

# Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

The College acknowledges that all learners bring an element of relevance to knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs to the learning environment. As an ethical establishment we recognise the importance of considering prior learning and we will not force candidates to go through a course of learning when they already have the knowledge, understanding and competence to meet the assessment criteria. The College will formally recognise this prior learning where this is educationally appropriate. When not formally recognised, prior learning will not be acknowledged. We appreciate that recognition of prior learning is an important tool to supporting those who have returned to learning or who intend to do so. This policy relates to all learners.

## Definition

**The recognition of prior learning (RPL)** is where a learner can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment criteria within a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess without undertaking a course of learning. RPL as an overall process that embraces two subsets: APEL (experiential where a portfolio etc. is used) and APCL (via certification of a unit). They must submit sufficient, reliable and valid evidence for internal and standards verification purposes. RPL is acceptable for accrediting a unit, units or a whole qualification; depending on awarding organisation regulations. Recognition of prior learning does not involve assessing and judging the prior learning or experience, but assessing the candidate's current competence and knowledge. APEL is usually achieved by the learner submitting a portfolio of evidence based on previous learning, skills and/or competence cross-referenced to the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the unit or units for which RPL is being sought, together with an authenticity statement, signed and dated by the learner and signed by a witness (usually the tutor). Evidence might include observation of the candidate's performance in the workplace, an interview with the candidate or other agreed methods. APCL is achieved by prior certificated learning, depending on awarding organisation criteria.

## Fundamental Principles of RPL

RPL may be claimed against one or more units, or against part of a unit.

The College will fully inform learners of the opportunities for RPL.

The learner is responsible for making relevant staff aware of their wish to make an RPL application.

The IQA must include RPL on the sampling plan as an assessment method and this will be subject to internal quality assurance.

## Policy Statements

This Policy is underpinned by several key principles:

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- Students who access Cardiff and Vale College must be **free from discrimination**.
- Our students must be supported to **enable** them to achieve their **potential** while at College, in an environment which removes or minimises disadvantage, takes steps to meet their needs and which encourages participation. The wellbeing of our students is central so they feel good about themselves and respect others.
- While at College our students will develop the **skills** they need to enable them to progress successfully throughout their lives.
- A commitment to **restorative approaches** to ensure that we foster good relations by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

In order to fulfil its responsibilities under this policy, the College will:

- Always follow awarding organisation's procedure in relation to RPL.
- Make learners aware of the purpose and availability of RPL at interview, as well as the specific timescales; it is expected that all applications will be made within one month of the start of a one-year course, unless stated otherwise by the awarding organisation.
- Offer professional support and guidance from staff with appropriate expertise (RPL advisor) for learners considering using RPL. This will include information related to the specific awarding organisation. It is the learner's responsibility to put together the portfolio of evidence and any other paperwork associated with their application.
- Train staff in RPL procedures.
- Maintain the integrity of units and qualifications by ensuring all assessment decisions, including RPL, are consistent and meet awarding organisation's standards; this will be the responsibility of the RPL assessor.
- Ensuring that the role of advice and guidance is separate from that of assessor in all RPL claims.
- Give feedback to the learner, discussing outcomes and offering support and guidance on subsequent learning options if necessary.
- Ensure internal and external quality assurers confirm the process of RPL and the proposed award of credit.
- Ensure learners are aware of College and awarding organisation procedure for appeals and complaints.

## Equality and Diversity Statement

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In accordance with College procedures, this Policy was written with consideration of the impact of individuals as per the Equality Act.

## Health and Safety Implications

There may be circumstances where there appears to be a conflict between equality issues and the health and safety of employees and learners. In particular, certain health conditions or disabilities may restrict access to some courses or areas of the College because risks will remain at an unreasonable level even when reasonable adjustments have been made. All cases will be dealt with on an individual basis.

## Welsh Language Standards

This policy does not affect the Welsh language negatively. In accordance with College procedures, this Policy was written with consideration of the impact of individuals as per the Welsh Language Standards. Learners have the right to request RPL be undertaken and assessed in Welsh.

## Linked Policies

- Data Protection Policy
- Complaints
- Bullying and Harassment
- Admissions
- Teaching and Learning
- Equality and Diversity – Staff (pending)
- Staff Disciplinary
- Relationship Management
- Fit to Study
- Disclosure
- Welsh Language

## Linked Procedures

- Complaints Procedure
- Data Protection
- Admissions
- Disclosure
- Teaching and Learning
- Bullying and Harassment
- Fit to Study

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## Location and Access to the Policy

This is available from the website/ staff intranet/ Moodle and may be out of date if printed.  
There is a Welsh version of this document available.

**Date approved:** 13/2/15

**Approved by:** QSB

**Review date:** October 2020

**Responsible Manager:** Dean for Quality Improvement

**Executive Lead:** Deputy Principal Curriculum & Standards

**Accessible to Students:** : Yes