# RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) POLICY

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## PURPOSE

MiTraining is required to offer Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and to implement an assessment system that ensures that assessment (including recognition of prior learning) complies with assessment requirements of Training Packages and VET Accredited courses, the Principles of Assessment (POA) and Rules of Evidence (ROE).

## SCOPE

MiTraining has established this policy to support the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTO) 2015. The policy has been developed and implemented by MiTraining to support and provide clear instruction and guidance to program Candidates MiTraining staff to define processes and parameters with regard to the offering and conduct of RPL.

## POLICY STATEMENT

MiTraining is committed to providing all Candidates with a fair and accessible process for RPL. The process acknowledges the skills, knowledge, performance outcomes and learning achieved prior to undertaking a program of study with MiTraining through either formal or informal learning pathways.

Such prior learning may include formal learning such as employer provided training or learning and assessment pathways (Credit Transfer), or informal learning such as work or life experiences.

Through the collection and submission of a portfolio of evidence and discussion with MiTraining assessors, Candidates may apply to have their existing knowledge and skills assessed against the units of competency contained in a program of study offered by MiTraining.

## RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

The RPL process is designed to be flexible to meet the needs of Candidates who need to be assessed formally against units of competency.

The availability of RPL is advertised through the MiTraining website, referred to through the enrolment process and referenced within the Student Handbook. Sufficient information is provided to self-assess whether RPL assessment is an appropriate pathway for a prospective student.

In addition to this policy document Candidates are provided with a detailed RPL Learner Information Kit once an application for RPL is received.

The RPL Learner Information Kit includes details of all the competencies required, suggestions for collecting evidence and some resources to help Candidates with evidence collection. It provides

information and direction as to appropriate and adequate information in order to maximise opportunities for a successful assessment outcome.

## RPL Explained

The Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) facilitates the progression of students through qualifications by giving credit for learning outcomes they already have achieved. Credit outcomes may allow for entry into a qualification and/or provide credit towards the qualification.

Credit given may reduce the time required for a student to achieve the qualification. RPL is one of a number of processes for establishing credit or advanced standing. RPL broadens access into formal learning by enabling credit to be given for student achievement though other formal, non-formal or informal learning.

RPL involves issuing organisations undertaking an assessment of each individual who applies to determine the extent to which that individual's previous learning is equivalent to the learning outcomes of the components of the destination qualification.

**RPL Assessment Process**

RPL assessment is a rigorous process that conducted to the same standard as undertaking summative assessment for accredited programs of study. Pursuing RPL requires the Candidate to provide specific and relevant evidence that their existing skills and knowledge aligns to the requirements of each training product.

RPL assessment will be undertaken by a qualified vocational assessor with expertise in the subject, content and/or skills area, as well as knowledge of and expertise in RPL assessment.

The process is designed to recognise prior learning regardless of how, when and where it was acquired, provided the learning is relevant to the learning outcomes in the qualification.

It is the responsibility of the Candidate to provide evidence that is valid, authentic, current and sufficient.

**RPL Assessment Methods**

The RPL assessment process provides a range of ways for Candidates to demonstrate that they have met the required outcomes and can be granted credit.

Assessment methods may include a combination of the following:

- Mapping of learning outcomes from prior formal or non-formal learning to the relevant qualification components
- Questioning (oral or written)
- Observation of performance in work based and/or simulated environments
- Challenge examinations/assessments
- Consideration of third party reports and/or other documentation such as articles, reports, project material, papers, testimonials or other products prepared by the RPL applicant that relate to the learning outcomes of the relevant qualification component
- Consideration of a portfolio and review of contents, and
- Participation in structured assessment activities that individuals normally would be required to undertake if they were enrolled in the qualification components.

The assessment outcomes may enable the student to meet the entry requirements and/or components of the qualification. This may reduce the duration of the qualification.

The agreed credit outcomes of the assessment of previous learning through RPL are specific to the individual and each assessment is unique to the Candidate.

## CREDIT TRANSFER

Credit Transfer assesses a Candidate's prior learning achieved through the formal education and training process. Credit Transfer seeks to match the learning outcomes of previous formal training to those of the current program for which Candidate is seeking recognition. This may include credit transfer based on formal learning that is outside the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). Credit transfer is one of a number of processes for establishing credit. It provides a means for students to gain credit in an AQF qualification on the basis of completed components of another AQF qualification or other formal learning.

The credit transfer process involves:

- mapping, comparing and evaluating the extent to which the learning outcome, discipline content and assessment requirements of the individual components of one qualification are equivalent to the learning outcomes, discipline content and assessment requirements of the individual components of another qualification, and
- making a judgment about the credit to be assigned between the matched components of the two qualifications.

