



Australian Institute of Flexible Learning

Candidate Guide

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) APPLICATION

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Overview:

Who is the guide for?

This guide has been produced to assist students who are seeking recognition for prior experience, skills and knowledge to use towards gaining a qualification with the Australian Institute of Flexible Learning.

This guide will help you become more informed about recognition and understand the recognition process.

RPL is an assessment process which recognizes what you have learnt through formal, non-formal & informal learning

These experiences are measured against the learning outcomes, competency outcomes or standards of the qualification/units you want to do. If what you have learned at work or elsewhere is relevant and meets the requirements of your chosen course or qualification, it may be used as evidence to support your application for recognition.

The AIFL recognizes your existing skills, knowledge and experience gained throughout your life, regardless of how they have been acquired, and use them towards the achievement of a nationally recognized qualification or full unit of competency.

After you have read this Candidate Guide, we recommend that you make contact with staff at the AIFL so that you can ask any questions you have and seek more detailed advice in preparation for detailing your claim for RPL.

What is recognition?

RPL is an assessment process which recognizes what you have learnt through formal, non-formal & informal learning

These experiences are measured against the learning outcomes, competency outcomes or standards of the qualification/units you want to do. If what you have learned at work or elsewhere is relevant and meets the requirements of your chosen course or qualification, that learning can be recognised through the RPL process.

The AIFL recognizes your existing skills, knowledge and experience gained throughout your life, regardless of how they have been acquired, and use them towards the achievement of a nationally recognized qualification or full unit of competency.

The full definition for RPL can be found at:

<http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2013L00167>

Anyone can apply for RPL but not everyone will get credit for their skills and knowledge.

A typical successful applicant is someone who has a reasonable amount of experience in the area their course or unit of competency covers and can demonstrate current competency.

This might mean working in that field. Life skills can earn credits but these must be shown to be relevant to the course or competency.

If an applicant is continuing on from secondary school or has limited work or life experience they should consider their claim carefully before applying for RPL.

If the applicant is a mature age student with relevant experience their skills are likely to have some value for credit through RPL.

If the applicant has gained qualifications in completing a course or has a statement of attainment for completed units of a course they may gain credits.

What are the benefits of recognition for you?

- ⌚ You can have your skills and experience recognised.
- ⌚ It enables you to identify gaps in your knowledge and skills therefore highlighting your learning needs.
- ⌚ You can reduce your study load by applying for RPL for some/all of the units of competency of your chosen qualification.

How to undertake RPL with the AIFL.

Following your initial contact with us, you will be asked to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) via our website www.aifl.edu.au. We will then email information regarding the qualification you are interested in to you. In this email we will request information from you such as your resume, position description and any relevant certificates to be forwarded to us to assess your eligibility to complete the qualification. Once we have received this information, it is forwarded to the course coordinator for assessment.

Should you wish to discuss the information forwarded to you or feel another qualification may be more suitable to your needs, please contact us and we will put you in contact with the course coordinator who can answer your questions, determine your needs and help you with your qualification pathway.

Should you feel that you may be eligible to RPL some or all of your chosen qualification, please contact your course coordinator who will discuss the process with you, answer your questions and discuss with you the forms, types of evidence and construction of your portfolio using the AIFL's RPL tool. The course coordinator will support you through the whole RPL process. There will be an interview/s, at a mutually convenient time, for critical questioning. This is further evidence required by the AIFL to progress your application.

Section One: Understanding Recognition.

Formal qualifications can open doors to employment and opportunities for advancement. In some occupations they are essential.

Perhaps you have extensive skills and experience but no formal qualifications or some that are not accepted in Australia. There are ways you can have your skills assessed and formally recognised.

If you decide to apply for RPL, you will be asked for detailed records of your experience, employment, training, etc, which may be relevant. Part of the process requires you to **conduct a self assessment** of each performance criteria within the unit of competence.

