



Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

Guidance for centres offering VTCT and iTEC qualifications



Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. What is Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) only?	3
2.1. When to use RPL only	3
2.2. How to apply RPL only	4
2.3. Assessment of RPL only evidence	4
3. What is Exemption?	4
3.1. When to use Exemption	4
3.2. How to apply Exemption	5
4. What is Equivalence?	5
4.1. When to use Equivalence	5
4.2. How to apply Equivalence	5
4.3. Equivalence for VTCT Technical Qualifications	5
4.4. Determining and documenting currency	6
5. Centre responsibilities	6
6. RPL only, Exemption and Equivalence process	7
7. Appendix 1 – RPL only	9
8. Appendix 2 – Exemption	10
9. Appendix 3 – Equivalence flow chart	11
10. Appendix 4: Mapping form	12
11. Appendix 5: Example of how to complete mapping grid for RPL only	16
12. Appendix 6: Example of how to complete mapping grid for Exemption	17
13. Appendix 7: Example of how to complete mapping grid for Equivalence	18



1. Introduction

This policy is an overarching policy which includes Recognition of Prior Learning only (RPL), Exemption and Equivalence. The policy aims to provide information and guidance to support those who are directly involved in the planning and advising of any assessment which incorporates prior learning from a specific and relevant subject area. The policy supports those who are undertaking a recognised RQF course at an approved VTCT and/or iTEC centre.

The first step in assessing a learner's prior learning or experience is to determine which category the learner's evidence fits into:

- Recognition of Prior Learning only (RPL)
- Exemption
- Equivalence

2. What is Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) only?

RPL only is 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.

Learners may possess skills and knowledge that have not been acquired through formal learning, e.g. through work experience and/or other related learning that has not been certificated through a recognised awarding organisation. This means that learners may be able to proceed directly to assessment without further study using evidence from uncertificated learning.

For the centre process of RPL only refer to Appendix 1.

2.1. When to use RPL only

RPL only should be applied:

1. When a learner has no previous RQF certification or recognised course of learning.
2. When a learner has relevant skills and/or knowledge acquired through:
 - Domestic/family life
 - Education and training
 - Work activities
 - Community or voluntary activities
3. In order to avoid repetition of learning

2.2. How to apply RPL only

RPL only evidence is assessed to decide whether or not a learner can proceed straight to summative internal/external assessment, as applicable.

RPL only evidence is assessed to identify gaps in skills and knowledge in order to ascertain what further study (if any) is required prior to summative internal/external assessment.

RPL only does not exempt learners from any element of the mandatory summative internal/external requirements of a qualification. RPL only simply means that further learning is not necessary, and the learner can proceed directly to summative assessment. In no circumstances can any mandatory summative observations or mandatory summative examination requirements be avoided. For the avoidance of doubt, where it has been decided that RPL only is the appropriate route to achieving the qualification for a learner who holds no prior recognised certification. It is also not acceptable to exempt the learner from external examination requirements. All mandatory summative assessments attached to the qualification must be completed as normal.

2.3. Assessment of RPL only evidence

Learners must present relevant evidence that meets the learning outcome requirements so that RPL only can be applied for their existing knowledge, understanding or skills for a unit within the qualification. Relevant evidence must be valid, authentic, sufficient and reliable.

Examples of evidence used to support the application of RPL only include:

- examination of documents
- expert witness testimony
- reflective accounts
- professional discussion
- practical skills observation or trade test
- theoretical knowledge of the learner

The RPL only process must be subject to the same rigorous internal and external quality assurance requirements as any other assessment method. All paperwork must be complete and stored along with the learner's evidence in the centre's IQA file and be available to the EQA on request.

3. What is Exemption?

Exemption is the facility for an individual to claim Exemption from some of the qualification that they are currently undertaking from their previously gained certificated achievement of a regulated qualification.

For the centre process of Exemption refer to Appendix 2.

