



Recognition of Prior Learning – OCR Policy Statement

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is the process for recognising learning that never received formal recognition through a qualification or certification. This includes knowledge and skills gained in school, college or university and outside formal learning situations. Evidence can draw on any aspect of a candidate's prior experience including:

- domestic/family life
- education
- training
- work activities
- voluntary activities.

RPL is not the same as accreditation of prior achievement (APA). OCR will recognise units achieved with another awarding organisation and use that prior achievement towards a qualification where the unit title, content and regulatory unit reference number are the same for the unit(s) concerned. For more information please see the section on Adding units achieved with another awarding body in '[Making online claims for vocational qualifications](#)' on the OCR website.

It is important to understand that RPL doesn't mean a learner is exempt from any assessment. In no circumstance does the RPL process mean that any required qualification assessments can be circumvented e.g. mandatory exams, practical/theory tests or assignments. Importantly, RPL cannot be used in place of any required external examinations.

Evidence obtained through the RPL process must be assessed by the centre to the same rigorous standards as evidence obtained through any other process. Evidence must be: valid, reliable, authentic, and sufficient¹. The RPL process should only be undertaken by a trained assessor with relevant subject or sector-based expertise and any specific qualification requirements to submit evidence to OCR for moderation or verification purposes still apply.

Normally, RPL is most appropriate for adult learners taking competence-based occupational qualifications which are assessed through observation of performance and evidenced through the generation of a portfolio. The majority of OCR qualifications are not aimed at adults and in most cases our policy is that 16-19 year olds in full-time education should complete any non-examined assessments during normal curriculum time.

For guidance on the use of RPL for specific qualifications, teachers are advised to refer to the relevant qualification handbook or specification.

Complaints

We are committed to providing a high quality service but understand that sometimes things can go wrong. If you have an issue with our RPL policy we welcome your comments and want to resolve your complaint as efficiently as possible. For more information please see our [Complaints Policy](#).



¹ 'Evidence obtained through the RPL process must demonstrate the learner's skills, knowledge and understanding are current, that is, the learner meets the criteria required for the part(s) of the qualification for which RPL is being used.'