



Australasian Society for HIV Medicine Inc.

Information for Students about Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

1. What is Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)?

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process that allows the competencies you already possess to be recognised, regardless of how you obtained them. These may include skills you picked up on the job or from other life experiences that do not necessarily include formal training.

2. Why apply for RPL?

If your RPL application is successful, you may:

- eliminate or reduce the need for learning skills and knowledge you already have
- reduce your study load resulting in time and cost savings to you
- finish your course earlier
- be able to advance to a higher level qualification

3. Who can apply for RPL?

Anyone can apply for RPL. A typical successful applicant is someone who has a reasonable amount of experience in the area their course covers. This experience may have come through working in the field or through other life experiences.

If you are continuing from secondary school or you have limited work or life experience, you should consider your claim for RPL carefully before applying. If you are a mature age student with relevant experience, your skills are likely to have some value for credit through RPL.

If you have gained qualifications in a course or have a statement of attainment for completed units of a course from another institute or training provider, you may gain credits.

Note: If your prior learning is in the same subject (that is, with the same name and code) at another training provider or a simple 'transfer of credit', you will not be required to pay any charges.

4. How does RPL work?

The process of RPL involves matching what you already know and can do to the elements and performance criteria for a competency within a particular subject. It requires that you put in some considerable effort to collect evidence regarding your skills and experience. You are solely responsible for demonstrating how the evidence that you have submitted relates to the competency concerned.

5. What is the cost of RPL?

Usually the cost of RPL is around 50% of the total charge for the course. The cost for RPL is included in the course information booklet. Remember, there is no charge for credit transfer i.e. where unit codes are an exact match.

6. How do I decide whether or not to apply for RPL?

If you think you are eligible for RPL, you should enrol for your chosen course, indicating on the enrolment form that you are applying for RPL. You should include your payment and you can find the fee for RPL in the relevant course information booklet. Once you have submitted your enrolment, you will be provided with an Evidence Guide which you must complete. If you are unsure about whether your skills and experience are enough to gain RPL, contact the Training and Accreditation Manager who will discuss this with you.

Note that applicants may choose to apply for RPL in one or more units, or an entire qualification.

7. How to apply for RPL?

In making an application for RPL for a unit you need to address each of the elements and performance criteria of the unit as set out in the RPL Evidence Guide. Match the elements and performance criteria to your previous study and/or work experience, and show how you have already attained the skills outlined in the unit. You may also supply as much supplementary information as possible in support of your RPL application as indicated below.

Types of evidence you could provide include:

Formal Training

- Academic Transcripts
- Statements of learning/competency
- Module descriptions from other institutions
- Module outlines from other institutions
- Samples of written work
- Supervisor reports
- Portfolios

Work Experience

- Manuals you have written
- Letter of reference from employer or supervisor
- Samples of notes you have prepared
- Log of activities
- Evaluation sheets
- Articles you have written or been the subject of
- Workshop notes from seminars/training days
- Record of professional development attendance
- Teaching outlines

Life Experience

- Audio/video tapes
- Letter of reference for volunteer roles
- List of books read on the subject
- Outlines of presentations you have given
- Letter of authentication for committees or groups you have been involved in.
- Records of attendance
- Logs of activities

All documentation should be copies signed by a JP where necessary e.g. for certificates.

Note that where it is difficult for you to produce documentation, ASHM may be able to assist you with other ways of proving your competence, for example, by interviewing you and asking questions and/or observing you in your workplace. This is also discussed under the section of this document "how is RPL assessed".

8. How do I assemble my evidence?

It is important that you not only gather your evidence but that your evidence corresponds closely with the learning outcomes included in the application form. Individual pieces of evidence should be numbered and the number clearly stated against the learning outcome to which it refers.

9. How is RPL assessed?

Once you submitted the RPL Evidence Book along with the required evidence, you need to submit it to the Training and Accreditation Manager. The Training and Accreditation Manager will refer your application to a qualified assessor who will then assess the evidence provided against the learning outcomes of the modules for which RPL is being sought.

If the evidence supplied is insufficient to make a judgment you may be asked to supply further evidence or to present for an interview with the assessor or an assessment panel. If the assessor or assessment panel still lacks the evidence needed to grant RPL, partial RPL may be granted as well as an assessment task in order to complete the module. If the evidence is insufficient altogether RPL may be denied.

Sometimes a visit to your workplace can be the most effective and efficient method of assessing an RPL application. It provides the opportunity for you to describe and demonstrate the job function on the job. The assessor can access and view additional forms of evidence if required which further develops a picture of competence. Authentication of your work can also be obtained by their supervisor, which is an essential aspect of RPL.

RPL Assessors follow a number of important criteria when assessing evidence against learning outcomes. They are as follows:

- Sufficiency - have you provided enough evidence to make a judgement?
- Authentic – is the work your own? The type of evidence you submit should enable the assessor to determine authenticity.

- Current - Does the evidence provided indicate that your skills and knowledge are up to date and meet current workplace requirements?
- Valid - Does the evidence cover the broad range of knowledge and skills specified in the course outline? The evidence you supply must convince the assessor you have the skills and knowledge to meet the learning outcomes required.

10. How long will it take to assess my application?

You will need to allow a minimum of 20 working days to have your application assessed and in some cases longer. The length of time taken to assess a submission will in large part depend on the size of the submission itself but may also be impacted by the number of applications being assessed at any one time.

You may contact the Training and Accreditation Manager at any time to enquire about the progress of your submission.

11. What will be the result of my application?

Application for RPL may result in one of four outcomes:

RPL granted in full.

In this case you will be informed in writing of this outcome and asked to confirm your acceptance of the offer by signing the indicated section and returning it to ASHM. The original of the confirmation will be placed on your student file, the units added to your record and a copy of the confirmation along with an updated Record of Studies returned to you.

Further assessment required

If the evidence you submitted is considered by the assessor to be insufficient, a further assessment may be required either by interview or the setting of appropriate assessment tasks.

Partial RPL granted

Partial RPL may be granted where the assessor considers that your prior learning does not totally match the competency content in the course. You may be required to undertake further training or assessment to complete the unit. In the event that Partial RPL is granted an applicant will be granted 'advanced standing' in the module so that previous learning is recognised.

RPL denied

Your prior learning has not been recognised as relevant to the course and the usual study requirements of the course must be completed.

11. Can I appeal the RPL decision?

If you are dissatisfied with either your application for RPL being refused or the level of credit obtained, you should first discuss the assessment with the Training and Accreditation Manager. If you are still dissatisfied, write to the Training and Accreditation Manager stating your case, within seven days of receipt of the RPL notification and request a review of the decision. Please note that the Manager has the

right to refuse re-assessment if they believe that the reasons you give are insufficient to warrant re-assessment.

The decision of the Training and Accreditation Manager will be final. No further appeals are possible.