



OÉ Gaillimh
NUI Galway

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

**GUIDE TO APPLYING FOR RECOGNITION OF PRIOR CERTIFIED
LEARNING**

ADULT LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

October 2014

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INTRODUCTION

This guide to the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is designed to help you understand the RPL process, to become familiar with the concepts and language around RPL and to complete the steps involved in completing your RPL Learning Portfolio. It is essential that you read through this guide before attempting to complete your RPL Learning Portfolio.

The guide begins by explaining what RPL is and provides an overview of what the process of achieving RPL involves. The guide then goes on to give a brief policy background to RPL to rationalise why it is important in accessing education. You will next learn some of the concepts that are core to becoming familiar with RPL terminology. Finally, the guide details the steps you need to take to complete your RPL Learning Portfolio and to maximise your chances of a successful application.

Overall, in compiling your RPL Learning Portfolio it is imperative that you clearly demonstrate the learning outcomes that you have achieved, that you provide authentic evidence of your achievement, that you demonstrate that you have achieved learning at a similar level on the NFQ¹ framework as the programme for which you are applying and that you compile a portfolio of your certified learning that is coherent, convincing and academically sound. Remember, RPL recognises what you have learned from previous learning, not just what you have done. We hope that this guide will assist you in completing these tasks. In particular the guide seeks to ensure that you should be able to:

Explain what recognition of prior learning is and its role in facilitating access to education;

- Explain the difference between prior certified learning and prior uncertified learning;
- Describe the National Framework of Qualifications;
- Describe the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System;
- Explain learning outcomes;
- Recognise the purpose of the RPL Learning Portfolio;
- Compile an RPL Learning Portfolio that clearly demonstrates, with supporting evidence, achievement of prior certified learning at the required NFQ level. .

This 'Guide to Applying for Recognition for Prior Certified Learning' has been compiled in collaboration with the four constituent centres within the offices of Adult Learning and Professional Development.

¹ National Framework of Qualifications

² Quality and Qualifications, formerly FETAC awards

WHAT IS RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING?

Recognition of Prior Learning is the process of giving formal recognition to a student for previous learning (knowledge, skills and competences). The previous learning may be by formal, non-formal or informal means and it may be certified or uncertified.

In line with the National Qualifications Framework goals and with current EU policy geared towards widening access to educational qualifications and supporting lifelong learning, NUI Galway recognises and supports the RPL process.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process which acknowledges, and gives value to, learning achieved prior to registering for a programme of study at NUI Galway (NUI, Galway, 2012).

Prior learning includes:

- **Formal learning:** learning that takes place in education and training institutions, leading to recognised awards and qualifications.
- **Non-Formal learning:** learning that is goal-oriented and planned. It occurs outside of the formal education settings. An example of non-formal learning is the training and learning that is facilitated in many youth work and youth training settings. Often, certification will be issued in recognition of these training events, but this certification may be difficult or impossible to place on the National Framework of Qualifications.
- **Informal learning:** learning that is achieved in everyday life. This is sometimes called experiential learning and will, in most cases, be un-planned and un-structured. It will have gained no certification or qualification and is often not even recognised as 'learning' by the individual.

Learning may be:

- **Certified:** in general certified learning is recognised as 'formal' learning and has been achieved in and recognised by a formal education institution. The learner's level of learning will have been assessed and he/she will have received certification for achievement of learning outcomes.
- **Uncertified:** learning may have taken place within a formal institution, but will most likely have occurred in a non-formal or an informal setting. Regardless of the setting, the learning achieved will not have been formally certified.

RPL may be used to:

- Gain admission to a programme of study where the standard entry requirements are not met;
- Gain exemptions on a programme of study;
- Gain advanced entry to a programme of study;
- Transfer from one programme of study to another within the university;
- Transfer from an external programme to one within NUI Galway;

Note: only applications for recognition of prior certified learning are currently being accepted by the Adult Learning and Professional Development Centre. Some programmes may allow experiential learning to supplement prior certified learning.

