Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Candidate Information Guide

This guide is designed to support you, the candidate, in understanding and participating in the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process. It explains the purpose of RPL, how it works, your role in the process, and what to expect at each stage. The information provided aligns with national training standards and ACBI's policies to ensure a fair and supportive experience.

1. What is Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)?

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a formal assessment process used to evaluate the skills and knowledge you've gained through work, life experience, and informal learning. Instead of repeating training you've already mastered, you can demonstrate your competence through a structured assessment. This process ensures that what you already know is recognised against the requirements of nationally endorsed qualifications or units of competency.

2. Who can apply for RPL?

RPL is open to anyone who believes they already hold the required skills and knowledge for a qualification or unit. You might be eligible if you've worked in a relevant role, completed informal or non-accredited training, undertaken voluntary work, or developed your capabilities through life experiences. The process begins with an initial conversation to determine if RPL is appropriate for you.

3. Are there any additional costs associated with RPL applications?

Due to the time and administrative costs associated with RPL assessment, ACBI charges a fee per unit of competency applied for as outlined in the schedule of administrative fees published on the ACBI website and outlined in your letter of offer and written agreement.

4. Benefits of applying for RPL

Choosing to apply for RPL can reduce the time and cost involved in achieving your qualification. You won't need to repeat learning that you've already mastered, which can accelerate your path to certification. RPL can also formally acknowledge the value of your professional experience, increasing your credibility and employability. For many, it is a way to access further study or improve career progression without starting from scratch.

5. Understanding the RPL Process

Once you express interest in RPL, an assessor will work with you to understand your background and help you identify units you may be eligible to complete via RPL. You'll participate in a planning interview, where you'll discuss your experience, work history, and potential evidence. Together, you and the assessor will agree on an evidence plan. You'll then collect and submit your portfolio. Assessment will follow using a combination of techniques such as interviews, document reviews, practical demonstrations, or third-party validation. A formal outcome will be issued once the assessor is confident that all competency requirements are met.

6. Types of evidence you may submit

Evidence must show that you can perform to the standard expected in the workplace. Acceptable forms include work samples, documents you've created, performance appraisals, job descriptions, training records, and photos or videos of tasks you've performed. You may also use references or written statements from supervisors. Your assessor will guide you in choosing the most appropriate evidence for each unit.

7. Assessment methods used in RPL

Your assessor will use a variety of assessment methods to confirm your competence. A competency conversation involves discussing your experience in detail. Your portfolio will be reviewed to ensure it meets the criteria. You may be asked to demonstrate your skills in a practical setting or complete a challenge task designed to test your abilities. Your assessor may also contact a third party, such as a supervisor, to validate your work history. Each method contributes to building a complete picture of your competence.

8. Your responsibilities in the RPL process

As a candidate, you are expected to participate actively and honestly in the process. You must provide evidence that is accurate, authentic, and relevant to the competencies being assessed. You should be available for interviews, complete any required tasks, and maintain open communication with your assessor. If you need help, support is available, just ask. Your participation is essential to the success of your RPL application.

9. How the assessor makes a decision

Assessors use national assessment principles to ensure your evidence is valid (it matches the unit), sufficient (it covers all criteria), current (recent enough to show you're up to date), and authentic (clearly your own work). They compare your evidence with the requirements of the unit or qualification. If all requirements are met, you'll be assessed as competent. If not, the assessor may recommend additional evidence, a challenge task, or partial training.

10. What if you don't agree with the outcome?

You have the right to appeal any assessment decision. If you believe the outcome is incorrect or unfair, you can request a review in line with ACBI's Complaints and Appeals Policy available on the website. You'll receive feedback explaining the reasons for the outcome and what options are available to you, whether that's submitting more evidence, participating in a further assessment, or engaging in training.

11. Getting help and more information

We're here to support you through every stage of the RPL process. If you have any questions or concerns, or if you would like to start the process, please contact our Admissions team at admissions@acbi.edu.au.

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