



## RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

### STUDENT INFORMATION

#### **What is Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)?**

A common definition for the recognition of prior learning comes from the Broadmeadows Technical and Further Education College who state that RPL is:

*“the acknowledgment of the full range of an individual’s skills and knowledge – irrespective of how it has been acquired.”*

(Broadmeadows TAFE, 1990)

This means that you may be able to receive recognition for any previous learning you may have acquired, regardless of where or how you acquired this learning. For example, you may have completed a course from another tertiary institution or University, or you may have acquired specific skills through on-the-job training or even through hobbies or community work.

#### **How can RPL benefit me?**

You may be able to shorten your course, or substitute the learning of new or more advanced skills for those skills you have already mastered. It also means that you do not have to waste time by repeating the learning of skills that you already have.

#### **What kind of information can be used for RPL?**

This can be provided in several ways:

1. You can supply copies of certificates and results for courses and competencies that you have undertaken and/or completed in a formal setting.
2. You can submit a portfolio that you have compiled, reports you have written, samples of your previous work or references detailing your previous skills or experience.
3. If you are unable to supply any of this information, you are still eligible to undertake testing to assess your skills.

#### **What steps are involved in RPL?**

1. This information sheet provides you with information about RPL and how it works.
2. Should you request RPL, you will receive support from the Competency lecturer. You will be interviewed and have the RPL process explained to you fully.
3. If you wish to pursue RPL you will need to complete the necessary paperwork to indicate that you wish to undertake RPL assessment. The onus is on you to gather all relevant information that will act as evidence for your RPL. You must compare the learning outcomes of the competency/s with proof of your experience/knowledge, where you gained this experience/knowledge and when you gained it. Every learning outcome in the competency/s must be addressed.
4. Complete the RPL application form available from the Competency lecturer or the Shafston website.
5. Complete the RPL application form along with your supporting documentation and submit this.

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SHAFSTON RPL Student Information	Version 2.0
	Page 1 of 6



6. After initial assessment of your supplementary evidence you will undertake Competency Conversation and if relevant a Practical Tasks Assessment.
7. Assessment then follows. As detailed above, this may take the form of an examination of all supporting documents/materials of proof, or it may be an actual testing of the skills you wish to have recognised.
8. After the assessment by the Competency instructor, a decision will be made as to whether RPL will be granted. There will be a post-assessment interview to advise you of the outcome and a written rationale will be provided to you if RPL has not been granted. You will be provided with certification for any skills, competencies or courses for which RPL has been granted, or, you will be provided with information about further action you may take if the result is not to your satisfaction.
9. Should you wish to take further action, you will need to complete a Student Appeals/Complaints for Academic Decisions Form and submit it along with your supporting evidence to the Head of School.
10. The Head of School shall review all of the evidence, meet with the Competency lecturer, and make a decision regarding the RPL application.
11. The Head of School will meet with the client to discuss the final decision.

### **Tips and Hints to help you prepare for Recognition**

To have skills formally recognised in the national system, assessors must make sure you have the skills and knowledge to meet the industry standard. This means you must be involved in a careful and comprehensive process that covers the content of all unit/s or qualification/s you can be recognised for.

Assessment happens in a variety of ways. Being prepared can save you valuable time and hassle and make the recognition process stress-free for you.

Here are some tips and hints for you:

1. Be prepared to talk about your job roles and your work history. Bring a resume or jot down a few points about where you have worked, either paid or unpaid, and what you did there.
2. Bring your position description and any performance appraisals you have from any businesses you have worked in.
3. Consider the possibilities for workplace contact. Are you in a workplace that is supporting your goal to get qualified? Would you feel comfortable to have the assessor contact your workplace or previous workplaces so your skills can be validated?
4. Think about who can confirm your skill level. Think about current or recent supervisors who have seen you work in the past 18 months and will be able to confirm your skills. The assessor will need to contact them. You may also have community contacts or even clients themselves who can vouch for your skill level.
5. Collect any certificates from in-house training or formal training you have done in the past.

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SHAFSTON RPL Student Information	Version 2.0
	Page 2 of 6



6. You can speak with your training organisation about other ways you can show your skills in the business sector. These could be letters from employers, records of your professional development sessions, employers or clients in related industries or government agencies, acknowledgements, workplace forms (as long as they don't show client details) or other relevant documents

### How do I apply for RPL?

All competencies in a Training Package are detailed. At the commencement of every competency you will be given a competency outline which will state the competencies. This outline will allow you to make an initial assessment of your prior experience/knowledge as compared to the elements of the competency. If you believe that you have sufficient evidence of having achieved a competency, then you should approach your lecturer for an interview. At this interview you will be given advice on the steps to take and be given the forms to complete the RPL process.

There are no direct fees for the Recognition of Prior Learning; however, as our student fees cover the issuing of qualifications or recognition of competencies, we are unable to reduce your total course fees for competencies for which you receive Recognition of Prior Learning. You are, however, welcome to substitute a higher level of competency for those for which you have received Recognition of Prior Learning, at no additional cost to you.

## ADDITIONAL STUDENT INFORMATION

### Types of Evidence

There are different ways of describing and categorising evidence. The most common way of categorising evidence is:

#### 1) Direct evidence

Competency is observed/witnessed, eg

- observations of candidates carrying out work activities
- oral questioning of candidates
- demonstration of specific skills needed to complete the task.

#### 2) Indirect evidence

Competency is inferred, eg

- assessment of technical qualities of finished product
- written test of underpinning knowledge
- review of previous work performed.

#### 3) Supplementary evidence.

Supplementary evidence is additional evidence required by an assessor to support a candidate's claim of competence. This could include:

- testimonials from employers
- reports from colleagues, clients and/or supervisors
- work diaries/journals
- evidence of training
- examples of reports or work documents.

Direct evidence is not necessarily more valid or reliable than indirect evidence or supplementary evidence. Each form of evidence is useful and relevant to the assessment process. Some forms of evidence may be used more frequently in different assessment contexts. For example, direct evidence may be used more often when assessing competencies at Certificates I – III, whereas indirect and supplementary evidence may be the main sources of evidence when assessing higher AQF qualifications.

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SHAFSTON RPL Student Information	Version 2.0
	Page 3 of 6

**Possible Evidence Sources**

Evidence Source	Explanation	Examples
Practical Demonstration	Observation of real work or simulation by assessor or agreed third party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operating complex equipment</li> <li>• Troubleshooting equipment faults</li> <li>• Presentation at a meeting</li> <li>• Video of inducting new staff</li> </ul>
Third party reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirmation of consistent performance over time and a range of contexts.</li> <li>• Confirmation of candidate's application and adaptation of complex procedures.</li> <li>• Ability to meet Key Performance Indicators</li> </ul>	Reports from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervisor</li> <li>• Manager</li> <li>• Customer</li> <li>• Suppliers</li> <li>• Peers</li> </ul>
Questioning/ structured interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirmation of understanding</li> <li>• Clarification of ethics, values &amp; attitudes</li> <li>• Review of portfolio for relevance, authenticity and sufficiency.</li> <li>• Establish capacity to handle unforeseen situations, predict and evaluate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application of enterprise procedures, eg OHS</li> <li>• Handling of critical incidents</li> <li>• Application of business goals in planning and evaluation</li> <li>• Reflection on personal/professional practice</li> </ul>
Personal statement/ resume	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal statement and self-assessment using relevant examples of performance</li> <li>• Resume that outlines past work experience and qualifications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-assessment against performance criteria</li> <li>• Outline of work experience</li> <li>• Personal development activities</li> <li>• Reflections in diary or journal nominated referees</li> </ul>
Workplace documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verified work outputs that are relevant and current</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job cards, rosters, shift records</li> <li>• Minutes of meetings</li> <li>• Operational plans/ budgets/ processes</li> <li>• Recommendations and reports</li> <li>• Explanations of procedures, manuals.</li> <li>• Calculations, flow charts, project plans</li> </ul>
Training records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training outcomes mapped to competency standards in the relevant Training Package</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workplace assessor qualifications</li> <li>• Equipment supplier's certificate</li> <li>• RTO qualification</li> </ul>
Case study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical analysis of performance that is mapped to competency standards in the relevant Training Package</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and implementation of new procedures</li> <li>• Illustration of ethical practice</li> </ul>

Work project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completion of a negotiated task to provide evidence of the capacity to analyse, synthesize, predict &amp; evaluate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing strategy for new product or service</li> <li>Quality improvement to a process</li> </ul>
Journal/ diary entries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Record of work roles, tasks and responsibilities, contributions to team outputs, reflection on personal performance, learning and training opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organisation and time management</li> <li>Operational planning, budgeting</li> <li>Analysis of critical incidents and contingency management</li> <li>Reflection on personal performance and development</li> </ul>
Testimonials/ awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent confirmation of personal performance</li> <li>Memberships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>solicited letters from customers</li> <li>Company/industry awards for innovation, excellence, achievement</li> </ul>

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