The agreed credit outcomes may include any form of credit: block, specified or unspecified credit.

Candidates seeking credit transfer should first discuss their options with MiTraining and, following that, submit a Credit Transfer Application Form available on the MiTraining website.

## RULES FOR SUPPLYING EVIDENCE FOR RPL

Evidence plays a crucial role in the RPL process as it provides proof that a Candidate has the skills and knowledge contained within the units of competency for which they wish to be recognised. The evidence will allow an assessor to determine whether to assess a Candidate as Competent or Not Yet Competent. When selecting pieces of evidence to support an RPL application, it is important for the Candidate to follow the guidelines outlined in the Rules for Supplying Evidence section of this policy as set out below.

**Valid Evidence**

Evidence of competency must cover the broad range of knowledge, skills and the application of such knowledge and skills specified in the Competency Standards. That is, when gathering evidence each piece of evidence must focus on the appropriate knowledge and skills specified against each element of a unit of competence for which recognition is sought.

**Sufficient Evidence**

Sufficient evidence relates to the amount of evidence that is needed to demonstrate a Candidate's competence in a particular unit of competency. Evidence must satisfy all elements of the unit of competency. To ensure that sufficient evidence to demonstrate competency is supplied, it might be necessary or desirable to use supplementary sources of evidence such as verbal confirmation, written testimonials (employers and clients), previously completed appraisals, certificates, job descriptions or third party reports.

**Authentic Evidence**

Evidence needs to be checked for authenticity - that is, that it actually relates to the Candidate being assessed, and not that of another person. To determine authenticity (and validation) of the evidence it may be necessary for CPA Australia RTO Personnel to verify and contact the third parties that are listed within the RPL application.

**Current Evidence**

Currency of evidence supplied is of particular importance, as evidence must be relevant and up to date according to current industry standards (and current unit of competency requirements). For example, if a Candidate has evidence of mastering an area of knowledge or skill in the past, this can be supplemented by evidence of continuing professional development activities.

## PREPARING AND COLLECTING EVIDENCE

Candidates need to collect and supply evidence for each unit of competency against which recognition is being sought. Evidence for each unit of competency should be clearly labelled and presented in a logical manner.

When applying for assessment in multiple units, evidence does not need to be duplicated but must be referenced accordingly. Once the evidence has been gathered, the portfolio of evidence should be returned to MiTraining for inclusion in the assessment process.

When preparing a portfolio of evidence to support an application for RPL, Candidates must gather evidence to substantiate the assertion that they can apply the skills, knowledge and performance criteria outlined in the units of competency within the workplace.

It is highly recommended that Candidates supply a range of different types of evidence to substantiate an RPL application. The evidence supplied to demonstrate a Candidate's skills, knowledge and abilities may cover a number of units of competency (and elements within these units). The RPL Learner Information Kit will contain information on the specific units of competency that Candidates may seek RPL against.

### Types of Evidence

Sample evidence may include (but is not limited to):

- Candidate's CV outlining specific job positions and how they relate to specific skills requirements;
- Completed testimonials (from clients and employers);
- Work samples — may include presentations to colleagues or clients to demonstrate knowledge;
- References;
- Completed performance reviews;
- Certificates or statements of attainment (including unit breakdowns);
- Company policies and procedures if these can be shown to be relevant to the unit of competency
- Company policy guidelines (if applicable to the unit) may include: policies and procedures in relation to client service, advertising and marketing, product or service development;
- Workplace documentation may include: meeting notes, records of telephone conversations, memos, brochures, agreements, contract or policy statements, reports (research/statistical/ad hoc/transaction/other), official, general /other correspondence;

- Documentation supporting ongoing reviews and services;
- Samples of advertising/ marketing materials: newsletters, mail outs, emails, web sites, phone calls, seminars;
- Samples of research materials;
- Written reports of simulations, peer group training activities; and
- Testimonials of learning, skill or competence.

## RPL ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

### Preliminary Discussion

Prospective students wishing to apply for RPL should contact MiTraining to discuss the process and ensure it is a suitable option for them before investing time in the evidence collection process.

Candidates may complete an initial application form on or before speaking with MiTraining. The form can be accessed via the MiTraining website. Candidates may also be provided with self-assessment checklists for specified units of competency to assist them to determine their suitability for RPL.

If it is determined that RPL is a potential pathway the Candidate, and the Candidate wishes to pursue the RPL process, a non-refundable application fee of $250 will be charged.

**MiTraining Contact Details**
Phone: 1300 549 190
Email: enquiries@mitraining.edu.au

The completed application form and self-assessment checklists should be returned to enquiries@mitraining.edu.au.

