



RPL Information Guide

Mitchell Personnel Solutions



Table of Contents

What is RPL

What are the benefits of applying for Recognition of Prior Learning?.....	3
Who can apply for Recognition of Prior Learning?.....	4
Guidelines for supplying evidence.....	4
What does an RPL application cost?	4
How long will it take to process?.....	5
What support is available?	5

Guide to Developing an Assessment Portfolio

What is a portfolio?	6
How should your portfolio be presented?.....	7
What should your portfolio contain?	7
Using competencies to prepare your portfolio?	8
How will your portfolio be assessed?.....	8
Who will have access to my portfolio?	9
Third Party Reports	9
How much is enough evidence?	9
What to expect with a workplace assessor?	10

Appendix A

Candidates Assessment Checklist	11
---------------------------------------	----

What is RPL

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) allows a person to receive recognition and credit for the knowledge and skills they have, no matter how and where they were attained. This can include skills / knowledge attained through:

- previous study (including vocational education training or training programs at work);
- work experience – paid or unpaid (volunteer).

What matters in obtaining recognition of prior learning is that the knowledge and skills you have gained help to meet the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the qualification for which you are seeking credit. RPL assessment can result in a full qualification or a Statement of Attainment for partial completion.

What are the benefits of applying for Recognition of Prior Learning?

Individuals may seek RPL to:

- demonstrate competence for an appointment to a workplace position or an industry classification;
- to seek a qualification / statement of attainment of knowledge, skills and competences.

Organisations may use RPL to:

- recruit or promote staff and place them in appropriate positions and skills classifications
- undertake a skills audit of staff to determine enterprise training priorities and objectives
- comply with competency requirements of licensing or regulatory authorities

Regardless of how RPL is used, for the individual it recognises the competence gained through on the job experiences, formal and informal learning and assists you in attaining nationally recognised qualifications.

What is RPL cont...

Who can apply for Recognition of Prior Learning?

Anyone who believes they have the skills and knowledge identified in the outcomes of a unit is encouraged to apply for RPL. The following factors may help you in deciding whether an application will be successful.

- Do you have the underpinning knowledge required in the unit?
 - Can you demonstrate the skills required in the unit?
 - Can you apply the knowledge and skills in a work situation?
 - Can you apply the knowledge and skills in a range of work situations?
 - Are your knowledge and skills current?
 - Can you provide evidence of your skills and knowledge?
-

Guidelines for supplying evidence

Evidence plays a critical role in the Recognition of Prior Learning process as it is on this basis the decision to grant RPL is made. When supplying evidence to support an RPL application it is important the evidence is:

- **Valid** – must focus on the specified skills and knowledge in the Performance Criteria and Evidence Guide of the unit of competency.
- **Sufficient** - must satisfy all elements of the unit of competency taking into account the Range of Variables and Evidence Guide. To ensure you are supplying enough evidence it may be necessary to use supplementary sources such as – verbal confirmation, written testimonials, completed performance appraisals, certificates, job descriptions or third party reports.
- **Authentic** – evidence must relate to the performance of the person applying for RPL, not that of another person.
- **Current** – this is a particularly important aspect as you must be able to demonstrate your evidence is still relevant and current according to the competency requirements.

As a general rule, if evidence is over two years old it's probably too old, unless you have been continually working in that environment and applying those skills and knowledge.

What does an RPL application cost?

The fee for Recognition of Prior Learning is available on application to MPS. Contact the Learning & Development Manager on 02 6162 0602 for further information, or email training@mpsolutions.com.au

What is RPL cont...

How long will it take to process? It is anticipated the assessment process will, under normal circumstances be completed within twenty (20) working days from the date the application is received by MPS.

What support is available? This information kit contains all the information you will need to decide whether to submit an application.

Full details of each Unit of Competency are located on the National Training Information Service website www.ntis.gov.au

Any further queries can be directed to MPS at:

Telephone: 02 6162 0602

Email: training@mpsolutions.com.au

Guide to Developing an Assessment Portfolio

This information aims to assist you to develop your portfolio. MPS staff are available to assist you and to clarify any information.

What is a portfolio?

A portfolio is a collection of documentary evidence from a range of sources relevant to the competencies for which you are being assessed. It will become your permanent and transportable record of achievement in the workplace.

