RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) & CREDIT TRANSFER POLICY AND PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 - F2014L01377 Glossary Definition
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) means an assessment process that assesses the competency/s of an individual that may have been acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning to determine the extent to which that individual meets the requirements specified in the training package or VET accredited courses.
Formal Learning (Credit) refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of instruction and is linked to the attainment of an AQF qualification or statement of attainment (for example, a certificate, diploma or university degree).
Non-Formal Learning refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of instruction, but does not lead to the attainment of an AQF qualification or statement of attainment (for example, in-house professional development programs conducted by a business); and
Informal Learning refers to learning that results through experience of work-related, social, family, hobby or leisure activities (for example the acquisition of interpersonal skills developed through several years as a sales representative).

- The availability of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) provides all potential candidates with access to RPL opportunities.

- The recognition of prior learning pathway is appropriate for potential candidates who have previously attained skills and knowledge and who, when enrolling in qualifications, seek to shorten the duration of their training and either continue or commence working.

- As with all assessments, RPL assessment should be undertaken by academic staff with expertise in the subject, content of skills area, as well as knowledge of and expertise in RPL assessment policies and procedures.

- Assessment methods used for RPL should provide a range of ways for potential candidates to demonstrate that they have met the required outcomes and can be granted credit.

- In a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) pathway, the enrolled candidate provides current, quality evidence of their competency against the relevant unit of competency. This process may be directed by the candidate and verified by the assessor. Where the outcomes of this process indicate that the candidate is competent, structured training is not required. The RPL requirements of the AQTF must be met.

- As with all assessment, the assessor must be confident that the evidence indicates that the candidate is currently competent against the endorsed unit of competency.

- The onus is on candidates to provide sufficient evidence to satisfy assessors that they currently hold the relevant competencies.

PROCEDURE

JMD Business Institute trading as State Institute of Training (SIT) will offer Recognition of Prior Learning to individual learners prior to enrolling them at SIT.

All candidates wishing to enrol in a qualification on SIT's Scope of Registration will be required to follow the RPL process:

Before Step 1

SIT will provide the prospective candidate with information about the SIT and the RPL processes, and will process the application in line with its policies and procedures before formal RPL assessment processes begin.

- Prior to enrolling a candidate SIT's Admin Officer will ensure that each candidate completes the RPL documentation so that SIT can determine the amount of training they will provide to each candidate with regard to their existing skills, knowledge and the experience.
- This document will provide an overview of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as an assessment process which assesses the competency/s of a candidate that may have been acquired through **formal, non-formal and/or informal learning** (or a combination of these) to determine the extent to which that candidate meets the requirements specified in the relevant training package or VET accredited course.
- The candidates will also be informed about the cost related to the RPL Process.
- The candidate will be given the *Candidate Guide* and the *Candidate Information Form* The candidate should complete the form **before Step 1,** the initial interview, so the assessor can consider the form and any initial documentary evidence at the initial interview and planning session.

Step 1: Initial interview, followed by candidate self-evaluation

Conducting the initial interview and planning for the RPL

The initial interview is part of the RPL assessment process. Therefore, it assumes that the candidate has been accepted for RPL according to the State Institute of Training's policies and procedures.

The initial interview could be conducted face-to-face, by phone or even on-line depending on individual circumstances and the State Institute of Training's processes—however, the method will be mutually agreed and must be convenient to the candidate.

This first step is critical. It provides an opportunity for assessors to put the candidate at ease, and to review some initial candidate information and begin gathering evidence of competence, including suggesting evidence relevant to that particular candidate.

A possible sequence for conducting the initial interview follows. Remember, this could be the candidate's first encounter with an assessor—assessors should be supportive and encouraging.

The Assessor will

1. Introduce themselves and make sure the candidate understands the RPL processes to be undertaken.

2. Ensure the candidate has been provided with, and has a copy of the *Candidate Guide*. Go through it with them, clarifying any aspects of the RPL process if required.

3. Review the *Candidate Information Form*, asking the candidate broad questions about their expectations of the RPL process, work history, and relevant personal circumstances.

4. Discuss the core and elective units required for the qualification, using workplace terminology and examples when discussing the candidate's work roles that might relate to electives. (Note that, while candidates should be able to describe workplace roles, they are not expected to understand units of competency—as the assessor)

5. Depending on the candidate's work history and context, outline electives that could be suitable. Where electives are suited to the candidate's work roles, but are not in this *RPL Toolkit*, use the State Institute of Training's assessment tools for those units (or source them).

6. Provide the candidate with the *Candidate Self-evaluation Tools*. Discuss how to complete these. Advise that the completed tools will be part of the evidence which will be considered in determining the candidate's competence. Inform the candidate that the RPL process **is not based on documentary evidence only**—that is, while some documents can be attached to the form, they do not need to provide documents as evidence of every skill they claim they hold. Other assessment processes will also be used.

7. Based on work roles and tasks the candidate has undertaken, suggest workplace documents or other evidence they may be able to access—giving them suggestions and showing them how to list evidence on the *Candidate Self-evaluation Tools*.

8. Advise the candidate that a workplace representative is required to verify their self-evaluation on the tools. This should be someone in a position of responsibility who knows their performance and holds higher qualifications—perhaps their employer or supervisor. The workplace representative needs to complete the *Workplace Representative Form*, confirm the candidate's self-evaluation of each task (where they have observed it) and provide examples and comments. Give the candidate the form (it's in the *Forms and Templates* resource).

9. Develop and seek candidate agreement to the *RPL Assessment Plan* (a template is in the *Forms and Templates* resource). Include in the *RPL Assessment Plan* a date for the candidate to return the *Candidate Self-evaluation Tools*, likely time-frame for the RPL, possible dates for workplace assessment visits, and any other responsibilities or expectations. The *RPL Assessment Plan* should reflect the initial agreement based on an expected number of workplace visits and RPL assessments. Assessor will progressively monitor and update it through the RPL process.

After the initial interview

After the initial interview, the candidate should complete and return the *Candidate Self-evaluation Tools* (also completed by the workplace representative) to the assessor along with the signed *Workplace Representative Form* and any other agreed documents.

Reviewing Step 1 documentation

On receipt of all documentation, the assessor should consider all evidence from Step 1 processes— the initial interview notes, the candidate and workplace representative's responses on the *Candidate Self-evaluation Tools*, and any documents provided.

Important note: Given the specificity of assessment requirements of units, such as specific requirements for volume and frequency, and requirements for workplace assessment, there will not be sufficient evidence to assess candidates as competent at this point. The assessment tools used in the following steps include more specific assessment requirements. Assessors should also consult the training package and associated companion volumes.

The information gathered from the candidate self-evaluation should guide the assessor in determining the focus of the 'competency conversations' and workplace assessment tasks to be undertaken.

The assessor should retain a copy of the completed *Candidate Self-evaluation Tools,* as they will need to be referred to in Step 2.

Preparing the candidate for the next steps

After recording outcomes on the *Candidate Self-evaluation Tools*, assessors should advise the candidate of the outcomes of Step 1, update the *RPL Assessment Plan*, and prepare the candidate for Step 2 as follows:

- refer the candidate to their *Candidate Guide*, which provides an overview of the competency conversation process and a brief summary of unit requirements

- briefly go over the steps, ensuring the candidate understands the process—explain that the competency conversation interview forms an important part of their assessment, that assessor will be asking a lot of questions, and that assessor is seeking information on their usual or past workplace activities, including the knowledge they apply when performing those activities

- advise which clusters of units will be covered and that assessor will also be confirming the broad information they provided in the *Candidate Self-evaluation Tools*.

Note: Do not provide the candidate with the *Competency Conversation Recording Tools* during the assessment process.

Step 2: Competency conversations

The 'competency conversation' interviews, usually conducted in the workplace, provide an opportunity for the candidate to confirm their knowledge as identified on their *Candidate Self-evaluation Tools*, and for the assessor to assess the units of competency.

For most candidates, the workplace provides a familiar setting where they may be more comfortable discussing their capabilities, and where natural evidence of workplace competency may also be gathered or demonstrated during the competency conversation. For example, there might be opportunities for the candidate to gather any documents they refer to in the conversation, or to be observed in their workplace setting interacting with others.

The *Competency Conversation Recording Tools* (in the *Forms and Templates* resource) include a question bank for the assessor to use in competency conversation with spaces for recording candidate responses.

Preparing for the competency conversation interview

To prepare for the competency conversation interview:

1. determine the venue with the candidate, and make any arrangements

2. determine which *Competency Conversation Recording Tools* are to be used for the particular interview

3. prepare the correct tools for the interview, for example, by saving the files to a laptop or by printing hard copies, depending on how the assessor will record candidate responses.

Note that the section in the form *'Key points to be addressed by the candidate'* and the 'Assessor Comments' box include the key responses assessor will be seeking from the candidate (criteria for assessment). Therefore, don't provide the *Competency Conversation Recording Tools* to the candidate during the competency conversation interview. These forms are for the assessor to complete during, or perhaps soon after, the interview.

Conducting the competency conversation interview

The following points will assist the assessor, to conduct the competency conversation.

- Remember—this is an assessment process, but it is also a 'conversation'—assessor will elicit the best responses from a candidate who feels comfortable. Use a conversational style and look for any cues of discomfort.

- The questions are prompts and discussion starters, and are not necessarily 'fixed'. The assessor may alter the wording or ask follow-up questions in a conversational style. The Assessor could move on if the candidate runs out of responses to a topic, and come back to it later; short breaks might also be useful.

- Each question provides key points the assessor should look for in the candidate's responses. The assessor may wish to use these points to formulate questions of their own and contextualise or rephrase questions to suit a candidate's particular work role. Follow-up questions, building on candidate responses, could be useful.

- In rephrasing, use open-ended questions and reflective questioning techniques to encourage responses and draw out the principles that guide the workplace practices being described by the candidate. Include questions that cannot be answered with a 'yes' or 'no'; questions about what the candidate might do in certain situations; questions about how the candidate feels in certain situations; and questions that explore the values and principles that underpin work practices.
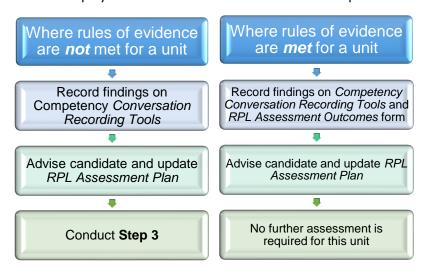
The following points will assist the assessor to record the conversation.

- During the conversation, tick points in the 'Key points to be addressed by the candidate' section as the candidate addresses them, and make brief notes in the assessor comments section. Look for any extra criteria in that column. The assessor notes could include further details about the discussion or other points and examples the candidate has discussed.

- While the assessor conducts the conversation, they can colour code, highlight or otherwise flag points they may wish to come back to—for example, if the conversation stalls on a question or further clarification is needed.

- The assessor will be required to add the details to the form after the conversation to reflect on the candidate's responses.

Considering evidence from Step 2 processes

The assessor should consider all evidence from Step 2—the notes from the competency conversations and any evidence gathered in the workplace—as well as evidence gathered in Step 1, and determine whether or not the rules of evidence are met. Note that the *RPL Toolkit* target group is candidates who are employed: assessors should conduct some workplace assessment.

Where rules of evidence are **not** met for a unit	Where rules of evidence are **met** for a unit
Record findings on Competency *Conversation Recording Tools*	Record findings on *Competency Conversation Recording Tools* and *RPL Assessment Outcomes* form
Advise candidate and update *RPL Assessment Plan*	Advise candidate and update *RPL Assessment Plan*
Conduct **Step 3**	No further assessment is required for this unit

Step 3: Workplace assessment tasks

The *Forms and Templates* resource contains assessment tools for a range of workplace assessment tasks, along with instructions for the candidate and assessor, and criteria and conditions for assessment (these are also available in individual Word files). Assessors should select workplace assessment tasks where further demonstration of competence is required to provide sufficient, valid, current or authentic evidence.

Candidates are not necessarily required to complete the workplace assessment tasks provided in the *RPL Toolkit*. However, if no other workplace assessment of the candidate has been undertaken, one or more workplace assessment tasks will be required.
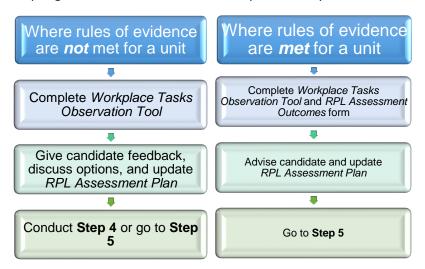
Assessors may customise the workplace assessment tasks to meet candidate needs or any State Institute of Training requirements, and may also combine tasks where applicable. Assessors may also devise other appropriate workplace assessment tasks, for example for a more holistic workplace demonstration of workplace skills. There is a blank tool in the *Forms and Templates* resource that the assessor can adapt if devising other workplace assessment tasks.

