

TA1.5B Recognition of Prior Learning Policy & Procedure

1. Purpose

NSS is committed to providing quality training and assessment in accordance with the 2016 VRQA Guidelines for VET Providers and the Australian Quality Training Framework's Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration and the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). As such, NSS is required to offer Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) to all clients, and to implement an assessment system that ensures that all assessment including Recognition of Prior Learning of prior learning complies with assessment requirements of Training Packages and VET Accredited course, the Principles of Assessment (POA) and Rules of Evidence (ROE).

2. Policy Statement

NSS is committed to providing effective processes for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) to all current and prospective clients and will ensure that:

- Recognition of Prior Learning is offered to all clients on enrolment;
- It implements an assessment system that ensures RPL assessments comply with assessment requirements of relevant Training Packages, VET Accredited Courses;
- RPL assessment is conducted in accordance with the Principles of Assessment (POA);
- RPL assessment is conducted in accordance with the Rules of Evidence (ROE);
- Adequate information and support are provided to clients in understanding the process and gathering reliable evidence to support their RPL Learning claim;
- all RPL applications are processed in accordance with the NSS Assessment Policy.

3. Definitions

3.1 The following words and expressions have the following specific meaning, as in the 2016 VRQA Quality Standards.

AQF certification documentation is the set of official documents that confirms that an AQF qualification or statement of attainment has been issued to an individual.

AQF qualification means an AQF qualification type endorsed in a training package or accredited in a VET accredited course.

Assessment means the process of collecting evidence and making judgements on whether competency has been achieved, to confirm that an individual can perform to the standard required in the workplace, as specified in a training package or VET accredited course.

Assessment system is a coordinated set of documented policies and procedures (including assessment materials and tools) that ensure assessments are consistent and are based on the Principles of Assessment contained in Table 1.8-1 and the Rules of Evidence contained in Table 1.8-2.

Competency means the consistent application of knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in the workplace. It embodies the ability to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situations and environments.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) means an assessment process that assesses the competency/s of an individual that may have been acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning to determine the extent to which that individual meets the requirements specified in the training package or VET accredited courses.

- a) formal learning refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of instruction and is linked to the attainment of an AQF qualification or statement of attainment (for example, a certificate, diploma or university degree);

- b) non-formal learning refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of instruction, but does not lead to the attainment of an AQF qualification or statement of attainment (for example, in-house professional development programs conducted by a business); and
- c) informal learning refers to learning that results through experience of work-related, social, family, hobby or leisure activities (for example the acquisition of interpersonal skills developed through several years as a sales representative).

Statement of attainment means a statement issued to a person confirming that the person has satisfied the requirements of the unit/s of competency or accredited short course specified in the statement.

Unit of competency means the specification of the standards of performance required in the workplace as defined in a training package.

4. Policy Principles

4.1 Underpinning Principles

- a) RPL is made available to any person enrolling in a qualification or unit of competency currently on the NSS scope of registration.
- b) RPL is the determination, on an individual basis, of the skills and knowledge currently held by the learner acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning.
- c) RPL is used to determine the advanced standing or 'credit', for a qualification, that the learner may be awarded as a result of their prior knowledge, skills and experience.
- d) RPL is an alternative pathway to an AQF qualification or Statement of Attainment.
- e) RPL is an assessment process, and as such is subject to all provisions of the NSS "Assessment Policy".
- f) RPL assessment decisions must comply with Principles of Assessment and Rules of Evidence as outlined in the Standards for RTOs and in NSS Assessment Policy. (See Assessment Policy)
- g) The onus is upon the candidate to demonstrate competence to the satisfaction of the assessors, including the provision of certification documentation.
- h) Competency may be derived from many sources:
 - i. Work experiences or work product
 - ii. Life experience
 - iii. Training programs offered by industry, private or community based providers which may or may not have been formally recognised
 - iv. Training programs undertaken overseas (which may or may not be accredited in that country)
 - v. Informal learning programs
- i) Only accredited and approved assessors will conduct RPL assessments on behalf of NSS.
- j) RPL assessments must comply with the assessment requirements detailed in the relevant Training Package and VET Accredited course.
- k) RPL application and assessments are subject to fees as outlined in NSS 'Schedule of Fees' calculated at 50% of the full unit/module cost and applied to the course fee.
- l) The minimum acceptable claim for RPL is a Unit of competency/module.
- m) Certification documentation will not be issued until all relevant fees are paid in full.

5. Applicant responsibilities:

Applicants must ensure they read and understand the policy as outlined within this document prior to enrolment, sign the declaration and include their declaration with their application for RPL. After which the applicant will:

- Meet with the assigned assessor to discuss the requirements and receive advice in relation to their application for RPL.
- Complete the RPL kit, ensuring that all the required evidence is made available and that the information provided is true and correct.

- The application for RPL must be received at least 14 days prior to the commencement of the course and prior to any payment being made so that appropriate adjustments to fees can be made prior to enrolment.

6. The assessment fee for all RPL applications will be Procedure:

Recognition of Prior Learning of Prior Learning (RPL)

1. RPL may be undertaken for one or more units of competency relating to a vocational qualification.
2. Applicants who consider applying for RPL will be required to attend an interview with the relevant Assessor who will provide an explanation of the process, give advice to the applicant and where appropriate supply them with the RPL Application Kit;
3. Assistance will be provided to the applicant to successfully complete the kit;
4. Applicants will use the information contained within the kit to conduct a self-assessment against the unit/module requirements (also to be supplied along with the RPL Kit);
5. Applicants will need to consider how they have achieved each component and if they can satisfy the unit/module requirements by submitting valid, sufficient, authentic and current evidence;
6. Applications for RPL must be accompanied by written evidence gathered by the applicant/student;
7. The completed form and kit, together with supporting documentation are then to be returned to the designated Assessor.
8. The designated Assessor will assess the application and make a decision as to whether RPL granted for each unit in the application.
9. In some instances, and in support of documentary evidence, an interview and/or practical demonstration of skills will be required. The schedule and location of such will be negotiated with the applicant/student.
10. The RPL Application Form, the Assessor's final determination, along with all evidence provided by the applicant will be stored in the applicants file. Where RPL is granted VETtrak will be updated with the result of Competent awarded for each relevant unit. The applicant/student will be advised about the outcome of their application in writing.
11. The applicant can then enrol in the remaining units of the qualification and their individual training plan will be updated to reflect the unit RPL has been awarded for, or a Statement of Attainment can be issued.

7. Appeals

Clients have the right to appeal a Recognition of Prior Learning Assessment decision. (See Complaints Appeals Policy)

8. Access and Equity

Clients have fair and equal rights to assessment, including Recognition of Prior Learning. (See Access and Equity Policy)

9. Records Management

All documentation from Recognition of Prior Learning processes are maintained in accordance with Records Management Policy. (See Records Management Policy)

10. Monitoring and Improvement

All Recognition of Prior Learning practices are monitored by RTO Manager and areas for improvement identified and acted upon. (See Continuous Improvement Policy)