



# RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY



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## 1 INTRODUCTION AND POLICY STATEMENT

EDUVISA performs and maintains comprehensive quality assurance processes and procedures which are designed to:

- Safeguard EDUVISA's integrity as an academic and corporate entity;
- Ensure the validity and integrity of EDUVISA qualifications and relevant assessment methodology

In particular, EDUVISA maintains up-to-date policies for staff and licensed centers in order to meet any requirements stipulated by the regulatory authorities. EDUVISA encourages licensed centers to offer RPL to their students. This **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** Policy is a **guidance document** for use by EDUVISA staff (including its External Quality Assurers and Award Institutions) as well as by the staff of EDUVISA.

## 2 ABOUT RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a controlled method of assessment that can lead to the award of credit to a student without the student necessarily completing a formal learning programme for one or more units of a qualification. The process considers whether or not a student possesses (through existing experience and skills) the evidence of knowledge and understanding necessary to achieve stated learning outcomes. This can be beneficial in the marketing of qualifications through brochures and prospectuses, and ultimately to the recruitment of potential students. RPL enables students to be properly placed on accredited qualifications/units to which they are best suited. RPL also enables EDUVISA to recognise student achievement from a range of activities that use any appropriate assessment methodology. On the condition that the assessment requirements of a given unit or qualification have been met, the use of RPL is acceptable for accrediting a single unit, multiple units, or an entire qualification. EDUVISA's RPL policy applies to all EDUVISA qualifications and EDUVISA-licensed qualifications as recognised by the relevant regulatory authorities and award institutions.

## 2.1 RPL and the Non-Formal Learning Process

While many RPL students will have a background in formal learning, the process also allows for students with non-formal experience to progress through academic programmes (especially vocational programmes). Their own life and work experiences can inform and enhance their learning just as effectively as if they had undertaken formal learning.

## 2.2 Applying RPL within the EDUVISA organisational environment

The implementation and use of RPL within the EDUVISA organisational environment is **compulsory** and also applies to centers licensed to make use of EDUVISA services and/or products.

## 3 EVIDENCE OF RPL

Evidence submitted to prove RPL must fulfil the following criteria:

- **Authentic:** Evidence must prove conclusively that RPL is based upon the student's own work
- **Valid/Current:** Evidence must meet the requirements of the current assessment criteria
- **Relevant:** Evidence must be appropriate to the content of the unit/qualification being considered for RPL
- **Sufficient:** There must be enough evidence to conclusively prove consistency of student performance in meeting the assessment criteria.

If the validity of any evidence is held in doubt (for example, it is deemed superficial or irrelevant), the assessor may formulate questions in order to test their reservations and the veracity of a student's RPL claim.

## 4 GENERAL GUIDANCE

RPL focuses on assessment of prior learning which can count as evidence towards a complete unit or number of complete units that accumulate towards a full qualification. It is possible that an entire qualification could be achieved through RPL, although evidence from prior learning would need to 'map to' (i.e. cross-match and synchronise with) all the learning outcomes and their assessment/performance criteria of the qualification. When considering claims for RPL, EDUVISA

reserves the right to request (normally through its External Quality Assurers (EQAs)) those samples of evidence scrutinised which underpin the claimed achievement through RPL.

## 4.1 Establishing RPL System and Policy

The RPL process provides for the following **key points**:

- 1) Statement of Policy:** The RPL policy is constructed and set out in a clear way for the benefit of staff as well as students. Providing potential students with access to the center's RPL policy in recruitment/induction material is regarded as very beneficial. EDUVISA is committed to the process of RPL in order to assist potential students in accessing the open-learning process.
- 2) Positioning RPL within EDUVISA:** The RPL policy is positioned either at an organisational level (in the Faculty/Department/Division) **or** at the programme level (by unit/qualification) in order to ensure fairness and consistency in its application.
- 3) Restrictions and Caveats:** Guidelines with regard to the application of RPL is made available to staff as well as to potential students on a regular basis.

