency of any evidence is in doubt, the assessor will use questions to check understanding, and for competence. Note also that the assessment strategy for each qualification will be adhered to.

The RPL process is not concerned with allowing for exceptional entry to, or exemption from, a programme of study. RPL does allow the recognition of any unit assessed by external assessment, because such units are subject to specific evidence requirements.

RPL is subject to Standards Verification as part of the annual Pearson Quality Assurance mechanism.

## 5  Terminology

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the term commonly used throughout Europe and is also the definition used in Chapter B6 *Assessment of students* of the UK Quality Code. Other terms which have been used in the past include:

APL    Accreditation of Prior Learning

APEL  Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning

APA    Accreditation of Prior Achievement

APLA  Accreditation of Prior Learning and Achievement.