



**GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS AND
RPL ASSESSORS SEEKING TO
APPLY FOR RECOGNITION OF PRIOR
LEARNING (RPL)**

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INTRODUCTION

This document is designed to provide guidance of applicants considering making an application for recognition of prior learning (RPL).

An RPL application seeks to prove that the applicant already has acquired skills and knowledge equivalent to the skills and knowledge being assessed in a recognised course or unit of competency.

The outcome of a successful RPL application is recognition that the applicant has already achieved the required skills and knowledge and thus does not have to demonstrate these skills or knowledge again.

The most practical application of this is a reduction in a training program.

RPL application will consider, formal education such as other training courses, work experience and general life skills, an example a hobby in personal computers will provide credit in many computing or computing related courses.

Much of the information contained within this document is based upon VETAB's "RPL Framework for Registered Training Organisations in NSW 2005 - A resource to assist RTO's to provide RPL for the TAA04 Training and Assessment Training Package"

1. WHAT IS RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)?

In short, RPL are recognition of all your current skills and abilities.

- If you can provide sufficient documentary evidence to demonstrate equivalent knowledge and skills to that required to be achieved in the Unit of Competency you will be recognised as having equivalent experience and knowledge and thus be found competent in that unit of competency and be awarded the unit of competency by RPL.
- Individuals who demonstrate equivalent competency in a complete qualification will be awarded the qualification.
- Individuals who demonstrate competency in less than the complete qualification will be awarded "Statements of Attainment" for those units of competency in which they were found to be competent.

2. POSSIBLE TYPES OF EVIDENCE THAT MAY BE SUITABLE

There are a very wide variety of evidence types that can suitable for inclusion in a RPL application.

- **Formal Qualifications:** These would include any recognised qualification such as a trade certificate, a TAFE course or another course from a RTO or any other formal course.

The formal qualification will need to directly relate to an element or elements of the course that you are seeking RPL for. Your formal qualification may in its entirety be equivalent, or a subject or module may directly relate to the Unit of Competency. As with all evidence offered in a RPL claim you will need to clearly show why the evidence is relevant to the qualification RPL is being sought for.

- **Resumes and CV's:** These are an excellent way of describing your experience and personal history, however they do provide clear and objective evidence of your skills and competencies. Resumes will need to be supported by work examples, valid third party reports and potentially other forms of evidence.

- **Copies of Policies and Procedures:** These can be acceptable forms of evidence if presented in a clear and accurate light. Merely presenting the Policies and Procedures is insufficient evidence of competency. The applicant will need to demonstrate that they either work to these policies and procedures in which case the correct evidence provided should be examples of work that complies with these policies or procedures.

Alternatively, if the applicant wrote or was involved in the writing of the policies and procedures then the applicant needs to submit evidence that supports the claim clearly documenting the extent of their involvement with the development the policies and procedures along with the actual policies and procedures.

- **Third Party Reports:** As with all evidence offered with your RPL application the evidence offered must relate directly to the unit of competence RPL is being sought for. Thus all third party reports will need to follow the rules of evidence and relate directly to the unit of competency and to the applicant. The author of the document will need to clearly establish their working relationship with the applicant and cite examples of what has been observed, signed and presenting in an identifiable document.
- **Work Documents:** Examples of your work such as reports, correspondence, meeting documents, files, conference proceedings, clients notes, training reports, assessments tools etc must be identifiable. All documentation should clearly relate to the candidate and the relevant aspect of the unit of competency RPL is being sought for. All documentation should be signed, dated and where appropriate verified.
- **Historical Evidence:** Any evidence that is over say 3 years old should be supported by more up to date evidence. The combined evidence should indicate the applicants continued currency in the area of competence RPL is being sought for. If the applicant can demonstrate a continuous standard of competency then the historical evidence can be submitted. If the evidence does not lead to a continuous level of competency, then the competency must be demonstrated in an alternative manner.

3. HOW SHOULD I START COLLECTING MY EVIDENCE?

Work Savvy Training will allocate an RPL Assessor to work with you in collecting evidence for your RPL application. Together, you will collect evidence through the following procedure:

1. Identify which units of competency you feel you may be suitable for you to apply for RPL.
2. Read the WHOLE unit of competency, including the elements, the performance criteria, the range statement and the evidence guide as contained in the Training Package. Training Packages are available from www.ntis.gov.au
3. Review your own education and experience, think about what knowledge and skills that you may have that address the requirements of this Unit of Competency.
4. Think of examples of you demonstrating these skills and using this knowledge over the last 2-3 years. You should refer to “specific evidence requirements” in the unit of competency Evidence Guide.
5. For every example, you will need to determine how you could demonstrate that you have met the requirements of the Elements and the Performance Criteria.
6. You will need to review the Range statement to ensure that your experience is consistent with the context and definitions provided in the range statements.
7. You should then review your experience and documented evidence to ensure that you have met every aspect of the Unit of Competency. Your evidence should be valid, ie show what it claims to show.
8. Your evidence should be authentic, ie you should be able to accumulate evidence that is identifiable, ie: on letterheads, that is signed by relevant people, contains file or reference numbers and is creditable to your RPL assessor.

