

HOPE FOR THE UNQUALIFIED...

Recognised Prior Learning

Never before has it been so critical for the industry to work efficiently, quickly and error-free than now. The fast-changing technological and business environment as production methods and techniques have become increasingly automated and business becoming more globalised and competitive.

If one thinks qualification is deprived to have a successful career, then you may forgo certain jobs, promotions and opportunities. But if you think not having a qualification is hindering you in your progress, find the time, make the investment, and earn it.

Unfortunately, not all can afford both time and money at the same time.

Some 30 years ago, immediately after leaving school many went into employment without much training and qualification. In the process, many gained work experience through years of hard work. With the experience acquired they were already in a better position to teach rather than to go back to the classroom to start learning all over again.

But the lack of qualification became an obstacle to progress in their career.

However, not all is lost. If you have worked for a period of time and feel confident you can do a particular job, but don't have a formal education, then Recognition of Prior Learning will benefit you. Helping you re-enter the workforce, be promoted, find a new career, or fast tracked into a higher qualification.

RPL stands for Recognition of Prior Learning. It is defined as the process by which prior learning is given a value. It is a means by which prior learning is formally recognised, identified, assessed and acknowledged regardless

of where and how the learning was attained.

In practice what this means is that people never stop learning, a learner or an employee's non-traditional or non-formal experience and learning can be recognised. If you have been working 3 to 5 years in a certain line of work and have in the process acquired skills, knowledge and experience but don't have a specific qualification to prove it, then you are the right candidate for doing RPL.

RPL involves the assessment of knowledge, skills and competence previously acquired. Learning occurs in many contexts which include work, or learning through life experience generally. RPL does not give credit for experience as such; rather it considers the learning that was acquired as a result of the experience.

Identifying any skill gaps and further learning tasks to meet the requirements of a particular job role or qualification. Reducing unnecessary education, training and assessment activities for what you already know and do at the same time reducing the cost and time it takes to complete to achieve a qualification.

RPL candidates can gain their qualification within a very short period of time, especially when compared to attending the training course. The RPL process will normally take between 2-8

weeks depending on your chosen field and how quickly you gather evidence.

Your knowledge and competency is proved through gathering a relevant range of valid and reliable evidence for an appointed assessor to review and verify.

There are many benefits in having your skills recognised through RPL process. Most importantly it provides you with the opportunity to have your non-formal learning recognised and counted towards a qualification. It will save you time in achieving this qualification as you do not have to receive training in the skills and knowledge you already have.

This will encourage you to continue upgrading your skills and knowledge through structured training to help you achieve a formal qualification which, in the long term, will improve your employment

opportunities.

For the employers, retraining and skills upgrading of young employees' is also of paramount importance to enhance the quality of workforce.

Many countries adopted the same processes when developing their own competency-based

qualification. The Government of Malaysia through Human Resource Development Fund which is better known as HRDF has also introduced Recognition of Prior Learning.

As much it helps employees, there are various benefits for employers in assisting employees to seek recognition of their skills through RPL. These can be achieved by fast

tracking workers through the skills recognition process. Reduction in costs of training. Reduction in down-time while workers are in training. Efficient identification of skills gaps allowing for more

focused training.

There is a growing awareness that it is necessary to recognise informal, as well as formal, learning if we are to make learning accessible to all. The use of RPL by education and training providers to allow candidates entry to a programme. However, RPL is not widespread and may not be available from all education and training providers.

Certificates obtained through RPL should be the same as those obtained through full-time learning so as to prevent discrimination of the RPL learners.

To some education may not be important to be successful in life; it's the certificate of education that matters now.

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