
RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING FOR APPRENTICESHIP APPLICANTS



Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills
Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Division

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Preface

This Applicants Guide is intended as a companion to Policy 6 and Procedure 7 of the Provincial Apprenticeship Certification Board and the Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Division of the Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills respectively.

This document provides guidance to apprentices who participate in the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for their apprenticeship in Newfoundland and Labrador.

It is the user's responsibility to ensure they have the most current version of this document. Version numbers can be found in the lower right corner of each page. The most current version can be found online.

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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

RPL GUIDE USERS

This guide is to be used by applicants for prior learning assessment in accredited skilled trades training programs in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The guide will offer guidance on the nature of RPL, the roles of those involved in RPL, and an overview of the RPL process.

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

As it applies to skilled trades certification in Newfoundland and Labrador, prior learning can be defined as learning acquired through previous experiences. Sources of learning can include (but are not limited to) formal credits achieved in a training program other than the training program the applicant is currently enrolled in, learning experiences not associated with institutional study, such as experiential learning, and professional credentials attained in another country.

Through a defined process, an applicant can demonstrate this learning and potentially attain advanced standing towards skilled trade certification, either as an apprentice, a trade qualifier, or through credential recognition.

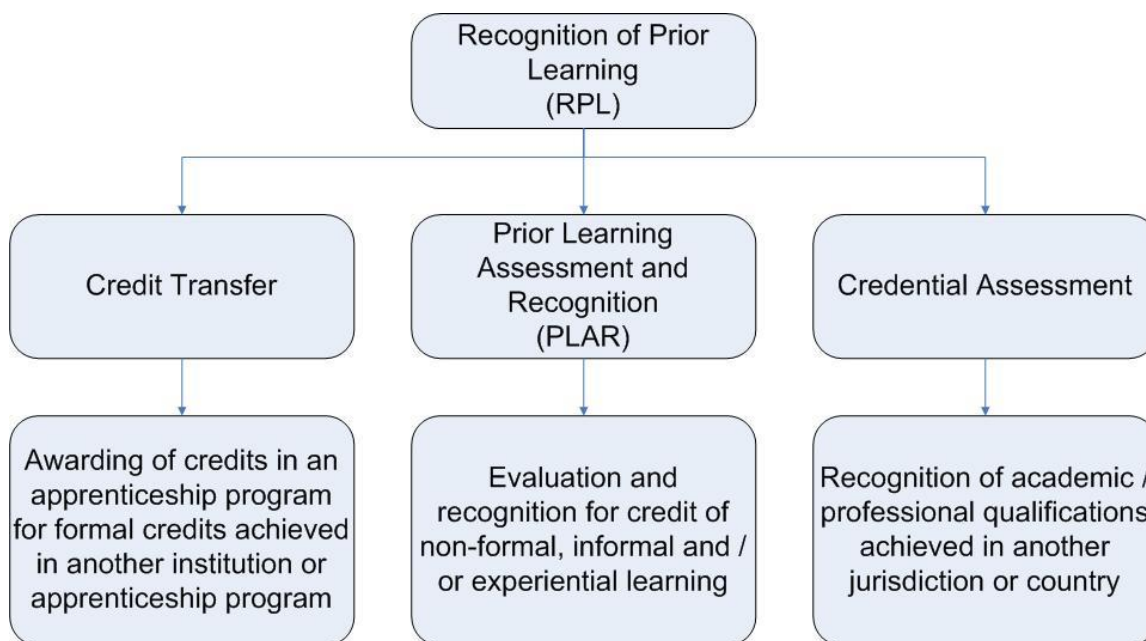
WHY WE RECOGNIZE PRIOR LEARNING

Many people will experience learning in different ways. Not all learning takes place in a formal setting such as a classroom or school shop. We recognize that learning which takes place outside of the formal post-secondary structure has value, and is often the same or very similar to the learning which occurs in a traditional post-secondary environment. Apprenticeship has a long history of recognizing this learning. Indeed, modern apprenticeship models rely heavily on learning experienced at work to produce high quality journeypersons.

For you, recognition of these other types of learning can result in significant savings of time and money, thus reducing traditional barriers to participation in apprenticeship. As well, the recognition of learning achieved through previous formal, informal or non-formal experiences can boost your confidence in your ability to complete a skilled trades apprenticeship.

THE RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

In NL, there are 3 components to RPL. The diagram below illustrates these 3 components.



