Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

RPL is an assessment process that enables learners to receive recognition of their achievement from a range of activities they have already undertaken.

Ofqual defines this as 'a method of assessment that considers whether a learner can demonstrate that they meet the assessment requirements for a unit, through knowledge, understanding and skills they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning.'

Recognition of Prior Learning may be that a learner has prior knowledge and expertise needed to meet standards through:

• employment
• in relevant voluntary work or leisure activities
• in education or training e.g. adult education courses or in-company training
• from independent or previous study in a college or university
• from other commitments or activities e.g. care situation or involvement in a family business

Evidence of RPL will need to be:

• authentic
• reliable
• current
• valid
• sufficient

It is the responsibility of the learner to generate the evidence and present it to the assessor for assessment.

Oxford Knight College plays a supportive role in this process. RPL can be applied to learners who are transferring from one learning programme to another. They may have embarked on a qualification and completed work, but they have not gained credits or qualifications.

RPL process cannot allow for the accreditation of any externally assessed units, which learners may already have achieved.

The assessors may come from different vocational areas depending on the nature of the RPL claim, but there must be a consistent approach which follows the centre's RPL policy. Any learner wishing to use RPL must meet with an adviser and an assessor in the first instance. The assessor needs to be experienced and have the relevant specialist subject knowledge.

It is accepted that previous communications may have taken place over the telephone or via email, but the RPL process should not formally commence without a face to face meeting. Where there are a small group of learners who wish to learn more about RPL and how it applies to them the first meeting may involve more than one person.

One member of the assessment team may act as an adviser or mentor to the learner. This role will always be distinct and separate from the assessor.

The starting point for any learner wishing to claim RPL is to reflect on their experience in order to identity relevant achievement. The learners must be asked to think about experience gained in a variety of situations including those listed above in the introduction.

It is suggested that the learner should initially provide a CV, portfolio of practical work or selective autobiographical account. This will help the assessment team gain a broad overview of the learner's experience. In addition, it will help to put the claim into context.

The assessor will examine the portfolio systematically for its completeness. He/she will ensure that the evidence relates to the assessment criteria of the unit(s) being claimed by the learner and that there are no gaps in the evidence. The assessor will be looking for evidence that is authentic, current, relevant and sufficient.

The assessor must check that the evidence presented is relevant, sufficient and authentic. The assess will ensure full record are maintained, where the decision will be sent to the student without delay.