Recognition of Prior Learning
Procedure

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RESPONSIBLE MANAGER:	RTO Governance
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RELATED DOCUMENTS:	
Legislation:	Standards for RTOs 2025
Documents:	PPP132 Assessment Guidelines
	PPP129 Skills Recognition Guideline
	PPP270 Credit Transfer Procedure
	PPP269 Agreed Equivalence Procedure
	Quick Screens Advanced Standing for Teaching Areas
	TL023 Unit Comparison Table and Determination Template
	TL031 Third Party Verification Template
	TL032 Assessor Verification Template
	RPL Pre-enrolment Information Kit (Part 1)
	RPL Application and Portfolio of Evidence Kit (Part 2)
	RPL Assessor Guide (Part 3)
	TL148 RPL Assessor Verification for Current Competency Template

1. Introduction

This procedure provides guidance for staff in relation to the process of assessing and recording the outcome of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

2. Scope

This Procedure is relevant for all applications for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in VET qualifications and/or accredited courses offered by South West TAFE.

3. Roles and Responsibility

Marketing

- Ensure that there is appropriate and clear information on the website to explain the Skills Recognition Process, including fees and charges to prospective students.

- Ensure there is reference to Skills Recognition options on each TAFE course program on the website.

- Ensure that marketing materials developed for any course include information on Skills Recognition

Teaching Education Manager

- The nominated RPL Assessor is the responsibility of the relevant teaching department. A teacher/assessor who has a Professional Profile mapped to assess the nominated units for RPL should be assigned to the RPL Application process and resulting of the RPL

- Ensure that students seeking admission to courses are given the opportunity to apply for Skills Recognition prior to enrolment.

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Teachers

- Prepare RPL Pre-enrolment Information Kit (Part 1) and RPL Application and Portfolio of Evidence Kit (Part 2) for the course.

- Contact students who declare existing skills or experience prior to enrolment.

- Conduct initial interview and self-assessment, prior to enrolment if possible.
- Assist with preparing application documentation for candidates deciding to proceed with Skills Recognition Process.
- Develop and submit delivery plans for individuals seeking skills recognition if required
- Conduct the Skills Recognition Process for RPL according to PPP129 Skills Recognition guidelines and Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure and associated kits.
- Ensure final outcomes, along with supporting documentation are provided to the Awards Office. Include request for Qualification or Statement of Attainment as appropriate.

4. Procedure

The process of assessing and recording an application for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) consists of five stages. A reasonable assessment timeframe for a student to complete the RPL is dependent on the student's ability to gather evidence for the RPL assessment. As far as possible, Skills Recognition should be processed quickly (allow up to 45 days for substantial RPL applications) and finalised as early as possible. The shorter the timeframe helps in not disadvantaging unsuccessful candidates, so that they can then enrol in an alternative training and assessment pathway. The maximum timeframe allowed is a period of 90 days.

Where an applicant is seeking consideration of RPL for a full qualification, the RPL process can be undertaken. However, prior to decision being granted, the outcome must to approved by a panel made up of Executive Manager (Education), Manager RTO Governance and Manager Education Partners or their delegates.

4.1. Preparing for Skills Recognition - RPL

The Teaching Education Manager of the relevant teaching department is responsible for ensuring the development and maintenance of RPL Assessment tools for the period the training product remains on South West TAFEs Scope of Registration.

4.1.1. Guidance and assessment templates for the Candidate

Guidance and templates for the candidate is available in the form of:

South West TAFE
- RPL Pre-enrolment Information Kit (Part 1)
- RPL Application and Portfolio of Evidence Kit (Part 2)
- RPL Application Unit Evidence templates (use to gather broad range of evidence for portfolio i.e. currency, workplace performance, knowledge, foundation skills for every unit)

Additional information for Candidates includes:
- Skills Recognition Frequently Asked Questions (included in RPL Pre-enrolment Information Kit)
- Information in course guide and available on South West TAFE public web site.

Externally developed RPL Kits
- RPL Candidate Kit including Guide, Application and Evidence Collection templates (approved for use by Assessment Panel)

4.1.2. Guidance and assessment templates for the Assessor

Guidance and templates for the Assessor is included in the:

- RPL Pre-enrolment Information Kit (Part 1)

- RPL Application and Portfolio of Evidence Kit (Part 2)

- RPL Application Unit Evidence templates (use to gather broad range of evidence for portfolio i.e. currency, workplace performance, knowledge, foundation skills for every unit)
- RPL Assessor Guide (Part 3)
- Assessor Verification Template (use to gather evidence for candidate that has studied with South West TAFE if they present with relevant satisfactory evidence that can be verified by assessor)
- Third Party Verification Template (use to gather evidence for candidate if they present with relevant satisfactory evidence from workplace that requires verification from employer).

4.1.3. RPL Tools purchased from External Source

To ensure quality assessment processes, where South West TAFE has purchased an RPL Kit from an external source the tool must be reviewed and approved for use by the Assessment Panel. The tools may be used in combination with or instead of the RPL Application Unit Evidence templates upon approval by the Assessment Panel.

4.2. RPL Mapping of units held by Candidate to current units

When a candidate requests RPL in a current unit and presents as evidence a Statement of Attainment with a unit of competency listed that is similar (including superseded units), it is South West TAFE practice where the unit of competency is not equivalent, to undertake unit to unit mapping to support an RPL process. The unit to unit comparison will allow the teacher to identify the gaps in the evidence and the teacher can then provide the candidate with a clear instruction on what evidence they need to submit for the gaps identified. This comparison mapping only needs to be completed for the units that have had verified evidence presented for RPL. The TL023 Unit Comparison Table and Determination template is used for this mapping.

While the Teaching Department will undertake the mapping the TL023 Unit Comparison Table and Determination documents must be endorsed by the relevant Teaching Education Manager, RTO Governance and Education Partners. The documentation will be added to and maintained in a centralised library for future reference and access by RTO Governance.

If the unit of competency name and code is identical then we are obliged under Clause 3.5 of the Standards to provide credit for prior studies irrespective of the issuing RTO. Refer to PPP270 Credit Transfer Procedure.

If you are developing an RPL Kit for a superseded qualification it is recommended to complete comparison mapping for the qualification units of competency listed in the TAS.

4.3. RPL for Foundation Skills Qualifications

South West TAFE does not offer RPL for accredited courses in foundation skills such as General Education and English as Another Language. Candidates for these courses designed specifically for people who want to develop their literacy and numeracy skills for future study and/or employment, undertake LLN assessments that indicate their Language, Literacy and Numeracy levels. The candidates are enrolled into the appropriate course for their ACSF level with support as required.

4.4. Recognition of Prior Learning for South West TAFE Staff

In line with best practice and risk management strategies, it is preferred that an independent assessment of the judgement is sought. The Board of Studies has determined that where a South West TAFE staff member applies for Advanced Standing (RPL) our process will be varied to:

- The staff member will be supported to seek external independent assessment of their RPL application by applying to another RTO. This may include a supported Professional Development Application, financial support and/or preparation time.

- The relevant Teaching Education Manager (TEM) will inform their Head of Division (HOD). The TEM will support the applicant, but where the application is being made by the TEM then the HOD will act as the support.

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- Where engagement with an alternative RTO is not achievable or practical, a request will be made to the Executive Manager Education (or their delegate) for an internal assessment to be made. If approved,

  ♦ An independent panel will be established led by the Executive Manager Education or their delegate and include representation from Education Partners, RTO Governance, and Audit, Risk & Compliance. If required, a representative from the relevant teaching areas will be invited to participate as a subject matter expert.

  ♦ The agreed outcome and subsequent documentation must be authorised by all parties to the decision prior to results being entered on the student data management system. The documentation will be retained on the student's file as evidence.

4.5. Recognition of Prior Learning for International Students

South West TAFE is not a CRICOS registered provider and therefore cannot deliver to students on a Sub-Class 500 Visa. However, there are numerous other Visas that allow students to study and work in Australia, and in line with ASQA regulations they are entitled to be assessed for RPL or Credit Transfer if they hold any relevant qualifications. All visas must be assessed individually through a VEVO (Visa Entitlement Verification Online) Check.

If we receive a request from a student with a Visa, this process must be coordinated with RTO Governance to confirm the validity of the Visa and Education Partners to support the RPL process. The course duration and hours per week of attendance are specific Visa requirements for international students. As recognition of prior learning applications have the potential to affect the attendance requirements, it is vital that this impact is clearly explained to them. Where an international student applies for advanced standing the Teaching Education Manager must notify Education Partners of the application. The Teaching Education Manager is responsible for explaining the potential impact on their Visa to the student and recording this in the student's file prior to the Teaching Area commencing processing the advanced standing application. Any agreed changes in course duration for a student on an approved study Visa resulting from an advanced standing application must be reported.

4.6. Fees and Charges

As part of the Pre-Training Review interview conducted with all students prior to enrolment, any relevant prior skills should be identified. If the applicant is seeking consideration, the RPL process should be commenced immediately. Current information on fees and charges for RPL must be published on South West TAFE website.

Students applying for RPL in a course that is supported by VET Student Loans must be informed how RPL will impact their fees and later repayment obligations.

When applying for RPL, students must pay required fees after their initial interview and completion of RPL Pre-enrolment Information Kit (Part 1) – referred to as Stage 1. If they decide to proceed with the RPL process after completion of Stage 1, the Advanced Standing Application can proceed before any further work is undertaken.

4.6.1. Students eligible for Victorian Government funding

Student who are eligible for Skills First funding through Victorian Government will have fees that mirror what is charged to a student enrolling into the unit in the same course. An RPL assessment fee equal to the tuition fee for the relevant units is applied.

4.6.2. Students ineligible for Victorian Government funding

The following is applicable for ineligible student:
- an RPL assessment fee of exactly half the full fee-for-service tuition fee must be applied for individual students applying for RPL.
- a blanket RPL fee may be charged to an organisation when undertaking RPL of our own staff. This fee must be determined by the relevant Head of Department in consultation with the Executive Manager Education.

4.7. Stages of RPL Process

4.7.1. Stage 1 Candidate enquiry and initial discussion

This involves the candidate contacting South West TAFE and enquiring about RPL. The initial enquiry may be made at the Pre-Training Review stage or made direct to South West TAFE Enquiries and Applications Team.

The candidate must complete a Pre-Training Review prior to enrolling into a course. During the Pre-Training Review, candidates will be given the opportunity to identify any past achievements they have and that they would like to apply for RPL and/or Credit Transfer.

The relevant Teaching Education Manager will assign one or more appropriately qualified teachers to assess the application. The types of evidence required to be presented and the process undertaken to demonstrate competence will vary depending on the unit/qualification being considered.

A nominated teacher is assigned to discuss the RPL process with the candidate and the candidate is provided with an RPL Information Kit (Part 1) or approved alternative which includes a self-assessment for the candidate to complete. After the candidate has completed the self-assessment they then contact the nominated teacher and discuss their responses and whether they are a suitable candidate for RPL. The teacher assigned must hold the relevant training and vocational qualification to assess the RPL.

4.7.2. Stage 2 Enrolment or RPL Application

The candidate can choose at this stage to be:

- Admitted into course/qualification and choose not to RPL any units. In this instance they:
  - will be enrolled in units and complete training and assessment; or
  - will be enrolled in units and complete assessment only

- Admitted into course/qualification and complete RPL Application paperwork for selected units, including nominating suitable referees to be used for Third Party Reports. The candidate will receive the RPL Application Kit (Part 2) and RPL Application Unit Evidence templates (for each unit they wish to RPL) or an approved alternative and the RPL Assessor will instruct the candidate how to complete the application and gather evidence for the submission of the RPL. In this instance there will be combination of Enrolled units and Advanced Standing Application set up for the candidate.

4.7.3. Stage 3 Gather and Submit

The student gathers evidence and prepares a portfolio of evidence for each of the units they have applied for RPL following the instructions in the RPL Application Kit (Part 2). The RPL Advisor will provide additional guidance to the student on how to collate and present evidence for the portfolio if required.

How the portfolio will be submitted for review is decided by the assessor in discussion with the candidate in Stage 2 of the process. Where relevant the units may be assessed in clusters, the qualification is better suited to a holistic approach. Other qualifications may be better suited to submitting unit by unit once all the evidence is gathered for a unit. This will be dependent on each application and units selected.

