



## **APPLICATION KIT**

**RECOGNITION FOR PRIOR LEARNING  
(RPL)**

**RECOGNITION OF CURRENT COMPETENCY  
(RCC)**

**Want to have your skills recognised?**

*This is a guide to assist students to apply for recognition of prior learning and current competency offered at Axiom College. It provides guidelines to assist in the compilation of evidence to demonstrate competence.*

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## Recognition Process

Recognition processes is a term that covers Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), and Recognition of Current Competency (RCC) and Skills Recognition. The assessment process enables recognition of competencies currently held, regardless of how, when or where the learning occurred. Under the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF), competencies may be attained in a number of ways. This includes through any combination of formal or informal training and education, work experience or general life experience.

In order to grant recognition of prior learning/current competency the assessor must be confident that the candidate is currently competent against the endorsed industry or enterprise competency standards of Training Packages or competency outcomes specified in Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) accredited courses.

The evidence may take a variety of forms and could include certification, references from past employers, testimonials from clients and work samples. The assessor must ensure that the evidence is authentic, valid, reliable, current and sufficient.

## What are the benefits of RPL?

If what you have learned at work or elsewhere is relevant to the qualification or accredited course you are enrolling in, then you may not need to complete those units of the course. This could mean finishing your course much earlier, or not having such a heavy subject load. You will only be doing units which are new and challenging as you do not have repeat unit areas in which you have already gained experience. It also recognises that you are not a total beginner but are entering the course with prior skills and knowledge.

## What is competence?

Competency standards are statements that describe what your industry accepts as effective performance in the workplace. This includes the skills and knowledge you need to do a job. Being competent means that you:

- ✓ Can perform and manage a task/job/activity to an industry standard
- ✓ Understand why the job should be done in a certain way
- ✓ You can do it in a consistent way over time
- ✓ You have sufficient knowledge and skill to enable you to perform it in a range of conditions
- ✓ Understand workplace policies and procedures.

The industry standards reflect the skills and knowledge required in different jobs and job levels in specific industries. These standards are divided into units of competency, which match particular activities that people carry out at work. Units of competency are found in industry specific Training Packages, which are documents that cover training and assessment requirements for most industries across Australia. Further information about industry competency standards in Training Packages can be found at the National Training Information Service <http://www.ntis.gov.au> .

## **What is a nationally recognised qualification?**

Qualifications in the Vocational Technical Education (VTE) sector are part of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). The AQF covers the range of levels for qualifications, for example Certificate I, II, III, IV, or Diploma, that are recognised in all States and Territories. The qualifications are based on competency rather than course length, so they will show how a person applies their knowledge and skills at work. People who have acquired relevant skills and knowledge may be assessed and granted a qualification. The VTE system recognises that people can gain their skills in many ways – for example through work, training or experience. The characteristics of each AQF level differ. Further information about those characteristics can be found in Appendix 1.

## **What is National Recognition?**

National recognition is the acceptance by Axiom College or any other registered training organisation to recognise and accept Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualifications and Statements of Attainment issued by other registered training organisations, enabling individuals to receive national recognition of their achievements. If you have completed units or modules of a qualification at another registered training organisation you may seek credit for your achievements. Credit may be awarded directly, or where units or modules are mapped to accredited courses or Training Packages. You should present your achievements to Axiom College where ever you seek this type of credit.

## Overview of the RPL process

Recognition of skills need not be difficult, but assessors will need to get to the right information to confirm your skills and experience. By working together, you and the assessor can determine what your skills are, how they can be confirmed and, if needed, what other training can help you achieve your goals.

After you have submitted your Recognition of Prior Learning application to Axiom College the assessment process provides for three screening phases, which is structured to minimise the time and cost to you. The assessor will need to gain information about your skills, knowledge and experience and how you have applied these to fit the requirements of the unit.

### **Step One: Submit Application**

Please complete the attached application forms and provide as much evidence of your previous experience as you can. If you have been referred by *Skilling Solutions Queensland (SSQ)*, please attach your letter of referral to the enrolment form.

This is your first opportunity (and not the last) to provide proof of your variety of experience...Here you can supply examples of your work history which could include:

- ❑ a detailed resume
- ❑ validated statements or references of your work experience/s from employer/s, supervisor/s, community representatives
- ❑ photographs or samples of your work
- ❑ copies of statements of attainment or qualifications received from learning programs
- ❑ industry log book, training record book, or other information
- ❑ outlines of informal learning programs you have undertaken
- ❑ unit outlines or learning outcomes of formal learning programs you have undertaken

You will also need to provide contact details of two (2) work referees in the industry who can confirm your skills.

**This evidence should be as comprehensive as possible to make your variety of experience very clear to a third party – that is the assessor.**

### **Step Two: Document Review, Interview, Assessment Plan and Questioning – phase 1**

An assessor will review the information you provide and begin to match up your skills to the units in the qualification. During the interview, you will have the opportunity to discuss your goals, ask questions and identify your previous experience with a qualified assessor who will understand your industry experience and conduct a professional conversation with you. An appropriate *assessment plan* will be negotiated and agreed to. You will be required to answer industry related questions (verbally and/or written) to identify your current knowledge and skills either at this interview, or at a practical skills assessment. During this discussion the assessor may also request that further evidence is required to support a judgement of your competency. The assessor will tell you what form this evidence should be. If the assessor is satisfied that the evidence collected during this first screening phase is sufficient to cover requirements then no further assessment would be undertaken.

### **Step Three: Practical Skills Assessment – phase 2**

The assessor may need to observe your skills and conduct a practical skills assessment which could be conducted at your workplace or at another suitable venue. This is your opportunity to demonstrate your level of competence in the units. This assessment will be focussed on skills that are required in the qualification. Your assessor will identify the skills that he/she will want you to demonstrate. If the assessor is satisfied that the evidence collected during this second screening phase is sufficient to cover requirements then no further assessment would be undertaken.

### **Step Four: Referee Report – phase 3**

The assessor may want to confirm your skills with those who can confirm your skills over time and in context. Supervisors generally would perform this role and where necessary referee reports will be sought. If the assessor is satisfied that the evidence collected during this third screening phase is sufficient to cover requirements then no further assessment would be undertaken.

### **Further steps: Assessment Outcomes, Skills Gaps and Training Options**

When your application has been assessed the RPL coordinator will send you a letter informing you of the result. If your application is successful you will receive a *Result of Assessment* from Axiom College for the relevant units of competence. Your portfolio of evidence will be retained by the institute due to audit requirements. If you are not seen to have met all the outcomes at completion of the assessment process then you will be deemed as '*not yet competent*'.

If skill gaps are identified these may be addressed through flexible training options.

***NB: It is suggested that current students enrolled in a course attend all classes until the recognition process is completed. If you have not attended classes and your application is un-successful you will be required to re-enrol in the unit at a later date.***



## **Appeals Process**

You can appeal the assessment outcome if you feel that:

- You have been unfairly treated or discriminated against
- You believe that your application has been unfairly assessed.

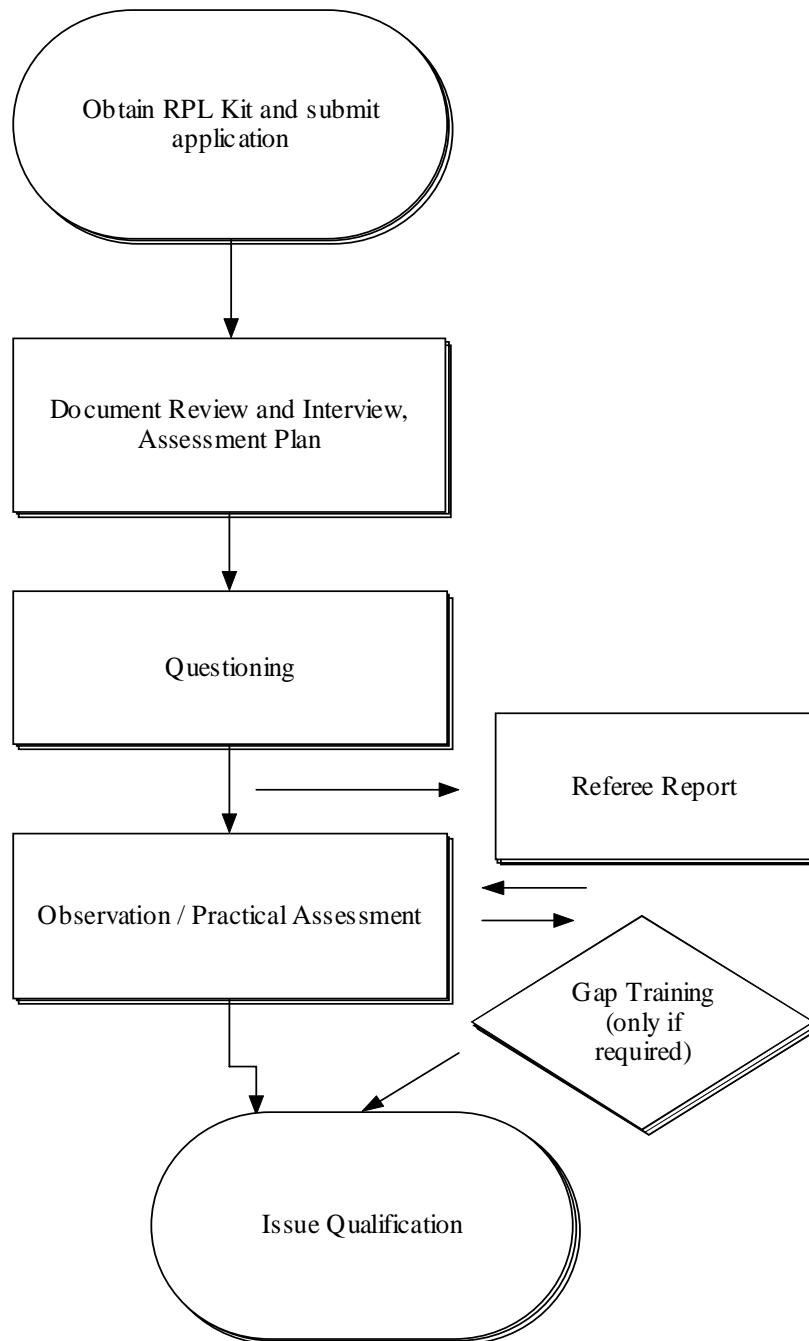
Refer to the student handbook or our website [www.axiom.com.au](http://www.axiom.com.au) for an explanation of the Appeals process.



### **Trade Recognition**

Candidates who have been assessed as meeting the full qualification for a *specific trade* and have six (6) years of trade experience after the age of 21 may also choose to have their time in the industry confirmed by applying for an additional trade certificate. Fees apply. For more information on trade recognition visit [www.trainandemploy.qld.gov.au](http://www.trainandemploy.qld.gov.au), or speak to your assessor.

# Overview of the RPL Process



# A Guide to Evidence

*Being prepared can save you lots of time and hassle*

Your skills and experience from the past 18 months – 2 years are the most important in the assessment because these show how you are current in the industry.

Here are some tips to prepare for a recognition process.

- 1) Be prepared to talk about your **job roles** and your **work history**. Bring along your resume or note down some points about where you have worked, either paid or unpaid, and what you did there.
- 2) Bring your position description and any performance appraisals you have from the businesses you have worked in.
- 3) Consider the possibilities for **workplace contact**. Are you in a workplace that is supporting your goals to get qualified? Would you feel comfortable to have the assessor contact your workplace so your skills can be validated?
- 4) Think about **who** can confirm your skill level. Think about current or recent supervisors who have seen your work in the past 18 months – 2 years and will be able to confirm your skills. We will need to contact them. You may also have other contacts that will be able to vouch for your skill level.
- 5) Collect any **certificates** from in-house training or formal training you have done in the past.
- 6) You can speak with Axiom College about other ways you can show your skills. These could be letters from employers, records of your professional development sessions, employers or clients in business, acknowledgements, workplace forms (as long as they don't show client details) or other **relevant documents**.

