

# Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Fact Sheet

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## **What is RPL?**

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the recognition of any existing skills and knowledge you may have, which have been gained through:

- Formal or informal training and education
- Paid or unpaid work
- Part time, full time or casual work
- General life experience in Australia or overseas
- Work experience in occupations not directly related to the qualification you are seeking

## **How much recognition?**

You can apply for up to and including 100% of a qualification or a course.

## **What are the benefits of recognition?**

- You will be recognised for what you already know, and may complete training in a shorter period of time
- You don't have to undertake training where you can prove you already have the skills and knowledge to do the job
- You can apply for 100% recognition if you already have the skills and knowledge that you would learn from an entire course
- You have the ability to update your existing qualification to ensure that you can obtain formal recognition for your current competence

## **What is the cost?**

To apply for RPL for the Certificate IV in Massage Therapy Practice you must enrol in RPL and pay the non-refundable application fee of \$500. To apply for RPL for the Diploma of Remedial Massage you must enrol in RPL and pay the non-refundable application fee of \$1000 (this includes the pre-requisite requirements contained in the Certificate IV in Massage Therapy Practice).

## **Proceeding with Recognition**

Once you have made the decision to proceed with the RPL process your career advisor will provide you with an RPL kit. This document details how the RPL portfolio is to be completed, the units of competence, and how the final paperwork is to be presented.

## **What is the RPL kit?**

The RPL kit is designed so that you can compare your skills, knowledge, qualifications and experience against the competencies for which you are seeking recognition. To RPL a unit of competency or competencies you will have to assess yourself against the elements, essential knowledge and essential skills and provide evidence to support your claim. If you are unable to locate sufficient evidence to support your RPL assessment, other forms of direct evidence such as workplace visit, skills test or an interview can be arranged. A detailed explanation the evidence process can be found below.

## **Gathering Evidence**

You should start compiling your evidence once you have reached agreement with your career advisor about the proceeding with the RPL process. Allow yourself plenty of time to collect your evidence. There are many 'Types of Evidence' (see below) that you can use, depending on which are most appropriate to your units of competence and will be explained in the candidate assessment. These will need to be arranged in a portfolio and submitted to a qualified recognition assessor.

## **Types of Evidence**

There are several types of evidence you can collect to show your skills, knowledge and experience for assessment against a unit of competence.

The best applications will include both direct and indirect evidence.

<b>Direct Evidence</b>	<b>Indirect Evidence</b>
<p><b>Certificates</b> You can provide copies of your qualifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certificates</li> <li>• Diplomas</li> <li>• Degrees</li> <li>• Statements of results</li> <li>• Courses completed at work</li> </ul>	<p><b>Written records</b> You can provide copies of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diaries</li> <li>• Records</li> <li>• Journals</li> <li>• Job descriptions</li> </ul>
<p><b>Work samples</b> You can provide samples of your work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drawings or photographs</li> <li>• Reports</li> <li>• Written materials</li> <li>• Projects</li> <li>• Objects</li> <li>• Works of art</li> </ul>	<p><b>Email evidence</b> You can provide copies of email communications which verify</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer feedback</li> <li>• Work activities</li> <li>• Written skills</li> </ul>
<p><b>Records of workplace activities</b> You can provide documents that verify your work activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notes</li> <li>• Emails</li> <li>• Reports</li> <li>• Completed worksheets</li> <li>• Workplace agreements</li> <li>• Contracts</li> </ul>	<p><b>Supporting letters</b> You can provide letters that verify your claims from</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employers</li> <li>• People you have worked with (paid and unpaid work)</li> <li>• Community groups</li> </ul>
<p><b>Workplace visit</b> Your recognition assessor may need to visit your workplace to observe you undertaking work tasks</p>	<p><b>Documents</b> You can provide evidence that shows what you have done in your life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media articles</li> <li>• Meritorious awards</li> </ul>
<p><b>Skills test</b> Your recognition assessor may choose to set you a skills test so you can demonstrate your competence</p>	<p><b>Resume / work history</b> You can provide a resume that lists your work history, key responsibilities, achievements and qualifications</p>
<p><b>Interview</b> You may be asked to talk to your recognition assessor at an interview</p>	<p><b>Referees</b> You can put forward the names of people who are willing to be contacted by your recognition assessor to verify your evidence</p>

### The best types of evidence

If you want your application to be successful, so you should submit the best evidence available. You will only have *one* chance to resubmit evidence.

The best evidence is:

- **Current** - you should be able to demonstrate that your skills are up-to-date and that you can use them now if required;

- **Relevant** - the skills you are claiming to have should relate directly to the relevant unit of competence and be at a comparable standard;
- **Authentic** - you need to be able to show that your claims are genuine. This is where letters from employers and others are very helpful;
- **Transferable** - skills you have learned in one situation must be capable of being applied to other situations. For example, if you are making claims against computing skills, you should be capable of demonstrating those skills on any appropriate machine or system, not just the one in your office!