If it is agreed that RPL is not a suitable pathway for the Candidate, they will be informed of formal learning opportunities and the enrolment process.

### Evidence Gathering

The Candidate is provided with an RPL Learner Information Kit for each unit of competency for which RPL is sought. Each kit includes instructions for the candidate to complete the document.

The kit requires Candidates to:

1. Provide their personal details, employment history, prior education and the contact information of professional referees relevant to the work situation and RPL subject matter.
2. Undertake a personal assessment of their pre-existing skills and knowledge against each of the elements and performance criteria for the unit/s of competency.
3. Collate and attach supporting documents as evidence to support the RPL assessment for the unit/s of competency.
4. The remaining sections of the kit are completed in consultation with MiTraining and the RPL assessor.

Candidates will gather all the relevant supporting evidence and documentation to demonstrate their competency. Evidence should be displayed in a clear and concise manner within the portfolio. Candidates must ensure that application forms and evidence documents are completed accurately. (Incomplete applications may not be processed. MiTraining may request further information before beginning the formal assessment process). Completed RPL Learner Information Kits for all units of competency should be returned by the Candidate to support@mitraining.edu.au.

## Initial Assessment

Each submitted RPL Learner Information Kit will be reviewed by the RPL assessor who, on the basis of the information provided, will deem the Candidate suitable to enrol for RPL or unsuitable to enrol for RPL.

Candidates must enrol in the desired course of study in order to participate in the full RPL assessment process and are subject to the terms and conditions of enrolment as outlined in the Enrolment Policy and Refund Policy.

The process to undertake an RPL assessment is rigorous for the Candidate and administratively intensive for MiTraining. The fees, charges and terms of applying reflect the level of effort required to effectively and comprehensively assess RPL.

At this point the Candidate will be charged the applicable fee for unit/s of competency for which they have been deemed suitable to enrol for RPL. Fees and charges for RPL are outlined in the annual Fee Schedule available on the MiTraining website.

## Formal RPL Assessment

The RPL assessor may arrange a competency conversation with the Candidate to confirm the skills and knowledge levels claimed in the RPL Learner Information Kit and/or confirm the authenticity of particular evidence items. Competency conversations may be conducted by phone or online meeting.

Formal assessment may include the gathering of evidence from the Candidate's workplace which is sought from the Professional Referees provided by the Candidate.

## Where the Participant is Assessed as 'Competent'

Where a Candidate is assessed as competent in all areas (i.e. the application for recognition of a full unit(s) of competency has been successful), they will be advised in writing and appropriate certification will be issued (please refer to the MiTraining Certification Issuance Policy).

All units of competency successfully recognised as part of the application for RPL will be listed on the appropriate certification documentation. Recognition will only be granted for a complete unit of competency (recognition will not be granted where a Candidate has only satisfied part of a unit of competency).

## Where the Participant's Portfolio Does Not Satisfy Competency Requirements

Where there are gaps between evidence supplied in an RPL portfolio and competency requirements for which recognition is being sought, the assessor will notify the Candidate that the deficiencies must be addressed before the application can be processed any further.

Candidates must supply further evidence within 28 days of this notification. If the Candidate does not have any further evidence to support their application, RPL may be denied. Depending on the extent of the gaps, the assessor may refer the Candidate to relevant formal training. Assessors will inform MiTraining of ongoing communication with the Candidate should further evidence be required.

### Final RPL Outcome and Candidate Notification

Once an assessor has made a final decision on an application for RPL, they will return all documentation including the Candidate's RPL portfolio, along with notification of the outcome of the application, to MiTraining.

MiTraining will record the outcome in the student management system (SMS) and arrange for formal notification of the outcome of the application to be sent to the Candidate.

## APPEALS PROCESS

Should the Candidate which to appeal the outcome of an application for RPL they may do so only on procedural grounds. New or additional evidence submitted after the request date, is not grounds for appeal.

An appeal may be based on one or more of the following grounds:

- That a procedural irregularity has occurred
- That the case was not considered on its merits.

Candidates should refer to the Appeals Policy and submit an Appeals Form located on the MiTraining website and to support@mitraining.edu.au.

## NOTES

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| *Related Policies/Procedures:* | *Appeals Policy*<br>*Certificate Issuance Policy*<br>*Enrolment Policy*<br>*Refund Policy* |
| *Related Documents/Forms:* | *Appeals Form*<br>*Credit Transfer Form*<br>*RPL Application Form*<br>*RPL Learner Information Kit*<br>*RPL Assessor Information Kit*<br>*Annual Fee Schedule* |
| *Related Legislation:* | *N/A* |
| *Guidelines:* | *N/A* |
| *Approved By:* | *Chief Executive Officer* |
| *Date of Next Review:* | |