



Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy

Introduction

Purpose of this document: This RPL Policy and Action Kit are designed to enhance best practice thinking across a range of areas where RPL processes should be considered. Training at MACE is competency based. Consequently students are entitled to exemptions from units in which they are already competent. (NOTE: Credit transfer/Mutual Recognition. Students who have demonstrated a particular competence by successfully completing a unit or units at another RTO receive automatic recognition of that achievement, provided the Code and Title of the unit are identical (Credit Transfer). The unit may have been completed as part of another qualification. Where the unit is similar but has a different code the assessor must map the unit against the elements of the unit for which recognition is requested. Any gaps may be filled by additional training.)

Processing of applications for RPL must be completed before the start of a course.

The definitions used in this policy kit are consistent with the AQTF definitions. The AQTF prescribes standards that govern vocational training in Australia.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Students and Assessors should be aware that onerous, exclusively paper-based portfolios are not the only acceptable form of evidence for RPL. Nor is a reductionist assessment where large quantities of evidence are matched to micro aspects of units acceptable. Assessors should aim for a holistic practice.

Objectives of this kit:

- To promote flexible ideas, thinking and practices
- To explore ways in which the need for onerous paper based portfolios generated by candidates can be minimized thereby reducing the workload for candidates and assessors
- To explore more flexible options to gather evidence of prior learning
- To still maintain a rigorous assessment
- To make RPL processes accessible to a greater diversity of individual and industry clients

RPL is a process of collecting evidence and making judgments on whether competence has been achieved. Competence can be exhibited in different ways due to the diversity of experiences and learning opportunities that candidates bring to the recognition process.

All assessments need to be equitable, fair and valid - a candidate should not be disadvantaged by narrow, inflexible assessment procedures. Evidence gathered needs to be sufficient, reliable and current.

RPL assessments need to be streamlined and user-friendly and high-quality, transparent and value adding.



RPL assessments need to meet an individual's needs and requirements. Choices in the ways of collecting, presenting and reviewing evidence need to be available for RPL, as for other forms of assessment. Ideally a combination of methods will be available to meet the needs and situation of individuals seeking recognition.

RPL assessments must take account of the differences in the needs of entry-level candidates and skilled (experienced workers). For entry-level candidates, assessment activities can be planned and integrated with industry training requirements allowing for greater flexibility.

An assessor must communicate his/her judgment clearly, rationally and comprehensively.

The AQTF Standards for RTO's are quite clear in the demand for appropriate student information and support around all training and assessment activities, including RPL.

Candidates need accurate, clear information about competency standards, in language that is accessible and understandable. Avoid using technical jargon.

Encouraging and supporting candidates.

Effective marketing and promotion of RPL is essential. Assessors need to encourage and assist candidates to see where their current skills match the competency standards. Published documents, web site content, and staff customer service skills should all be reviewed to ensure that potential clients are getting genuine encouragement, straightforward options and the support they need to undertake RPL.

RPL should be regarded as part of the learning and assessment cycle. All students approaching training should have a genuine opportunity to have skills recognised beforehand so that the entire learning and career journey can be better informed by their current skill status and goals.

Access and Equity

RPL, like other forms of assessment, needs to be appropriate to the unit assessed. By enabling skills learned in work and life to be recognized, RPL can open the door for many who have previously been marginalized by the education and training system. There are many ways that inappropriate RPL processes can exclude clients.

Barriers for RPL clients:

- *Processes requiring language and literacy skills beyond the demands of the job to which the qualification, unit or competency applies*
- *Expecting students to map their own skills directly to the training package/accredited course qualification or unit/s of competency with limited assistance*
- *Limiting assessment options to a narrow set of collection methods*
- *Insisting that itinerant, casual or redundant workers provide evidence from all former workplaces*
- *Not providing flexible methods of RPL assessment*
- *Not providing alternative methods of assessment for clients with a wide variety of backgrounds, including clients with a disability or limited education*



Flexibility and Fairness

Many clients who apply for RPL have to provide a “hard copy” portfolio of evidence to support the application. Although this method is appropriate in some circumstances, it can limit which clients can apply for RPL in some qualification areas. In RPL, as in all forms of assessment, it is important that options are available to the greatest number of clients.

