

Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

1. General

1.1 This policy is to be used by Swim England Qualifications' (SEQ) Approved Training Centres (ATC's). ATC's who are planning to apply Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as evidence towards the achievement of qualifications provided by Swim England Qualifications.

1.2 It is not mandatory for ATC's to offer RPL opportunities, however SEQ encourages ATCs to as the following are just some of the benefits of RPL:

- Reduction of the duplication of learning
- Increased Learner engagement
- Recognition of skills / knowledge gained without previous formal recognition
- Enables gaps in skills and knowledge to be filled
- Allows for more tailored and individualised learning programmes

2. Purpose

2.1 This policy sets out how and when RPL can be used as a method of assessment for SEQ qualifications.

2.2 This policy sets out the requirements for ATC's to have an RPL Policy in place (if offered) and to provide guidance on how the RPL process can be managed.

3. Definition

3.1 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) was formerly known as APL (Accreditation of Prior Learning) and is defined as 'a method of recognising previous learning or attainment to meet current requirement' or 'a method of assessment leading to the award of a qualification that considers whether learners can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for criteria such as through knowledge, behaviours, skills and understanding they already possess and so may not need to develop these through a course of learning.

3.2 RPL is an assessment method, so must be of equal rigour as with any other assessment method and as such is also subject to ATC's internal quality assurance (IQA) and SEQ's monitoring activities as outlined within the GOV017 SEQ Monitoring Policy.

4. RPL Accepted

4.1 ATC's can apply RPL to internally assessed qualifications offered by SEQ.

4.2 The use of RPL is optional. But, if ATC's choose to apply it, ATC's will need to have an internal policy on RPL and the appropriate resources to do so.

4.3 Applications for RPL must be carried out by staff who are competent to consider and make decisions about RPL.

4.4 ATC's cannot use RPL for externally assessed or exams based qualifications.

4.5 Further guidance on delivering and assessing can also be found in the DOC037 SEQ Guide to Delivering and Assessing Qualifications and applicable Centre Assessment Scrutiny strategy (CASS) per qualification.

4.6 There is no difference between achievement of the required standards by RPL and achievement through a formal course / programme.

5. Types of RPL

5.1 SEQ accept the following types of RPL:

Assessment Transfer

5.2 When developing a qualification SEQ may identify Assessment Criteria that will have already been met either in part or in full via the achievement of our other qualifications. This is defined by SEQ and is either provided as a pre-set mapping document or stated within the Qualification Specification.

Exemption

5.3 Applies to any formal achievement which is deemed to be of equivalent value but which does not necessarily share the exact Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria.

5.4 It is the ATC's responsibility to map previous achievement against the assessment requirements of the qualification in order to determine its equivalence. Any queries about the relevance of any certificated evidence, should be referred in the first instance to the ATC's Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) / Internal Verifier (IV).

5.5 It is important to note that a Learner's ability to claim exemption will be dependent upon the currency and existing levels of skill or knowledge. Where past certification only provides evidence that could be considered for part exemption of a qualification, Learners must be able to offer additional evidence with previous or recent learning (or achievement), or undertake the required assessments.

Non-certification

5.6 Any previous non-certificated learning or experience which may exempt a Learner from a further course of learning.

5.7 Evidence must be presented and mapped against the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria for the qualification.

5.8 When making decisions using this evidence, ATC's must be satisfied that the evidence produced will allow the Learner to meet the requirements of the qualification and the Assessment Tasks must still be completed.

5.9 The Assessor may look at:

- Work experience records, validated by managers
- Past portfolios of evidence or essays by the Learner
- Reports validated as being the Learner's own unaided work
- Expert witness testimonies
- Professional discussions

- Existing Assessment Tasks that have been used to fill any gaps in the Learner's work.
- Current assessment of demonstration or practical ability / skills

Please note: any new Assessment Tasks that an ATC wishes to use as part of their RPL process must be approved by SEQ prior to use.

