

Recognition of Prior Learning

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Aiming to improve the quality-of-life skills and employability of residents in the borough, making Wandsworth a vibrant and prosperous learning community.

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Recognition of Prior Learning

1 | Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide support, clarification and guidance regarding the recognition of a learner's/apprentice's previous achievements and/or qualifications.

2 | Scope

The policy applies to all learners/apprentices enrolled on a course with Wandsworth Council Lifelong Learning (WCLL) and participating in the associated learning activities.

3 | The Purpose of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

WCLL is committed to an inclusive approach in the provision of learning opportunities and acknowledges its responsibility in recognising prior learning and/or achievement.

RPL is a method of assessment that considers whether learners/apprentices can demonstrate that they meet the assessment requirements for a programme unit through knowledge, understanding or skills, that they already possess and do not need to develop further through an additional course of learning. It is used sparingly and is applicable to adult learners/apprentices returning to education.

RPL enables recognition of achievement from a range of activities using any valid assessment methodology. The use of RPL is acceptable for accrediting a unit, units, or a whole qualification, provided that the assessment requirements of a given unit or qualification have been met through valid and reliable evidence.

The process of assessment for RPL applies the same quality assurance monitoring standards as any other form of assessment offered by WCLL.

4 | Using RPL

WCLL recognises the use of RPL when an individual applying as a learner or apprentice has relevant prior learning that was not formally accredited. RPL can be used to award credit for a single unit, a group of units, or even a full qualification. The knowledge, skills, and understanding being considered may have been gained through various life experiences, including previous education or training, work, family responsibilities, or voluntary and community activities.

Where appropriate evidence demonstrates that the learning outcomes have been met, learners or apprentices can claim credit for units through the RPL process, whether the evidence covers part or all of the required outcomes.

5 | Assessment of RPL Evidence

Assessment methods for RPL must be as rigorous as those used for other methods of assessment in that they must be fit for purpose and relate to the evidence of learning provided. It is possible to claim credit for any unit through RPL, unless the established assessment methods for that unit do not allow this. It is the responsibility of tutors or skills coaches and internal verifiers to ensure that the evidence presented and accepted is valid, current, sufficient, authentic and reliable.

6 | The Process of RPL

If the request for RPL rests on previous study, then this process will apply:

The first part of the process will involve checking the learning outcomes of the prior award and unit content against the corresponding elements of WCLL unit(s), from which the learner or apprentice is seeking exemption.

This will be done by an appropriate internal verifier (IQA) who will review and agree if the exemption can be used and if so, what the next steps will be.

If the RPL rests on practical experience and skills, then the process below will apply:

The methods of assessment chosen will depend on the assessment strategy for the programme unit being assessed and may include examination of documents, witness testimony, reflective accounts, portfolios or professional discussion.

Assessment is planned with the learner/apprentice and will be:

- The subject of formal decision making.
- The focus of feedback and advice.
- Verified in the same way as other forms of assessment.
- Considered via the WCLL appeals procedure if this is required.
- Subject to the normal WCLL certification process.
- Subject to the same quality assurance requirements as any other assessment method.

7 | Summary

WCLL will ensure that:

- The process of RPL assessment is subject to the same quality assurance and verification standards as any other form of assessment conducted by WCLL.
- All guidance and assessment for RPL is overseen by staff with the relevant levels of experience and expertise to ensure that all the requirements for assessment are met.