

GLOSSARY OF TERMS RELATED TO RECOGNIZING PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)

Assessment: A process of developing, delivering and evaluating prior learning.

Assessment Method: A procedure used to identify and measure prior learning.

Assessment Options: There are a number of ways that a candidate can demonstrate their learning. These are defined below:

- **Portfolio Development** is the process of collecting, substantiating, and organizing documented evidence to support a candidate's claim for PLAR credit or recognition.
- **Oral Questioning** refers to a structured interview between an assessor and a candidate that is intended to permit the assessor to probe the depth and breadth of candidate learning and to give the candidate the opportunity to provide supplementary evidence to support his/her credit claim.
- **Challenge Exam** is intended for students who wish to claim credit for a course that they have not completed. Challenge exams may either be directly linked to specific course content or to a set of generic outcomes.
- **Case Study** is a tool that permits a candidate to demonstrate or apply a skill set to a set of circumstances.
- **Demonstration:** A performance completed by an individual learner and witnessed by the assessor. It includes but is not limited to structured interviews, product assessments, role-plays, simulations, presentations and oral examinations.
- **Simulations** are an attempt to replicate workplace conditions in order that a candidate may demonstrate his/her competence in a range of critical skills.

Assessor: The specialist who is responsible for assessing a candidate's knowledge, skill, and judgement. The assessor will be an expert with specialized knowledge in the subject area being assessed.

Case Study: A tool used to assist the candidate to demonstrate or apply a skill set to a set of circumstances.

Documentation: Evidence that supports the claim for prior learning experience. Documentation may be in the form of transcripts, licenses, certificates, job descriptions, articles written, products produced, letters, evaluations, etc.

Evidence: The array of evidence used to prove prior learning - in the form of written documents, work samples, or demonstrations – that are used to substantiate his or her PLAR credit claims.

Direct Evidence: The learner produces the evidence. (Products, performances, reports, plans, etc. created by the candidate)

Indirect Evidence: Information about the learner’s achievements.

Experiential Learning: The attributes of skills, knowledge, and values that are acquired through work and life experience rather than through formal, recognized educational programs.

Flexible Assessment: The process of measuring, evaluating, defining, and granting credit for learning acquired through experientially gained knowledge, skills, and judgement.

Formal Learning: Courses or programs taken at recognized educational institutions, with related assessment processes and credits.

Informal Learning: Learning gained from life and work experiences.

Learning Outcomes: The measurable knowledge, skills, and capacity for judgement which a person is expected to have developed or acquired as the result of a course of study of a set of identifiable experiences. Also described as what a person knows and can do.

Letter of Verification: A formal letter prepared on letterhead that may be used to authenticate work or to verify a candidate’s participation in a project.

Non-formal Learning: The skills and knowledge gained through learning experiences. Such as on-the-job or industry based training, professional development workshops, seminars, private study, or work experience.

RPL Advisor: A person who is responsible for facilitating candidates through the process. Often is a link to administration and assessors.

RPL Assessor: A content specialist who is responsible for assessing candidate’s learning.

RPL Facilitator: An individual who is responsible for setting up credible systems, advocating and supporting practitioners and learners.

RPL Practitioner: An individual working with PLAR in the capacity of Advisor, Assessor, Facilitator, or Administrator.

Portfolio: An organized collection of materials developed by a learner, which describes, records and verifies learning achievements, as well as personal goals.

Portfolio Development: The process of collecting and organizing evidence to support a person's learning through classroom, distance learning or advisory structures.

Recognizing Prior Learning (RPL) or Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR): A process that involves the identification, documentation, assessment, and recognition of the learning you have acquired through formal and informal learning. The process of recognizing and granting credit for skills, knowledge, and competencies that have been acquired experientially, that is, through work experience, unrecognized education or training, self study, volunteer activities, and hobbies.

Reflective Thought: Refers to thinking back on specific experiences and finding answers to questions such as:

What did I learn?

What did I learn about myself during the process?

Which earlier learning experiences led me to this learning experience?

How have I adapted this learning experience to related experiences?

What evidence can I provide to substantiate my learning?

Rigorous Assessment: Extent to which assessment must be done for conclusive proof of learning.

Technical Requirements: Refer to a set of evaluation criteria that can be attached to direct and indirect evidence. These include:

- **Authenticity** asks if the candidate can prove conclusive ownership of the submitted evidence.
- **Sufficiency** asks if there is enough evidence to prove conclusively that the skill or knowledge claimed can be transferred from one context to another.
- **Currency** asks if the evidence represents current professional/vocational levels of competency.
- **Reliability** asks if the measurement criteria are sufficiently unambiguous to ensure that subsequent assessments of the same evidence would produce similar credit recommendations.