

# Recognition of Prior Learning and Exemption Policy



## Policy Statement

The YMCA Awards Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Exemption Policy sets out our position on RPL and the procedures approved centres should follow to meet our requirements on RPL.

The policy outlines the centre's role in making decisions regarding RPL, the type of evidence required and how we will review and making decisions on claims for achievement where RPL applies.

YMCA Awards seeks to enable learners to avoid duplication of learning and assessment for the purposes of achieving a qualification. This can be managed through:

- Exemption
- Recognition of prior learning

Recognition of prior learning *does not include* prerequisite entry requirements which must be met before a learner is permitted to enrol on a qualification.

## Definitions

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	<p>An assessment method that considers a learner's existing knowledge, understanding and skills to determine whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the learner can proceed straight to formal assessment (thereby omitting some or all of the time usually spent learning)</li><li>• there is sufficient evidence that the learner does not need to undertake part, or all, of a formal assessment because they have met the assessment criteria in some other way</li></ul> <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• additional learning/development is needed.</li></ul> <p>A centre can make an application for a learner to claim RPL unless the assessment criteria of the qualification, or qualification component, states otherwise.</p> <p>To be eligible for certification, the learner must be capable of demonstrating their competence successfully in all the assessments relevant to the component or qualification under the same conditions as other learners.</p>
Exemption	<p>The ability for a learner to use achievements that have <b>already been certificated</b>, to demonstrate that they have fully met the learning outcomes of a unit or component of a qualification. When applied, the learner does not undertake further learning or assessment for the unit or component of the qualification.</p>
Prerequisite	<p>A qualification or component of a qualification that must be completed before a learner can continue studying.</p> <p>This describes situations where <i>prior learning is required</i>.</p>

## Policy

Learners, employers and YMCA Awards must be confident that any Recognition of Prior Learning and exemption decisions which contribute to qualification achievement do not compromise the integrity of our qualifications. In order to maintain the integrity of YMCA Awards qualifications, we set and maintain requirements regarding claims for achievement which feature recognition of prior learning and exemption.

### Your responsibilities as a YMCA Awards approved centre: RPL decisions

You must ensure that:

- the learner has provided sufficient evidence that their prior learning is current and relevant to the qualification or qualification component they are looking to achieve
- you design an individual training and assessment plan for the learner to successfully achieve all the required learning outcomes and assessment criteria
- you are confident the learner has the necessary underpinning knowledge, understanding and skills before commencing formal assessment without having undertaken the full programme of study with your centre
- your RPL policies, processes, procedures, practices and decisions are transparent, rigorous, reliable, fair and accessible to individuals and stakeholders
- you retain a copy of all evidence of the RPL assessment and outcomes for internal and external quality assurance
- you do not allow a learner to proceed to assessment, or claim achievement if there is any doubt regarding the learner's skills, knowledge, competence or the quality of evidence.

### Your responsibilities as a YMCA Awards approved centre: exemption

You must ensure that:

- the certificated achievement sufficiently covers the requirements of all the learning outcomes and assessment criteria for the unit, units or component of the qualification the learner is being exempt from
- the learner's knowledge, understanding or skills have been formally assessed within a reasonably recent timeframe to ensure the achievement remains **current**
- in circumstances where the date of certification may indicate the achievement is not sufficiently current, you seek additional evidence to demonstrate the learner has kept their knowledge, understanding and skills up-to-date; in some cases, RPL may be the more appropriate route
- you retain a copy of the certificate used to provide the exemption for internal and external quality assurance; exemption evidence is reviewed by YMCA Awards before certification
- you do not request an exemption if there is any doubt over the learner's skills, knowledge, competence or the quality of evidence.

**A note on currency of evidence:** we do not stipulate a maximum time threshold (for example, prior certificated achievement within three years of the date of claim) because this may not be appropriate for all qualifications and specific learner situations. Centres should use their professional judgement to establish currency in the context of the qualification and the learner's evidence (including supporting evidence) and seek advice from their YMCA Awards External Quality Assurer.

## Evidence requirements: RPL and exemption

The evidence must be **authentic**. All documentary evidence must be submitted in its original form. For example - original copies of certificates and reports must be provided. All evidence must be signed and dated at the time of achievement. The work must also be the learner's own. Forged documents or fraudulent claims must not be accepted and should be reported to YMCA Awards.

The evidence must be **valid**. The evidence must relate directly to the criteria and must meet all the assessment criteria for the area(s) of competence claimed. For example - a GCSE Biology certificate would not be a valid source of evidence for demonstrating the same underpinning knowledge required of an exercise and fitness instructor.

Centres must retain records that clearly show how eligibility for exemption/RPL was determined. All such records should be made available to the YMCA Awards External Quality Assurer upon request and should be kept by the centre until reviewed by YMCA Awards.

## An example of an RPL procedure

### Information, advice and guidance

Before enrolling a learner, the centre should discuss the option of using RPL. If the learner feels their past experience and/or qualifications will allow them to do this, the centre should ensure the learner is made aware of the definition of RPL, the process of applying RPL and what evidence needs to be provided.

### Evidence checking

It is advised that the evidence is checked prior to enrolment and registration with YMCA Awards. The evidence gathered needs to meet the standards of the qualification.

### Assessment and record keeping

Assessment as part of RPL is a structured process of gathering and reviewing evidence and making judgements about learners' past learning and experience in relation to qualification standards. In assessing using RPL, the centre must be satisfied that the evidence from the learner meets the standard for all the learning outcomes and criteria.

Centres must keep copies of all evidence used when deciding if RPL can be applied. This can include, but is not limited to, individual learning plans, details of discussions with the learner and certificate evidence. Evidence collected through the RPL process needs to be assessed and verified through the same quality assurance procedures that the centre uses for any other internal assessment methods.

### Outcomes of the RPL process

If it has been decided that the evidence provided is not sufficient to apply RPL, the learner must be informed as soon as possible. The centre should explain exactly why RPL cannot be applied and what this means for the learner with regards to their programme of study.

### Claiming certificates

All evidence used for RPL must be verified and securely stored prior to submitting a certificate claim for the learner. This evidence must be available for EQA sampling.

### Appeals

If a learner wishes to appeal against a decision made by their centre regarding RPL they will need to refer to the centre's appeals policy and procedures. If a learner or their centre wish to appeal against a decision made by YMCA Awards regarding RPL, the YMCA Awards Appeals procedure should be followed.

## An example of the exemption procedure

### Information, advice and guidance

Before enrolling a learner, the centre should discuss the option of using exemption. This will apply if the learner is being enrolled on a qualification with components/units that appear in another qualification which the learner may have achieved.

### Evidence checking

Centres must ensure that the learner provides evidence of exemption prior to enrolment and registration with YMCA Awards. This evidence must be kept as the centre will be required to submit this evidence to YMCA Awards when a certificate is being claimed.

### Record keeping

Centres must keep copies of all evidence of exemption, this will need to be submitted to YMCA Awards.

### Outcomes of the exemption process

If it has been decided that the evidence provided is not sufficient to apply exemption, the learner must be informed as soon as possible. The centre should explain exactly why exemption cannot be applied and what this means for the learner with regards to their programme of study. The possibility of using RPL should be discussed.

### Claiming certificates

All evidence used for exemption must be submitted to YMCA Awards; without this evidence being approved, the certificate cannot be released. This evidence must be available for EQA sampling.

### Appeals

If a learner wishes to appeal against a decision made by their centre regarding exemption they will need to refer to the centre's appeals policy and procedures. If a learner or their centre wish to appeal against a decision made by YMCA Awards regarding exemption, the YMCA Awards Appeals procedure should be followed.

## Feedback and complaints

Formal feedback and complaints relating to the application of RPL or a decision regarding RPL (including exemption) should be submitted to us using our usual feedback and complaints process: [ymcaawards.co.uk/contact-us/feedback-and-complaints](https://ymcaawards.co.uk/contact-us/feedback-and-complaints)

Any informal feedback, queries or requests for points of clarification can be directed to YMCA Awards' Quality and Assessment Team: [awards.quality@ymca.co.uk](mailto:awards.quality@ymca.co.uk)