

# **CMI Awarding Body**

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy and  
Procedure - V8

# CMI Awarding Body

## Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy and Procedure

AB/POL/0028 - January 2026 - V8

### History

<b>Date</b>	<b>Amendments Made</b>
November 2025 / V8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Full review of policy and procedure</li><li>• Updated process for CMI Partner Connect</li><li>• Transferred to the new CMI Policy template.</li><li>• Change in name from SQA Accreditation to Qualifications Scotland Accreditation.</li></ul>
August 2023 / V7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Approved Centre - RPL Approval Process, stages 3 and 4 amended to show RPL evidence requirements and the process for RPL claims in CMI's moderation system (Approved Centres) and registration system (Registered Centres)</li></ul>
April 2023 / V6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complete revision of the policy to add clarity.</li><li>• Added information and clarification for Registered CMI Centres</li></ul>
September 2021 / V5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SQA new principles amended</li></ul>
October 2018 / V4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 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</li><li>• Addition of scenarios in which RPL may or may not be used. Information was added regarding the list of regulated qualifications.</li><li>• Addition of a provision for Centres to charge for RPL applications.</li></ul>

---

## Intended Audience

- CMI Centres (Approved and Registered)
- CMI Quality Managers
- CMI Markers and Moderators
- CMI Partner Relationship Managers
- CMI Partner Engagement Managers
- CMI Awarding Body Support Team

All of CMI's policies are published on the [CMI Policies Webpage](#)

## Purpose

This policy and procedure outlines CMI's approach to RPL for its qualifications. It is designed to offer clear guidance, support, and clarification to CMI Centres on how Learners can use RPL to gain credit towards their qualification(s). The policy distinguishes between the procedures to be followed by CMI Approved Centres and CMI Registered Centres. It enables Learners to have their previous learning and achievements formally recognised, potentially reducing any duplication in completing a qualification.

## Scope

This policy applies to all CMI Approved and Registered Centres, including their staff and Learners, as well as to relevant CMI staff. It ensures consistent application of RPL practices and supports compliance with the requirements of all CMI regulatory bodies.

## Regulatory Requirements

This policy meets the regulatory requirements set out by our regulators: Ofqual, CCEA Regulation, Qualifications Wales, and Qualifications Scotland Accreditation.

[Ofqual - General Conditions of Recognition](#)

[Qualifications Wales - Standard Conditions of Recognition](#)

[CCEA Regulation - General Conditions of Recognition](#)

[Qualifications Scotland Accreditation - Regulatory Principles \(2021\)](#)

Regulator or Relevant Regulatory Body	Reference Details	Legislation/Regulatory Reference
Ofqual	General Conditions of Recognition	Condition No: E10 Recognition of Prior Learning
Qualifications Wales	Standard Conditions of Recognition	Condition No: E10 Recognition of Prior Learning
CCEA Regulation	General Conditions of Recognition	Condition No: E10 Recognition of Prior Learning
Qualifications Scotland Accreditation	Regulation Principles 2021	Principle 14. The Awarding Body and its providers must ensure that its qualifications and their delivery and assessment are fair, inclusive and accessible to Learners.

## Definition of RPL

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

Through the RPL process, evidence of a Learner's previous learning and achievements is assessed against the Assessment Criteria (AC) and Learning Outcomes (LOs) of a unit.

**Definition of RPL by Ofqual, CCEA Regulation and Qualifications Wales:**

### Condition J - Interpretations and definitions

#### J1.8 - Recognition of Prior Learning

- (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 an amendment to the requirements which a Learner must have satisfied before the Learner will be assessed or that qualification will be awarded.

---

## Definition of RPL by Qualifications Scotland and Accreditation:

### Glossary: Terms and Definitions

Describes a process used for the purpose of recognising competence against a given set of standards, competencies, or learning outcomes.

