

## Policy and guidance – Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

### Introduction

Learners will often embark on a qualification with some form of prior achievement or experience and as such, Active IQ operates a policy whereby these may be recognised in order to remove unnecessary duplication and repetition.

The learner is central to the RPL process – it will be ultimately their choice and responsibility whether to apply for RPL and in doing so they must supply the relevant evidence/details.

There can be three assessment decisions made in response to any RPL request:

- **RPL assessment exemption allowed.**
- **RPL fast track to assessment allowed.**
- **RPL evidence insufficient.**

#### **RPL assessment exemption allowed:**

An RPL assessment exemption may be allowed in two circumstances:

- Active IQ has reviewed a recognised certificated qualification and deemed it ‘equivalent’ to a unit, or an assessment within a unit. These are called ‘**agreed exemptions**’.
  - Agreed exemptions will be evidenced by a suitable certificate containing full details of qualification or unit codes recognised by Active IQ.
  - Agreed exemptions may be time sensitive and as such further evidence to prove currency has been maintained may be required (e.g. should a learner hold a certificated qualification deemed equivalent, but historic, the learner may need to provide further additional evidence showing how they have maintained currency of their knowledge and skills in order to claim the agreed exemption).
  - A centre can check if a certificated qualification can be deemed an agreed exemption by sending a copy of the certificate (including the qualification and unit codes) to the centre’s external verifier (EV) for further guidance.
- The learner can provide holistic evidence to show competence against every assessment criteria in an entire unit. This type of RPL request is carried out in line with the Active IQ flexible assessment policy and as such are termed ‘**flexible RPL assessments**’.
  - Flexible RPL assessments will only be considered if every assessment criteria in a specific unit has been covered and the evidence presented meets VARSC (validity, authenticity, reliability, sufficiency and currency).
  - Should the review of a flexible RPL assessment find there are gaps between the evidence presented and the assessment criteria for a whole unit, no assessment exemption can be allowed.
  - A centre does not have to apply to Active IQ prior to making a flexible RPL assessment decision, however if there is any doubt it would be prudent to check with the centre’s EV to ensure appropriate guidance and support is sought in order to minimise the risk of inappropriate certification that may result in a certificate recall, malpractice, or a maladministration investigation. Furthermore, the centre must conduct a comprehensive interview checking against any learning outcome/unit being claimed

for RPL, and a record must be kept. Questions and checks against assessment criteria should be completed to ensure the learner already meets the standard against which they are claiming, and their responses should be recorded. Where skills-based criteria need to be checked, then a skills-based approach should be used (e.g a practical observation of associated skills, rather than a verbal check)

Centres must inform Active IQ of RPL exemption(s) when making the relevant claim for certification for the learner (via the APA function of the certification claims procedure).

### **RPL fast track to assessment allowed:**

If a learner cannot present sufficient evidence to allow assessment exemption (as detailed in the section above) then a centre can consider if the learner has sufficient competence to allow fast tracking to assessment. This means a learner may not have to undertake the learning and development activities in preparation for assessment. A centre can fast track learners to assessment where deemed appropriate, although they must ensure:

- The learner can move to assessment fairly and is not disadvantaged by the direct progression to assessment.
- The learner already holds the knowledge and skills required to complete the assessments fairly, or any knowledge or skills gaps are appropriately filled using appropriate qualification delivery methods.
- The learner agrees with the fast track decision.
- Sufficient records of the fast track decisions are maintained to provide evidence in the event of a future learner appeal.
- The learner's right to appeal is not compromised by the fast track decision.

### **RPL evidence insufficient:**

A centre may feel that a learner's presented evidence is insufficient and does not meet VARSC and as such the outcome must be that a learner completes the usual qualification delivery and assessments as defined by the qualification requirements and centre delivery model.

## **RPL best practice guidance**

The centre is advised to maintain detailed records of any previous RPL requests, assessments, Active IQ support and guidance and centre decisions made to ensure ongoing decisions can be standardised and evidence is always available as required.