Communication

Much of the confusion surrounding RPL for clients and for RTO’s can be traced to communication difficulties. Every point of contact with potential clients provides an opportunity for supporting and informing choices. Published documents, internet content and staff customer service skills should all be reviewed to ensure that potential clients are getting a consistent message, genuine encouragement, straightforward options and the support they need to undertake RPL.

Client-focused approach

The key success factors for a truly, client-focused approaches to RPL are:

- Genuine and positive encouragement for clients enquiring about RPL
- Advice on RPL that is in plain English and in a range of formats
- Staff who have had sufficient training in RPL and in dealing with client diversity
- Assessors who know the requirements of particular industries and employers
- Staff who have an understanding of the needs of clients and of the factors which may discourage them from undertaking an RPL assessment or further training
- Assessors who are able to assess the client’s case for RPL using flexible approaches
- Support for clients through each stage of the RPL process, including feedback
- Alternatives for clients to demonstrate competence
- Career planning and learning advice integrated throughout the RPL process
- Assessors who know the training products and options available
- A final assessment and feedback process that provides clients with options for further training and career opportunities

Clients who may need encouragement and support may include clients who:

- Have had limited previous education
- Are mature aged
- Are returning to the paid workplace after a long absence
- Are unfamiliar with training and education systems
- Have experienced failure in the past
- Have limited literacy skills

Holistic Assessment

A “holistic” assessment occurs when several related competencies are assessed at the same time. This approach focuses on the assessment of a “whole-of-job or function that may draw on a number of units of competency or on different parts of one or more competencies.

When assessing a unit holistically, activities focus on whole activities that integrate a number of aspects of the competency. When clustering competencies assessment is focused on how a number of competencies can be integrated and assessed holistically, rather than as separate items.



The benefits of holistic assessments are that they:

- Reflect the real world and skill requirements of industry
- Save time and reduce costs
- Streamline processes and optimize evidence opportunities

Managing Risk

All assessment involves risk. Being able to identify and manage risk is important. A risk management approach is a positive and effective way to deal with many key concerns arising from competency-based assessments.

MACE PROCESS FOR HOLISTIC SKILLS RECOGNITION

Students must give notice that they are seeking RPL at the time of enrolment. Details of the procedure will be made available on request from the Administration desk.

Briefing workshop following orientation

Small sessions with potential applicants to determine:

- Appropriate qualification level
- Selection of clusters
- Appropriate work samples
- Appropriate evidence
- Timeframe for skills recognition



Individual support

Follow up by assessor or peer to check that applicant is able to finalise application process (e.g. clarification about clusters, work experiences, evidence of the skills recognition process)



Skills recognition interview with assessors

Assessment of applicant's examples of work, evidence and relationship to units of competency



Award of qualification or unit of competence where the assessor is satisfied that the applicant can substantiate their claim against the units of competency



Skills development strategy recommended
Where gaps in skills are identified through the recognition process, the assessors work with the applicant to identify appropriate skills development strategies



Detailed procedure:

