

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

If you have already gained skills, experience and knowledge through completing courses, life experience or work experience, this may provide you with credit towards the completion of a qualification that relates to your occupation or the occupation that you want to move in to.

The formal method of comparing your skills, experience and knowledge to the training units that make up a qualification is called Recognition of Prior Learning or RPL.

You undertake an RPL assessment with a Registered Training Organisation, such as a TAFE or private training provider.

How does it work

For example, if you have been working in a manufacturing role that included duties like helping make sure that the equipment and machinery works properly, you will have gained experience in the use tools and some engineering techniques used in maintaining and repairing mechanical plant and equipment.

By doing an RPL assessment and providing evidence to a training provider of your skills, you may be given credit for some training units in a qualification like the Certificate III in Engineering – Mechanical Trade. The training provider will also identify any additional training that you need to complete before you can be awarded a Certificate.

As you can see, one of the main principles of RPL is to focus on what you can already do so that you do not have to waste time learning what you have already learned.

Gaining a formal qualification like this can help you move on to new job roles with higher pay and more career and education options.

About evidence

One of the key elements of RPL is your presentation of evidence of your skills, experience and knowledge as they relate to the detail of a training unit.

Here are some key issues about evidence provided in RPL applications.

Types of authentic evidence:

You can include formal qualifications, position descriptions, references, examples of your work and any other material you might have to support your application. Has the evidence been authenticated, for example by an employer or by an appropriate authority?

- **Currency** - Are the skills, experience and knowledge you are including in your application used in the work force now?
- **Quality** - Are the skills, experience and knowledge at a standard appropriate for current requirements?
- **Relevance** - Are the skills, experience and knowledge relevant to the particular occupation and qualification you are focusing on?
- **Transferability** - Are the skills, experience and knowledge gained elsewhere relevant to the particular occupation and qualification you are focusing on?
- **Validity** - Can you demonstrate a skill required? This may be necessary for practical training units.

Is RPL for me?

Anyone can apply for RPL but not everyone will get credit for their skills, experience and knowledge. A typical successful applicant is someone who has a reasonable amount of experience in the area that a qualification covers.

Also, if you have already gained qualifications in a course or even if you have completed some individual training units or courses you may gain credits toward a related qualification.

How do I check my skills against a qualification?

On the Australian Apprenticeships Pathways website www.aapathways.com.au you can search for an occupation and qualification that you are currently doing, or would like to do, and see a 'Summary of Training' or an example of the 'training units' that need to be completed to be awarded the qualification that goes with the job title.

When looking at these training units compare them to your skills, experience and knowledge. That will give you a very general idea of how much you may already know about the training to be done.

RPL is a lot more detailed than doing this type of comparison, so don't rely on yourself! Sometimes the training unit titles may use jargon that sounds strange but is describing something you already do.

You will also need to think critically about the quality of the evidence that you could provide if you made an RPL application.

You will definitely need the help of an expert if you are to take the next step.

RPL assessment costs

The cost of an RPL assessment may be met by government if you are eligible for an initiative or a government supported service. Sometimes you may need to cover the cost yourself. "Who pays?" is a question that you need to ask the person that you contact next.

Next Steps

Contact a Registered Training Organisation directly. You may know of a local training provider, or you can search using the links below.

[Service Provider Search](#)

Find Local Registered Training Providers

[MySkills](#)

National directory of vocational education and training (VET) organisations and courses