

# Recognition of prior learning and Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT)

Policy and procedures

# Contents

## Recognition of prior learning and Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) policy

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For the attention of:	Heads of Centre/ASDAN QA

Policy owner	Policy approver
Compliance Manager	Responsible Officer

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<b>1 General</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 Introduction	3
1.2 Scope	3
<b>2 Policy</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 Definition of RPL	4
2.2 Definition of CAT	5
2.3 Responsibilities	6
<b>3 Process and procedures</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1 Managing the process of RPL as a centre	7
3.2 Managing the process of RPL – ASDAN	9
3.3 Managing the process of CAT as a centre	9
3.4 Managing the process of credit transfer – ASDAN	10
<b>4 Associated policies and procedures</b>	<b>11</b>

# 1 General

## 1.1 Introduction

ASDAN seeks to recognise and reward a range of learning styles, contexts and achievements and to make learning relevant and transferable. We aim to provide opportunities for all to achieve, promoting assessment for learning and supporting personalised learning.

To help us achieve these aims, we support the principle of Recognition of Prior Learning (PRL), defined in the General Conditions of Recognition as the:

- a) identification by an awarding organisation of any learning undertaken, and/or attainment, by a learner:
  - i. prior to that learner taking a qualification which the awarding organisation makes available or proposes to make available, and
  - ii. which is relevant to the knowledge, skills and understanding which will be assessed as part of that qualification, and
- b) recognition by an awarding organisation of that learning and/or attainment through amendment to the requirements which a Learner must have satisfied before the Learner will be assessed or that qualification will be awarded.

As well as supporting the principle of RPL, ASDAN recognises Credit Accumulation Transfer (CAT) which is the process of utilising learner units or qualifications that have previously been recognised and certified both within and out of ASDAN's suite of qualifications.

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) describes this as the mechanism that allows credit that is conferred by awarding bodies to be recognised, quantified and included towards the credit requirements for a programme delivered by another provider or between programmes offered by an awarding organisation such as ASDAN.

## 1.2 Scope

This policy applies to all regulated qualifications offered by ASDAN and related products and services and will ensure that centres are aware of what does and does not constitute RPL and CAT.

## 2 Policy

This policy complies with the General Conditions of Recognition which require awarding organisations like ASDAN to have an open, transparent and clear process to all Learners and Users of qualifications access to RPL and CAT.

This policy addresses the following Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition (GCR).

GCR Reference
<b>E10.1</b> An awarding organisation must establish, maintain, publish and comply with a policy which specifies whether or not it will recognise prior learning.
<b>E10.2</b> 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.
<b>D5.1</b> An awarding organisation must ensure that in the development, delivery and award of any qualification which it makes available, or proposes to make available.

### 2.1 Definition of RPL

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) can be defined as an assessment process that involves assessment of an individual's relevant prior learning (including formal, informal and non-formal learning) to determine the credit outcomes of an individual application for credit or a method of assessment leading to the award of credit that considers whether learners can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, behaviours, skills and understanding they already possess and so may not need to develop these through a course of learning.

RPL does not cover previously certificated learning which is recognised as part of credit accumulation and transfer.

RPL can be used where learners can demonstrate that through their experience, they have already gained the relevant knowledge and skills required.

Circumstances when prior learning will not be recognised:

- Learning that is similar to assessment criteria but which has been met at a level lower than the current qualification being undertaken by the learner
- Prior learning that is not current in meeting the qualification
- Prior learning that has been referred by an Assessor
- Prior learning that has not been assessed by an Assessor

## 2 Policy

### 2.2 Definition of CAT

CAT is a separate process to RPL as CAT applies to learning that has been previously certified for a different regulated qualification or from a different Awarding Organisation on the same framework (RQF or QCF).

This is to prevent a learner from having to unnecessarily repeat previous learning. Where a learner has already achieved a unit with credit, we will recognise that prior learning and will allow the credit to be transferred onto a new qualification, provided that the units have the same Ofqual reference number.

The concept of Credit Transfer is based on the aims and design of the Qualifications Credit Framework (QCF) system, which has now been superseded by the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF).

All qualifications that were created within the QCF are made up of units, each of which has a credit value allocated. Each credit is equivalent to 10 notional hours.

Centres can find out more about the units and credits that make up ASDAN qualifications from the specifications published on the ASDAN qualification's web pages.

ASDAN's procedures for Credit Transfer allow centres to claim credit from units already achieved by candidates, towards the total credit value required for them to complete a new qualification, subject to certain rules.

