

## Document 3

# Candidate RPL Assessment Information and Guide

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) should not be viewed a 'short cut' to achieving a qualification. Candidates must ensure that they have ALL of the required skills, knowledge and experience to meet industry standards and must be able to demonstrate a sound knowledge of the qualification itself and the units of competency therein. Documentary evidence is required for all claims made in an RPL Application, and it is often said that gaining RPL can be more challenging to the applicant than undertaking the qualification itself. You should read this document and all related RPL documentation before deciding if you wish to continue with the RPL Application process.

It is not sufficient for an RPL Applicant to simply have the skills and knowledge to undertake particular workplace tasks and to 'teach' others in the workplace how to perform those tasks, the RPL applicant must also have sound knowledge and practice of vocational training and the 'competency based learning' model on which it is based. Competency based learning is described as 'an approach to vocational education and training the places emphasis on what a person can do in the workplace as a result of completing a program of training. Competency based training programs are comprised of competency standards set by industry'. This means that the RPL Applicant must be involved in a comprehensive assessment process which covers the content of the unit/s or qualification/s applied for.

Assessment happens in a variety of ways. Being prepared can save you valuable time and make the recognition process less stressful for you.

Here are some tips and hints to assist with your preparation:

1. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to seek and provide the College with documentary evidence of all claims made on the RPL Application Form.
2. Read through the **Frequently Asked Questions** section in this document as these questions and answers may assist you in deciding to progress further with your application.
3. Complete the **RPL Self-assessment, Document 5**, for the TAE40116 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. You will find it uses uncomplicated language rather than educational jargon to describe activities in the training and assessment workplace related to each unit of competency in the qualification.
4. Complete the **RPL Application Form, Document 4**.
5. Prepare and submit a resume and describe your job roles and your work history and also explain what work tasks you did in these roles that is related to the TAE qualification.
6. Prepare and submit a job description of your last position involving the practical application of this qualification and any performance appraisals you have from any training organisations or facilities you have worked in.
7. Consider the possibilities for workplace contact. Are you in a workplace that is supporting your goals to get qualified? If you feel comfortable to have the assessor contact your existing or previous workplace so your skills can be validated let them know when you commence your discussion.
8. Think about who can confirm your skill level. Think about current or recent managers or supervisors who have seen you training and assessing in the past 12 to 18 months and will be able to confirm your skills and experience in writing and submit this third party report.

You may also have community contacts or even clients themselves who can vouch for your skill levels.

9. Collect any certificates from in-house training or formal training you have done in the past.
10. You could also submit letters from employers or clients in related industries (contact details should be included), records of your in-house training sessions, training and assessment documents, such as presentation materials, delivery handouts and assessments, (as long as they don't show client details) other relevant documents or photos and videos of your work if you have any.

## **Steps in the RPL Assessment Process**

### **Step 1. Complete the application**

Completes the **RPL Application form, Document 4**. It is important for you to provide as much information and documentation as you have available of **your previous knowledge, skills and experience in the training and assessment industry**.

There will be a range of workplace documents that you have developed over time to support your application you should submit as much documentation as possible as they will be useful sources of evidence to support your claim for recognition.

These documents may include but are not limited to:

- CV or work history and job descriptions
- certificates or results of assessment from local or overseas training or education institutions
- results or statements of attendance from in-house courses, workshops, seminars, etc. on training and assessment
- photographs or videos of related training and assessment activities
- diary entries
- records of in-house training conducted
- samples of presentation materials, e.g. PowerPoint presentations, hand-outs, etc.
- training programs, session plans and assessment materials
- membership of relevant professional associations
- related training and assessment activities carried out for voluntary organisations
- references/letters from previous employers/supervisors
- training awards
- any other documentation that may demonstrate experience in the training and education industry

Wherever possible provide contact details for at least two referees who can confirm your training and assessment skills over time.

### **Step 2. Interview about your self-assessment results and documentary information provided**

You may have elected to complete a RPL Self-assessment of your skills, knowledge and experience against the requirements for each of the units of competency in this qualification, and you may also have provided a range of supporting documents and information. Your assessor will arrange a time for both of you to discuss your application and, where relevant, the results of your RPL Self-assessment and any documents or information you provided.

This meeting will give your assessor valuable information that will influence their planning for the smooth progression of the assessment.

### **Step 3. Questions for the Competency Conversation**

Conducting the "Competency Conversation" is the next phase in collecting evidence for the RPL assessment process. The questions are designed to enable you to have a professional conversation with the assessor who will gather evidence of your past experience, skills and knowledge from the discussion and will, if necessary, validate the information provided. Competency Conversation questions have been developed for all units of competency in the qualification and are aligned against the requirements of these units.

The competency conversation uses 'open' questions that are designed to allow you to describe the training and assessment you have been carrying out in the workplace. They are not in the form of 'test' questions that require a single answer but are in a format that promotes a professional conversation between you and the assessor.

As each question is discussed your assessor will determine if your responses align with the range of answers required and will record the relevant details in the Record of Conversation. Your assessor may probe for specific training and assessment examples from your workplace and then from your replies determine if gaps in your knowledge and/or skills are emerging.

During the Competency Conversation the assessor may determine from your responses that it is appropriate to gather further evidence by asking you to complete one or more practical activities. Practical activities have been created for each unit of competency in this qualification and are mapped against the relevant components of the units of competency.

Evidence gained through the competency conversation, practical activities, workplace documents, reports from other parties, or other evidence is aligned with the relevant unit/s of competency and recorded in your 'Final Evidence Sig-off' record.

*NOTE: It is important to note that all documentary evidence MUST be submitted and received by the College prior to the Competency Conversation be arranged.*

### **Step 4. Practical activities and tasks**

Step 3 above (Questioning) and Step 4 (Practical Activities) will both be used when conducting this assessment. The RPL assessment uses a combination of questioning, practical activities and workplace documents to gather evidence of your competence. This evidence may be supplemented through evidence gathered from other parties to assist the assessor to make their final judgement.

Practical activities and tasks are the second phase in collecting evidence. A practical activity may be conducted at your workplace if appropriate and acceptable to you, or another suitable venue such as the RTO's practical assessment area. If the assessor uses your workplace gain appropriate permission and ensure the assessor complies with all WHS and any other legislative requirements, regulations and workplace policies and procedures that may be introduced to them through the induction into the workplace.

Practical activities and tasks are a further opportunity for you to demonstrate your competence. It is expected the practical activities will comprise of only those competencies or components of competencies that you are still unable to demonstrate after the competency conversation has been conducted.

The assessment is a conversation/observation, not an exam, and your assessor will assist you to focus responses and actions toward relevant issues without providing you with the correct response. Assessing through questioning, observation and discussion of workplace documents, particularly if it is possible in your workplace, will speed up and streamline the RPL assessment process.

Recording sheets of the information and documents you provide; your self-assessment; and the practical activity assessments for you to complete have all been included in this RPL Assessment Kit. Your responses, records of observations of your skills and documents presented as evidence will be noted in enough detail so that anyone external to the process (e.g. another assessor, auditor, etc.) can read the record and determine how the assessor made their judgement.

### **Step 5. Gap training**

RPL is an assessment process designed to show areas of competence and to identify if there are any gaps in your skills and knowledge against a complete qualification. Not all candidates will have skills or knowledge gaps.

If it is determined that there are gaps in your skills and knowledge then opportunities for closing the gaps will be established through negotiation with the assessor. Opportunities may include but not be limited to attending training and assessment sessions and/or completing activities in the workplace.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

The following list of questions are typically what candidates want answers to about RPL. They have been included to demonstrate that the RPL process is effective and user-friendly whilst still maintaining the quality and rigour required by industry for competent staff. If you have other questions please do not hesitate to ask your assessor.

#### ***Question 1:***

What is Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) all about?

#### ***Answer 1:***

Recognition of Prior Learning is about determining whether your skills, knowledge and experience gained in the recent past partially or completely qualify you for a qualification without you having to undertake further study.

When you first enquired about applying for RPL it was suggested to you that you read through and where necessary complete the supplied documents that would have included: the **RPL Self-assessment, Document 5** and the **RPL Application Form, Document 4**; and these Frequently Asked Questions. These documents will have given you a better idea as to what you have to do for a successful RPL assessment. For example, in the RPL Self-assessment all you have to do is respond to each statement by indicating whether you can perform the skill to the level described and submit it along with any other information that you think may support your application for the qualification.

#### ***Question 2:***

What happens when I decide to apply for RPL?