## *A definition of evidence*

Evidence is information gathered which, when matched against the unit of competency, provides proof of competency.

Evidence may include products such as reports, models and items that have been made, fixed or repaired. It might also be processes that can be observed, such as following the correct sequence, providing the required service or maintaining records correctly. Answers to questions are another form of evidence. These may include questions about topics such as work procedures, typical faults and remedies, and workplace hazards.

If the assessor cannot gather this evidence other people such as supervisors, trainers, team members or the candidate, can report what they see or hear.

## *Where does evidence come from?*

Evidence can come from your current work and any work that you will be doing during the achievement of your qualification; any projects that you undertake within the workplace specifically in relation to the qualification; your previous activities; activities outside your working role that are relevant to the standards.

*How is performance evidence produced and what form does it take?*

Evidence of performance comes from your activities in your working role. It can come in various forms and can be:

- ⇒ based on observation/discussion – for example, evidence gained by your assessor during an on-site ‘walk through’ of your work role
- ⇒ paper-based – for example, your own notes, memos etc generated within your working role; witness testimonies; an observation report of what your role was in an activity, written by the person who did the observation, for example, be your coach or assessor or line manager
- ⇒ photographic or video – for example, photos or videos to illustrate how you do your job; they can be taken by you or by someone else
- ⇒ audio tape – for example, a cassette of a meeting or session to show how you contributed

It can come from a variety of sources

- ⇒ observations of your work – these can be provided by various people
  - your coach or assessor, in discussion with you
  - specialist witnesses, like you colleagues or line manager, who know you and the job you are doing. In addition, they may have knowledge of the appropriate standards but will not be your coach or assessor. They will be able to complete informed witness statements to show specific achievement
  - non-specialist witnesses who will be any individuals who work with you. They will initiate or complete witness statements, or other records. Knowledge of the standard is not assumed.
- ⇒ your personal records – for example, plans submitted for overall improvement, budgets, records of meetings with other personnel or customers, personal reports
- ⇒ organisation records – for example, reports on activities and evaluations, records of special projects to which you made a specific contribution, appraisals, training and development records, ‘paper’ filing systems, computer-based records/databases

(You must, however, be able to show that it is evidence of your own work).

- ⇒ your own reasoning or questions from your coach or assessor – questioning is used to gather evidence of performance or evidence of knowledge and understanding. Your answers will be in the form of your arguments, motives or justification for your actions or, where appropriate, presentation of theories and concepts. Reasoning is the term given to self-questioning.

In responding to the questioning and reasoning, you will become aware of any gaps that there might be in the evidence that has been collected for a particular element or a number of performance criteria. Clearly, questioning cannot be used on its own – it will be used to supplement other sources of evidence gathered by observation or examination of products.

In asking questions, your coach or assessor will be exploring issues with you to make sure that you have the necessary knowledge and understanding required to demonstrate competence against a particular Element, frequently and consistently. Questioning also provides the opportunity to check the authenticity of a piece of written evidence and to encourage self-assessment.

*Where does evidence of knowledge and understanding come from and what form does it take?*

Some evidence of your knowledge and understanding will be able to be deduced from your performance evidence and will therefore come from your working role. Other ways in which you can provide evidence that you possess the necessary knowledge and understanding are:

- ⇒ you may talk with your assessor about what you did and why, to support your performance evidence. Alternatively, you may choose to write about this. (This oral or written information may include any principles and methods which you used to underpin your actions).
- ⇒ Your coach or assessor may ask you questions and judge your responses (see above)
- ⇒ You may have attended a training program and completed test papers satisfactorily
- ⇒ You may have completed some formal study program and have copies of tests or assignments and reports from your tutor
- ⇒ You may explain your knowledge and understanding in your Element Review
- ⇒ You may possess recognised qualifications that confirm your knowledge and understanding.

It is likely that you will provide a mixture of these.

*Some specific examples of evidence*

Demonstration / observation / discussion:

- ⇒ meetings
- ⇒ briefing sessions.

