

SIGTA LTD

Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

Next revision due: 15-01-27

<u>Date</u>	<u>Version</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Checked</u>	<u>Approved</u>
15-01-26	2.1	Annual review of this policy review completed. Introduction of version control table to record amendments made. Transition to the Department for Education (DfE) included in lieu of DFE closure 31-05-25.	 Mike Driscoll IQA - SIGTA	 Alison Foxwell CEO -SIGTA

Recognition of Prior Learning & Experience (RPLE) Policy

1. Policy Purpose

This policy outlines the framework for the recognition of prior learning and experience (RPLE) for learners seeking qualifications funded through the Department for Education (DfE) formerly known as the Education and Skills Funding Agency (DFE). The purpose is to ensure compliance with DfE funding rules while providing a clear and fair process for recognising prior formal, non-formal, and informal learning in a manner that supports learner progression.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All learners, both prospective and current, who wish to apply for recognition of prior learning and experience.
- Qualifications and courses funded by the DFE, including apprenticeships, adult education, and other vocational qualifications.
- Providers delivering accredited training funded under DFE contracts, who must ensure all RPLE processes align with DFE's funding guidance.

3. DFE Funding Rules Compliance

The policy adheres to the following key DFE funding rules:

- **Avoiding Double Funding:** Training providers must ensure that RPLE is applied to avoid duplication of funding. Learners must not be funded for learning outcomes already achieved through prior learning or experience.
- **Accurate Initial Assessments:** Training providers must conduct robust initial assessments to identify prior learning and experience to reduce the total duration and cost of the training programme accordingly.
- **Recording Evidence:** Training providers must accurately document RPLE decisions and ensure this evidence is available for audit purposes. This includes learner evidence, assessment records, and a reduction in funding claims if applicable.
- **Adjusting Training Plans:** Based on RPLE outcomes, the individual training plan (ITP) or apprenticeship training plan must be adjusted to reflect the learning that the individual is exempt from and the remaining training required.

4. Eligibility for RPLE

Learners may apply for RPLE if they have relevant prior learning or experience that directly aligns with the learning outcomes of the funded course or qualification. Eligible prior learning includes:

- **Formal learning:** Recognised qualifications and certifications, such as A-Levels, NVQs, diplomas, etc.
- **Non-formal learning:** Learning from professional development courses, work-based training, or industry-specific workshops.
- **Informal learning:** Work experience, volunteering, or personal projects relevant to the course outcomes.

5. Types of Recognition

RPLE can take the following forms:

- **Credit Transfer:** Recognition of formal qualifications allowing direct exemption from certain units/modules.
- **Exemption:** Exemption from specific course components based on non-formal or informal learning.
- **Reduction in Training Duration:** Learners may complete the qualification in a shorter time where prior learning is recognised.

In line with DFE guidance, the total price of the training program must be reduced in proportion to the prior learning recognised.

6. Application Process

The RPLE application process will be as follows:

- **Step 1: Initial Inquiry**
Learners express interest in applying for RPLE during their initial assessment, or at any point before enrolment, by contacting Recruitment/ the Training Officers.
- **Step 2: Submission of Evidence**
Learners must provide documented evidence of prior learning or experience. Suitable evidence includes:
 - Certificates and academic transcripts.
 - Employment records (e.g., job descriptions, work references).
 - Portfolio of work, including practical projects or assignments.
 - Records of non-accredited training (e.g., workplace training).
 - Testimonial or reflective accounts of learning through informal experiences.
- **Step 3: Initial Assessment**
The provider must carry out a detailed initial assessment to determine the relevance and sufficiency of the learner's prior learning against the qualification's learning outcomes. The assessment must be recorded in the learner's ITP.
- **Step 4: Evidence Assessment and Outcome**
Qualified assessors will review the evidence to ensure it meets the course learning outcomes, referencing the following:
 - **Validity:** The evidence is relevant to the learning outcomes.
 - **Authenticity:** The evidence is verifiably the learner's own work.
 - **Currency:** The prior learning is still relevant and up-to-date (usually within the past 5 years).
 - **Sufficiency:** The evidence is comprehensive enough to meet the required standards.

- **Step 5: Notification and Adjustment**

Learners will receive written notification of the RPLE decision, and their ITP will be updated to reflect any exemptions or reductions in training duration. Providers will ensure that the funding claimed from the DFE reflects the reduced learning where applicable.

7. Appeals Process

Learners who wish to challenge an RPLE decision can submit an appeal in writing within 10 working days of receiving the outcome. The appeal will be reviewed by our Business Support Officer, and learners will receive a final decision in writing within 20 working days.

8. DFE Compliance in Evidence Management

To ensure compliance with DFE rules, training providers must maintain thorough documentation:

- All RPLE decisions and related assessments must be recorded and stored in the learner's file.
- Evidence supporting the RPLE decision (certificates, portfolios, etc.) must be retained for audit purposes.
- Adjustments to funding claims must be clearly documented, and training providers must reduce claims proportionally to the reduced learning or shortened course duration.

10. Continuous Improvement and Review

The RPLE policy will be reviewed annually to ensure ongoing compliance with the DFE funding rules and updates from the DFE. Feedback from learners, staff, and external auditors will inform changes to the policy to improve effectiveness and ensure fairness.

11. Responsibilities

- **Learners:** Responsible for providing accurate and complete evidence of prior learning and experience.
- **Assessors:** Responsible for assessing RPLE applications in a timely and fair manner, ensuring compliance with DFE rules.
- **Training Provider:** Responsible for ensuring that all RPLE processes are transparent, that funding claims are accurate, and that decisions align with DFE guidance.

Communication and training for staff

SIGTA is committed to the continuous professional development of its employees.

We believe that investing in staff training is essential for maintaining excellence, fostering innovation, and ensuring a safe, productive workplace. The company will provide relevant learning opportunities to enhance job-specific skills, meet regulatory requirements, and support long-term career growth, ensuring all employees have the tools necessary to succeed in their roles.

Please refer to our SIGTA Training and Development Policy for more information.

Regular discussions during SIGTA Training Officer meetings are held with SIGTA team members including Training Officers. Where necessary, training provided on funding rule changes, requirements.

Communication is provided to employers during visits to discuss apprenticeship requirements and employer forums.

Conclusion

This RPLE policy ensures compliance with DFE funding rules while supporting learners in having their previous learning and experience recognised.

By avoiding double funding and ensuring accurate recording and assessment, the policy promotes learner progression and cost-effective delivery of qualifications.