Below are some guidelines about the different types of evidence that might be used to assist in your application.

### **Interviews**

It may be possible for you to demonstrate competence by *explaining particular areas directly* to your assessor. This would happen in an interview that your recognition assessor would arrange.

Be aware that you would have to *attend the interview prepared*. You should have the relevant documents or other material to hand and ensure that your responses relate directly to the learning outcomes.

### **Skills Test**

You may be asked to demonstrate competence by completing an assessment agreed upon by you and your assessor.

### **Samples of your work**

If possible, you should submit your application with examples of work that demonstrate your competence against a particular unit of competence. For example, a person applying for recognition in a word processing module may choose to submit examples of merged letters, complex tabulations, assignments, reports or similar.

### **Supporting Letters**

A supporting letter should *not* be confused with a reference. Its purpose would be to *help confirm the authenticity* of the information in your application. It should provide *details about your duties, experience and responsibilities* that are relevant to the learning outcomes or competencies of the unit of competence. Such a letter should also indicate the *level of skill* demonstrated by you in your work. A supporting letter should always:

- Be written on official stationery;
- Be written by a person who knows the applicant and has direct knowledge of the activity on which the claim is based;
- State clearly the relationship between the author and the applicant;
- Give full details of the activity, indicating the relevance of the knowledge and experience including; and
- Provide an evaluation of the level of the applicant's knowledge and performance.

### **Currency of evidence**

Evidence that is *older than three years* must be supported by *up-to-date evidence* of your continued application of the relevant competence. You will need to demonstrate a continuum of application and if not, you must be able to demonstrate current competence in an appropriate way.

### **Verification of evidence**

A Justice of the Peace (JP) must certify any copies of original qualifications, certificates or documents you submit. Alternatively a Sage Manager can view the original document and write a certification on the copy.

## **Preparing a Portfolio**

### **What is a portfolio?**

A portfolio is a collection of logically arranged evidence showing that you already have the skills and knowledge required by the unit(s) of competence or course you are seeking recognition in.

### What types of evidence should you provide?

Evidence is any information that proves what you know and can do. To support your application for recognition, your evidence must show that your experience and skills match the learning outcomes of the specified unit(s) of competence or course. Check the table (above) that sets out the types of evidence that you can use in your portfolio as well as the additional types of evidence that you can provide – like doing a Skills Test.

### Example of how to match your evidence to a unit of competence

The following is an example of evidence that might be provided to meet a learning outcome called ‘To Operate a Gas Barbecue’:

*To Operate a Gas Barbecue the skills and knowledge to be assessed would be:*

- *The safe preparation and use of gas barbecues;*
- *The ability to ignite barbecues using safe lighting methods and to monitor heat;*
- *The proper cooking of food using gas barbecues; and*
- *The safe and effective cleaning up of all barbecue surfaces and equipment.*

The evidence you supply might be:

- A copy of the instructions you wrote for staff at your workplace on how to use gas barbecues safely;
- A video of you demonstrating how to light a barbecue properly and monitor heat effectively;
- A photocopy of the award you won for cooking the best steak on a gas barbecue at the annual chef's picnic; and/or
- A signed and dated letter from your supervisor relating how you always clean the barbecue workspace and equipment in line with company OH&S requirements

### Before you submit your portfolio

- Make sure you *include certified copies of your documents* or show the originals to a Sage Manager so they can certify them
- Present your portfolio in a way that shows how your experience, skills and knowledge *match the learning outcomes* of the unit(s) of competence
- *Be selective and disciplined* about your choice of evidence
- Organise your material in a *logical order, with a clear format* and in *plain English*

### Applicants should note that:

- Your recognition assessor may request **an interview** with you if details of your portfolio need to be clarified
- A **skills test** may be required so you can demonstrate your skills and knowledge
- Your recognition assessor may contact relevant authorities to **check the authenticity** of documents submitted as your evidence

## Other information

### When can I apply?

You can apply for recognition at any time, however the application for RPL needs to be submitted to your career's advisor prior the commencement of your course. You should receive a response *within three weeks* of the submission your application.

### Can I appeal the outcome of a recognition assessment?

You can lodge an appeal if you feel that the process used to assess your application for recognition was unfair. You must appeal in writing within ten days of receiving the notification of the result of your application. Your appeal must be sent to the General Manager of Sage Massage.

### Security of records

Sage Massage undertakes to keep all records in a safe and secure environment. However, your portfolio will be assessed by a recognition assessor and may be examined by State Training Authorities for purposes of audit, accountability and registration.