Credit transfer involves the assessment of your previous formal learning experiences. This learning may include, but is not limited to, training in other occupations, skilled trades training in other jurisdictions or in another trade in this jurisdiction, or training received in non-accredited skilled trades programs in this jurisdiction. The assessor will compare the evidence of learning and determine if it is a close equivalent to the learning expected in the prescribed NL curriculum.

PLAR involves assessing your informal learning experiences. This can include, but is not limited to, learning from work and volunteer experiences or learning from non-credit training programs. The assessor will use evaluation tools to determine if the evidence of learning you present is equal to the learning required for the granting of credit in an apprenticeship program.

Credential Recognition does not provide course credit in an apprenticeship program. Those seeking credential recognition must demonstrate the equivalency of their certification to a trade certification in Newfoundland and Labrador. If equivalency is determined, the credential holder may challenge the certification exam for the trade. The process begins with assessment by divisional staff and may involve a designated assessor at a partner college to review and endorse workplace skills with or without remedial training.

STAKEHOLDERS IN THE RPL PROCESS

The Provincial Apprenticeship and Certification Board (PACB) determines the process by which apprentices and potential apprentices receive credit for learning acquired from other forms of formal training and from work and life experiences.

The Program Development Officer (PDO) and Program Development Specialist (PDS) will be the first points of contact for direct entry apprentices, trade qualifiers, foreign credentialed workers and graduates of non-accredited NL skilled trades training programs. They will introduce apprentices to RPL, offer guidance to applicants on the RPL process, and will be the principal liaison with the college and the designated assessor. They arrange the RPL class call, and are responsible to record assessment results in the apprentice's permanent record.

The Apprentice must indicate their interest in RPL. After consultation with the PDO & PDS, the apprentice will be responsible for assembling evidence of prior learning, both informal and formal, for assessment. With guidance from the PDS, the apprentice will assemble their evidence and present to the assessor. The apprentice is responsible to participate in all assessment assigned by the assessor.

The Designated Assessor will work with the PDO and the apprentice to design and conduct the RPL assessment. Upon receiving evidence of prior learning from the apprentice, the assessor will prepare an assessment plan and review it with the apprentice. The assessor determines if sufficient evidence is presented to proceed with an assessment. The assessor will guide the apprentice through the assessment process, grade all evaluations and determine if the prior learning demonstrated by the apprentice satisfies the requirements set by provincial curriculum. The assessor ensures the assessment results are recorded and returned to the PDO.

THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

WHAT TO EXPECT AT YOUR APPRENTICESHIP OFFICE

If you have recent experience in the trade, or are currently working in the trade, you should contact a PDO at a regional Apprenticeship and Trades Certification office to begin an apprenticeship.

At registration, the PDO will provide you with information on RPL, and if you are interested, forward your file to the PDS. The PDS will explain how RPL can affect your apprenticeship, and also give you the documents you will need to identify and document your learning for assessment purposes. You will have **21 Days** from the time you register as an apprentice to make contact with the PDS and indicate your intent to start the RPL process.

You will be given advice and guidance as necessary to assemble your evidence. It is important to note, however, that the responsibility to identify learning and gather evidence to prove that learning is yours.

Your Request for Recognition of Prior Learning (PL-110) must be returned to the PDS, no later than **90 days** after you have registered as an apprentice. You will not be issued a class call for assessment until your documents have been received and verified as complete by the division.

Your PDO is responsible to submit the request along with your supporting evidence to the assessor at the college you will be attending.

PREPARING FOR ASSESSMENT

If you have decided to request assessment of your prior learning for credit in the formal training part of your apprenticeship program you must begin preparing.

You will be given form PL-110, which is used to assemble your evidence of prior learning.

Contact Information

Please provide all information so that you may be contacted by those involved in your assessment.

Prior Formal Learning to be Assessed

In this section, you will identify any formal learning you have experienced which you believe is equivalent to learning in your trade program.

Formal learning can include any learning received at a formal educational institution for which credit was received, but which does not have a transfer agreement with the Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Division.

A course completed in another program is defined as the *sending course*. The equivalent course in the NL program is defined as the *receiving course*.

In order to identify a course for credit here, you must have adequate evidence you successfully completed the course, and adequate evidence of what was covered in the course.

A certified transcript from a college, with a percentage grade, will be sufficient to show that a course was completed. The content of the course must be identified through a verifiable course outline or similar document which identifies the learning objectives / outcomes of the course. The outline must clearly identify the college and course number.

When you are attaching supporting evidence, it is important to note on each piece of evidence the letter from the form which corresponds with each course you have identified. Writing this on each document will ensure the assessor sees every piece of evidence which supports your request.