Your portfolio will be composed of documentary evidence. Under the assessment process this can include, but is not limited to:

- a report you have written
- a project you were involved in
- an extract from your previous performance agreement (where available)
- a demonstration of a specific task in the workplace
- your answers to questions
- letters from clients, the public, other organisations, etc.
- participation in a role play
- relevant qualifications or awards
- copies of documentation you have completed / processed
- a paper you have written or an oral presentation you have given
- third party reports
- written references and citations

If your evidence is not on the list

However, you are able to include any evidence you think is necessary to demonstrate your competence. You may also refer to the Evidence Guide contained in each unit of the competency standards. Competency units can be found at www.ntis.gov.au.

The evidence you include in your portfolio must be:

- Relevant to the competencies for which you are being assessed.
- Current, try not to include documents that are more than two years old.
- A reflection of your actual work performance.
- Valid, that is, it must be your work.
- Sufficient for a workplace assessor to make a decision on competence.

Assessment Portfolio cont...

How should your portfolio be presented?

The most important aspect of a portfolio presentation is the evidence is accessible and comprehensible to a workplace assessor. It should contain:

- A cover page detailing your name, contact details and the competencies you wish to be assessed against.
- Two or more third party reports.
- A guide referencing your evidence to the competencies.
- A range of supporting documentary evidence clearly referenced to the competencies.

It is your responsibility to maintain the portfolio and to clearly reference your evidence to the relevant competencies. Workplace assessors will assess your evidence; they **will not** map it to the competencies for you. If your portfolio does not contain some form of referencing to the competencies it will be regarded as incomplete and returned to you by the workplace assessor. A suggested portfolio structure is included at Appendix B.

What should your portfolio contain?

A portfolio assessment will be made based on a combination of the following three key pieces of evidence:

- workplace documents – including training program attendance verification
- an interview with a workplace assessor and / or a subject matter expert
- Third party reports (minimum of two (2) reports)

This is in contrast to a workplace assessment which can include:

- direct observation of task performance, either in the workplace or via a scenario / simulation
- questioning to determine underpinning knowledge
- Examination of the product / service directly or via third party reports and / or workplace documents.

Therefore the contents of your portfolio will vary, depending on your job and the principal method of assessment you have chosen. If you have chosen a portfolio assessment your portfolio is the key piece of evidence on which the workplace assessor will base his/her decision of competence. It will therefore need to demonstrate **ALL** of the skills and knowledge acquired through your job and defined in the competencies.

If you are preparing a portfolio as a supplement to a workplace assessment it should address those areas that are not adequately covered in the principal assessment. In this instance the portfolio will not need to be as comprehensive.

Assessment Portfolio cont...

Using competencies to prepare your portfolio

Once you have identified the relevant competencies, you need to collect evidence that reflects demonstration of the skills and knowledge identified in these competencies. As a guide you may refer to the Evidence Guide that forms a part of each competency standard. You should aim to collect evidence that addresses the elements in the competency standard. When referencing your evidence to the competencies, indicate which of the competencies it is relevant to as well as the element in the competency that you believe it addresses. It is vital your referencing system is accurate or assessors may miss an important piece of evidence.

You should try to select evidence that covers more than one competency. For example, a report you have written may cover a number of elements in different competencies. There may still be some areas that your portfolio does not cover.

In this instance you should flag gaps for the assessor and they will be able to either run you through a scenario or ask you some questions to cover this gap.

Competency based assessment processes recognise there are some skills it is difficult to collect evidence of. As a general rule, you should aim to fully cover 80% of the material in the competencies. The assessor is then able to work with you to address remaining gaps to facilitate the assessment process.

How will your portfolio be assessed?

Your portfolio will be examined by a workplace assessor, and if necessary, a subject matter expert. Assessment is a process of confirming you have achieved competency. To be certain the final decision of competent / yet to demonstrate competence is accurate, your evidence must be examined to ensure it is valid, reliable, sufficient, authentic, and current.

If the workplace assessor is also a subject matter expert, they will make these decisions alone. However, if they require subject expertise, the assessor will decide if your evidence is sufficient and reliable, whereas the subject matter expert will advise if it is valid, current, and authentic.

