

Highfield Recognition of Prior Learning Policy



1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document describes Highfield's approach to Recognition of Prior Learning "RPL". This policy should be read in conjunction with all related Highfield documents, in particular the specifications for individual qualifications of interest.
- 1.2 This policy sets out the evidence of prior learning that will be required by Highfield, and the process and timelines for making an application for RPL.
- 1.3 For the purposes of this policy, 'prior learning' refers to demonstrable knowledge, skills and/or understanding acquired by the learner before the learner takes the qualification in question. 'Prior achievement' refers to prior learning that has been formally recognised by another organisation in the form of a certificate or some other form of documentary evidence.

2. Audience

- 2.1 This policy is intended for use by centres, learners and other users of Highfield qualifications.

3. Review arrangements

- 3.1 The policy and associated arrangements will be kept under continuous review by Highfield to ensure appropriateness and effectiveness. In particular, a formal review of these arrangements will be carried out at least annually as part of our annual self-evaluation activities, with the outcomes being reported to the board of Directors accordingly.

4. Recognition of prior learning

- 4.1 Highfield does not normally reduce or change the assessment requirements of Highfield qualifications on the grounds of the learner possessing prior learning.
- 4.2 Exceptions to 4.1 will be indicated in the relevant qualification specifications.
- 4.3 Centres may apply to use recognition of prior learning to reduce the amount of time spent in preparing the learner for assessment.
- 4.4 Centres wishing to use RPL as described in 4.3 must apply to Highfield before the learner is registered for the qualification(s) in question. Centres must provide evidence of the prior learning that is being claimed for the learner, and they must indicate what proportion of the learner's preparation time they are seeking exemption for.

- 4.4.1 The evidence the centre presents must comply with the VARCS principles in that it must be Valid, Authentic, Reliable, Current and Sufficient. Where evidence does not meet all of these principles, the centre will be expected to complete further assessment of the learner and/or support the learner with further training/delivery.
- 4.5 Highfield will normally provide a decision within 5 working days of receiving the application and supporting evidence.
- 4.6 Centres are required to keep complete records of all such applications and full details of RPL evidence alongside records of assessment and quality assurance activity for the specific learner for a period of three years.
- 5. Recognition of prior achievement**
 - 5.1 Where there is demonstrable evidence of the learner completing units within a previous qualification that can be mapped into a new qualification they are undertaking, this should be reviewed as part of the centre's own initial assessment process.
 - 5.2 The centre is expected to use personnel who are fully qualified and competent to make the decision on recognising the learner's prior achievement. These personnel should take steps to ensure that the unit is of the same title, number, level, value and content and that it sits on the same framework.
 - 5.3 Prior achievement could be used in instances where a learner has completed and achieved a certificate for a qualification that is made up of a series of units and where one of these units forms part of a further qualification they are undertaking. It would not normally be used to certificate an entire award, certificate or diploma.
 - 5.3.1 An example of this would be in qualifications that require units 1 and 2 to be completed but a higher level of the qualification requires units 1, 2 and 3 to be completed. In this instance the centre and learner may agree that the previously achieved units 1 and 2 could be used and only unit 3 needs to be undertaken.
 - 5.4 In all instances, the evidence presented must meet the principles of VARCS in that it must be Valid, Authentic, Reliable, Current and Sufficient. Where evidence does not meet this criteria, further assessment is required.
 - 5.4.1 The centre will be encouraged to consider any changes that may have impacted on the learner's previous achievement such as sector,

qualification or legal requirements and complete further assessment in the event that gaps are found in the learner's knowledge or competence.

- 5.5 In the event that prior achievement is used, evidence must be presented within the portfolio of evidence or supplied to our Quality Assessment team (in the case of externally assessed or marked units). Evidence must also be retained in the centre's assessment and quality assurance records for the specific learner for a period of three years.

6. Contact us

- 6.1 If you have any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact your Customer Support Officer directly on 01302 363277 or email info@highfield.co.uk.

Document control

Version	Date	Author	Notes
V1	April 2022	Terry Bloor	
V2	October 2023	Terry Bloor	Latest review
V3	January 2024	Terry Bloor	House Style
V3.1	August 2025	Grace Stansfield	Latest review