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# Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Dr Russell Docking

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## Topics for this workshop

- What is RPL...and what it is not...
- What is the use of RPL ...and how is it misused?
- What standards does RPL have to meet?
- How can we make RPL work?
- RPL pre-assessment – are you ready?
- RPL assessment – are you competent?
- RPL issues to consider
- Policies and procedures for RPL



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## What are the responsibilities of an RTO?

- Awareness of the AQF National Principles and Operational Guidelines for RPL.
- Compliance with the requirements of the Standards for RTOs.
- Conformity to the requirements of the training package or accredited course.
- Consistency with the requirements of competency-based assessment.

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**What is RPL?**

*RPL has also been known as:*

- The Recognition of Current Competency (RCC)
- A form of Skills Recognition
- A kind of credit
- An assessment only pathway



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**RPL is ...**

**“RPL means an assessment process that assesses the competency(s) of an individual that may have been acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning to determine the extent to which that individual meets the requirements specified in the training package or VET accredited course.”**



*Standards for RTOs 2015 Glossary p.11*

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**What is not RPL?**

**RPL is NOT...**

- Recognition of Current Competency (RCC)
- Verification of Competency (VOC)
- Recognition of prior assessment
- Recognition of prior performance
- A short-cut assessment process
- The substitution of tuition with intuition
- Credit
- Equivalence
- National or Mutual Recognition



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What do you think are the benefits of RPL?

-  **For individuals?**
-  **For the community?**
-  **For employers?**
-  **For RTOs?**

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Why is RPL confused and misused?

- Confusion about what RPL really is.
- Differences between RPL in Higher Education and VET Sectors.
- RTO reluctance to provide RPL.
- Bad habits and wrong turns in RPL practices.
- Inadequate evidence demands.
- Excessive evidence demands.
- Excessive RTO costs and administrative complexity.
- Poor take-up by candidates.



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The framework for RPL

- AQF National Principles and Operational Guidelines for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) 2007
- Standards for RTOs
- Training packages and accredited courses
- Competency-based Assessment

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## AQF National Principles and Operational Guidelines



1. Offered by all RTOs: clear, accessible and transparent procedures (2.13)
2. Evidence-based: rules of evidence and principles of assessment (2.9 & 2.10)
3. Recognise all learning relevant to current competencies (2.5)
4. Be available to all students (2.16)
5. Be decided in a timely way (2.8)

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## AQF National Principles and Operational Guidelines



6. Be of the same standard as training-based assessment (2.10 & 2.11)
7. Provide for entry, units or whole qualification (2.5)
8. Be subject to VET quality requirements (2.10)
9. Be widely promoted and accessible (2.14)
10. Be continually reviewed to reflect current standards and industry needs (2.15)

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## Requirements of the Standards for RTOs 2015

- 1.8a Assessment (including RPL) meets the requirements of the relevant Training Package or accredited course.
- 1.8b Assessment (including RPL) is conducted in accordance with the principles of assessment and the rules of evidence.
- 1.12 RPL must be offered to all individual learners

Other relevant standards are:  
1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.9, 1.10, 1.11, 1.13, 1.14, 1.15, 1.16, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 4.1, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 6.1, 6.2, 8.5 & 8.6.

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### Requirements of Training Packages and accredited courses

RPL requirements are to be found in ...

**Units of competency**  
(particularly AQF level, elements and performance criteria, Foundation Skills and pre-requisites).

**The Assessment Requirements**  
(particularly relating to Performance Evidence, Knowledge Evidence, assessment conditions, assessor requirements, legislative and OH&S requirements).

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### Requirements of competency-based assessment

**The making of judgements**

**on the basis of**

**evidence gathered**

**on the basis of**

**national competency standards.**



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### Break



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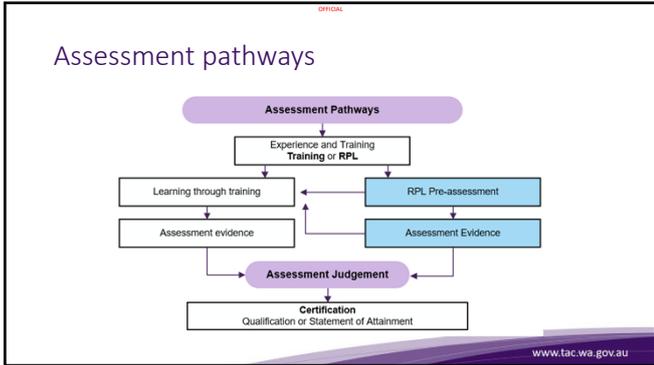
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### The RPL pre-assessment

Not a competency-based assessment leading to a judgement of competency.

A low-risk, low cost review to determine which pathway to follow:

- to **training**; or
- directly to **assessment**.

Based upon evidence provided by the candidate and an interview.

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### RPL competency assessment

If we determine that the assessment pathway is appropriate, then we move on to assessment.

We should re-visit the evidence provided by the candidate to determine what can be accepted as evidence, and to determine if there are any gaps that will require the gathering of new evidence.

At this point we need to remind ourselves of the qualities of evidence that we can accept.

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### RPL competency assessment

**Must stand upon the four pillars of quality:**

<p><b>Professional Assessors</b> Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE)</p> <p><b>National Certification</b> Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)</p>	<p><b>Industry Standards</b> Training Packages and Accredited Courses</p> <p><b>Registered Training Organisations</b> Standards for RTOs</p>
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### Gathering good evidence of competency

<b>Validity (relevance)</b>	<b>Sufficiency</b>
<b>Authenticity</b>	<b>Currency</b>

(The Rules of Evidence in Clause 1.8b)

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### Gathering good evidence of competency

What about a competency conversation?

What about higher level courses completed at university?

What about a portfolio of work experience evidence provided by the applicant?

What about a reference provided by an employer?

What about hobbies or leisure activities?



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**Activity**  
**Typical RPL Evidence and the Rules of Evidence**

Evidence	Validity?	Sufficiency?	Authenticity?	Currency?	Admissible?
	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No/Unsure
A competency conversation					
Higher level university courses					
Portfolio of work experience					
Employer reference					
Hobbies or leisure activities					

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### Using evidence provided by the candidate

Prepare a list of unit requirements and a list of evidence provided by the candidate.

Map the evidence provided by the candidate onto the unit requirements.

Determine for each item of evidence meets the rules of evidence.

Determine what (if any) additional assessment needs to be conducted.

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**RECORD OF RPL EVIDENCE AND ASSESSMENT JUDGEMENT**

Name of learner: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact number: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit applied for: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of application: \_\_\_\_\_

RPL assessor: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact number: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit requirement	Learner evidence	RTO evidence	Rules of evidence					
			V	A	C	S	*/*	
<i>List all requirements</i>	<i>Location in source</i>	<i>Assessment tool</i>						
1 Conduct pre-operational checks	A: pages 3-4 C: para 2	Practical demonstration	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2 Utilise equipment	B	Not required	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
KEY Safety rules		Knowledge test item 3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pre-requirements completed?								N/A

Assessment judgment: C / NYC RTO assessor signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Key: V: Validity, A: Authenticity, C: Currency, S: Sufficiency, \*/\*: demonstrated/not demonstrated ? : unclear/more evidence required  
Unit requirements to include all elements of competency, any foundation skills (FS), all performance evidence (PE) and all items of knowledge evidence (KE)  
Prerequisites required (list code and title): Nil

Evidence sources provided by learner:  
A. Completed start up log  
B. Video of equipment use  
C. Employer reference  
D. \_\_\_\_\_

Assessment tools administered by RTO:  
 Practical demonstration  
 Workplace observation  
 Knowledge assessment

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### The components of competency

- Application of knowledge**  
(Knowledge Evidence)
  
- Application of skills**  
(Elements, Foundation Skills and Performance Evidence)
  
- Workplace standard, consistency and transfer**  
(Definition of competency in the Standards for RTOs 2015 Glossary)

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### RPL assessment options

- Knowledge:**  
Written or oral short answer questions  
(May be administered as a part of the pre-assessment)
  
- Skills:**  
Workplace simulation  
Workplace observation

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### Making good judgements of competency

<b>Fairness</b>	<b>Flexibility</b>
<b>Validity</b> <small>(mandatory unit requirements)</small>	<b>Reliability</b>

(The Principles of Assessment in Clause 1.8b)

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## Making judgements

1. Determine if there is sufficient credible evidence for each mandatory unit requirement.
2. Determine if each mandatory unit requirement has been demonstrated.
3. Sign-off by person(s) with assessor qualifications and vocational expertise.



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RECORD OF RPL EVIDENCE AND ASSESSMENT JUDGEMENT						
Name of learner:		Contact number:				
Unit applied for:						
Date of application:						
RPL assessor:		Contact number:				
Unit requirement	Learner evidence	RTO evidence	Rules of evidence			
	List of requirements	Location in source	Assessment tool	V	A	S
1 Conduct pre-operational checks	A: pages 3-4 C: para 2	Practical demonstration	✓	✓	✓	✓
2 Utilise equipment	B	Not required	✓	✓	✓	✓
KE1 Safety rules		Knowledge test item 3	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pre-requisite(s) completed?						N/A
Assessment judgement: C / NYC		RTO assessor signature:			Date:	
Key: V: Validity, A: Authenticity, C: Currency, S: Sufficiency, -/K: demonstrated/not demonstrated ? : unclear/more evidence required. Unit requirements to include all elements of competency, any foundation skills (FS), all performance evidence (PE) and all items of knowledge evidence (KE). Prerequisites required (top code and title) : (U)						
Evidence sources provided by learner: A: Completed start-up log B: Video of equipment use C: Employer reference D:						
Assessment tools administered by RTO: SE: Practical demonstration O: Workplace observation KA: Knowledge assessment						

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## Issues to consider

- Clustering units of competency
- Contextualisation
- Reasonable adjustment
- On-line and distance assessment
- Support for applicants



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### Meeting RPL candidate needs

- Information about RPL
- RPL application
- Support during RPL
- RPL pre-assessment
- RPL assessment
- Feedback to candidate
- Certification
- Appeals



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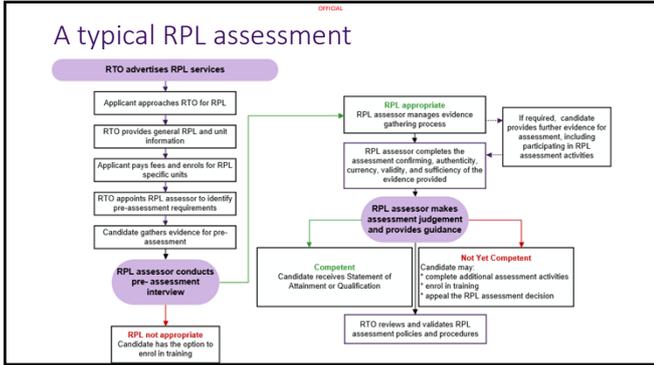
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### Policies and procedures for RPL

- Assessment processes
- Client support
- Record-keeping
- Feedback and guidance
- Appeals
- Quality assurance
- Certification
- Fees
- Equity and access
- Client information
- Advertising and marketing
- Application procedures



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References and Resources

- The Standards for RTOs
- The TAC Users' Guide for the Standards
- TAC Assessment Fact Sheet
- TAC Assessment Validation Fact Sheet
- TAC RTO Complaints and Appeals Fact Sheet
- TAC Industry Engagement Fact Sheet
- TAC Vocational Competence and Industry Currency Fact Sheet
- TAC Assuring the Quality of RTO Processes, Practices and Products Fact Sheet
- TAC Identifying and Meeting Learner Needs Fact Sheet
- TAC Third Party Arrangements Fact Sheet
- TAC RPL Fact Sheet

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Questions?



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