



What is Recognition of Prior Learning?

Recognition of Prior Learning, also known as RPL, is a form of assessment that acknowledges skills and knowledge (known within the VET system as competencies) gained.

The skills and knowledge being assessed may come from a range of sources including previous studies, work experience and life experience

This means that some students:

- may be able to provide evidence that they meet all of the performance criteria for a particular unit of competency
- will not need to complete the assessment tasks of a subject

This also means that students:

- A student must show that they satisfy **all performance criteria** to obtain credit for the unit of competency.

RPL can only be granted by a qualified assessor working with or on behalf of RTO's (Registered Training Organisation)

Recognition of Prior Learning is a process where current skills and knowledge are assessed against units of competency. This assessment can occur independently of additional study or training.

In order to grant RPL, the assessor must be confident that the candidate is competent against the current endorsed competency standards or outcomes specified in the Australian Qualifications Framework accredited courses

Example: If you regularly volunteer, or are employed as an outdoor Guide, instructor or a manager of a canteen at community events, you will have some skills and knowledge that may **FORM PART** of the learning outcomes of an accredited training course.

If you have volunteered or worked in a field that is relevant to a formal course of study, you may be able to demonstrate competency through your experience that will be acceptable for the RPL process

Rule for Evidence

You need to provide evidence that you meet the performance criteria for the unit of competency.

The processes used to assess RPL applications may take several (not mutually exclusive) forms, for example:

- participation in exactly the same or modified versions of the assessment you would be required to complete as part of the full course; assessment based on a portfolio of evidence;
- direct observation of demonstration of skill or competence;
- reflective papers, journals or portfolios that relate past learning to the learning or competency outcomes of the current course or qualification;
- provision of examples of work drawn from the workplace, social, community or other setting in which you may apply your learning, skill or competence;
- testimonials of learning, skill or competence; and combinations of any of the above

All evidence submitted must be your own or directly relate to yourself. You will be asked to sign a document to this effect.

When submitting and reviewing evidence during the recognition process the following points should be remembered

THE EVIDENCE MUST be:

VALID

The means that the information and evidence is relevant to the qualification or competency being applied for, is well-founded and adds weight to the RPL application.

Does it relate to the topic in question?

SUFFICIENT

Is it enough to make a judgment on competence?

AUTHENTIC

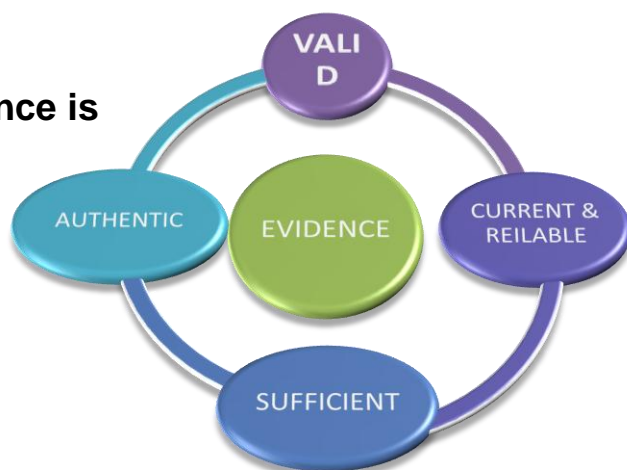
Means that the information and evidence provided is genuine and trustworthy

REILABLE

Means that the evidence can withstand scrutiny, has integrity and reasonably indicates that the applicant is able to perform a task to a specified standard with regularity and consistency

CURRENT

Less than 3 years old and you perform this task regularly



Type of Evidence	Interview	Currently Performing Task at Work	Previous Qualifications	Other Training Courses	Work History	Other <i>(Please state)</i>
<i>Valid</i> <i>(Evidence gathered in a range of contexts)</i>	✓	✓			✓	
<i>Current</i> <i>(evidence relates to current work practices)</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<i>Authentic</i> <i>(Must be the candidates own work)</i>		✓	✓	✓		<i>Challenge Test</i>
<i>Sufficient</i> <i>(evidence must cover all elements of the competency)</i>					✓	

