



**ESTAR**

ELITE SKILLS, TRAINING  
& RECRUITMENT

**CP-015**

**Recognition of Prior  
Learning (RPL) Policy  
and Procedure**

**REV: 00**



## Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy and Procedure

Form: CP-015

Revision: 00

**Policy owner:** Head of Quality & Compliance

**Operational leads:** Programme Managers, Lead IQA, MIS / Data Lead

**Applies to:** All learners and apprentices on ESTAR programmes (funded and non-funded)

**Review cycle:** Annual, or following changes to funding or regulatory requirements

**Version:** 00

### 1. Purpose

ESTAR Education recognises that learners may already possess relevant **knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs)** gained through prior learning or experience. This policy sets out how ESTAR identifies, assesses, recognises and records **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** to ensure:

- learners do not repeat learning unnecessarily;
- programmes are tailored, efficient and meaningful;
- assessment standards and occupational competence are maintained; and
- funding, audit and inspection requirements are met.

RPL is used to **reduce duplication of learning**, not to lower standards or bypass assessment.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- apprenticeships and adult skills provision;
- funded and non-funded programmes;
- knowledge-based, practical and behavioural elements of standards or qualifications.

RPL may be applied:

- **prior to enrolment** (initial assessment stage); and/or
- **during the programme**, where further evidence becomes available.

### 3. Definition of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning is the **formal identification, assessment and validation** of learning already achieved by a learner through:

- previous education or qualifications;
- work-based experience;
- informal or non-formal learning;
- training or professional development.

RPL may reduce the **amount of learning required**, but **must not remove the requirement to demonstrate competence** where assessment evidence is required.

### 4. Principles

ESTAR's approach to RPL is underpinned by the following principles:

- **Validity** – prior learning must be relevant and current
- **Authenticity** – evidence must clearly belong to the learner
- **Currency** – learning must still be applicable to current standards
- **Sufficiency** – evidence must fully meet the required criteria
- **Integrity** – assessment and certification standards are not compromised



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### 5. Regulatory and funding context

RPL is implemented in line with expectations from:

- funding and audit requirements set by Education and Skills Funding Agency;
- quality and inspection expectations of Ofsted; and
- awarding organisation and End-Point Assessment requirements (where applicable).

For apprenticeships, RPL must be considered **at the start of the programme** and reflected in the planned duration, price and training plan where relevant.

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### 6. Roles and responsibilities

#### 6.1 Learners and apprentices

- Declare prior learning and experience honestly and early.
- Provide evidence to support RPL claims.
- Engage in assessment activity where required.

#### 6.2 Tutors / Assessors

- Identify opportunities for RPL during initial assessment and delivery.
- Assess evidence against relevant standards or criteria.
- Ensure RPL decisions are evidence-based and documented.

#### 6.3 Programme Managers

- Ensure RPL is applied consistently across programmes.
- Confirm that programme plans reflect RPL outcomes.

#### 6.4 Lead IQA

- Quality assures RPL decisions and evidence.
- Confirms consistency, fairness and compliance.
- Samples RPL decisions as part of IQA activity.

#### 6.5 Head of Quality & Compliance

- Oversees compliance with funding and regulatory expectations.
- Approves RPL processes and monitors risk.

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### 7. RPL identification process

#### 7.1 Initial assessment

RPL is considered during:

- enrolment and onboarding;
- skills scan and initial assessment;
- review of prior qualifications and experience.

Learners are informed about RPL opportunities and responsibilities.

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#### 7.2 Evidence for RPL

Evidence may include (but is not limited to):

- certificates or qualifications;
- transcripts or unit credit;
- workplace records or job descriptions;
- portfolios of work or products;
- employer testimonies or references;



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- professional discussions or demonstrations.

Evidence must be:

- relevant to the current standard or qualification;
- authentic and verifiable;
- sufficient to meet assessment requirements.

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### 8. Assessment and decision-making

#### 8.1 Assessment of RPL

- Assessors evaluate evidence against the required KSBs or criteria.
- Where required, additional assessment methods may be used (e.g. professional discussion, observation).
- RPL **does not automatically guarantee exemption** from assessment activity.

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#### 8.2 Decision outcomes

RPL decisions may result in:

- reduction in taught content or off-the-job training;
- adjusted learning plans and delivery schedules;
- confirmation that no RPL applies (with rationale).

For apprenticeships, RPL outcomes are reflected in:

- training plans;
- programme duration; and
- funding price, where required.

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### 9. Limitations of RPL

RPL **cannot** be used to:

- bypass mandatory assessment requirements;
- avoid End-Point Assessment (EPA);
- reduce occupational competence standards;
- compensate for lack of current competence.

Where assessment is owned by an awarding organisation or EPAO, their rules **take precedence**.

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### 10. Recording and documentation

ESTAR maintains clear, auditable records of:

- RPL evidence submitted;
- assessment decisions and rationale;
- programme adjustments made as a result of RPL;
- IQA sampling and confirmation.

Records are retained in line with the **Document Retention and Secure Storage Policy**.

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### 11. Quality assurance of RPL

RPL decisions are:

- sampled through IQA activity;
- reviewed for consistency and fairness;
- included in standardisation discussions where appropriate.



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Any issues identified are addressed through corrective actions and staff development.

### 12. Appeals

If a learner disagrees with an RPL decision:

- they may request a review within **10 working days** of notification;
- the review will be conducted by a senior member of staff not involved in the original decision where possible.

Further escalation may follow the **Enquiries and Appeals Policy for Learners**.

### 13. Data protection and confidentiality

All RPL evidence and decisions are:

- handled confidentially;
- stored securely; and
- processed in line with ESTAR's **Data Protection Policy**.

### 14. Monitoring and review

The effectiveness of RPL is monitored through:

- learner progress and outcomes;
- IQA and audit findings;
- funding and compliance checks.

This policy is reviewed:

- annually; and
- following changes to funding rules, standards or regulatory guidance.

Date of last Review	Print Name	Position
02/02/2026	Keiran Casey	Chief Executive Officer
	Darren Beach	Quality Manager