

## LEARNING WORKS' LWP 10: RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

TYPE: Policy and Procedure	
SUBJECT: Recognition of Prior Learning REFERENCE: LWP10	
DATE: 24 <sup>th</sup> September 2021	
LAST REVIEWED:	
APPROVED BY: Board of Directors	
<b>Purpose</b> <p>The purpose of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is to recognise and accredit knowledge, skills and competences gained by individuals through formal, non-formal, informal or experiential learning. RPL allows applicants to demonstrate learning achieved through a range of learning experiences, including formal, non-formal and informal education. RPL enables applicants to gain entry to a chosen programme of study by satisfying entry requirements through different forms of learning. Furthermore, RPL also provides an opportunity for students to gain exemptions from ECTS as part of the programme.</p> <p>This policy will guide Learning Works when managing the process of recognition of prior learning. Learning Works shall carry out RPL based on a set of core principles intended to ensure a fair and transparent process.</p>	
<b>Glossary</b>	
<b>Formal Learning</b>	Formal learning can be described as learning which takes place in a structured manner and in organised environments such as universities, education institutions or at the workplace. This is normally structured in a way where time, objectives, tasks and resources are clearly set by the educational institution. Candidates will apply to participate in this learning experience thus, demonstrating that learning is intentional from the candidate's end.
<b>Non-Formal Learning</b>	Non-Formal learning is defined as learning that takes place within planned activities. It generally takes place outside formal learning environments but may also take place in a formal institution or in a structured manner in terms of specified time frames, listed objectives and provided support. Non-formal learning may be validated and can lead to certification or recognition of prior learning. Non-formal learning is also sometimes described as semi-structured learning.
<b>Informal Learning</b>	Informal learning is not intentionally organised or structured in terms of main objectives, tasks and time constraints. Informal learning normally takes place during various activities done on a daily basis resulting from

	the place of work, and other leisure and family activities. Objectives may be achieved without the students' knowledge or perspective. Informal learning is achieved through experience which can be random, incidental learning.
<b>Work-Based Learning</b>	Work-based learning is an educational strategy that provides students with real-life work experiences where they can apply academic and technical skills and develop their employability. Work-based learning can be achieved using alternate methods in a vocational context between VET institutions and or on the job.
<b>Lifelong Learning</b>	The rationale behind lifelong learning is the continuous personal and professional development undertaken throughout life with no age limit
<b>Life-Wide Learning</b>	Life-wide learning is all the learning and personal development that emerges through activities in the different contexts experienced in life with the aim of fulfilling roles and achieving specific goals and continuously developing knowledge, understanding, skills capabilities, dispositions and values within personal, civic, social and/or employment-related contexts.
<b>Knowledge</b>	Knowledge is the outcome of the collection and assimilation of information through learning. In the EQF, knowledge is described as being theoretical or factual.
<b>Skills</b>	A skill is the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. In the EQF, skills are described as cognitive (use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials and tools and instruments)
<b>Competence</b>	The proven ability to use knowledge, skills and other abilities to perform a function against a given standard in work or study situations and in professional and/or personal development.
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	Learning outcomes are statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process. Knowledge, skills and competencies are mapped against these learning outcomes (fully or parts of it) for which the candidate seeks exemption from a study unit therefore gaining credits.
<b>Portfolio of Evidence</b>	A portfolio is a collection of documentation, references and records of past learning experiences compiled by the applicant in order to demonstrate the learning achieved through different learning processes.
<b>RPL Coordinator</b>	The RPL coordinator is the person who coordinates the RPL procedures within Learning Works (LW). This is the person who is the point of contact for individuals seeking RPL after the RPL application has been submitted. The RPL coordinator is responsible for supporting applicants/candidates throughout the process.
<b>RPL Technical / Academic Expert</b>	RPL Technical Experts are academic experts with a technical or academic background within a particular area or subject related to the programme of studies offered.

## **Principles of recognition and accreditation of prior learning**

Learning which takes place outside formal education may be enriching and may contribute to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences. RPL gives visibility, value and currency to such experiential learning thus making the learning more valuable to society. This allows all students and prospective students to enrol and succeed in formal education through gaining entry exemption from an amount of ECTS and modules thus avoiding repetition of content.

RPL will take place prior to admission to a programme of studies. Learning Works aims to give value to relevant learning, irrespective of the mode or place of learning. Learning Works shall ensure that its academic standards are maintained throughout the RPL process when mapping the learning outcomes of a study unit with those that the applicant may have achieved through previous formal, non-formal, informal or experiential learning.

Learning Works, therefore, offers RPL as an exemption from particular modules and a number of ECTSs as part of the chosen programme of studies.

Applicants applying for RPL must provide the necessary evidence as part of their application. A declaration form must be filled in and signed declaring that the evidence provided is true and solely the applicants' work. Further detailed information is provided in the section "The RPL Procedure".

Only up to 50% of the total amount of credits within a programme of studies may be achieved through RPL. Thus, for example, if a programme of studies has a total of 60 ECTSs, an applicant may be exempt from up to 30ECTSs through RPL.

### **RPL Procedure**

Learning Works aims to provide support and guidance to those applicants who obtained different types of learning through various experiences and who wish to access a programme of study through RPL. Information about the RPL process shall be available online through the Learning Works website: [www.learningworks.edu.mt](http://www.learningworks.edu.mt) to facilitate and encourage prospective candidates to come forward and seek guidance prior to applying.

#### **1. Contacting Learning Works**

An applicant wishing to apply for RPL at Learning Works has access to the RPL policy on the Learning Works' website. Should the applicant require any further information or assistance with filling in the application form they should contact Learning Works where the staff would be able to help and contact the RPL Coordinator as and when necessary.

#### **2. Applying for RPL**

Applicants who opt to apply for a programme of studies through the RPL route shall be responsible for demonstrating how the learning outcomes obtained through prior certified learning or experiential learning are relevant to the programme of studies they are applying for.

To ensure that the RPL can be carried out effectively, any form of evidence including any relevant documents is to be attached to the application. The evidence that can be included in a portfolio includes:

- ✓ A detailed, up-to-date curriculum vitae (CV)

- ✓ Employment history
- ✓ Any formal certificates or continuous professional development awards
- ✓ Letter of reference/s
- ✓ Duties performed at current/past jobs
- ✓ Voluntary work
- ✓ Examples of work-related documentation (e.g. prepared reports, budgets, plans, articles)
- ✓ Internship or apprenticeship programmes
- ✓ Other relevant evidence that is linked to the programme of studies/ study unit

The evidence is to be scanned and sent by email together with the application form on [info@learningworks.edu.mt](mailto:info@learningworks.edu.mt).

These documents will be filed and saved by the Learning Works' administration department. The RPL Coordinator, the CEO and the Internal Quality Assurers shall have access to this documentation.

The applicant shall fill and sign two declaration forms (which are annexed to the application form). The applicant shall sign to confirm that the evidence provided is authentic and to give access and permission to Learning Works to be able to verify the documentation provided when necessary.

### **3. Application Process**

The applicant should then submit the application form via email together with copies of the evidence as described above. An applicant will receive an update with regards to their RPL application submitted within two weeks. This update may include a request for more evidence or an invitation to any further assessment as deemed necessary by the RPL Coordinator. The RPL Coordinator will be present and available throughout the process so that applicants and staff can always be in direct contact.

Upon receipt of applications, Learning Works shall provide information to students about what is expected from the RPL process and carry out the steps in point 4 below.

### **4. Reviewing of the Application Form**

The CEO shall appoint one or more assessors who are deemed appropriate to assist the RPL Coordinator in carrying out these assessments. The RPL Coordinator's role is to provide support to the assessors and technical experts who form part of the process. Should a conflict arise, the RPL Coordinator's decision is final.

Technical or Academic experts are to be appointed to carry out the interviewing part of the assessment. The RPL procedure should give applicants the opportunity for formative and personal development through the whole process, therefore feedback should be provided throughout the process. This will be provided through a form that the technical experts shall compile following the assessment process.

### **5. Evaluation Methods**

The evidence submitted to support the application form shall be assessed against the learning outcomes of the relevant programme of studies. Consideration will be given to:

- i. **Validity** – Documents and evidence provided for RPL should match the appropriate academic level and at least **70%** of the learning outcomes required by the relevant programme of studies and the respective modules.
- ii. **Sufficiency** – Applicants shall provide sufficient documentation to support their application form. This will aid in determining the type of assessment to be carried out by the technical experts.
- iii. **Authenticity** – The applicant should provide a variety of documentation together with signed declaration forms.
- iv. **Relevance** – Learning achieved through different forms of learning as stated in the glossary is to be mapped to the learning outcomes of the respective programme of studies.

The RPL Assessment will include the review of the application form as well as one or a combination of the following overarching assessment methods to ensure that the RPL awarded is valid and sufficient.

- i. **Brief Assignment:** This will be determined by the technical experts. This is to allow the applicants to demonstrate the learning outcomes which were acquired through different forms of learning.
- ii. **Interview / Oral Examination:** This is to provide the applicants with the opportunity to submit additional information in person which is in line with the learning outcomes of the respective programme of studies and its study units.
- iii. **Practical Assessment:** Direct observation of the applicant may be required to confirm the competences previously obtained. A simulation of a particular role may be applied if necessary.
- iv. **Case Study:** This is to provide the applicant with the opportunity to carry out decision making skills in a particular situation which is given by the technical experts.
- v. **Written Test:** If deemed necessary assessors may ask candidates to sit for a written test based on the learning outcomes of the programme of study or the modules that the applicant applied for.

The candidate will be notified about any method of assessments in two weeks by Learning Works who will carry out the necessary arrangements beforehand.

## 6. Feedback and Results

Once all the necessary RPL assessments and evaluations are done, the assessors, technical experts and the RPL Coordinator shall compile a report on the applicant's RPL process which will include the final results and marks obtained. The applicant is to be given marks based upon the evidence presented, the interview and any other assessment carried out. The applicants will be assessed against the learning outcomes of the respective study unit. If the evidence, knowledge, skills and competences presented during this process prove that the candidate is already in possession of at least **70%** of the learning outcomes of the particular programme of studies, then the applicant will be exempt from particular modules in the chosen programme of studies.

## 7. Appeals

Applicants who may feel that the RPL assessment was unfair may forward their written complaint to the CEO of Learning Works via email on [cbonnici@learningworks.edu.mt](mailto:cbonnici@learningworks.edu.mt) copying the Internal Quality Assurance staff ([IQA@learningworks.edu.mt](mailto:IQA@learningworks.edu.mt)). In this case, the CEO shall appoint another assessor as a technical expert to reassess the first assessment. The second assessment result shall

be deemed as final, and feedback shall be provided to the applicant in a detailed report compiled by the appointed technical expert.

## **8. Quality Assurance**

Any documentation compiled throughout the RPL process shall remain confidential and filed by the administration department at Learning Works. The Internal Quality Assurance staff should be given access to check reports and relevant documentation should the need arises.

The Internal Quality Assurance Department will constantly be updated on the RPL procedures to ensure efficient monitoring of the RPL process. QA personnel shall make sure that assessments are held in a fair and transparent manner and ensure that the evidence is analysed fairly and according to the set RPL policy.

## **9. Results**

Within a month from the final assessment, the applicant is expected to receive the results of the RPL process. If the candidate is successful and is exempt from any modules and several credits, this will be reflected in the final transcript. Learning Works shall mark these modules with an asterisk and a Pass in the final transcript.

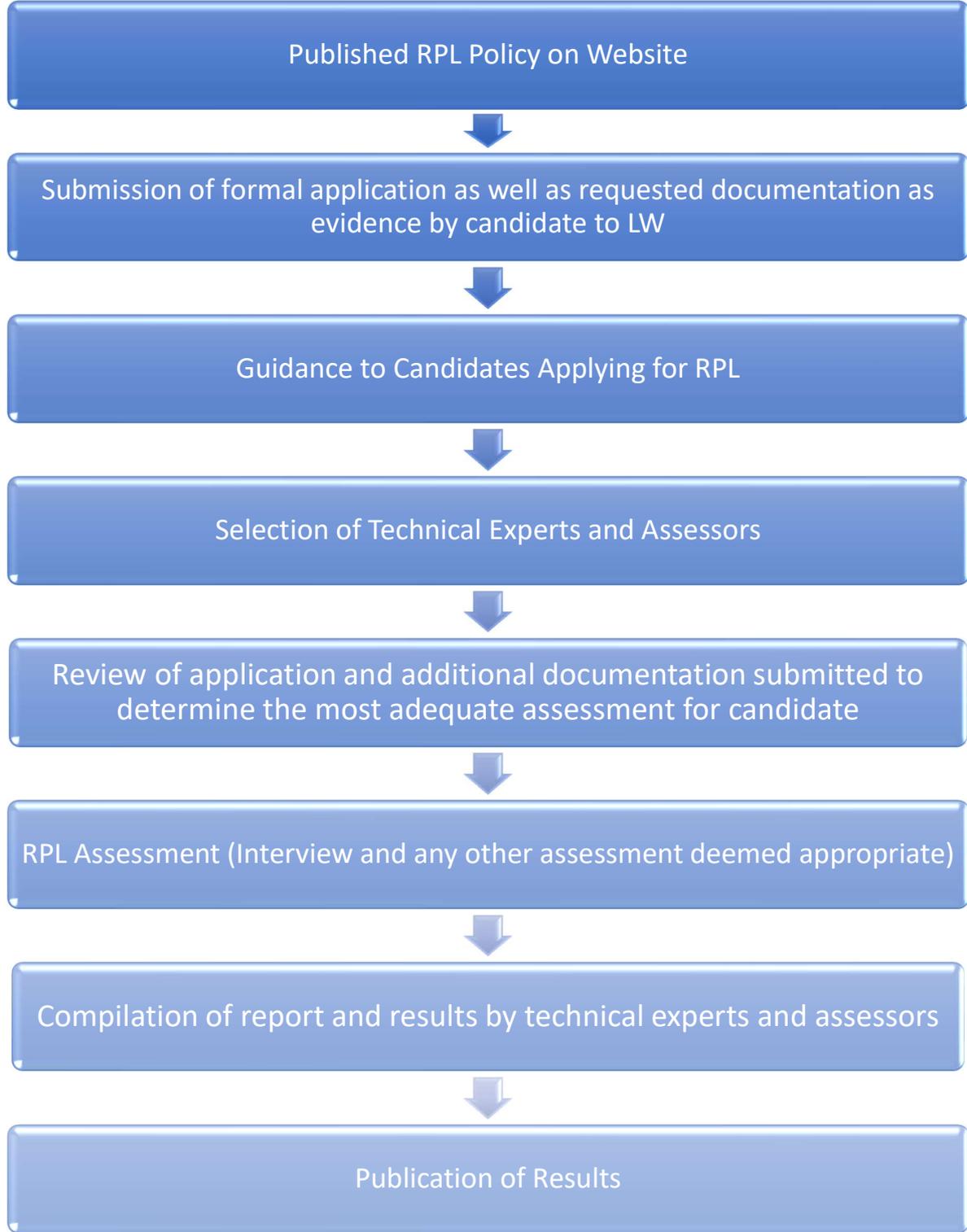
## **10. Applicable Fees**

A processing fee of €25 per ECTS is applied. The final fee of the RPL shall be based on the number of the total credits allocated per module (e.g. if a module has 6 credits, a fee of €150 is charged prior to the assessment process).

If the candidate is successful in the RPL assessment and hence obtain an exemption it is to be ensured that a candidate is not charged twice. This is worked out through deducting the exempted number of ECTS from the full ECTS of the programme of studies. For example, if a programme of studies has 60ECTS and the candidate has obtained exemption for 5 ECTS, then the candidate is to be charged for 55ECTS and not the full programme.

Applicable fees may be amended from time to time and any changes will be reflected in an update of these policy and procedures.

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CEO