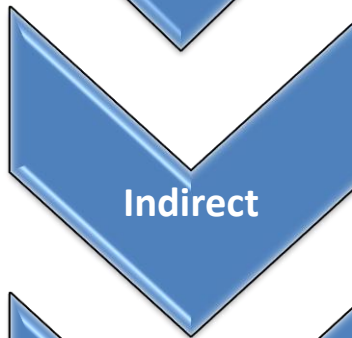
It may help you to have in mind that competency-based training is concerned with outcomes – i.e. you being able to demonstrate competency. Under these conditions, you are not required to undertake studies for those parts of a qualification in which you are already competent.

BUT – you are required – if seeking RPL- to PROVE- that you already have these competencies irrespective of how they have been achieved.

Types of Evidence



- obtained when an assessor observes actual performance in a workplace, or via videos or by examining products made



- when it is not possible or desirable to be assessed directly as it may be too costly or involve risks. Indirect evidence is gained through projects, simulations and role plays



- allows the assessor to infer competency through written or oral questioning, tests done off-the-job, or testimonials from third party sources

Tips for RPL Evidence Submissions

To ensure you submit relevant and sufficient evidence for the RPL process, simply follow the guideline below:

- Read and understand the unit competencies first, before making a decision on applying for RPL
- Assess your acquired knowledge and skills for the unit and ensure that you are able to **submit sufficient evidence** for all the outlined competencies for that particular unit
- Gather relevant supporting materials as evidence
- Attach evidence for each separate competency for the unit
- Ensure evidence is **relevant to the competency**
- Supplying RPL evidence to support unit competencies is based on **Quality not Quantity**
- Ensure evidence folders are clearly labelled as to the unit of competency the evidence is supporting
- Assuming that performing a particular task regularly over a long period of time **does not mean** that you can perform that task competently to meet the performance criteria of the unit of competency

Who Will Assess the Evidence I Submit?

All submissions will be reviewed and examined by highly trained, qualified and experienced trainer/assessors with expertise in the subject, content or skills area, as well as knowledge of, and expertise in, RPL policies and procedures.

RPL evidence submissions will be marked against the given criteria, assessment will be made based on:

1. How closely you are able meet the given competencies
2. The depth of evidence you submit
3. The extent and scope of prior Learning you have acquired
4. Your ability to provide relevant evidence and ultimately;
5. Your ability to prove you are competent in the unit you are applying for

But What If.....?

ISSUES

- I do not have a log book of all of my past activities. Do I have to go back now and make one up?
- “How do I prove that I can do it? I know I can as I have been employed to run these activities for the past ?? Years”

SOLUTIONS

- Statutory declarations
- Tesimonials
- Field Assessments
- Copy of Work Rosters
- Photographs, Video's
- And similar forms of evidence

How can you apply for RPL for a subject?



These are the steps involved in obtaining RPL:

1. Complete the Online enrolment <http://www.e-cademysolutions.com.au>
2. And then nominate “I wish to apply for recognition of prior learning to indicate that you wish to apply for RPL for the Course or unit of competency.
3. After payment of the Enrolment fee, you can immediately print the RPL Self-Appraisal Kit from your student log in.
4. After receiving the RPL Self-Appraisal Kit you have 14 days to decide if you want to continue with the RPL process. Noting that additional cost will be applicable for units of competency that require completion via other methods than RPL
5. If you decide to continue the RPL process, complete the information required for the RPL process and return it to our office within the designated timeframe – note RPL has a 3 months completion date from enrolment
6. If you decide not to continue with the RPL process, then your enrolment continues in your selected course, so please contact the office to make appropriate arrangements.
7. You need to complete this kit and submit it for assessment to:
Adventure Resources And Promotion Services
PO Box 749, Windsor NSW 2756
Or Email: rpl@aboveandbelow.com.au