Most importantly, you will need to provide **evidence** against each of the performance criteria in a unit of competency (i.e. evidence that you have the skills and knowledge outlined in the performance criteria).

You, the applicant should ensure that the skills and knowledge you use as evidence is relevant to the RPL application. In particular, an RPL applicant must be able to show that their knowledge and skills are current - i.e. where the knowledge and skill was first acquired some time ago, the applicant has maintained currency of this knowledge and skill by use or other means and can provide evidence of this.

Please note: RPL is awarded for a total unit of competency (no partial RPL of a unit will be awarded)

Section Two: What is evidence?

Evidence is the material that you submit in your portfolio of evidence.

Evidence may be collected via:

- ⌚ Documentation of practical experiences in the workplace or the community including photo's, newspaper articles, reports etc
- ⌚ Statements of results from both formal and informal training that you have completed
- ⌚ Copies of projects that you have undertaken
- ⌚ Documents you created that link your training and assessment to the units of competency
- ⌚ Documents, checklists, notes and resources you have developed to support what you do or have done in your field of work.

Your evidence is your proof that you have reached a level of performance that meets the criteria outlined in the unit of competency. This evidence should be **current** (show that you are still competent), **authentic** (it is your work) and be at a level of complexity that matches the unit of competency. Logically the evidence should be **valid** and relate directly to the unit of competency. **Sufficient** evidence is required to demonstrate that you have the knowledge and can perform the skills described in the unit of competence.

Note that original documents such as certificates, workplace reports, etc, should be copied and certified. A list of who can certify your documents is attached as *Appendix A*. Each document should contain a brief statement of what unit this relates to and how it relates to the required competency. **Information about the units of competence will be provided by the AIFL Course Coordinator for your qualification.**

You will usually need to combine several pieces of evidence together to get adequate cover for each unit.

Remember you can use a piece of evidence as many times as you like provided it shows that you have achieved the competencies outlined in the unit in question. This means that a piece of evidence such as a set of meeting notes can show your competence for more than one unit.

Section Three: What is a portfolio of evidence?

A portfolio is a collection of items - in this case, a collection of evidence of competence.

Portfolios will usually include a combination of many different types of evidence.

Evidence can take the form of:

- 🕒 Reports you have written
- 🕒 Statements made by you
- 🕒 Certificates/Statements of Attainment
- 🕒 Position Description
- 🕒 Current Resume
- 🕒 References from your employer or supervisor

A good portfolio will usually include:

A title page	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🕒 Your name 🕒 The qualification or individual units you are seeking recognition for 🕒 The date of submission
A Table of Contents	A listing of the contents of your portfolio
The evidence	The evidence must be clearly cross referenced against each performance criteria using the pro-forma supplied for each unit in the Application for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Form.

Dos	Don'ts
Do show reasons why you believe you are competent. e.g. I have been working in administration for three years. I believe I am competent because I finish my tasks on time, I have a strong record on working safely and I follow plans precisely. Evidence of this is contained	Don't assume you're competent simply because you have been doing the job for a long time. e.g. I have been working in administration for three years.. My tasks include planning meetings, preparing spreadsheets, budgeting, etc

<p>in my supervisor's report, which is Item 1 in my portfolio.</p>	
<p>Do get external support for your examples. Wherever possible, back up your claims by reports from witnesses or supervisors, or maybe even prizes, awards, qualifications or newspaper items.</p>	<p>Don't rely on your own word only to prove your competence. It is the weakest form of evidence.</p>

Evidence groups

Documents	<p>Documents are things you create or help create in the workplace. For example for frontline managers, documents may include reports, policies or procedures that you have written. The only problem with this type of evidence is that, while it shows what you produce, it does not provide evidence of HOW you produced it. Because management is a process it is vital to show HOW you manage as well as what you produce. So, while this is an excellent source of evidence, you will generally need to support it with other types of evidence that can demonstrate more about HOW you managed.</p>
Records	<p>Records can be any type of work or professional document. For example; copies of qualifications, result notices or even extracts from your work diary are your professional records. Minutes of meetings, timesheets and personnel records are examples of work records. It is often useful to have work records verified by another person from your workplace. They can do this by writing a statement to this effect on the copy of the record you are submitting and then signing it.</p>
Statements by you	<p>These statements about your own competence must be written. You may write a special report that provides a case study relevant to the unit. You could describe how you set up a process, or how you resolved a particularly difficult situation. You could use the report to address several units of competence (especially if no other evidence is available). Once again, a statement by you will need to be verified by a third party.</p>

Section Four: Submitting your portfolio of evidence?

