

# CMI Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

AB/GUD/0002 • Sept 2021 • V5.0



## History

Date	Amendments made
September 2021 V5	SQA new principles amended
October 2018 V4	Complete revision of the policy to add clarity. Addition of text taken from Ofqual documentation and cross checking of documentation from regulators in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Outlining suggested Centre timelines/process and addition of timescales for CMI to acknowledge RPL applications. Addition of scenarios in which RPL may or may not be used. Information added regarding the list of regulated qualifications. Addition of provision for Centres to charge for RPL applications.

## Distribution

### Distribution List

- All Quality Managers
- All Lead Moderators
- New Partner Relationship Manager
- Customer Service team
- Assessment and Support Coordinator
- HE Partnership Support Executive
- Digital Delivery
- Quality Auditor

# Purpose

## Document Purpose

This guidance applies to all CMI Centres and Learners registered on a CMI qualification. This document aims to support and give clarification to Centres and their Learners on how CMI recognises Learners' previous achievements.

# Introduction

## Document Introduction

This document applies to all qualifications on credit-based frameworks. These include the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF), the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW).

# Regulatory Requirements

## Regulatory Requirements

Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition (August 2018) state the following:

Condition E10.1

Where an awarding organisation has in place a policy for the recognition of prior learning it must –

- (a) ensure that the policy which it has in place enables the awarding organisation to award qualifications in accordance with its Conditions of Recognition,
- (b) publish that policy, and
- (c) comply with that policy.

Condition H5

Results for a qualification must be based on sufficient evidence

H5.1 An awarding organisation must ensure that the result of each assessment taken by a Learner in relation to a qualification which the awarding organisation makes available reflects the level of attainment demonstrated by that Learner in the assessment.

H5.2 An awarding organisation must ensure that –

- (a) the marking of an assessment in relation to, and
- (b) the awarding of;

a qualification which it makes available takes into account all admissible evidence generated by a Learner as part of that assessment.

H5.3 Where an awarding organisation sets a rule as to the quantity or type of evidence generated by Learners which will be admissible in an assessment, it must ensure that –

- (a) the assessment makes the rule clear, and

(b) the rule is applied to all Learners taking the assessment (other than where any Reasonable Adjustments or Special Consideration require it to be altered).

H5.4 Where an awarding organisation sets a rule as to how the final mark for a qualification will be calculated from marks for different assessments, it must ensure that –

(a) the qualification makes the rule clear, and

(b) the rule is applied to all Learners taking the qualification (other than where any Reasonable Adjustments or Special Consideration require it to be altered).

It also meets the requirements of the SQA Accreditation Regulatory Principles (2021):

“The awarding body and its providers must ensure that its qualifications and their delivery assessment are inclusive, fair and accessible to learners: - arrangements for providers to manage recognition of prior learning and achievement (if applicable) ” Principle 14.

## Scope

### Scope

This procedure applies to all key stakeholders engaged with the CMI qualifications. This includes CMI Centres, Centre staff and CMI Learners

## Definition of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

### Definitions

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is an assessment process which makes use of the evidence from a Learner's previous non-certificated and certificated achievement(s) to demonstrate competence or achievement within a unit or qualification.

Through the RPL process, evidence of a Learner's previous achievement(s) (learning) is assessed against the assessment criteria of a unit.

The Regulatory Arrangements for Regulated Qualifications Framework gives the following definition of RPL and this definition is fully supported by Qualifications Wales and CEA Regulation:

E10.2 For the purposes of this Condition, 'recognition of prior learning' is the –

- (a) identification by an awarding organisation of any learning undertaken, and/or attainment, by a Learner –
  - (i) prior to that Learner taking a qualification which the awarding organisation makes available or proposes to make available, and
  - (ii) which is relevant to the knowledge, skills and understanding which will be assessed as part of that qualification, and
- (b) recognition by an awarding organisation of that learning and/or attainment through amendment to the requirements which a Learner must have satisfied before the Learner will be assessed or that qualification will be awarded.

A similar definition is given by the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework which provides the following explanation:

“The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the process for recognising learning that has its source in experience and/or previous formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts. This includes knowledge and skills gained within school, college and university and outside formal learning situations such as through life and work experiences.”

### **When to use RPL**

The RPL process is relevant where the Learner has any prior learning or attainment achieved prior to them registering for a CMI qualification which is relevant to the knowledge, skills and understanding which will be assessed as part of that qualification.

Evidence can draw on any aspect of a Learner's prior experience including:

- education and training (including certificated activities)
- work activities
- community or voluntary activities.

It may be useful to draw a distinction between different types of RPL:

- Recognition of prior certificated learning – learning for which certification has been provided by an educational organisation or awarding body
- Recognition of prior experiential learning – learning gained from experience but which has not been certificated.

### **Evidence required for RPL**

Evidence obtained through the RPL process must be assessed to the same rigorous quality levels as evidence obtained through any other process. There must be summative assessment of the evidence provided to ensure it meets assessment criteria of the unit being claimed.