From current and past experience:

- ⇒ notes or records of interviews
- ⇒ written or spoken feedback from team members, etc
- ⇒ training plans developed with your team, supervisor, etc
- ⇒ minutes from meetings
- ⇒ evaluation reports
- ⇒ action plans
- ⇒ project report prepared for management, etc
- ⇒ documents, etc produced as part of your work
- ⇒ handwritten notes, comments, amendments on such documents
- ⇒ diary entries
- ⇒ 'stick on' notes.

From previous training activities:

- ⇒ a statement of results from a training organisation (where these results reflect the requirements of specified parts of the standards)
- ⇒ details of completed modules, units, etc
- ⇒ a copy of assessments tasks which you completed successfully
- ⇒ examples of how you incorporated what you learned into your work.

## *Kinds of Evidence*

Competency may be granted against three main types of evidence and in some instances all three may be required:

1. Direct evidence
2. Indirect evidence
3. Supplementary evidence.

1. **Direct evidence** is work produced by you; it is what you do or what you are seen to do and could include observations of actual or simulated performance and products of work. It may include anything you have either produced by yourself or which you have been primarily responsible for. Normally 2 – 4 examples of each type of evidence are desired to show you have undertaken the activities over a period of time. This evidence should be verified by your supervisor as being your own work. The assessor may contact your supervisor for verification.

2. **Indirect evidence** is information about what you say you do or what someone else says you do and may include:

- ✓ personal statements/report
- ✓ client feedback
- ✓ reference from your employer or previous employers
- ✓ awards/transcripts
- ✓ performance reviews
- ✓ magazines or newspaper articles about you
- ✓ prizes, certificates or other forms of commendation, workplace awards
- ✓ video recordings or photographic evidence of activities you have undertaken
- ✓ witness testimony.

**Personal statements** are a concise description of your work activities and the functions/tasks you carry out and need to relate to the unit of competence and elements claimed. It gives you an opportunity to explain the evidence that is specific to your industry or organisation so the assessor can have a clear understanding and match it against the performance criteria.

Your personal statement should include:

- ✓ a brief description of the context in which you carried out your work
- ✓ details of the activities you undertook
- ✓ an explanation of the planning process
- ✓ any explanations as to why you made certain decisions and any factors that influenced the outcome
- ✓ any other similar situation you handled.

**Witness testimony** could include:

- ✓ **Statements** from others to support your claim. You might include managers, supervisors, previous employers, customers and colleagues. These are NOT references; the information contained in this type of document must be relevant to the elements and performance criteria for the unit of competence.
- ✓ **Reports** from managers or supervisors who have witnessed specific activities you have undertaken. E.g. presentations, meetings etc

3. **Supplementary evidence** is information obtained through oral questioning or written tests / assignments. If you are competent in your knowledge and understanding you should be able to explain what and how things should be done.

### *How to identify the appropriate evidence required*

Your evidence MUST be relevant to the *unit of competence*. The *unit of competence* and its *elements, performance criteria, critical aspects, range statement* and other related information can be sourced in the Training Record Book supplied by Axiom College, or at the National Training Information Service: <http://www.ntis.gov.au>.

Your evidence will be evaluated to see that it:

- ⇒ meets the relevant elements, performance standards, critical aspects and range of evidence for the unit of competence
- ⇒ is sufficient to show that you have all the skills and knowledge required
- ⇒ is current
- ⇒ is authentic.

Your complete collection of evidence should demonstrate that you can handle a range of tasks completely in a variety of situations. You should link your evidence to the relevant elements of competency for the unit.

**Please note:** Any documentation submitted for RPL will not be returned to the applicant. ***Please do not send original certificates etc – send copies that have been certified by a justice of the peace of a Commissioner of Declaration.***

### *Confidentiality*

Confidentiality is an extremely important aspect of the process of recognition for prior learning. It is important that you do not disclose sensitive information when you submit your evidence. You should:

- ⇒ obtain authorisation from your organisation or relevant body to use evidence
- ⇒ remove sensitive names and figures if necessary
- ⇒ if there is confidential information that can not be enclosed with the portfolio, note it on your application and enable it to be sighted if necessary
- ⇒ enclose any sensitive documents in an envelope and mark it “private and confidential”. Address the envelope to the Assessor **by name**. No copies of the documents will be taken without your express permission.

