



Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

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2.0	February 2026	National Talent Academy	Redrafted from original RPL policy; removed QCF/RQF regulatory references; contextualised for NTA's unregulated CLC

			endorsed by TQUK; added NTA platform context; added RPL application and assessment process
2.1	September 2026	National Talent Academy	Removed the separate appeal acknowledgement and response timescales, which conflicted with the Enquiries and Appeals Policy, and cross-referred to that policy instead. Appeal submission window confirmed at 20 working days. Added a document control block recording the document owner, status, date published, next scheduled review and contact. Set the review frequency to annual. Corrected the description of certification: TQUK issues the certificate for the full Level 3 Award and NTA issues certificates for individual units, including the mandatory unit. Changed programme duration from GLH to hours TQT, in line with the agreed terminology standard, and removed the separate mandatory-unit hours figure pending confirmation.
2.2	September 2026	National Talent Academy	Updated the name of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy in the list of related policies, following its renaming. No other change.

For use in National Talent Academy policy development

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1. Introduction

1.1 About National Talent Academy

National Talent Academy (NTA) is an educational technology company providing online qualifications in essential work skills for 16-to-19-year-olds and adult learners in Further Education colleges, schools and training providers across the UK.

NTA was founded in 2020 by Cambridge graduate David Jaffa, who previously founded SAM Learning (online GCSE/KS3 revision used in hundreds of UK schools) and Penda Learning (online science/maths for US schools, sold 2019). David received the 2021 BETT Outstanding Achievement Award for his lifetime achievements in EdTech.

1.2 Purpose of This Policy

This policy sets out NTA's approach to the recognition of prior learning (RPL). RPL is a process of evaluating and giving credit for knowledge, skills and understanding that a learner already possesses, regardless of how or where this learning was acquired. RPL enables learners to gain recognition for prior achievement, avoiding unnecessary repetition of learning and supporting efficient progression.

NTA recognises that learning takes place in many contexts – through formal education and training, through work experience, through voluntary and community activities and through everyday life. Where a learner can demonstrate that they already meet the assessment requirements of a unit, RPL provides a fair and rigorous route to recognition.

1.3 Scope

This policy applies to the NTA Level 3 Award in Essential Work Skills, which is an unregulated qualification endorsed by Training Qualifications UK (TQUK) as a Certified Learning Course (CLC). The programme comprises 35 hours TQT: the mandatory unit and the 30-hour Level 3 Award. TQUK issues the certificate for the full Level 3 Award; NTA issues certificates for individual units, including the mandatory unit.

RPL may be applied to individual units within the Level 3 Award where a learner can demonstrate that they already meet the relevant learning outcomes and assessment criteria. RPL cannot be used to claim exemption from the entire

qualification – the learner must complete at least one unit through the standard NTA assessment process.

This policy applies to all NTA staff, delivery partners, assessors and internal quality assurers involved in the management, delivery, assessment and quality assurance of NTA qualifications.

1.4 Key Definitions

RPL encompasses a number of related terms used across the education and training sector:

Term	Description
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	A process of evaluating and giving credit for knowledge, skills and understanding that a learner already possesses, regardless of how or where this learning was acquired.
Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)	An older term describing the same broad process as RPL, typically applied to certificated prior learning.
Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)	A term describing recognition of learning gained through experience rather than formal study.
Certificated learning	Prior learning that has been formally assessed and for which the learner holds a certificate or qualification.
Experiential learning	Learning acquired through work, volunteering, domestic life, community activities or other non-formal or informal experiences.

NTA uses the term Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) throughout this policy. All of the above terms broadly describe the same process.

1.5 Review

This policy is reviewed annually and may be revised in response to feedback, changes in best practice or guidance from TQUK. Copies are available at hello@nationaltalent.org or via www.nationaltalent.org.

2. Principles

NTA's approach to RPL is based on the following principles:

- RPL is a valid method of enabling learners to gain credit for units, irrespective of how their learning took place. There is no difference in value between credit achieved through RPL and credit achieved through the standard NTA programme.
- The assessment of RPL evidence is subject to the same quality assurance and monitoring standards as any other form of assessment. RPL assessment decisions are subject to internal quality assurance in accordance with NTA's Internal Quality Assurance Procedure.
- Credit awarded through RPL is not distinguished from any other credit awarded. Certificates issued following RPL do not indicate that RPL was used.
- RPL focuses on what the learner can demonstrate, not on where or how the learning took place. Prior learning may have been acquired through formal education, work experience, voluntary activities, community involvement or everyday life.
- All RPL applications are considered on their individual merits. The decision to grant or refuse RPL is based solely on whether the evidence demonstrates that the learner meets the required learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
- Learners have the right to appeal where an RPL application is unsuccessful, in accordance with NTA's Enquiries and Appeals Policy.

3. When RPL May Be Used

3.1 Eligibility

All learners are entitled to apply for RPL, provided that they meet the following conditions:

- The learner is registered (or intending to register) on the NTA Level 3 Award in Essential Work Skills.
- The prior learning is relevant to the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the unit(s) for which RPL is being claimed.
- The learner can provide evidence that meets the evidence principles set out in Section 4.

