RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY

Contour College (Contour) is committed to providing all students and potential students with a fair and accessible process for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). The process acknowledges the skills, knowledge, performance outcomes and learning achieved by a prospective student, through either formal or informal learning pathways, prior to undertaking a program of study with Contour.

RPL is based on the understanding that people learn in many different ways throughout their lifetime. This may be through formal training, work experience and training provided at work, and life experience.

Students wishing to enrol with Contour are eligible to apply for RPL prior to commencement of their course. The assessment should be equal in rigor and quality to the assessment of students' skills in the course. This ensures the qualification they receive from the RPL assessment will be the same as the qualification received from attending the full course.

What is RPL?

RPL involves the assessment of previously un-recognised skills and knowledge a person has achieved outside the formal education and training system. The RPL process assesses this un-recognised learning against the requirements of a qualification or a unit of competence. While RPL and credit transfer are related and can occur concurrently, they are seen as alternative (but complementary) pathways to a qualification and are defined by the way each process recognises the person's learning.

Prior learning may be achieved through formal education and training (credit transfer) or outside the formal education and training system, through work and life experience (RPL).

How is RPL assessed?

The RPL assessment process determines the extent to which the person has achieved the required learning and performance outcomes for units of competency, which are pre-requisites or required for partial or total completion of a qualification.

Students will be asked to undertake an assessment or produce documents for the already learnt skills and competencies that they wish to have recognised.

Both credit transfer and RPL are recognition pathways that can be used for the award of credit in a program or qualification, leading to the partial or full completion of the requirements for that program or qualification.

In order to recognise prior learning, it is necessary to:

- compare the informal or non-formal learning the student has achieved against the performance and knowledge outcomes of the unit(s) of competence for which the student is seeking recognition
- verify appropriate evidence to support the claim of prior learning.

Evidence gathering methods used to assess RPL applications may take several (not mutually exclusive) forms, such as:

- undertaking exactly the same or modified versions of the assessment the student would be required to complete as part of the full course
- undertaking an assessment based on a portfolio of evidence
- direct observation of demonstration of skill or competence, supplemented by assessment of the knowledge underpinning such skills

- reflective papers, journals or portfolios that relate past learning to the learning or competency outcomes of the current unit of competency

- provision of examples of the student's work drawn from the workplace, social, community or other setting in which the student applies their learning, skill or competence

- testimonials of learning, skill or competence

- a combination of any of the above.

Assessment Processes

RPL assessment processes and procedures may consist of the following stages:

- establishing the purpose of the assessment

- identifying the evidence required

- using appropriate evidence gathering methods

- interpreting the evidence and making a judgement

- recording the outcome

- reporting to key stakeholders.

Assessment methods will accommodate to literacy levels, cultural and educational background and experiences of students, whilst ensuring competency standards are met. Assessment methods will provide for a range of ways for students to demonstrate that they have met the required outcomes.

Students will be provided with advice about the assessment processes, and the types of evidence that Contour will consider in assessing their RPL application. Students will be provided with sufficient information to enable them to prepare their evidence to the standard required for the RPL assessment and any applicable fees.

As with all assessments, RPL assessment will be undertaken by suitability qualified assessors having knowledge of the content or skills area, as well as knowledge of, and expertise in, RPL practices and procedures.