## Completing and submitting your application

Axiom College strives to ensure its RPL process is structured to minimise the time and cost to applicants and provide adequate information, support and opportunities for participants to engage in the RPL process. Candidates should contact Axiom College Toll Free on **18000 AXIOM (29466)** if they have any questions about the RPL process, and/or for help to complete the forms.

1. Obtain a copy of the RPL Application Kit and Self Assessment and Application form from your trainer/assessor, or the student liaison officer at Axiom College.

2. Complete the following application details:

- Application form
- Self Assessment form (if you have not received this document already, please contact the student liaison officer on 18000 AXIOM (29466))
- Summary of Evidence form and supply any supporting documentation
- Skilling Solutions Queensland (SSQ) letter of referral (only if referred by SSQ)

**NB:** Supporting documentation should be clearly identifiable on the Summary of Evidence form, so your assessor can see what evidence relates to the unit you seek recognition in .

3. Submit your application to your Axiom College trainer/assessor, or RPL officer.

**RPL Officer  
Axiom College  
PO Box 1041  
MILTON QLD 4064**

**NB:** Existing students should submit their RPL application **within four (4) weeks** of course commencement. Existing students may submit their application to their trainer/assessor directly at the next visit, or post it to them. It is **strongly recommended** that posted applications be sent via **registered post** to avoid inconvenience in case your items are lost, as postal disappearances are beyond Axiom College's control.

4. Your trainer/assessor will contact you to discuss your RPL application and arrange a suitable time and place for an interview.

**NB:** If you have not heard from Axiom College's student liaison officer, or your trainer/assessor within two weeks about your application you should contact Axiom College on our Toll Free number: **18000 AXIOM (29466)**.

# Appendix 1

## Characteristics of competencies in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)

Qualification levels in the AQF have certain characteristics that differentiate them from the different levels. Assessing competency for a particular qualification level will take into account such features.

*At the Certificate I level, the breadth, depth and complexity of knowledge and skills would prepare a person to perform a defined range of activities most of which may be routine and predictable.*

*At the Certificate II level, performance of a prescribed range of functions involving known routines and procedures and some accountability for the quality of outcomes. The breadth, depth and complexity of knowledge and skills would prepare a person to perform in a range of varied activities or knowledge applications where there is a clearly defined range of contexts in which the choice of actions required is usually clear and there is limited complexity in the range of options to be applied.*

*At the Certificate III level, performance of a defined range of skilled operations, usually within a range of broader related activities involving known routines, methods and procedures, where some discretion and judgement is required in the selection of equipment, services or contingency measures and within known time constraints. The breadth, depth and complexity of knowledge and competencies would cover selecting, adapting and transferring skills and knowledge to new environments and providing technical advice and some leadership in resolution of specific problems.*

*At the Certificate IV level, performance of a broad range of skilled applications including requirements to evaluate and analyse current practices, develop new criteria and procedures for performing current practices, and provision of some leadership and guidance to others in the application and planning of skills. The breadth, depth and complexity of knowledge and competencies would cover a broad range of varied activities or applications in a wider variety of contexts most of which are complex and non-routine. Leadership and guidance are involved when organising activities of self and others as well as contributing to technical solutions of a non-routine or contingency nature.*

*At the Diploma level, the self directed application of knowledge and skills, with substantial depth in some areas where judgement is required in planning and selecting appropriate equipment, services and techniques for self and others. The breadth, depth and complexity covering planning and initiation of alternative approaches to skills or knowledge applications across a broad range of technical and/or management requirements, evaluation and co-ordination. Applications involve participation in development of strategic initiatives, as well as personal responsibility and autonomy in performing complex technical operations or organising others. It may include participation in teams including teams concerned with planning and evaluation functions. Group or team co-ordination may be involved.*