The RPL Self-Appraisal Kit

The Kit consists of:

- An explanation of the RPL process;
- Specific details relating to the performance criteria for each unit of competency in which you have enrolled. Each performance criteria is accompanied by an evidence guide and a checklist for you to complete.
- A checklist relating to workplace skills and attributes

 Traps	 Tips
In many cases the RPL process can be exhausting, frustrating and downright stressful for both the applicant and the RTO's	
<p>The applicant would like their skills, knowledge and experience to be recognised and to avoid any unnecessary work for areas they already feel competent in.</p>	<p>The RTO needs to ensure they do not breach the compliance requirements placed upon them as doing so could lead to serious consequences such as suspension or cancellation of their RTO status.</p>
<p>Describing how and when you have done something well, without getting to the heart of the purpose (the intended or expected result) of that activity and what was actually achieved by your good performance</p>	<p>Effective performance is all about producing an intended or expected result. Try to think of positive outcomes that you have achieved as a direct result of your competency. This is more difficult than it sounds, but if you can master this your portfolio of evidence will be very powerful. This principle can be applied to any other situation when you need to influence or impress a third party. For example, when writing a resume or preparing a funding proposal or tender submission. Similar to the tip above, if you can prove these results or outcomes your competency will be indisputable. Statistics (published or otherwise), evaluation studies, winning tenders or awards; these are all ways that of proving positive outcomes or results.</p> <p>The examples over the page in the right hand column illustrate how powerful evidence can be when you draw attention to outcomes</p>
<p>Validity <i>Saying something is simply not enough</i></p>	<p>Documents like resumes are merely saying something in writing (statement) that need to be backed up by supporting evidence. How will you back up these statements?</p>
<p>Hard Evidence <i>If it isn't in writing, it doesn't count</i></p>	<p>All evidence needs to be documented and many include testimonies, reference letters etc, as long as they are recorded and validated</p> <p>Validation means that they can be verified and proved beyond doubt</p>
<p>Overseas, Non-Accredited and or University Qualifications <i>These may not be measurable against the Australian VET Qualification Framework</i></p>	<p>These qualifications may have different terminology, components, learning outcomes or elements that we are simply unable to accurately map against the units of competency associated with a VET Course <i>If we can not map it we can not award it</i> Your evidence needs to demonstrate your work, experience, currency, knowledge and ability against AQTF requirements</p>

<p>Non VET Recognition</p> <p>What your company or another organisation accept, eg in-house training or association training, may not be enough or correct for RPL under the AQTF</p>	<p>If we do not know what it is, or it can not be proven, or we can not measure it against the VET standards <u>It does not count</u></p>
<p>Your word is the weakest form of evidence, Indisputable, authentic evidence is that which is provided by an objective third party</p>	<p>When thinking of examples which demonstrate your competency, try to think <u>how this can be proven!</u></p>
<p>While specific examples of when and how you have performed a task well are weightier than assertions of competency, try not to populate your portfolio of evidence solely with these examples.</p> <p>Remember that your combined evidence must be <u>authentic, valid, reliable, current AND sufficient.</u></p> <p>If your portfolio of evidence contains only examples of past performance claimed and authored by you personally, an assessor may question the authenticity of your evidence.</p> <p>Specificity when describing examples will help, but your portfolio must also contain some evidence which verifies the authenticity of the content. Third party reports, and (even better) awards or prizes will strengthen your portfolio. Take heart, though, if you have not received any awards or prizes.</p> <p>Very few people have these things to offer as evidence and it does NOT mean that your application for RPL will be unsuccessful.</p>	<p>When thinking of examples which demonstrate your competency, try to think how these can be proven.</p> <p>Your word is the weakest form of evidence. Indisputable, authentic evidence is that which is provided by an objective third party. For example: prizes and awards; a formal qualification or statement of attainment; quality product or service applauded in a newsletter or paper.</p> <p>Third party reports such as references are also often used to demonstrate competency. However, these are slightly weaker forms of evidence (although they are perfectly acceptable) because the objectivity of the third party is difficult to verify, whereas to award a prize or statement of attainment due process must be followed. This assures equity, objectivity and the deservingness of the recipient.</p> <p>Remember that actual examples of your work – such as reports you have written, minutes documenting a decision you have been instrumental in bringing about, letters you have crafted, and processes you have created – will be very weighty additions to your portfolio, provided that they have been authenticated by a third party.</p>
<p><i>All of the evidence submitted by the applicant follows the requirements of the AQTF and that the evidence meets the Training Package rules for the unit of competency</i></p>	

FAQ'S

FAQ's Answers

Sufficiency of evidence

One of the questions most frequently asked by assessors is – how much evidence is needed?

Although there are cases of specific training packages/units of competency where required evidence is prescribed, generally there are no rules for quantity. Rather than focusing on the **quantity of evidence**, assessors need to ensure that assessment decisions are based on quality evidence that demonstrates the learner is competent against the criteria for the unit of competency

Evaluate and Recording evidence

If the assessment process has been **valid, reliable, fair, and flexible** and the evidence is sufficient then the professional decision on a candidate's competency should be a straightforward appraisal of the evidence

How much RPL can I get?

If you have the evidence to show that you can demonstrate the skills and knowledge needed, the minimum RPL is one unit of competence and the maximum is a full qualification.

Do training providers have to offer RPL services?

Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) are required to demonstrate that RPL services have been offered to all enrolling students and that appropriate information and advice has been made available.

How long will the process take?

Your RPL assessor will try to complete the process as quickly as possible for you, but how soon they can make a decision on your RPL application **depends mainly on how well you have prepared your evidence and how well your evidence meets the requirements of the unit/s of competency.**

Your RPL assessment time frame is approximately four **weeks after you have lodged your application with all your suitable evidence**

Note: you will have **3 months in which to submit all relevant RPL evidence** to our assessors

What does the training package mean by 'quality evidence'?

For evidence to have '**quality**' it must cover the scope listed below.

The collection of quality evidence requires that:

- assessment must address the scope of this unit and reflect all components of the unit, that is, the Elements, Performance Criteria, Range Statement, Evidence Requirements and Key Competencies
- a range of appropriate assessment methods and evidence gathering techniques is used to determine competency
- evidence must be gathered in the workplace wherever possible. Where no workplace is available, a simulated workplace must be provided
- the evidence collected must relate to a number of performances assessed at different points in time and in a learning and assessment pathway these must be separated by further learning and practice
- assessment meets the rules of evidence
- a judgement of competency should only be made when the assessor is confident that the required outcomes of the unit/s have been achieved and that consistent performance has been demonstrated

FAQ'S

FAQ's Answers

What is a portfolio of evidence, and how do I collect evidence?

A portfolio is a **formal collection of evidence** that you have obtained during your learning, your career experience and your personal and professional development.

Your evidence can be collected from a range of sources including the following.

- Samples of your work that demonstrate your competence.
- Employment history which can include voluntary and work experience.
- A validation letter that confirms the authenticity of your information.
- Skills demonstration.
- Life experience.
- Industry representative from your place of employment.

It is advised that you are methodical with your collection - use a folder to store paper-based evidence under the unit headings, keep an overall index and use an evidence review/summary sheet as a cover page for your portfolio.

Ensure that you cross-reference evidence clearly so that your RPL assessor can see how it relates to the performance criteria.

Remember, the clearer and better organised your portfolio of evidence is, the easier your RPL assessor will find it to work with

What do I do if I do not have enough evidence?

If you do not have enough evidence to apply for RPL, you should consider undertaking further training to broaden your range of knowledge and skills in that specific competency area.

Would it be easier just to do the study?

Good question! In some cases... yes, it would be

Some people think that RPL is the 'easy way out' of study, but actually, **it can take a lot of time** and effort to put together a successful RPL application.

