

## Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

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## Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

### Scope

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Initial Assessment Policy is a process of assessment that considers whether a learner can demonstrate that they meet the assessment requirements of an Apprenticeship Standard (or other qualification as applicable) by the knowledge, skills or behaviours (KSB) they already possess and therefore do not need to develop through a programme of learning.

### Policy

MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD will always seek to avoid duplication of learning and assessment for learners where they or their employer deem themselves already skilled in particular subject areas. There are two ways in which this will be achieved:

- The opportunity to transfer credits, (i.e. to recognise previously accredited achievement from within or outside the Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF)) to count towards other qualifications; or
- For individuals with learning or achievements that have not been certificated / accredited it we will assess and validate these through an assessment & diagnostic process based on a set criterion taken from the Apprenticeship Standards' Assessment Plan

### Process

MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD's process varies depending on the entry point of the learner in respect of their previous experience, qualifications of training in the subject area.

#### New market entrants

(with little or no prior knowledge, skills or experience and/or with less than 6 months experience in the job role)

Prior to starting their apprenticeship, a LDC will contact the learner and conduct and document a detailed professional discussion with the learner to ascertain their current knowledge and skills using MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD's competence evaluation descriptors

that during initial assessment and **before** learners agree their learning plan & commitment statement with their Learning & Development Coach:

- We will arrange for learners (and their line manager where applicable) to complete our online 'Competency Evaluator' tool to assess their current knowledge, skills and behaviours against the criteria set out in the relevant Assessment Plan.
  - This is to ascertain a learner's level relative to the pass or distinction criteria (or any other criteria) as described in the Assessment Plan
  - 'Competency Evaluator' is an in-house piece of software that is customisable to suit any Apprenticeship Standard. It uses a 1-9 scale where;
    - 1 = no prior experience; and
    - 9 = full competence against Distinction (or highest) criteria as defined in the relevant assessment plan.

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- Where a learner and their employer agree any prior knowledge, skill or behaviour they will be required to produce recent, valid and reliable evidence of learning to support any claims of RPL based on experience. This may include, but not limited to:
  - Work reports/appraisals/performance reviews
  - Evidence of attendance at in-house training courses with appropriate results
  - Current CPD logs (if appropriate)
  - Written statements from line manager, mentor or appropriate person outlining how the learner has applied relevant skills or knowledge in their day job
- This evidence can be provided in a number of ways during the initial assessment. In summary this will either be in written form from naturally occurring evidence generated by the learner whilst in their job or through professional discussion and questioning with between learner, line manager and Learning & Development Coach (LDC). In some instances, the LDC may wish to get more information about a specific piece of written evidence through professional discussion to make a reasonable judgement as to its relevance against the Assessment Plan.
- Furthermore, where only subjective verbal evidence exists or the LDC is not satisfied that the written evidence meets the Standard criteria, MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD reserve the right to ask learners to undertake one or multiple assignments during initial assessment to independently judge the level of the learners prior knowledge & skills. This is primarily to ensure MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD is satisfied that no additional learning is required before putting a learner through “gateway” to End Point Assessment. In summary, we assure ourselves that we are not setting the learner up to fail EPA.
- Additionally, if a learner presents some level of knowledge or skill through previous work experience or formal training but as a result of undertaking their Apprenticeship programme with MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD they will get to a higher level (relative to the Assessment Plan and/or role profile agreed with the Employer), we will agree a learning plan with the learner and employer than may require up to the full programme length to stretch and challenge the learner.
- We will review the learner’s [Personal Learning Record](#) to identify and/or corroborate any learner claims for prior accredited learning.
  - Where a learner’s PLR highlights particular qualifications that are relevant to the propose Apprenticeship Standard the LDC will undertake a mapping exercise to ascertain any duplication of learning and conduct a professional discussion with the learner to assure that no learning will be duplicated as part of their Apprenticeship programme
- We will undertake an initial assessment of English and maths (see English and maths policy & process)
- We will undertake Additional Learning Support assessments (where appropriate)

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### Validating initial assessments:

In order to validate recognition of prior learning & achievement there are two options open to the learner:

- Undertake the same assessments that lead to the relevant unit or qualification. These assessments may be undertaken without further learning.
- Submit a portfolio of evidence based on previous learning, skills and/or employment experience/competence cross referenced to the learning outcomes, KSB's and/or assessment criteria of the Apprenticeship Standard (or other qualification as applicable)

Learners wishing to claim this method of accreditation must agree the procedure and relevant evidence requirements with their appointed Learning & Development Coach and it must be approved by the learner's line manager and Apprenticeship Manager prior to enrolment.

The learner must play an active role in the process and must produce evidence and map it to the learning outcomes, KSBs and/or assessment criteria of all RPL they wish to claim. The individual wishing to make the claim may also require the support of their employer or others in order to be able to confirm achievement of assessment criteria for which there is no tangible evidence, e.g. practical tasks.

Initial assessment process is subject to an internal Quality Assurance process as outlined in our policy.

### How initial assessment impacts the Individual Learning Plan

In all cases an LDC will undertake a one to one appointment with every learner to review their initial assessment results. This appointment (also known as the "Sign Up meeting") will be to create the learner's Individual Learning Plan (ILP). An ILP is designed to address the skills gaps identified and evidenced through the initial assessment process, these gaps will then be used to determine the length and overall cost of the programme.

Where prior learning has been agreed it is expected that the length and overall cost of the programme be reduced accordingly.

## Principles of RPL

### Principle 1

RPL is a valid method of enabling individuals to claim credit for prior knowledge, irrespective of how their learning took place. There is no difference between the achievement of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of a unit through prior learning or through a formal programme of study.

### Principle 2

RPL policies, processes, procedures, practices and decisions should be transparent, rigorous, reliable, fair and accessible to individuals and stakeholders to ensure that users can be confident of the decisions and outcomes of RPL.

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### Principle 3

RPL is learner-centred, voluntary process. The individual should be offered advice on the nature and range of evidence considered appropriate, to support a claim for credit through RPL, and be given guidance and support to make a claim.

### Principle 4

The process of assessment for RPL is subject to the same quality assurance and monitoring standards as any other form of assessment. The award of credit through RPL will not be distinguished from any other credits awarded.

### Principle 5

Assessment methods of RPL must be of equal rigour to the 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, based on a rationale consistent with the aims and regulations of the framework.

## Transferring between programmes

RPL is also of value to learners transferring across various learning programmes that have relevant learning but do not have relevant credits or certificates (i.e. this may include learners transferring from NQF to QCF specifications).

In these instances MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD will follow the procedure for RPL as set above. The result of the assessment will be logged on the candidates Records and all records of RPL claims for credit will be kept for three years by MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD.

## Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

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