SFEDI®AWARDS
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy
V2.0

Introduction

This is version two of the RPL Policy and replaces all previous versions. This document is subject to regular revision and maintained electronically by its owner. Electronic copies are version controlled. Printed copies are not subject to this control.

Change history to (V1.0)

Section	Change
All	Structural and formatting changes
Definition	Updated
Centre Responsibilities	Updated
Regulatory reference	Updated to reflect latest General Conditions of Recognition criteria

Scope

SFEDI encourages the use of (RPL) where it is of value to centres and learners. This document applies to all regulated SFEDI qualifications. Although this information is for all stakeholders, it is of particular relevance to those responsible for supporting learners in their choice of qualification and to those responsible for planning, carrying out and quality assuring assessment. The information will also have relevance for those involved in teaching and learning.

Definition

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is defined by Ofqual as the:

"1. Identification by an awarding organisation of any learning undertaken, and/or attainment, by a Learner –

(i) prior to that Learner taking a qualification which the awarding organisation makes available or proposes to make available, and

(ii) which is relevant to the knowledge, skills and understanding which will be assessed as part of that qualification, and

2. Recognition by an awarding organisation of that learning and/or attainment through amendment to the requirements which a Learner must have satisfied before the Learner will be assessed or that qualification will be awarded".

This essentially means that if a learner is able to meet all of the assessment requirements of a unit, RPL allows them to receive recognition for their learning, regardless of the method it was accessed. This can reduce duplication of learning activities but needs the centre to assess and verify the learner's claim.

It should be noted that the learner is still required to demonstrate that they meet, or have met, the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of all the unit or qualification.

Examples

RPL is a general term and is a process of recognising previous learning, experience or achievement that may satisfy the requirements of a unit yet to be assessed or awarded. Prior experience or achievements may have resulted from past or present employment, previous study, or voluntary activities.

Centre Responsibilities

The use of recognition of prior learning is optional. However, if centres choose to apply it, they are required to have an internal policy on RPL and the appropriate resources to carry it out. The centre is responsible for RPL assessment and claiming credit. There is no difference between achievement of the required standards by RPL and achievement through a formal programme of study. All relevant staff at a centre must be familiar with the content of their own RPL policy and the SFEDI policy.

Whilst evidence used for RPL is not time-limited, centres must determine whether it is valid and authentic. RPL must be current to be used by the learner and as a general guide this will normally be within the last 12 months from the point at which the evidence has been generated. This is to ensure that the learner demonstrates current knowledge and skills required for the qualification.

Where appropriate, RPL can be used to claim credit for a learner's achievements. This process can give them either a part or full (less common) qualification, irrespective of how their skills and knowledge were acquired.

Content, as well as assessment, can be used as RPL. This recognises that learning occurs in many different contexts as well as via formal learning or training or within the workplace. Assessment of the learning must be valid and reliable to ensure the integrity of the award of unit(s). The evidence gathered needs to fully meet the requirements of the unit, or part of a unit for which claims are being made.

The centre must confirm that any RPL meets the following assessment requirements:

- Validity
- Authenticity
- Reliability
- Currency
- Sufficiency

Centre policy should detail the RPL process and should state that it's purpose is to enable the learner(s) to record and assess their knowledge, understanding, and skills acquired from their previous experiences and training against the requirements of a qualification.

Centre policy should state that learner(s) can do this using a range of evidence including, for example, a portfolio of evidence put together by the learner showing the prior learning undertaken, or evidence of their learning, for example, having completed an assessment. The policy should state that the requirements are that the evidence must be 100% mapped to the SFEDI assessment criteria. This piece of assessment must be assessed and internally quality assured and recorded within the SFEDI centre documentation.

The centre policy should outline the steps to be taken when using RPL. The RPL process should be carried out as an entire process and should include the following centre preparations:

- Induction of learner(s) into the requirements of RPL
- Pre-assessment – advice, support, planning and mentoring for gathering of evidence
- Formal assessment of and documenting evidence against unit requirements by a competent assessor
- Internal (IQA) and External quality assurance (EQA) process and requirements
- Feedback to the learner following the assessment process and IQA of the assessment process. To confirm assessment judgement(s) and providing guidance on the available options (particularly in situations where the decision has been not to award credit)
- Learner right to appeal using internal and external processes
- Claim of credit from SFEDI Awards.

Centres wishing to use this process with their learners must ensure that it is carried out by designated staff with relevant levels of expertise to meet the requirements of the delivery and assessment strategy for the qualification they are working with. The centre policy should state the requirements for staff involved in the RPL process:
- Occupationally competent assessors will assess if the evidence fully meets the assessment requirements of the unit(s) within the qualification, record the assessment process, and then record their judgement
- An occupationally competent IQA must carry out a final internal quality assurance check to ensure validity and consistency in the assessment judgement(s) and record their findings.

Where centres are uncertain of requirements, they are encouraged to contact SFEDI Awards to seek clarification.

Process

Stage 1: Awareness

All learners should be informed about RPL or how they can claim recognition of prior learning, so they are able to make an active choice whether to pursue this option. This awareness should detail the spirit of RPL, the process, support available and any impact on costs.

Stage 2: Pre-assessment

The learner should collect all relevant evidence with support available from the centre. The nature

and content of the evidence must be driven by the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the unit(s) for which they are seeking RPL.

Stage 3: Assessment

The assessor must review the evidence submitted and make a judgement as to its suitability in meeting the requirements of the unit(s), usually achieved through a mapping exercise against the unit(s) and qualification requirements, including any mandatory assessment methods.

Assessment must be valid and reliable to ensure the integrity of the unit(s), qualification and RPL system as a whole – to achieve this; the same quality assurance mechanisms as for a standard assessment apply, e.g., mapping of the evidence followed by the IQA and EQA processes. Further detail of this is provided in the Centre Responsibilities section of this policy.

Stage 4: Awarding Recognition

This is done the same as a standard approach to awarding recognition – recorded in the learner record and claim for certification

Stage 5: Feedback

The assessor will feedback to the learner indicating and discussing the results

Stage 6: Appeal

If a learner wishes to appeal against a decision the normal centre route and process of appeal should be followed. Only when this internal process has been exhausted may SFEDI Awards Appeal Policy be consulted.

All centres should make sure that claims for recognition using these methods correctly identifying the exemptions and where there is any doubt, SFEDI Awards should be contacted for clarification.

It is important to make sure that any claim for certification to SFEDI Awards using these exemptions should make it clear in the documentation exactly what is being claimed and against which unit(s). This would be subject to SFEDI Awards EQA scrutiny as per all other methods of assessment.

Regulation

In the publishing, content and execution of this RPL policy SFEDI Awards will comply with all requirements of its Regulators to protect the integrity of its qualifications.

Review Arrangements

We will review this policy as part of our annual self-evaluation arrangements and revise it as and when necessary in response to customer and learner feedback, changes in our practices, actions from the regulatory authorities or external agencies, changes in legislation, or trends identified from previous allegations.

In addition, this policy may be updated considering operational feedback to ensure our arrangements for dealing with RPL remain effective.

If you would like to feedback any views, please contact us via the details provided at the end of this policy

Other Related SFEDI Policies and Documents

- Appeals Policy
- Qualification Specifications

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Contact Us

If you have any queries about the content of this policy, please contact our customer service department.

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