5.10 It is important to note that a Learner's ability to claim Non-certification RPL will be dependent upon the currency and a Learner's existing levels of skill or knowledge.

6. ATC Procedural Guidance

ATC Preparation

6.1 The ATC will need to ensure they have the staff with the expertise to deliver against their RPL policy.

6.2 Any ATCs who use RPL as a method of assessment must ensure that appeals of RPL assessment decisions are incorporated into their appeals policy.

Awareness

6.3 Before registering Learners, the ATC will need to discuss with the learner the option of using RPL for their past learning or experience. If the Learner is interested in this, the ATC should explain to them:

- The process of claiming using RPL
- The support and guidance that is available
- How long the process will take, how to appeal and any costs included.

6.4 The ATC should check that the evidence provided by the Learner for RPL has been achieved before the start of their course of study.

Pre-Assessment

6.5 The ATC will need to register the Learner as soon as they officially start to gather evidence.

6.6 To help the Learner in gathering evidence the ATC could create an assessment plan or tracking document.

6.7 The evidence gathered needs to meet the standards that the evidence is being used for.

Assessing

6.8 The ATC must ensure that the IQA / IV is aware that the ATC has applied RPL for a Learner as they may include these in their sample.

6.9 A Learner's past achievement that would show evidence of current knowledge, understanding and skills varies. It depends on the range of their experience, changes in the subject area and the nature of the outcome claimed. The Assessor may ask questions or ask a Learner to show them skills, to check that their understanding and skills are current. The CASS and qualification specification for each qualification must be followed.

6.10 Assessment as part of RPL is a structured process for gathering and reviewing evidence and making judgements about a Learner's past learning and experience.

6.11 Evaluate all the evidence using the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria from the qualification. In assessing using RPL, the Assessor must be satisfied that the evidence from the Learner meets the standard for all of the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria.

6.12 If the ATC finds gaps in the Learner's work then those gaps will need to be assessed in order to generate sufficient evidence. For these situations, extracts of existing Assessment Tasks could be considered.

Documenting Evidence

6.13 Evidence collected through the RPL process needs to be assessed and verified through the same quality assurance procedures that the ATC uses for any other internal assessment methods.

6.14 Ensure records of assessment against prior learning are kept and are available for verification if requested. See the GOV036 SEQ Retention of Learner Records policy for further details.

Outcomes

6.15 Once the ATC has checked a Learner's evidence and made an assessment decision, it is important that feedback is given to the Learner including the assessment decision and what options are available to the Learner if the ATC has decided not to claim results.

6.16 The ATC should check that the Learner understands how they can appeal if they do not agree with the assessment decision.

6.17 If SEQ identify that requirements have not been met, SEQ will ask the ATC to provide more evidence, or ask you to ensure that the Learner completes the standard assessment requirements if they want to achieve the qualification.

Monitoring Activities

6.18 ATC monitoring activities and quality assurance are undertaken by SEQ as outlined within the GOV017 SEQ Monitoring Policy.

Learner Results and Certificates

6.19 Once the Learner has completed their assessments, the ATC will need to ensure that internal quality assurance has taken place and has been accepted and then submit the results to SEQ, as per standard procedures.

6.20 The awarding of the qualification and issuing of certificates will be undertaken by SEQ as per the standard procedures.

7. Quality Assurance and Monitoring

7.1 This policy supports regulatory conditions; E10, H2 and H5.

7.2 This policy is reviewed biennially to ensure it continues to meet our needs and the Regulators (Ofqual / Qualification Wales).

For Office Purposes

Document Version Number	Comments on Amendments and/or Additions	Department & Published Date	Date for next review
3	Minor rewording, formatting, tense change, revised definition. Extra example in 5.8 regarding practical ability and skills. Signposted to official documents including Guide to Delivering and Assessing and Retention of Learner Reports. Highlighting the importance of adding RPL to an ATC appeals policy. Additional instruction regarding IQA of any RPL in 6.19. Version control has been updated.	SEQ QA - May 2024	May 2026