Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy and Procedure

Item	Details
Policy owner	Kirsty Noble
Position	Quality Director
Version	Version 2
Applies to	Learners and Staff
Effective from	August 2026
Review cycle	August 2027

1. Policy Statement and Scope

Skills-UK, Education & Training Limited will identify relevant prior knowledge, skills and achievement so that learners do not unnecessarily repeat learning and can receive recognition where the programme and awarding organisation permit it.

This policy applies at initial assessment and when relevant evidence emerges later. It covers regulated and non-regulated programmes and publicly or commercially funded provision, with the applicable qualification and funding rules taking precedence over general examples.

RPL does not automatically confer credit, exemption, a qualification or funding entitlement. Skills-UK may assess and recommend recognition only within its approval and the awarding organisation's rules.

2. Types of Prior Learning

Prior learning may arise through employment, volunteering, previous study, training, professional activity or other experience. Prior certificated achievement may support credit transfer or exemption where specifically permitted.

Experience or a job title alone is not proof of current competence. Evidence must be mapped to the actual learning outcomes or assessment criteria and checked for authenticity, validity, currency and sufficiency.

3. Initial Assessment and Information

Before finalising the programme, discuss previous learning and qualifications with the learner and inspect relevant evidence. Explain available recognition, restrictions, evidence, timescales and any properly disclosed charge where legally and contractually permitted.

Record the starting point and what remains to be learned. A learner must not be discouraged from declaring prior learning merely because it could reduce delivery income.

The Tutor or assessor must refer a potential RPL decision to the Quality Director or nominated competent assessor, checking the awarding organisation's rules and any mandatory assessment that cannot be exempted.

4. Assessment Procedure

- Agree the scope of the request and an evidence plan with the learner.
- Obtain relevant certificates, work products, references, observations, professional discussion or other suitable evidence.
- Verify authenticity and identity and check certificates through appropriate authorised routes.
- Map evidence against each relevant criterion, recording the rationale and any gaps.
- Arrange additional assessment where needed, using authorised methods.
- Apply internal quality assurance and obtain awarding organisation approval where required.
- Explain the decision, outstanding learning, effect on the programme and appeal route to the learner.

Assessors must be competent and free from unmanaged conflicts. An independent internal quality assurer must review decisions as required by the centre's quality arrangements and awarding organisation rules.

5. Funding and Programme Adjustment

Where prior learning reduces the learning required, staff must adjust the learning plan, planned hours, price, duration and funding claim as required by the specific programme rules. For relevant ASF qualification aims, the funding claimed must be reduced to reflect the proportion not required under the applicable rules.

Do not claim twice for the same learning or report learning that has not been delivered. Retain the assessment and calculation supporting any change. Apprenticeship or other programme-specific arrangements apply only where Skills-UK actually delivers that provision.

RPL must not shorten mandatory safety training or assessment where current competence still has to be demonstrated or the relevant rules prohibit exemption.

6. Records Appeals and Review

Records must show the evidence, mapping, assessor decision, quality assurance, external approval where needed, programme changes and funding consequences. Access and retention must follow the relevant contract and awarding organisation requirements.

Learners may appeal through the Assessment Appeals Policy and Procedure and the relevant awarding organisation route. Explain applicable deadlines and provide accessible support. Complaints about handling may use the Complaints Policy.

The Quality Director oversees practice, sampling and standardisation. Review this policy annually and following changes in qualification or funding requirements.

7. Related Policies and Procedures

- Access to Fair Assessment Policy;
- Internal Quality Assurance Strategy;
- Assessment Appeals Policy and Procedure;
- Conflicts of Interest Policy;
- Learner Support Policy;

- Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration Policy and Procedure;
- Fees and Refunds Policy;
- RARPA Policy; and
- Document Retention and Secure Storage Policy.