

# **IAN WATSON'S DRIVER TRAINING CENTRE**

## **Guide to Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**

### **Competency Standards**

## Gaining recognition of your skills through Ian Watson’s Driver Training Centre

Throughout your life, you will have had many experiences from which you have gained skills. Many of these skills will be used in your current work activities.

People gain work-related skills in a number of ways such as:

- \* through work experience
- \* formal and informal training and education and
- \* general life experience.

These skills may be recognised through the Recognition of Prior Learning process if they are relevant to the qualification you have selected.

**Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** is the formal recognition of skills (competencies) and knowledge currently held, regardless of how, when or where the learning occurred. This is sometimes referred to as **Recognition of Current Competence (RCC)**. In this guide, we will use the term RPL.

### Why should you apply for RPL?

If you apply for RPL and your application is successful, you will:

- eliminate or reduce the need to retrain in skills and knowledge you already have
- complete your qualification within a shorter period of time
- save money because you will not have to buy learning materials.

You will find information on the following in this guide:

- terms about training which you need to understand
- types of evidence which you need to provide for your RPL application
- how to identify appropriate evidence
- how to present your evidence

### Stages of the RPL process

<b>Information</b>	Information which should include all learning outcomes and criteria to be assessed as well as the RPL process should be provided to the applicant.
<b>Initial support and Counselling</b>	Support and encouragement should be given to the applicant as a folio of information is prepared for RPL purposes.
<b>Application</b>	The applicant officially applies for RPL by submitting a folio of work and whatever other processes and procedures are deemed necessary.
<b>Assessment</b>	The application is assessed against standards.
<b>Post assessment guidance</b>	The applicant is given guidance on any criteria that have not been met and is informed of the criteria that have been met.
<b>Certification</b>	If the applicant is deemed competent in all areas certification is granted. If the application is lacking competency in any areas he or she will need to gain competency in those areas before certification is given.

## What is competence?

If you wish to be recognised for your current skills, you have to show that your skills are relevant to the qualification you have chosen. You can do this by proving that you are competent against industry performance standards.

Being competent means that:

- you can perform a task/job/activity to an industry standard
- you can do it in a consistent way over time and
- you have sufficient knowledge to enable you to perform it in a range of situations.

These industry standards reflect the skills and knowledge required in different jobs and job levels in specific industries. Standards are grouped together to form qualifications which reflect these specific jobs and job levels. The qualifications and associated standards form part of the industry-specific National Training Package.

## Training Package

A Training Package is developed by Australian industry to identify the skills and knowledge required for specific industries or industry sectors. It provides a set of nationally-endorsed competency standards (units of competence) which clearly state the skills and knowledge required to perform effectively in the workplace.

A qualification within a Training Package specifies the core and elective (if relevant) units of competence you are required to achieve against an identified vocational outcome or job role.

## Unit of competence

Each unit of competence is divided into elements, a series of work activities or steps directed toward the achievement of the overall outcome of the unit. For each element, there are a number of performance criteria which specify the standards you are required to achieve in the workplace. The critical aspects of evidence usually reflect the performance criteria but may contain important, additional information.

Someone who is competent has the required knowledge and skills and can apply effectively in a work situation. To achieve recognition for a specific unit of competence must provide evidence which demonstrates that you have the skills and knowledge all the performance criteria and critical aspects of evidence for that unit.

## How do you gain recognition of your skills?

Your skills can be recognised through RPL, Exemption and Credit Transfer. The RPL Coordinator can assist you with further information.

If you wish to be recognised for the skills and knowledge you have already gained through work or life experience, you will be applying for: **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**

**Exemption or credit transfer** is relevant for those who have completed formal training which is **equivalent** to one or more of the units in their qualification you have chosen.

Please note:

- You cannot receive an exemption or credit for a complete qualification.
- Formal training may not be accepted as equivalent to a unit of competence unless you also have relevant work experience. Contact the RPL Coordinator (phone 3491 8088) for advice if you believe you have completed equivalent study elsewhere.
- If you have trade or overseas qualifications which you wish to claim for RPL, exemption or credit transfer, discuss your options with the RPL - Coordinator.

If you wish to apply for an exemption or credit transfer, obtain copies of your results certified by a Justice of the Peace or Commissioner of Declarations. If you decide to apply for an exemption or credit transfer, you may be asked to provide a syllabus document or a course outline. This will help determine if your prior study is equivalent to the standards required for the nominated unit(s).

**If you are going to apply for RPL, please read on.**

## **How do you prove that you have the required skills?**

You must provide **evidence** to prove that you are competent against the performance criteria for the unit to gain recognition. It is not enough to state that you have the skills and knowledge required for a particular unit of competence.

There are four types of evidence that you can collect and present:

1 direct evidence

2 indirect evidence

3 personal statements

4 supplementary evidence.

All four types of evidence may be required for a successful application.

## Direct Evidence

This is work produced by you and could include:

- correspondence (letters, memos, fax messages and emails) you have written
- diary notes you have made
- completed job cards for work you have done
- drawings/plans you have created
- bookkeeping or other financial records you have maintained.

In other words, direct evidence is anything that you have either produced you or for which you have been primarily responsible. You need to provide 2 - 4 examples of each type of evidence to show that you undertaken the activities over a period of time.

This type of evidence should be verified by your Supervisor as your own work. Your Supervisor may be phoned by Ian Watson's Driver Training Centre to check this verification.

## Indirect Evidence

This is information about you, and could include:

- certificates/results of relevant training you have completed
- minutes of meetings which contain information on your participation and performance in specific activities your position description
- performance appraisal reports written about you
- letters of appreciation from clients or work colleagues
- references from previous employers
- workplace awards, prizes, certificates
- witness testimony or third party reports
- video recordings/photographs of activities you have undertaken.

### Witness testimony or third party reports

This is indirect evidence about you, and could include:

- **statements from others to support your claim.** You might include managers, supervisors, previous employers, customers and colleagues. These are NOT references: the information contained in this type
- of statement must be **relevant** to the elements and performance criteria for the unit of competence.
- **reports** from managers or supervisors who have witnessed specific activities you have undertaken, eg meetings, presentations and interviews.

Your witnesses may be contacted to verify their reports.

## Personal statements

A personal statement plays two very important roles in helping you prove your competence.

- (i) It gives you the opportunity to explain the evidence that is specific to your own organisation or industry so that the Assessor can understand it and match it against the performance criteria for the unit.
- (ii) It helps you highlight the knowledge and understanding required to do your job. It gives you an opportunity to explain why you did what you did.

The personal report is a concise description of your work activities and the functions you carry out, and should be related to the unit of competence and elements claimed. It reflects the actions you take, your knowledge and understanding.

Your personal report should include:

- a brief description of the context (situations and circumstances) in which you carried out the work
- details of the activities you undertook
- an explanation of the planning processes used
- an explanation as to why you made certain decisions, and the factors which influenced the outcome. For example, was it necessary to follow company policy or any specific legislation? What underlying principles were applied? Relate any applicable theories to your evidence.
- the decisions regarding follow-up of the outcomes of your activities
- any other similar situations you handled.

*A personal statement can never stand alone as sufficient evidence of your competency.*

## Supplementary evidence

In addition to providing evidence, you may be asked to provide answers to oral or written questions to ensure that you have the underpinning knowledge and understanding required to perform your work activities.

### *Underpinning knowledge*

To be consistently effective you need to understand the theories, models, principle methods and techniques on which your work activities are based. People with this knowledge and understanding are able to decide and explain what and how things should be done.

Underpinning knowledge is important because:

- (i) Competent performance is based on a good understanding of what you are and why you are doing it.
- (ii) Being competent means that you should be able to explain how you would perform in a different context - for example, in another organisation or in a different role.

*Your complete collection of evidence should demonstrate that you can handle range of tasks competently in a variety of situations. The quality of your evidence is more important than the quantity.*

Direct evidence is usually more valid, but assessors will expect to see both direct and indirect evidence eg financial plans **plus** witness testimony to authenticate them as your own work.

