RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) POLICY

Process Area	Curriculum
Reference Number	CUR/010
Directorate	Directorate

Issue No	Date	Details	Author	Approved	Next Review
001	Dec 2012	First issue	JH/CM	BD	Nov 2015
002	Nov 2015	Updated 4.2 to clarify evidence standards. Updated 4.4 to clarify assessment process	GD, CD, MG	BD	Nov 2018
003	Nov 2018	Changes to points 1, 2 and 3.	KK	Governing Body	Nov 2021
004	Nov 2021	Removed reference to QCF and updated paragraph 4.4 to reflect QPU	KK	Governing Body	Feb 2025
005	Feb 2025	Minor change to terminology to reflect terms now used	LS	Governing Body	Nov 2027

If requested, the College will make the policy available in alternative formats to accommodate visual impairments. The policy can also be downloaded from the College website and made available in alternative languages upon request.

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a method of assessment [leading to the award of credit] that considers whether learners can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess and so not need to develop through a course of learning.

As part of our commitment to quality assurance Southern Regional College seeks to provide learners with guidance and support to help them achieve their learning and development goals while meeting any regulatory requirements. This policy is about prior learning and ways that Further Education learners can meet requirements while avoiding repetition of learning and assessment.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to qualifications on the Register of Regulated Qualifications (RRQ) and other national frameworks in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and self-regulated qualifications. However, where learning is evidenced only through a national examination, the learner is required to sit this examination, e.g. General Qualifications such as GCSEs or GCE are not within the scope of this policy.

3. Definitions

RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RRQ	Register of Regulated Qualifications
RQF	Regulated Qualifications Framework
APEL	Accredited Prior Experiential Learning

4. PROCEDURE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 RPL enables recognition of achievement from a range of activities. Provided that the assessment requirements of a given unit or qualification have been met, the use of RPL is acceptable for accrediting a unit, units or a whole qualification. Evidence of learning must be:

Valid
Does the evidence genuinely demonstrate that the demands of the learning outcome have been met? For RPL, currency of evidence will be of particular concern, does for example, the evidence meet up to date demands or is it representative of practice that has been significantly changed?

Authentic
This involves consideration of whether the evidence being examined is genuinely the work of the learner. For example, the evidence may have been produced by somebody else, or may be the result of the work of a team. In the latter case, this would be acceptable if the learning outcome was related to team/joint working, but not if it was being used as evidence of an activity which should have been carried out individually.

Sufficient
There must be enough evidence to fully meet the requirements of the learning outcome, or learning outcomes being considered. If there is insufficient evidence to fully meet requirements, then evidence obtained through RPL must be complemented by additional evidence gained through other suitable assessment method(s) before requirement/outcomes can be said to have been met.

Reliable
The evidence obtained through RPL should be such that an assessor would arrive at the same assessment decision, were the assessment to be repeated.

4.2   RPL is a learner-centred, voluntary (for the learner) process. The individual will be offered advice on the nature and range of evidence considered appropriate to support a claim for credit through RPL and be given guidance and support to make a claim.

4.3   The process of assessment for RPL is subject to the same quality assurance and monitoring standards as any other form of assessment. The award of credit through RPL will not be distinguished from any other credits awarded.

4.4   Where units are assessed against criteria or grading criteria, then all evidence must be evaluated using the stipulated criteria. In assessing a unit using RPL the assessor must be satisfied that the evidence produced by the learner meets the assessment standard established by the learning outcome and its related assessment criteria. QPU staff will provide expertise and knowledge to facilitate this.

4.5   RPL can be used where a learner has not had their prior learning formally recognised. If a learner has certificated learning, then they should apply for exemption, not RPL. Exemption is the facility for a learner to claim exemption from some of the achievement requirements of a qualification, using evidence of certificated achievement deemed to be of equivalent value.

4.6   The RPL process is **not** concerned with allowing for exceptional entry to, or exemption from, a programme of study.

4.7   The RPL process does **not** allow the recognition of any unit assessed by external assessment only because such units are subject to specific evidence requirements.

5. DISTRIBUTION

VLE
SharePoint
All Clients

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS

APEL (Accredited Prior Experiential Learning) Policy

7. FLOWCHART
N/A