Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Application Kit

Introduction

The Mercer RPL Application Kit is designed to provide students with information required to apply for a Nationally Recognised Qualification through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). This application kit will guide you through Mercer requirements for any student undertaking the RPL process for any national competency or full qualification in the Furnishing Training Package.

RPL enables trainers, teachers, students and industry professionals to have the skills and knowledge that they have obtained through training, work experience and/or life experience to be formally recognised.

To apply and receive RPL through Mercer is a simple, cost-effective process. The process involves four phases - the Request, the Collection of the Evidence, the Assessment and the Review.

It is important to realise though, that gaining RPL for a credential does not mean, in any way, a diminution of the quality of the competency standards required by industry at each level. The standards are the same, the process of having achieved those standards is different.

What is Recognition of Prior Learning (or RPL)?

Recognition of Prior Learning (or RPL) is the acknowledgement of skills and knowledge obtained through:

- Formal training (conducted by industry or education)
- Work experience (including informal training)
- Life experience

The main focus of RPL is the learning outcomes and their assessment requirements and not about how, when or where the learning occurred. This is a crucial underlying principle of RPL - it makes the distinction between formal and informal training unnecessary, by focusing on the outcomes rather than the location and the process of learning.

For example, you could accumulate skills in lighting in the circus or the concert hall, in the classroom, or on-line with work placements. Some students could take 30 hours to complete a competency/study unit; others may take 3 hours - it doesn't matter as long as the final outcome is achieved.

RPL offers a number of potential advantages, in particular:

- The completion of formal education studies in a shorter period of time
- The elimination or reduction of duplication in learning already acquired
- An efficient response to industry skill shortages
- A fairer access to studies, which the individual may wish to undertake
- Increasing career and education options through mobility of training and credentials
- Stronger links between industry and education
- Greater understanding and recognition of workplace training needs
- A cost reduction in education/training provision for industry, education and the individual

The Mercer RPL process requires the applicant to demonstrate that their skills and knowledge is current and matches the requirements of national units of competency.

The Process

The process involves four phases: Application, Collecting the Evidence, Assessment and Review.

Phase 1: Application

Complete and submit a Mercer '*RTO Application for RPL*' form. The form requires each applicant to indicate which national competency unit and full qualification they wish to apply for.

ⓘ ***Where can I access an '*RTO Application for RPL*' Form?***

An '*RTO Application for RPL'* form can be downloaded via the college website.

You must complete an application form for each unit of competency that you seek recognition.

ⓘ ***Where can I find the requirements of the unit of competency?***

Your qualification is made up of a number of core and elective units of competence. Please check the units that we offer in our Certificate IV in Interior Decoration and Diploma of Interior Design and Decoration on the Mercer Website.

Each unit of competency then has its own requirements. The training.gov.au website provides a document outlining the requirements for each unit of competency which can be downloaded in a MSWord or PDF file under the Content section. To find the requirements of the unit of competency for which you are seeking recognition, click on the qualification link below and locate the unit of competency for this application and scroll down to the section titled 'Content' where you can download the requirements document.

- MSF40113 - Certificate IV in Interior Decoration (Release 3)
- MSF50213 - Diploma of Interior Design and Decoration (Release 3)

ⓘ ***Where can I get help to complete my application?***

Mercer can advise students on selecting appropriate units. If you have any questions in relation to your application, please contact the Mercer Program Manager on 1300 226 743 or via email to studentcare@mercer.edu.au.

Phase 2: Collecting the Evidence

Each unit of competency is assessed according to the required performance criteria in accordance with the National Training Package. The '*Assessment Matrix*' section of the '*RTO Application for RPL*' form can help applicants identify the evidence required to support the performance criteria for each unit.

ⓘ *What Sort Of Evidence Do I Need To Provide?*

Evidence could include, but is not limited to:

☐ Formal qualifications, with details of the subjects completed and the institution

☐ Support letters from professionals confirming the skills that they have observed

☐ Published works, paper clippings

☐ Letters from fellow staff members confirming competencies in the Workplace

☐ Reports from Supervisors in Workplaces

☐ Projects

☐ Questioning, interviewing, oral presentations can be gleaned from the telephone conversation

ⓘ *How should I present the evidence?*

It is crucial that your evidence is presented in a clear and concise way, so that the assessor can easily work through the assessment process:

☐ Each item presented as evidence must be clearly marked.

☐ You may use the same evidence for a number of assessment criteria but it must be clearly marked or linked.

☐ Where possible, it is preferable that your evidence is submitted in an electronic format either on a USB or through a file sharing site like Dropbox.

As a guide a sample *Assessment Matrix* is provided at Schedule 3.

Remember, you must complete an application form for each unit of competency for which you seek recognition. If you have any questions about your evidence, please contact the Mercer Program Manager on 1300 226 743 or via email to studentcare@mercer.edu.au.

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Phase 2: Collecting the Evidence (contd)

ⓘ *What if I can't prove some areas in the Assessment Matrix?*

The '*Assessment Matrix*' section of the '*RTO Application for RPL*' forms the outline of all the elements of the unit of competency that you have applied for and is trying to discover all your skills and knowledge that are required by industry to meet the outcomes in an area.

If you find that some areas you simply don't have evidence for, please leave it blank. The assessors will be using a holistic assessment approach.

ⓘ *What do I do once I've collected all the evidence?*

Once all your evidence is collected, send your completed application with the relevant evidence to Mercer using one of the means below:

Email: studentcare@mercer.edu.au with the subject line "RPL Application" Mercer,
Post: Mercer Program Manager, 67 Cromwell Street, Collingwood VIC 3066

In Person: 67 Cromwell Street, Collingwood VIC 3066

All documentation is filed as evidence of competency and held at Mercer. You should retain a copy of your RPL application, including supporting evidence, for your own records.

Phase 3: The Assessment

On receipt, Mercer will check your application for completeness and begin the process of assessment.

Your application and evidence will be assessed by a qualified assessor with specialist industry skills.

Where an application is deemed to be incomplete, Mercer will be in contact to discuss what additional information is required before assessment can commence.

The process of assessment can take four (4)weeks from receipt of a completed application.

Phase 4: The Review

Where there have been difficulties in deciding whether to grant RPL, the applicant will receive an '*RPL Assessment Report*' from Mercer indicating where competencies still need to be completed and suggesting options for how to gain these competencies.

ⓘ *What happens if I don't meet every competency?*

There are opportunities for alternative assessment procedures such as phone interview, panel interview, working with a Workplace Supervisor. Mercer will advise you of the options for alternative assessment and/or how to gain the missing competencies.

ⓘ *What if I would like to make a complaint or appeal the Assessment Decision?*

Any grievances in relation to the RPL process will be dealt with in accordance with the college RTO Complaints & Appeals Policy. Any applicant wishing to lodge a grievance or an appeal should refer to the college '*Complaints & Appeals Policy*' which can be accessed via the college website.

Schedule 1

Principles of Assessment

Fairness:	The individual learner's needs are considered in the assessment process.
	Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments are applied by the RTO to take into account the individual learner's needs.
	The RTO informs the learner about the assessment process, and provides the learner with the opportunity to challenge the result of the assessment and be reassessed if necessary.
Flexibility:	Assessment is flexible to the individual learner by:
	▪ reflecting the learner's needs;
	▪ assessing competencies held by the learner no matter how or where they have been acquired; and
	▪ drawing from a range of assessment methods and using those that are appropriate to the context, the unit of competency and associated assessment requirements, and the individual.
Validity:	Any assessment decision of the RTO is justified, based on the evidence of performance of the individual learner.
	Validity requires:
	▪ Assessment against the unit/s of competency and the associated assessment requirements covers the broad range of skills and knowledge that are essential to competent performance;
	▪ Assessment of knowledge and skills is integrated with their practical application;
	▪ Assessment to be based on evidence that demonstrates that a learner could demonstrate these skills and knowledge in other similar situations; and
	▪ Judgement of competence is based on evidence of learner performance that is aligned to the unit/s of competency and associated assessment requirements.
Reliability:	Evidence presented for assessment is consistently interpreted and assessment results are comparable irrespective of the assessor conducting the assessment.

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Schedule 2

Rules of Evidence

Validity:	The assessor is assured that the learner has the skills, knowledge and attributes as described in the module or unit of competency and associated assessment requirements.
Sufficiency:	The assessor is assured that the quality, quantity and relevance of the assessment evidence enables a judgement to be made of a learner's competency
Authenticity:	The assessor is assured that the evidence presented for assessment is the learner's own work.
Currency:	The assessor is assured that the assessment evidence demonstrates current competency. This requires the assessment evidence to be from the present or the very recent past.

Mercer School of Interior Design

Schedule 3

Assessment Matrix

| Qualification: | Certificate IV in Interior Decoration | Unit of Competency: | CUAACD301 Produce Drawings To Communicate Ideas |

Elements & Performance Criteria	How have you done this?	Evidence to Support This	Location of the Evidence
%‡ D`Ub˙XfUk]b[˙k cf_ F‡È·Á‹a^}œ‑·Á‡å¦æ¸å‡*Á^˘˘ã^{˘^}œÁ‡[{˘Á ¦^-^¦^}&^Á¸æœ^¦ãæÁ‡å‹Æ&[}-ã{˘Á¸ã@Á æ‡}¦¦[]¦ãæœ^Á¸^[]¦Á‡å‑Á^˘˘ã^å 1.2 Identify factors, including contractual, legal and ethical factors, that may impact on how drawing work is undertaken F‡È·ÁŐæœ@·¦Á‡å-¦¦{˘æœã}Á‑æä[˘o‑å¦æ¸å‡*Á‑æ^&@‡ã˘^•ÉÁ {˘æœ^¦ãæ‑¦Áæå‡å‑ã˘{˘^}·o‑Á‡[{˘Á‑æˉæå‡*^Á‑Á‡[˘¦‑&•Á æå‡åÁ‑æˉ^c‑¦{˘ã‑^Á‑Á@¸¸Á‑o‑@^ˉÁ‑æêÁ‑æˉ^Á•^å¦Á‑Á &[{{˘˘}‑å‑æˉæ^Á‑‑ãæ^• 1.4 Evaluate information for its application to specific drawing briefs	Regular and ongoing professional development (give examples) Current job role	Portfolio of work Non Accredited training certificates Position Description of required skills in current employment 3rd party testimonials	Drop box - CUAACD301