

22 August 2018

Accounting for recognition of prior learning

During the last period of enterprise bargaining at both TAFE Queensland and at Central Queensland University, discussion to clarify the status of RPL achieved a common set of conditions.

Until these recent agreements, the programming of RPL was a team by team matter and there was no uniformity to the outcomes. Some teams had time taken to undertake RPL recognised as contact time while other teams programs relegated the activity to non-contact time (NCT). For some who had the time allocated as NCT there was acknowledgement of the work required to be undertaken with reduced contact time negotiated, while other teachers were told to make it fit into the existing NCT.

The following clauses from the CQU and TQ agreements were intended to provide equal conditions across the public providers and to ensure that the workload associated with RPL was clearly recognised.

The wording is almost identical and the intention is the same. RPL is to be regarded as neither contact nor non-contact time. It is a complex activity which may involve a range of activities, some of which may well involve contact with a student. It is therefore to be accounted for as a third category of time – RPL. This is allocated and accounted for in no less than 15 minute blocks and the time will be agreed in advance.

Any questions regarding the programming of RPL should be directed to tafe@qtu.asn.au

From: TAFE Queensland Educators Certified Agreement 2016

3. Definitions and interpretation

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) means an assessment process of 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 accredited course.

Clause 26. Recognition of prior learning

- (a) Recognition of prior learning, as defined at clause 3, requires the educator to complete a number of tasks which may include:
- (i) reviewing evidence submitted
 - (ii) conducting a professional conversation with the candidate to evaluate their knowledge and skills
 - (iii) observing the candidate perform competency related tasks and
 - (iv) making an assessment of overall competency and credit transfers.
- (b) The time allocated for educators to complete recognition of prior learning will:
- (i) be subject to the number, range, complexity and Australian Qualifications Framework level of units being assessed

From: Central Queensland University Enterprise Agreement 2017

4. Definitions

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) means an assessment process of the competency/s an individual possesses 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 accredited course.

Formal learning means learning that takes place through structured program of instruction and is linked to an Australian Qualifications Framework qualification or of Attainment.

Non-formal learning means learning that takes place through structured program of instruction, but does not lead to an Australian Qualifications Framework qualification or Statement of Attainment (for example, in-house professional development program).

Informal learning means learning that results through experience of work-related, social, family or leisure activities (for example the acquisition of interpersonal skills through years of work experience in a relevant role).

RPL is not counted as contact time.

16.9 Recognition of prior learning

16.9.1 Recognition of prior learning requires the educator to complete a number of tasks which may include:

<p>(ii) be allocated in no less than 15 minute blocks</p> <p>(iii) be agreed in advance, where possible and</p> <p>(iv) not exceed the maximum programmed hours per week without agreement.</p> <p>(c) The yearly plan and the delivery timetable will be amended to record the time the educator is allocated to complete recognition of prior learning.</p> <p>(d) The time allocated will be recorded in the yearly plan and delivery timetable as recognition of prior learning.</p> <p>(e) Formal learning means learning that takes place through a structured program of instruction and is linked to an Australian Qualifications Framework qualification or Statement of Attainment.</p> <p>(f) Non-formal learning means learning that takes place through structured program of instruction, but does not lead to an Australian Qualifications Framework qualification or Statement of Attainment (for example, in-house professional development program).</p> <p>(g) Informal learning means learning that results through experience of work-related, social, family or leisure activities (for example the acquisition of interpersonal skills through years of work experience in a relevant role).</p>	<p>(i) reviewing evidence submitted</p> <p>(ii) conducting a professional conversation with the candidate to evaluate their knowledge and skills</p> <p>(iii) observing the candidate perform competency related tasks and</p> <p>(iv) making an assessment of overall competency and credit transfers.</p> <p>16.9.2 The time allocated for educators to complete recognition of prior learning will:</p> <p>(i) be subject to the number, range, complexity and Australian Qualifications Framework level of units being assessed</p> <p>(ii) be allocated in no less than 15 minute blocks</p> <p>(iii) be agreed in advance, where possible and</p> <p>(iv) not exceed the maximum programmed hours per week without agreement.</p> <p>16.9.3 The yearly plan and the delivery timetable will be amended to record the time the educator is allocated to complete recognition of prior learning.</p> <p>16.9.4 The time allocated will be recorded in the yearly plan and delivery timetable as recognition of prior learning.</p> <p>16.9.5 RPL is not counted as contact time.</p>
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Debate on the national place of vocational education and the responsibility for provision.

In the lead-up to the next federal election, the national debate regarding the structure and funding of post-compulsory education continues to rage. A recent report from KPMG into the post-secondary education sector and a National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) report into “the fourth industrial revolution” call for changes to the current structures. Key issues continue to be:

- what constitutes fair funding for vocational education and how should it be distributed
- the structural division of and responsibility for post-compulsory education
- the importance of vocational education to individuals and the economy generally
- the fitness for purpose of the competency-based training system in the face of “industry 4.0”
- the take-up of vocational education in an era of “academic inflation”.

The KPMG report particularly drew the ire of Universities Australia, with its Chief Executive declaring the recommendations to be “bizarre”. In prosecuting the policy problems of voc ed, the Australian Education Union federally has been successful in convincing Labor to institute a national inquiry into the vocational education sector (albeit within the broader category of post-compulsory education). There is unfortunately no bipartisan agreement on the issues plaguing tertiary education, any more than there is in the compulsory education area. The federal government is currently looking to tinker with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), apparently to simplify a complex system and to allow individuals to be recognised for experience gained in the workplace. Within the TAFE sector, this is called recognition of prior learning (RPL) and is accounted for as a mandatory option for students enrolling in vocational courses.

Playing around the edges will not solve the inherent and intransigent policy problems of the vocational education sector, which our public providers and our TAFE members struggle with on a daily basis.

Further analysis will be contained in the next edition of the Queensland Teachers’ Journal.

State government closes RTOs

The Palaszczuk government has released a statement outlining the statistics regarding the closure of underperforming and incompetent training providers in Queensland. Since 2015, 174 training providers have been closed, either because they were not providing quality training or were not up to the task. The performance of training providers that are pre-qualified suppliers is regularly monitored, and those that fail to meet the strict requirements of the Queensland VET Quality Framework face losing their authority to deliver state government-subsidised training.

The government has stated that since it established the office of the Queensland Training Ombudsman in 2015, it has secured more than \$500,000 for students in fee refunds and helped thousands of complainants resolve their issues with training providers.

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