

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Relevant Standards

National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025	Standard 1.6 Standard 1.7
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ACRONYMS

NEM – National Education Manager

TPIC – The Pet Industry College

RPL – Recognition of Prior Learning

RTO – Registered Training Organisation

Purpose

The Pet Industry College (RTO: 70236) provides the opportunity for students to apply to have prior learning recognised toward a qualification or units of competency for which they are enrolled.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is a form of assessment of a student's competence that uses evidence from formal, nonformal, and informal learning rather than from specific assessment activities.

RPL must be conducted with the same rigor as any other form of assessment.

What is Recognition?

Recognition generally takes two forms: recognition of prior learning, which is the focus of this policy, and credit transfer, which is dealt with in the Credit Transfer policy. It is important not to confuse these two recognition concepts. For the purposes of this policy, recognition of prior learning will be referred to simply as "recognition".

Recognition involves the assessment of previously unrecognised skills and knowledge an individual has achieved outside the formal education and training system. Recognition assesses this unrecognised learning against the requirements of a unit of competency, in respect of both entry requirements and outcomes to be achieved. By removing the need for duplication of learning, recognition encourages an individual to continue upgrading their skills and knowledge through structured education and training towards formal qualifications and improved employment outcomes.¹ This has benefits for the individual and industry. Most importantly, it should be noted

that recognition is just another form of assessment and requires the same application of policy and procedures outlined in the Assessment section of this manual.

Recognition Guidelines

The following guidelines are to be followed when an application for recognition is received:

- Any student is entitled to apply for RPL in a course or qualification in which they intend to enrol.
- Students may not apply for recognition for units of competency or qualifications that are not included within TPIC's scope of registration.
- RPL applications must be submitted and assessed prior to course commencement.
- A non-refundable upfront RPL assessment fee of \$500 applies to all RPL applications.
- In addition to the upfront RPL assessment fee, a unit assessment fee applies for each unit submitted for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). Unit assessment fees vary depending on the qualification.
- If the applicant subsequently enrolls into a qualification with TPIC and RPL is granted, the \$500 upfront RPL assessment fee will be credited towards the total course fees payable.
- Unit assessment fees are payable for each unit assessed through the RPL process, regardless of the assessment outcome, and are non-refundable once assessment has commenced.
- If the applicant does not enrol, withdraws their application, fails to provide sufficient evidence, or is deemed not yet competent through the RPL assessment process, the upfront RPL assessment fee remains non-refundable.
- Any units of competency granted through the RPL process may affect course duration. TPIC reserves the right to amend the Training Plan, Fees Schedule, and Training Agreement accordingly and retains the final decision regarding course duration and fee adjustments.
- Applicants are responsible for providing all requested evidence within the timeframe specified by TPIC.
- If the applicant fails to provide the requested evidence, withdraws from the process, or does not respond to requests for information, the application will be closed, and the RPL assessment fee will not be refunded.
- Assessment conducted through RPL will apply the Principles of Assessment and Rules of Evidence.
- RPL may only be granted for whole units of competency.
- TPIC reserves the right to request additional evidence, conduct interviews, require workplace observations, challenge assessments, or practical demonstrations before making an RPL decision.

Forms of Evidence

Recognition acknowledges that workplace skills and knowledge may be gained through a variety of ways including both formal and informal learning or through work-based or life experience.

In evaluating assessment evidence, TPIC applies the following rules of evidence:

- Sufficient,
- Valid,
- Authentic, and
- Current.

Like assessment, recognition is a process whereby evidence is collected, and a judgement is made by an assessor or assessment team. The judgement is made on evidence provided by candidates of the skills and knowledge that they have previously learnt through work, study, life, and other experiences, and that they are currently using. It also includes evidence to confirm a candidate's ability to adapt prior learning or current competence to the context of the intended workplace or industry.

Forms of evidence toward recognition may include:

- Work records;
- Records of workplace training;
- Assessments of current skills;
- Assessments of current knowledge;
- Third party reports from current and previous supervisors or managers;
- Evidence of relevant unpaid or volunteer experience;
- Examples of work products;
- Observation by an assessor in the workplace;
- Performance appraisal; or
- Duty statements.

Many of these forms of evidence would not be sufficient evidence on their own. When combined together with a number of evidence items, the candidate will start to provide a strong case for competence. TPIC reserves the right to require candidates to undertake practical assessment of activities of skills and knowledge to satisfy itself of a candidate's current competence.

Appealing Recognition Outcomes

If the student is not satisfied with the outcomes of a recognition application, they may appeal against the outcome like other assessment decisions.