### **Criteria required to be met for RPL to be awarded**

It remains the role of Assessors to ensure that assessment criteria are only deemed to have been met where evidence is:

#### **Valid:**

Does the evidence genuinely demonstrate that the demands of the assessment criteria have been met? For RPL, currency of evidence will be of particular concern. Does, for example, the evidence meet up-to-date demands or is it representative of practice that has significantly changed? Evidence used for RPL cannot date from more than 5 years before the date of application to the Centre for RPL and Assessors at the Centre must determine whether it is valid and authentic.

#### **Authentic:**

This involves consideration of whether the evidence being assessed is genuinely the work of the Learner. For example, the evidence may have been produced by somebody else, or may be the result of the work of a team. In the latter case, this would be acceptable if the assessment criteria was related to team/joint working, but not if it was being used as evidence of an activity which should have been carried out individually.

#### **Sufficient:**

There must be enough evidence to fully meet the requirements of the assessment criteria or learning outcomes being considered. If there is insufficient evidence to fully meet requirements, then evidence obtained through RPL must be complemented by additional evidence gained through other suitable assessment method(s) before requirements/outcomes can be said to have been met.

**Reliable:**

The evidence obtained through RPL should be such that an Assessor would arrive at the same assessment decision, were the assessment to be repeated.

If individuals can produce relevant evidence that meets the above conditions and the assessment criteria requirements, then recognition can be given for their existing knowledge, understanding or skills. If an individual can demonstrate that they meet all the learning outcomes and assessment criteria in a unit, then they can claim they have achieved that unit solely on the basis of their RPL achievement.

If, however, evidence from RPL is only sufficient to cover one or more learning outcomes or assessment criteria, or to partly meet the need of a learning outcome or assessment criteria, then additional assessment methods should be employed to generate sufficient evidence on which to base a safe assessment decision.

Learners are unlikely to have all the evidence they need to achieve a full unit and may need to produce additional evidence. RPL may be used in conjunction with other assessment methods such as professional discussion or observation to assess current performance.

Evidence from RPL is similar to that derived via any other acceptable assessment method. This means that where the standard of a unit is met by evidence obtained wholly or partly from RPL, an award can be made.

**RPL Process**

Learners wishing to claim RPL must approach their CMI Centre at the time of registration for the qualification. CMI will not deal with any claims directly from Learners. CMI Centres are required to have their own RPL policy and that policy must ensure it is in line with CMI RPL requirements. The CMI Centre RPL policy must:-

- be made available to CMI Learners.
- be clear and include timescales
- explain the process for complaints

Centres wishing to undertake RPL must ensure that:

- Evidence used for RPL cannot date from more than 5 years before the date of application to the Centre for RPL
- The process is carried out by CMI approved Centre staff with relevant levels of expertise to meet CMI requirements.

The RPL assessment should be carried out as an entire process, and the following stages are suggested as a process that Centres could follow. This means that the Assessor should:

- **Stage 1**  
Plan with the Learner – discuss with the Learner the evidence they wish to provide to claim RPL and decide whether the evidence is admissible. This could be within 15 working days of the date of application for RPL.
- **Stage 2**  
Allow the Learner to gather and present the evidence. This should be provided to the Centre within 10 working days of the conclusion of Stage 1.
- **Stage 3**  
Make a formal assessment decision and feedback the assessment decision to the Learner, confirming decisions and giving guidance on the available options (particularly in situations where the decision has been not to award credit). This should be done within 10 working days of the conclusion of Stage 2.
- **Stage 4**  
Register learner with CMI, notify [awardingbody@managers.org.uk](mailto:awardingbody@managers.org.uk) stating the unit(s) for which RPL is being claimed. Confirmation of this will be provided by CMI within 5 working days.
- **Stage 5**  
Maintain appropriate records for CMI moderation (in case this is required).

## At all stages

- Ensure that Learners are aware of their right to access the Centre's appeals process should they feel the RPL decision was unfair
- Ensure that Learners are aware of their right to access CMI's appeals process once the Centre's processes have been exhausted.

The Assessor must ensure that all learning outcomes and assessment criteria being claimed are covered and that records of assessment are maintained in the usual way. The process must be subject to the same quality assurance requirements as any other assessment method.

Therefore, there is not requirement to have any RPL approved by your QM as the RPL evidence will be moderated by CMI through our moderation processes. However, a record of any RPL claimed must be kept and this will be reviewed by your Quality Manager during your annual Centre quality assurance visit.

## Is it RPL?

### Scenario 1

A Learner has approached the Centre, wishing to undertake a CMI L5 Diploma in Management and Leadership. As part of the Diploma, the Centre is offering Unit 510 Managing Finance. The Learner is a Finance Manager in their full time job and feels that they should be awarded this unit on the basis of their work experience.

In this scenario, the Learner cannot just be awarded the unit. However, the Centre should review evidence of the Learner's knowledge and understanding to decide whether RPL would be appropriate. The Learner could submit as evidence work-based reports, presentations, and products that they had produced independently. The Centre would need to assess the evidence against all of the assessment criteria of the unit. The assessor would need to 'signpost' the evidence to show which assessment criteria are met and where. If the evidence did not sufficiently meet all of the assessment criteria, then additional assessment evidence will be required e.g. through additional written evidence, professional discussion etc. The Centre would retain appropriate records and carry out normal processes of marking and internal quality assurance.