The learner's RPL request must first be made to the centre and it is their responsibility to make the RPL assessment decision – if the centre is in doubt further advice and guidance can be obtained by contacting the centre's EV.

The centre must conduct an assessment of the presented evidence, checking against any assessment criteria/ learning outcome/unit being claimed for RPL. Records of the RPL evidence (e.g. certificates, occupational evidence), assessment decision and feedback must be kept and made available to the centre's EV on request.

Upon authorising any RPL requests, the centre must ensure that appropriate evidence and documentation is reviewed and maintained to ensure this is made available to Active IQ upon request.

The method by which the centre reaches its decision to agree a claim needs to be fully documented and retained as a record for the Active IQ EV to sample upon request. This is not only required for comparability exercises against learners completing the full qualification in its original intended format but, in case of appeal,

these records will be checked for rigour, to ensure a robust process, as explained above, has been followed appropriately.

The centre can choose to utilise their own recording procedures, or there is an Active IQ record form provided at the end of this document.

If learners wish to appeal a decision made about their RPL, they should be directed towards the centre's internal appeals procedure and thereafter, if required, the Active IQ appeals policy.

Examples of evidence types that may be acceptable, include:

- **Certificates** – learners who have a certificate awarded to them must have the original certificate (not a photocopy). Only original or replacement certificates issued by the awarding organisation will be accepted as proof of prior achievement (not a training provider's internal certificate of completion) If there are any doubts about the certificate, then guidance should be sought by contacting the original issuing awarding organisation or Active IQ.
- **Previous work** – for learners who provide previous work as evidence, then this work must have been dated and signed by the learner, and where possible the person under whom they worked, to show it is reliable and authentic. If there are no dates and signatures from the time the evidence was produced, then this evidence cannot be accepted.
- **Witness Testimony** - learners who provide a testimony from a witness, need to ensure the witness is reliable by looking at their occupation in relation to the learner and what qualifications they hold. If the witness has an assessor award this would strengthen the case of the evidence being used.

When assessing the evidence being presented, the centre must adhere to following principles:

#### **Sufficiency:**

When a learner is claiming for an aspect of competence, the assessor must see sufficient evidence to cover ALL aspects of the competency being claimed.

#### **Authenticity:**

The evidence being assessed must be presented in its original format.

For example, an assessor would need to see an original certificate for a learner claiming using this method. Any work that the learner has done, which is being assessed, must be signed and dated and must be the learner's own work. Fraudulent evidence MUST NOT be accepted and in the event of an assessor suspecting any fraudulence, Active IQ should be contacted.

#### **Reliability:**

The evidence must be reliable.

For example if a learner has provided a witness testimony from a colleague stating that they have proved competence against specific criteria, the assessor would need to judge the reliability of the colleague to be able to make judgements of the learner's performance against specific performance criteria. The assessor would need to ask "is the colleague competent and objective to be able to give a reliable statement?"

The template form below may be used as a guide for internal RPL processes.

## Active IQ RPL record form

<b>Centre name</b>		<b>Centre number</b>	
<b>Learner name</b>		<b>Learner number</b>	
<b>Qualification title</b>		<b>Qualification accreditation number</b>	
<b>Unit title(s) related to the RPL request</b>		<b>Unit accreditation number(s)</b>	
<b>Nature of the request/ the rationale</b>			
<b>Supporting evidence attached</b>			
<b>Assessment decisions: Please indicate which of the following assessment decisions has been made in this case.</b>			
<b>Exemption allowed – agreed exemption</b>			
<b>Exemption allowed – flexible assessment</b>			
<b>Fast track to assessment allowed</b>			
<b>Evidence insufficient</b>			
<b>Actions</b>			
<b>Declaration: I am satisfied that the evidence and information provided is valid, authentic, reliable, sufficient and current and I support the indicated assessment decision and actions.</b>			
<b>Assessor signature</b>		<b>Date</b>	
<b>Internal verifier signature</b>		<b>Date</b>	
<b>Learner comments and feedback</b>			
<b>Learner signature</b>		<b>Date</b>	