



Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

**Last approved: July 2025
Approved by: Quality Committee
Next review due: July 2026**

Safeguarding Statement

BN1 Arts is a post 16 specialist provider, specialising in Music and the Creative and Performing Arts. All staff, volunteers and partners are committed to safeguarding the welfare of every person within BN1 Arts. Our mission is to help young people to engage and achieve within a safe and inclusive environment.

1. The Scope of this Policy

Recognition of Prior Learning is defined as an opportunity for learners to present performance or accredited knowledge evidence which comes from a period prior to their registration. This is evidence of earlier learning and achievement towards part of a qualification. For example, if a learner has started a vocational qualification elsewhere (i.e. an equivalent level qualification (i.e. BTEC/UAL) or the first year of RSL qualifications) and wishes to transfer the previous credits.

Recognition of Prior Learning can be applied to internally assessed parts of vocational qualifications. It cannot be applied to:

- Graded Music examinations.
- GCSE examinations
- A Level Examinations
- Performing Arts Awards examinations.
- Parts of externally assessed units in vocational qualifications.

It can be applied to:

- Full units in vocational qualifications (including those externally assessed)
- Part of internally assessed elements of vocational qualifications

RPL does not apply to qualifications which identify the achievement of specific qualifications as a minimum entry requirement.

2. The RPL Process

2.1 Prior to Registration

All prospective learners will have access to information on how to apply for and claim RPL.

2.2 Application Requirements

Applications for RPL shall consist of the following;

- A written request, stating the BN1 Arts qualification in respect of which the applicant seeks RPL and details of which level(s) of the course for which they wish their application to be considered.
- Certificate(s) of prior qualification detailing grades, units achieved and associated credits. BN1 Arts requires original copies.

- The evidence provided to meet all the learning outcomes of prior qualification, (learner work).

In addition to submitting the materials outlined above, applicants may be invited to attend an interview/audition, which will be arranged after the documentation submitted has been assessed.

2.3 Timescale for Submission

Applicants wishing to be awarded credit for RPL will be advised in the first instance to discuss the matter with the Admissions Team, who will ensure that the applicant is informed of this Policy & Procedure.

Applications for RPL should be made no later than two weeks in advance of enrolling on the intended course for which they are seeking to transfer prior certified learning, unless specific course requirements have set an earlier deadline. Where such earlier deadlines are required, applicants shall be notified as appropriate.

If the applicant has a problem obtaining appropriate evidence in time to meet the final deadline, they should inform BN1 Arts and request an extension at the earliest opportunity. Such requests will require approval by the College Principal.

Applicants must not assume credits to have been granted via RPL until they have received an official statement to that effect.

2.4 Approval Process & Confirmation of Decision

The Admissions Team will advise RPL applicants on deadlines for submission of their application and arrange appropriate support, where applicable, to ensure the applicant understands what is required of them.

If the agreed submission deadline is missed by an applicant, the Admissions Team will advise on the next available date by which their application should be received to ensure it makes the next RPL approval date. If the applicant has missed the final RPL approval date for the relevant year of entry, Admissions will discuss the application with the College Principal to see if other options are available or if the applicant needs to defer their application until the following academic year.

All RPL applications accepted by the Admissions Team will be referred to the College Principal, who will check the submitted documentation for completeness. Should they identify a requirement for additional information, they will refer the application back to the Admissions Team, and the applicant will be set a new deadline for the new information to be submitted.

When the College Principal is satisfied that all the necessary details to assess the application have been provided, they will assign the application to the RPL Assessor for the relevant course.

2.5 Process for the Assessment of RPL

The centre BN1 Arts accepts the following evidence for RPL:

- Unit certificates
- Certificates for full qualifications

When presenting a certificate for RPL, the learner will need to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding to prevent the need to repeat the assessment or course.

Learners' prior certificated learning can be used as evidence for assessment criteria. Copies are only acceptable as evidence where the original certificates have been seen and countersigned.

When using certificates for RPL, BN1 Arts will cross reference the work between the two standards, (the qualification/unit certificated and the qualification registered on).

Evidence of previous learning or achievement, like other evidence, will be rigorously subjected to the assessment of its:

- **Validity:** does the evidence demonstrate that the demands of the assessment criteria/learning outcome has been met?
- **Currency:** does the evidence demonstrate that demands of the specification have been met and are up-to-date? See below for further guidance.
- **Authenticity:** can the evidence be unequivocally attributed to the learner?
- **Sufficiency:** is there enough evidence to fully meet the criteria/outcome

2.6 Other types of evidence

The evidence gathered needs to meet the standards of the specification that it will be used for. Evidence from a learner's past experience could include:

- Paid work
- Community or voluntary work
- Home life
- Education and training

Further evidence may include:

- Evidence of workplace practice, confirmed by workplace managers.
- Past portfolios of evidence created by the learner which remains current.
- Reports created by the learner and confirmed as authentic.
- Expert witness testimonies (i.e. workplace managers, specialists, lecturers/teachers)
- Professional discussions conducted with the learner to confirm their knowledge/skills

- New assignment briefs or tasks that have been created to fill any gaps in the evidence presented.

Whatever evidence is used it must be confirmed as valid, current, sufficient and authentic and subjected to the same rigour as any other type of evidence by College Principal, Head of Assessment & Curriculum or Programme Leader prior to acceptance.

2.7 Cross Referencing

All RPL will be mapped to individual assessment criteria to the appropriate/corresponding assessment criteria in RSL qualifications. This will mean that some assessment criteria will be met and others only partially met, some not at all. It is unlikely that learners will have all the evidence they need to achieve a full unit unless they have previously achieved the unit itself. A full record of the mapping must be kept for quality assurance purposes.

RPL can only be used for those assessment criteria that are fully met.

With this type of mapping, the assessment criteria have to match, or sufficient evidence to show that the learner has achieved the criteria with the work that they have done and access to the work that has been submitted for the original qualification, if available, may help. When mapping, grading criteria cannot be used unless the learner has met all assessment criteria.

Evidence for how and why an individual learner has achieved through RPL needs to have a substantial audit trail and is not a shortcut.

2.8 RPL Assessment

Quality Assurance

Presenting RPL to Awarding Organisations

BN1 Arts will provide access to the audit trail for all units claimed through the individual Awarding Organisation (AO) quality processes. 100% of RPL evidence could be asked for by the External Quality Assurer so a rigorous audit trail must be in place.

Certificates can only be claimed when the appropriate quality assurance processes are completed successfully.

3. Complaints and Appeals

Learners are able to appeal the assessment decision for RPL in the same way they can any other assessment decision by use of the centres Complaints and Appeals policy.

