DH Associates

Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

Scope
This policy is based on guidance from awarding bodies and applies to all learners with DHA Assessment Centre

Definition
The following definition of RPL.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is 'a method of assessment that considers whether a learner can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills that they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning'.

In the context of the QCF, the definition of RPL is quite specific and relates to assessment leading to the award of credit. Assessment for RPL is conducted against the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of a unit and is subject to exactly the same internal and external quality assurance requirements as any other kind of assessment within the QCF.

The RPL process must be agreed by the centre and must be claimed by the learner as part of a qualification. The centre is responsible for assessment and claiming credit. There is no difference between achievement of the required standards by RPL and achievement through a formal programme of learning.

Process
The RPL process enables the learner/s to record their knowledge, understanding and skills acquired from their work experiences and training. Learner/s can do this using their CPD log.

Where appropriate this can be used to claim credit for their achievements. This process can give them either a part or full qualification irrespective of how their skills and knowledge were learnt.

RPL will be assessed by qualified assessors within the relevant expertise to meet the requirements of the delivery and assessment for the qualification the RPL relates to.

There are two contexts of RPL.
- The first is where a portfolio of evidence is put together by the learner showing the prior learning undertaken – the learner would then may need to complete the awarding body assessments in order to gain the qualification.
- The second is where the learner has evidence of their learning which also shows they have completed an assessment which can be 100% mapped to the assessment criteria of the qualification.

DHA offer RPL as an option for learners.
- For privately funded learners a cost will be given for RPL assessment, often this may be more than the cost for non RPL assessment, it is not always a cost effective option.
- For funded learners the proportion of RPL learning may impact on access to funding and account will be taken of Skills Funding Agency and ESF regulations.
- If a learner requests RPL this must be identified prior to the commencement of programme.
- Any request must be forwarded to the Quality Assurance Manager

- An appropriate competent and qualified assessor will be allocated the responsibility for assessing RPL
- Learners are responsible for presentation of RPL evidence
- Learners will be informed of the outcome of RPL assessment

Outcomes of RPL

If individuals can produce relevant evidence, that meets learning outcome requirements then, recognition can be given for their existing knowledge, understanding or skills.

If an individual can meet all the learning outcomes and assessment criteria in a unit, then they can claim credit for that unit solely on the basis of their RPL achievement.

If however, evidence from RPL is only sufficient to cover one or more learning outcomes, or to partly meet the need of a learning outcome then additional work must be undertaken by the learner. All assessment criteria must be met in order for an assessment decision to be reached.

This is recognised as good practice by all the concerned regulators and Ofqual has a statement which reinforces this:

Learners are unlikely to have all the evidence they need to achieve a full unit and may need to produce additional evidence. Evidence used for RPL is not time-limited but assessors must determine whether it is valid and authentic. RPL may be used in conjunction with other assessment methods such as examination of recent products, professional discussion or observation to assess current performance.

Since evidence from RPL is similar to that derived via any other acceptable assessment method, where the standard of a unit is met by evidence obtained from, or partly from RPL, credit can be claimed.