RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING AND EXPERIENCE (RPL) POLICY

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Policy Statement

North Lancs Training Group is committed to an inclusive approach to the assessment of learning including the recognition of prior learning and experience and/or achievement. This policy has been compiled by NLTG employees with a vast knowledge and competence in teaching pedagogy gained in work-based learning.

Key Objective

Key objective of initial assessment is to ensure the applicant is enrolled onto an appropriate Apprenticeship for their job role i.e. appropriate level of Apprenticeship and appropriate Standard. It is therefore an imperative requirement that the NLTG tutor discusses and agrees the most appropriate Standard in conjunction with both employer and applicant. We also need to ensure that no funds are used to pay for training of skills, knowledge and behaviours already attained by the apprentice.

Accreditation of Prior Experience:

is defined as previous non-certificated achievements. This form of RPL is relevant when an individual's learning has not been formally recognised and evidence of this learning can be drawn from: domestic/family life, work experience, work activities and/or community or voluntary activities.

Accreditation of Prior achievement:

is defined as previous certificated achievements via prior education, training or associated qualifications in a related subject sector area, including any previous apprenticeships undertaken. The evidence presented must meet the principles of VARCS, in that it must be Valid, Authentic, Reliable, Current and Sufficient.

Assessment of RPL evidence

North Lancs Training Group will ensure that the process of assessment for RPL is subject to the same quality assurance and monitoring standards as any other form of assessment related to compliance and quality of education. NLTG will use the information gathered through our initial assessment processes to identify and analyse specific skills gaps in applicants' knowledge, skills and behaviours specific to the relevant Apprenticeship Standard via the skills radar.

RPL process

- RPL will be included in all parts of the learner journey so that learners fully understand the process of RPL assessment and related opportunities i.e. initial assessment (including reviewing the applicants Personal Learning Records via Gov.uk Learning Records service, previous training, qualifications and work experience detailed on our application documentation, and where applicable our MI systems i.e. where applicant has previously undertaken training via NLTG), induction, ILPs, reviews, ongoing feedback, (this includes documentation which allows learners to apply for RPL at the beginning of their Qualification/Standard).
- Programmes of Learning and planning highlight opportunities for RPL
- Review and assessment documentation recording RPL
- Employers will be included in planning for, and collection of RPL evidence
- IQA processes include RPL, including sampling and validation
- RPL is included in Self-Assessment processes
- Stakeholder feedback informs improvement of RPL processes.

Funding

In line with ESFA/DfE Apprenticeship funding rules wherever RPL is identified at initial assessment:

i) NLTG will use Apprenticeship government – employer co-invested funding to address any skills gaps (assuming the applicant meets ESFA/DfE eligibility criteria and that by undertaking an Apprenticeship they will be developing substantive new skills).

ii) the duration of the programme will be adjusted accordingly. Where the shortening of the Apprenticeship means that it fails to meet either the minimum duration requirements or the minimum off-the-job training requirement, the apprentice is not eligible for funding. The tutor will in such circumstances then discuss commercial opportunities for such training i.e. not ESFA funded.

iii)   the cost of the training will be adjusted accordingly. NOTE The EPA cost will not be adjusted in such circumstances.

iv)   Duration (in terms of Start to Completion/ Achievement date) and costs, regardless of whether any RPL is identified at initial assessment, is entered on NLTG MIS system for ILR recording.

v)   NLTG's Skills Radar will facilitate assessment and subsequent training needs for the skills, knowledge and behaviours that are required to enable the Apprentice to be successful at End Point Assessment. Any other training identified is outside of scope of Apprenticeship Funding.

1.   How NLTG use Recognition of Prior Learning and experience to plan learning and costs
1.1 NLTG Definition of competence

NLTG treat competency as far more than just a "tick list" of skills.

Competency is defined as being able to complete a task to a defined quality standard within defined timescales on a consistent basis.

Key components of competency include aptitude, confidence, retention and mastery.

Aptitude - the amount of time required by an Apprentice to attain mastery of a learning task. Aptitude is not constant across all Apprentices and can be subject to change due to environmental conditions or learning experience.

Confidence -. the ability to take the knowledge and skills and move into an action or behaviour in a range of contexts

Retention – a preservation of the aftereffects of experience and learning that makes recall or recognition possible

Mastery - possession or display of great skill, knowledge or technique

8.2 NLTG high expectations

One of NLTG's core values as defined in our 3 years strategic provision plan is that we have "High expectations of learners".

The intention is for all Apprentices to be stretched and challenged to their full potential, to develop deep understanding of their vocation to enable them to master, analyse, evaluate, challenge and to progress in both their work and the wider society. In summary NLTG have high expectations of Apprentices. This concept applies to the whole RPL process i.e. we stretch and challenge Apprentices throughout their learning journey.