## 4.2 Centre Checklist Guidance

The following requirements have to be adhered to in order to ensure the successful implementation of RPL policy:

- Appointment of a dedicated RPL official
- Application of a RPL Staff Development Programme
- Appointment of Trained assessors/tutors
- Access to learning resources which support additional learning.
- Appropriate assessment recording tools
- An appeals system (see also EDUVISA's 'Appeals Policy')

## 4.3 Supporting RPL Procedures

EDUVISA applies the following principles in order to enable students to benefit from the RPL system:

- All evidence for RPL must be evaluated using the stated learning outcomes and assessment criteria from the qualification or unit being claimed. When assessing a unit using RPL, the assessor **must be satisfied** that the evidence produced by the student meets the assessment standard (as established by the desired learning outcomes and their related assessment criteria) established by the EDUVISA EQF or partnering award institutions.
- Students must be registered as soon as they begin to gather evidence for RPL
- Records of assessment against prior learning are maintained
- Certification claims made by potential students will be assessed against the curricula, modules, units and guidelines against which EDUVISA is accredited.

## 5 EXPLAINING THE RPL PROCESS

This example of an RPL process is designed to highlight the key areas involved in supporting a valid and clear RPL policy.

- 1) **Awareness, Information, and Guidance:** Before EDUVISA formally enrolls a potential student, the possibility that the student may be able to claim credit for previous learning will be raised directly or indirectly (online registration system) by EDUVISA.
- 2) **Pre-Assessment:** Evidence will be provided by the student to the staff member responsible for implementation of the RPL process. This evidence will be measured against the requirements of the relevant unit(s) for which RPL is being claimed.
- 3) **Career Guidance:** Should the student require career guidance he/she may approach the EDUVISA Academic Advisor who will assist the student during this stage.
- 4) **Assessment:** This stage focuses on the evaluation of the documentation of evidence and is conducted according to a structured process which take the following into consideration:
  - Previous work experience records (as validated by managers);
  - Previous portfolios of evidence collated by the student;

- Essays and/or reports that have been validated as the user's own unaided work; and
  - Referenced evidence supported by tracking documentation and adequately signposted in order to facilitate internal assessment as well as internal/external verification.
- 5) **Claiming Certification:** Once internal and external quality assurance procedures have been completed, certification claims will proceed. Assessment and internal verification records, along with any additional RPL records completed, will be retained for the standard three-year period following certification and will be duplicated by the award institution relevant to the specific qualification or study pathway.
- 6) **Appeal:** If a student wishes to appeal against a decision made about their assessment, they must follow the standard centre policy procedures, and then EDUVISA Appeals Policy procedures.

## 6 THE PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE

Generally, a student intending to claim credit through RPL should aim to construct a **portfolio of evidence** which should contain:

- **Autobiographical** statement, including a statement as to why RPL is being claimed to contextualise the claim for subsequent assessment;
- A **current CV or other document** listing the student's educational/vocational/employment records and achievements;
- A **signed** statement of authenticity (see the **Witness Testimony Form** provided at **Annex 1** to this document);
- A **commentary** on each piece of evidence assembled within the portfolio; and
- **Certified copies of previous qualifications** obtained.

## 6.1 Forms of Evidence

While documentation may be presented in a portfolio, the production of physical evidence for products and objects that the student has created may not always be practicable. In this case, authenticated photographic evidence which can be assembled within the portfolio will generally suffice as long as it also satisfies the assessor and assessment criteria for which RPL is being claimed.

## 6.2 Additional Evidence

If the evidence presented in support of a claim for RPL is convincing, it may be deemed sufficient for the purposes of certification. However, if the evidence is less convincing (though still substantial), the assessor may decide to further prove the student's RPL claim by:

- Setting an oral assessment for the student
- Setting a written assessment for the student
- Asking the student to carry out a demonstration
- Any combination of the above

## 6.3 Additional Learning

If only part of a unit's assessment requirements has been met once evidence has been collated and analysed, additional learning and assessment inputs may be expected of the student in order to cover the outstanding (i.e. missing, incomplete, or invalid) evidence. This additional learning might be facilitated through individual tutorials and/or assignments, seminar instruction, open learning, or through a learning contract.

## 6.4 Internal Verification

EDUVISA's qualifications are internally and externally assessed, and EDUVISA is required to comply to certain prescribed processes. This ensures that assessors' decisions are consistent in the interpretation and application of assessment criteria. For some qualifications, the internal verification process is designed by EDUVISA and is part of the internal quality assurance system.

## 6.5 Accreditation of RPL

External quality assurance of RPL evidence of EDUVISA EQAs/External Verifiers is undertaken in the same way as would apply to evidence from students who have been through more traditional methods of study. There is therefore no distinction between RPL evidence and traditional evidence submitted to EDUVISA.