3.2 What RPL Can and Cannot Be Used For

RPL can be used to claim exemption from individual units within the Level 3 Award where the learner can demonstrate that they already meet the required learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

RPL cannot be used:

- To claim exemption from the entire qualification – learners must complete at least one unit through the standard NTA assessment process.
- Where the assessment requirements of a unit specifically require assessment through the NTA platform and this cannot be replicated through prior evidence (for example, where platform-based activities form part of the assessment design).
- Where TQUK has indicated that RPL is not permitted for a specific unit or assessment component.

3.3 NTA Platform Context

The NTA Level 3 Award is delivered fully online and self-paced via the NTA platform. The platform captures an automatic evidence trail of each learner's engagement, responses and achievement. This delivery model means that most learners will find it efficient and straightforward to complete the programme through standard assessment.

However, NTA recognises that some learners may already possess the knowledge, understanding and skills assessed by certain units – for example, through previous qualifications, professional experience or prior training. RPL provides these learners with a fair route to recognition without unnecessary duplication of learning.

4. Evidence Requirements

4.1 Evidence Principles

All evidence submitted in support of an RPL application must meet the following five principles:

Principle	What This Means
Valid	The evidence must genuinely demonstrate that the learner meets the demands of the learning outcomes. It must be directly relevant to the unit or units being claimed.
Current	The evidence must reflect up-to-date knowledge, understanding

	and skills. Currency requirements will depend on the nature of the learning outcome. Where currency is in doubt, NTA may use supplementary questions or tasks to verify current competence.
Sufficient	There must be enough evidence to fully meet the requirements of the learning outcome(s) being claimed. Where evidence is insufficient, it must be complemented by evidence gained through other assessment methods before credit can be awarded.
Authentic	The evidence must genuinely be the learner's own work. Where evidence arises from collaborative activity, it is only acceptable if the learning outcome relates to teamwork. Learners must sign a declaration of authenticity.
Reliable	The evidence must be such that a different assessor would arrive at the same assessment decision if the assessment were repeated.

4.2 Types of Acceptable Evidence

Evidence submitted in support of an RPL application may include, but is not limited to, the following:

Evidence Type	Examples
Certificates and qualifications	Copies of certificates, transcripts or records of achievement from previous qualifications.
Qualification specifications	Unit specifications, syllabi or learning outcomes from previous qualifications, to enable cross-mapping against NTA learning outcomes.
Witness testimony	Signed statements from a reliable source (e.g. line manager, tutor or professional supervisor) confirming the learner's knowledge, skills or experience.
Professional discussion	A recorded discussion with the learner to explore the depth and breadth of their knowledge and understanding.
Reflective accounts	Written accounts by the learner describing how their prior experience demonstrates the required knowledge, understanding or skills.
Work products or portfolios	Documents, reports, presentations or other outputs produced by the learner in a professional, voluntary or educational context.
Employer or organisational records	Training records, CPD logs, performance appraisals or job descriptions that evidence relevant experience.

The types of evidence required will depend on the learning outcomes of the unit(s) being claimed. NTA will provide guidance to learners on what evidence is likely to be needed for their specific RPL application.

4.3 Currency of Evidence

The currency of evidence is particularly important. Evidence must reflect up-to-date knowledge, understanding and skills. What counts as 'current' will vary depending on the nature of the learning outcome and the pace of change in the relevant area. As a general guide, NTA would normally expect evidence to relate to learning or experience gained within the past five years, unless the nature of the subject area means a longer timeframe is appropriate.

Where the currency of evidence is in doubt, the assessor may use supplementary questions or a professional discussion to verify the learner's current knowledge and competence.

5. The RPL Process

The RPL process follows a structured series of steps to ensure consistency, fairness and rigour:

Step	Stage	Description
1	Initial enquiry	The learner (or delivery partner on their behalf) contacts NTA to express an interest in RPL. NTA provides information on the RPL process, the requirements of the qualification and the types of evidence that may be acceptable.
2	Guidance and support	NTA or the delivery partner provides the learner with guidance to help them understand the learning outcomes against which their prior learning will be assessed, and to identify what evidence they may need to gather.
3	Application	The learner submits a formal RPL application using the RPL Application Form (Appendix A), together with all supporting evidence. Applications should be submitted before or at the point of registration on the NTA programme.
4	Assessment	A suitably qualified assessor reviews the evidence against

		the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the relevant unit(s). The assessor applies the evidence principles (valid, current, sufficient, authentic, reliable). Where evidence is insufficient, the assessor identifies the gaps and advises the learner on what further evidence or assessment is needed.
5	Internal quality assurance	All RPL assessment decisions are subject to internal quality assurance in accordance with NTA's Internal Quality Assurance Procedure, to the same standard as any other form of assessment.
6	Decision and notification	NTA notifies the learner (and delivery partner, where applicable) in writing of the outcome. If RPL is granted, the learner is exempt from the relevant unit(s) and this is recorded on the NTA platform. If RPL is not granted, the learner is advised of next steps.
7	Record keeping	NTA retains a full record of the RPL application, evidence reviewed, assessment decision and quality assurance outcome. Records are retained in accordance with NTA's data retention schedule.