Once you have submitted your evidence the assessor reviews it against the units of competency in accordance with the assessor guide for Recognition of Prior Learning.

The evidence is reviewed together as a whole and recorded by the assessor using documents developed by the Australian Institute of Flexible Learning. The assessor needs to ensure that your evidence is:

- Valid:** Does your evidence relate directly to the unit of competency; demonstrate relevant skills and knowledge; and is it appropriate to the relevant level required by the competency?
- Sufficient:** Does your evidence include all the critical tasks and knowledge in the unit of competency; prove you have performed these over a period of time and in different situations; and have you submitted enough different forms of evidence?
- Authentic:** Can each piece of evidence be clearly identified as your own work and is it dated and referenced; where your evidence is part of teamwork, is your specific role clearly defined; are qualifications, references, licences etc presented by you certified documents; are your written accounts about what you can do verified by a credible third party and/or supported by documented evidence?
- Current:** Does the evidence demonstrate you have the skills and knowledge required to meet current performance requirements and contemporary practice in the workplace?

An interview, whether face-to-face, by telephone or other means is a common part of any recognition process. This allows the assessor to:

1. Ask questions to explore the extent of your knowledge
2. Seek clarification about items of evidence
3. Ensure the whole competency is demonstrated

Section Five: Assessment

The assessor will use a six stage model to establish your suitability for RPL.

An overview of the six stages is as follows:

The Assessor -

1 Context	Will establish the environment in which recognition takes place – the industry, the location, whether in a workplace or a training organisation, the level of qualification sought and so on.
2 Information	Ensures everyone involved is informed about the process of recognition in consistent ways, and ensures you, the candidate, understand the expectations of the assessment process.
3 Evidence	Will assess proof of competency – will negotiate with you, the candidate (within guidelines) on how you prove your competence and what rules are applied to this evidence?
4 Assessment	Will collect and measure the evidence against the standards of performance required - using the assessment tools and recording the evidence.
5 Decision making	Once all evidence is collected and measured, will aggregate/evaluate this and make a decision about competency which is communicated to you, the candidate.
6 What next?	Will help you to decide “where to next?” This may include ‘gap’ training to complete a qualification, advice about the next level of qualification available, career advice for the newly qualified, or the development of an action plan if not yet competent.

Section Six: Issuance of Qualification

All certificates issued by the AIFL must follow the steps outlined below in the same order (a checklist is provided to ensure the procedure is followed):

- ⌚ On conclusion of the course or unit of competency, the course coordinator completes and signs the Final Assessment Form that the candidate has successfully gained RPL for their chosen units (**F16 Generic Final Assessment Form**)
- ⌚ All relevant student information, results and signed authorisation documents is forwarded to the Reporting & Curriculum Maintenance Officer who verifies eligibility against the Training Package rules and student information
- ⌚ The Reporting & Curriculum Maintenance Officer enters the details onto the resulting database and produces the certificates/statements/transcripts
- ⌚ Certificates and Statement of attainments will clearly identify how each unit of competency has been gained
 - Eg: RPL - Recognition of Prior Learning
 - CT - Credit Transfer
 - C - Competent
- ⌚ The results form and certificates/statements/transcripts are returned to the relevant course coordinator to check and the checklist is signed
- ⌚ The Reporting & Curriculum Maintenance Officer arranges for the certificates/statements/transcripts to be:
 - signed by the General Manager
 - awarded at a Graduation/Award ceremony, or
 - forwarded to the course participant by Registered Mail within four weeks of receiving the Final Assessment Form provided course fees have been paid in full.

