

## Prior Learning Policy

### Introduction

OnBoarding Group Limited is committed to an inclusive approach to the assessment of learning, including the recognition of prior learning and/or achievement.

OnBoarding Group Limited will ensure that the process of assessment for Prior Learning, whether that is Accredited Prior Learning (APL) or Recognised Prior Learning (RPL), is subject to the same quality assurance and monitoring standards as any other form of assessment.

Accredited Prior Learning (APL) allows a Learner to demonstrate through their previous certificated achievements that they have already met the requirements of a unit and so do not need to be assessed against those units again.

Recognition of RPL is a method of assessment that considers whether learners can demonstrate through their previous **non-certificated** work that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding, or skills they already possess and so do not need to develop through a course of learning.

### Policy Statement

The OnBoarding Group Limited Prior Learning Policy will:

- Provide a learner-centered range of learning opportunities driven by individual needs, purposes, prior achievement, potential, and learning style.
- Enable individuals to gain whole or parts of qualifications without necessarily undertaking formal training or a formal programme of study.
- Identify learners' initial competencies during guidance and induction, and, where appropriate, offer Prior Learning to learners.
- Provide learners with advice on the nature and range of evidence considered appropriate to support a claim for credit through Accredited Prior Learning or Recognised Prior Learning and provide guidance and support to make a claim.
- Ensure that learners demonstrate their knowledge and skills against national standards to achieve qualifications.
- Ensure that the process of assessment for Prior Learning is subject to the same quality assurance and monitoring standards as any other form of assessment.
- Prior Learning is carried out by staff with relevant levels of expertise to meet the requirements of the assessment strategy/guidance for the qualification concerned.

It is the role of the Internal Verifier/Assessor to ensure that evidence of learning is:

- Valid.
- The evidence provided by the learner must genuinely demonstrate that it conforms to the demands of the learning outcome.

- **Current** – evidence of current knowledge, understanding and skills will vary from sector to sector. It will depend on the extent of the experience, technological changes, and the nature of the outcome claimed. If the currency of any evidence is in doubt, the Internal Verifier/Assessor may use questions to check understanding and competence.
- **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 prior learning must be complemented by evidence gained through other suitable assessment methods before requirements can be said to have been met.
- **Authentic** – the evidence being examined must genuinely be the work of the learner. If the evidence produced is the result of teamwork, then it is acceptable, provided the new learning outcome is related to team/joint working, but not if it was used as evidence of an activity that should have been carried out individually. Learners must understand what plagiarism means and sign a declaration of authenticity.
- **Reliable** – evidence obtained through prior learning should be such that an assessor would arrive at the same assessment decision, were the assessment to be repeated.

## Terminology

Prior learning encompasses several terms developed over the years to describe this process. Among the most common are:

- Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)
- Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)
- Accreditation of Prior Achievement (APA)
- Accreditation of Prior Learning and Achievement (APLA)
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

## Accredited Prior Learning (APL)

To apply for Accredited Prior Learning (where you could potentially be exempt from completing specific questions/modules), a Learner's prior achievement(s) must be accredited; this could be for any of the following three circumstances:

1. Learners who have previously achieved the same unit within another qualification are eligible for credit transfer.
2. Learners who have a certificated achievement within the RQF/QCF can claim that completed units are of the equivalent value in content and demand to the units they wish to achieve and so are eligible for equivalence.
3. Learners who have a certificated achievement outside of the RQF/QCF can claim an exemption from the requirements to achieve credits for designated units on the basis that they are of equal or higher value.

This is only possible where specifically noted in the qualification specification, which will identify the achievements eligible to be used as the basis for the exemption.

Learners must be able to provide evidence of their certificate(s) and module breakdown/unit transcript(s).

Examples of courses/accreditation where previous APL has been granted include:

- Pearson BTEC Level 7 Extended Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership
- CMI Level 7 Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership
- CMI Level 8 Certificate in Strategic Direction and Leadership

To qualify for APL, a Learner's prior certification achievements must have been awarded within the last **six years and not older**.

## Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

RPL is appropriate for use where an individual's learning is not a RQF/QCF qualification or has not been formally recognised. It enables the recognition of achievement from a range of activities using any appropriate assessment methodology. 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.

The knowledge, understanding and/or skills in question may have been acquired in any area of life, for example, domestic/family life, education and training, work-related activities, community, or voluntary activities.

As long as all the composite learning outcomes have been met, an individual can claim credit for units where RPL has been used to generate all or part of the required evidence.

## Assessment of RPL Evidence

Assessment methods for RPL must have equal rigour to other assessment methods, be fit for purpose and relate to the evidence of learning. Credit may be claimed for any unit through RPL unless the assessment requirements of the unit do not allow this.

Evidence will be requested to support your claim, including but not limited to:

- CVs
- Work activities, including job descriptions/roles and responsibilities
- Training and CPD

If deemed necessary, the Assessor may request a professional discussion/online meeting to support a claim, specifically for non-accredited qualifications.

## Process

Learners are registered as soon as they formally start to gather evidence. The methods of assessment used will be determined by the assessment strategy for the qualification being assessed, but might, for example, include:

- Examination of documents, including certifications and module transcripts.
- Witness testimony.
- Reflective accounts.
- Professional discussion.

The prior learning assessment should be carried out as an entire process. This means that the Verifier/Assessor should:

- Plan with the learner.
- Make a formal assessment decision.
- Feedback assessment decisions to the learner, confirming decisions and giving guidance on the available options (particularly in situations where the decision has not been to award credit).
- Maintain records of assessment as for any other unit/qualification.
- All relevant evidence is assessed before assessment decisions are confirmed through verification procedures.
- Ensure that learners are aware of their right to access the appeal process should they feel the assessment decision was unfair.
- Certification and claims are made according to normal procedures.
- The process must be subject to the same quality assurance requirements as any other assessment method.

## Access

Staff and learners are all made aware of the existence of this policy and have open access to it:

- On paper in a folder in the OnBoarding Group Limited office.
- On our website at <https://www.onboardingofficers.co.uk/privacy-policies/>.
- All Internal Verifiers/Assessors, Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) and tutors teaching at OnBoarding Group Limited are made aware of the contents and purpose of this policy.

This policy is reviewed annually and may be revised in response to feedback from learners, tutors, and external organisations, as well as contemporary legislation.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Management Team.  
Last reviewed 07/04/2025 – next review date 07/04/2026