Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

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1. Qualifications in Scope

This policy applies to all qualifications offered by AA London College and those awarded through external awarding organisations with which the College is approved to deliver.

2. Policy Statement

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a valid method of assessment that considers whether learners can demonstrate that they meet the learning outcomes and assessment requirements of a unit or qualification through knowledge, skills or understanding they already possess.

RPL allows learners to gain credit for prior achievement without the need to repeat learning. It may be used for:

- A single unit
- A group of units
- An entire qualification in exceptional circumstances

All RPL evidence must be:

- **Valid** – directly linked to the learning outcomes and assessment criteria
- **Current** – up to date and relevant to present standards
- **Reliable** – authentic, accurate and trustworthy

The use of RPL benefits learners by recognising prior achievement and experience while supporting the College's aim of providing flexible and inclusive education. The Head of Academics is responsible for maintaining accurate RPL records and ensuring these are available for review by awarding organisations when required.

3. Terminology

Different sectors and awarding bodies have historically used a range of terms for RPL, including:

- Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)
- Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)
- Accreditation of Prior Achievement (APA)
- Accreditation of Prior Learning and Achievement (APLA)

At AA London College, the term **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** will be used consistently across all qualifications.

4. Principles of RPL

Principle 1

RPL is a recognised and valid method of assessment. There is no difference between achievement of learning outcomes and assessment criteria through prior learning or through formal study.

Principle 2

RPL procedures must be transparent, rigorous, fair, reliable and accessible to all learners and stakeholders.

Principle 3

RPL is voluntary and learner-centred. Learners will be supported with clear guidance on the evidence required and how to present it for assessment.

Principle 4

RPL assessments are subject to the same internal quality assurance requirements as all other forms of assessment. The **Internal Quality Assurer (IQA)** will review the application of RPL to ensure that assessment decisions are valid, reliable, fair, consistent and in line with qualification and awarding body requirements.

Credits awarded through RPL are equivalent to credits gained through standard assessment routes.

Principle 5

Assessment methods used for RPL must be appropriate, robust and consistent with qualification requirements. RPL claims may be made for individual units or, in exceptional circumstances, for a full qualification.

5. Application of RPL

RPL is particularly valuable for learners who may not hold formal qualifications but who have relevant professional, vocational or experiential learning.

If a learner has certificated prior learning, they should normally apply for exemption rather than RPL where permitted. Exemption allows a learner to claim exemption from some achievement requirements of a qualification using evidence of certificated achievement deemed to be of equivalent value.

Evidence may count towards:

- Units within a qualification
- Certificates of Achievement
- Full qualifications in exceptional cases

Assessors must ensure that:

- Evidence fully meets the relevant learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
- Evidence is authentic and current.
- Assessment decisions are based on sufficient and appropriate evidence.
- Additional questioning, professional discussion or supplementary assessment may be used where required to confirm validity, authenticity or currency.
- RPL decisions are clearly documented.

Where RPL is used, the relevant IQA must be informed and the assessment decision must be included within the internal quality assurance process.

6. Limitations of RPL

- RPL cannot normally be applied to units assessed solely through external assessment.
- RPL does not provide an exceptional entry route into a programme unless specifically permitted by the qualification requirements.
- It is uncommon for a learner to demonstrate prior achievement that fully meets all requirements of an entire qualification.
- RPL must not be used where the qualification or awarding body rules prohibit its use.

7. College Responsibilities

When delivering RPL, AA London College will ensure that:

- Learners are appropriately registered in accordance with qualification and awarding body requirements.
- Learners receive clear information and guidance about the RPL process.
- RPL assessment is undertaken by suitably qualified and competent assessors.
- Full and accurate records of assessment decisions are maintained.
- Certification and claims follow normal awarding body procedures.
- All evidence is reviewed before assessment decisions are confirmed.
- RPL decisions are clearly mapped against the relevant learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
- RPL is supported and overseen by appropriately qualified staff.
- The IQA is involved in monitoring RPL assessment decisions and confirming that the process has been applied consistently and appropriately.

8. Role of the Internal Quality Assurer (IQA)

The IQA plays an important role in ensuring that RPL is applied consistently and to the same standard as other assessment methods.

The IQA will:

- Review RPL assessment decisions as part of the College's internal quality assurance arrangements.
- Check that evidence is valid, sufficient, authentic and current.
- Confirm that evidence has been correctly mapped to the relevant learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
- Check that assessment decisions are fair, consistent and supported by appropriate evidence.
- Ensure that RPL is being applied in accordance with qualification and awarding body requirements.
- Sample RPL assessment decisions in line with the College's IQA strategy.
- Provide feedback to assessors where improvements or corrective action are required.
- Record IQA decisions and actions within the appropriate quality assurance records.
- Escalate any concerns about the inappropriate or inconsistent use of RPL to the Head of Academics.
- Ensure that any required actions are completed before certification or achievement claims are made where necessary.

9. Quality Assurance and Monitoring

- RPL will be subject to internal quality assurance in the same way as other assessment methods.
- RPL decisions will be included within the College's IQA sampling arrangements.

- Records of RPL assessment and IQA activity will be retained and made available for review by external quality assurers or awarding organisations where required.
- Any issues identified through IQA activity will be addressed through assessor feedback, action planning or additional sampling where necessary.
- RPL practice will be reviewed annually to ensure continued compliance, consistency and improvement.