1. Students must give notice that they are seeking RPL at the time of enrolment. Details of the procedure will be made available on request from the Administration desk. Students will be provided with an RPL Application Kit.
2. An RPL application form must be completed by the student and lodged with Administration before the course begins.
3. Processing of applications must be completed before the course begins.
4. An application for RPL must be accompanied by supporting documents.
5. Processing of RPL applications will vary according to the unit and nature of the evidence provided. Processing may involve assessment by interview, examination of documentary evidence, written examination or demonstration. Documents submitted should be checked for authenticity, currency and verification sought from sources such as previous employers where appropriate.
6. Students must be given written notice of the decision to grant or not to grant RPL. This notice must be signed by the student and assessor and placed on the students file.
7. As RPL is a form of assessment, the policies and procedures applying to re-assessment and appeals apply.
8. Students are required to pay \$100 for the RPL application fee and \$2.00 per credit hour (as per the Victorian Purchasing Guide) to a maximum of \$250.00 per Unit of Competency per Qualification. Additional fees apply for practical challenge tests.
9. Students have the right of appeal if they are dissatisfied with the assessment outcome for RPL. This appeal process must follow the procedure that is in place for all assessment matters.
10. **Use any of the following forms where appropriate for individual circumstances. Assessors will need to adapt, add to or delete details where necessary. For individual units ask the critical questions. Ask yourself what would industry expect? Competence includes knowledge and performance.**



Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Application

Date: _____

This application form will assist us in assessing your request for recognition of prior learning.

Recognition of Prior Learning Record

Candidate Name	
Position/Organisation	
Contact Details	
Assessor Name	
RTO	
Contact Details	
Unit/s of Competency:	
Summary of Evidence	
Outcome	
Feedback & Candidate Action Plan	
Additional Information/Appeals	
Candidate Signature:	Date:
Assessor Signature:	Date:

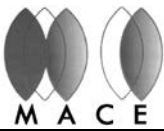
Evidence Record

Units of Competency	Historical evidence	Recent evidence	Comment & verification



Quality Management Checklist

Quality Check	Relevant Action in the RPL Process
The purpose/s of the RPL process is appropriately identified in collaboration with candidates and others	For example, ensure that an interview is conducted with the candidate and/or supervisor before the RPL process to determine purpose and requirements
The RPL process & procedures have been developed in consultation with, and are made known to, assessors, candidates and others involved	
Appropriate steps are taken to ensure efficiency in the RPL	
Equity & fairness are built into the RPL process, including an appropriate appeal process	
The process is consistent with the rules of evidence, including validity, sufficiency, currency and authenticity	
RPL outcomes lead to a range of appropriate pathways	
Information sharing strategies ensure that RPL processes have meaning for candidates & others involved	
RPL processes involve appropriate collaboration with candidates & others	
Candidates are involved & consulted throughout the RPL process	
All those involved in the RPL process understand their roles	
Suitable opportunities are available for assessors to network with each other & others involved in the assessment process	
Suitable procedures are in place for identifying the appropriate Training Package & qualification; and identifying, interpreting and understanding the relevant units of competency and relating and matching them to workplace activities	
Types of evidence that will be used have been identified	



Suitable materials & aids have been developed or obtained and are available for use by assessors	
Assessors guide and support the candidate throughout the RPL	
Recognition processes involve a strategic approach in the consideration of evidence	
Assessors have the required qualifications as specified in the relevant Training Package and are experienced in RPL	
Appropriate guidance & strategies are in place to assist assessors in ensuring sufficiency of evidence	
Assessors seek more evidence of current competence if they consider they do not have sufficient relevant evidence	
Assessors use appropriate methods to put evidence together and judge it	
Appropriate guidance and materials are provided for completing required records in line with the reports of the relevant State Registering Body	
Feedback is provided to candidates and they are assisted in developing appropriate action plans based on the RPL outcomes	
The quality of the RPL process is closely monitored and managed	



Portfolio Information

Portfolio for: Competency/Unit Code & Title
Due date:
Description of the portfolio: A portfolio should include samples (of depending on the requirements of the competency.....) Supporting materials must also be included. Wherever possible, you must include paper and electronic files for work samples
Assessment criteria: Documents will be checked for:
Presentation of the portfolio: Each work sample in your portfolio will need to be supported by a statement which outlines:
Portfolio contents:
Progress and feedback: This portfolio should be on going, to include samples of work you do over the period of this assessment. The portfolio will be checked as you progress through this assessment. Feedback about the quality of your evidence will be given before the final due date. The final presentation will be on the agreed date.