Note: It is important to note that colleges and schools of NUI Galway implement the RPL policy uniquely. Please contact the College or School to which you are applying, for further information.

Learning Activity 1

Think about your own learning

a) List any formal learning programme/s in which you have participated

b) What, if any, non-formal learning have you achieved?

c) Describe some informal learning that you have experienced

RPL AS WIDENING ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Recognition of prior learning is seen as a way of widening access to education. By providing opportunities to gain credits for previous learning, individuals are encouraged to re-enter education. Towards this goal, RPL is underpinned by a range of EU policies and declarations.

The Council of the European Union, with the Lisbon European Council strategic declaration (March 2000) recognised that improving the individual's education and training was a primary means of making the EU the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based society and economy in the world.

The Copenhagen Declaration (European Commission, 2002) identified strategies for improving the performance, quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training.

The Maastricht communiqué, produced by the European Commission (2004), stressed the priorities for vocational education and training, and supported the development of lifelong learning.

These policies and declarations were a firm commitment to the ideal of widening access to education and providing opportunities for lifelong learning. As a mark of commitment, the EU Member State Governments issued a Statement of Common European Principles to encourage and guide the development of high-quality and trustworthy approaches and systems for the recognition of prior learning (Cedefop, pp. 57-59). These principles include:

- An assurance of equal access and fair treatment of all individuals in the recognition of prior learning;
- An obligation on stakeholders to provide systems and approaches for the recognition of prior learning;
- A commitment to provide a fair, transparent and a quality assured system of recognition of prior learning;
- The provision of an independent, open and professional system of recognition of prior learning;

LEARNING ACTIVITY 2

How do you think that recognition of prior learning will contribute to your work as a vocational trainer/tutor/teacher (or as a practitioner in the science and technology sector) ?

THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF QUALIFICATIONS

The National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) is a ten-level system of education and training awards standards, set up by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) to comply with the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999. Each level (see fan diagram) is based on nationally agreed learning outcome standards. It is defined as: The single, nationally and internationally accepted entity, through which all learning achievements may be measured and related to each other in a coherent way and which defines the relationship between all education and training awards (NFQ, 2012).

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) was established in November 2012 and is responsible for the external quality assurance of further and higher education and training. It replaced HETAC, FETAC and the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, while also incorporating the functions of the Irish Universities Quality Board. Part of this workload is the maintenance, development and review of the National Framework of Qualifications (<http://www.QQI.ie/>)