A single piece of evidence may be relevant to one or more elements of the unit of competence or to more than one unit of competence. In this case, you should link this evidence to the relevant elements (and relevant units if applicable) to help the assessor evaluate your application.

Original certificates of training, awards etc, are not required for the assessment, however copies must be certified a Justice of the Peace or Commissioner of Declarations.

## **Confidentiality**

It is important that you do not disclose sensitive information when you submit your evidence.

You should:

- obtain authorisation to use evidence
- remove names and figures, if necessary
- enclose sensitive documents in an envelope and mark the envelope *Private* and *Confidential* together with the RPL Coordinator's name.
- If there is confidential information that cannot be included, note this in the portfolio and make arrangements for it to be 'sighted' by an assessor.

Your portfolio of evidence will be archived at Ian Watson's Driver Training Centre for audit purposes after assessment. However, it may be returned to you upon receipt of your written request. In this case, copies of evidence which validate the assessor's decision will need to be retained by the Driver Training Centre. No copies will be taken without your permission.

## **What else might be useful in the RPL Assessment?**

In addition to direct, indirect evidence and personal statements, your portfolio might contain:

- the unit of competence
- your curriculum vitae or resume
- a brief description of the operations of the organisation for which you work, its organisational structure (include names and titles).

## **How will your application be assessed?**

Your evidence will be checked to ensure that:

- it meets the performance requirements and critical aspects of evidence of the unit of competence.
- it is sufficient to show that you have the skills and knowledge required. However, the quality of your evidence is more important than the quantity.
- it is current.
- it is authentic (that you have prepared the documentation in your submission)
- it displays your understanding of the underpinning knowledge.

If the assessor requires **further evidence** to support your application, you will be contacted to provide additional information within a specified period.

This could be done:

- over the telephone and/or
- by face-to-face interview and/or
- by submission of additional evidence.

You may also be asked to provide **evidence of your underpinning knowledge** for the unit of competence through oral or written questions.

When your application is assessed, the RPL Coordinator will send you a letter informing you of the result.

If your application is **successful**, you will receive a **Result of Assessment** from Ian Watson's Driver Training Centre for the relevant units of competence. Your portfolio of evidence will be retained by the Driver Training Centre.

If your application is unsuccessful, your evidence will be returned to you and you can then decide whether you wish to enrol in training for the unit of competence. You can also decide to reapply at a later date when you have gained more skills and knowledge as a result of your work activities. It is possible to appeal the decision on your RPL application. (Contact the RPL Coordinator for further information.)

## List of terms used in this Guide

### **Authentic**

In the RPL process, this is relevant to evidence that is genuinely your own work. When evidence is submitted from a team project, your contribution must be identified and assessed independently.

### **Competency standards**

The competencies required for effective performance in the workplace.

### **Evidence**

Information collected which provides proof of competence.

### **Exemption**

Equivalent for a unit of competence. (Relevant work experience may be required in addition to formal training. You will then need to go through the RPL process.)

### **Personal statement**

Statement on how you meet the performance standards required for a unit of competence.

### **Portfolio**

Collection of evidence relevant to the elements in a unit of competence. It may contain products of work, information about your work, witness testimonies or personal statements.

### **Qualification**

Result of successful completion of units of competence identified as the skills and knowledge required for a job and job level in a specific industry.

### **RCC (Recognition of Current Competence)**

The recognition of skills currently held, regardless of how, when or where the learning occurred. The terms RCC and RPL - are often used in the same context.

### **RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning)**

The recognition of skills currently held, regardless of how, when or where the learning occurred. The terms RCC and RPL are often used in the same context.

### **Training Package**

Includes a set of nationally-endorsed competency standards developed by industry to meet the training needs of specific industries or industry sectors and relevant qualifications.

### **Unit of Competence**

A statement of the knowledge and skills required to perform a work activity and the performance standards specified by industry.

### **Witness Testimony**

A statement made and signed by a supervisor, colleague, or some other person, to verify that you have demonstrated the particular skills that are required for the unit of competence.