## RPL Principles

- CMI uses the regulators' definitions of RPL.
- Approved Centres must have their own RPL policy, and this must align with CMI's Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy and Procedure.
- Registered Centres will follow the CMI's Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy and Procedure.
- CMI will maintain oversight of all instances where RPL is applied.
- RPL can be used to claim partial or full units within qualifications. Where partial claims are made, the remainder of the AC are to be assessed using CMI Assessment Briefs. Centres may also devise their own assessment; however, this will require approval by CMI before use.
- Any evidence provided to support an RPL claim must have been achieved within the last 5 years.
- RPL evidence must be assessed by a suitably qualified Assessor and IQA (Approved Centres). In a Registered Centre this will be done by a CMI Assessor.
- RPL evidence used for assessment must be:
  - Valid
  - Authentic
  - Sufficient
  - Reliable
  - Current
  - Fair
- RPL evidence must be at a similar or higher level to the level of the unit being claimed for.
- RPL is subject to external quality assurance monitoring through CMI's moderation system (Approved CMI Centres only).
- Approved CMI Centres must notify CMI by selecting the RPL button on the moderation claim stage against the individual when they are submitting claims to the CMI moderation system. Moderation claims with RPL will be sampled by CMI in line with CMI's moderation strategy.
- Registered CMI Centres must notify us by completing a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Application form through CMI Partner Connect.

## Areas which do not fall into RPL

Where units have previously been achieved as part of a CMI qualification suite, credits/units will automatically be applied without a formal RPL application process.

---

For qualifications with shared units, for example, qualifications at the same level and subject which are available as Awards, Certificates, Diplomas, Extended Diplomas, Learners should be registered on the appropriate qualification. Where they progress from a smaller qualification, for example, from an Award to a Certificate, the shared units can be used to top up those qualifications as long as they meet the rules of combination within the qualification requirements. All credits/units that have previously been achieved by the Learner will automatically be transferred to the new qualification registration.

This won't apply where the Learner has been registered on a previous version/framework of the qualification. Centres, in this instance, may consider whether the CMI's Equivalent Unit Policy would apply. This can be found on [CMI's Policy Page](#) and CMI Partner Connect.

## **RPL Procedure**

### **CMI Approved Centres - RPL Procedure**

#### **Stage 1: Awareness, Information, Advice and Guidance**

The first step is for the Centre to make their Learners aware during their induction process of the opportunity to use RPL towards their qualification. Learners must be made aware of:

- What RPL is
- The Centre's processes for claiming achievement through RPL
- How the Centre will support and guide Learners on RPL requirements.
- What is involved in the application for RPL
- Any associated costs for RPL applications
- Details of timelines
- Their right to appeal an RPL decision

---

## Stage 2: Pre-assessment

The Centre and the Learner will collate evidence, and the Centre will map this to the relevant AC/LOs/unit(s) of the CMI qualification. The Centre may create a learning plan to document the evidence collation. This should take place at the beginning of the programme.

## Stage 3: Assessment

This stage requires the Centre to gather and review the evidence to make judgements about the Learner's prior learning in relation to the CMI Unit's LOs and AC.

All assessment principles must be applied to ensure the integrity of units and qualifications. The evidence needs to meet the standards of the unit(s) and show appropriate evidence of current knowledge, understanding and skills.

Evidence may include:

- Qualification certificates/unit/component transcripts
- Work experience records, validated by managers
- Past portfolios of evidence made by the Learner
- Reports validated as being the Learner's own unaided work
- Witness testimonies/professional discussions
- Completed assignments or tasks that have been created to fill any gaps in the Learner's work.

The Assessor must be satisfied that the evidence from the Learner meets the standard for all of the LOs and AC. If any gaps are identified, then the Learner may undertake the normal CMI assessment(s) in order to be awarded the qualification, but it is permitted that they do so without attending additional learning sessions. Where the Centre wishes to use a Centre-Devised Assessment to complete any gaps in the learning, they will need to apply to CMI to use a Centre-Devised Assessment. Please refer to the Centre-Devised Assessment Policy on the [CMI Policies page](#) and on CMI Partner Connect.

## Stage 4: Certification

All evidence submitted and assessed for RPL must be referenced clearly for Internal Quality Assurance and CMI moderation.

The assessment process for RPL will be subject to the same quality assurance processes as standard assessment processes. If it is identified that there is insufficient evidence, a decision will be made that further evidence is required, or the Learner will be required to undertake the normal CMI assessment processes.

Centres must declare on the CMI moderation system that RPL has been applied, and these are sampled in line with the CMI moderation sampling strategy, which is detailed within [CMI Quality Assurance](#)

---

[Handbook](#). If it is identified, as part of our sampling, that a Centre has not indicated that RPL has been used, this will be investigated by the CMI Quality Manager and recorded within the CMI Quality Assurance Activity reports and may result in an investigation for maladministration.

The Quality Manager will review the Centre's RPL policy and activity at the Quality Assurance Activity to ensure that processes are applied consistently and fairly and that any decisions on RPL have been applied by staff who are competent to assess and make decisions around RPL. Any actions will be set by the Quality Manager and recorded within the Quality Assurance Activity reports.

Where all IQA and CMI moderation has been successfully completed, Learners will be certificated with the required unit(s).

## **CMI Registered Centres - RPL Procedure**

### **Stage 1: Awareness, Information, Advice and Guidance**

The first step for the Centre is to make their Learners aware during their induction process of the opportunity to use RPL towards their qualification.

Learners must be made aware of:

- What RPL is
- The Centre's process for claiming achievement through RPL
- How the Centre will support and guide Learners on RPL requirements
- What is involved in the application for RPL
- Any associated costs for RPL applications
- Details of timelines
- Their right to appeal an RPL decision

### **Stage 2: Pre-assessment**

The Centre and the Learner will collate evidence, and the Centre will map this to the relevant unit(s) of the CMI qualification. The Centre may create a learning plan to document the evidence collation.

### **Stage 3: Application for RPL Assessment**

The assessment of RPL must be conducted by CMI to determine that the evidence is sufficient to meet the LOs and AC of the Unit.

The CMI Centre will be required to submit a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Application through CMI Partner Connect. The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Application will be reviewed by the CMI

---

Assessment team, and the outcome of this review will be communicated to the Centre within 20 working days from receipt of a fully completed application.

#### **Stage 4: Outcome**

Where the RPL application is successful for a complete unit, the Centre will be notified via CMI Partner Connect, and certification for the unit will be arranged.

Where the RPL application is successful for a partial unit, the Centre will be notified via CMI Partner Connect, and the Learner will be required to undertake additional assessment activity to meet the remaining AC in the unit. For any partial unit RPL claims, at the Assessment Criteria level, a PDF copy of the formal RPL decision must be attached to the marking service submission at the point of submitting the assessment covering the remainder of the unit.

Where the RPL application is unsuccessful, the Centre will be notified via CMI Partner Connect. The Learner can then decide whether to undertake the unit via written assessment, choose a different unit, or appeal the RPL decision.

## **Appeal**

Where an RPL decision has not been agreed for a specific unit based on the evidence provided, Learners and/or Centres can raise an appeal.

#### **Approved Centres**

RPL Appeals should be raised initially to the Centre using the Centre's Appeal process. However, if the Learner is not satisfied once the Centre's Appeal process has been exhausted, then an appeal can be raised directly with CMI by the Centre on behalf of the Learner. If CMI disagree an RPL decision at the moderation stage, this can also be appealed. In both instances, the Centre should use the Appeal Form (Created by Centre), which is available in CMI Partner Connect.

#### **Registered Centres**

RPL Appeals should be raised directly with CMI by the Registered Centre on behalf of the Learner. The Centre should use the Appeal Form (Created by Centre), which is available in CMI Partner Connect.

Please refer to the CMI Appeals Procedure on the [CMI Policy page](#).

---

## Higher Education (HE) Centres - Dual Accredited Programmes

As regulated Awarding Bodies, HE Centres are expected to have their own established RPL policies and procedures in place. It is entirely the HE Centre's own decision whether (or not) to award RPL/exemption for its programmes. However, CMI will still ensure that any use of RPL for CMI qualifications aligns with its own RPL guidelines and that CMI maintains oversight of all instances where RPL is applied. Once a HE Centre has made an RPL decision related to a mapped module within a dual-accredited programme, they must contact their assigned CMI Quality Manager to discuss the proposed claim. CMI will then review the application and, if approved, will update the Learner's record accordingly.

## MOD Learners

Learners at CMI Registered MOD Centres can make a direct application to CMI for RPL by submitting a request to the [Awarding Body Mailbox](#) . The CMI MOD Quality Manager will make contact with the Learner regarding any MOD Learner RPL requests.

## Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed in line with CMI's Document Control Policy.