

## LEIA EDUCATIONAL TRUST

### DISTANCE LEARNING COURSE RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY<sup>1</sup>

The aim of this policy is to communicate the commitment of the LEIA Educational Trust through the Education and Training Committee of the Lift and Escalator Industry Association (LEIA) and staff members to the recognition of prior learning in all training opportunities given by the Committee.

It is our policy that prior learning, whether certificated or by experience shall be considered when nominating a candidate for an award.

#### **Criteria**

*To ensure that duplication of learning is avoided*

*To ensure prior learning, appropriate to the New Distance Learning course subjects is considered for acceptance towards application for awards*

*To ensure that the recognition of prior learning is robust and accountable*

#### **Definitions**

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a method of assessment leading to the award of credit that considers whether candidates can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning.

Other terminology:

Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL)

Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL)

Recognition of Prior Achievement (RPA)

Recognition of Prior Learning and Achievement (RPLA).

#### **Principles in relation to RPL**

RPL enables recognition of achievement from a range of activities using any appropriate assessment methodology. Provided that the assessment requirements of a given unit or qualification have been met, the use of RPL is acceptable for accrediting a unit, units or a whole qualification. Evidence of learning must be valid and reliable.

The use and application of RPL is of particular value to candidates without formal qualifications, who are either in employment, preparing to enter, or returning to employment. It enables them to gain all or part of a qualification without having to undertake a formal learning programme.

RPL can be used where a candidate has not had their prior learning formally recognised.

<sup>1</sup> This Policy document is based upon 'Recognition of Prior Learning Policy for Edexcel Vocational Qualifications' published by EdExcel Sep 2012 ([EdExcel website](#))

RPL focuses on assessment and awarding for prior learning which may count as evidence towards:

- a unit accumulated towards a full Edexcel qualification
- unit or units recognised by an Edexcel Certificate of Achievement
- a full Edexcel qualification.

All evidence must be evaluated using the stipulated learning outcomes and assessment criteria from the relevant qualification specification. In assessing a unit using RPL the assessor must be satisfied that the evidence produced by the candidate meets the assessment standard established by the learning outcome and its related assessment criteria. Centres must have personnel with appropriate expertise and knowledge to facilitate this.

Most often RPL will be used for units. It is acceptable to claim for an entire qualification through RPL although this is not the normal practice because it would be unusual for a candidate to be able to offer prior achievement that completely matches every aspect of a qualification's assessment requirements.

The prior achievement that would provide evidence of current knowledge, understanding and skills will vary from sector to sector. It will depend on the extent of the experience, technological changes and the nature of the outcome claimed. If the currency of any evidence is in doubt, the assessor may use questions to check understanding, and ask for the demonstration of skills to check competence. Note that the assessment strategy for each qualification must be adhered to.

The RPL process is not concerned with allowing for exceptional entry to, or exemption from, a programme of study.

The RPL process does not allow the recognition of any unit or qualification assessed by external assessment only. This is because such units are subject to specific evidence requirements.

Centres wishing to carry out RPL must ensure that:

- Candidates are registered as soon as they formally start to gather evidence
- Records of assessment against prior learning are maintained
- Certification claims are made according to normal procedures
- All relevant evidence is assessed before assessment decisions are confirmed
- There are designated personnel with the appropriate expertise to support and assure the RPL process.

## ***The RPL process***

An example RPL process is outlined below, with common steps and actions outlined.

### ***Stage 1 – Awareness, information and guidance***

Ahead of enrolling a potential candidate, the possibility that they may be able to claim credit for some of their previous learning should be raised with them. If the candidate is interested in this, they will need to know the:

- Process of claiming achievement by using RPL
- Sources of support and guidance available to them
- Timelines, appeals processes and any fees involved

### ***Stage 2 – Pre-assessment; gathering evidence and giving information.***

At this stage the candidate will carry out the process of collecting evidence against the requirements of the relevant unit(s). In some cases the development of an assessment plan and tracking document

or similar may be required, to support the candidate through the process. The evidence gathered will need to meet the standards of the unit, or part of unit, that the evidence is being used for.

**Stage 3 – Assessment/documentation of evidence**

Assessment as part of RPL is a structured process for gathering and reviewing evidence and making judgments about a candidates' prior leaning and experience in relation to unit standards. The assessor may be looking at work experience records, validated by managers; previous portfolios of evidence put together by the candidate or essays and reports validated as being the candidate's own unaided work. Assessment must be valid and reliable to ensure the integrity of the award of credit and, as above, the evidence gathered needs to meet the standards of the unit, or part of unit, that the evidence is being used for. The assessment process will be subject to the usual quality assurance procedures of the centre, for example internal standardisation and internal verification as well as Pearson's quality assurance procedures.

**Stage 4 – Claiming certification**

Once the internal and external quality assurance procedures have been successfully completed, certification claims can be made by the centre. Assessment and internal verification records, along with any additional RPL records completed, should be retained for the standard three year period following certification.

**Stage 5 – Appeal**

As with any assessment decision, if a candidate wishes to appeal against a decision made about their assessment they need to follow the standard centre and then Pearson Enquiries and Appeals procedures.

## ***Principles in relation to RPCL***

1. In claims for RPCL, the certificated learning must normally have taken place within five years preceding the date of application for accreditation, unless the applicant can thoroughly demonstrate that the learning is still being currently applied.
2. RPCL claims for recognition of learning that has previously been accredited in the award of a qualification, credit or other form of certification and is subsequently being presented for recognition in a second qualification, or part thereof, will be considered as follows:
  - Credits not certified as part of an award may be used to satisfy the credit requirements of any award for which the credit learning is deemed relevant. At module level the credits may be kept and used to satisfy the credit requirements of any award for which the credit learning is deemed relevant.
  - Credits certificated as part of an award (except Honours Degree) may contribute towards a *higher award* but not towards another award of equivalent or lower status.
  - At Honours Degree level any surplus credit or credit at level 4 not contributing to the award classification may be used towards a further award at the same level. The credits which contributing to the award classification are considered spent in the certification of the award and cannot be used a second time towards any further award.
3. Where a student meets learning outcomes through RPCL, but there is a mismatch in credit volume, the RPEL process may be used to bridge the difference if the student has relevant experience in relation to the module, and provided a critical reflective account or equivalent of the experience is produced.
4. Where a claim for RPCL credit is approved this will be shown in the achievement profile presented to the relevant Award, Progression or Status Board.

### ***Principles in relation to RPEL***

1. Credit resulting from an RPEL claim will be awarded only on the basis of demonstrable learning and not on the basis of experience itself.
2. In claims for RPEL the demonstrable learning must normally have occurred within five years from the date of application in order for the evidence to be valid and worthy for consideration within LEIA assessment process.
3. Applicants wishing to claim credit through RPEL must produce a portfolio of evidence in support of the claim. The portfolio must demonstrate that the learning that has taken place is at the level of the award for which the student is registered. It must also be demonstrated that the experiential learning meets the learning outcomes of the module(s) to be credited, or a specific subset of the overall learning outcomes for the programme which allows the identification of the remaining modules which need to be completed to achieve the award.
4. Applicants who require support in the production of the portfolio must complete the RPEL module.
5. The outcome of a claim for RPEL, where following assessment the University is awarding credit, will be formally reported to the relevant Field Assessment Board and Progression and Award board, and will be subject to external examiner scrutiny as appropriate.
6. Appeals against RPEL outcomes may be made only in accordance with LEIA Academic Appeals Procedure.

This policy is fully supported by the LEIA Education and Training Committee.