3.1. When to use Exemption

Exemption should be applied when:

1. A learner has achieved a regulated qualification which is recognised as equal or comparable



2. A learner possesses knowledge and skills that are deemed to be current
3. A learner holds a certificate or qualification which has been awarded on the achievement of assessment criteria and assessment methods which are deemed to be equivalent to the regulated qualification
4. Exemption can only be applied when one or more of the above is deemed current

Determining and documenting currency

- A qualification is only deemed to be current if achieved within the last three years.
- Skills and knowledge are only deemed to be current if the specific vocational qualification content i.e. work practice is current, within the last three years.
- Evidence of currency must be submitted i.e. certificates (of the same level or above with a minimum of 80% common content and assessment criteria).

3.2. How to apply Exemption

- The evidence should be assessed to decide if knowledge and skills are equal or comparable to the regulated qualification
- The evidence should be assessed to decide if the learner's knowledge and skills can be deemed to be current
- The evidence should be assessed to identify any gaps in skills and knowledge which would require the learner to undertake further study
- There must be evidence to demonstrate a minimum of an 80% overlap with the unit/qualification for which Exemption is being sought

4. What is Equivalence?

Equivalent units must be from the Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF) and equivalent in criteria and content to another RQF unit. An equivalent unit needs to be of the same credit value/guided learning hours (GLH) or greater and the same level or higher. Equivalence allows the replacement of one RQF unit in a qualification with another RQF unit that has the same general content and is of the same or greater credit/GLH value and level.

For the centre process of Equivalence refer to Appendix 3.

4.1. When to use Equivalence

Equivalence should be applied when a learner has achieved an equivalent RQF unit in another RQF qualification.

4.2. How to apply Equivalence

Units from different qualifications but sharing the same Unit Reference Number are deemed to be equivalent.

4.3. Equivalence for VTCT Technical Qualifications

For VTCT Technical Qualifications where a qualification contains an identical unit from another VTCT Technical Qualification. Where this unit is a mandatory unit, the learner's grade for the unit graded assessment will be carried over from their previous qualification. However, the learner must still complete the graded synoptic assessment and



external examinations that accompany the new qualification, which may assess the unit in question. If the learner wishes to increase their grade, then they may re-take the graded practical assessment, the highest grade will always stand.

Each individual request must be considered and confirmed by VTCT. Evidence will need to be presented in at least 12 weeks before an exam date to ensure that the correct grade is recorded on the learner's final certificates.

VTCT aims to process this in 6 weeks but in busy periods it may take up to 12 weeks. To ensure that learners are not disadvantaged please submit at least 12 weeks before the exam dates.

4.4. Determining and documenting currency

- A qualification is only deemed to be current if achieved within the last three years.
- Skills and knowledge are only deemed to be current if the specific vocational qualification content i.e. work practice is current, i.e. within the last three years.

5. Centre responsibilities

Centres shall ensure that:

- The accountable person appointed, will need to have the relevant subject specific knowledge and a full understanding of each RPL method: RPL only, Exemption and Equivalence.
- In all cases of RPL, mandatory assessment requirements are complied with, when applicable.
- If RPL only, Exemption or Equivalence is to be used, the relevant Quality Assurer is informed.
- Assessment and Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) procedures and practices are rigorous, robust and auditable, and of the same standard as any other form of assessment and IQA.
- Evidence provided by the learner for RPL only, Exemption or Equivalence is relevant, authentic, sufficient, valid, clear, transparent and current.
- If the accountable person has any concerns or doubt regarding the learner's knowledge, understanding, skills, competence or evidence proposed, RPL only, Exemption or Equivalence must not be applied.
- Formal records including the mapping form and learners evidence of RPL only, Exemption or Equivalence are kept by the centre.
- Formal records of Exemption or Equivalence, including the mapping form and the learner's evidence should be forwarded to VTCT/ITEC via rpl@vtct.org.uk or rpl@itecworld.co.uk for approval.
- Learners are informed that RPL only, Exemption and Equivalence are not necessarily money or time-saving exercises and that the collation of evidence may involve a high proportion of time and may incur some cost, charged by the centre.

