

SEM

Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

Effective September 2019
Next Review Date August 2020

SEM

Scope

Learners can apply Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) to internally assessed parts of SEM's vocational qualifications. The use of recognition of prior learning is optional.

This policy cannot be used for and external assessments.

In the event of any uncertainty about the scope of this policy or who to contact in the first instance, the Head of Administration and Student Welfare will be happy to help with any advice or support needed:

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Definitions

RPL is about using a learner's evidence of earlier learning and achievement towards part of a qualification. An assessor will review whether the evidence is enough to show that a learner has met the assessment requirements for a current qualification/module/unit. The learner will need to show that through knowledge, understanding or skills they already have, they do not need to repeat or complete extra assessment activity.

If there is evidence that the learner has previously shown the knowledge, skills or understanding required by a qualification, this may be used towards achieving that qualification. Evidence of previous learning or achievement must be:

- Valid/current.
- Reliable.
- Authentic.
- Sufficient.

RPL is not normally used to provide evidence against achievement for an entire qualification. This would be called an exemption, and is usually used where a learner must gain a specified qualification for a particular purpose (for example, as an entry requirement for further study, employment or registration).

Can learners use a previously achieved certificate towards a qualification?

SEM will need to map and check that the learners' previous certificated achievement meets the current qualifications/module/unit's assessment criteria. Records will be kept and presented to the relevant awarding body to ensure mappings and evidence is valid.

No extra assessment will be needed if a learner's previously achieved certificate or qualification meets the requirements of a whole module/unit.

SEM will at all stages defer to the guidelines of any relevant awarding body where necessary.

RPL Process

Where relevant, a discussion will take place with the learner regarding the option of using RPL to claim units for some of their past learning or experience at the point of admission/enrolment. The Head of Administration and Student Welfare will then take the learner through the process of claiming.

Gathering evidence

The evidence gathered needs to meet the standards of the unit, or part of a unit, that the evidence is being used for. Evidence from a learner's past experience could include:

- Home or family life.
- Non-certificated education or learning.
- Paid work.
- Community or voluntary work.
- Certificated achievement.

Evidence provided by the learner for RPL must have been achieved before the start of their course of study.

Assessing

A learner's past achievement that would show evidence of up-to-date knowledge, understanding and skills varies between industries. It depends on the range of their experience, technological changes and the nature of the outcome claimed. The assessor may ask questions or ask a learner to show them skills, to check that their understanding and skills are current. The assessment strategy, where stated, for each qualification must also be followed.

Assessment as part of RPL is a structured process for gathering and reviewing evidence and making judgements about a learner's past learning and experience in relation to unit standards. The assessor may look at:

- Work experience records, validated by managers.
- Past portfolios of evidence or essays made by the learner.
- Reports validated as being the learner's own unaided work.
- Expert witness testimonies.
- Professional discussions.
- New assignment briefs or tasks that have been created to fill any gaps in the learner's work.

All evidence will be evaluated using the learning outcomes and assessment criteria from the qualification or unit being claimed. In assessing a unit using RPL the assessor must be satisfied that the evidence from the learner meets the standard for all of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

- If published assessment or grading criteria are available, evidence will be reviewed against all of the criteria.
- If gaps are found in the learner's work through RPL, then further assessment will take place to create enough evidence to be able to award the learning outcome for the whole unit.

Documenting evidence

Records of assessment against prior learning will be kept and made available for verification by relevant awarding bodies.

Feedback

- Once a learner's evidence has been checked and an assessment decision made, feedback will be given to the learner including the assessment decision and what options are available to the learner if the decision has been made to not award the unit/module.
- The learner may invoke the Academic Appeals policy at this stage.
- Upon exhaustion of internal processes, the learner may defer to the policies of the awarding body where relevant.