The focus of the assessor will be “Can the candidate do this now?” They will make this decision based on the evidence you present and any discussions you may have. Additionally, the assessor will need to determine whether the evidence, as a whole, matches your claims. They will do this by comparing and contrasting the documents with the competency standards. If there is something the assessor cannot reasonably infer from the evidence, they will either ask you a specific question about this at interview or request further documentary evidence.

Assessment Portfolio cont...

Although documentary evidence is the key to a portfolio assessment, you will also need to meet with the assessor. This provides an opportunity for you to flesh out the evidence you have presented and for the assessor and / or subject matter expert to satisfy themselves regarding any concerns about gaps in your skills and / or knowledge they may not be able to infer from work documents alone. You will usually be asked “what if ...” type questions by the assessor so they can be sure you are able to apply your knowledge to real life situations.

Who will have access to my portfolio?

If the workplace assessor is not a subject matter expert in the competencies you have addressed, they will need to consult with one or more subject matter expert/s to accurately assess your evidence.

MPS's Assessment Policy confirms your portfolio will be treated in confidence and only shown to individuals who have a genuine need to see the portfolio in order to conduct the assessment. It is recommended where you feel the need to use classified documents as evidence, that your Third Party Reports refer to this and you **do not** include them in your portfolio.

Third Party Reports

Third party reports can be completed by any member of staff who has worked with you, and you are confident can supply relevant examples of your work performance.

Staff completing third party reports do not need to be Work Place Assessor trained. These are not statements of competence they are only comments and examples of how you conduct yourself in the workplace.

There is no requirement for a third party report to be completed by a staff member of a higher level as in many cases it is other staff of the same or even a lower level who are best placed to submit comments on your behalf.

How much is enough evidence?

There are no hard and fast rules about how much evidence is enough. If the task you are being assessed against has a number of dimensions, try and provide evidence for each of these. If an assessor feels they would like more evidence to demonstrate a particular skill or facet of knowledge, they are able to ask you for it prior to making their final assessment decision.

Remember – it is your responsibility as a candidate to provide the assessor with enough evidence so they can be confident they are making an accurate assessment decision.

Assessment Portfolio cont...

What to expect when meeting with a workplace assessor (WPA) for an on the job assessment

The length of an assessment will vary depending on a number of factors, such as – what is being assessed, the strategies being used to gather evidence, how many tasks you are being assessed against, the type of evidence you present, the availability of assessors and / or subject matter experts, etc.

As a guide an assessment will usually involve:

- A briefing meeting where an assessor will explain the assessment process to you and together you can determine the most appropriate way of gathering evidence.
 - A period of time for you to gather evidence.
 - A meeting with the workplace assessor where you will either be presenting your evidence or the assessor will be observing you in the workplace.
 - If necessary, some time to find additional evidence and a follow up meeting to discuss that evidence.
 - A final meeting to provide feedback to you on your performance, to advise the final assessment rating and to allow you to sign the assessment report. This is also an opportunity for you to provide feedback to the assessor on the conduct of the assessment process.
-

Appendix A

Candidates Assessment Checklist

This checklist is designed to be used as a reminder when you are preparing for and participating in a formal assessment of your competencies.

<i>Preparing for the Assessment</i>		
	Yes	No
▪ Do you know why you are being assessed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Have you sought advice about which development options will best meet your needs? (if required)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Have you undertaken appropriate development activities? (if required)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Are you satisfied that you are competent in all aspects of the units for which you are seeking assessment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Requesting the Assessment</i>		
▪ Have you met with the workplace assessor to discuss how the assessment will be conducted?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Have you let the assessor know about any special needs that may affect the assessment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Gathering Evidence</i>		
▪ Are you clear about what types of evidence you should collect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Have you requested third party reports from your supervisor / manager or other appropriate person?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Have you gathered the evidence required by the assessor and/or taken part in evidence gathering activities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Participating in the Assessment</i>		
▪ Did you present yourself, your evidence and your claims to the assessor in a professional manner?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Did you gather additional evidence if required?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Did you provide feedback to the assessor on the conduct of the assessment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Did you notify the assessor if you disagreed with the assessment outcome?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>