

## Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

This policy is aimed at recognised Training Providers delivering iPET Network approved qualifications and units, and Candidates enrolled on that provision.

It sets out definitions relating to which Recognition of Prior Learning and Achievement (RPL), the basis on which RPL can be given, the process involved, and the way in which iPET Network will respond to requests. It is also for use by iPET Network staff to ensure they deal with all requests for consideration of RPL and prior achievement in a consistent manner.

It is important that Training Provider staff involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of our qualifications and candidates are aware of the contents of this policy.

This policy applies to all iPET Network provision, including provision that is regulated and non-regulated provision.

iPET Network seeks to enable Candidates to avoid duplication of learning and assessment for the purposes of awarding credit. There are four ways that this can be managed:

- Exemption
- Equivalency
- Recognition of prior learning and
- Credit transfer

Exemption (also known as 'Recognition of Prior Certificated learning) - is the facility for a Candidate to claim exemption from some of the achievement requirements of an iPET Network qualification using certificated evidence, for example certificated NQF achievement. This must be of an equivalent or higher value to an iPET Network unit but may not share the exact assessment criteria or learning aims.

Exemptions are not recognised by the award of credit and appear on certificates without a credit value. Equivalent Unit/s – are similar units that are in a different qualification or are an updated unit in the same qualification which iPET Network deem of equivalent or higher value so can be considered towards a qualification in place of a designated mandatory or optional unit.

Where possible, iPET Network will publish a list of equivalent units in the unit specification. Equivalencies may not be recognised by the award of credit and appear on certificates without a credit value. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the recognition of non-certificated learning towards a unit or qualification.

The RPL process must be agreed with the Training Provider and must be claimed as part of a course. The Training Provider is responsible for assessment and claiming credit. There is no difference between achievement of the required standards by RPL and achievement through a formal programme of study; therefore, RPL appears on certificates as credit-bearing. There are three ways of recognising prior learning which may be open to the learner:

1. Submit a portfolio of evidence based on previous relevant knowledge, skills and competences which must be assessed against the assessment criteria of the units, or units, for which RPL is being sought to ensure that all learning outcomes have been achieved.
2. Undertake the same assessments as Candidates following a formal course of learning and assessment that lead to award of the unit or qualification. The assessments may be undertaken without attending teaching sessions.
3. Assessment through a summative assessment against a unit or qualification.

It is important to note that RPL is an alternative route to achievement and not an easy option or shortcut. Evidence must be produced for RPL which is subject to the same assessment and quality assurance requirements as applied to evidence produced as part of a course.

Credit Transfer (Access to HE Diplomas only) - The process by which credits used towards one Access to HE Diploma may be considered towards the award of a different Diploma. Credit transfer allows credits to be transferred between Diplomas, Providers and/or AVAs for access to Higher Education Diplomas, it is allowable for candidates to transfer units achieved towards another Diploma as a part of the credit transfer process. In such cases, transferred credits will not show on a learner's transcript, as the Candidate should already have a certificate for the transferred credit. Credit may be transferred between iPET Network Diplomas or may be transferred from another AVA. It is not a requirement that credits transferred towards iPET Network Diplomas exactly map against iPET Network units. However, any such requests should be within the spirit of the rules of combination – i.e. the programme of study should be similar in content to the iPET Network Diploma to which the credits are being transferred. If Training Providers are in any doubt over credit transfer, they should seek clarification from iPET Network.

The Responsible Officer will have the final decision on any request for credit transfer.

Credit Transfer - Non-Access to HE Provision (e.g. RQF) qualifications is the process whereby achievement of credits in one qualification can be awarded against the exact same unit in a different qualification. The unit will have the same learning outcomes, code and assessment criteria.

Currency - Prior learning and achievement must be current to be used by the Candidate. Unless stipulated by an external licensing body or other authority, for iPET Network purposes, RPL is current if outcomes have been achieved within 3 years of starting a qualification.

Restrictions on recognition for exemption and equivalency:

- A maximum of 70% of a qualification can normally be achieved through exemption or equivalency. At least 30% should be gained through new learning at the same level of the qualification. Where a qualification consists of only one unit, a maximum of 50% applies.
- 67% of credit within a qualification will normally be achieved at the level of the qualification. RPL can be used to claim up to 50% of a qualification unless specified in the qualification guide.

iPET Network reserves the right to exclude the use of RPL in cases such as:

- Licence to practice
- Health and safety requirements
- Regulated professions
- Work placements
- Where the qualification guide states that RPL is not allowable.

Additionally, RPL cannot be used where units and qualifications are subject to external assessment. Procedure for RPL Training Providers should ensure Candidates are aware of the process for claiming credit through RPL. Candidates are responsible for providing relevant evidence to submit to the Training Provider for assessment. Training Providers should assess all evidence to ensure assessment is valid and reliable. Training Providers need to inform iPET Network which Candidates will have some component of achievement as RPL. The assessment process for RPL must be subject to the same quality-assurance processes of awarding organisations as any other part of the assessment process.

Process for exemptions, equivalencies and credit transfer Exemptions and equivalencies are included in the rules of combination for a qualification, and Training Providers must register candidates against the appropriate exemption and/or equivalency unit/units. Claims for RPL is through the use of the Recognition of Prior Learning Claim Form.

Training Providers are required to keep records of valid claims through exemptions and equivalencies for three years. Policy Responsibility and Review iPET Network will review the policy and procedure biennially and revise it as and when necessary, in response to customer and stakeholder feedback, changes in practice, requirements of the qualification Regulator(s) or external agencies or changes in legislation.

### Document Control

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