6. RPL only, Exemption and Equivalence process

Stage 1:

Prior to enrolment, all learners should be informed of the possibility of applying RPL only, Exemption or Equivalence. If learners decide to apply for RPL only, Exemption or Equivalence a learner interview should take place where they are fully informed about the:

- Process
- Support and guidance available
- Timelines
- Appeals processes
- Centre Fee(s) involved – to include a clear breakdown and explanation of costs

Stage 2:

All learners who apply for RPL only, Exemption or Equivalence must be provided with literature that informs the learner about:

- What they should know (related to the specific unit or qualification)
- What they should be able to demonstrate (related to the specific unit or qualification)
- Amount and type of assessment(s) they need to undertake
- The type and range of evidence which can be considered

Stage 3:

Learners and centres together will collect evidence to meet the standards of the learning outcome(s)/ unit(s). Learners and centres will cross map evidence to the relevant learning outcome(s)/unit(s). Evidence may meet unit requirements partially or in full, as applicable.

Stage 4:

The evidence will be assessed, and judgements made in relation to unit standards. Evidence must be valid and reliable. The assessment process is subject to the usual internal and external quality assurance processes. A learner has the right to appeal against any assessment decision and should follow the centre's appeals process and then VTCT/ITEC's appeals process.

Stage 5:

Where further evidence/learning is needed, learners will be provided with an action plan:

- Identifying the further evidence required
- Identifying any further learning required
- Highlighting available assessment and re-assessment opportunities



Stage 6:

For Exemption and Equivalence, VTCT/iTEC need to be informed in the following way:

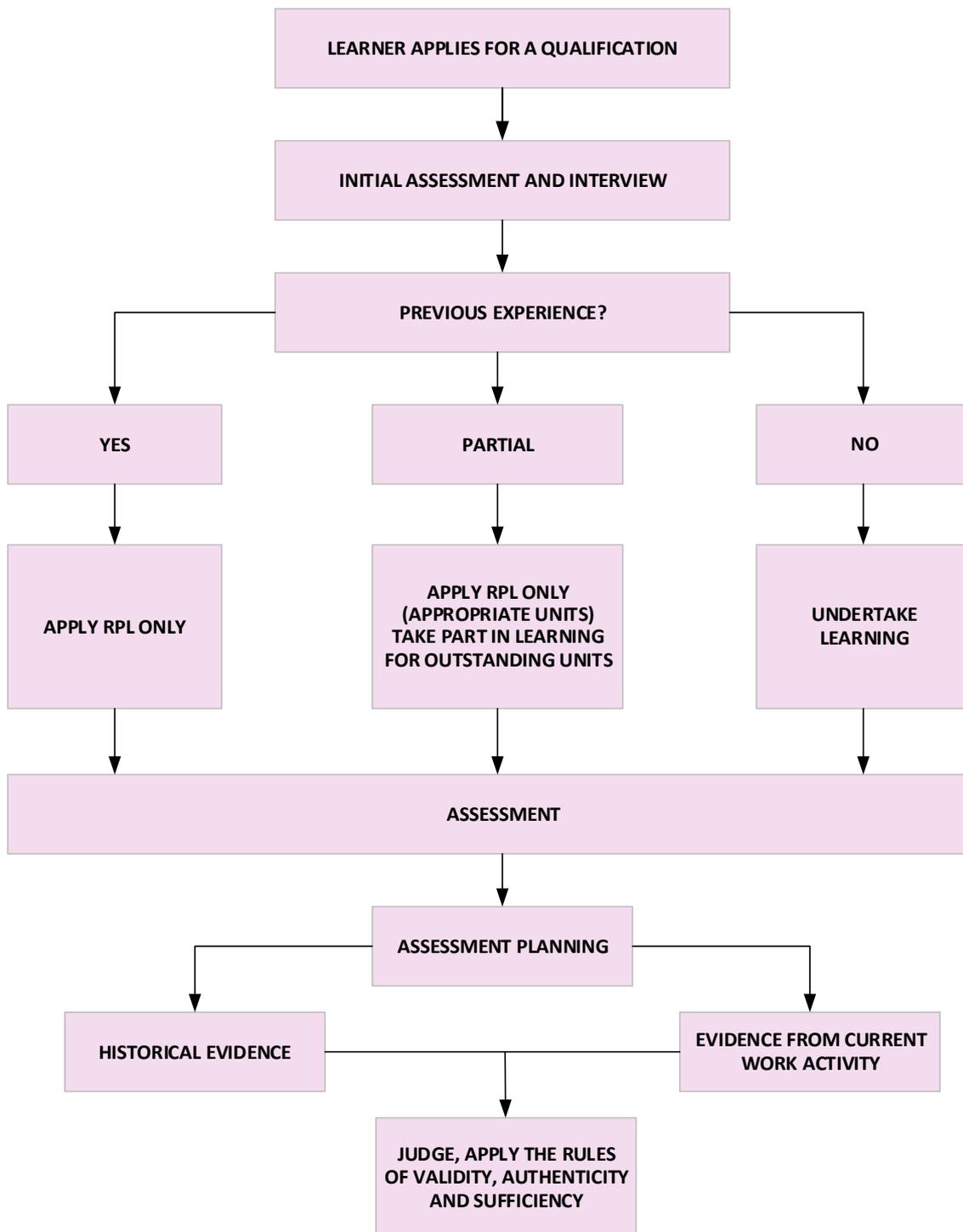
- All documentation needs to be sent to rpl@vtct.org.uk or rpl@itecworld.co.uk, the documents should include the mapping form, and the learner's evidence e.g. copies of certificates, work evidence.
- Original certificates should be made available for your EQA to view on their visit.
- Evidence needs to be presented at least 12 weeks before an exam date to ensure that the learner is not disadvantaged. VTCT/iTEC aims to process this in 6 weeks but in busy periods it may take up to 12 weeks.

Stage 7:

On successful completion of all quality assurance processes, certification claims can be made following the normal procedure.

7. Appendix 1 – RPL only

FLOW CHART FOR RPL ONLY



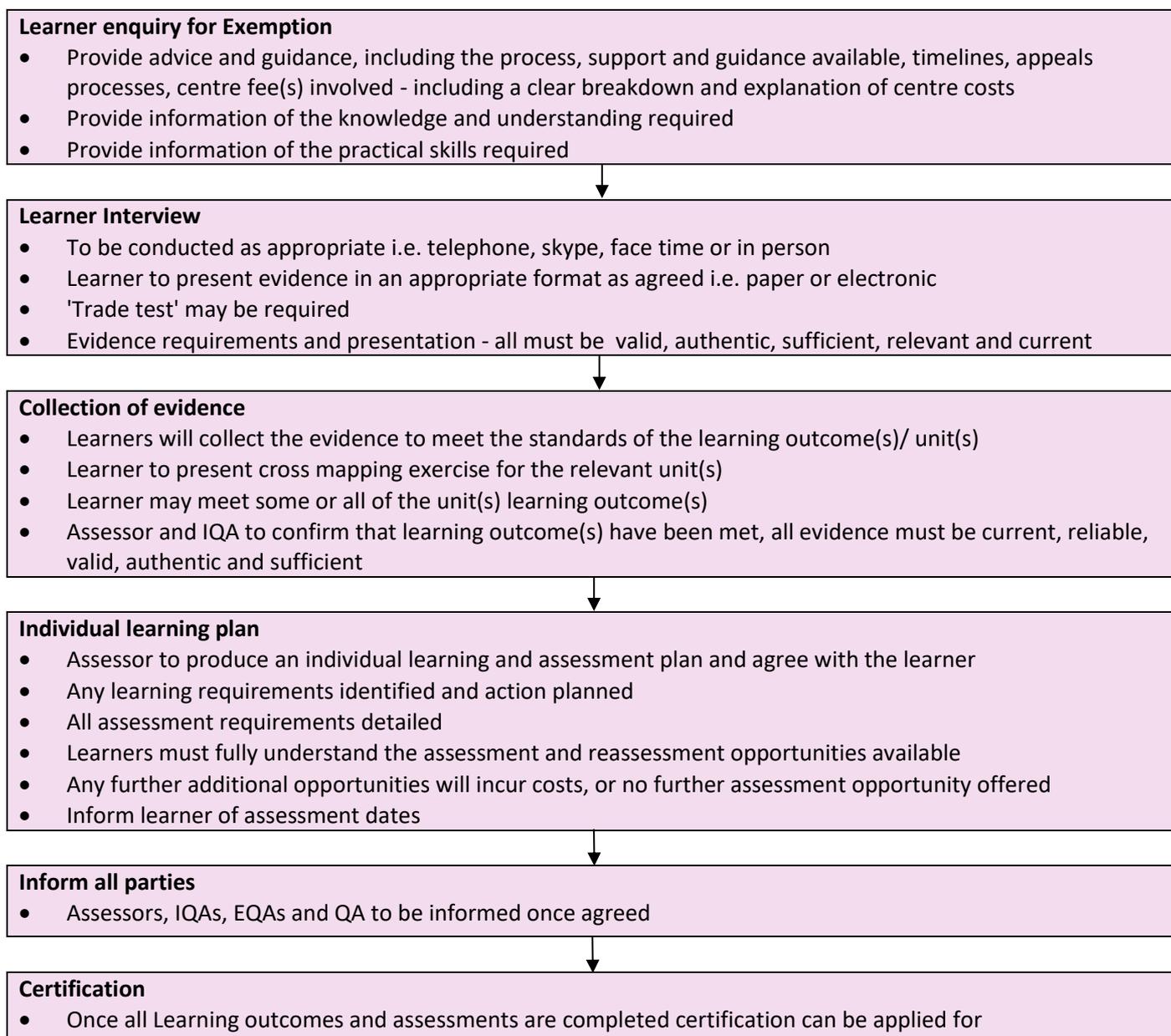
8. Appendix 2 – Exemption

Prior to Enrolment on a qualification, all learners should be informed of the possibility of applying RPL only, Exemption or Equivalence. If learners decide that they would like to apply for RPL only, Exemption or Equivalence an interview should take place.

This document refers to Exemption. The learner can claim against the achievement requirements of a RQF qualification/unit, using evidence of certificated non-RQF achievement deemed to be of equivalent value e.g. achievements gained in the QCF.

Exemption is for certificated non – RQF achievements

Gaps to be identified



9. Appendix 3 – Equivalence flow chart

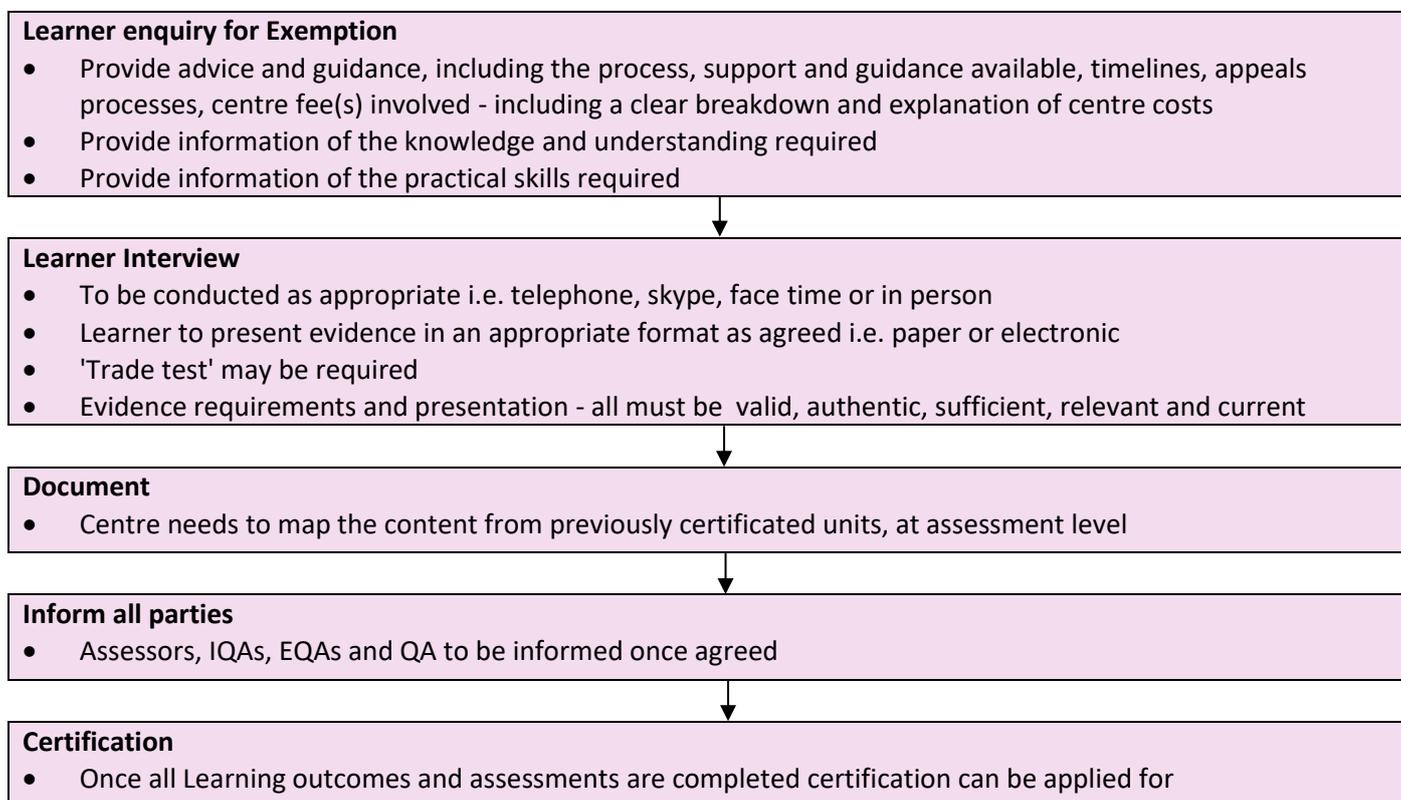
Prior to Enrolment on a qualification, all learners should be informed of the possibility of applying RPL only, Exemption or Equivalence. If learners decide that they would like to apply for RPL only, Exemption or Equivalence an interview should take place.

This document refers to Equivalence. The learner can claim against the achievement requirements of a RQF qualification using evidence of certificated RQF achievement deemed to be of an equivalent value.

Equivalence is for certificated achievement within the RQF.

Directly maps to meet credit/evidence requirement of a unit.

Gaps to be identified.



10. Appendix 4: Mapping form

This form should be completed by the Centre.

For RPL only it should be approved by the VTCT/ITEC Quality Assurer. For Exemption and Equivalence all documentation needs to be sent to rpl@vtct.org.uk or rpl@itec.org.uk

Evidence needs to be presented at least 12 weeks before an exam date to ensure that the learner is not disadvantaged. We aim to process this in 6 weeks but in busy periods it may take up to 12 weeks.

1. Centre details	
Centre name:	
Contact name:	
Contact telephone number:	
Email:	

2. Learner details	
Learner name:	
Learner number: (if applicable)	
Date of registration: (if applicable)	
Email:	
Qualification details (if applicable)	From: To:

3. Previously certificated unit(s)/module(s)/qualification to be used for Exemption	
Unit/module name:	
Unit number:	
Unit level:	
Additional unit/module name:	
Unit number:	
Unit level:	
Additional unit/module name:	
Unit number:	
Unit level:	
Qualification title (if applicable) in which units(s) sit:	
Qualification number:	
Awarding organisation that certificated the unit/qualification:	
Training provider that claimed for the unit/qualification:	
Date of certification:	



4. Mapping Form				
Unit name and number claiming for RPL only/Exemption	Mapping			
	LO/AC number and title	Evidence	For IQA use only Achieved/not achieved	For EQA use only Achieved/not achieved
Learning outcomes/ Assessment criteria				
Learning outcomes/ Assessment criteria				
Learning outcomes/ Assessment criteria				
Learning outcomes/ Assessment criteria				
Learning outcomes/ Assessment criteria				
Learning outcomes/ Assessment criteria				
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Learning outcomes/ Assessment criteria				
Learning outcomes/ Assessment criteria				



5. Mapping Form for equivalence			
Unit name and number claiming for equivalence	Mapping		
	Evidence	For IQA use only Achieved/not achieved	For EQA use only Achieved/not achieved
Qualification name and unit			
Qualification name and unit			
Qualification name and unit			
Qualification name and unit			

11. Appendix 5: Example of how to complete mapping grid for RPL only

4. Mapping grid for RPL only				
Unit name and number claiming for RPL only	Mapping			
Fulfill salon reception duties UG211G4 RPL only	LO1 Be able to maintain the reception area	Evidence	For IQA use only Achieved/not achieved	For EQA use only Achieved/not achieved
Example: Learning outcomes/ Assessment criteria	Example: LO1 A Keep the reception area clean and tidy at all times	Example: Witness testimony from employer to confirm that Jane has been working as a receptionist in a salon for 5 years and maintained a clean and tidy environment	Achieved	Achieved
Learning outcomes/ Assessment criteria	Example: LO1B Maintain agreed levels of stock of reception stationery and product displays	Example: Witness testimony from employer to confirm that Jane has been working as a receptionist in a salon for 5 years, confirming her responsibility for reception stock, stationery, promotions and displays	Achieved	Achieved
Learning outcomes/ Assessment criteria	Example: LO1 C Offer clients hospitality to meet the salon's client care policies	Example: Witness testimony from employer to confirm that Jane has been working as a receptionist in a salon for 5 years, Jane also demonstrated her skills by working on the college salon reception for 2 hours, greeting customers, dealing with bookings in person and on the phone.	Achieved	Achieved

12. Appendix 6: Example of how to complete mapping grid for Exemption

4. Mapping grid for Exemption				
Unit name and number claiming for Exemption	Mapping			
Anatomy and physiology	Unit claiming Exemption for:	Evidence	For IQA use only Achieved/not achieved	For EQA use only Achieved/not achieved
Example: Learning outcomes/ Assessment criteria	Example: Anatomy and physiology of respiratory, circulatory, neurological, skeletal and muscular systems, endocrine and urinary systems.	Example: Transcript of a complementary therapy A&P unit at level 3 which covers all of the systems listed.	Achieved	Achieved
Learning outcomes/ Assessment criteria	Example: Anatomy and physiology of respiratory, circulatory, neurological, skeletal and muscular systems, endocrine and urinary systems (for exercise and health).	Example: Transcript of a complementary therapy A&P units at level 3 which covers all of the systems listed.	Not achieved – as not in the context of exercise and health	Not achieved – as not in the context of exercise and health
Learning outcomes/ Assessment criteria	Example: Understand postural and core stability.	Student has covered posture in their complementary therapies' qualification. This would need to be mapped at an assessment criteria level.	Not achieved - as minor overlap and not in context.	Not achieved - as minor overlap and not in context.
	Describe the structure and function of the stabilising ligaments and muscles of the spine.	Outline common postural faults.		
	Describe local muscle changes that can take place due to insufficient stabilisation.	Describe muscles affected.		
Learning outcomes/ Assessment criteria	Explain the potential effects of abdominal adiposity and poor posture on movement efficiency.	Undertake postural assessment.		



13. Appendix 7: Example of how to complete mapping grid for Equivalence

5. Mapping grid for Equivalence			
Unit name and number claiming for equivalence	Mapping		
UV20470 – Provide manicure treatments	Evidence	For IQA use only Achieved/not achieved	For EQA use only Achieved/not achieved
Qualification name L2 certificate in manicure and make-up	Portfolio of Achievement and original certificate dated July 2018 Copy of certificate placed in IQA file and learners portfolio.	Achieved	Achieved



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v2		September 2017	Updated with new branding	Qualifications Administrator
v4		12/02/2018	Updated with new branding	Qualifications Manager
v5		30/10/2018	Additional information added to 3.2, 4 and 4.1.	Assessment Manager
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