Portfolio should have a contents page. Assessor should keep contents page for evidence.



Third Party Checklist

Candidate's Name:	
Unit/s of competency:	
Name of third party:	
Third party role:	
Comments regarding candidate performance:	
The candidate demonstrates competent performance in the following areas:	
Third party signature:	Date:
Assessor signature:	Date:

Third party evidence form: Confidential

Name of candidate:
RTO
Unit/s of competency:

As part of this assessment for the units of competency, we are seeking evidence to support a judgement about the candidate's competency. As part of the evidence of competency we are seeking reports from the supervisor and other people who work closely with the candidate.

Name of supervisor:
Workplace:
Address:
Phone:

Have you read the units of competency that you are commenting on?
 Yes No

Has the assessor explained the purpose of the candidate's assessment?
 Yes No

Are you aware that the candidate will see a copy of this form?
 Yes No

Are you willing to be contacted should further verification of this statement be required?
 Yes No



What is your relationship to the candidate?	
How long have you worked with the person being assessed?	
How closely do you work with the candidate in the area being assessed?	
What are your technical experience and/or qualification/s in the area being assessed? Include any assessment or training qualifications	

- Does the candidate:
- perform job tasks to an acceptable level? Yes No
- manage job tasks effectively? Yes No
- Implement safe working practices? Yes No
- Solve problems on the job? Yes No
- Work well with others? Yes No
- Find it easy to move to new tasks? Yes No
- Cope with unusual or non-routine situations? Yes No

Overall, do you believe the candidate performs to the standard required by the unit/s of competency on a consistent basis?	
Identify any further training needs for the candidate:	

Any further comments:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Supervisor signature:.....

Date:.....



Diagnosis of unit to develop a picture of competency

Unit Title:				
Qualification Type and (Work) Context:				
Critical Aspects of the Training Package:				
Critical Aspects of the Qualification: E.g. What does the appropriate AQF descriptor say? AQF 3, 4, 5, 6.				
Diagnosis of Unit:		Level of Risk		
Dimensions, and application of competence. Assessor to gain information about:		L	M	H
Task skills				
Task management				
Contingency				
Job role				
Transfer skills				
Aspects of range to be considered:				
Key issues/expectations Indicators to look for to ensure critical aspects, skills, knowledge and key competencies are assessed:				
Key Risks:				

Decide on possible “critical” indicators of competence, in consultation with industry/enterprise

<p>Conducting the RPL: There will be an emphasis on (e.g. observation, products of work, questioning and supplementary evidence)</p>	
<p>Overview of possible indicators: (e.g. "on site" –the candidate to "walk through" the job and explain and demonstrate. Opportunities to view records, job sheets and work diaries and to authenticate and verify stated skills with supervisors. Suggested starting points and direction are offered below e.g. Use of open ended questions will allow a depth of knowledge and application of skill to be demonstrated. At Advanced Diploma level the emphasis is on specialized knowledge and theory in depth. Assessment will need to be contextualised around the individual's workplace. For skilled candidates who do not have a current workplace, the assessor should consider opportunities to access actual or simulated workplaces for demonstration.</p>	
Possible indicators of competence	Unit analysis & alignment
<p>Direct indicators e.g. observation, products of work etc.</p>	
<p>Indirect indicators e.g. personal reports, third party reports</p>	
<p>Supplementary indicators e.g. questioning</p>	
<p>Checking for authenticity</p>	



Example of mapped assessment tool

THHCOR01B: Work with colleagues and customers	
Observation and questioning	Unit analysis and alignment
Element 1 Communicate in the workplace	
Performance criteria	
Element 2 Maintain personal presentation standards	
Element 3 Provide service to colleagues and customers	
Element 4 Work in a team	
Supplementary evidence: Enterprise policies and procedures Enterprise records Legislation kept on site Work diaries	
Checking for authenticity Third party checking Testimonials References	



Analysis of a unit of competency

THHCOR01B: Work with colleagues and customers

The qualification type and work context needs to be considered as part of assessing competence

Critical aspects of the package:

Critical aspects of the qualification: At Certificate level, Diploma and Advanced Diploma.....

