



Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy

This policy is reviewed biennially to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
ABPI Director of Examinations May 2025	
Date of next review	May 2027

The use of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) by those organisations which deliver examinations is optional however, the ABPI has established this RPL policy with the underlying principle that no learner should be required to undertake a specific unit of study (as one part of any whole qualification) for which that learner is able to demonstrate satisfactory achievement of the required competency standard or learning outcome.

The Ofqual Handbook Condition E10 states (E10.1): *An awarding organisation must establish, maintain, publish and comply with a policy which specifies whether or not it will recognise prior learning.*

E10.2 states: *In any circumstances where the policy it has in place permits the Recognition of Prior Learning, an awarding organisation must ensure the policy enables it to award qualifications in a way that complies with its Conditions of Recognition.*

This policy reflects the above guidance for recognising prior learning and defines the procedures and guidance for submitting and approving requests for transferring credit in order for a learner to be exempted from a specific unit. Every attempt has been made to ensure that the provisions of this document are consistent with the requirements of Ofqual.

The Intermediate and Advanced Programmes are bespoke programmes developed in conjunction with the Ofqual regulated awarding body: SFJ Awards.

A learner may be eligible to claim an exemption for a specified unit as a result of prior qualifications obtained through accredited awarding/professional bodies or Quality Assurance Agency regulated universities. The procedures for recognising prior learning are intended to ensure that the learning which a learner has undertaken and which is presented as evidence of RPL is equivalent to the learning that would have otherwise occurred had the learner studied all elements of the programme of study without RPL, including evidence that all learning outcomes of the accredited unit for proposed exemption have been met in full. The integrity of the ABPI Advanced and Intermediate Programmes must be treated as a priority at all times.

With the exception of *Unit M1 Operating in the pharmaceutical industry and Unit M5 Understanding working with the NHS and the provision of prescription medicines*, any exemption through

recognition and accreditation must be awarded for learning achieved within three years prior to enrolling on one of the current qualifications offered by the ABPI. For Unit M1, recognition and accreditation must be awarded for learning achieved since the most recent update to the ABPI Code of Practice. For Unit M5, recognition and accreditation must be awarded for learning achieved since the most recent update to the M5 learning content at the time of application.

The 3 year timescale equally applies to units passed in ABPI qualifications which means a pass in a particular unit will expire 3 years from the date of passing, with the exception of *Unit M5 Understanding working with the NHS and the provision of prescription medicines* which will be considered on a case by case basis, depending on the date and magnitude of the most recent update to the learning content.

Where a learner believes a qualification reflects similar learning outcomes to a specific unit forming part of a specified programme, the learner can apply for it to be recognised and accredited as prior learning.

Any such application would be considered on a case-by-case basis, and a non-refundable administration fee is chargeable for this process. An application for RPL must be made at the time of registration on a course, and only by exception will a late application be considered. The ABPI will not consider any application for RPL where a learner has already sat an exam for the specified unit being considered for RPL. Where a learner chooses to make an application for RPL following registration on a specific programme, ABPI will neither refund registration fees, nor exam fees already paid (other than where such a refund falls within scope of the ABPI's standard refund policy). Retrospective applications for RPL will not be considered, and therefore, refunds in respect of retrospective applications for RPL, will not be issued.

On receipt of a formal application for RPL, ABPI acting through the Examinations Director, will acknowledge receipt in writing and at that stage, will provide both guidance on required and permissible documentary evidence to support the RPL application. On receipt of all required evidence, the Examinations Director will provide the date by which a formal judgement will be communicated (normally 28 days following receipt of final supporting evidence). Where ABPI approve an application for RPL, such approval is valid for a limited period (up to two years maximum) which will be stated in the letter.

The ABPI will recognise qualifications automatically if such qualifications have already been confirmed as meeting the learning outcomes of a specified unit. Currently, there are no qualifications judged to be acceptable for automatic recognition and accreditation of prior learning. Where qualifications are confirmed as meeting the learning outcomes of a specified unit, full titles and providers of such qualifications will be listed in an appendix to this policy.

The Examinations Director is the named competent assessor who reviews any application for RPL, focussing specifically on the validity, reliability, authenticity and sufficiency of evidence supplied in relation to previously demonstrated knowledge, skills and understanding as required for the specific unit about which the learner is applying. The only permissible evidence for consideration is that of formally assessed and certified programmes/qualifications, administered and delivered by accredited awarding/professional bodies or Quality Assurance Agency regulated universities.

Following review of evidence, the Examinations Director, together with the independent Chair of the Exam Governance Committee will agree a joint decision on the application.

The ABPI does not accept RPL being used to provide evidence against achievement for an entire qualification. A learner who wishes to pursue recognition of an appropriate qualification in order to comply with Clause 9 of the ABPI Code of Practice 2024, should in the first instance consult the current [ABPI Code of Practice](#).

RPL application outcomes are either:

- RPL is not being awarded
- Evidence is sufficient to award RPL for a named unit of the named ABPI qualification.
Note, RPL will not be awarded for part of a unit.

Applicants may not appeal against the academic or professional judgement of the decision maker on an application. However, the ABPI shall consider a request from an appellant that the decision to reject their application be reviewed on the grounds that there exists new evidence, which can be corroborated, and could not have been brought to the attention of the ABPI Examinations Director at the time of the original RPL application.

The ABPI reserves the right to terminate an application for RPL, or registration on a programme, if the applying learner is found to have omitted relevant facts or information in connection with their RPL application or to have falsified or misrepresented any part of their application. See also ABPI Exam Regulations in relation to malpractice: [Exam Regulations \(abpi.org.uk\)](#)

It is ABPI policy to welcome feedback as it helps improve the products and services provided by the ABPI Examinations team. Where a learner feels there are justifiable grounds for complaint in relation to an RPL application (or any other examinations matter), this should be processed in line with details set out in the ABPI Exam Regulations.

This policy is reviewed biennially, in line with all exam policy reviews, or else is revised as and when necessary in response to qualifying feedback, changes in its practices, advice from regulatory authorities or external agencies or changes in legislation. In addition, this policy may be updated in light of operational feedback to ensure ABPI arrangements for managing RPL remain effective.