In determining whether a workplace assessment task is required for a candidate, assessors should consider not only the candidate's assessment requirements but also whether their workplace is able to accommodate the activity.

Assessors must provide appropriate instructions to the candidate before the task is undertaken, providing reasonable notice of the task. The *Forms and Templates* resource includes *Workplace Assessment Tasks: Instructions for the Candidate* for this purpose (and the instructions include assessment criteria and conditions). Where the assessor has devised a workplace assessment task for a candidate, they should add the requirements to the blank candidate instructions tool and provide that to the candidate. Assessors should also record the required activities in the candidate's *RPL Assessment Plan*.

For each workplace task observed, assessors should record the process and the skills and knowledge demonstrated by the candidate in the *Workplace Assessment Tasks: Observation Tools* including adapting the blank observation tool template for any assessor-devised assessment tasks.

Where rules of evidence are **not** met for a unit	Where rules of evidence are **met** for a unit
Complete *Workplace Tasks Observation Tool*	Complete *Workplace Tasks Observation Tool* and *RPL Assessment Outcomes* form
Give candidate feedback, discuss options, and update *RPL Assessment Plan*	Advise candidate and update *RPL Assessment Plan*
Conduct **Step 4** or go to **Step 5**	Go to **Step 5**

Step 4: Third party reporting

Where an assessor considers that additional workplace verification is required for any aspect, this can be gathered with a *Third Party Report*. This could be useful where there is a particular skill or body of knowledge on which the assessor requires additional verification. (Noting that this is additional to the workplace representative's verification on the *Candidate Self-evaluation Tools*.)

The blank *Third Party Report* template is in the *Forms and Templates* resource. The assessor should develop a suitable report format from the template, setting out details of the workplace tasks, behaviours or skills and knowledge to be demonstrated, before providing it to the workplace representative. Once it is completed, the assessor should consider the evidence provided. The workplace representative completing the *Third Party Report* should also complete a *Workplace Representative Form*.

Step 5: Finalising the assessment decision and RPL process

The assessor should come to a professional judgement on whether the candidate is competent or not yet competent in the units being assessed; provide the candidate with feedback on the outcome and their options where required; and complete all RPL- and State Institute of Training-required process documentation.

- Where the candidate is assessed as competent for the units required for the qualification, the State Institute of Training should undertake its processes to issue the qualification.

- Where the candidate has not met the qualification requirements, the State Institute of Training should undertake its processes to issue a Statement of Attainment listing any units attained.

- Options should be canvassed with candidates who are not competent in any units required for the qualification, including training and assessment pathway options.

- The assessor and State Institute of Training should ensure all records of the RPL process and outcomes attained are recorded in line with the State Institute of Training's processes and any regulatory or other requirements.

   a. Conversation believes that the candidate will not be able to be deemed competent at the conclusion of the conversation, they will terminate the RPL process at this stage. The RPL processing fee must be paid by the candidate irrespective of whether or not RPL is granted or not granted.

After RPL Process is completed
If SIT grants RPL or course credits which results in a reduced duration of the course, SIT must then inform the candidate in writing of the reduced course duration.

Requirements of SIT RPL Assessor
- SIT assessors who conduct RPL assessments against individual units of competency will hold formal recognition of competence in each unit in which they are conducting a RPL assessment or have the relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being assessed.
- It is their judgement that will certify that a RPL candidate has provided all the required evidence of competency to the standard required.
- The SIT RPL assessor must be confident that the evidence indicates that the RPL candidate is currently competent against the endorsed unit of competency.
- This evidence may take a variety of forms (direct, indirect or supplementary evidence) with the onus being on the candidate **to provide sufficient evidence** to satisfy the SIT RPL assessor that they currently hold the relevant competencies.

APPEALS
If a candidate wishes to **appeal** any of the RPL decisions made by their RPL assessor, they have the right to access SIT'S Appeals Procedure within twenty working days of the communication advising them that the RPL has not been granted for any unit of competency.