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**Recognition of Prior Learning Policy (RPL)**

**1. Policy**

This policy reflects the QAA guidelines for recognising prior learning as described in the UK Quality Code, Jordan accreditation requirements, and defines the procedures and guidance for submitting and approving requests for transferring credit in order for a student to be exempted from individual units or permitted direct entry to the upper level of a programme on the basis of prior certified and/or experiential learning.

**2. Scope of policy**

This policy applies to all Pearson qualifications. This policy does not apply to defined exemptions from examinations or other professional body requirements using BTEC Higher National achievements. For more information regarding these, please consult the BTEC Higher National Professional Recognition and Progression Directory.

**3. Policy statement**

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a method of assessment [leading to the award of credit] that considers whether learners 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.

**Note: RPL should not be confused with exemption and unit equivalency[[1]](#endnote-1)**

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
* Reliable.

Pearson encourages the use of RPL where it is of value to HTU and learners in facilitating assessment. HTU when uses RPL, it will follow these principles and keep appropriate records.

**4. Terminology**

RPL policies and procedures will be further developed over time, which may lead to the use of a number of terms to describe the process. Among the most common are:

Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)

Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)

Accreditation of Prior Achievement (APA)

Accreditation of Prior Learning and Achievement (APLA).

These terms broadly describe the same process. Pearson uses the term

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

**5. Amplification**

The use and application of RPL is of particular value to learners 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 learner has not had their prior learning formally recognised.

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

evidence towards:

\_ A unit accumulated towards a full Pearson qualification

\_ A unit or units recognised by a Pearson Certificate of Achievement of a full

Pearson qualification.

All evidences must be evaluated using the stipulated learning outcomes and assessment criteria from the qualification or unit being claimed. In assessing a unit using RPL the assessor must be satisfied that the evidence produced by the learner meets the assessment standard established by the learning outcome and its related assessment criteria. HTU has 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 learner 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.

Where evidence is assessed to be only sufficient to cover one or more learning outcomes, or to partly meet the need of a learning outcome, then additional assessment methods should be used to generate sufficient evidence to be able to

award the learning outcome(s) for the whole unit.

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.

To carry out RPL policy HTU will ensure that:

* Learners 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
* **A standing committee is in place to review individually cases of RPL and equivalency .**

**6. The RPL process**

The following process will outline the RPL policy including common steps and proper actions:

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

Ahead of enrolling a potential learner, the possibility that they may be able to claim credit for some of their previous learning should be raised with them. If the learner 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

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

At this stage the learner 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 learner 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.

**6.3 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 learners’ 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 learner or essays and reports validated as being the learner’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 is subject to the usual quality assurance procedures of HTU, for example internal standardisation and internal verification as well as Pearson’s quality assurance procedures. Evidenced gathered through RPL should be clearly will be referenced and sign posted to aid internal assessment and internal and external examination.

**6.4 Stage 4 – Claiming certification**

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

The assessor must ensure that all learning outcomes and assessment criteria being claimed for each unit are achieved and that the records of assessment are attained in the usual way.

**6.5 Stage 5 – Appeal**

As with any assessment decision, if a learner wishes to appeal against a decision made about their assessment they need to follow the declared standards of HTU and then Pearson Enquiries and Appeals procedures.

**7. Regulatory references**

Ofqual and SQA require all awarding organisations to establish and maintain their compliance with regulatory conditions and criteria. As part of this process, policies that relate to Pearson’s status as an awarding organisation will reference the particular conditions and criteria that they address.

**End of Policy**

1. Exemption - the facility for a learner to claim exemption from some of the achievement requirements of a qualification, using evidence of certificated achievement deemed to be of equivalent value.

   Equivalent unit(s) - a unit/units from a different qualification or submitted by another recognised organisation that is/are

   deemed to be of equivalent value and so can count towards a qualification in place of designated mandatory or optional units

   from it [↑](#endnote-ref-1)