6. RPL Assessment Decisions

Following assessment and internal quality assurance, one of the following outcomes will be communicated to the learner:

Outcome	What Happens Next
RPL granted in full	The learner is exempt from the relevant unit(s). Credit is recorded on the NTA platform and is not distinguished from credit awarded through standard assessment. The learner continues with any remaining units of the qualification.
RPL granted in part	The learner is exempt from specific learning outcomes where sufficient evidence has been provided. The learner must complete the remaining learning outcomes through standard assessment on the NTA platform.
RPL not granted	The evidence was insufficient, not current or did not meet the required standard. The learner is advised of the reasons and may either submit additional evidence within 20 working days or undertake the unit(s) through the standard NTA programme.

All RPL assessment decisions are made at the discretion of NTA. TQUK, as the endorsing awarding organisation, has the final decision regarding any RPL application where a dispute arises.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 NTA Management

- Ensure that this policy is communicated to all relevant staff, delivery partners and learners.
- Ensure that suitably qualified assessors and internal quality assurers are available to support the RPL process.
- Approve RPL applications and oversee the RPL process.
- Maintain records of all RPL applications and outcomes.

7.2 Assessors

- Assess RPL evidence against the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the relevant unit(s).
- Apply the evidence principles (valid, current, sufficient, authentic, reliable) consistently.
- Identify gaps in evidence and advise learners on further evidence or assessment needed.
- Record assessment decisions with clear justification.

7.3 Internal Quality Assurers

- Quality assure RPL assessment decisions to the same standard as any other form of assessment.
- Verify that the evidence principles have been correctly applied.
- Provide feedback to assessors on the quality and consistency of RPL decisions.

7.4 Delivery Partners

- Inform learners about the availability of RPL during induction.
- Provide initial guidance and support to learners considering an RPL application.
- Ensure that staff involved in RPL are aware of this policy and have received appropriate training.

7.5 Learners

- Gather and submit evidence to support their RPL application.
- Complete the RPL Application Form (Appendix A) and the declaration of authenticity.
- Respond to requests for further evidence or clarification within the agreed timescales.

8. Fees

NTA may charge an administrative fee for processing RPL applications. The current RPL fee is available on request from NTA or is published on the NTA website. Any fees charged to NTA by TQUK for processing an RPL application will be passed on to the learner or delivery partner making the request.

RPL fees are set out in NTA's Invoicing and Fees Policy.

9. Appeals

A learner whose RPL application is unsuccessful has the right to appeal the decision. Appeals may be made on the following grounds:

- Non-observance of the agreed RPL procedures set out in this policy.
- Improper application of those procedures.

Appeals should be submitted in writing to NTA within 20 working days of receiving the RPL decision. Appeals are handled in accordance with NTA's Enquiries and Appeals Policy, which sets out the stages, the timescales for NTA's response and any fees that apply.

Where a dispute cannot be resolved through NTA's appeals process, the matter may be referred to TQUK.

10. Record Keeping

NTA will retain a complete record of each RPL application, including:

- The RPL Application Form and declaration of authenticity.
- All evidence submitted by the learner.
- The assessor's assessment decision and written justification.
- The internal quality assurance record.
- The outcome notification sent to the learner.

Records are retained in accordance with NTA's data retention schedule and Data Protection and Privacy Policy.

11. Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following NTA policies:

- Internal Quality Assurance Procedure.
- Enquiries and Appeals Policy.
- Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.
- Plagiarism Policy.
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy.
- Invoicing and Fees Policy.

12. Contact Information

For any queries about recognition of prior learning, please contact National Talent Academy:

Email: hello@nationaltalent.org

Website: www.nationaltalent.org

Address: 3rd Floor, 1 Ashley Road, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA14 2DT

Appendix A: RPL Application Form

This form should be completed by the learner (or with the support of their delivery partner) and submitted to NTA together with all supporting evidence.

Section 1: Learner Details

Full name:

Date of birth:

NTA learner ID (if registered):

Delivery partner (if applicable):

Email address:

Telephone number:

Section 2: Qualification and Unit(s)

Qualification: NTA Level 3 Award in Essential Work Skills

Unit(s) for which RPL is being claimed:

Section 3: Summary of Prior Learning

Please provide a brief summary of the prior learning, experience or qualifications on which this RPL application is based. Include details of where and when the learning took place.

Section 4: Evidence Submitted

Please list all evidence documents submitted with this application:

Section 5: Declaration of Authenticity

I confirm that:

- The information provided in this application is accurate and complete.
- All evidence submitted is my own work (or, where collaborative work is included, I have clearly identified my own contribution).
- I understand what plagiarism means and that submitting evidence that is not my own constitutes malpractice.
- I understand that NTA may verify any evidence submitted and that providing false information may result in the application being refused or, if RPL has already been granted, the decision being revoked.

Learner signature:

Date:

Section 6: For NTA Use Only

Date application received:

Assessor name:

Assessment date:

Outcome (granted in full / granted in part / not granted):

Justification:

IQA name:

IQA date:

IQA outcome:
