



## FACT SHEET FOR RTOs

# Recognition of prior learning – frequently asked questions

### 1. What is recognition of prior learning?

RPL is a way that individuals can get their existing skills, knowledge and experience formally recognised, without having to attend training or do further study.

Any related formal qualifications that an individual holds should be taken into account when they apply for RPL.

### 2. What is the difference between RPL, recognition of current competency, credit, credit transfer and *National Recognition*?

#### ***RPL***

RPL is a process that involves assessment of an individual's relevant prior learning (including formal, informal and non-formal learning) to determine the credit outcomes of an individual application for credit (Australian Qualifications Framework, second edition, January 2013).

#### ***Recognition of current competency***

RCC applies if a student has previously successfully completed the requirements for a unit of competency or module and is now required to be reassessed to ensure that the competence is being maintained (Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard Data element definitions, edition 2.2, 10 December 2015).

The costs for students undertaking RCC should be calculated on a commercial basis.

#### ***Credit***

Credit is the value assigned for the recognition of equivalence in content and learning outcome between different types of learning and/or qualifications. Credit reduces the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification and may be through credit transfer, articulation, RPL or advanced standing (AQF, second edition, January 2013).

#### ***Credit transfer***

Credit transfer is a process that provides students with agreed and consistent credit outcomes for components of a qualification based on identified equivalence in content and learning outcomes between matched qualifications (AQF, second edition, January 2013).

### **National Recognition**

Under the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015*, RTOs must recognise the AQF qualifications and statements of attainment issued by all other RTOs, thereby enabling national recognition of the qualifications and statements of attainment issued to any person. Previously this was known as “mutual recognition”.

### **3. What is the difference between formal, non-formal and informal learning?**

#### **Formal learning**

Formal learning is the learning that takes place through a structured program of learning that leads to the full or partial achievement of an officially accredited qualification (AQF, second edition, January 2013).

#### **Non-formal learning**

Non-formal learning refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of learning but does not lead to an officially accredited qualification (AQF, second edition, January 2013).

#### **Informal learning**

Informal learning is learning gained through work, social, family, hobby or leisure activities and experiences. Unlike formal or non-formal learning, informal learning is not organised or externally structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support (AQF, second edition, January 2013).

### **4. Does RPL have the same requirements as other assessment?**

Yes. The type of evidence you require of a student may vary from that required of a student in class, but basically RPL is an assessment like any other.

### **5. What Western Australian VET Enrolment Data Standard codes should be used for RPL?**

TAFE colleges should use the following codes:

Delivery mode	Result code
R	PR (RPL granted) or AR, BR, CR (RPL granted - graded outcome) or R (competency not achieved/not competent) or UR (RPL not granted)

Private RTOs should use the following codes:

Delivery strategy	Outcome code
90	6 (RPL granted) or 7 (RPL not granted)

### **6. What does RPL cost a student?**

The fees payable for RPL students are not regulated. However, RTOs are required to publish their fees for RPL services.

**7. When a student comes back to redo first aid as RCC, should the fees charged be on a commercial basis?**

Yes. RCC fees are not regulated.

**8. What happens if a student enrolls for RPL and is not successful?**

The student will need to enrol in the qualification or relevant units of competency if they want to complete the training. The usual course fees will apply.

Students should receive sound advice from assessors/RTOs to minimise the chances of their RPL application being unsuccessful.

**9. Is there public funding available for RPL?**

For TAFE colleges, public funding forms part of existing profile delivery funding. TAFE colleges should contact their Planning Officer for further information.

For private RTOs currently contracted by the Department of Training and Workforce Development to deliver training services, costs associated with conducting RPL form part of the contract.

**10. If an individual wants RPL for a publicly funded qualification that has pre-requisite units of competency, is RPL for the pre-requisite units funded?**

If the qualification has mandated pre-requisite units of competency, RPL for these units will be funded. The pre-requisite units will form part of the qualification requirements.

**11. A student has enrolled in class and after one week decides they already have the required skills and knowledge. If their skills are assessed then, is this regarded as RPL?**

Yes. This would be regarded as RPL.

Once you have assessed the student, for those students who are successful, you need to make sure that the enrolment and delivery code are changed and the correct *Western Australian VET Enrolment Data Standard* reporting code for RPL is used.

If the RPL is not successful the student should remain in class and complete training and assessment. The student would then be re-assessed at the conclusion of the training.

Each assessor will need to make the decision as to whether the situation should be deemed RPL or not. Generally if the training that has occurred is not significant, RPL is justified.

**12. I am involved in assessing in the workplace. Some workplaces have a qualified trainer/assessor who does all the training, and in some workplaces the supervisor does the training. As my RTO only does the assessing, is this considered to be RPL?**

In these situations, if a student has enrolled prior to the training occurring, even though your RTO does not do the training, it is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the training is completed to an appropriate standard. As the learning has not occurred prior to the student starting training this would not be considered as RPL.

**13. Can RPL be done in an apprenticeship or traineeship?**

Yes. However there are different requirements depending on whether the apprenticeship/traineeship is a Class A or Class B qualification.

Individuals seeking RPL for a Class A qualification must be able to demonstrate competence as a result of training received from an employer. If they do not meet the requirements for all the necessary units of competence they will need to complete their training under a training contract.

Note: training received from an employer does not include self-employment or experience gained through hobbies.

Individuals seeking RPL for a Class B qualification need to demonstrate skills and competency required for the qualification, not necessarily achieved as a result of training from an employer.

**14. How much RPL can be done in a traineeship and apprenticeship?**

It will vary depending on the individual. The RTO should undertake a process to determine what training options are appropriate depending on the individual's skills and knowledge and the requirements of the qualification.

If the student has most of the skills and knowledge required for the qualification, it may not be appropriate to undertake the traineeship or apprenticeship. The student/employee should be guided towards undertaking RPL and/or if appropriate, gap training.

If the student does not have most of the skills and knowledge required to achieve the qualification, the traineeship or apprenticeship pathway may be appropriate.

**15. What does my RTO have to do so that it can offer RPL for qualifications listed as Class A and Class B on the *Public Register*?**

RTOs must have the AQF qualification listed on their scope of registration to offer RPL for Class A and Class B qualifications.

RTOs who are actively involved in the training and assessment of apprentices and have established links with industry are best placed to conduct RPL for Class A and B qualifications.

Note that RPL assessment of competency contributing to a Class A qualification must have been obtained as a result of training received from an employer.

**16. I have a student who enrolled in a Class A qualification via RPL (trades skills recognition) and then completes the qualification by undertaking an apprenticeship. When the student receives the certificate for the qualification will it indicate that the qualification was achieved through apprenticeship arrangements?**

Yes. As the student was an apprentice at the time the qualification was completed, the certificate will indicate that the qualification was achieved through an apprenticeship arrangement.

- 17. I have a student that commenced a Class A qualification as an apprentice but the training contract was terminated before completion. The student has now come back to complete the qualification via the RPL pathway. Will the certificate for the qualification indicate that part of the qualification was completed through an apprenticeship arrangement?**

As the student will not be an apprentice at the time that the qualification is completed, the certificate will be silent on the pathway/s through which the qualification was achieved.

- 18. Is there anything I need to know about offering RPL for qualifications with a licensed or regulated outcomes?**

In areas where a qualification is linked to a licensed or regulated outcome, RTOs must meet that licensing/regulatory authority's requirements to ensure that the RPL process is appropriate.

RTOs should also ensure that they have considered any other legislative requirements related to the qualification in accordance with the requirements of the training package.

- 19. Does my RTO have to offer RPL?**

Yes. It is a requirement under the *Standards for RTOs 2015*.

- 20. How will the VET regulator audit the RPL process?**

The Australian Skills Quality Authority or Training Accreditation Council will audit RPL through the normal audit process.

- 21. What role does the Career Centre have in the RPL process?**

The Career Centre, located in the GPO Building, Level 7, 3 Forrest Place, Perth, provides information about the RPL process and advises of the RTOs (private and publicly funded) that have the qualification on scope and can offer RPL. Career and training advice are provided to individuals who think they may not be eligible for RPL.

The Career Centre can be contacted on T: 13 23 98.

- 22. I have an enquiry from a person who is in Australia on a 457 visa. Can they enrol in RPL?**

If the person is the primary holder of a 457 visa, they are **not** eligible for publicly funded RPL or training. If the person wishes to enrol in RPL or training, the cost must be calculated on a commercial basis. Note: primary 457 visa holders are ineligible to have a training contract registered.

If the person is a secondary holder (e.g. spouse or dependent) of a 457 visa they are eligible for government subsidised training and RPL.

Secondary 457 visa holders are eligible to have a training contract registered, subject to the duration of the visa being sufficient to support the employment and study arrangements specified in the training contract.

The *VET Fees and Charges Policy* provides further information on the fees and charges applicable to temporary residents and international students.

### **23. What is Trades Recognition Australia? Who can it help to have their skills recognised?**

Trades Recognition Australia approved RTOs assess a range of trade occupations for overseas skilled people who intend to migrate to Australia. TRA also offers assessments in a number of metal and electrical trades through their Trades Recognition Services program for Australian residents and citizens who have gained skills overseas.

Individuals planning to migrate to Australia may need to have their skills assessed by the relevant Australian assessing authority before lodging a visa application with the Department of Immigration and Border Protection.

There are several TRA approved RTOs that assess trade occupations for migration purposes. If the skills assessment is successful, the individual will be issued with a successful outcome letter and an Australian qualification (for non-licensed trades) or an Offshore Technical Skills Record (for licensed trades).

More information on TRA's programs and a list of TRA approved RTOs can be found at [www.tradesrecognitionaustralia.gov.au](http://www.tradesrecognitionaustralia.gov.au).