

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) POLICY

Purpose

To ensure all learners are provided the opportunity to have their prior learning and formal qualifications recognised, in accordance with Smartlink Training's commitment to fair access, academic integrity, and the credentialing requirements under the 2025 Standards for RTOs.

This policy document outlines the procedures required to obtain RPL, which ensures that prospective students seeking undeserved RPL will not be supported by Smartlink Training in this endeavour. The policies and procedures in this document will be followed for every RPL application to ensure the consistency of recognition decisions.

Policy Statements

Recognition Pathways

Smartlink Training supports Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as a valid mechanism to acknowledge a learner's previous formal, informal, and non-formal learning and work experience.

- a) formal learning refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of instruction and is linked to the attainment of an AQF qualification or statement of attainment (for example, a certificate, diploma or university degree)
- b) non-formal learning refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of instruction, but does not lead to the attainment of an AQF qualification or statement of attainment (for example, in-house professional development programs conducted by a business);
- c) informal learning refers to learning that results through experience of work-related, social, family, hobby or leisure activities (for example the acquisition of interpersonal skills developed through several years as a sales representative).

Our approach to RPL accommodates all of these pathways while maintaining the integrity of the training product.

Smartlink Training has a separate credit transfer policy and procedure in place to recognise only formal learning refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of instruction and is linked to the attainment of an AQF qualification award/testamur or statement of attainment (for example, a certificate, diploma or university degree). All RTO staff are trained to identify the difference between RPL (assessment only pathway) and Credit Transfer (CT) which is an administrative process to recognise and confirm previously completed formal learning that has been awarded as per the AQF qualification issuance policy.

Offer at Enrolment

Learners will be informed of the opportunity to apply for RPL as part of the pre-enrolment and enrolment process. Information about eligibility, procedures, and evidence requirements is clearly outlined below under provision of RPL kit as each RPL kit is specific to the unit of competency requirement within the relevant qualification which is available to all prospective students and is discussed during course admission, to ensure students understand when RPL is a valid option for them.

Integrity and Consistency

All applications for RPL will be assessed in accordance with the Principles of Assessment, Rules of Evidence, and assessment record retention requirements, ensuring decisions are transparent, consistent, and defensible. In accordance with this, all RPL applications will be reviewed by Smartlink's assessors, and not by our authorised third-party delivery partners who deliver short courses only. Recognition decisions will uphold the integrity of the training product and comply with any relevant licensing or regulatory obligations.

Short Courses

Short courses currently delivered by Smartlink have industry requirements, specifically the requirement to undertake refresher training and reaccreditation for certain units mean that application of RPL is not appropriate.

Due to the nature of the short courses currently delivered by Smartlink, students may be able to apply for Credit Transfer (CT), please refer to the Credit Transfer Policy for more information.

In the case of Credit Transfer decisions, equivalence will be considered and evidenced before CT is granted. For more information please refer to the Credit Transfer Policy and Procedure.

Qualifications

Smartlink provides RPL as an alternative means of recognition, where possible if credit transfer (CT) cannot be granted because a unit of competency is not deemed equivalent to the current training package.

Students who initially request a Credit Transfer but are not granted one can use RPL to evidence their recognition, in which case they will receive an RPL Kit to complete their application.

Smartlink will not issue a VET statement of attainment or qualification achieved through credit transfer from training completed entirely through CT or RPL from a different RTO.

Verification of Documentation

Smartlink Training will verify all AQF certification documentation and/or authenticated VET transcripts, USI transcript, and all other evidence by contacting the relevant authorities prior to awarding RPL, including checking them against the current training package, to ensure the authenticity and currency of evidence provided by the student. AQF certification documentation will be checked through the USI transcript service and by contacting the issuing RTO. If licensing or regulatory requirements prohibit recognition, the RPL will not be offered, and learners will be informed accordingly.

RPL evidence of overseas qualifications or competencies will need to be mapped to Australian regulatory and legislative requirements before RPL can be assessed and granted.

RPL evidence (including assessments) will be stored by Smartlink to document recognition decisions and prove that they are defensible.

Provision of RPL Kit

Learners who express interest in RPL will be provided with an RPL Application Form and RPL Kit, which outlines the steps, evidence requirements, and timelines for completing the recognition process. The process will be guided by qualified assessors in line with the procedures in this document.

RPL Assessment Fees

Students will be required to pay all the relevant RPL fees (RPL application fee, RPL second application fee, RPL unit fee and RPL gap training fee as applicable). For more information on RPL fees, please refer to the RPL fees table located at the end of this document or refer to the Fees and Refunds policy. RPL application will only be processed once Smartlink Training receives the completed RPL application form, along with all RPL evidence and required RPL fees as applicable.

Fee Reduction for Qualifications for RPL

A reduction of fees can apply for any units granted through RPL.

The fee reduction amount depends on the number of units granted through RPL is based on the evidence supplied, verified and assessed to confirm RPL which may vary for each RPL application and also for the number of units that the applicant applied for. This will be dealt on a case by case basis. RPL gap training fees will apply if required.

The total RPL fee reduction amount is then subtracted from the total course fees for the short course or qualification to calculate the new reduced total course fee. These figures will be shown on the course invoice.