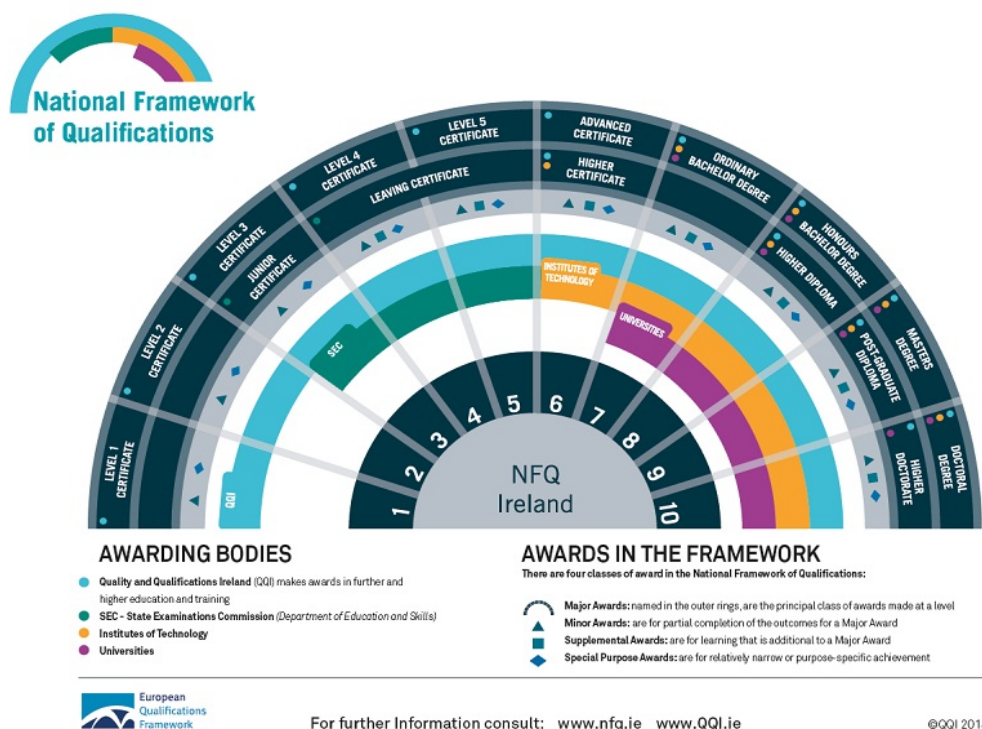


FIGURE 1: NATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF QUALIFICATIONS FAN DIAGRAM (QQI, 2014)

The 'fan diagram' (Figure 1) helps to illustrate the levels on the NFQ, the awarding bodies and the major types of qualifications that are included in the system of qualifications.

The framework levels consider a wide range of learning. For instance, level 1 recognises the ability to perform basic tasks, while level 10 recognises the ability to discover and develop new knowledge and skills that are at the frontier of research and scholarship (OLC, 2001, p.192) (See Table 2).

TABLE 1: AWARDS, LEVELS AND INSTITUTIONS

Awarding Body	Award Levels	Awarding Institution
Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) ²	Levels 1 - 6	ETB ³
Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) ⁴	Levels 6 - 10	ETB ⁵
State Examinations Commission (SEC)	Levels 3 – 5	ETB ⁶ Post Primary Schools
Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT)	Levels 6 - 10	Dublin Institute of Technology
Other Institutes of Technology	Levels 6 - 10	Institutes of Technology
Universities	Levels 7 - 10	Universities

Each level of the framework is based on nationally-agreed standards of knowledge, skill and competence. These standards are based on learning outcomes; that is, what a learner is expected to know, understand and be able to do after successful completion of the learning process. So the level of award reflects the learner's level of knowledge, skill and competence.

Each level of the system is associated with specified level indicators, which are broad descriptions of the learning outcomes at a given level. The level descriptors and their associated awards are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2: LEVEL DESCRIPTORS AND ASSOCIATED AWARDS

Level	Descriptor (reflecting learning outcomes)	Award
Level 1	Individuals perform basic tasks under supervision; learn information and basic repetitive skills.	Level 1 Certificate
Level 2	Have basic literacy and numeracy skills, ability to learn new knowledge and skills in a supervised environment	Level 2 Certificate
Level 3	Perform relatively simple work, have functional literacy and numeracy; capacity for low-skilled occupations	Level 3 Certificate; Junior Certificate
Level 4	Have a certain level of responsibility for participating in public life and shaping one's own life	Level 4 Certificate Leaving Certificate
Level 5	Have a broad range of skills that require some theoretical understanding, have the capacity to engage in knowledge and skill specific activities	Level 5 Certificate, Leaving Certificate
Level 6	Have a comprehensive range of skills which may be vocationally-specific and/or of a general supervisory nature; have the capacity to work in an autonomous way.	Advanced Certificate; Higher Certificate

² Quality and Qualifications, formerly FETAC awards

³ Education and Training Board, formerly VEC

⁴ Quality and Qualifications, formerly FETAC awards

⁵ Education and Training Board, formerly VEC

⁶ Education and Training Board, formerly VEC

Level 7	Have the knowledge and critical understanding of the established principles in a field of study and the capacity to apply them in different contexts.	Ordinary Bachelor Degree
Level 8	Have the ability to cope with change, to exercise initiative and to solve problems within specific field of study	Honours Bachelors Degree; Higher Diploma
Level 9	Demonstrate knowledge which is at the forefront of a field of learning, have the ability to integrate knowledge, handle complexity and formulate judgements	Master's Degree; Postgraduate Diploma
Level 10	Demonstrate the capacity for discovery and development of new knowledge and skills	Doctoral Degree

Adapted from: Forfás (2008) Monitoring Ireland's Skills Supply: Trends in Education/ Training Outputs 2008. Dublin: FÁS.

The National Framework of Qualifications helps you to:

- Compare awards and decide which awards suit your needs;
- Make decisions about how to progress within the award system;
- Identify learning outcomes for each level of the NFQ;
- Identify what you are expected to know, understand and be able to do at each level;
- Recognise where on the framework your prior learning is located.

LEARNING ACTIVITY 3

Think about your own learning achievements

a) What NFQ level was the course(s) you took?

b) If you want to progress your learning, what NFQ level should you next take?

c) In what type(s) of educational institution might you find a course at the appropriate NFQ level, for your progression? (See Table 1)

Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes describe what a learner is expected to know, understand and be able to do after successful completion of a process of learning (European Commission, 2009, p.13). Therefore, learning outcomes refer to the learner's knowledge, understanding, skills and/or competences and what he/she knows and can do to the required standard as a result of his/her involvement in a learning process. All certified programme modules are expected to define a number of learning outcomes.

Learning Outcomes take into account different domains of learning. Bloom (1956) developed three domains of learning:

- The cognitive domain: the intellectual elements, knowledge, information;
- The psychomotor domain: physical and motor skills;
- The affective domain: attitudes, values, emotions, feelings.

Learning Outcomes:

- Are learner centred;
- Specify what the learner should be able to do on completion of the course;
- Identify what level of performance is expected from the learner;
- Specify the cognitive, behavioural and affective scope of learning;
- Guide the content of the training/teaching materials;
- Determine delivery methods;
- Identify learning environment conditions;
- Provide directions for evaluation and assessment.

LEARNING ACTIVITY 4

Think about an educational programme that you have attended. Identify and list the learning outcomes associated with that programme.

EUROPEAN CREDIT TRANSFER AND ACCUMULATION SYSTEM (ECTS)

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is the credit system used in Europe and relates to formal learning; that is, learning that is certified. The system is part of the Bologna process, which is an EU Member State agreement on the harmonisation of educational qualifications. Although mainly used in the higher education system, it is currently being implemented at other educational levels in Ireland.

ECTS aims to facilitate planning, delivery, evaluation, recognition and validation of qualifications and units of learning (European Commission, 2009). By allocating ECTS credits to a programme of study, the system enables students to collect credits for formal learning achieved. This facilitates learners' mobility by allowing them to compare the number of ECTS that they have achieved. Such mobility makes it easier for individuals to work and study in different EU Member States.

ECTS harmonises educational qualifications by assigning credits and workload hours to a programme of study. In other words it is a way of describing the credits attached to a programme of study and reflects the workload needed to achieve the programme learning outcomes.

Workload hours as associated with ECTS include:

- Self-study time
- Lectures
- Classes
- Workshop time
- Assignment time
- Examination time
- All time spent completing the module/programme.

Harmonisation of credits and workload involves (NQAI, 2009):

- Allocating credits to all educational components of a study programme (such as modules, courses, dissertation work).
- Quantifying the outcomes of learning. Learning outcomes express what the student will know, understand or be able to do after completion of a process of learning. All well designed programmes/courses/modules have clearly defined learning outcomes.
- Basing ECTS credits on the workload that students are expected to complete in order to successfully achieve learning outcomes. The workload is the typical amount of time that a student needs to complete learning activities.
- Basing the allocation of ECTS credits on the official length of a study programme cycle. The total workload necessary to obtain a first cycle degree lasting three or four years is expressed as 180 or 240 credits. Diplomas and Certificates are expressed as fewer credits.
- Assigning 60 credits to the workload of a full-time student during one academic year. Part-time programmes attract fewer credits per year to allow for combining work and learning. For example, the typical BA within the Adult Learning and Professional Development Centre attracts 45 credits per year, while the Specialist Diploma in Science and Technology Studies attracts 30 credits per year. One credit corresponds to 20 to 25 working hours, amounting to 1,500 to 1,800 hours per academic year for a full-time student, or 900 to 1,125 hours for a part-time 45 credit programme (600 to 750 hours for a part-time 45 credit programme

LEARNING ACTIVITY 5

Review the programmes or courses that you have taken,

a) How many credits were allocated to the programme/course?

b) If the programme/course was modular, how many credits were allocated to each module?

c) Estimate the suggested workload of the programme/course/module

d) Estimate the number of hours you studied and worked on each module of the programme

THE RPL LEARNING PORTFOLIO

At a most basic level, when making an RPL application, you and the university are engaging in a process of attempting to satisfy, not alone, one another, but also all other stakeholders involved in the programme to which you seek entry, that the desired learning outcomes have been achieved. Thus all students will gain equal credit for equal work. It is essential, therefore, that you provide evidence of the necessary prior learning achievements in your RPL Learning Portfolio.

HOW CAN YOU DEMONSTRATE YOUR PRIOR LEARNING?

Your skills and knowledge can be demonstrated by submitting evidence of learning to Adult Training and Education Studies as part of your learning portfolio. In the RPL Learning Portfolio, present your evidence in the form of official transcripts of results and formal syllabi accompanied by relevant supporting documentation.

Your RPL Learning Portfolio must include:

- Achievements/accreditations gained;
- The learning outcomes of prior learning programmes;
- Transcripts of relevant results;
- Signed copies of formal syllabi;
- Relevant supporting documentation.

Note: To ensure authenticity all documents must be signed by the relevant personnel.

OVERVIEW OF THE RPL PROCESS

The flowchart below outlines the RPL process clearly. Begin at Point 1 in the top left-hand corner and follow the arrows. The flowchart takes you from the point at which you are considering applying for recognition of prior learning to a point where you are informed of the outcome of the application.

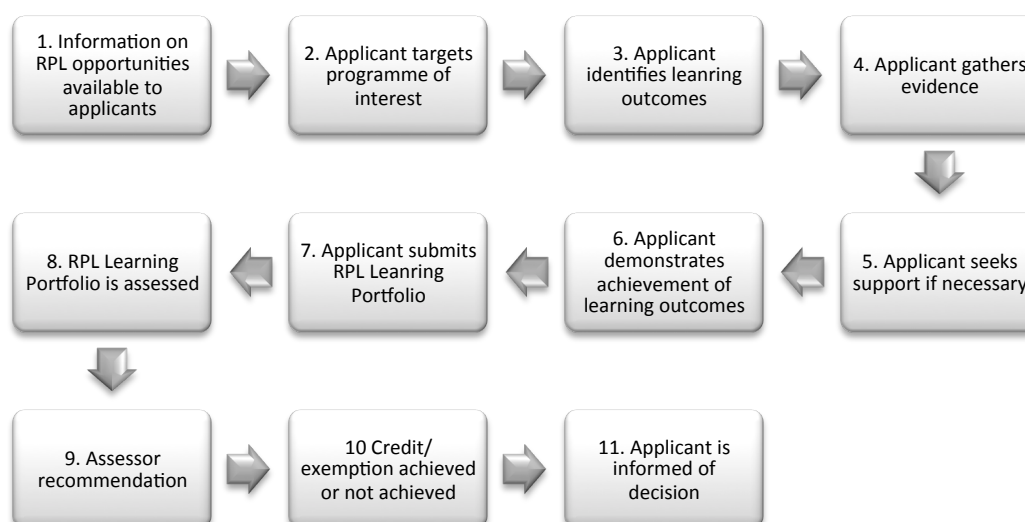


FIGURE 2: OVERVIEW OF RPL PROCESS

BEGINNING THE PROCESS

STEP 1

Identify the programme of study for which you wish to apply for an exemption.

- Are you hoping to use RPL for admission purposes, for module exemption purposes, for transfer purposes or for advanced academic standing (admission to year other than year 1)?
- The application form associated with this guide pertains to application for entry to Year 1 (Certificate Year) of: the BA in Training and Education, or of the BA in Community and Family Studies, or of the BA in Early Childhood Studies and Practice.
- If you wish to apply for RPL, for entry to another year of a programme, or indeed for another programme (The Modular Programme in Science and Technology Studies, for example), contact the RPL administrator to enquire about the RPL procedures specific to the programme in which you are interested. The administrator will discuss the issues involved and may be able to advise you on whether it would be worth your while to submit an RPL Learning Portfolio.
- Depending on the purpose for which you hope to use RPL, the administrator may be able to advise you on certain aspects of the process. This may include advice on the modules in the programme of study for which you could consider claiming an exemption based on your prior learning. It is important to note that this advice from college staff does not guarantee exemption from any module.
- If you are using the RPL process to apply for module exemptions then you will be required to submit your learning portfolio at least four weeks before you submit your programme application.

STEP 2

Gather your evidence.

- When applying for recognition of prior certified learning for programme entry or for module exemptions then you will be required to present evidence of learning in the form of official transcripts of results and formal syllabi accompanied by relevant support documents.
- You will be required to map your prior certified learning against the learning outcomes of the module(s) in question. Learning outcomes refer to the learner's knowledge, understanding, skills and/or competences - what the learner knows and can do to the required standard as a result of prior learning (see segment on Learning Outcomes earlier in this guide).
- A later segment of this guide provides detailed instructions on compiling your portfolio.

STEP 3

Compile and submit your RPL Learning Portfolio.

- Once you have all the necessary evidence collected and validated you are in a position to compile your RPL Learning Portfolio. Compiling an evidence-based neat, coherent and logical portfolio will optimise your chances of success.
- When completed, submit your portfolio to the RPL administrator in the relevant Adult Learning and Professional Development unit. On submission, your application will be assessed, and a final decision will be made.

SEEKING SUPPORT DURING THE RPL APPLICATION PROCESS

You have two options to support your application for RPL:

1. Discuss your options with the RPL Co-ordinator in the relevant unit of the Adult Learning and Professional Development Centre
 - Contact the programme administrator to set up an appointment to meet with the RPL Co-ordinator. When you first contact the RPL Co-ordinator, you will discuss the module(s) in which you feel you are eligible for exemption(s). The RPL Co-ordinator may discuss the level and course content of the module(s) you have chosen, and go through their learning outcomes with you so that you become familiar with them (NUI Galway, 2012).
2. Follow this RPL guide.
 - It guides you through a process of reflection and analysis of your past experience, current situation and future aspirations.
 - It assists you to thoroughly document past certified learning, knowledge, skills and competencies.
 - It shows you how to organise and present evidence of past certified learning outcomes that demonstrate your learning achievements.
 - It helps you to develop a portfolio to be used as a base for benchmarking your learning and identifying career options and future learning requirements and opportunities.

THE RPL LEARNING PORTFOLIO APPLICATION

There are five sections in the portfolio application:

- **Section 1:** Provide your name and contact details.
- **Section 2:** Identify the specific module/s for which you are seeking exemption. Indicate the programme name/s and the educational institution/s in which you have gained your certified learning.
- **Section 3:** Provide evidence of your achievement of the learning outcomes that match the learning outcomes of the module/s for which you are seeking exemptions.
- **Section 4:** Supply a list of additional supporting information if necessary.
- **Section 5:** Sign the application indicating that the work submitted in all respects is true.

COMPILING THE RPL LEARNING PORTFOLIO

The evidence of learning achieved is compiled in an RPL Learning Portfolio following 1) your reading of this guide; 2) advice from the portfolio preparation session and/or 3) from your discussions with the programme co-ordinator.

The portfolio consists of a statement of your learning and evidence to support your learning. It is not just a folder of all the work you have done. It must show authentic evidence of learning achievements and outcomes.

Your portfolio must contain all the evidence that will be required by the assessor to evaluate your claim for entry or exemption under RPL. The portfolio should provide a comprehensive demonstration of achievement.

The evidence in the portfolio must be linked to specific learning outcomes and NFQ Level and serves to show what you know in relation to a particular subject area. The portfolio building process is led by you but will be supported by the RPL Co-ordinator in the relevant unit of the Adult Learning and Professional Development Centre.

An assessor or a group of assessors is appointed to review the RPL Learning Portfolio. Assessors are all specialists in the subject matter being assessed.

MATCHING THE LEARNING OUTCOMES

To complete a portfolio and submit it in application for a module exemption, you will need to provide evidence that your prior learning is equivalent to the learning outcomes of the module(s) for which you are seeking an exemption. In other words you need to match the learning outcomes for the modules or programmes that you have already achieved to the learning outcomes of the modules for which you are seeking an exemption. Equally, it is important that the learning outcomes achieved match the NFQ Level of the target programme/module.

Typically a module will have between 5 and 8 learning outcomes. You must provide response for each learning outcome. The response must focus on the learning gained for each outcome in particular. This involves some preparation but provides a clear account of how your certified learning matches that of the module for which you are seeking exemption. If you have not met a particular learning outcome, state so clearly. Do not leave any learning outcome unanswered. Setting out this information in a clear logical manner and providing sound evidence to meet these claims forms the basis on which the assessor makes a decision (NUI Galway, 2012). Section 3 of the application form provides an example to demonstrate how this requirement should be answered.

In your application for RPL you must demonstrate that you have previously achieved learning outcomes that are cognitively similar and at an equivalent NFQ Level to those defined in the module/programme from which you are requesting an exemption.

If you have completed a certified learning programme, that is cognitively similar and at an equivalent NFQ Level to the programme from which you are applying for an exemption, it should be reasonably easy to match the relevant learning outcomes.

If the learning outcomes of these previously studied programmes equate to the expected learning outcomes of the courses for which exemption/recognition is being sought, then the achievement of RPL should be achievable.

PROVIDING EVIDENCE

In order to gain an exemption from a subject, you must meet equivalent learning outcomes of that subject. One piece of evidence may be used to demonstrate more than one learning outcome.

To prove that you have undergone the prior certified learning, you need to provide evidence to support your claim. The following is a list of the types of evidence that you can submit to support your claims:

Required evidence:

- Transcripts of examination results;
- Transcripts of relevant results;
- Copies of Certificates;
- Letters of Certification;
- Achievements/accreditations gained;
- The learning outcomes of prior learning programmes;
- Signed copies of formal syllabi;
- Relevant supporting documentation;

Evidence that may be useful in supporting your application

- Job Profiles
- Published Material
- Records of On-the-job Training
- Written Reports
- Teacher Training Reports
- Reports on Unpaid Work
- References
- Work Samples

Do not include original documents in the portfolio – include authenticated photocopies instead. In cases where the college requires additional proof, you may have to attend for a brief oral and/or written examination in order to check that you have achieved specific learning outcomes (NUI Galway, 2012).

AUTHENTICATING THE EVIDENCE

When collecting your evidence, use the following points as a guide. This will help ensure that all your evidence meets authenticity requirements:

- Ensure that the evidence you are supplying is appropriate and directly related to the subject for which you are applying for exemption or the entry criteria you are hoping to meet.
- Ensure that documentation is clear, that the evidence you are supplying comes from you and relates to you.
- Ensure that the evidence you are supplying demonstrates that you are up to date with current practices and are capable of achieving certain criteria.
- Ensure that you have sufficient evidence to show that you have covered all the learning outcomes for the module(s).
- Finally, ensure that you have listed all evidence clearly and logically documented in the **Supporting Document List (in the appropriate section of the application form)**.

