

## 1. Purpose

Mars Institute has established and implemented this policy to support the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) Standards for Registered Training Organizations (RTO) 2015. This policy ensures candidates can access recognition assessment pathways through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) arrangements, with previously unrecognized skills and knowledge that a student has achieved outside the formal education and training system. For the purpose of this policy, recognition of prior learning (RPL) will be referred to simply as RPL.

## 2. Scope

Mars Institute is committed to providing all candidates with a fair and accessible process for an RPL assessment pathway. RPL involves the assessment of previously unrecognized skills and knowledge that a student has achieved outside the formal education and training system. The RPL process assesses this unrecognized learning against the requirements of a qualification or a unit of competency standards.

This policy supports within clauses 1.8 to 1.12, 3.5 & 5.1 to 5.3 of the Standards for Registered Training Organizations (RTO's) 2015

## 3. Authorisation

This policy shall be endorsed and issued under the authority of the Deputy Chief Executive Officer or authorized delegate.

## 4. Policy

RPL is another form of assessment and requires the same application as outlined against the Training and Assessment policy and procedures. RPL involves the assessment of previously unrecognized skills and knowledge an individual has achieved outside the formal education and training system. RPL assesses this unrecognized 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, RPL encourages a candidate to continue upgrading their skills and knowledge through structured education and training towards formal qualifications and improved employment outcomes.

## 5. Recognition guidelines

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

- Any candidate is entitled to apply for RPL in a course or qualification in which they intend to enroll into.
- RPL may not be achieved for 100% of a qualification, gap training may be needed with additional costs.
- Candidates may not apply for RPL for units of competency or qualification which are not included in MARS's scope of registration.
- Whilst candidates may apply for RPL at any time, they are encouraged to apply before commencing a training program or qualification. This will reduce unnecessary training and guide the student down a more efficient path to achieving qualification competence.
- Candidates who are currently enrolled in a training program are eligible to apply for RPL, but additional fees and charges may apply.
- Assessment via RPL is to apply the Principles of Assessment
  - Fairness: The individual learner's needs will be considered in the assessment process. Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments are applied by the RTO to take into account the individual learner's needs. The RTO will inform the learner about the assessment process and provide the learner with the opportunity to challenge the result of the assessment and be reassessed if necessary.
  - Flexibility: Assessment will be flexible to the individual learner by reflecting the learner's needs; assessing competencies held by the learner no matter how or where they have been acquired; and drawing from a range of assessment methods and using those that are appropriate to the context, the unit of competency and associated assessment requirements, and the individual.
  - Validity: Any assessment decision of the RTO will be justified based on the evidence of performance of the individual learner. Assessment will be against the unit/s of competency and the associated assessment requirements covering the broad range of skills and knowledge that are essential to competent performance. Assessment of knowledge and skills will be integrated with practical application. Assessment will be based on evidence that demonstrates that a learner could demonstrate these skills and knowledge in other similar situations; and judgment of competence will be based on evidence of learner performance that is aligned to the unit/s of competency and associated assessment requirements.



- Reliability: Evidence presented for assessment will consistently be interpreted and assessment results are comparable irrespective of the assessor conducting the assessment.
- RPL may only be awarded for whole units of competency.
- Evidence of qualifications must be an AQF qualification.
- Qualifications must be no older than 10 years unless additional mapping evidence can be provided by the student.
- Superseded unit of competency can be used as part of an RPL process toward the award of a current unit of competency.

## 6. Forms of Evidence

RPL 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, MARS applies the following rules of evidence:

- **Validity:** The assessor needs to be assured that the learner has the skills, knowledge and attributes as described in the module or unit of competency and associated assessment requirements. If there are doubts based on the evidence presented by the learner, a second trainer/assessor may be involved in the RPL process to ensure fairness to the student as well as rigour in the assessment process.
- **Sufficiency:** The assessor must be assured that the quality, quantity, and relevance of the assessment evidence enable a judgement to be made of a learner's competency. Learners will be given guidance on the types and quantity of evidence required to meet these assessment criteria within relevant RPL assessment tools.
- **Authenticity:** The assessor must be assured that the evidence presented for assessment is the learner's own work. This may be verified with both the learner as the time of evidence submission as well as via third party evidence collection form workplace supervisors or other parties.
- **Currency:** The assessor must be assured that the assessment evidence demonstrates current competency. This requires the assessment evidence to be from the present or the very recent past. For MARS, currency is considered evidence that has been developed within 2 years from date of RPL application.



## RPL Policy

Like assessment, RPL is a process whereby evidence is collected, and a judgement is made by our Trainers and/or Assessors. 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.
- Records of previous qualifications.
- Assessments of current skills and knowledge.
- Record of competency conversation.
- 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 and resumes.

Many of these forms of evidence would not be sufficient evidence on their own. Where a candidate provides evidence against a superseded unit of competency, this does not mean the unit is not valid for recognition through RPL assessment pathways. The Trainer and/or Assessor must ensure there is sufficient evidence of the person's competence at the time you make the assessment decision. When combined together with a number of evidence items, the student will start to provide a strong case for competence against the National Register of VET requirements of the unit of competency. MARS reserves the right to require candidates to undertake a practical assessment of activities to assess their skills and knowledge in order to determine the candidate's current competence.

## 7. Appealing Recognition Outcomes

If the candidate is not satisfied with the outcomes of their RPL application, they may appeal the outcome like other assessment decisions. Further information on the appeals process students can access this policy and procedure through our website and Student Handbook.

## 8. Definition

<b>Unit of Competency</b>	A unit of competency is the specification of knowledge, skills, and the application of that knowledge and skill, to the standard of performance expected in the workplace.
<b>Trainers and/or Assessors</b>	Are persons who assess a learner's competence in accordance with Clauses 1.13 to 1.16.
<b>Recognition of Prior Learning</b>	Recognition of prior learning is an assessment process that involves assessment of an individual's relevant prior learning (including formal, informal, and non-formal learning).
<b>Competency</b>	Means the consistent application of knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in the workplace. It embodies the ability to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situations and environments

## 9. Responsibilities:

### Deputy Chief Executive Officer

- To make decisions based on the rights of students in relation to the requirements of this policy

### Training Manager

- To uphold the rights of students in relation to the requirements of this policy

### Operations

- To collate evidence of documentation submitted to MARSs by students

### Trainers and/or Assessors

- To collate evidence of documentation submitted to MARSs by students.
- To assess the evidence of the documentation
- To make informed decisions about RPL eligibility
- To process eligible RPL outcomes and inform students.

## 10. Procedure:

- 1) Expression of Interest form
- 2) Assessment of eligibility to apply RPL.
- 3) Notify the student with assessment of eligibility outcome.
- 4) Application Form and Payment
- 5) Application Assessment
- 6) Allocation of Trainer
- 7) Completing RPL Kit
- 8) Reminder of completing RPL Kit
- 9) Assessing RPL Kit
- 10) Payment for each unit and Gap Training
- 11) Scheduling Gap Training
- 12) Credential Process
- 13) Credentials Process (Issuance)