



Recognition of prior learning (RPL)

Policy

The Institute of Animal Technology recognises the importance of learning and development throughout the career of animal technologists, and wishes to see animal technologists reach their full potential and contribute fully to the field of animal technology, science and animal welfare. The IAT acknowledges the importance of recognising prior learning (RPL) in learners as an important motivating factor in encouraging learners to participate and progress through continual learning throughout their careers.

RPL should only be applied to prevent unnecessary replication of learning in the attainment of further qualifications and wider developmental goals, and not as a way to bypass qualifications or parts of qualifications because of personal preference. Any restrictions on RPL will be explained to the learners at the start of an application for RPL for a qualification or part of a qualification. There are three ways to achieve RPL:

1. Transfer of Ofqual credits
2. Exemption of certificated learning outside of the Ofqual
3. Assessing and validating uncertified learning through the RPL process.

Scope and objectives

RPL enables recognition of previous learning achievements from a range of activities using any valid assessment methodology. Provided that the assessment requirements of a given qualification or part of a qualification have been met, the use of RPL is acceptable for accrediting part of a unit, a complete unit or a qualification. Any evidence submitted for RPL must be:

- Authentic (the evidence provided must be the work of the applicant)
- Current (the evidence must demonstrate the learning is up to date, typically within 5 years of applying for RPL, or that the applicant can demonstrate they have retained and used the learning in the workplace) and relevant (the evidence must meet the requirements of the qualification or part of the qualification being accredited by RPL)
- Sufficient (the evidence must cover the appropriate learning objectives specified in the qualification or part of the qualification being accredited by RPL).

Any application for RPL for FE will be assessed by the IAT Moderators; the Chair of the Board of Education is ultimately responsible for the implementation of the RPL process and policy. For HE applications these will be assessed by the programme leader of the Centre.

It is possible, but unlikely, for a learner to be able to claim for an entire qualification through RPL. For example, a qualification with externally assessed objectives cannot be accredited in its entirety using RPL. Also, it will be unusual to be able to offer prior achievement that completely matches every aspect of the qualification's assessment requirements.

Automatic exemptions

The IAT also publishes a list of qualifications and parts of qualifications that give automatic exemption to parts of Institute qualifications. This Approved Prior Learning Proxy list can be checked on the IAT website www.iat.org.uk

A learner is advised to consult the IAT website www.iat.org.uk, before applying for an Institute qualification to check if they have automatic exemption to part of the qualification they intend to study by recognising the transfer of relevant Ofqual credits or of relevant certificated learning outside the Ofqual. When registering for the course with an accredited Centre the learner should supply evidence of an authentic certificate(s) to the course leader showing the qualification(s) or parts of the qualification(s) they are using to claim exemption. Evidence of the exemption should be kept and will be made available to the Moderator on request.

Procedures for claiming RPL for uncertified learning

RPL is a learner centred voluntary process but the learner will need advice and support to complete the process and comply with regulatory requirements. Recognition for uncertified learning can only be gained through summative assessment and recognition of learning. The learner will need to demonstrate that they have the knowledge, skills and competences to map across the Ofqual unit for which they are claiming recognition.

Typically the evidence will be supplied either by:

- Standardised summative assessment
- Individually tailored set of evidence covering the relevant learning outcomes and assessment criteria

The evidence must cover a complete unit, partial recognition is not permissible.

Applying for RPL

A learner wishing to claim RPL against an IAT qualification or part of a qualification should present their evidence along with an application form to the IAT Moderator or programme director via their registered Centre. The RPL application form and mapping chart can be found on the IAT website www.iat.org.uk

The claim should clearly indicate which qualification or part of a qualification is being claimed by RPL and what evidence is being supplied to demonstrate that the learning objectives have been covered.

The evidence will typically be provided in the form of a portfolio containing:

- A statement of the claim for recognition
- A statement of authenticity
- A brief curriculum vitae or autobiography, to put the claim into context
- A summary of the learning and assessment requirements claimed
- A commentary which identifies prior achievement against individual learning and assessment requirements
- A list of evidence against each assessment requirement claimed
- Full evidence against each assessment requirement claimed.

Development of the portfolio should be completed with the support of the accredited Centre and once completed should be sent to the IAT Moderator or programme director for consideration.

Assessment of the claim

When considering RPL evidence for a particular qualification or part of a qualification, the evidence should be judged against the learning objectives of the qualification or part of the qualification for which the applicant wishes consideration.

Although it is possible to claim for an entire qualification through RPL, this is not the norm. For example, a qualification with externally assessed units cannot be accredited in its entirety using RPL. The RPL process does not allow the recognition of any externally assessed unit because these units are subject to specific evidence requirements. It would be unusual for an RPL learner to be able to offer prior achievement that completely matches every aspect of the qualification's assessment requirements.

The IAT Moderator or programme director will examine the RPL submission. They will check the authenticity relevance, currency and the sufficiency of the claim and evidence provided. At the end of their deliberations the learner will be provided with clear feedback on their decision. The decision will either:

- Grant RPL, where the evidence presented is strongly convincing and complete
- Withhold RPL until further evidence is provided, where the evidence presented is incomplete or insufficiently convincing. If the evidence is less convincing but nevertheless substantial, the learner might, where suitable:
 - undergo an oral assessment
 - complete an appropriate assignment
 - complete a written test- carry out a demonstration
 - Or a combination of the above.
- Deny RPL where the evidence provided is insufficient or unconvincing. Clear reasons for the decision will be given

A learner unhappy with the decision has the right to appeal, following the standard complaints procedure. Details can be found on the IAT website: www.iat.org.uk

The learner is responsible for obtaining the evidence and creating the portfolio, including any costs and translations into English that may be required.

External moderation

The Board of Education and the External Verifier regularly review all applications for RPL to ensure decisions are consistent, appropriate and fair.

Support

Guiding RPL learners can be a staff-intensive activity. Most learners will be unfamiliar with the process of putting together an RPL claim. It is important that learners receive adequate advice and guidance on how to proceed.

This will involve:

- helping the learner to understand the opportunities that RPL provides
- encouraging reflection and self-evaluation
- helping to identify possible sources of achievement
- helping to identify possible evidence of achievement
- advising on the structure and presentation of evidence
- explaining assessment requirements

The starting point for any learner wishing to claim for RPL is to reflect on their experience in order to identify relevant achievement. They should think about experience gained:

- at the workplace
- in any relevant voluntary work and leisure activities
- in formal or informal education and training i.e. adult education courses or in-company training from independent study
- from home-based activities, such as care of the young, the elderly or the sick or involvement in the family business

Mapping Achievement

Learner name	Centre name
IAT number	Centre assessor
Contact address	Date applied
Evidence	Evidence included (yes/no)
<p>statement of the claim for recognition a statement of authenticity a brief <i>curriculum vitae</i> or autobiography a summary of the learning and assessment requirements claimed a commentary which identifies prior achievement against individual learning and assessment requirements a list of evidence against each assessment requirement claimed full evidence against each assessment requirement claimed</p>	

Learner signature: _____

Centre representative signature: _____

Moderator signature: _____

Portfolio evidence and assessment

Evidence within the portfolio	Assessing the evidence
<p>An authenticated <i>curriculum vitae</i> or <i>selective autobiographical account</i> of the learner's experience which will include the dates and duration of relevant experience, standards of work done, degree of supervision required, details concerning the circumstance of the experience such as the nature, size and location of the workplace.</p> <p>The witness testimony can be a useful source of evidence to verify a learner's prior achievement. The learner should identify an endorser or endorsees from their workplace to produce a witness testimony. For each witness testimony, the endorser's job role in relation to the learner and the company must be explained. It is the learner's responsibility to obtain this witness testimony.</p>	<p>The learner's authenticated <i>curriculum vitae</i> or autobiographical account will be useful to the assessor in presenting a global view of career patterns and experience and will provide a context in which the attainment of specific qualification assessment requirements is judged.</p> <p>When evaluating a witness testimony, the assessor will take into account the credibility of the endorser and the currency of the experience.</p>
<p><i>Physical products</i>, such as posters, papers, training materials. The list given is not exhaustive. A statement of authentication must accompany the products submitted.</p> <p>Where evidence has been created in the past for another purpose, it is important that the learner obtains proof that it is their work. Verification will sometimes be needed from an appropriate third party, such as an employer or fellow voluntary worker. The endorser should make a statement that describes the role of the learner with respect to the evidence. This will be particularly important where the evidence relates to work carried out by the learner as part of a group project.</p>	<p><i>Physical products</i> will normally be considered as supporting evidence for accounts of experience and may be subject to endorsement in the same way as written accounts.</p> <p>Some physical products may not be portable, or may be perishable, in which case suitable photographic evidence may be substituted, if properly authenticated.</p> <p>A structured and documented interview with the learner, based on the product submitted, should be carried out; particularly as the processes leading to the completion of the product, may be as important as the end product itself.</p>
<p><i>Previous recognition</i> such as licences, training certificates, first aid certificates, etc, can be submitted as RPL evidence. However, these must be accompanied by details of where and how the skills were used in the workplace. Also the knowledge and skills content of the training certificates/licences must be listed and cross-referenced to the standard and requirements of the qualification being claimed by RPL.</p>	<p>When <i>previous recognition</i> such as licences or certificates are presented as evidence of prior achievement, their relevance to the claimed units must be demonstrable and mapped to the required qualification standards. The RPL learner must be able to provide examples of where and how the skills in the training certificate/licence were used. The authenticity of the documents must be assured and the currency considered.</p>
<p><i>Other supporting documentation</i>, i.e. independent references, testimonials or job descriptions, can be submitted as RPL evidence and supported where relevant by listing and cross-referencing skills to the standard and requirements of the qualification being claimed.</p>	<p>Many examples may fit into other <i>supporting documentation</i>. Relevance, authenticity and currency must be considered and where necessary can be supplemented with oral assessment.</p>

Mapping Achievement

<p>Learner:</p>	<p>Date</p>
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Unit:			
Qualification title:			
Learning objectives to be recognised by RPL		Achievement(s) mapped to the learning objectives	
Details of testimony			
I can confirm the learner's evidence is authentic and accurate			
Witness name and signature:			
Designation/relationship to learner:			
I am familiar with the qualification standards to which the learner is working			
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		Date:	
Assessor name and signature:			Date: