



IO3 - Step-by-step Guide to the Accreditation of Prior Learning

Accreditation of Prior Learning in Ireland

Completed by Meath Partnership

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COUNTRY

Please specify your country:

Ireland

NATIONAL SYSTEM FOR ACCREDITATION/CERTIFICATION OF PRIOR LEARNING

Please provide an overview of the National System

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a relatively new concept in Ireland. Not all training and education providers are familiar with or apply RPL procedures in their institutions. If learners are interested in returning to education, and completing a RPL process, they are encouraged to contact the education provider or centre directly and enquire if they offer RP for learners.

RPL in Ireland is managed in Ireland by 'Quality and Qualifications Ireland' (QQI). QQI are the national accreditation body for all education qualifications in Ireland, from EQF level 1 to 8. While QQI have developed guidelines for the implementation of RPL, how RPL processes are adapted and implemented is left to the discretion of the education provider. As such, the procedures for assessment and awarding RPL can vary greatly between education providers in Ireland.

These differences are not divided by regions or areas, but rather they depend on the type of learning being recognised under RPL and the type of education programme that the learner is applying for. These factors will influence the type of RPL assessment that will be developed by the education provider in question; as education providers will often design an RPL process on a case-by-case basis.

For the purpose of completing this step-by-step guide, in the next sections we will provide some examples of how RPL may be assessed in Ireland.

TARGET GROUPS

Please specify the target groups for which the described procedures are in force.

- **Group 1: All learners – but specifically for students with a collection of work to show what they have learned or for older learners with work experience but without formal qualifications**

DESCRIPTION OF STEP-BY-STEP PROCEDURE/S

STEP-BY-STEP PROCEDURE 1 for accreditation of prior learning

TARGET GROUP/S

Please specify for which of the target groups identified this concrete procedure is in force .

- Group 1: All learners

TYPE/S OF DOCUMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION

Which type/s of document/s for certifying the acquired knowledge, skills and competences will be issued after successful completion of the procedure.

- Education providers may have their own specific RPL application form for learners to complete to begin the RPL process – however this is not a requirement according to national guidelines.
- Rather than requesting formal documentation, depending on the individual case, education providers may require applicants to complete a short interview, to perform a simulation task to demonstrate their learning, to prepare a portfolio of work or to provide other evidence of learning completed which may include:
 - samples, photographs or videos of your work
 - a practical 'on the job' assessment by a previous supervisor
 - answers to questions in an interview
 - a simulation of a work activity
 - letters from your employers
 - performance management reports
 - copies of documents you have completed at work
 - certificates
 - any other evidence that is valid, sufficient, authentic and current

LIST OF THE CERTIFICATION PROCEDURE STEPS

Please provide the list of all steps included in the procedure.

- Step 1.** Contacting the Institution.
- Step 2.** Description of Previous Experience/Learning.
- Step 3.** Meeting with and RPL Advisor
- Step 4.** Gathering and Submitting Evidence for Assessment
- Step 5.** Assessment and Outcome

STEP DESCRIPTION

STEP 1 – Contacting the Institution

<p>Description</p> <p>The first step is for learners to make contact with the education provider who will be delivering the education programme and to enquire about their procedure for RPL. Once initial contact is made, the education provider will refer the learner to the department or person in their organisation who arranges and manages their RPL structures. Alternatively, a good place to start is to research on the website of the individual education provider to see if they have published their RPL procedure on their website.</p>
<p>Pre-requisites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Preliminary actions</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Learners should search online or through brochures and other promotional materials for contact details of the education provider who are offering the training programme they are interested in. ○ Learners then make contact with the education provider to enquire about their RPL procedure. • <i>Documents/ forms</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For a list of education providers in Ireland, learners should visit the Qualifax online repository of courses which is available at: http://www.qualifax.ie/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=211&Itemid=49
<p>Supporting materials and tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
<p>Referent links</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following websites are useful for learners seeking RPL: https://www.ncge.ie/ncge/aegi-contact-details http://www.qualifax.ie
<p>Next Step</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A

STEP 2 – Description of Previous Experience/Learning

<p>Description</p> <p>When initial contact is made, the learner is usually instructed to provide an appropriate outline of their previous experience or any other relevant information in support of their application. An RPL Application Form may be used by the applicant to provide this information but these forms are not used by every education provider so is not compulsory. Depending on the education provider, this outline information could be supplied over the phone, by email, in writing or in person.</p>

<p>Pre-requisites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Preliminary actions:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The learner should prepare a short overview of their previous experience or learning in writing, as this will support them in completing an RPL application/communicating their previous experience to the education provider directly by phone, email or letter. • <i>Documents/ forms:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If an RPL Application is required, this can be requested from the education provider directly.
<p>Supporting materials and tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For a copy of an RPL Application form, the learner should request this from the education provider they are applying to.
<p>Referent links</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following websites are useful for learners seeking RPL: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> https://www.ncge.ie/ncge/aegi-contact-details http://www.qualifax.ie
<p>Next Step</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A

STEP 3 – Meeting with and RPL Advisor

<p>Description</p> <p>The next step is for the learner to arrange a meeting and consultation with an RPL advisor from the education provider they are applying to. At this stage, learners will receive advice and support to guide them in preparing the evidence required by the individual education provider.</p> <p>The individual institution can request a range of different types of evidence to support the learner’s RPL application, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • samples, photographs or videos of your work • a practical 'on the job' assessment by a previous supervisor • answers to questions in an interview • a simulation of a work activity • letters from your employers • performance management reports • copies of documents you have completed at work • certificates • any other evidence that is valid, sufficient, authentic and current
<p>Pre-requisites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Preliminary actions:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Learners should be prepared to discuss their experience/prior learning with the RPL

<p>advisor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Documents/ forms:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ learners will be given a list of required evidence to support their application to have their prior learning recognised.
<p>Supporting materials and tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
<p>Referent links</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following websites are useful for learners seeking RPL: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.ncge.ie/ncge/aegi-contact-details • http://www.qualifax.ie
<p>Next Step</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A

STEP 4 - Gathering and Submitting Evidence for Assessment

<p>Description</p> <p>Once the learner has received the list of evidence required, they are given a certain timeframe to prepare the evidence and to submit this to the education provider directly. The education provider then implements their verification process for the recognition of prior learning by first checking that all evidence is submitted in the required format, before progressing the application to the next step.</p>
<p>Pre-requisites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Preliminary actions:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Learners are given some time to prepare any necessary evidence to support their application for RPL. • <i>Documents/ forms:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Learners will be instructed as to the format in which they should submit their evidence for review.
<p>Supporting materials and tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
<p>Referent links</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following websites are useful for learners seeking RPL: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.ncge.ie/ncge/aegi-contact-details • http://www.qualifax.ie
<p>Next Step</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A

STEP 5 – Assessment and Outcome

Description
Once the evidence has been verified, the learning evidence, plus the completed RPL Application form if required, will be presented to the education centre or department for assessment by the relevant academic unit. The outcome of the assessment process will be communicated to the applicant “within a reasonable period of time”, as per the RPL guidelines.
Pre-requisites
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Preliminary actions:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Learners will prepare the required evidence to support their RPL application, in the required format. • <i>Documents/ forms:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Once the evidence has been assessed, and a decision has been made, the learner will receive notification of the outcome by email or post.
Supporting materials and tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Referent links
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following websites are useful for learners seeking RPL: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.ncge.ie/ncge/aegi-contact-details • http://www.qualifax.ie
Next Step
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A



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