



Policy

Recognised Prior Learning (RPL)

Version: 1

Summary:	This policy document sets out how the Institute of Fire Safety Managers (IFSM) will standardise and apply prior learning to the qualifications offered.	
Target Audience:	Staff, Members, Council, Candidates & Participants	
Next Review Date:	November 2027	
Approved by:	Management Team	23/09/24
Ratified by:	Council	14/11/24
Date issued:	November 2024	

Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Scope	3
3. Recognised Prior Learning (RPL)	3
4. Responsibilities of the Institute	4
5. Application of Prior Learning.....	4
6. Submitting Evidence	5
7. Limitations of RPL	5
8. Confidentiality.....	5
9. Appeals	5
Version Control.....	6

1. Introduction

The Institute recognises that learning is a lifetime process and when applying for a qualification not all applicants will be starting from the same position. This should be considered when assessing competencies for qualifications the Institute offers.

The Institute prides itself on providing a high-quality service and takes great care to ensure that all policies and processes are followed. This policy ensures that prior learning is recognised, considered and applied in a consistent manner. This policy is enacted under the Institute's By-Laws.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all activities and services provided by the Institute, including but not limited to professional development and educational opportunities. It is applicable to all staff, participants and candidates/ entrants.

The policy should be read alongside the following Institute policies:

- Complaints Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Appeals Policy

3. Recognised Prior Learning (RPL)

A method of assessment that considers whether a learner can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills that they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning.

The Institute aims to reduce the duplication and undue burden on candidates where they can demonstrate, through clear, robust, up to date and demonstrable methods, that they already possess the knowledge, understanding and skills required for components of the qualification.

The Institute will accept suitable RPL within the production of a portfolio of evidence for a unit/course where acceptable evidence is provided in line with the Institutes expectations and the requirements of the awarding organisation. RPL carries a maximum weighting of 70% of the final qualification mark.

Submission of sufficient evidence of RPL will be required to meet the criteria and requirements of the unit/ course. RPL will be assessed by the Institute as part of the qualification.

Candidates who submit evidence of RPL will still be required to complete e-assessments as part of their qualification. Candidates will be required to meet all criteria and requirements of

the unit/ course they are undertaking as assessed by the Institute. Assessment methods for RPL will be of equal rigour to other assessment methods, be fit for purpose and map to the course content.

4. Responsibilities of the Institute

All relevant staff and candidates will be made aware of the requirements of RPL.

The Institute will consider all evidence submitted in support of an application for RPL by candidates. Where evidence is unsuitable e.g. unclear, out of date, unsigned or lacking detail, the evidence will not be accepted, and further evidence will need submitting. Candidates will be informed where this is the case

Evidence will be collected and stored in order to support applications; this may be shared with the awarding body or regulators.

5. Application of Prior Learning

The Institute will endeavour to ensure candidates are aware of acceptable forms of RPL on application to the unit/ course in order to reduce the possible chance of unnecessary duplication of work during the learning/ assessment process.

Examples of RPL evidence include, but are not limited to:

- CPD portfolios
- Documents linked to qualification standards e.g. Fire Risk Assessments
- Signed letters/ documents from employers/ mentors

Candidates will be informed of the principles of RPL, the process involved, support for the candidates and details on the impact on training and assessment costs where applicable. Evidence will be gathered during the application process. Guidance on relevant evidence will be provided by the Institute on application to the course/ unit or on request.

Documents linked to qualification standards would typically only be accepted if it demonstrates evidence of skills/ knowledge or understanding within the past twelve months prior to application. CPD portfolios will be accepted at the discretion of the Institute and/ or awarding bodies.

Where there is a change in law and/or other professional and/or industry standards, the twelve-month limitation may be shorter to ensure that knowledge and/or skills reflects those in existence at the time of completing the unit and/or qualification.

6. Submitting Evidence

Evidence for RPL should be submitted on application to the course/unit or within the time frames outlined in the course/unit guidance.

Evidence should be submitted electronically to the Institute. This will be included in the final portfolio as evidence towards achievement and should be presented, by the candidate, as such.

Evidence submitted will be assessed against the unit/ qualification standards. Decisions on the suitability of evidence will be made by the Institute/ awarding body.

7. Limitations of RPL

Candidates can only achieve a maximum of 70% of the qualification through RPL.

This ensures candidates demonstrate current knowledge and skills and that they have completed sufficient work towards a qualification.

RPL will be used in conjunction with e-assessment. It is not possible to gain the qualification through RPL alone.

The qualification awarding body has the final decision regarding all RPL requests.

8. Confidentiality

All aspects of RPL will be handled with strict confidentiality. Information will only be shared with those directly involved in the qualifications process.

9. Appeals

Candidates may appeal against the decisions regarding RPL but only on the grounds of non-observance of agreed procedures and/or improper application of those procedures. Appeals guidance can be found in the Appeals Policy held on the Institute's website.

Version Control

Change Record

Date	Author	Version	Page	Reason for Change

Reviewers/contributors

Name	Position	Version Reviewed & Date