Recognition of Prior Learning

RPL Handbook

Conwal and Associates Pty Ltd, trading as Conwal Institute RTO31190
www.conwalinstitute.edu.au

RPL handbook for staff and students
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Introduction

Recognition of prior learning, also referred to as RPL, is the formal acknowledgement of a person’s current skills and knowledge, no matter how, when, or where the learning occurred (Department of Education, Training and Employment). It can also include recognition of current competencies.

What is RPL?

RPL recognises any relevant learning that the candidate has acquired, whether it was from informal or formal training, workplace experience, or general life experience. Recognition of prior learning is a process whereby, through assessment, acknowledgement is given to learning that has already been acquired. The RPL process allows the candidate to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. At Conwal Institute, candidates have the opportunity to complete an RPL self-assessment checklist and/or an online self-assessment of work experience and life skills and/or undergo a series of assessments specifically designed to assist the candidate to display their competence to an assessor.

Through RPL, a candidate may be awarded a single unit or several units of competence. As a result, the candidate would be able to complete their studies in a shorter period of time.

Why should you apply for RPL?

If you apply for RPL and your application is successful, you could:

- Eliminate or reduce the need for training in skills and knowledge you already have
- Complete your qualification in a shorter time
- More quickly advance to a higher level qualification if you wish

How do I apply for RPL?

To apply for RPL, please talk to your Course Advisor and/or your Trainer. They will be able to provide you with the necessary information.

What are the processes involved in the application?

The RPL process in 7 steps

1. Candidate is provided information about the RPL process
2. Candidate completes self-assessment either online or through your assessor
3. Application is assessed
4. Complete a series of online quizzes and competency conversations
5. Upload evidence and a Practical Skills Report/Third Party Report or submit to your assessor
6. All evidence is reviewed
7. RPL outcome of application advised
How will I be assessed?

To demonstrate what you know and can do, you need to present “evidence” as part of an overall assessment process that meets the learning outcomes of the unit(s) of competence. This evidence might include presenting a portfolio of evidence, submitting examples of your work, undertaking an oral or written assessment activity, being observed in an actual workplace or classroom setting, or some combination of these options.

Your evidence will be assessed against the four principles of assessment (Australian Skills Quality Authority, 2014):

Validity

Assessment must ensure the candidate has met all the requirements specified in the relevant unit of competency.

Reliability

Ensure assessments are conducted in a way that ensures decisions about competency are consistent and that they are consistent between assessors.

Fairness

Consider the individual candidate’s needs and characteristics, fully inform the candidate about the assessment process, and where appropriate, provide for reasonable adjustment.

Flexibility

Ensure assessments draw on a range of methods appropriate to the context, the unit of competency, and the needs of the candidate.

What types of evidence should you provide?

Evidence is any information that proves what you know and can do. Use direct examples of your own work to demonstrate your abilities.

To support your application for RPL, the evidence must show your experience and skills match the learning outcomes of the module or unit of competency or course. You need to provide supporting evidence such as:

- Certificates from accredited vocational education and training courses (certified by a Justice of the Peace)
- Results from other non-accredited courses from various education and training providers
- Certificates and statements of attainment from in-house courses sponsored by employers or professional bodies (certified by a Justice of the Peace)
- Samples of work
- Statement of duties
- Letters from employers verifying vocational skills or otherwise providing evidence of the ways in which applicants have applied their knowledge and skills
- Letters from clients, verifying work done
- Details of community activities involving significant responsibilities
- Records of workplace activities
- Portfolio of evidence
• Business, project, or task plans
• Proposals or reviews
• Presentations to clients or at conferences
• Designs
• Test reports
• Internal memos
• Minutes of meetings (that demonstrate your contribution)
• Employment performance reviews
• Testaments from others witnessing your attainments

The assessor will be looking for evidence that is:

**Valid**
Ensure the evidence you have presented has direct relevance to the unit’s learning outcomes. The evidence must show that you have met all the requirements specified in the unit of competency.

**Sufficient**
Ensure that there is enough evidence, and the evidence assessed is of sufficient quality to meet the requirements specified in the unit of competency.

**Authentic**
Ensure the assessment evidence gathered is your own work.

**Current**
Competency judgements rely on evidence that demonstrates current skills and knowledge; this means the evidence you present must be from either the present or the very recent past – we ask that you are currently employed within the industry and have been for approximately three years. Alternatively, if you are not currently working in the industry, you have been up until 12 months ago.

**Collecting evidence**
It is your responsibility to gather and assemble evidence to support your claim for recognition with enough detail to help the assessor reach a decision.

The assessor will be looking for evidence that you can do the tasks required as outlined in the learning outcomes. While one source of evidence may not demonstrate much on its own, when corroborated by a number of other sources, it can help to build up a picture of your competence.

**Assistance provided for RPL**
Conwal Institute offers RPL and promotes RPL to its clients by means of this handbook, brochures, and the Conwal Institute website, to make RPL assessment an easier process either online or through one of our accredited assessors. We also have specialist administration support staff who can provide ongoing assistance to support your RPL application.

**Dealing with confidential material**
No institution or employer expects you to breach security in order to provide evidence. Where there is a need to inspect evidence, arrangements can be made to ensure that security is not compromised. Please discuss any issues or concerns you may have with your assessor.
Keeping evidence up-to-date
Evidence has a limited life span because skills and abilities depend on practice and change over time. For the most part, you will be performing similar tasks over time and this provides a ready source of renewed evidence and reflects your ever-increasing level of proficiency.

Assessment interview
Once you have collected your evidence, it needs to be reviewed by the RPL assessor to ensure that the evidence does in fact provide sufficient proof to match all the elements of the unit or units. This can be done in two ways, either on our online RPL process or through one of the accredited assessors, where the assessor can discuss the evidence, ask questions, and identify any elements requiring gap training or further information.

Underpinning knowledge
During your assessment interview you will be asked to provide answers to oral questions that allow the assessor to ensure you have the underpinning knowledge required to meet the elements or performance criteria.

Underpinning knowledge is important because you are only competent in your knowledge when you understand not only what you are doing, but also why you are doing it. You may also be required to explain how the role could be performed in a different context or organisation.

RPL assessment outcomes
You will be advised by the RPL assessor of the outcome of your RPL submission once all evidence has been completed. If you are successful, your result will be recorded as RPL granted, meaning competent for RPL. If you are unsuccessful, your result will be notified that you were unsuccessful in your application for RPL.

Appealing the RPL decision
Applicants have the option of appealing the RPL decision if they wish. For more information about the appeals process, go to: www.conwalinstitute.edu.au

How long does it take to assess my application?
You will receive written notification within four (4) weeks of lodging your application. The time taken to process applications varies depending upon the application details and supporting evidence. However, you will be notified by the assessor of any variation to the time frame.

Fee structure
Fees will be processed in accordance with an individual’s recognition, experience, and qualifications.
Overseas qualifications

If you hold a qualification gained overseas, it can be used to support your RPL application and used as evidence towards the qualification you are seeking.

Your documents and qualifications need to be certified, and must be in English or translated into English. If you are seeking advanced standing and you cannot provide sufficient documentation, you may be required to undergo assessments to demonstrate your skills.

Translations can be done by the following organisations:

Translating and Interpreting Service
Ph: 131 450

Department of Immigration and Border Protection
Ph: 131 881

Website: https://www.tisnational.gov.au

Important additional information

- Ensure you have certified photocopies of qualifications or statements of attainment
- Ensure you have written confirmation from existing and previous employers regarding your work experience
- You will have the opportunity to clarify points in the interview
- If you are unsure about any of the processes, remember to ask for help