

Version Control

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Approval

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Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) Policy

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Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) Policy		3.0
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Policy Owner	Neville Algar	

Approval

Name	Neville Algar
Signature	<i>N.Algar</i>
Position	Head of Education

Policy Statement

The term 'recognition of prior learning' has been adopted and abbreviated to RPL. In accordance with the ESFA's Apprenticeship Funding Rules, Ignite Training recognises the valuable role RPL plays in allowing learners to use past learning and experience towards their current learning and has put in place this process to account for this.

Scope

Ignite Training Recognises that funds must not be used to pay for training for knowledge, skills and behaviours already attained by the apprentice. This policy defines what may be acknowledged as prior learning, the process set out in identifying this and impact it may have on the Apprenticeship programme as well as the roles and responsibilities of all parties for the declaration, assessment and application of prior learning towards Apprenticeship standards.

Definitions and Examples

RPL is defined as follows:

“A method of assessment that considers whether a learner 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.”

One of the principles of RPL is that individuals should not be required to repeat things that they have already learnt, although they may still need to demonstrate their knowledge in the workplace. Ignite Training, within this policy will accredit acceptable evidence of recognised prior learning (RPL) as follows:

- learners have successfully completed the assessment criteria for a whole or part of a unit within a qualification;
- learners have evidence of recent prior study which meets assessment criteria of the current programme of study being undertaken in full;
- learners can provide evidence of prior work experience which means they do not need to undertake further practice of skills and behaviours;
- learners can demonstrate that their learning is being used effectively in the workplace;
- employer feedback that the learner is able to already demonstrate that competence in the workplace

The ESFA Guidance on Prior Learning:

- Recognition of prior learning extends beyond English, maths and existing qualifications.
- All the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the standard should be considered in reviewing the prior learning of the apprentice.
- Recognition of prior learning is part of the learner eligibility assessment.
- Apprenticeships could be poor value for money and unnecessarily long if training covers areas that the apprentice already knows, and public funding should not be used for learning which is not new.
- Initial assessment is vital to ensure high-quality apprenticeships and Ofsted inspections look for evidence of a robust initial assessment.
- Funds must not be used to pay for training for skills, knowledge and behaviours already attained by the apprentice. This needs to be evidenced. Funding must be reduced proportionately to account for prior learning. Full funding will be recovered by the ESFA where prior learning hasn't been accounted for.
- The content, duration and price where the apprentice has prior learning must be reduced – following our Skills Scan process.
- The apprentice's existing knowledge, skills and behaviours must be assessed against those required to achieve occupational competence, including that gained from
 - Work experience, particularly where the apprentice is an existing employee
 - Prior education, training and qualifications.
 - Any previous apprenticeship.

Circumstances When Prior Learning Will Not Be Recognised:

- Learning that is similar to assessment criteria but which has been met at a level lower than the current programme of study being undertaken by the learner.

- Prior learning that is more than three (3) years old, and deemed by the tutor to be out of date/not current and further training needed.
- Prior learning that has been referred by an assessor.
- Prior learning that has not been assessed by a qualified and trained assessor.
- Prior learning/experience that is not being demonstrated in the workplace from feedback from employer.
- Evidence of behaviours that have been identified that do not reflect the level of Prior Learning obtained usually obtained from feedback from employer or from an assessor/coach.

Identification of RPL

In order to ensure the process of identifying RPL is robust Ignite training will undergo a number of checks with the learner and employer including;

- **Application / Self Declaration;** during the onboarding process the learner will be asked to declare any previous certifications, training or work experience.
- **CV;** a copy of the learners CV will be obtained in order to assess and relevant previous experience, certification or training.
- **PLR check;** a PLR check will be undertaken to validate the learners self-declaration of qualifications
- **Initial Assessment;** An Initial assessment will be completed to ascertain the current level the learner is working at.
- **Skill Scan;** a skillscan will be completed with the learner, and confirmed with the employer against the standards of their chosen apprenticeship and this will be scored to evaluate and quantify their level of RPL is applicable.
- **Professional discussion;** a professional discussion will take place with an occupationally competent assessor, the learner and employer to confirm all of the above assessments and justify any RPL.

Where the individual has completed a T-Level, you must also take account of the progression profiles published by the Institute, which will identify if a subsequent apprenticeship in the same occupational area can be funded (as there are at least 12 months off-the-job training left to deliver) and if so, whether that apprenticeship must be an accelerated apprenticeship. Further Information can be found here;
<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/qualifications/t-levels/t-level-progression-profiles/>

Where published and relevant, guidance on progression routes for skills bootcamps and occupational traineeships must be considered in the same way.

Once the above checks have been completed the skill scan will be used alongside the curriculum to identify where learning is not required, this will be quantified by looking at the related OTJ Training hours to quantify the number of hours not required by that specific learner by omitting the associated content from the curriculum.

Where an apprentice has no prior learning this must be agreed with the learner and employers and clearly stated in the enrolment pack.

Accelerated apprenticeships

An accelerated apprenticeship is where the apprentice's planned duration is shorter (by at least 3 months) than the typical duration of the standard, based on prior learning. Minimum requirements of an apprenticeship must still be met, including the 12-month minimum duration and minimum volume of off-the-job training.

Impact on funding / Delivery

The assessment will quantify the content which should be omitted from the training plan, in the form of a volume of off-the-job training hours. Once this has been determined the reduction of off-the-job training hours will be translated to a reduction in duration and in the total negotiated price.

Where you account for prior learning and experience and the reduction of content would mean that the apprenticeship would fail to meet either the minimum duration requirement or the minimum off-the-job training requirement, the apprenticeship is not eligible for funding.

To reduce the negotiated price we will calculate the percentage of prior learning that the individual has, as a percentage of the off-the-job training hours that would be delivered to an individual with no relevant prior learning for the same standard.

For example, if the individual's prior learning accounts for 300 off-the-job training hours and typically, for the same standard, 1,000 off-the-job training hours would be delivered to an individual with no prior learning, this would equate to 30% prior learning.

We will then reduce the total price by at least 50% of the prior learning percentage, from the maximum funding band, this takes into account that there are fixed costs associated with programme delivery.

For example, the apprentice has 30% prior learning, this means there must be a reduction in the total price of at least 15% of the maximum funding band (i.e., £1,500 price reduction if the funding band is £10,000). This reduced price (e.g., £8,500) is the maximum that will be paid using apprenticeship funding (e.g. £8,500 for a £10,000 funding band where there has been a 15% reduction)

Roles / Responsibilities

The assessor/coach is responsible for:

- Assessing the prior learning of each individual before the qualification/apprenticeship can begin. This is done at induction through the Skills Scan.
- Agreeing with the learner and the employer how the programme will be delivered to reflect any relevant existing knowledge, skills and behaviours.
- Recording prior learning on their Skills Scan, in their e-portfolio and in the Commitment Statement (apprenticeships only).

The Funding and Compliance team are responsible for;

- Auditing the accuracy of funding reductions
- Confirming these changes and authorising them
- Reporting them to the ESFA via the ILR

Further Guidance

Further information for training providers, employers and apprentices about the need for, and importance of, initial assessment and recognition of prior learning can be found here; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-recognition-of-prior-learning>

Monitoring and Review

The SMT will monitor the effectiveness and review the implementation of this policy with regards to its suitability, adequacy and effectiveness. Any improvements identified will be made as soon as possible. Internal control systems and procedures will be subject to regular audits to provide assurance that they are effective in the implementation of this policy. This policy will be reviewed annually as a minimum and may be amended at any time.

Associated Policies

- IQA Policy
- IAG Policy
- Quality, Monitoring and Evaluation Policy