### Scenario 2

A Learner has approached the Centre, wishing to undertake a CMI L5 Diploma in Management and Leadership. As part of the Diploma, the Centre is offering Unit 510 Managing Finance. The Learner states that they have achieved a finance qualification and have the certificate to prove it, but there is no other evidence.

In this scenario, the Learner cannot just be awarded the unit. However, the Centre would need to check that the qualification is not an RQF qualification. The Centre would check [www.gov.uk/find-a-regulated-qualification](http://www.gov.uk/find-a-regulated-qualification). If the qualification appeared on this, it would be deemed an 'exemption' and could not be claimed as it would 'double count' the credits already achieved in completing the original qualification.

If the qualification does not appear on the list of RQF qualifications, the Centre should review evidence of the Learner's knowledge and understanding to decide whether RPL would be appropriate. The Centre would need to satisfy themselves that the qualification as listed on the certificate satisfies the requirements of the unit's assessment criteria e.g. by checking the qualification syllabus etc. The Centre would retain appropriate records and carry out normal processes of marking and internal quality assurance and store appropriate records of the 'mapping process'.

### Scenario 3

A Learner has approached the Centre, wishing to undertake a CMI L5 Diploma in Management and Leadership. As part of the Diploma, the Centre is offering Unit 510 Managing Finance. The Learner states that they achieved a finance qualification and have the assessed evidence from that qualification.

In this scenario, the Centre would check RQF qualification list to ensure it did not appear. If the qualification did not appear, the Centre would need to assess the evidence against all of the assessment criteria of the unit. The assessor would need to 'signpost' the evidence to show which assessment criteria are met and where. If the evidence did not sufficiently meet all of the assessment criteria, then additional assessment evidence will be required e.g. through additional written evidence, professional discussion etc. The Centre would retain appropriate records and carry out normal processes of marking and internal quality assurance.

#### Scenario 4

A Learner has approached the Centre, wishing to undertake a CMI L5 Diploma in Management and Leadership. As part of the Diploma, the Centre is offering Unit 510 Managing Finance. The Learner states that 3 years ago they completed a BA (Hons) Business Management in which there was a very similar module. They have the dissertation they completed for the module saved on their computer, and the transcript/results to show that the module had been passed.

In this scenario, this could be considered for RPL as degree programmes do not sit on the RQF framework. The Centre would need to assess the evidence against all of the assessment criteria of the unit, and must verify the Learner's achievement of the module. The assessor would need to 'signpost' the evidence to show which ACs are met and where. If the evidence did not sufficiently meet all of the ACs, then additional assessment evidence might be required e.g. through additional written evidence, professional discussion etc. The Centre would retain appropriate records and carry out normal processes of marking and internal quality assurance.

#### Scenario 5

A Learner is undertaking a BA (Hons) Business Management at a university. The programme has been dual accredited to a L5 Diploma in Management and Leadership, and there are modules in each of the 3 years of the programme which are mapped and contribute to the evidence for the Diploma. The university has allowed the Learner direct entry to Year 2 of the programme on the basis that they completed a Foundation Degree at another institution. The Learner will then miss the mapped modules in Year 1. The Learner wants to know if they are eligible for the L5 Diploma.

In this scenario, the Learner could only be awarded the Diploma if the modules achieved in the years of study at the university allow them to meet the rules stated in the syllabus regarding TUT, credits etc. If the Learner cannot meet these rules and wishes to be awarded the Diploma, they will need to present sufficient evidence to meet the requirements of the CMI units which were 'missed' in Year 1 of the programme.

Question: This RPL seems like a lot of additional work for the Centre. Can the Centre charge the Learner for this?

Answer: Yes, reasonable additional charges could be made to the Learner. It is up to the Centre to determine the level of these charges.

When considering previous evidence for RPL, the Centre must pay due regard to the level of qualification previously achieved or the work experience gained to ensure that it is at a similar level of demand. Evidence from a level below the qualification being sought for RPL is not admissible and the Learner will have to complete the whole unit. Generally, the following should be used as guidance:

- Level 3 qualifications – comparable to A levels or experience gained in a first line management role.
- Level 5 qualifications – comparable to Year 2 of an undergraduate degree or experience gained in a middle management role.
- Level 7 qualifications – comparable to a postgraduate/Master's degree or experience gained in a senior/strategic management role.

## **Clarification of related terms**

### **Terms in this section**

A range of terms and processes are frequently confused with RPL. Centres should refer to these other CMI policies and procedures:

- Exemptions – see the CMI Exemption Policy and Procedure AB/PRO/0021/Oct2018/V3
- Equivalent Units – see the CMI Equivalent Units Policy and Procedure AB/PRO/0021/Oct2018/V2

CMI encourages the use of these processes where they are of value to Learners and/or Centres.

: