



**QAES**  
QUALITY ASSURANCE AND  
ENHANCEMENT SERVICE



**cmethb**

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna  
an Chabháin agus Mhuineacháin  
*Cavan and Monaghan  
Education and Training Board*

## Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy

Version	Reviewed by	Review Date	Approval by	Approval date	Ratification by	Ratification date
1.0	QA Working Group	28 <sup>th</sup> November 2024	FET Management and Quality Council	11 <sup>th</sup> April 2025	Senior Management Team	14 <sup>th</sup> April 2025

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## List of Abbreviations

CAS	Common Awards System
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CMETB	Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board
EA	External Authentication/Authenticator
ELC	Early Learning and Care
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FET	Further Education and Training
FETAC	Further Education and Training Awards Council
IV	Internal Verification
NARIC	National Academic Recognition Information Centre
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
PAC	Programme Approval Committee
PDAS	Programme Derived Award Standards (previously referred to as Non-CAS Awards)
PHECC	Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council
PLC	Post Leaving Certificate
PL&D	Professional Learning and Development
PPC	Programme Proposal Committee
QA	Quality Assurance
QAES	Quality Assurance and Enhancement Service
QBS	QQI Business System
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RPCL	Recognition of Prior Certified Learning
RPEL	Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning

**Note:** Where the term RPL is used in this document, it is understood to refer to both RPCL and RPEL, unless otherwise stated.

## 1. Introduction

This policy outlines Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board's Quality Assurance (QA) policy and procedures for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for Further Education and Training (FET) learners. It is aligned to QQI's *Policy Restatement on the Policy and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Learners for providers of Further and Higher Education and Training (2015)*.<sup>1</sup> It is also informed by the *Principles and Operational Guidelines for the Recognition of Prior Learning in Further and Higher Education (2005)*.<sup>2</sup>

CMETB will conduct regular reviews of this policy. Updated versions will be uploaded to the CMETB Quality Assurance and Enhancement SharePoint site.

For any queries on this policy, please contact the RPL Officer or any member of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Service (QAES).

## 2. Policy Statement

CMETB is committed to implementing Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) across its FET provision, as appropriate, in line with its organisational vision of "*empowerment through learning and progression for all*." In so doing, CMETB acknowledges that individuals do not confine their learning to formal education settings. They can, in fact, gain valuable knowledge, skills and competence through diverse life experiences.

This RPL policy recognises and values all forms of learning, including learning gained outside of traditional classroom settings. Such learning may come from work, volunteering, or varied life experiences. Recognising and validating this prior learning can empower individuals by creating flexible and tailored educational pathways.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-11/qi-20-policy-restatement-policy-on-criteria-for-atp-in-relation-to-learners-for-providers-of-fh-et.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-09/principles-and-operational-guidelines-for-rpl-2005.pdf>

In setting out its RPL policy and procedures, CMETB commits to providing fair and equitable access to RPL, allowing individuals to have their prior learning assessed and validated irrespective of how and where they obtained the learning. This process will be transparent, quality assured, and consistent to ensure the integrity and credibility of the recognition granted.

In summary, this policy aims to reduce barriers to progression and foster a culture of lifelong learning that values and recognises all forms of learning, regardless of the methods used, including formal, non-formal or informal approaches.

### 3. Scope

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 and the 2019 Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (amendment) Act outlines the statutory basis for QQI's engagement with RPL. Accordingly, QQI has responsibility for setting policy in respect of access, transfer and progression.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016)<sup>4</sup> stipulate that:

*providers' policies and procedures for learner admissions, progression and recognition include 'fair recognition of education and training qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning' and that provider's ethos enable flexible learning pathways.*

CMETB must, therefore, put in place a consistent approach to RPL in line with its policy on access, transfer and progression.

CMETB's Quality Assurance (QA) system provides oversight that the assessment of learner achievement is carried out in a fair, transparent and consistent manner in line with relevant award standards.

CMETB is fully committed to utilising RPL as an instrument for:

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-10/recognition-of-prior-learning-in-fet.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-11/qg-1-core-statutory-quality-assurance-guidelines.pdf>

- Determining standard access equivalences
- The award of credit and
- Exemptions for learners with qualifications or prior experience in a specific area

This policy, therefore, applies to RPL for the purposes of access, accreditation and exemptions.

As a general rule, RPL can only be applied for in respect of awards that CMETB is validated to deliver. Applicants who apply for awards not validated by CMETB will, where possible, be referred to providers who offer that award. It should also be noted that where differential validation is applied for, there will be a delay in offering the RPL process. Such decisions will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and based on FET Management and Quality Council approval and the availability of resources.

In the case of individuals accessing programmes accredited by other awarding bodies, CMETB will adhere to the relevant body's RPL requirements.

All new programmes developed by CMETB and submitted to QQI for validation will give due consideration to both the benefits and requirements of RPL.

## 4. Definitions

Designed to widen access to education and training for learners who lack either formal certification or who have older, outdated qualifications, RPL is a powerful mechanism that helps build an environment of lifelong learning and inclusiveness. RPL facilitates all learners by paving the way for a more responsive, flexible and personalised learner-centered FET system.

RPL, therefore, is the formal process that assesses and recognises individuals' existing knowledge, skills and competence acquired through formal, non-formal and/or informal means.

In respect of each of these types of learning – formal, non-formal and informal – the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) provides the following definitions<sup>5</sup>:

**Formal learning** occurs in an organised and structured environment (in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It typically leads to validation and certification.

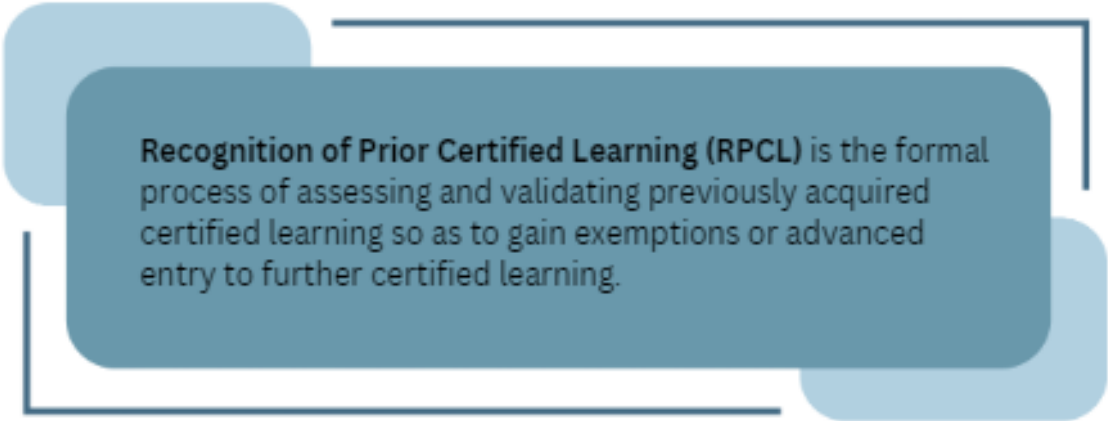
**Non-formal learning** is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It may be validated and may lead to certification.

**Informal learning** results from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is in most cases unintentional from the learner's perspective. It doesn't usually lead to certification.

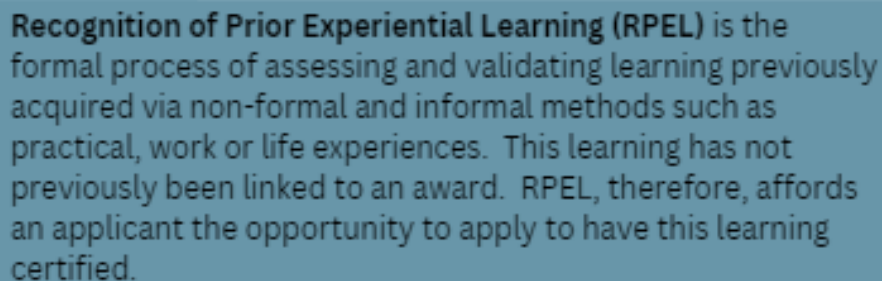
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<sup>5</sup> [https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/3093\\_en.pdf](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/3093_en.pdf)

Furthermore, RPL is an umbrella term used to refer to all forms of prior learning. It incorporates both the **Recognition of Prior Certified Learning (RPCL)** and the **Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL)**.

An infographic with a light blue background and a dark blue rounded rectangle containing text. The text defines RPCL as the formal process of assessing and validating previously acquired certified learning for exemptions or advanced entry.

**Recognition of Prior Certified Learning (RPCL)** is the formal process of assessing and validating previously acquired certified learning so as to gain exemptions or advanced entry to further certified learning.

An infographic with a light blue background and a dark blue rounded rectangle containing text. The text defines RPEL as the formal process of assessing and validating learning previously acquired via non-formal and informal methods such as practical, work or life experiences, which has not previously been linked to an award.

**Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL)** is the formal process of assessing and validating learning previously acquired via non-formal and informal methods such as practical, work or life experiences. This learning has not previously been linked to an award. RPEL, therefore, affords an applicant the opportunity to apply to have this learning certified.

Other key terminology referred to throughout this policy includes:

#### 4.1. Access

Access means that applicants are facilitated to gain entry to a programme at a level commensurate with their existing knowledge, skills and competence. Assessment of course

applicants, in line with course entry requirements, will provide clarity on the level of prior learning obtained.

All new programmes developed by CMETB, and submitted to QQI for validation, will include criteria for RPL for access, where appropriate.

## 4.2. Exemptions

CMETB will only offer exemptions in respect of RPCL applications for either advanced entry to a programme or for the achievement of the overall award. Accordingly, exemptions will only be considered for those applicants whose prior certified learning maps to the learning outcomes of the programme applied for. The prior certified learning should have been achieved within the previous 5 years and is considered current/up to date. Such exemptions will only be granted for full modules.

All new programmes developed by CMETB, and submitted to QQI for validation, will include criteria for RPL for exemptions, where appropriate.

## 4.3. Award

CMETB will support RPL applications for the purpose of gaining recognised qualifications for either individual minor awards or major awards, where relevant and appropriate.

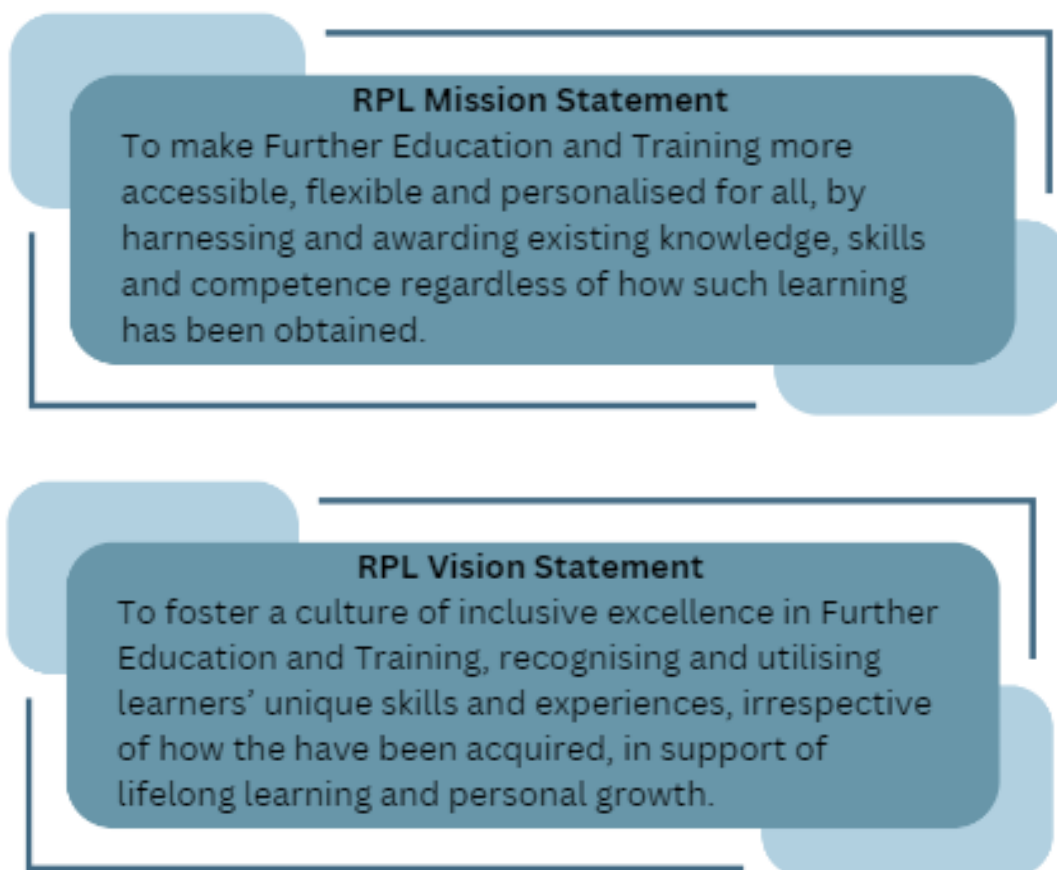
## 4.4. Credit

Credit, in terms of the Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) may be granted where there is sufficient evidence of the required learning outcomes being achieved. Consequently, applicants may be entitled to advanced entry to a programme and/or awarded marks/grades for the learning.

# 5. RPL in CMETB

## 5.1. CMETB's RPL Mission and Vision Statements

In its RPL Framework, CMETB sets out its RPL mission and vision statements and these are restated here for ease of reference.



## 5.2. Policy Aim and Objectives

The aim of this policy is to set out CMETB's process for the implementation of RPL, to support access to FET programmes and awards by providing a process for the recognition of previously obtained knowledge, skills and competence achieved through formal, non-formal or informal means by accrediting same.

To help achieve this, this RPL policy outlines CMETB's approach to RPL and includes the following information:

- The steps involved in applying for RPL.
- How to submit an RPL application.

- The roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder involved in the RPL process.
- The RPL appeals process

## 6. Principles of assessment in relation to RPL<sup>6</sup>

Quality assured assessment ensures that, in criterion referenced assessment, *“learners are assessed, and the assessment judgment is made based on whether the learner has reached the required national standards of knowledge, skill and competence for the award.”*<sup>7</sup> Central to quality assured assessment is the assumption that learners are assessed in a fair and consistent manner in line with the relevant award standard. Quality assured assessment ensures adherence to the principles of assessment.

### 6.1. Validity

The principle of validity is fundamental to the assessment process, ensuring that an assessment measures what it has been designed to measure. A valid assessment should assess the relevant standard of knowledge, skill and competence required to successfully achieve a named award.

Validity in assessment occurs when:

- Assessment is fit for purpose.
- Learners can produce evidence which can be measured against the relevant award standard.
- Assessors can make accurate assessment decisions.
- Assessment is accessible to all learners who have the potential to achieve the relevant award standard.

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<sup>6</sup> The principles discussed in this policy are based on QQI’s principles for assessment. More details on this can be found in QQI’s *Quality Assuring Assessment: Guidelines for Providers (revised 2018)*.  
<https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-10/quality-assuring-assessment-guidelines-for-providers-revised-2013.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-10/quality-assuring-assessment-guidelines-for-providers-revised-2013.pdf>

## 6.2. Reliability

The principle of reliability ensures that assessment measurement is accurate. In other words, the knowledge, skills and competence which the assessment is designed to measure should produce results that are both reliable and can withstand scrutiny. Reliable assessments ensure that results remain consistent when administered under similar conditions.

Reliability in assessment occurs when:

- Assessment is based on valid assessment techniques.
- Assessment conditions are consistent.
- Learner evidence is reliable.
- Results are consistent across different assessors, context, conditions and learners over time.

## 6.3. Fairness

The principle of fairness supports the principles of validity and reliability. Fairness in assessment provides equality of opportunity by ensuring learners have access to appropriate resources and equipment to complete their assessment. It also ensures that assessments are fair and equal for all learners. CMETB has policies and procedures in place to ensure the fair and consistent assessment of all learners.

## 6.4. Quality

The principle of quality ensures that all assessment processes are quality assured.

## 6.5. Transparency

The principle of transparency ensures that assessment policies and procedures provide clarity for all relevant stakeholders.

## 6.6. Authenticity

The principle of authenticity requires that the assessment evidence submitted is the learner's own work.

### 6.7. Sufficiency

The principle of sufficiency requires that the submitted evidence is appropriate and sufficient to the level of the relevant award.

### 6.8. Currency

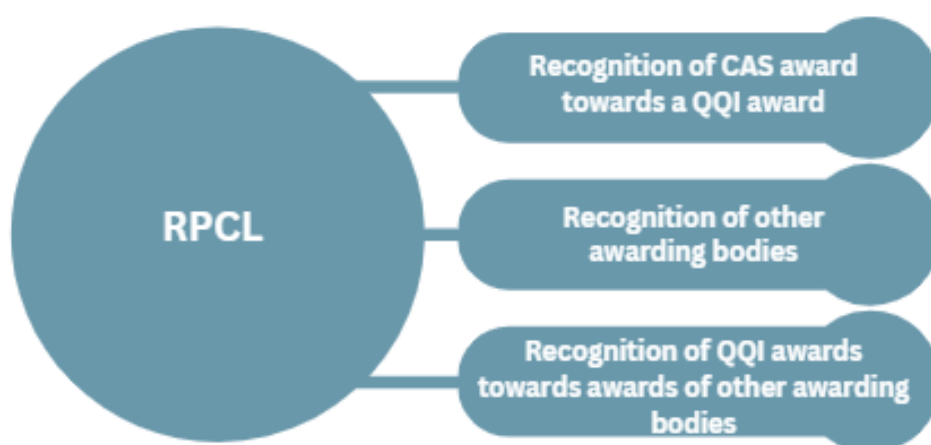
The principle of currency requires that the knowledge, skills and competence being claimed as part of the assessment are up-to-date and retain their relevance.

## 7. Recognition of Prior Certified Learning

As previously outlined, Recognition of Prior Certified Learning (RPCL) is the formal process of assessing and validating previously acquired certified learning so as to gain exemptions or advanced entry to further certified learning.

### 7.1. Types of RPCL

There are a number of different types of RPCL as outlined below:



**Figure 1: Types of RPCL**

#### 7.1.1. Recognition of a CAS award towards a QQI award

Where a learner has previously achieved a CAS award, the learner is deemed to have completed the award, provided the award has been achieved in the previous five-year period and that the learning remains current. The QBS system will recognise the award and the original grade remains valid. It is, therefore, not necessary to apply for RPCL.

Notwithstanding this, the onus is on CMETB, as the provider, to ensure that the prior certified learning is still relevant. Awards older than five years may still be used for RPL if the skills achieved are still considered relevant and current. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

If the award, for which RPL is sought, lies outside the CAS system, RPCL will apply. This includes recognition for FETAC awards. In some cases, both RPCL and RPEL will be used to demonstrate that the standard for the destination award has been achieved. This works by mapping the learning outcomes for the certified learning to the destination award and using evidence from practice (experiential learning) to fill any gaps. The applicant must apply for RPCL using the process outlined in this policy.

The following points must be considered as part of the RPCL process:

<b>Comparison of Learning Outcomes</b>	<p>The RPL assessor is required to compare the learning outcomes of the prior certified learning to the learning outcomes of the module(s)/programmes for which the applicant is seeking RPCL.</p> <p>This must be conducted in line with CMETB's RPL Policy and adhere to the award standard and principles of assessment.</p>
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	Gaps must be clearly identified and supports put in place to help the applicant address these gaps.
<b>Currency of RPCL</b>	<p>The RPCL must have been achieved within an appropriate timeframe in line this RPL Policy.</p> <p>For example, digital skills acquired ten years ago are of limited benefits today unless the applicant has continued to upskill in this area. Certain skills in areas such as communications or cookery may remain more relevant over time.</p> <p>The general rule of thumb is that certification must have been achieved within the last five years. Older certification may still be used for RPL if the skills achieved are still considered relevant and current (up to date). This will be determined on a case-by-case basis.</p>

### 7.1.2. RPCL in respect of other awarding bodies

Apart from QQI, CMETB works with a number of different awarding bodies. These include City and Guilds, FDQ and the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC). QQI recognises the value of awards made by other awarding bodies provided that body is nationally recognised in its own country and operates a robust quality assurance process.

QQI has identified a list of awards to which RPCL may be applied (QQI, 2018)<sup>8</sup>. Where an award is not on this list, the applicant must submit original transcripts, along with the learning outcomes and assessment requirements for the relevant programme with their completed RPL Application Form. The original copies will be returned to the applicant after authenticity of the documentation is confirmed. If any of these documents or certificates are in a language other than English, it is the applicant's responsibility to have them translated and verified by a recognised translation service prior to submitting an RPL application. CMETB may seek contact details of the awarding body to verify these directly or through the National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC).

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-12/exemptions.pdf>

Any applicant seeking *Statements of Equivalence* for foreign qualifications may be referred to NARIC<sup>9</sup> if their qualification is not already aligned to the NFQ.

### 7.1.3. Recognition of QQI awards towards the awards of other awarding bodies

Where a learner is seeking to apply for RPCL using an award from another awarding body, the application will be processed in line with the RPL procedures of the relevant awarding body.

## 7.2. RPCL in CMETB

RPCL can be used within CMETB to support access onto a programme or to achieve exemptions from a specific module or to contribute to evidence for an award.

Please note that in respect of full-time provision, RPCL applications will not be accepted after 30<sup>th</sup> September of the respective calendar year.

In all cases where a learner applies for RPCL after commencing a programme, the learner must continue on the relevant module(s) until they are informed of the outcome of their RPL application.

### 7.2.1. RPCL for access

Where an applicant submits an RPCL for access application, the applicant's prior certified learning will be used to determine their entry level. The prior certified learning will be used to support access to an award at the same or next level on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

### 7.2.2. RPCL for exemption

Exemptions exist where learners have been awarded accredited certification for learning by an awarding body such as QQI or other recognised institution or body. In such cases, the

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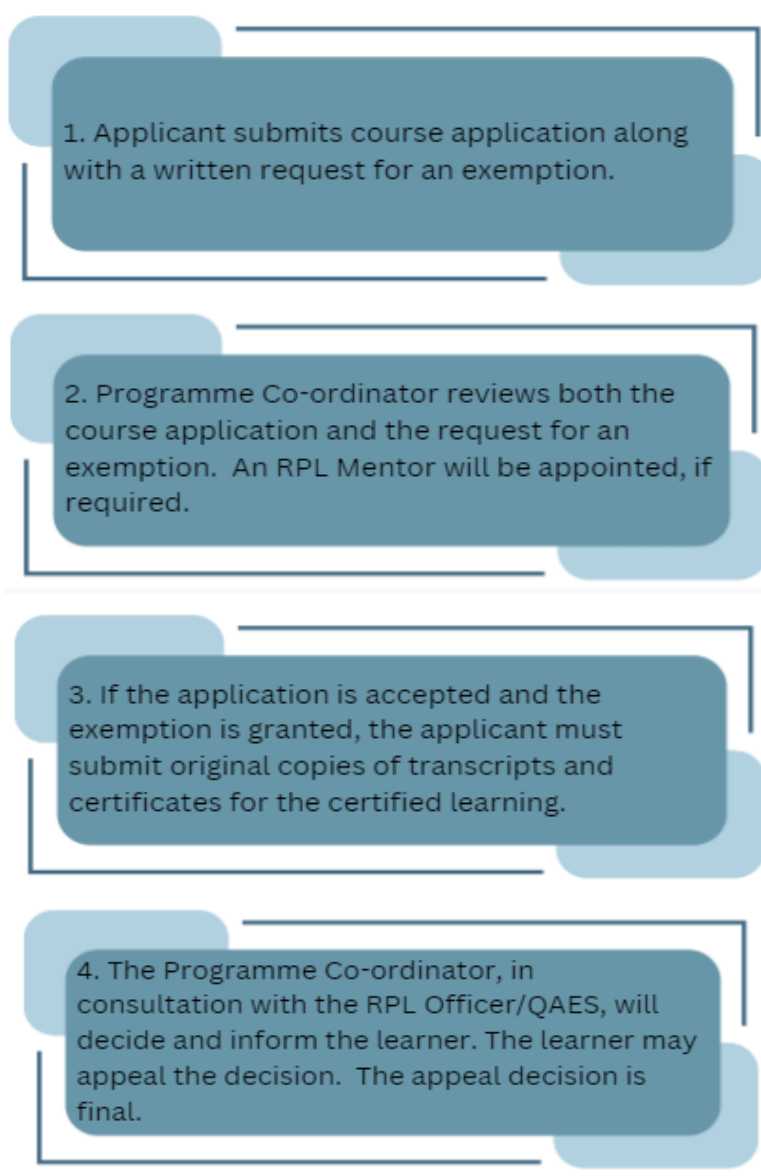
<sup>9</sup> <https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/Search?searchtype=recognitions>

accredited programme has already been graded and when used as RPL is grade neutral and does not contribute to the overall calculation of the grade of the major award. This, however, only applies in the case of CAS awards and not in the case of PDAS (non-CAS) awards such as Early Learning and Care where a grade is required.

Exemptions may afford learners advanced entry to a programme and/or may be used for the achievement of the overall award

Where an applicant submits an RPCL for exemption application, the applicant's prior certified learning, which the application is based on, should be at the same (or higher) level on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) as the level of the programme the application is seeking exemption for.

In order to manage expectations QAES has devised the following process for dealing with RPCL for exemption applications:



## **Figure 2: RPCL for Exemption**

### **7.2.3. RPCL for award**

Where an applicant submits an RPCL for award application, the applicant must be able to provide evidence of knowledge, skills and competence to the level of the relevant award standard. CMETB will appoint an RPL Mentor to support the applicant in preparing the required evidence based on the resources available to CMETB at the time the application is submitted.

Learning outcomes of the prior certified learning will be mapped to the learning outcomes of the module/programme for which the applicant is seeking RPL for. The award standard and principles of assessment must be adhered to. Any gaps in learning should be identified and supports put in place to help the applicant address these gaps.

In preparing their evidence, the applicant must clearly demonstrate that the required learning has been achieved. The certification must have been achieved within the five years prior to submitting the RPCL application and/or the relevant knowledge, skills and competence must still be current.

In order to manage expectations QAES has devised the following process for dealing with RPCL for award applications. Before applying this process, however, a mapping of learning outcomes will be conducted. Where gaps are identified the following process will be applied:

1. The learner submits an RPCL application using the official CMETB RPL Application Form along with original certificates and copies of the learning outcomes and assessment requirements of the prior certified learning.

2. Where gaps are identified during the mapping process, an RPL Mentor will be assigned to support the applicant throughout the RPL process.

3. The applicant prepares and submits their RPL portfolio, ensuring that the evidence submitted demonstrates their prior learning while also meeting the learning outcomes of the award being sought.

4. RPL Portfolio is assessed by an RPL Assessor, who is appointed by QAES, and is an experienced subject matter expert.

5. Internal Verification, External Authentication and Results Approval takes place.

6. CMETB QA governance process takes place with results approval via the QA Sub-group and FET Management and Quality Council.

7. Applicant is informed of their results.

8. Applicant can appeal in accordance with CMETB's RPL Appeals Process and applicable assessment policies.

## 8. Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning

As previously outlined, Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) is the formal process of assessing and validating learning previously acquired via non-formal and informal methods such as practical, work or life experiences. This learning has not previously been linked to an award. RPEL, therefore, affords an applicant the opportunity to apply to have this learning certified.

### 8.1. Types of RPEL

CMETB will support RPEL applicants via the process set out in this policy.

#### 8.1.1. RPEL for access

Where an applicant submits an RPEL for access application, the knowledge, skills and competence they have acquired are considered in the context of the programme they are applying for. Additional mechanisms such as one-to-one interviews and/or skills demonstrations may be used to determine an applicant's suitability and ability to succeed.

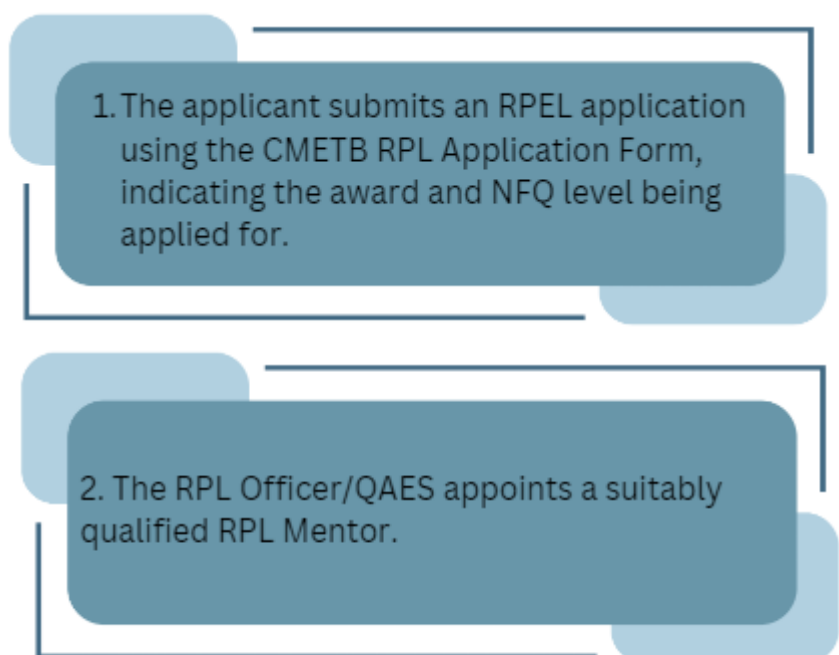
#### 8.1.2. RPEL for exemptions

CMETB does not consider RPEL for exemption applications. A formal RPEL application must be submitted in all cases.

#### 8.1.3. RPEL for award

Where an applicant submits an RPEL for award application, the RPL Officer will, in the first instance, meet the applicant to establish the destination award they wish to achieve. Subject to the outcome of this initial meeting, the applicant may be invited to submit a formal RPEL application, which will be subject to approval of both the RPL Officer and the Director of Quality Assurance/Centre Head.

In order to manage expectations QAES has devised the following process for dealing with RPEL for award applications:



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graph TD; A[3. The RPL Mentor supports the applicant with their portfolio preparation.] --> B[4. The RPL portfolio is assessed by an RPL Assessor, who is appointed by QAES and is an experienced subject matter expert.]; B --> C[5. The RPL portfolio is presented for Internal Verification, External Verification and Results Approval via CMETB's assessment process and procedures.]; C --> D[6. CMETB QA governance process takes place with results approval via the QA Sub-group and FET Management and Quality Council.]; D --> E[7. The applicant is informed of the outcome of the RPEL process.];
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3. The RPL Mentor supports the applicant with their portfolio preparation.

4. The RPL portfolio is assessed by an RPL Assessor, who is appointed by QAES and is an experienced subject matter expert.

5. The RPL portfolio is presented for Internal Verification, External Verification and Results Approval via CMETB's assessment process and procedures.

6. CMETB QA governance process takes place with results approval via the QA Sub-group and FET Management and Quality Council.

7. The applicant is informed of the outcome of the RPEL process.

**Figure 4: RPEL for Award**

## 8.2. Limitations of RPEL

Work-related experience in the vocational area for which RPEL is being sought must be deemed to be current. For example, IT experience from 2 years ago may no longer be current, whereas childcare experience from 5 years ago may still retain some or all of its currency. Regardless, learners must be able to demonstrate all of the knowledge, skills and competence associated with the award for which RPEL is being sought. This will be considered on an individual basis except in the case of apprenticeship programmes where specific minimum levels of prior work-related experience apply.

## 9. Responsibility for RPL

CMETB is committed to facilitating RPL for access, exemptions and award. In order to facilitate this, all staff involved in programme management, learner recruitment and programme delivery should:

- Ensure that courses have clear entry criteria based on the standard of knowledge, skills and competence required to successfully complete the programme.
- Ensure that courses have fair, consistent and transparent access procedures, using appropriate mechanisms. A screening tool may be required to facilitate this, for example in the case of ESOL learners requesting RPL.
- Ensure that RPL is only applied for and granted in respect of full modules. Written approval will be required, with the RPL process applied clearly documented. Exemptions must be approved by the relevant programme manager in consultation with the RPL Officer.

### 9.1. RPL Working Group

The RPL Working Group will consist of at least one representative from each FET Service. It will be chaired by the RPL Officer and will form a key part of the RPL and Quality Assurance (QA) governance structures. The Working Group will report to the QA Sub-group and the FET Management and Quality Council.

The Working Group will meet at least quarterly. Additional meetings may be required from time to time.

The responsibilities of the RPL Working Group include:

- Assisting in the development and review of the CMETB RPL policy and procedures,
- Providing support to the RPL Officer.
- Ensuring consistency, fairness and transparency in the application of RPL across CMETB FET Services.
- Providing guidance and support to staff members involved in implementing RPL.
- Promoting awareness and understanding of RPL amongst staff, learners, employers and/or other key stakeholders.
- Communicating the opportunity to participate in RPL,
- Being available to form a panel to discuss an RPL query with the independent assessor.

Refer to the RPL Working Group Terms of Reference for further information.

## 9.2. RPL Officer

The RPL Officer is responsible for co-ordinating CMETB's RPL provision. This includes the development and oversight of the RPL Framework and RPL policy and procedures. The RPL Officer will also provide any additional guidance required.

The key tasks and responsibilities of the RPL Officer include:

- Supporting the recruitment of participants for the RPL process.
- Developing appropriate tools and resources to support key stakeholders at all stages of the RPL process – identification, documentation, assessment and certification.
- Maintaining appropriate records and submitting regular reports/updates via the RPL Working Group and other appropriate QA governance groups.
- Liaising with the various FET centres, Quality Assurance and Enhancement Service (QAES) and guidance and recruitment departments.
- Liaising with the Professional Learning and Development (PL&D) Officer to ensure RPL Mentors and Assessors are supported with ongoing PL&D opportunities.

In addition, the RPL Officer will work with centre management to ensure that staff and learners are informed of:

- CMETB's RPL policy and requirements for implementation.
- The benefits of RPL to CMETB, learners, employers and other stakeholders.

- The appropriate supports relating to the mapping of learning outcomes to assessment standards (RPCL only).
- The appropriate supports relating to portfolio preparation.

As part of the RPL application process, the RPL Officer, in consultation with the Programme Co-ordinator, will inform the learner of the process, timelines and outcomes of their RPL application.

The RPL Officer must also submit any appeals to the Independent Appeals Committee/ Examiner and inform the learner of the outcome of the appeals process once the appropriate governance channels have been notified as per the process outlined in Section 12.

### 9.3. Programme Co-ordinator

The Programme Co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring that all staff and RPL applicants from their service/centre are fully aware of:

- The existence of the CMETB RPL Framework and RPL Policy.
- The many benefits of RPL.
- The appropriate supports available to both staff and learners.
- The RPL application process and the supports available to support applicants through the RPL process.

The Programme Co-ordinator, in consultation with QAES, will appoint an appropriate RPL Mentor from the approved CMETB RPL Mentor Panel. However, QAES is solely responsible for appointing the RPL Assessor.

The Programme Co-ordinator must submit any appeal applications to RPL Officer who will forward all appeals to the independent RPL Appeals Examiner as per Section 12.

## 9.4. RPL Applicant

The RPL Applicant is required to submit their RPL application using the official CMETB RPL Application Form. The completed application form is returned to the Programme Co-ordinator within 10 days of receipt of application form.

In the case of RPCL applicants, original certificates, results, programme details, and a copy of the learning outcomes for each module completed must be submitted along with the application form. The learning outcomes and assessment details are required to facilitate the initial mapping process.

In applying for RPL, the applicant:

- Has full responsibility for completing their RPL portfolio, ensuring that evidence submitted relates to the preceding five-year period and meets the current standards as set out for the award they are applying for.
- Has a responsibility to engage with the RPL Mentor assigned to them to provide guidance on how to gather the relevant evidence.
- Has a responsibility to bring any support needs to the mentor's attention in a timely manner.
- Will have their application withdrawn or paused if, after three attempts, they have not engaged with their mentor in a satisfactory manner.

## 9.5. RPL Mentor

The role of the RPL Mentor is to guide and support the applicant through the RPL process and to ensure that the evidence provided by the learner is consistent with the relevant award standard.

As part of their duties, the RPL Mentor will:

- Provide guidance and support, as necessary, in respect of possible outcomes of the RPL process e.g., destination award.
- Developing briefs, tasks and marking rubrics in consultation with the RPL Officer/ Subject Matter Expert.
- Protect the integrity and reliability of the relevant award by ensuring that national standards of knowledge, skills and competence are adhered to.

- Support the learner throughout the RPL process while ensuring that the evidence produced maps to the learning outcomes as prescribed in the award specification.
- Attend regular meetings with the RPL Officer and other relevant personnel, as required.
- Keep a full and complete record of the learner's progress throughout the duration of the process.
- Attend initial and ongoing RPL Mentor training and briefing sessions.

## 9.6. RPL Assessor

The RPL Assessor must be a suitably qualified and experienced assessor and subject matter expert. They must be able to assess both RPCL and RPEL and have knowledge of the different forms of RPL (access, advanced entry or award). They should also be aware that RPL is individual to the applicant and as such, each portfolio submitted will be unique to the applicant's prior learning and experiences.

The RPL Assessor will be appointed by CMETB's QAES and will:

- Assess and grade each RPL portfolio in a fair and consistent manner, using an assessment rubric which includes marks to assist the assessor in determining the grade. RPL portfolios will be graded as Pass, Merit or Distinction. Each learning outcome will be awarded a mark, and the total marks will be averaged to inform the final grade.
- Maintain and submit appropriate records and reports to the RPL Officer and/or QAES.

The RPL Assessor must also be aware of the fact that the standards in the award specifications are used to assess the RPL portfolio and not CMETB's validated programmes. As such, the assessment techniques and guidelines in the module descriptors do not apply to RPL. Notwithstanding this, CMETB must be validated to offer the programme the applicant is applying for RPL for.

## 9.7. Quality Assurance and Enhancement Service

The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Service (QAES) will work with the RPL Officer and/or Programme Co-ordinator to appoint an RPL Mentor upon acceptance of an RPL application.

The RPL Officer, in consultation with the Programme Co-ordinator and/or QAES, is responsible for appointing an assessor, a subject matter expert, to assess and grade the portfolio of evidenced. Following Internal Verification, QAES will appoint an appropriate External Authenticator from the National External Authenticator (EA) Database.

### 9.8. Guidance and Recruitment Staff

Guidance and recruitment staff within CMETB FET centres will be available to advise, support and refer RPL applicants as appropriate.

The RPL Officer will support guidance and recruitment staff with up-to-date information in respect of RPL policies, procedures and processes.

### 9.9. Independent Appeals Examiner

The role of the Independent Appeals Examiner is to:

- Examine learner appeals on RPL application outcomes.
- Investigate whether relevant assessment procedures have been followed.
- Make an informed decision on all appeals.

## 10. Expected Benefits of RPL

In an ever-evolving economic and educational landscape, RPL provides a broader, flexible and more personalised approach that validates knowledge, skills and competence acquired through life experiences, be it through work, self-study or volunteering.

RPL, therefore, provides many benefits for learners, employers and educational providers because it empowers individuals, fosters inclusivity and promotes lifelong learning. In recognising and validating learning irrespective of how or where it has been achieved, RPL not only validates an individual's knowledge, skills and competence, but also opens up new progression pathways.

### 10.1. Benefits of RPL for individuals

Among the benefits of RPL for individuals that this policy considers are:

- RPL validates the knowledge, skills and competence achieved through various work and life experiences.
- RPL allows individuals gain credits towards the attainment of formal qualifications in a way that helps reduce the time and financial costs of education. This, in turn, makes education more accessible.
- RPL helps promote a culture of lifelong learning, encouraging individuals to engage in ongoing education, thereby participating in both personal and professional growth.
- RPL can lead to career advancement by providing formal recognition of knowledge, skills and competence.
- Recognising an individual's existing knowledge, skills and competence can enhance their confidence, self-esteem and motivation to engage in education.

### 10.2. Benefits for CMETB

Among the benefits of RPL for CMETB that this policy considers are:

- RPL allows for enhanced participation in education and training, thereby increasing enrolments.
- RPL allows CMETB make its provision more adaptable and responsive to individual needs, thereby creating more diverse pathways into education and training.
- RPL helps build a culture of lifelong learning, providing individuals with access to ongoing and flexible opportunities for continuous learning and development at all stages of their professional development.
- RPL can lead to enhanced learner outcomes, benefiting both the individual and CMETB.
- RPL provides an accurate reflection of skills needs in the CMETB region, allowing CMETB to respond in a timely and efficient manner,
- RPL allows CMETB build stronger relationships with employers, demonstrating CMETB's commitment to lifelong learning and enhancing the lives of all in the communities it serves.
- RPL allows CMETB make more effective and efficient use of resources.

### 10.3. Benefits for employers

Among the benefits of RPL for employers that this policy considers are:

- Employers can use RPL to help identify existing knowledge, skills and competence within their workforce, as well as skills gaps. This will help inform training needs and support the career development and advancement of their employees without having to start at the baseline academic requirement.
- Employees who have their knowledge, skills and competence formally recognised are more likely to be engaged and motivated, leading to increased productivity.
- Recognising prior learning can increase employees' job satisfaction and commitment, helping to reduce staff turnover.
- Recognising existing skills can help employers save on their training costs. It also helps reduce the number of superfluous training days for employees.

## 11. RPL Implementation

This policy and associated RPL procedures have been approved by CMETB's FET Management and Quality Council, having been developed in association with the CMETB cross-functional QA Working Group and Sub-group. They have been developed in direct response to sectoral guidelines, strategic priorities and organisational commitment to the co-ordinated implementation of RPL across CMETB FET Services.

It is CMETB's intention to adopt an incremental approach to the introduction of RPL across FET Services. Adopting a staged process will help ensure that CMETB remains an inclusive learning environment capable of providing agile and timely responses to the diverse needs of individuals, employers and the wider community on an ongoing basis while learning from local and sectoral models of good practice.

An RPL Working Group will be established to support the RPL Working Group in the implementation and promotion of RPL across CMETB FET Services.

## 12. Learner Appeals Process

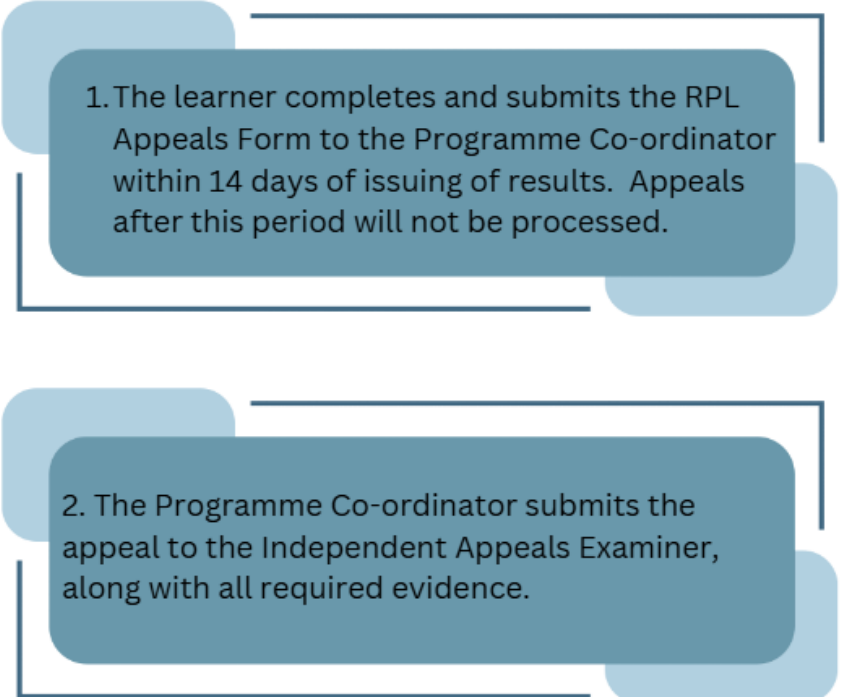
A learner has the right to appeal the decision in relation to RPL. The learner can appeal either the process by which their RPL application was assessed, or the grade awarded as part of the RPL process. All appeals must be submitted within 14 days of issuing of results. All appeals must be made in writing using the RPL Appeals Form (Appendix A). No new assessment evidence can be submitted as part of the appeal application.

In submitting an appeal, the learner must:

- Note the grounds for appeal (assessment result appeal or assessment process appeal).
- Note the 14-day timeframe for submitting an appeal.
- Lodge an appeal, ensuring the appropriate fee has been paid.

Where possible, the learner should discuss their appeal application with their RPL Mentor and/or Programme Co-ordinator.

All learner appeals will be conducted in line with **CMETB's Assessment Results Appeals and Assessment Process Appeals policies**. For ease of reference the assessments appeals process is summarised as follows:



1. The learner completes and submits the RPL Appeals Form to the Programme Co-ordinator within 14 days of issuing of results. Appeals after this period will not be processed.

2. The Programme Co-ordinator submits the appeal to the Independent Appeals Examiner, along with all required evidence.

3. The Independent Appeals Examiner reviews the appeal and makes a decision.

4. The Independent Appeals Examiner informs the Programme Co-ordinator of the outcome of the appeal within a reasonable timeframe (recommended within 2 working days.)

5. Programme Co-ordinator informs the learner of the outcome of the appeal within a reasonable timeframe (recommended within 2 working days). If successful, the appeal fee is refunded to the learner. The appeal decision is final.

**Figure 5: RPL Appeals Process**

## Appendix A: Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Application Form

This application form is your request to apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). There are two distinct types of RPL, and it is important to know which type you are applying for. To help you with this, we have included the following short definitions of both types. If you are still not sure which type of RPL applies to you, please speak to the relevant programme manager/co-ordinator.

**Recognition of Prior Certified Learning (RPCL)** is the formal process of assessing and validating previously acquired certified learning so as to gain exemptions or advanced entry to further certified learning

**Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL)** is the formal process of assessing and validating learning previously acquired via non-formal and informal methods such as practical, work or life experiences. This learning has not previously been certified. The RPEL process gives you the opportunity to have this learning certified.

The RPL process requires that the knowledge, skills and competencies you have achieved are compared with the learning outcomes of the award you are applying for.

You should complete all sections of this application form.

Please include original copies of all relevant certificate/diplomas that you have achieved. Please note that we will take copies of these documents and return the original copies to you. Photocopies must be certified as original by an authorised CMETB staff member.

If your application is accepted, you will be required to register as a learner with Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board (CMETB)<sup>10</sup> and meet with an RPL Mentor, document your learning and participate in a short interview. If the module requires it, you may also be asked to complete a skills demonstration.

If your application is not approved, you have the right to appeal the decision. This appeal must be submitted within 10 days of receipt of the decision and outline the reason(s) for your appeal.

<sup>10</sup> Information on the application and registration process will be provided to you by the relevant programme manager/co-ordinator.

