



RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY

Date Last Reviewed	December 2025
Date Effective From	6th January 2026
Date of Next Planned Review	December 2026
Signed	Natalie King, Managing Director

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to enable those who have prior learning or experiences, to be able to demonstrate them in a way that would allow them to gain credit in the qualification framework.

Responsibility:

Overall responsibility lies with the Principal. Operational responsibility lies with education team.

Scope of Policy:

This policy applies to all qualifications at AccXel. In the case of Higher Education qualifications delivered by AccXel that are awarded by Pearson, AccXel will adhere to the Awarding Organisation's (AO) own Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy and Procedure.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a method of assessment leading to achievement that considers whether students can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning.

The term 'recognition' is used to describe accurately the process in relation to prior learning applicable to two widely recognised forms: prior experiential (or informal) learning and prior certificated learning.

The Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) involves an assessment process on the part of academic staff that leads to recognition, normally through achievement of a unit. The essential feature of this process is that it is the learning gained through experience which is being assessed, not the experience itself.

Prior certificated learning relates to prior learning (such as professional development awards or employment-based awards) which is at higher education level but which has not led to the award of credits or achievement on the qualification for which the claim is being submitted.

RPL enables recognition of achievement from a range of activities using appropriate assessment methodology. Provided that the assessment requirements of a given unit or qualification have been met, the use of RPL at AccXel is acceptable for accrediting a unit or units of a qualification. Evidence of learning must be current (within the last five years), valid and reliable. The authenticity of the evidence requires consideration of whether the evidence is genuinely the work of the learner.

The use and application of RPL is of particular value to students without formal qualifications, who are either in employment, preparing to enter, or returning to employment. It enables them to gain part of a qualification without having to undertake a formal learning programme. RPL can be used where a student has not had their prior learning formally recognised. RPL focuses on assessment and awarding for prior learning, which may count as evidence towards a unit accumulated.

All evidence will be evaluated using the stipulated learning outcomes and assessment criteria from the unit being claimed. In assessing a unit using RPL, the assessor must be satisfied that the evidence produced

by the student meets the assessment standard established by the learning outcome and its related assessment criteria. AccXel has staff with appropriate expertise and knowledge to facilitate this. At AccXel RPL may be used for units, but it would not be acceptable to claim an entire qualification through RPL as it is unlikely prior achievements would match every aspect of assessment requirements. Guidance from the AO is an essential stage of this process.

The prior achievement that would provide evidence of current knowledge, understanding and skills will vary from sector to sector. It will depend on the extent of the experience, technological changes and the nature of the outcome claimed. If the currency of any evidence is in doubt, the assessor may use questions to check understanding, and ask for the demonstration of skills to check competence. Where evidence is assessed to be only sufficient to cover one or more learning outcomes, or to partly meet the need of a learning outcome, then additional assessment methods should be used to generate sufficient evidence to be able to award the learning outcome(s) for the whole unit.

AccXel will ensure that:

- Students are registered appropriately against the agreed qualification guidance, stipulated by the AO.
- Records of assessment decisions made against prior learning are maintained.
- Certification claims are made according to procedures.

Procedure:

Stage 1 – Awareness Information and Guidance:

The education team, in the first instance, can advise potential students about the process for seeking RPL. Thereafter, and for existing students, support will be provided by lecturers with a full understanding of the specific qualification requirements. If the student is interested in seeking RPL, the following will be explained by the tutor:

- Process of claiming achievement by using RPL.
- Sources of support and guidance available to them.
- Timelines, appeals processes and any fees and funding implications involved.

Stage 2 – Pre-assessment; Gathering Evidence and Giving Information:

At this stage, the student will carry out the process of collecting evidence against the requirements of the relevant unit(s). In some cases the development of an assessment plan and tracking document or similar may be required, to support the student through the process. The evidence gathered will need to meet the standards of the unit, or part of unit, that the evidence is being used for.

Stage 3 – Assessment/Documentation of Evidence:

Assessment as part of RPL is a structured process for gathering and reviewing evidence and making judgments about a student's prior learning and experience in relation to unit standards. The assessor may be looking at work experience records, validated by managers; previous portfolios of evidence put together by the student or essays and reports validated as being the student's own unaided work.

An application for RPL should not be approved until the following criteria are satisfied:

1. The date of the prior learning has been checked and confirmed to have taken place within the past five years.
2. There is a correlation between the prior learning or experience which has taken place, and the level and intended learning outcomes of the course units.

Assessment must be valid and reliable to ensure the integrity of the achievement and, as above, the evidence gathered needs to meet the standards of the unit, or part of unit, that the evidence is being used for.

The assessment process will be subject to the standard quality assurance procedures of AccXel, for example internal standardisation and internal verification as well as the AO'S quality assurance procedures.

Evidenced gathered through RPL will be clearly referenced and sign posted to aid internal assessment and internal and external verification.

Stage 4 – Claiming Certification:

Once the internal and external quality assurance procedures have been successfully completed, certification claims can be made by AccXel. Assessment and internal verification records, along with the completed RPL record, will be retained for the standard three year period following certification. The lecturer will ensure that all learning outcomes and assessment criteria being claimed for each unit are achieved and that the records of assessment are maintained according to AO guidance.

Stage 5 – Appeal:

If a student wishes to appeal against a decision made about their assessment, they need to follow the appeals process below, in sequential order:

Appeal Stage 1 - Appeal to the Lecturer:

1. Where a student disagrees with the assessment given, they must explain the reasons for this with the Lecturer, in written form, within five working days.
2. The Assessor/Tutor will consider the evidence, and provide a response to the student in writing, within ten working days of receipt of the appeal. The Lecturer will give a clear explanation of the appeal decision, following re-evaluation of the evidence.
3. A record of the appeal will be retained within the student's file and on AccXel systems as appropriate.

Appeal Stage 2 - Appeal to the Internal Verifier (IQA):

1. Where a student disagrees with the decision at Appeal Stage 1, they should forward the RPL Appeal Form to the IQA within five working days.
2. The IQA will reconsider the assessment decision, which may involve evaluation of the student's evidence, the Lecturer's rationale for the decision, the opinion of another tutor and the opinion of the candidate.
3. The IQA will provide the student with the reconsidered decision in writing within ten working days of receiving the appeal. A copy will be retained on the appropriate online system.

Appeal Stage 3 - Appeal to Appeals Panel:

1. Where a student disagrees with the decision at Stage 2, the RPL Appeal Form should be forwarded to the Head of Education and Principal. The Head of Education and Principal will convene an Appeals Hearing.
2. The hearing may involve an interview with the student and staff, by prior agreement. They may be accompanied by a family member/friend/fellow student. All the evidence will be reviewed, the student will be notified of a decision within five working days of the hearing and a copy will be retained on the relevant system.

Stage 4 - Appeal to AO:

1. Where a student disagrees with the decision at Stage 3, they have a right to appeal to the AO. The student will be assisted by a chosen member of the faculty. The decision of the Awarding Body is final.

Higher Education Programmes:

For provision of Higher Education Programmes (accredited by Pearson), our Policy will be interpreted in line with Pearson's RPL Policy that can be found here: [recognition-of-prior-learning-and-process-policy.pdf \(pearson.com\)](#).

This policy has been agreed by the AccXel senior management team and agreed. It will be reviewed every year or after significant changes to AccXel's business or staff.

Signed:

Natalie King

Date: 06/01/2026