#### ***Answer 2:***

You will be given information by the RTO on what you need to read through, complete and the types of additional information that you may want to compile and submit to support your application for RPL. The process also requires you to consider completing the RPL Self-assessment for the TAE40116 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and forwarding it with any supporting

information to the RTO.

Once the RTO has received your RPL Application, RPL Self-assessment (if you have chosen to complete it) and any supporting materials an assessor will contact you and arrange a date for you to have an interview. This interview with the assessor may be in person or by telephone in the first instance.

Your assessor will discuss your responses to the RPL Self-assessment and/or how your previous knowledge, skills and experience match the requirements of the qualification and where any gaps appear to be present at this stage. They'll then organise a time and a place for you to meet so they can conduct activities that demonstrate the skills, knowledge and experience you have.

Once they've gathered the evidence from the activities that have taken place they will determine if there are any gaps in your knowledge or skills that may have to be filled prior to you achieving the qualification. They will discuss a range of options with you to fill these gaps.

**Question 3:**

How long do I have to have been working before I can apply for RPL?

**Answer 3:**

There is no set time to have been working prior to applying for RPL but experienced workers have generally applied their knowledge and skills; communicated effectively; understood and applied relevant legislation; and solved workplace training problems in a range of situations to become competent. The RPL Self-assessment indicates the range of activities that people have been involved in to become competent. Have a read through these activities, complete the required 'boxes' and submit the self-assessment with your application.

**Question 4:**

Will any of the previous qualifications that I've gained count in the RPL process?

**Answer 4:**

When you submit your application for RPL include certified copies of any qualifications that you have already obtained. The assessor will consider a Credit Transfer if any of the units of competency in the course you have completed are the same as in the course you are applying for or deemed to be equivalent to the unit/s of competency in the TAE16 Training Package.

**Question 5:**

I have been working for the same organisation for a number of years, is this sufficient evidence to gain RPL?

**Answer 5:**

Not necessarily. The length of time in a workplace is not by itself sufficient evidence. You must be able to demonstrate that you have the knowledge and can perform the skills required to the standard expected in the workplace for all of the units of competency in the qualification. Nevertheless through the RPL Self-assessment process you will be able to determine exactly what skills and knowledge you do have and what gaps may still exist. If there aren't many gaps you may still consider RPL and obtain information on how the gaps can be filled.

**Question 6:**

How is it possible to get a qualification if I have not attended any formal training? Will it be as good as one gained through study at a Registered Training Organisation in Australia?

**Answer 6:**

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) recognises skills and knowledge irrespective of where you learnt those skills. You do not have to attend formal training in order to obtain recognition of these skills. The qualification will be the same as any gained through study at a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) anywhere in Australia.

**Question 7:**

What are the benefits to my organization if they are to support me through the RPL process?

**Answer 7:**

Many organizations have come to realize that providing an employee with a 'piece of paper' is only one benefit to both the candidate and the business. Employers have traditionally stated "our biggest asset is our people" but are also very conscious of the fact that words alone don't get the job done. Throughout the workplace they acknowledge there are often gaps in people's knowledge and skills that they would desperately like to have filled in order for the business to be more productive, more responsive and more profitable. An RPL assessment will assist in identifying the gaps and once filled will add value to the business as well as to the person.

**Question 8:**

I was never too good at doing tests at school. Will I have to sit for practical and theory tests during my RPL?

**Answer 8:**

The RPL assessment process is one that encourages you to discuss and demonstrate training and assessment tasks that you do every day at work. It involves an assessor developing a relationship with you as a professional colleague as they encourage you to discuss what you have achieved over time as you gathered the skills, knowledge and experience associated with the training and assessment area. It's not an assessment that requires you to 'state definitions' or 'list items' but is more about your practical application associated with real work examples.

**Question 9:**

People who have been through an RPL have told me that I need to collect and supply a whole range of documents in order to be assessed. Many of the places I have worked at in the past no longer exist; people I worked with have moved on; and in some cases I didn't get on with the boss or others and left without any reference. I didn't always have a documented job description and I don't have a CV or resume. But I do know how to do the job and why I make the decisions that I do on a daily basis, so how much documented information do I have to supply before I can go through the RPL process?

**Answer 9:**

Complete the **RPL Application Form, Document 4**. The application information form asks for some basic information for an assessor to help you begin your RPL journey. Page 2 of this document gives you examples of a range of documents that may be easy for you to collect; but if you can't supply them they are not a barrier to you applying and being interviewed to determine your ability.