



RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

What is Recognition of Prior Learning?

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the process of recognising what individuals know or can do, before undertaking a course of study or training wherever or however they may have acquired the knowledge and/or skill.

The source of this knowledge and/or skill can take many and varied forms including:

- ⌘ learning from relevant life experience (eg volunteer and community work, self instruction as in interests or hobbies etc.)
- ⌘ learning from work experience (on the job training, informal learning, staff development, supervision, teamwork, etc.)
- ⌘ learning from other courses of study and non credentialled courses (adult learning courses, in-house training, continuing education courses, professional development etc.)

In the RPL process the critical factors are the quality, relevance and currency of learning, not how or when it was initially acquired.

RPL is different from credit transfer, that is, giving credit for formal learning achieved and credited at another institution. Students seeking credit transfer are advised to request the relevant information from the Australian Institute for Relationship Studies (AIRS).

What is different about RPL is that it accepts the reality that much adult learning is gained through experience, which may be additional to, or separate from, formal learning. RPL is not concerned about how or where the learning was gained, but the range and levels of competence which an individual can prove by documentary and other evidence.

The RPL process

RPL provides the opportunity to gain exemption from some units/modules within courses on the basis that you already have the knowledge and/or skills required by the learning outcomes of that unit/module.

This process requires you to provide us with evidence of your learning and the development of the relevant knowledge or/skills. This is not a matter of time serving or amount of experience, but proof of your specific and relevant learning which will be assessed by Australian Institute for Relationship Studies assessors.

The Australian Institute for Relationship Studies will provide you with a format and framework in order to document and present your evidence, and details of the learning outcomes for the unit/module for which you are applying. The learning outcomes represent the knowledge and/or skills students are expected to have developed at the completion of the unit/module.

Methods of Presenting and Assessing Evidence of Learning

There are a variety of ways in which prior learning can be assessed, depending on the nature of the learning, including:-

- ⌘ Compilation of a portfolio (a collection of evidence, written and material objects, which reflects and validates the learning and achievements of the applicant and highlights the relationship between the evidence presented and the module/s for which exemption is sought).
- ⌘ Interview
- ⌘ Essay; oral or written test; report
- ⌘ Videotaped example of work
- ⌘ Practical demonstration
- ⌘ Review of a text or key article
- ⌘ Case study
- ⌘ Special project
- ⌘ Completion of an assignment

Supporting documentation, such as references, course details including duration, learning outcomes and assessment may be included with the application. In most cases presentation of evidence must be supported by some type of authenticity check, eg: interview, in person or by telephone.

What Constitutes “evidence” ?

There are two types of evidence:

Direct evidence

Direct evidence is anything which you have produced or achieved which can be authenticated. It may be in written or other forms, eg: a video. Examples of direct evidence include:

- ⌘ certificates from courses completed (certified copies must be supplied), duration of course, specific learning outcomes identified and assessment events outlined.
- ⌘ things you have written or developed such as a counselling session plan; a family assessment, an assignment, a critique of a counselling session etc.
- ⌘ evaluation forms
- ⌘ videos of your performance
- ⌘ articles and or reports you have written
- ⌘ courses, procedures that you have designed
- ⌘ skills you can demonstrate

Indirect evidence

Indirect evidence is anything reflecting the value of the work produced, or skills demonstrated by the applicant. Examples of indirect evidence include:

- ⌘ annual report which identified your team's accomplishments
- ⌘ reference from supervisor
- ⌘ statement from employer
- ⌘ attendance certificate for training
- ⌘ active membership of professional association

What RPL is Not

The RPL procedure is not an easy way to get a qualification. The RPL process is designed for applicants to prove their existing knowledge, not a process through which applicants should attempt to gain or learn the knowledge or skills, as in a correspondence course. However this is not to say that learning (about yourself, the subject and your skills) will not occur throughout the RPL process.

Applicants must be committed to supporting their case by locating and providing suitable evidence and documentation. **This requires significant time and effort.**

Current Availability of RPL

Applications must be submitted to Australian Institute for Relationship Studies at least four weeks prior to the commencement date of the relevant course. Consideration of RPL applications after the course has commenced will be at the discretion of the Manager of AIRS.

RPL is available for entire units only, not parts of units. Various arrangements exist for each course in relation to the amount of recognition that will be granted.

Applicants will be advised in writing of the outcome of the recognition assessment. In some cases candidates may be asked to undertake some form of assessment to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes.

Fees

Fees vary according to the amount of assessment and time involved in processing applications. The following scale represents the current fee structure. Applicants will be advised of the possible fee implications before submitting their application.

Minimum fee \$50

This involves minimum time in assessing an application.

General recognition fee \$150

This process involves more involvement from the assessor

Maximum fee \$300

This involves a more complex assessment process

Unsuccessful RPL Applications

If an applicant is unsuccessful in their RPL application, they have the options of either withdrawing their application from the course altogether or enrolling in the unit/module where their RPL was unsuccessful. When establishing our RPL procedure we needed to address the fact that a student who was unsuccessful in their RPL application and subsequently wished to enrol in the unit/module would face the cost of RPL as well as the additional cost of enrolling in the unit/module.

Fee Reduction or Discount

In order to ensure that the RPL process is not financially prohibitive applicants will be offered a discount by way of a percentage of the RPL being deducted from the cost of the unit/module.

Steps in the Recognition of Prior Learning Process

- 1 Applications for RPL must be submitted to Australian Institute for Relationship Studies at least 4 weeks in advance of the course commencement date. Consideration of applications received outside of this timeframe will be at the discretion of the Manager of AIRS.
- 2 On enquiry, the applicant will be given general information about recognition of prior learning. The applicant will be sent written information outlining the RPL process, an application form and information about the fees for RPL. This information will be supplied by the administration of the Australian Institute for Relationship Studies.
- 3 The applicants will submit a completed application form and registration fee and identify the units for which they are requesting RPL including brief information about the basis on which they are applying.
- 4 The candidate is contacted and offered the opportunity to discuss any queries or concerns. The candidate is supplied with an information package including:-
 - * information on the types of evidence assessors will be looking for
 - * details on the learning outcomes for the relevant units

- * instructions concerning any documentation and or other information that must accompany the application
- 5 The candidate collates evidence and submits to AIRS for consideration by an assessor, together with remaining RPL fees.
 - 6 The application will be assessed and candidates will receive feedback from the assessor as part of this process. Some opportunities exist for candidates to resubmit or attend an interview to clarify any evidence that may be unclear or inadequate. This decision is made on the basis of the evidence demonstrated and discussion with candidate. If an assessor is uncertain as to whether the learning outcomes have been demonstrated in the evidence submitted, consultation with another assessor will take place and/or the candidate may be required to undertake some form of test or assessment to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes.