

# **FACT SHEET 3**

# **RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING**

## Introduction

The Fiji competency-based training and assessment system recognises the importance of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and its role in providing for access to education and training and its role in minimising duplication of learning effort if the skills and knowledge have already been obtained. Recognition of Prior Learning is particularly relevant to qualifications levels 1–6.

The Fiji Higher Education Commission defines Recognition of Prior Learning as:

The recognition of learning gained and currently held, regardless of how, when, and where the learning occurred. It involves the assessment of an individual to make a judgement in relation to the required learning outcomes. It may involve the evaluation of formal learning previously undertaken (which may or may not be competency-based) but will include the evaluation of skills and knowledge obtained through non-formal and informal learning.

Source: Glossary

Recognition of Prior Learning acknowledges the experience an individual has gained through various avenues, including:

- Work experiences, learning undertaken in employment/career
- Life experiences, such a volunteer bookkeeper for a sporting club
- Institutional learning undertaken outside the formal education and training learning system.

Recognition of Prior Learning differs from Credit Transfer as it involves the assessment of the individual rather than the evaluation of previous successful formal studies and the granting of credit. Recognition of Prior Learning is an assessment of an applicant who has not been a learner of the HEI for the particular unit standards in which RPL is sought.

In most instances the evidence sought to confirm competence is already available and it is the evaluation of the evidence that forms the major part of the assessment. However, given that RPL is an assessment of prior learning, the HEI will need to ensure that an assessment tool is developed, and appropriate records maintained.

Recognition of Prior Learning will result in the determination related to competence. However, not all applicants will be successful, and therefore, gap training may be required.

It is important to recognise that RPL assessment decisions are equal to assessment decisions made that follow the training.

An RPL assessment should be equally rigorous and needs to adhere to the principles of good assessment (valid, reliable, fair and flexible). The evidence provided or collected through the RPL process needs to adhere to the principles of quality evidence (valid, current, sufficient and authentic).

The two most common issues with RPL evidence are currency and authenticity.

- In the case of RPL, evidence may not always be in the most recent past; however, the evidence must support any determination of competence.
- Authenticity of documentation (e.g. evidence of professional development programs) and ensuring that the document purports to be true can be a concern. Google searches, contacting the organisation, and questioning the applicant on the program can assist in verifying authenticity of documentation.
- Authenticity of products produced by the applicant (e.g. wooden table, report, restaurant menu) can also be an area of concern. Questioning about the process of production and contingency issues that arose, as well as questioning employers, can assist in verifying that the product was produced by the applicant.

It may be possible to use an applicant's workplace to undertake observation or onsite assessment.

This assists in ensuring currency and authenticity.

### **Supporting the RPL process**

The RPL is often an unfamiliar process for HEIs, assessors and the applicant. As such, the RPL process needs to be supported using a range of strategies. For HEIs these include:

- Establishing an effective assessment process that is user-friendly and documented in a procedure.
- Enhanced communication strategies, including using plain English and various languages.
- Supporting applicants through pre-application information sessions, brochures outlining the process, provision of a contact person to answer questions and provide advice.
- Assisting assessors to understand the process, in providing resources and developing assessment templates and tools.
- Promotion of RPL through marketing, making links with enterprises, selling the benefits.

## Stages of RPL assessment

The RPL assessment process includes the following stages.



## Associated documents

- Fact Sheet 1: Assessment system
- Fact Sheet 2: Assessment tools
- Fact Sheet 4: Internal moderation
- Fact Sheet 5: Assessment simulation
- Fact Sheet 6: Meeting assessors' requirements
- Fact Sheet 7: Using third parties to collect assessment evidence
- Fact Sheet 8: Structured workplace learning and workplace assessment
- Assessment tool templates.

## References

Dyson, C. and Bateman, A. 2007. *Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): Resource kit*. Melbourne. TAFE Development Centre.

*RPL Assessment Tool Kit*, Government of Western Australia, Government of Australia, which can be sourced at:

<http://www.google.com.au/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=0ahUKEwjV2Iz9lejZAhWKVrwKHYYpAxoQFgg-MAE&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.dtwd.wa.gov.au%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Fuploads%2Frppl-template-v3.docx&usg=AOvVaw0WLDjhz8y27ZQh4teznTI>

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### FIJI HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

Level 1 Red Cross Building, 22 Gorrie Street, Suva

P: (679) 310-0031, E: info@fhed.org.fj

<http://www.fhed.org.fj/index.php/en/>

## APPENDIX 1: SAMPLE APPLICATION FORM

Below is a **sample** of a RPL application form.

HEI logo

### Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Application

Student ID \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (M): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE READ CAREFULLY BEFORE COMPLETING APPLICATION.**

- You must be enrolled in the Qualification and/or unit standard(s) prior to completing this application.
- You will need to provide supporting documentation and evidence with your application.

**STUDENT TO COMPLETE (List the unit standards you are seeking RPL)**

| Qualification Code: | Qualification Title: |              |
|---------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| Unit Code           | Unit Standard Title  | Credit Point |
|                     |                      |              |
|                     |                      |              |
|                     |                      |              |
|                     |                      |              |
|                     |                      |              |
|                     |                      |              |
|                     |                      |              |
|                     |                      |              |
|                     |                      |              |
|                     |                      |              |

**Applicant to complete**

I wish to apply for Recognition of Prior Learning for the units identified above

Applicant Signature:

Date:

## APPENDIX 2: SAMPLE SELF-EVALAUTION FORM

Below is a **sample** of a self-evaluation form. This form includes the following:

- Column 1 – Competency tasks: tasks which the assessor enters based on the unit standard for which RPL is sought.
- Column 2 – Allows the applicant to self-assess against the competency tasks embedded within the unit standard. It allows the option for a comment on the level of frequency
- Column 3 – Could include a comment by the supervisor as to the level of performance, such as: not well, well, very well. Alternatively, this could be changed to the applicant responding (i.e. Applicant Evaluation), noting the same options.
- Column 4 – Allows the candidate to identify relevant evidence and start to prepare a portfolio.

| 1  | 2                            |                          |                          | 3                       | 4                         |  |
|--|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Competency Task  | I have performed these tasks |                          |                          | Supervisor's Evaluation | Evidence to support claim |  |
|  | Frequently                   | Never                    | Sometimes                |                         | Doc No.                   | Documentation provided<br>(Number and name the document you are providing for easy reference.) |
| Using a computer to enter or change work information or data.  | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3                        | Not Well                |                           |  |
| Using personal protective equipment as appropriate to conduct my work safely and in accordance with site and legal requirements. | 3                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Well                    | 1                         | <i>Copy of Company Personal Protective Equipment Requirements for my job role.</i>             |

Source: RPL Assessment Tool Kit (200?)

### APPENDIX 3: EVIDENCE FORM

| Portfolio Evidence                                   |   |                                       |  |                             |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| Evidence items required (Assessor to complete)       | Quality indicator to be demonstrated (Assessor to complete) | Evidence number (Learner to complete) | Learner justification for item inclusion | S/NS (Assessor to complete) |
| Item   | Quality indicator/s   |                                       |  |                             |
| Item   | Quality indicator/s   |                                       |  |                             |
| Item   | Quality indicator/s   |                                       |  |                             |
| Item   | Quality indicator/s   |                                       |  |                             |
| <i>Add alternative evidence submitted by learner</i> |   |                                       |  |                             |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Assessor comments:</b> Identify any issues regarding the Principles of Quality Evidence (validity, authenticity, currency, sufficiency) to inform the questions below. |   |
|   |   |
| <b>Questioning</b>  | The questions are used to test that the evidence meets the Principles of Quality Evidence, especially authenticity. Assessor to record question asked, e.g. How did you ensure that the cake was decorated as required? |
| <b>Question</b>   | Insert question   |
| <b>Response</b>   | Summarise response  |
| <b>Question</b>   | Insert question   |
| <b>Response</b>   | Summarise response  |