Procedure

The following procedure is to be applied by TPIC upon receipt of an application for recognition and submitted to the National Education Manager (NEM):

1. Provide sufficient information to prospective students to inform them of opportunities for alternative pathways via RPL and the RPL process.
2. Prospective students seeking RPL must:
 - a. Submit an RPL Application Form;
 - b. Pay the \$500 RPL assessment fee;
 - c. Complete the RPL Self-Assessment Guide (recommended);
 - d. Provide supporting evidence for assessment.
3. TPIC will review the application and determine whether sufficient evidence is likely to exist for an RPL assessment to proceed. Payment of the RPL assessment fee does not guarantee that RPL will be granted.
4. Undertake an RPL assessment planning interview between the assessor and the applicant (using the relevant RPL Kit). This is to include where possible:
 - a. Helping the applicant identify appropriate forms of evidence;
 - b. Guiding the applicant on the use of RPL tools;
 - c. Informing the applicant about the assessment process.
5. Applicants are to compile their RPL submission into the Submission Portal in Eskilled. This allows applicants to record documentary evidence against each unit of competency and attach supporting evidence as required.
6. The Assessor is then to review the evidence and determine whether additional evidence is required. The Assessor may invite the applicant to undertake:
 - a. An RPL interview;
 - b. Practical assessment activities;
 - c. Workplace observation;
 - d. Challenge assessments;
 - e. Additional evidence gathering activities.
7. At the completion of the assessment process, the Assessor will provide the applicant with a written outcome, including feedback and information regarding the appeals process.
8. If the applicant is not satisfied with the outcome of the RPL assessment, they may appeal in accordance with TPIC's Complaints and Appeals Policy.
9. When all assessment and appeal processes have concluded, the outcome will be recorded in the Recognition Register.
10. Where RPL is granted and the applicant proceeds with enrolment, the approved units will be recorded prior to commencement, and the \$500 upfront RPL assessment fee will be applied as a credit against the total course fees payable.

11. TPIC will advise the student of any resulting reduction in course duration, fees, and training requirements arising from the granting of RPL.
12. Statements of Attainment or Qualifications awarded through RPL will be issued in accordance with TPIC's Qualifications Issuance Policy and Procedure.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Fees

The Pet Industry College charges a non-refundable upfront RPL assessment fee of \$500 for all RPL applications.

This fee covers:

- Initial eligibility review
- Assessment planning interview
- Review of evidence requirements
- RPL administration and application processing
- Initial assessor allocation

Where an applicant subsequently enrolls into a TPIC qualification and RPL is approved, the \$500 upfront RPL assessment fee will be credited against the total course fees payable.

In addition to the upfront fee, a unit assessment fee applies for each unit submitted for RPL assessment.

Qualification	RPL Fee Per Unit
Animal Shelter Worker Skill Set	\$216.67
Certificate II Animal Care	\$183.33
Certificate III in Animal Care Services	\$182.35
Certificate IV Animal Behaviour & Training (General Stream)	\$250.00
Certificate IV Animal Behaviour & Training (Assistance Dog Specialist Stream)	\$250.00
Certificate IV Animal Facility Management	\$307.69

The unit assessment fee has been calculated as 90% of the qualification fee (after applying a 10% reduction), less the \$500 upfront RPL assessment fee, divided equally across the total number of units in the qualification.

No refund of the upfront RPL assessment fee or any unit assessment fees will be provided where:

- The applicant withdraws their application.

- Insufficient evidence is provided.
- The RPL application is unsuccessful.
- The applicant chooses not to enrol following assessment.
- The application is closed due to non-response.
- Assessment of a submitted unit has commenced.

Payment of the upfront RPL assessment fee and unit assessment fees does not guarantee that RPL will be granted.

Recognition Process Flowchart

1. Enquire About RPL

- a. Student receives information about the RPL process and eligibility requirements.



2. Submit Application

- a. Complete the RPL Application Form.
- b. Pay the \$500 upfront RPL assessment fee.
- c. Submit initial supporting documentation.



3. RPL Planning Interview

- a. Meet with an assessor to discuss experience, evidence requirements, and the assessment process.



4. Submit Evidence

- a. Upload evidence and supporting documents via the eSkilled Submission Portal.



5. Assessment & Review

- a. Assessor reviews evidence.
- b. Additional evidence, interviews, workplace observations, practical demonstrations, or challenge assessments may be required.



6. Outcome Issued

- a. Student receives written outcome and feedback.
- b. Successful RPL units are recorded.
- c. Appeals process available if required.
- d. If the student enrolls, the \$500 upfront RPL assessment fee is credited towards their course fees. Unit assessment fees remain payable for all units assessed through the RPL process.

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