Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy – CPL036

Purpose

The Centre of Professional Learning and Education (Shafston) has established and implemented this policy to support the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTO) 2015. This policy ensures candidates can access recognition assessment pathways through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) arrangements, with previously unrecognised skills and knowledge that a student has achieved outside the formal education and training system. For the purpose of this policy, recognition of prior learning (RPL) will be referred to simply as RPL.

Policy statement

RPL is another form of assessment and requires the same application as outlined against the Training and Assessment policy and procedures. RPL involves the assessment of previously unrecognised skills and knowledge an individual has achieved outside the formal education and training system. RPL assesses this unrecognised learning against the requirements of a unit of competency, in respect of both entry requirements and outcomes to be achieved. By removing the need for duplication of learning, RPL encourages a candidate to continue upgrading their skills and knowledge through structured education and training towards formal qualifications and improved employment outcomes.

Recognition Guidelines

The following guidelines are to be followed when an application for recognition is received:
- Any candidate is entitled to apply for RPL in a course or qualification in which they are currently enrolled.
- Candidates may not apply for RPL for units of competency or qualification which are not included in Shafston's scope of registration.
- Whilst candidates may apply for RPL at any time, they are encouraged to apply before commencing a training program or qualification. This will reduce unnecessary training and guide the student down a more efficient path to achieving qualification competence.
- Candidates who are currently enrolled in a training program are eligible to apply for RPL but additional fees and charges may apply.

- Assessment via RPL is to apply the Principles of Assessment
  - Fairness: The individual learner's needs will be considered in the assessment process. Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments are applied by the RTO to take into account the individual learner's needs. The RTO will inform the learner about the assessment process and provide the learner with the opportunity to challenge the result of the assessment and be reassessed if necessary.
  - Flexibility: Assessment will be flexible to the individual learner by reflecting the learner's needs; assessing competencies held by the learner no matter how or where they have been acquired; and drawing from a range of assessment methods and using those that are appropriate to the context, the unit of competency and associated assessment requirements, and the individual.
  - Validity: Any assessment decision of the RTO will be justified based on the evidence of performance of the individual learner. Assessment will be against the unit/s of competency and the associated assessment requirements covering the broad range of skills and knowledge that are essential to competent performance. Assessment of knowledge and skills will be integrated with practical application. Assessment will be based on evidence that demonstrates that a learner could demonstrate these skills and knowledge in other similar situations; and judgement of competence will be based on evidence of learner performance that is aligned to the unit/s of competency and associated assessment requirements.
  - Reliability: Evidence presented for assessment will consistently be interpreted and assessment results are comparable irrespective of the assessor conducting the assessment.

- RPL may only be awarded for whole units of competency.

Forms of Evidence

RPL acknowledges that workplace skills and knowledge may be gained through a variety of ways including both formal and informal learning or through work-based or life experience. In evaluating assessment evidence, Shafston applies the following rules of evidence:
• Validity: Assessors needs to be assured that the candidate has the skills, knowledge, and attributes as described in the module or unit of competency and associated assessment requirements. If there are doubts based on the evidence presented by the candidate, a second trainer/assessor may be involved in the RPL process to ensure fairness as well as rigour in the assessment process.
• Sufficiency: Assessor must be assured that the quality, quantity, and relevance of the assessment evidence enable a judgement to be made of a candidate's competency.

Candidates will be given guidance on the types and quantity of evidence required to meet this assessment criteria within relevant RPL assessment tools.

• Authenticity: Assessor must be assured that the evidence presented for assessment is the candidates own work. This may be verified with both the candidate at the time of evidence submission as well as via third party evidence collection from third parties.

• Currency: Assessor must be assured that the assessment evidence demonstrates current competency. This requires the assessment evidence to be from the present or the very recent past.

For Shafston, currency is considered evidence that has been developed within 12 months from date of RPL application. Like assessment, RPL is a process whereby evidence is collected, and a judgement is made by our trainers and assessors. The judgement is made on evidence provided by candidates of the skills and knowledge that they have previously learnt through work, study, life, and other experiences, and that they are currently using. It also includes evidence to confirm a candidate's ability to adapt prior learning or current competence to the context of the intended workplace or industry.

Forms of evidence toward recognition may include:
o Work records.
o Records of workplace training.
o Records of previous qualifications.
o Assessments of current skills and knowledge.
o Record of competency conversation.
o Third party reports from current and previous supervisors or managers.
o Evidence of relevant unpaid or volunteer experience.
o Examples of work products.
o Observation by an assessor in the workplace.
o Performance appraisal.
o Duty statements and resumes.

Many of these forms of evidence would not be sufficient evidence on their own. Where a candidate provides evidence against a superseded unit of competency, this does not mean the unit is not valid for recognition through RPL assessment pathways. Shafston trainer and assessors must ensure there is sufficient evidence of the candidate's competence at the time they make the assessment decision.

When combined with several evidence items, the candidate will start to provide a strong case for competence against the National Register of VET requirements of the unit of competency.

Shafston reserves the right to require candidates to undertake a practical assessment of activities to assess their skills and knowledge to determine the candidate's current competence.

Procedure

1. The student will request RPL, they will receive support from the Trainer/Assessor. The student will be interviewed and have the RPL process explained to them fully.

2. If the student wishes to pursue RPL they will need to complete the necessary paperwork (Recognition of prior learning Request Form) to indicate that they wish to undertake RPL assessment. The onus is on the student to gather all relevant information that will act as evidence for their RPL.
   Students must compare the learning outcomes of the competency/s with proof of their experience/knowledge, where they gained this experience/knowledge and when they gained it. Every learning outcome in the competency/s must be addressed.

3. The trainer will provide the appropriate RPL kits and information to the student.

4. The student is to complete the RPL kits along with supporting documentation and submit this to the trainer/Assessor.

5. After initial assessment of the supplementary evidence, students will undertake Competency Conversation and, if relevant, a Practical Tasks Assessment.

6. Assessment then follows. As detailed above, this may take the form of an examination of all supporting documents/materials of proof, or it may be an actual testing of the skills you wish to have recognised.

7. After the assessment by the Trainer/Assessor, a decision will be made as to whether RPL will be granted.
   There will be a post-assessment interview to advise the student of the outcome and a written rationale will be provided, if RPL has not been granted. The student will be provided with certification for any skills, competencies or courses for which RPL has been granted, or, they will be provided with information about further action they may take if the result is not to their satisfaction.

8. Should students wish to take further action, they are able to discuss the RPL results with the Education Manager.

Shafston cannot guarantee that, by participating in this RPL process, candidates will receive a Competent outcome for any of the units that are assessed. Students have three attempts to provide satisfactory evidence, and if unable to provide satisfactory evidence in the three attempts, they will be required to move into a training and assessment pathway instead. If the student is not satisfied with the outcomes of their RPL application, they may appeal the outcome like other assessment decisions. Further information on the Shafston appeals process, is outlined in the Appeals Policy and Procedure available on our website.

Version History

Date	Summary of Modifications Made	Version
17/02/2023	Version 1 finalised.	1.0