Please note RPL fees are different and are listed in the additional fees table in the Fees and Refunds Policy and Procedure.

RPL fees are calculated based on the RPL unit fee as listed in it which are also listed in this document at the end under RPL Fees table.

All fees and charges will be reviewed annually, and all marketing material and student information will be updated accordingly. New fees and charges will generally only apply to incoming students.

Notification of Outcome

Learners will be formally advised in writing of the outcome of their RPL application. Where RPL is granted and results in a reduction in course duration or course fees, this adjustment will also be confirmed in writing and reflected in the Student Agreement. Where RPL is not granted, students will be advised as to why and presented with alternative pathways to gain recognition such as formal training and assessment and or gap training where applicable.

Credential Compliance

In accordance with the Outcome Standards for Credentials, Smartlink Training will only issue qualifications or statements of attainment when all components are completed or when appropriate recognition has been granted through validated and documented assessment. RPL applications are assessed by Smartlink assessors who have the requisite skills, knowledge and industry competencies to do so, and who meet the requirements of the Credential Policy.

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) PROCESS

Aligned with the 2025 Standards for RTOs: Outcome Standards, Compliance Standards, Credential Policy

1 Overview

Smartlink Training supports learner access to Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as a valid pathway for acknowledging prior skills, knowledge, and experience gained through formal or informal learning. This aligns with our commitment to uphold fair access, recognition of competencies, and the integrity of issued credentials.

2 Pre-Enrolment Stage

RPL information is provided in the Pre-Enrolment Information Document and in the Student Handbook on the website. Learners may express interest in RPL through the **Enrolment Form**, which is used for both short courses and qualification courses. For qualification courses, learners may also indicate their interest during the Course Entry Interview. Each application will be dealt on a case by case basis.

All applicants are informed of:

- RPL availability
- Process requirements
- Applicable fees
- Required supporting documentation
- Timeframes and expectations

3 Initial Assessment and Guidance

Interested learners should contact Smartlink Training to request RPL. A preliminary suitability review may be conducted to determine whether RPL is appropriate for the learner. If eligible, the learner is issued:

- An RPL Application Form

- A qualification- or unit-specific RPL Kit
- Application invoice and evidence submission instructions

4 Submitting an RPL Application

To formally apply, the learner must submit:

- A completed RPL Application Form
- The relevant RPL Kit

RPL Fee

- The learner must also pay the RPL assessment fee.

And supporting evidence, which may include:

- Statements of Attainment or Qualifications
- Resume/work history
- Third-party reports
- References from employers
- Samples of work, job descriptions, testimonials

5 RPL Self-Assessment

- Student to complete the Self-Assessment Information Kit
- Gather evidence supporting the responses in the self-assessment
- Submit the Self-Assessment to the RPL Assessor

6 RPL Assessment Process

A qualified assessor will:

- Assess the evidence against the Principles of Assessment and Rules of Evidence
- Ensure decisions are valid, current, sufficient, and authentic
- Identify any gaps by comparing student skills, knowledge and competencies to current skills, knowledge and competencies, (gap training fees may apply, refer to the Fees and Refunds Policy for more information)
- Provide gap training based on the specific RPL kits for each unit

The assessor will require a competency conversation to assess RPL, and may also require a practical demonstration to verify competence. The exact requirements for each unit will depend on the RPL kit for that specific unit. All RPL applications will be assessed and finalised within 20 working days of receipt of a complete application.

6 Notification of Outcome

The learner will be notified in writing via email of the outcome. If RPL is granted, the result is recorded in the Student Management System (SMS), RPL register and a revised Offer Letter and Student Agreement are issued. Course duration and fee reductions are calculated based on the time allocated to the credited units, per the Fees and Refunds Policy, and the applicable certificates will be issued.

If RPL is not granted, a formal explanation is provided and the learner is informed of their right to appeal through the Complaints and Appeals Policy.

7 Recordkeeping and Audit Compliance

All RPL documentation and evidence are retained in the learner's file for audit purposes. RPL outcomes are securely recorded in the Student Management System. All decisions are documented to ensure consistency, fairness, and the integrity of the training product.

RPL EVIDENCE

Forms of Evidence could include but are not restricted to:

Resume, work history, portfolio of work, diaries, task sheets, journals, logbooks, photos and videos. Work records; contracts, agreements, notes, emails, reports, articles, blogs, industry awards

Records of workplace training; Assessments of skills and knowledge; Third party reports from supervisors / managers, clients, trainers; Previous qualifications; Volunteer experiences: Examples of work products; Statutory Declarations; Photographs /Videotapes of work produced; Previous position descriptions; Customer response forms or letters.

Licenses and tickets, competency cards, professional memberships, hobbies, interests, community work and volunteering work.

Records of completed training, assessment items, assessment records, declarations from a student's employer, and/or a copy of student records provided by ASQA.

RPL FEES ONLY (FROM THE ADDITIONAL FEES TABLE)

Category	Amount	Application
RPL Application Fee	\$250	Assessing RPL Applications
Second RPL Application Fee	\$100	Assessing secondary RPL applications after a successful first RPL application
RPL Unit Fee	\$150 (per unit)	Assessing units in RPL Applications
RPL Gap Training	\$200 (per unit)	RPL Gap Training