Credit can be transferred in various circumstances:

- Some units occur in more than one qualification, whether awarded by ASDAN or by another Awarding Organisation:

eg a candidate may already have a Personal Progress unit previously accredited by NOCN.

- Some units have been judged to be similar enough in content to other units for them to be counted as equivalent units at certain levels:

eg communicating through Discussion level 1 (CoPE) can be counted as equivalent to Group Discussion level 1 (AoPE).

- Achieving certain units from non-credit rated units can allow a candidate to be exempt from identified credit-rated units:

eg the achievement of the wider key skill Improving own Learning and Performance could give a candidate exemption from taking the unit Planning and Reviewing Learning as part of their AoPE qualification. No credit is accumulated from exempt units.

The equivalent units and exemptions allowed for each unit are included in the qualification specification.

## 2 Policy

### 2.3 Responsibilities

This policy is for centres and learners accessing ASDAN qualifications and related services and all those involved with the development, delivery and quality assurance of ASDAN qualifications. There are three direct responsible persons:

**ASDAN Trustees:** Must have overall authority to scrutinize and approve any changes to the policy.

**Responsible Officer (RO):** Must be informed first and takes responsibility for managing the investigation and reporting the event to Ofqual.

**Compliance Manager:** Must work with the RO to investigate the validity of the claim.

# 3 Process and procedures

## 3.1 Managing the process of RPL as a centre

RPL can demonstrate competence or achievement within a unit or qualification. Through the RPL process, evidence of a learner’s previous achievement (learning) is assessed against the assessment criteria of a unit.

Evidence used by learners must be current and valid and meet the assessment criteria of the qualification, and evidence must be reliable, whereby centres consistently arrive at equivalent assessment decisions.

Evidence obtained through RPL must therefore meet the same rigorous quality criteria that other assessment methods must conform to.

**It remains the role of Assessors and quality assurance staff to ensure that evidence is:**

It is vital that evidence that is to be provided to demonstrate that learning or assessment has taken place previously and does therefore not need to be repeated, has been quality assured by the centre to ensure that evidence of learning is:

**Valid** – The evidence provided by the learner must genuinely demonstrate that it conforms to the demands of the learning outcome.

**Current** – Currency of evidence is particularly important. For example, does the evidence meet up-to-date demands or does it reflect a practice that has significantly changed? Evidence of current knowledge, understanding and skills will vary from sector to sector. It will depend on the extent of the experience, technological changes and the nature of the outcome claimed. If the currency of any evidence is in doubt, the assessor may use questions to check understanding, and for competence.

**Sufficient** – There must be enough evidence to fully meet the requirements of the learning outcome, or learning outcomes, to be considered. If there is insufficient evidence to fully meet requirements, then evidence obtained through RPL must be complemented by evidence gained through other suitable assessment methods before requirements can be said to have been met.

**Authentic** – The evidence being examined must genuinely be the work of the learner. If the evidence produced is the result of team work, then it is acceptable providing the new learning outcome is related to team / joint working, but not if it was being used as evidence of an activity which should have been carried out individually. It is important that learners understand what plagiarism means and sign a declaration of authenticity.

**Reliable** – Evidence obtained through RPL should be such that an assessor would arrive at the same assessment decision, were the assessment to be repeated.

## 3 Process and procedures

**3.1.1** Centres may use RPL as appropriate and must have processes regarding RPL that are transparent, rigorous, reliable, fair and accessible to learners.

**3.1.2** If individuals can produce relevant evidence, that meets assessment criteria requirements then, recognition can be given for their existing knowledge, understanding or skills. If an individual can meet all the learning outcomes and assessment criteria in a unit, then they can claim credit for that unit solely on the basis of their RPL achievement. If however, evidence from RPL is only sufficient to cover one or more assessment criteria, or to partly meet the need of an assessment criteria, then additional assessment methods should be employed to generate the sufficient evidence required to make a safe assessment decision.

**3.1.3** Centres should offer advice and guidance to learners on the type of evidence considered appropriate to support a claim for RPL.

**3.1.4** Centres must have personnel with appropriate expertise and knowledge to facilitate RPL.

**3.1.5** All relevant evidence must be assessed against the assessment criteria before decisions are confirmed.

**3.1.6** In assessing using RPL the assessor must be satisfied that the evidence produced by the learners meets the required standard.

**3.1.7** Centres must keep appropriate records of assessment and evidence and provide that evidence to ASDAN when applying for RPL, please complete the ASDAN Application for RPL Form found here ASDAN website: [asdan.org.uk/policies-regulations-and-centre-guidance/](https://asdan.org.uk/policies-regulations-and-centre-guidance/)

**3.1.8** The RPL assessment should be carried out as an entire process. This means that the Assessor should:

- Plan with the learner
- Make a formal assessment decision
- Feedback assessment decisions to the learner, confirming decision and giving guidance on the available options
- Maintain appropriate records
- Ensure that learners are aware of their right to access the appeals process should they feel the assessment decision was unfair
- Ensure that all assessment criteria being claimed are covered and that records of assessment are maintained in the usual way. The process must be subject to the same quality assurance requirements as any other assessment method.



# 3 Process and procedures

## 3.2 Managing the process of RPL – ASDAN

**3.2.1** ASDAN will consider and deal with all claims for RPL and in line with the rules and procedures laid out in the Centre Guidance Section 2.5.

**3.2.2** ASDAN will process all claims for RPL in line with the rules of combination for units within the Regulated Qualifications Framework, where applicable, including opportunities for credit transfer and exemptions, following agreed systems and procedures.

**3.2.3** Where rules of combination are not applicable, ASDAN will accept claims in line with published permitted exemptions.

**3.2.4** Claims for non-certificated achievement of RPL will be dealt with on an individual basis

**3.2.5** Where claims for RPL are unsuccessful, ASDAN will respond to centres in writing, within 20 working days of the claim being submitted, giving a full rationale for the decision.

**3.2.6** If a learner wishes to appeal against a decision made about a claim for RPL, ASDAN's Policy for Enquiries Appeals must be followed.

## 3.3 Managing the process of CAT as a centre

Do not enter units on the Candidate registration and Submission form where credit is being transferred from previously achieved/equivalent units or when an exemption is being claimed.

Only enter candidates' units for external moderation for new units that have been achieved and not for the previously moderated and achieved units. On the ASDAN website, you will find the applicable Transfer Document on the Course Resources page.

Download and complete the form and after the sample has been sent to the centre together with evidence to support the claim, email the claim to:

[qualifications@asdan.org.uk](mailto:qualifications@asdan.org.uk)

The claim form asks centres to list units for which credit transfer or exemption is being claimed and the evidence of prior achievement that ASDAN needs the centre to supply in order to approve the transfer of credit. The form also contains a mandatory declaration which must be signed.

# 3 Process and procedures

## 3.4 Managing the process of credit transfer – ASDAN

The process of credit transfer is handled by the quality assurance and compliance team, not by an EQA. Therefore centres are requested NOT to send claim forms or evidence of prior achievement to their EQA as this may delay the process of transferring credit.

When a centre submits a claim for credit transfer with the candidate submission, ASDAN will check and validate the claim.

A check of the candidate's ASDAN achievement within the previous three years (five years for Personal Progress candidates) will be carried out. If additional evidence has been provided by the centre, this will be checked for validity.

After external moderation, the credit from all validated credit transfer claims is added to the credit from successfully moderated units, and the appropriate full qualification certificate is generated.

A document called a Credit Transcript is provided with the certificate, which shows the units the candidate has achieved in order to gain the qualification, together with the unit levels and credit values, details of any credit transferred from other units, and any exemptions.

**N.B. Credit from equivalent units or units achieved in the context of a different qualification can only be counted towards the achievement of a full qualification.**


**Credit can only be transferred from units that the candidate has achieved within the three years prior to the qualification moderation date (five years for Personal Progress candidates).**

**There is no limit to the number of times credit from the same unit can be counted towards a qualification but the same unit can only be certificated once.**

## 4 Associated policies and procedures

Policy name	Responsible person
Certification policy	Centre Support Manager
Centre monitoring policy – Audit	Compliance Manager
Complaints policy and procedure	Centre Support Manager
Appeals policy	Compliance Manager
Enquiries and appeals	Centre Support Manager
EM policy and procedures	Compliance Manager
Malpractice and maladministration policy	Compliance Manager
Retention policy	HR



© ASDAN March 2021  
Wainbrook House, Hudds Vale Road, St George, Bristol BS5 7HY  
t: 0117 941 1126 | e: [info@asdan.org.uk](mailto:info@asdan.org.uk) | [www.asdan.org.uk](http://www.asdan.org.uk) |   @ASDANeducation