Dimensions:

Task skill
Task management
Contingency
Job role

Key issues/expectations- skills, knowledge and key competencies

Key risks:



Making a unit of competency meaningful

Unit:	
Descriptor:	
Element:	
Performance criteria:	What does this mean?



Assessment plan for recognition

Candidate Name:

Position:

This assessment plan is to be completed with the assessor. It has been designed to help you identify the units of competency for which you are seeking Recognition. Your assessor will discuss the following areas with you. They should be ticked off once you are confident that you have understood the information and procedures.

- Purpose and outcomes of the RPL
- Relevant units of competency
- Appeals process
- Confidentiality and security of information
- Special needs/additional information

Assessment outline:	process	Pre-interview and self assessment Evidence gathering Guidance and feedback Submission of evidence Evidence reviewed and judged Outcomes/feedback discussed Action plans developed	Date to be completed by:
Relevant units of competency:			
Materials required:			
Types of evidence that may be collected:			

Candidate signature:

Date:

Assessor signature:

Date:



Candidate self-assessment tool

Candidate Name:	
Job role/position	
Self assessment questions:	Responses:
1. Can I do all the work tasks and activities that are covered by the units of competency?	
2. If not, what parts do I have difficulty with and would benefit from further training?	
3. Do I know and understand all the things I need to carry out the workplace activities?	
4. Are there any gaps in my knowledge and understanding where I would benefit from some additional training?	
5. What evidence do I have to support my application for RPL?	



Self-assessment form

Qualification:	
Unit of competency:	
Can you?	Evidence I could provide
List elements and pc	



Assessment summary and feedback form

Candidate details:	
Workplace:	
Manager/supervisor	
Assessment date:	
Assessor Name:	
RTO:	

Unit/s of competency	
Comments on assessment context:	
Assessment decision:	

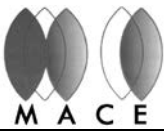
Feedback and further action	
Gaps in performance:	
Reinforcement of good performance	
Strategies for further improvements:	



Candidate's Record of Competency

Candidate Name: _____ Date: _____

Assessed at AQF level _____ Unit Code/Title: _____
I can
Evidence produced:
Further action plan:
Candidate Signature: _____ Date: _____ Assessor Name: _____ Assessor Signature: _____ Date: _____



Assessor record of oral questioning			
Unit code and title			
Elements of competency	Evidence	Evidence provided	
		Yes	No
	Questions: Acceptable answers:		
Comments: John detailed.....			
	Questions: Acceptable answers:		
Comments: John described.....			
Summary of interview: •			
Summary of evidence: Underpinning Knowledge: Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/>			

Client granted RPL
 Client not granted RPL

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Assessor signature: _____ Date: _____



Simulation Checklist:

Student Name:			
Assessor Name:			
Unit Name/Title:			
RTO:			
Date of assessment:			
During the simulation, did the candidate:	Yes	No	N/A
The candidate's performance was:	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory		<input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfactory
Feedback to candidate:			
Student Signature:			Date:
Assessor Signature:			Date:



Complex Demonstration Checklist

Student Name:			
Assessor Name:			
Unit of Competency:			
Training Package:			
RTO:			
Date of assessment:			
Time of assessment:			
Instructions for demonstration:			
Materials and equipment:			
Observation:			
During the demonstration of skills did the candidate:	Yes	No	N/A
The candidate's demonstration was:			
Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/>			
Assessor Signature: _____ Date: _____			
Student Signature: _____ Date: _____			



Feedback Summary

Candidate Name:	
Assessor Name:	
Unit Code/Unit Title:	
Critical aspects of assessment:	
Competent/Not Competent	
Comments:	
Follow up Assessment (if any):	
Candidate Signature:	
Assessor Signature:	
Date:	