



Recognition of Prior Learning and achievement policy

Who is this policy for

This policy is for centres and/or learners regarding the recognition of a learner's prior learning and achievement which may be applied to AIM approved qualifications or units delivered either within or outside the UK.

Owner	Compliance Director
Date of next review:	31 st August 2024

Version history

Version number	Date	Description
1	July 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Document created
1.1	April 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Appendix 1 – AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group telephone number updated to 0844 2253377

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Section 1 - Scope

1.1 Scope

This policy and related procedures are intended for:

- centres and its' staff delivering AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group approved qualifications or units who wish to use a learner's prior learning or achievement in their delivery and assessment of a learner on an AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group qualification and/or unit
- learners registered on AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group approved qualifications or units, who wish to use their prior learning or achievement on an AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group qualification and/or unit
- AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group staff to ensure that all requests to recognise prior learning or achievement are dealt with and applied in a consistent and fair manner and to meet the requirements of qualifications regulations

The purpose of this policy is to:

- define recognition of prior certificated learning, recognition of prior learning, equivalency, credit transfer
- detail the responsibilities AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group, centres, centre staff and learners have
- detail the methods which enable learners to avoid duplication of learning and assessment for the purposes of awarding credit
- identify evidence examples which a learner can use to claim prior learning and achievement
- state how evidence being used by a learner to claim prior learning and achievement must be viewed by a centre
- provide key process requirements for recognition of prior certificated learning, equivalencies and credit transfer
- state what restrictions there are for recognising prior learning and achievement
- provide information on evidence requirements for both reasonable adjustments and special considerations requests
- detail follow-up actions after a centre has made a decision on recognition of prior learning and achievement
- provide the regulatory references which apply
- provide useful contacts of both AIM and the various regulators



1.2 About us

AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group is a leading **Awarding Organisation** and one of the UK's largest **Access Validating Agencies (AVA)**. We work in partnership with colleges, independent training providers, universities, employers and voluntary organisations to develop accredited and regulated vocational qualifications. Our qualifications cover a range of academic levels from Entry Level to Level 6 across a wide range of subject areas. As an AVA we are licensed by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) to develop and award nationally recognised Access to Higher Education Diplomas. AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group is also an independent, government recognised, **End-Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO)** responsible for an apprentice's final assessment to ensure they can do the job for which they've trained.

Section 2 - Policy detail

2.1 Definition

Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL) is:

- the process through which previously assessed and certificated learning of the same or a higher value is recognised as comparable in relation to meeting some of the requirements for the achievement of a different unit or qualification
- where the learning aims or assessment criteria of the certificated learning is not exactly the same as the new unit(s)
- a method which allows learners to avoid unnecessary duplication and repetition of learning and assessment

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is:

- a structured, formalised process of gathering and reviewing evidence of the learning, knowledge, understanding, experience and skills that a learner already possesses and which they do not need to develop through a course of learning
- a method which allows learners to avoid unnecessary duplication and repetition of learning

Equivalency is:

- where one or more units with similar learning objectives found within a different qualification or one or more updated units within the same qualification which are of equal or higher value to be considered in place of a designated mandatory and or optional unit
- a method which allows learners to avoid unnecessary duplication and repetition of learning and assessment

Credit Transfer for Access to HE Diplomas is:

- the process by which credits used towards one Access to HE Diploma awarded by one Provider or Access Validating Agency may be considered towards the award of a different Diploma with the same or a different Provider or Access Validating Agency
- a method which allows learners to avoid unnecessary duplication and repetition of learning and assessment

Credit transfer for other qualifications is:

- the process whereby achievement of credits in one qualification can be awarded against the exact same unit in a different qualification
- where the units in the different qualifications have the same learning outcomes, code and assessment criteria
- a method which allows learners to avoid unnecessary duplication and repetition of learning and assessment

2.2 Responsibilities

The following represent the key responsibilities of AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group, centres, centre staff and learners.

2.2.1 AIM responsibilities

Overseen by the Compliance Director, AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group will:

- ensure that all requests for consideration of RPL and achievement are dealt with in a consistent timely manner
- ensure that the integrity of its qualifications and assessments are always maintained
- ensure all staff involved within RPL are competent to consider and make decisions about the relevant RPL

2.2.2 Centre responsibilities

All centres delivering AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group qualifications must:

- have an RPL and Achievement Policy in place which explains how the centre will explore and implement RPL and achievement as an assessment method and identifies the responsibilities of the learner, the assessor and other key staff involved in the internal quality assurance of AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group Qualifications and units
- ensure that all staff involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group qualifications and any learners undertaking one are fully aware of this policy and the centre's own RPL and achievement policy
- make learners aware of the restrictions of this policy
- make learners aware that evidence provided for consideration of RPL and achievement must have been achieved before the start of their qualification or unit
- inform and make clear to learners at the beginning of the RPL and achievement process the timescales for the submission of evidence for it to be considered for RPL and achievement so that it is transparent
- take responsibility for any RPL and achievement applications for their learners
- signpost learners to support materials to assist them in their understanding of relevant pieces of evidence for RPL and achievement use
- ensure that formal requests for RPL and achievement are made at the point of learner enrolment and comply to this policy
- ensure that a learner has sufficient evidence to make a viable claim and to support evidence collection and presentation for assessment
- ensure that the assessment process for RPL and achievement is subject to the same quality assurance processes as any other part of the assessment process
- have an effective appeals policy and procedure in place so that a learner can query any decision taken by the centre not to allow RPL and achievement

2.2.2 Learner responsibilities

Any learner undertaking an AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group Qualifications must:

- be aware of this and the centre's own RPL and achievement policy
- produce appropriate evidence in a timely manner to support the use of RPL and achievement
- ensure that evidence is current and that the required learning, knowledge, understanding, experience, skills and achievements are relevant to the learning aims and assessment criteria it is being judged against

2.3 Process

AIM seeks to enable learners to avoid duplication of learning and assessment for the purposes of awarding credit. **There are four ways that this can be managed:**

- recognition of prior certificated learning
- equivalency
- recognition of prior learning
- credit transfer

2.3.1 Recognition of prior certificated learning

- Exemption for some of the achievement requirements of a qualification can be claimed by a learner using certificated evidence
- Exemptions are not recognised by the award of credit and appear on certificates without a credit value

2.3.2 Equivalency

- A learner can seek to have one or more similar units from a different qualification or one or more updated units from the same qualification considered towards a qualification in place of one or more designated mandatory and/or optional units
- The units(s) must be deemed by AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group to be of equal or higher value
- Where possible, AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group will publish a list of equivalent units in the unit specification
- Equivalencies may not be recognised by the award of credit and appear on certificates without a credit value

2.3.4 Recognition of prior learning

- A learner can apply for non-certificated learning to be recognised towards a unit or qualification
- The RPL process must be agreed with the centre and must be claimed as part of the unit or qualification
- Exemption for some of the achievement requirements of an AIM qualification can be claimed by a learner using certificated evidence
- There is no difference between attainment of the required standards by recognising prior learning or through a formal programme of study, therefore RPL appears on certificates as credit-bearing
- **There are three ways of recognising prior learning which may be open to the learner:**
 - Submission of a portfolio of evidence based on previous relevant knowledge, skills and competences which must be assessed against the assessment criteria of the unit or units, for which RPL is being sought, to ensure that all learning outcomes have been achieved
 - Undertaking the same assessments as learners following a formal course of learning and assessment that lead to award of the unit or qualification. The assessments may be taken without undertaking any further formal learning
 - Assessment through summative assessment against a unit or qualification
- RPL is an alternative route to achievement and not an easy option or shortcut. Evidence must be produced for RPL which is subject to the same assessment and quality assurance requirements as applied to evidence produced as part of a course

2.3.5 Credit transfer for Access to HE Diplomas

- For Access to Higher Education Diplomas, learners can transfer units achieved towards another Diploma as a part of the credit transfer process
- The unit title appears on the transcript, but the credit value will appear as 0 on learner certificates
- Credit may be transferred between AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group Access to HE Diplomas or may be transferred from another Provider or Access Validating Agency
- It is not a requirement that credits transferred towards AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group Access to HE Diplomas exactly map against AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group units, however any such requests must be within the spirit of the rules of combination, i.e., the programme of study must be similar in content to the AIM Diploma to which the credits are being transferred
- Clarification must be sought from AIM if a centre has any doubt over credit transfer
- The Head of Compliance will have the final decision on any request for credit transfer

2.3.6 Credit transfer for other qualifications

For other qualifications, learners can seek to have achieved unit credits in one qualification, awarded against the exact same unit in a different qualification:

- The unit will have the same code, learning aims and assessment criteria
- transfer units achieved towards another qualification as a part of the credit transfer process

2.3.7 Evidence examples

The evidence required to demonstrate RPL and achievement will depend on the purpose, learning aims and assessment criteria of the unit(s) in question. All evidence submitted for RPL and achievement must be referenced and signposted clearly in order to facilitate internal assessment, internal quality assurance and external quality assurance. The items listed below are examples of evidence which could be used. **These are not exhaustive and are only intended as indicative guidance.**

- Qualification and/or unit certificates
- Unregulated training
- Completed assessments
- Documents
- Testimonies
- Performance management feedback
- Continuous Professional Development (CPD)
- Professional discussion
- Learner reflective account

2.3.8 Reviewing evidence

The assessment of evidence through RPL and achievement must be a structured process which allows the assessor to make judgements about a learner's prior learning, knowledge, understanding, experience, skills and achievements in relation to unit standards. Assessment methods for RPL and achievement must be of equal rigour to other assessment methods, be fit for purpose and relate to the unit(s) it is being judged against.

When examining the evidence being presented, the centre must adhere to the following five principles, that it is:

Valid

- the evidence needs to demonstrate that the assessment requirements have been met

Current

- unless stipulated by an external licensing body or other authority, for AIM purposes, evidence must be from within the last three years
- The evidence needs to meet up-to-date practice standards of the unit

Authentic

- the evidence must be the sole work of the learner, unless the learning aim(s) or assessment criteria of the unit(s) being assessed states that work must be produced in groups or in teams

Sufficient

- the evidence must be substantial enough to fully meet the requirements of the learning aim(s) or assessment criteria being considered
- if there is insufficient evidence to fully meet the requirements, then evidence obtained through RPL and achievement must be complemented by evidence gained through other suitable assessment method(s) before requirements can be said to have been met

Reliable

- the evidence must demonstrate sound competence which would allow confidence in the ability of the learner re-producing the evidence in the future
- the evidence obtained through RPL and achievement must be such that an assessor would arrive at the same assessment decision were the assessment to be repeated

2.3.9 Process for recognition of prior certificated learning, equivalencies and credit transfer

- Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (*Exemptions*) and equivalencies are included in the rules of combination for a qualification, and centres must register learners against the appropriate exemption and/or equivalency unit/units. Claims for credit are made through the [MIA Portal](#) by completing a Recognition of prior learning and credit transfer form. Centres will be able to view the outcome of the application within the form.
- Centres are required to keep records of valid claims through exemptions and equivalencies for three years

2.3.10 Restrictions on recognition

For recognition of prior certificated learning (*exemption*) and equivalency:

- a maximum of 70% of a qualification can normally be achieved through exemption or equivalency. At least 30% must be gained through new learning at the same level of the qualification. Where a qualification consists of only one unit, a maximum of 50% applies.
- 67% of credit within a qualification will normally be achieved at the level of the qualification.

For RPL and Credit transfer for Access to HE Diplomas:

- up to 50% (30 credits) of a qualification can be achieved unless specified in the qualification guide.

AIM reserves the right to exclude the use of RPL and achievement in cases such as:

- licence to practise
- health and safety requirements
- regulated professions
- work placements

RPL and achievement cannot be used where units and qualifications are subject to external assessment.

2.3.11 Malpractice

A centre must note that failure to comply with the guidance regarding recognition of prior learning and achievement set out by AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group, has the potential to constitute malpractice and may lead to AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group withholding the learner's result.

Instances of malpractice will be dealt in accordance with **AIM Malpractice and maladministration policy and procedures**.

2.3.12 Appeals against the recognition of prior learning and achievement decision

If a learner disagrees with the centre's decision to recognise prior learning or achievement, the learner can ask the centre to review its decision in accordance with the centre's Appeals Policy.

2.3.13 Learner complaints

If any learner is unhappy with how a centre has dealt with their application for RPL and achievement and has exhausted the centre's own appeals policy, they must follow the **AIM Complaints Policy** to submit a complaint.

Section 3 - Regulatory references

3.1 Conditions and licencing criteria

This policy is intended to meet the regulatory requirements of Ofqual, Qualifications Wales, CCEA and QAA. **In particular:**

Section	Condition/Licensing criteria
Malpractice and maladministration	Condition A8
Arrangements with centres	Condition C2
Accessibility of qualifications	Condition D2
Responding to enquiries and complaints procedures	Condition E10
Completion of the assessment	Condition G8
Delivering the assessment	Condition G9
Marking the assessment	Condition H1
Centre assessment standards scrutiny where an assessment is marked by a centre	Condition H2
Monitoring the specified levels of attainment for a qualification	H3
Results of a qualification based on sufficient evidence	Condition H5
Appeals process	Condition I1
Documented accessible procedures for appeals	Licensing Criteria 30a, c
Procedures for complaints and appeals	Licensing Criteria 31
Procedures and criteria for the recognition of prior learning	Licensing Criteria 50m

Section 4 - Appendices and links

Appendix 1 - Useful contacts

Link 1 - AIM website



Appendix 1 - Useful contacts

The following provides contact details for AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group and its regulators.

AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group Contact details

If you have any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact our **Compliance Director**

Telephone: [0844 2253377](tel:08442253377)

Email: enquiries@aimgroup.org.uk

Regulators' contact details

CCEA

Telephone: [02890 261 200](tel:02890261200)

Email: info@ccea.org.uk

Ofqual

Telephone: [0300 303 3344](tel:03003033344)

Email: public.enquiries@ofqual.gov.uk

Qualifications Wales

Telephone: [0333 077 2701](tel:03330772701)

Email: enquiries@qualificationswales.org

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)

Telephone: [01452 557 000](tel:01452557000)

Email: enquiries@qaa.ac.uk