Glossary

<p>Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)</p>	<p>RPL is an assessment process which recognizes what you have learnt through formal, non-formal & informal learning</p> <p>These experiences are measured against the learning outcomes, competency outcomes or standards of the qualification/units you want to do. If what you have learned at work or elsewhere is relevant and meets the requirements of your chosen course or qualification.</p> <p>The AIFL recognizes your existing skills, knowledge and experience gained throughout your life, regardless of how they have been acquired, and use them towards the achievement of a nationally recognized qualification or full unit of competency.</p>
<p>Portfolio</p>	<p>Collection of evidence relating to yourself</p>
<p>Competency</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Unit of competency</p>	<p>This is a description of the job or work function that you need to perform. Selected units to be completed to successfully gain a Nationally recognised qualification</p>
<p>Qualification</p>	<p>Means a formal certification, issued by a relevant approved body, in recognition that a person has achieved learning outcomes or competencies relevant to identified individual, professional, industry or commercial needs.</p>
<p>Statement of attainment</p>	<p>A nationally recognised statement awarded for attainment of units of competency which partially contribute to completion of a qualification</p>
<p>Credit</p>	<p>Credit is the value assigned for the recognition of equivalence in content and learning outcomes between different types of learning and/or qualifications. Credit reduces the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification and may be</p>

	through credit transfer, recognition of prior learning or advanced standing.
Credit Transfer	Credit transfer is a process that provides students with agreed and consistent credit outcomes for components of a qualification based on identified equivalence in content and learning outcomes between matched qualifications.
Assessment	Assessment is a process to determine a student's achievement of expected learning outcomes and may include a range of written and oral methods and practice or demonstration.
Assessor	The course coordinator or teacher of the qualification who will assess your work
Currency	Currency relates to the age of the evidence presented by students to demonstrate that they are still competent. Competency requires demonstration of current performance, so the evidence must be from either the present or the very recent past.

Appendix A

List of authorised person to verify documents:

- ⌚ a justice of the peace or a bail justice
- ⌚ a public notary
- ⌚ an Australian lawyer (within the meaning of the Legal Profession Act 2004)
- ⌚ a clerk to an Australian lawyer
- ⌚ the prothonotary or a deputy prothonotary of the Supreme Court, the registrar or the deputy registrar of the County Court, the principal registrar of the Magistrates' Court or the registrar or the deputy registrar of the Magistrates Court
- ⌚ the registrar of probates and the assistant registrar of probates
- ⌚ the associate to a judge of the Supreme Court or of the County Court
- ⌚ the secretary of a master of the Supreme Court or of the County Court
- ⌚ a person registered as a patent attorney under Chapter 20 of the Patents Act 1990 of the Commonwealth
- ⌚ a member of the police force
- ⌚ the sheriff or deputy sheriff
- ⌚ a member or a former member of either House of the Parliament
- ⌚ a member or former member of either House of Parliament of the Commonwealth
- ⌚ a councillor of a municipality
- ⌚ a senior officer of a council as defined in the Local Government Act 1989
- ⌚ a registered medical practitioner with the meaning of the Medical Practice Act 1994
- ⌚ a registered dentist within the meaning of the Dental Practice Act 1999
- ⌚ a veterinary practitioner
- ⌚ a pharmacist
- ⌚ a principal in the (State) teaching service
- ⌚ the manager of a bank
- ⌚ a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia or CPA or the National Institute of Accountants
- ⌚ the secretary of a building society
- ⌚ a minister of religion authorised to celebrate marriages (not a civil celebrant)
- ⌚ a person employed under Part 3 of the Public Administration Act 2004 with a classification that is prescribed as a classification for statutory declarations, or who holds office in a statutory authority with such classification.
- ⌚ a fellow of the Institute of Legal Executives