PUTTING THE PORTFOLIO TOGETHER

At this stage, most of the work is done; all you need to do now is ensure your portfolio is complete by:

- Reading through all the documentation, considering what you have written and making any amendments you think necessary;
- Consulting your advisor if you have any final questions;
- Making your portfolio presentable and easy to follow;
- Reading through the full document once compiled to ensure every required item is present.

SUBMIT YOUR PORTFOLIO

When you are satisfied that your portfolio is complete, the final step is to submit it to the RPL Administrator by the due date. Submit your application to, one of the following:

RPL Programme Administrator
Training and Education Studies
Centre for Adult learning and Professional Development
National University of Ireland, Galway
Nuns' Island
Galway
Tel:091 494055
Email: Edel.Molloy@nuigalway.ie

RPL Programme Administrator
Community Education
Centre for Adult learning and Professional Development
National University of Ireland, Galway
Nuns' Island
Galway
Tel:091 495786/495472
Email: community.ed@nuigalway.ie

RPL Programme Administrator
Early Childhood Studies and Practice
Centre for Adult learning and Professional Development
National University of Ireland, Galway
Nuns' Island
Galway
Tel:091 492080
Email earlychildhood@nuigalway.ie

RPL Programme Administrator
Science and Technology
Centre for Adult learning and Professional Development
National University of Ireland, Galway
Nuns' Island
Galway

BSc Niamh McHugh Tel:091 495845
Email Niamh.mchugh@nuigalway.ie

MSc Aisling Monahan Tel:091 495698
Email Aisling.monahan@nuigalway.ie

Be sure to **keep a copy of your completed portfolio** for your records.

The Centre for Adult Learning and Professional Development will not accept responsibility for materials lost in transit.

ASSESSMENT OF THE RPL LEARNING PORTFOLIO

Your compiled portfolio will be assessed against the following criteria:

- **Currency:** Is the curricular information and knowledge studied by the student current to today's course/practice?
- **Validity:** Is the evidence submitted directly related to the subject in question?
- **Authenticity:** Is all documentation submitted authentic? In other words, is the applicant responsible for all learning and achievements portrayed?
- **Sufficiency:** Does the submitted portfolio completely satisfy the learning requirements needed to gain exemption or entry to the chosen course? Are the learning outcomes and NFQ Levels aligned to the target programme/module?
- **Reliability:** Can the evidence produced here be repeated at another time?
- **Relevance:** Is the learning gained relevant to the programme of study you now intend to take? This means that it must be at a similar NFQ Level, have similar learning outcomes, and cover a similar knowledge-and-skills-base. The learning outcomes and knowledge-and-skills-base need not be identical but they must be cognitively close enough to those outlined for your target programme

The assessor may orally examine you in relation to your claim, or request you to undergo a written or practical test, as a check that you have achieved specific learning outcomes if necessary.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE ASSESSOR DOES NOT GRANT AN EXEMPTION?

If no exemption is granted then the assessor makes a recommendation. This informs the candidate of the necessary steps/actions which must be taken. This can be a recommendation for additional work, study, research, project work, assignment, short course, attendance at a seminar, or further development work on the portfolio. The assessor may also require further clarification or verification of evidence contained in the portfolio before a decision can be made (NUI Galway, 2012).

Please Note: Exemptions gained may differ in their ECTS value, depending on:

The level of an applicant's previous certified learning

The programme level to which an applicant is seeking entry

A student must have gained at least 50% of the particular programme ECTS value in order to be allowed graduate from that programme.

Please consult with the RPL Programme Administrator in the relevant unit of the Adult Learning and Professional Development Centre from whom you wish to receive Recognition of Prior Learning.

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