8.3. Initial Assessment

Initial assessment includes a professional discussion between the employer, the Apprentice and occupationally competent NLTG Tutor. Such discussion will include thorough appraisal of the Apprentices current skill level and experience against the specific knowledge, skills and behaviours defined in the occupational Standard. This includes currency of skills against current industry legislation and guidance.

Where an apprentices skills have eroded through lack of practice or where the apprentice's knowledge has been superseded e.g. through technological advances then it might be determined by NLTG, in conjunction with the employer that such prior learning and experience is not relevant. In such circumstances this will be evidenced as such.

The initial assessment will also identify the Apprentices career aspirations and explore the compatibility of the apprenticeship with their job role. On Aptem this is done via the setting of goals against a set of competencies relating to the standard. These goals are agreed by the Apprentice, Employer and tutor and will help stretch and challenge the apprentice in areas that are relevant to their role. The goals can be amended throughout the programme (either up or down) and progress against goals is discussed at least in each Progress Review.

All Apprentices will be initially assessed for currency of their English and maths skills via Skills Forward.

NLTG define progress as "knowing more and remembering more" this will include moving knowledge and skills from short term memory to long term memory. Consequently, if a learner cannot fully recall and articulate at initial assessment previous learning to satisfy embedded competence, then it is not considered

as being embedded within their long term memory. The view then is that a learner is either competent or not and this is reflected in how RPL is applied.

This will be explained at our thorough initial assessment. NLTG will not adjust duration or costs should RPL subsequently become apparent after initial assessment.

9. Impact of RPL on costs and duration of training for Apprentices
In calculation of the reduction in duration on the Apprenticeship programme and subsequent training costs the impact of the criteria scored at initial assessment collated in terms of number of planned Off the Job Training hours for each criteria.

9.1. Examples for Apprentices entered on Aptem using 1 to 10 point scale
For Apprentices initially assessed using Aptem on a 1 to 10 scale (as per appendix 1) a score of 7,8,9 or 10 means that the Apprentice is competent or above and ready for RPL for that specific Standards criteria. NLTG will apply proportionate reduction.

Where the agreed score on any given knowledge, skill or behaviour is a 7 or above then a 'New RPL Calculator' tracker is raised and assigned to Admin Support and further verification by SMT. Once verified the Learning Plan will be amended and any learning plan phase that contain those areas where the Apprentice has shown competence will have planned hours removed. Aptem will then calculate any reduction in time on programme and costs based on the number of planned Off the Job Training hours for each criteria.

Signed …………………………………
GARETH LINDSAY
NLTG Managing Director

Appendix 1
At initial Assessment for Apprentice starts as entered on the Skills Radar

Non-Aptem Score Equivalent	Score (Version 1)	Score (Version 2)	Level	Meaning
0-1	1	1	Beginner	**Knowledge:** you have no knowledge of this area. **Skills:** you have not performed this skill in your current or previous roles. **Behaviours:** you have not demonstrated this behaviour in your current role.
		2	Beginner+	
2	2	3	Novice	**Knowledge:** you have limited knowledge of this area. **Skills:** you do not perform this skill other than in a classroom, experimental or closely supervised environment. If you have needed to perform this skill you have felt unsure or out of your depth. **Behaviours:** you have not demonstrated this behaviour in your current role other than on a very occasional basis.
		4	Novice+	
3	3	5	Intermediate	**Knowledge:** you have some knowledge in this area, but it is partial or out of date. **Skills:** You have performed this skill at work but with guidance from a colleague. Most of the time you do not feel confident to perform this skill without support. **Behaviours:** you have demonstrated this behaviour in your current role but only occasionally.
		6	Intermediate+	
4	4	7	Competent	**Knowledge:** you have all the knowledge required on a day to day basis and know where to find answers to more complex questions. **Skills:** you perform this skill regularly without support and to the standard required for your role and you and colleagues can provide recent evidence of you doing so. **Behaviours:** you demonstrate this behaviour consistently and you and colleagues can give recent examples.
		8	Competent+	
No score attributed - Identified as distinction level where appropriate	No score attributed – Identified as distinction level where appropriate	9	Expert	**Knowledge:** you are a "go to" person in your organisation (and possibly beyond) for questions about this area. You share your knowledge with others in your organisation, for example by delivering training or creating support materials. **Skills:** You regularly perform this skill in complex situations and support less experienced colleagues in applying this skill. **Behaviours:** you are recognised by your colleagues as setting an example to others in respect of this behaviour which you demonstrate consistently and to a high standard.
		10	Expert+	