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**Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**

**Credit Accumulation and Transfers Policy**

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**Version History**

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This Policy has been developed by Somerset Centre for Integrated Learning (SCIL), part of Somerset Council. All training programmes have a commitment to providing a supportive learning environment which enables all Students, Apprentices, Learners and Trainees (SALTs) who have chosen to study with SCIL to achieve their full potential.

**Appendix 1 – Study Centre**

**Policy**

A learner must produce valid and reliable evidence of prior learning to support any claims based on experience.  A learner may claim RPL against a whole unit or several units.  It is not possible to award part units, but where the RPL evidence does not fully meet the needs of a complete unit, the missing information may be provided via the same assessment processes that are undertaken by a taught group of learners.

In order to achieve recognition of achievement there are 2 options open to the learner:

* Undertake the same assessments as those following the formal course of learning and assessment that lead to the desired unit or qualification.  These assessments may be undertaken without attending teaching sessions.
* Submit a portfolio of evidence based on previous learning, skills and or competence cross referenced to the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the unit or units for which RPL is being sought.

Under some circumstances there may be a limit to the proportion of a qualification that can be achieved by either credit transfer or RPL according to guidelines published from time to time by our Awarding organisations.

The learner must play an active role in the process as s/he must produce evidence and map it to the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of all units s/he wishes to claim.

**Procedure**

The process for RPL is outlined below, with common steps and actions outlined. The actual evidence required will depend upon the learning outcomes and the assessment criteria of the award.

**Stage 1 – Awareness, information and guidance**

Ahead of enrolling a potential SALT, the possibility that they may be able to claim credit for some of their previous learning should be raised with them. If the SALT is interested in this, they will need to know the:

* Process of claiming achievement by using RPL
* Sources of support and guidance available to them
* Timelines
* Appeals processes

**Stage 2 – Pre-assessment/gathering evidence and giving information**

At this stage, the SALT will carry out the process of collecting evidence against the

requirements of the relevant unit(s). In some cases, the development of an assessment plan and tracking document or similar may be required to support the learner through the process. The evidence gathered will need to meet the standards of the unit, or part of unit, that the evidence is being used for.

**Stage 3 – Assessment/documentation of evidence**

Assessment as part of RPL is a structured process for gathering and reviewing evidence and making judgments about a SALTs prior leaning and experience in relation to unit standards.

The proxy (assessor) will be looking at work experience records, validated by managers; previous portfolios of evidence put together by the learner or essays and reports validated as being the SALTs own unaided work. Assessment must be valid and reliable to ensure the integrity of the award of credit and, as above, the evidence gathered needs to meet the standards of the unit, or part of the unit, that the evidence is being used for.

The prior achievement that would provide evidence of current knowledge will vary from sector to sector. The proxy must be satisfied that the evidence provided meets the assessment criteria for which it has been submitted and where evidence from prior learning is weak, the receiving assessor must plan further work with the SALT as appropriate.

All prior learning that is submitted as evidence by a SALT must be complemented by a professional discussion to make sure the SALTs knowledge or the application of this knowledge meets the requirements of the assessment criteria.

The assessment process will be subject to the usual quality assurance procedures of the Centre, for example internal standardisation and internal verification as well as the awarding organisations quality assurance procedures.

**Stage 4 – Claiming certification**

Once the internal and external quality assurance procedures have been successfully completed, certification claims can be made by the Centre. Assessment and internal verification records, along with any additional RPL records completed, should be retained for the standard for a three-year period following certification.

**Stage 5 – Appeal**

A SALT wishing to appeal against a decision made about their assessment will need to refer to the Assessment Policy.

**Credit Accumulation and Transfers (CAT)**

Credit accumulation and transfer (CAT) is the system by which SALTs can accumulate and transfer credits over a period of time, in differing locations and contexts, in order to gain qualifications. Credit transfer is the process of using credit(s) awarded in the context of one qualification or awarded by a different awarding organisation towards the achievement requirements of another qualification.  CAT should be considered as a separate process to RPL as CAT applies to learning that has been previously certified for a different regulated qualification or from a different Awarding Organisation on the same framework (RQF or QCF). This is to prevent a SALT from having to unnecessarily repeat previous learning.

When a SALT believes they are eligible for CAT the centre will confirm their eligibility by...

**Stage 1 – Confirmation of unit/qualification completion**

The SALT will provide the centre copy(s) of the certificates relating to the unit or qualification to be considered for CAT.

**Stage 2 – Centre confirmation of eligibility for CAT.**

The centre will confirm with the awarding organisation that CAT is available for the completed units/qualifications and are nested within the qualification being undertaken.  For example:  Where a SALT has achieved the NCFE Level 4 Award in the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice (QN: 501/0889/X) unit 01 and 02 must be achieved.  To achieve the NCFE Level 4 Certificate in Leading the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice (QN: 501/0890/6), the additional unit 03 has to be achieved.  Therefore, a SALT may be eligible to CAT unit 01 and unit 02 in the achievement of the level 4 certificate. Once confirmation of eligibility of CAT has been received the centre will claim the achieved qualification following the awarding organisations procedures.

Records of CAT will be kept in line with the centre and awarding organisations policies and procedures.

**Appendix 2 - Higher Education Courses**

**Foundation Degree, BA Professional Practice and Somerset SCITT**

If a SALT on one of the above courses believes they have appropriate prior learning they would like to claim RPL for, SCIL will follow the University of Worcester policies relating to the Recognition of Prior Learning, which can be found on the University of Worcester Registry webpage (link below).

[ProceduresfortheRecognitionofPriorLearning.pdf (worc.ac.uk)](https://www2.worc.ac.uk/registryservices/documents/ProceduresfortheRecognitionofPriorLearning.pdf)

**Appendix 3 – Apprenticeships**

**1. Initial assessment**

Before an apprenticeship begins, the main training provider must assess the individual’s prior learning to establish the ‘starting point’, or baseline, of the apprentice. Initial assessment checks that the apprenticeship is an appropriate programme for the individual. The initial assessment checks how much of the apprenticeship programme the individual requires to reach occupational competency. The main training provider is responsible for doing the initial assessment.

**2. What counts as prior learning?**

In recognising prior learning, the following should be considered against the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the standard or framework:

* Work experience (this is particularly important if the apprentice is an existing employee);
* Prior education, training or associated qualification(s) in a related sector subject area (this goes beyond just English and maths); and
* Any previous apprenticeship undertaken

**3. How is prior learning assessed?**

ESFA does not mandate how a provider assesses or determines prior learning, just that it must be done and the findings taken account of. The relevant apprenticeship framework or standard should normally be used as the basis for initial assessment.

**4. How should prior learning be recorded?**

The ESFA does not mandate how prior learning should be recorded, only that the initial assessment must be documented in the evidence pack and summarised on the commitment statement.

**5. How does recognition of prior learning feed into funding negotiations?**

The funding band of the apprenticeship is based on an apprentice requiring the full content of the apprenticeship, and in the case of standards this means all the listed knowledge, skills and behaviours. A negotiation between training provider and the employer will take place should prior learning be applicable,

**6. How does this all link to a 12-month minimum duration and off-the-job training?**

Where there is prior learning, the content and duration of the apprenticeship must be reduced to reflect this. The new (reduced) duration must still meet the minimum threshold of 12 months.

**7. How is recognition of prior learning taken into account when applying to be on the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers?**

ESFA apprenticeship funding rules require main training providers and employer providers to take account of prior learning. As part of the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP) application processes, main providers and employer providers must submit their policy on how they will perform initial assessments of apprentices’ prior learning.