Prior Informal Learning to be Assessed

In this section, you will identify any informal learning you have experienced which you believe is equivalent to learning in your trade program.

Informal learning includes any learning not associated with a formal learning institution. The sources of this learning include, but are not limited to:

- Work experiences
- Non-credit training courses received at the workplace or through continuing education programs at colleges or universities
- Volunteer experience
- Acquired skills developed through life experiences

To receive credit for this informal learning, you will be evaluated using challenge methods. This means you will have to complete theoretical and/or practical tests of your knowledge and abilities. The evaluation methods will be determined by your

assessor and outlined in the assessment plan which you will review and sign before beginning assessment.

You will complete a separate page for each learning experience you wish to have assessed. You may, however, identify multiple courses which you believe you could receive credit for from each experience.

To identify appropriate experiences, you must reflect on the Skills, knowledge, and abilities (SKA) you have acquired through informal means. These have to be considered in the context of the learning objectives identified in specific courses in the Plan of Training for your trade. As a guide, you should be competent in at least 70% of the objectives in a course, since the assessor will expect you to achieve a grade of at least 70% in any evaluations you are given.

In order for the assessor to determine if an assessment will be done, you must do more than provide a *where* and *when* for the experience. You must provide as detailed a description as possible of the skills, identifying ways in which your experience is connected to the course objectives. Other documentation, including but not limited to, references from your employer(s) or co-workers, certificates, records of employment, or journey person signoff of workplace skills can serve as evidence of the SKA you have achieved through this experience.

Special Needs

You have the opportunity to identify any special accommodations you require or learning challenges you face. Providing this information is voluntary, but may result in a better assessment outcome for you.

Endorsement

You must confirm that the information provided in your application is accurate. If you intentionally submit false or misleading information, you may be refused entry into an apprenticeship program, or refused recognition of your prior learning.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT YOUR TRAINING INSTITUTION

You will be assessed at the training institution by a designated assessor who is an expert in your trade.

Your assessor will review your request and supporting material and will meet with you to discuss your submission. At this time, the assessor may seek clarification on certain items, and will advise you of the learning that will be assessed and any areas where evidence does not support assessment. It is likely that you will be asked questions

about your prior learning which will allow the assessor to develop a thorough understanding of your situation.

The assessor will prepare an assessment plan (PL-200) during or after this meeting, and will review this with you before assessment begins. The plan identifies the learning to be assessed, and the methods to be used. Once the plan is prepared and you agree to it, assessment can begin.

It is important to remember that you will most likely be attending the assessment session with a number of other apprentices, and the assessor will have to meet with all the apprentices in the same manner. Because of this, you may experience times when you are waiting to meet with the assessor, or to receive feedback on assessment items you are completing. During these times, you may be asked to complete course work related to courses which you have not requested assessment for. These are normal occurrences in an assessment session.

THE GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSMENT

There are a formal set of rules to guide assessors in their assessments. These rules, taken from the Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Divisions Procedure 7, are detailed on the following pages.

Assessment Scope

Unless specifically noted in a plan of training, you can receive credit for any course in a Provincial plan of training. This includes both core trades courses and the academic essential skills (related) courses.

While all courses are available for assessment, many colleges require a percentage of courses to be completed on campus to receive a certificate or diploma from the college.

Assessment of Informal Learning

Assessment of prior informal learning will be challenge based, on a course by course basis. Credit will be awarded for whole courses only, not for partial courses.

When relevant learning has been identified for assessment, the learning will be evaluated through the use of theory and practical (where necessary) evaluation tools of the same quality, and testing the same competencies, as those used for students who complete full time training in the course.

Where a course consists of both theoretical and practical learning objectives, evaluation must take place on both.

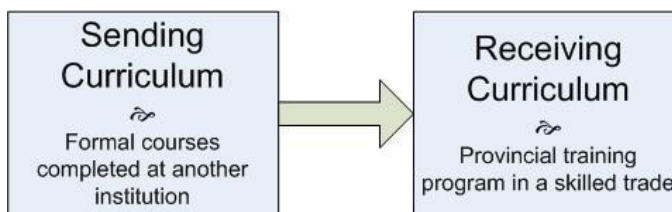
Evaluation of prior learning must take place during the RPL class call period, under the supervision and observation of the designated assessor. Any required demonstration of practical knowledge and ability must be done during your RPL class call period.

It is important to note that, while you may provide some evidence of your skills with your PL-110 form, this will only serve as an indicator that the skills may exist. Evaluation of those skills must still take place during the class call period.

Assessment of Formal Learning

When you have completed prior formal learning, assessment will involve a comparison of the learning outcomes/objectives of the learning received at the sending institution to the outcomes/objectives of the course in the current receiving NL curriculum.

To be considered for credit, a course in the sending curriculum must have commonality in objectives (theoretical and practical) of at least 80% with the course in the current receiving curriculum. As well, the grade received in the sending course must be at least 80%.



Credit will not be granted for courses which were themselves granted for credit through a PLA or similar process at another institution or in another jurisdiction.

When a receiving course in NL contains practical objectives, the sending curriculum must also contain practical objectives.

Success in prior formal learning must be verified through the use of certified transcripts from a recognized educational institution, along with supporting documentation which identifies the learning objectives and outcomes of the courses being recognized.

Time frame for assessment

Assessments are completed at training institutions as scheduling permits. The timing of an assessment placement will depend on trade volumes, the availability of resources at training institutions, and the timely submission of required documentation. Every effort will be made to provide a suitable response to an applicant's request for assessment.

Identifying the learning for assessment

If you wish to receive RPL for formal or informal learning you must notify the PDS within 21 days after you register as an apprentice. The PDS will explain RPL in apprenticeship and the process of self-identifying learning for which you could receive credit. The PDS will supply a copy of the current plan of training and the workplace skills sheet, to be used along with form PL-110 to organize the evidence of prior formal learning and to identify courses where you believe formal and informal learning could provide credit. It is not required that you or the assessor complete the workplace skills sheet. The PDS will offer advice and guidance as required to identify learning for assessment.

You are required to have all required documents submitted to your PDS within 90 Days of registration as an apprentice. You will not receive an assessment class call until all documents have been received and approved. Your PDO will forward the documents to the appropriate representative at the school.

In all circumstances, it is you who are primarily responsible for identifying previous learning, either formal or informal, which could be recognized for credit.

You are responsible for assembling any evidence of prior formal learning including, but not limited to;

- certified transcripts from recognized educational agencies for formal learning,
- verifiable course outlines which clearly identify the learning outcomes and objectives of the courses,
- evidence of the type of evaluation used in the courses,
- evidence that practical evaluation was performed for practical learning objectives.

In the event that evidence of prior formal learning is in a language other than English, it is your responsibility to have the documents translated to English by a qualified, unbiased 3rd party who can certify that the copy is a true and accurate translation of the original.

Pre-Assessment

When the self-assessment (PL-100 or PL-110) document is received by the school, you will be contacted by the RPL assessor to arrange a meeting to discuss the self-assessment results, and to receive a brief overview of the assessment process. At this time, you should identify any challenges you have which may require modifications to the normal assessment methods the assessor would use. Decisions to modify an assessment method will be the responsibility of the assessor, in consultation with the Department if necessary.

This meeting would preferably take place before training begins, but must occur no later than the end of the first week of training.

The assessment plan

After meeting with you, the assessor will prepare an assessment plan (PL-200) which will identify the courses in the provincial curriculum for which you will be demonstrating their prior learning. The plan will also outline the assessment methods which will be used to evaluate the prior learning and the performance level expected to achieve successful outcomes for the assessments. All assessment must fall within the guidelines established in section 5 of the division's procedure 7.

When the plan is complete, you will meet with the assessor to review the content of the assessment plan, and ensure you are aware of what will take place during the actual assessment. You will sign the assessment plan to signify your agreement.

Completing the assessment

Assessment times and locations will be scheduled by the assessor.

Assessment will be completed in the manner outlined in the assessment plan. At the discretion of the assessor, the assessment may be concluded for a specific course before it is complete, if it is apparent that you are not able to demonstrate sufficient knowledge or ability in a particular course.

The results of the assessment will be reviewed and scored by the assessor in an appropriate manner. You will be given a complete/incomplete grade for courses completed through RPL rather than a numeric grade.

Reviewing the assessment

When the assessment process is complete, the assessor will meet with you to provide a copy of the assessment plan (PL-200) and to review the results. The assessor will identify areas where you successfully demonstrated prior learning to receive credit for a course in the provincial curriculum and will also identify areas where prior learning has not been sufficiently demonstrated to receive credit. The gaps in your knowledge and / or ability are identified so that you can focus on these areas during the remainder of your training.

Transcripts and recording RPL

When the assessment process is complete, the assessor will ensure that your transcript is updated to reflect the receipt of course credit for the prior learning successfully demonstrated.

At the end of their block of training, the assessor will forward your PL-200 form to the division, and provide you with your transcript of marks. It is your responsibility to submit your transcript to the division for recording in your permanent record.