**Please return this completed application form to the RPL Officer within 10 working days.**

**Part A: Applicant Information**

Applicant's Name	
Address (please include Eircode)	
Contact Phone Number	
Email Address	

**Part B: Please specify details for the modules/programme(s) for which you are looking to gain RPL for**

Please provide the name and code of the Major Award relevant to this application	
Major Award Name	
Major Award Code	
Please provide details of the specific modules you are looking to gain RPL for.	
<b>Module Name</b>	<b>Module Code</b>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	

Part C: Details of Formal Training Completed (This is any training that you have received a certificate for)

Please outline below if you have any certified qualifications to support your RPL application e.g. QQI modules already certified, degrees, diplomas, Leaving Certificate, Junior Certificate, City and Guilds etc.

**Note: You can attach additional information to this part of the application if required.**

## Part D: Details of Prior Experiential Learning

Please outline below details of your current and previous work experience relevant to this application.	
Current Employer's Name	
Your Current Job Title	
Details of your Current Role	
<b>Note: You can include additional information to this section of the application if required.</b>	
<p>Details of your previous role(s) at work. Please list your duties and responsibilities from previous jobs/roles. These are the tasks that you carried out as part of your job.</p> <p>Supporting documentation may include a job description or role profile and/or an employer reference.</p>	

## Part E: Other Relevant Experience

Please provide details of any other relevant experience that you may have and consider relevant to this application. This could include voluntary work, sports clubs, parent associations, school clubs, charity work etc.)	
Organisation Name	
Dates	
Role in organisation	
List your duties and responsibilities as part of this role	
Supporting documentation included:	
Organisation Name	
Dates	
Role in organisation	
List your duties and responsibilities as part of this role	
Supporting documentation included:	
Organisation Name	
Dates	
Role in organisation	
List your duties and responsibilities as part of this role	
Supporting documentation included:	
Note: You can attach additional information to this part of the application if required	

## Part F: Details of Informal Training Completed

Please provide details of any courses that you have completed – workshops, work-based courses, webinars etc. – that you have received a certificate of achievement/attendance for

Name of Training	Dates Attended	Training Details
<b>Note: You can attach additional information to this part of the application if required.</b>		

## Part G: Learning Achieved

What skills do you use in your work? Please give a brief example and explanation of how you use each skill.

## Part H: Supporting Documentation

Please state the name of CMETB staff member supporting this RPL application	
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Please list any documents that you have attached to your application that you would like to be considered in the assessment of your application. These documents may include	
No	Document Details

## Part I: Applicant Declaration

<b>I declare that the information entered on this form by me is true and complete.</b>	
Applicant's Signature	
Date	

## Office Use Only – To be completed by the RPL Officer

Application Received Date	
Application Reviewed Date	
Comments/Recommendation	
RPL Officer Signature and Date	
Programme Co-ordinator Signature and Date	

## Appendix B: Learner RPL Appeals Form

<b>Part A:</b> This section should be completed by the learner and returned to the Programme Co-ordinator by the stated deadline. This is usually 14 days following receipt of the original decision/ result.	
Centre Name:	
Learner Name:	
Learner Address:	
Learner ID/PPS Number:	
Programme Code/Title:	
Are there any impending deadlines which may need to be considered with this application – CAO application etc.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please provide details	

<b>Part B: Appeal Details</b>	
Please tick which type of appeal you are submitting	RPCL Appeal <input type="checkbox"/> RPEL Appeal <input type="checkbox"/> RPL Process Appeal <input type="checkbox"/>
Please provide a detailed reason for your appeal	

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Learners wishing to submit an appeal must complete this form in full and return to the relevant Programme Co-ordinator on or before **X**.

Appeals received after this date will not be processed.

There is an administrative fee of €40 per module result that you wish to appeal. The fee must be made payable to X. Fees should be paid by EFT, cheque, postal order or bank draft. NO CASH payments will be accepted.

Appeals will not be processed without the payment of the fee.

The outcome of the appeal will be communicated to you in writing.

If successful, the administrative fee of €40 per module will be refunded.

I confirm that I have read and understood the RPL appeals procedure including the grounds for appeal. I can confirm that I have enclosed a total fee of €\_\_\_\_. This fee is refundable if the appeal is successful.

Learner Signature:

Date:

Programme Co-ordinator Signature:

Date:

<b>Part B:</b> To be completed by the RPL Officer/Programme Co-ordinator	
Centre Name:	
Centre Contact Name:	
Learner Name:	
Learner ID/PPS Number:	
External Authenticator:	
Fee Paid:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
RPL Officer/Programme Co-ordinator Signature:	
Date Received:	

<b>Part C:</b> To be completed by the Independent Appeals Examiner	
Independent Appeals Examiner Name:	
Details of evidence received:	
Date received:	
Appeal Decision:	Successful <input type="checkbox"/> Unsuccessful <input type="checkbox"/>
Details of appeal investigation:	<div> <input type="checkbox"/> Grade/Result upheld  <input type="checkbox"/> Grade/Result increased  <input type="checkbox"/> Grade/Result decreased  <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunity to repeat/resubmit  <input type="checkbox"/> Test/Assessment declared null/void </div> <p>Further details:</p>
Independent Appeals Examiner signature:	
Date:	
Details of designated person to communicate outcome of appeal to learner:	

## Appendix C: Examples of RPL Evidence

### 1. Formal Learning

Description
Formal learning is any learning that has been certified and aligned to a level on the National Framework of Qualifications.
Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• National awards that have been aligned to the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)</li><li>• Apprenticeships</li><li>• City and Guilds</li></ul>
Examples of evidence that could be provided
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Certificates</li><li>• Result transcripts</li><li>• Syllabus/learning outcomes</li><li>• Assessment criteria</li></ul>

### 2. Non-formal learning

Description
Non-formal learning takes place alongside or completely outside of the formal education system, for example, in the workplace, or community setting. It may be assessed (e.g., industry recognised certification) but does not typically lead to formal NFQ aligned certification.
Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Industry certificates/diplomas</li><li>• Professional development courses</li><li>• Professional body awards</li><li>• Work-based certification or awards</li></ul>
Examples of evidence that could be provided
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Certificates</li><li>• Course descriptors</li><li>• Certificates of attendance</li><li>• Sample materials</li><li>• Learning outcomes</li><li>• Course objectives</li></ul>

### 3. Informal Learning

Description
Informal learning is the learning that takes place during typical everyday life and work experiences. It does not lead to certification.
Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Life experience</li></ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work experience</li> <li>• Sports/coaching</li> <li>• Supervision/mentoring</li> <li>• Volunteer work</li> <li>• Workplace training</li> <li>• Hobbies</li> </ul>
<b>Examples of evidence that could be provided</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job descriptions</li> <li>• Reports</li> <li>• Project plans</li> <li>• Photographs</li> <li>• Completed documentation</li> <li>• Letters of verification</li> <li>• References</li> <li>• HR records</li> </ul>

Adapted from: <https://www.myexperience.ie/types-of-recognised-learning/>