9. Your evidence should have times and dates, as this will be required to determine that your evidence is recent and that these skills and knowledge are current.
10. Your evidence should reference the element or item that you feel it is addressing. An accumulation of a number of unrelated facts, and experiences does not allow the assessor to evaluate your competency.
11. Your evidence should be sufficient, ie there should be sufficient forms of evidence to indicate your competency. You will also need to ensure that you have demonstrated that your competency has been demonstrated to exist over time, thus consider evidence of competency that has been collected over a significant period of time.

4. HOW SHOULD I EVALUATE MY EVIDENCE AND HOW WILL MY RPL ASSESSOR EVALUATE MY EVIDENCE. (RULES OF EVIDENCE)

Your RPL assessor must be able to rely upon your evidence, this evidence must withstand close scrutiny and examination. The evidence must clearly demonstrate your competence over time.

Your RPL assessor will evaluate your evidence by asking if it is:

Valid:

1. Does it relate directly to the unit of competency?
2. Does it demonstrate the relevant underpinning skills and knowledge?
3. Does it reflect the four dimensions of competency and the key competencies?
4. Is appropriate to the relevant AQF descriptor?

Sufficient:

- Does the evidence address all the critical aspects of evidence presented in the unit of competency?
- Does the evidence address all the requirements of the Evidence Guide, including the specific evidence requirements listed?
- Does the evidence cover the full range of performance identified in the unit?
- Does the evidence show competency over a period of time and in different contexts?
- Does the evidence include different forms of evidence?

Current:

- Does the evidence demonstrate that the candidate can apply the competency in their current work?
- Does the evidence reflect work carried out by the candidate over a period of time? The assessor must be confident the applicant can still perform to the standard demonstrated by the evidence.

Authentic:

- Is each piece of evidence clearly identifiable as the candidate's own work?
- Are the Qualifications, references, licences etc presented by the applicant signed off as a full and correct copy of the original by a credible third party?
- Are the Applicant's verbal or written accounts of what they can do supported by actual evidence, such as work examples, or products, etc?

5. HOW SHOULD I PRESENT MY EVIDENCE?

Your RPL Assessor will work with you to present your RPL information, however if you want to work independently, the following procedure may be helpful.

While there are no firm instructions for the presentation of your RPL material there are some very clear guidelines.

Follow the suggestions in the preceding sections and structure your application in a logical and thoughtful manner.

Choose your Evidence wisely:

- Provide different forms of quality evidence clearly linked to the units of competency that you are seeking RPL for.
- Ensure that all evidence is authenticated.
- Ensure that all resumes and job descriptions are supported by actual evidence.
- Ensuring that all Organisational documents are controlled, and clearly show ownership, authorship and the date of last review.

You will have spent a significant amount of time and effort assembling your RPL application, the good efforts that you have spent does not need to be spoilt by a poorly constructed application.

6. STRUCTURE OF THE RPL APPLICATION:

1. Complete the RPL Application Form detailing your contact details and the Units of Competency that you are seeking RPL for. This form can be found on our website or at any Work Savvy Training office.
2. Complete the Declaration Form contained in the RPL Application Form
3. Working with your assessor, assemble your evidence by Unit of Competency. With each item clearly labeled.

Templates for assembling evidence will be provided by your assessor
4. Insure all relevant information is in a well thought out and structured manner, if the evidence is volumous, reevaluate its relevance, if it is still consistent with this guide ensure that it is itself well laid out.

7. QUESTIONS

If you have any questions at any time regarding the assembly of your RPL application, the progress of the RPL application or the results of your RPL application, please contact our office at:

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9. APPEALING OUR DECISIONS

We as an AQTF compliant RTO we have an established process for RPL applicants to appeal any decisions made by us.

In the first instance we would suggest that you contact us to discuss the decision to thus ensure that you understand why the decision was made.

If you feel that you wish to appeal our decision please contact our office and we will arrange for an Appeal Outcome Appeal form to be immediately despatched to you. Alternatively, you will find the form on our website along with a fact sheet explaining our Complaints and Appeals policy.

10. APPLICATION RESULTS AND FEEDBACK

Work Savvy Training will provide all RPL Applicants with notification of the RPL Assessment results within 3 weeks of submission of correct documentation.

Applicants will have the opportunity to submit additional evidence and resubmit applications for RPL.

All applicants will be provided with feedback regarding any 'not yet competent' results.