Tools to use to gather evidence

There are a number of tools the assessor may provide the candidate with to gather evidence for the RPL Application.

- RPL Application and Portfolio of Evidence Kit (Part 2)
- RPL Application Unit Evidence templates (use to gather broad range of evidence for portfolio i.e. currency, workplace performance, knowledge, foundation skills for every unit)

- Assessor Verification Template (use to gather evidence for candidate that has studied with South West TAFE if they present with relevant satisfactory evidence that the assessor can verify)
- Third Party Verification Template (use to gather evidence for candidate if they present with relevant evidence from workplace that requires verification from employer)

The RPL Application and Portfolio of Evidence Kit together with the Unit Evidence Templates are used together to gather a broad range of evidence for portfolio i.e. currency, workplace performance, knowledge, foundation skills for every unit. The division may choose to use an externally developed RPL Kit instead of the South West TAFE kit as long as it has been reviewed by Education Partners and approved before use by the Assessment Panel.

Candidates that have previously studied with SWTAFE

For candidates that are currently a South West TAFE student or a student that hold units of competency/modules issued by South West TAFE, it is important to acknowledge that some of the evidence for RPL may be taken from units already achieved in other courses they have studied with South West TAFE. In this case it may be appropriate to use an Assessor Verification supported by a unit of competency/module (that may be superseded) together with other evidence the candidate has on file at South West TAFE in the form of satisfactory assessment tasks.

Likewise, it may also be appropriate to use a Third-Party Verification supported by a unit of competency/module (that may be superseded) together with evidence from the workplace and verification by the employer that the candidate has performed the tasks.

Teachers are to contact Education Partners for guidance on how to complete the Assessor Verification or Third-Party Verification templates.

4.7.4. Stage 4 Review and Determination of Competency

The assessor reviews all evidence and will determine whether competency has been demonstrated for each unit. At this stage the assessor will:

- contact the candidate's 3rd Party referees to authenticate the evidence provided;
- request additional evidence be provided; and/or;
- gather additional evidence by interview or by working with the candidate to provide a targeted assessment task for gaps identified.

The teacher records this information on the RPL Assessor's Report and completes their assessment of the RPL application.

The candidate is provided with an assessment report with feedback on each unit.

4.7.5. Stage 5 Record the Result

If competent the RPL is granted for the unit(s) and the results are recorded in the in the student's SMS academic file.

At the time of admission into the course the units the candidate is requesting RPL for are left at "Planned". Dates for the advanced standing application are set as follows:

- Start dates for each unit should be set to the date on which the candidate first provides evidence that will be used to contribute to assessment of that unit. If such evidence has already been provided at the time of course enrolment, then the unit start date can be set to the date of course enrolment.
- End dates should be set to the completion date of the assessment. Every effort should be made to complete the Skills Recognition Process within one month of the candidate's enrolment; however, planned end dates should be set conservatively to allow for contingencies in the assessment process.

If the result is not yet competent there are the following options:

1. Submit more evidence – Repeat Stage 3 to 5

2. Accept the NYC result and RPL for unit is not granted. Result is recorded in student's SMS academic file.

   Candidate may choose to enrol in unit and then undertake gap training and assessment. The allocated RPL Assessor can advise and assist with this option.

3. Appeal the NYC result. Candidates dissatisfied with the outcome of their application may lodge an appeal in accordance with the South West TAFE Academic Grievance and Appeal procedure.

5. RPL for Recognition of Current Competency (RCC)

RPL process for Recognition of Current Competency applies if an individual has previously successfully completed the requirements of a unit of competency or module and is now required to confirm that the competence is being maintained. The student must provide evidence that they have the skills and knowledge needed to demonstrate competency in one or more units of competency or module(s) linked to a license or regulatory requirement. It is particularly relevant where there is a requirement for a trade occupational license or ticket in order to practice in the skill area.

This process requires the student to prove to the assessor that they have maintained current skills and knowledge needed to meet the requirements of a particular unit of competency or module. The process may include an assessment of evidence supplied by the student or demonstration of skill, against the outcomes of the relevant unit or module. The evidence provided must clearly show that the candidate has met the standard consistently.

Successful application of an Advanced Standing - RCC results in an exemption being granted and will appear on a subsequent Record of Results as RPL.

5.1. Currency

The evidence provided must be current – i.e. working within the industry for the last three (3) years or more; or as stipulated by in the regulatory license.

Where currency of skills is subject to dispute, or the assessment is based on non-recent experiences or credentials, the Teaching Education Manager shall review the assessment and make a recommendation. The student would be advised of outcome and if dissatisfied with the outcome of their application may lodge an appeal in accordance with the South West TAFE Academic Grievance and Appeal procedure.

5.2. Authentication of Documents

Authenticity of documentation must be verified before processing a request for RCC. It is the teaching department's responsibility to authenticate the Statement of Attainment being presented by the student by contacting the issuing RTO and seeking authentication in writing. A copy of this authentication must be attached to the application for Advanced Standing – RCC. An Awards team member must check all documentation provided and grant or decline RCC. Refer to BP014 Authenticating Qualification Documents business process for more information.

5.3. Process for RPL for Recognition of Current Competency

The process to be used for RPL for Recognition of Current Competency is as follows:

Action	Responsibility	Guidance
Advanced Standing RCC Application created	Teacher Teaching Education Manager	• The Advanced Standing application is completed by the assessor with proposed dates for commencement and completion of the relevant units(s). This form is uploaded into the Advanced Standing screen in SMS and an approval email is sent via the TEM to the Awards Officer.

		• As Advanced Standing is an assessment process, any consideration of applications for Advanced Standing is the responsibility of a suitability qualified staff member from the relevant Teaching division.
Application Approval	Teaching Education Manager	• Contact RTO Governance Manager for review and approval to process the Advanced Standing – RCC application
Gather Evidence	Student	• Student gathers "statement of attainment" for previous unit of competency or module and evidence to support currency of knowledge and skills relating to the RCC sought. It may be necessary for the student to "demonstrate" their skill. • Students must be advised to provide original copies of supporting documents. • Evidence of currency is based on recent industry experience where the relevant skills and knowledge have been applied
Verification of Documents	Teacher Teaching Education Manager Awards Office	• It is the teaching department's responsibility to authenticate the Statement of Attainment being presented by the student by contacting the issuing RTO and seeking authentication in writing. A copy of this authentication must be attached to the application for Advanced Standing – RCC. Refer to the BP014 Business Process – Authenticating a Statement of Attainment for guidance. • A copy of this authentication is to be attached to the Advanced Standing – RCC Application in SMS • The TL148 RPL Assessor Verification for Current Competency form together with the evidence provides verification of supporting evidence that the candidate has performed to the standard required by the units of competency on a consistent basis. This form is used to document the necessary evidence to support a judgement about the candidate's competency. • Once the supporting evidence is uploaded into the Advanced Standing screen in SMS and an approval email is sent via the Teaching Education Manager to the Awards Officer.
Determination of Currency	Teacher Teaching Education Manager RTO Governance Manager.	• Where currency of skills is subject to dispute, or the assessment is based on non-recent experiences or credentials, the Teaching Education Manager shall review the assessment and make a recommendation to the RTO Governance Manager.

Assessment	Teacher	• Skills Recognition Assessor (teacher) reviews and assesses the documentation and evidence to determine current competence
Record Result	Awards Office Teaching Area	• On completion of the documentation check by the Awards Officer the Teaching Area is notified and Advanced Standing – RPL result is recorded in SMS to reflect the unit outcomes. • The SSP Status for units that have been processed as "Granted" will change from "Planned" to "Exempt".

6. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

SWTAFE is committed to making diversity, equity and inclusion part of everything we do, including in the implementation of this policy/procedure/guideline. For more information, please visit the 'Our Values' page on our website [external] or the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Homepage on ECHO [internal]. Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)

7. Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

South West TAFE is committed to the protection of all children from all forms of child abuse and demonstrates this commitment through the implementation of a Child Safe Program designed to keep children safe within our organisation. For Child Safe key documents, resources, contact officer details please go to: Child Safe Commitment

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