**Introduction**

Halo Nation Training Pty Ltd (HaloNT) provides a process by which trainees may access **RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning) and RCC (Recognition of Current Competency)**. Many Trainees looking to enrol may have skills and knowledge that can be recognized through an RPL assessment. It has long been recognized that trainees entering any field of study have current skills and future training needs. Many of the skills, along with knowledge held by trainees can gain a full qualification for their skills and knowledge, or can have partial or whole individual competencies recognized.

Lists of competencies are available by contacting HaloNT. HaloNT Partners may refer trainees to HaloNT for consideration of an RPL process. HaloNT will then appoint a Supervisor who will assist the Trainee with their RPL application. Lodging an RPL application is not a guarantee that the trainee will have sufficient work experience to successfully complete the RPL. A HaloNT Partner may be appointed as the applicants supervisor, although the ultimate decision regarding the success of the application must be made and approved by HaloNT.

**What is RPL?**

Different people learn in different ways, we gain important skills from different work, education and life experiences. RPL is about being able to use the skills the trainee has to gain credit towards formal qualifications and/or to improve the trainees work opportunities.

RPL is a process that allows individuals to gain recognition for a range of skills and knowledge regardless of how they gained those skills. This may include skills and knowledge gained through work experience, through formal or informal training and from life experience.

**For example:**

* Time spent assisting a client preparing for, and participating in a particular interest group (e.g. a local cricket team) may count towards a competency unit in “Plan and implement community integration”.
* If the trainee has undertaken regular occupational health and safety training offered through the trainees workplace and are on the safety committee this may mean the trainee already has the skills for the competency unit “Implement workplace health and safety procedures”.

RPL matches what the trainee can already do with the set outcomes of competency units that make up a qualification. By using RPL, the trainee does not have to relearn things that the trainee already knows, regardless of where those skills were gained. RPL can reduce the amount of time needed to study because the trainee has already reached the necessary skill level. If the trainee can use RPL to prove competency in relation to one or more competency units then the trainee will be granted recognition of this.

Competency listings are derived from industry ratified Units of Competency that are grouped together to form Qualifications. In some case, such as High Risk Work licences, these Units of Competency can stand as qualifications on there own.

The advantages of RPL include:

* The trainee is treated as an individual
* The trainee can get credit and recognition for skills that the trainee already has
* The full range of the trainees skills are acknowledged
* The trainee can reduce the length of time it may take the trainee to complete a formal qualification of course
* Reduction in duplication of learning
* Recognized skills and knowledge that the trainee may have acquired from paid or unpaid work. This may help in:
  + - Meeting course entry requirements, and/or
    - Gaining credit within a course of study
* Increasing the career options available, and
* The trainees training needs can be identified and aimed at a level appropriate to the trainee

By working through the competency listings the trainee will be able to determine:

* Whether the trainee has the required skills and knowledge for some or all of these units; and
* Where the trainee will have gaps and a need to develop skills and knowledge.

**Process of Recognition of Prior Learning**

Recognition of Prior Leaning (RPL) consists of a number of stages that the trainee needs to go through. These are:

**1. Information**

The trainee needs to gather information about the RPL process and the competency listing for the units he wishes to apply for. HaloNT will assist the trainee with this process.

**2. Self Assessment**

The trainee will need to compare his skills with the competency listing and make an initial evaluation as to how those skills may be demonstrated. Any evidence of skills and experience used to support the RPL application must address the requirements for that unit or course as identified in the competency listing.

The RPL application will be dependent on the evidence the trainee can provide. If the trainee is satisfied that they can provide evidence to support the requirements of the competency listing, they should submit an RPL Application Form for consideration.

**3. Enrolment Interview (if required)**

Once the trainee has completed and lodged the RPL Application Form, they will be required to undertake a self-assessment. HaloNT will appoint a supervisor to assist the trainee with the process. The supervisor may elect to arrange an interview to discuss the process and the trainees evidence. Subject to the competency listing, and the evidence that can be provided, the supervisor will provide the trainee with a formal quotation for the processing and support during the application process.

If the quotation for services is accepted by the trainee, the formal RPL Application Form is accepted for processing by HaloNT. Fees are payable at this stage.

**4. Gathering and Submitting Evidence**

The trainee will then be required to gather the agreed evidence that supports the RPL application, and submit to the supervisor for evaluation.

**Preparing Evidence**

The trainee must begin gathering and collating information, or evidence, that is going to support the RPL Application. The trainee will need to consider the range of experience and knowledge that may have been accumulated through his personal and professional life, and how this might relate to the RPL application. This information might include (but is not restricted to) the following:

* The trainees achievements – what the trainee have done, and what the trainee needed to know to do it;
* Major turning points – what they were, and skills and qualities that the trainee needed;
* Employment – present and previous work – full and part-time, volunteer work/ years, organization/ position, duties;
* Hobbies – what the trainee do, time involved, skills demonstrated, qualities required, knowledge gained;
* Membership of clubs, associations and community groups – what organizations do the trainee belong to/ name, years/ position, role or duties performed/ time involved, skills demonstrated, qualities required, knowledge gained;
* Home duties (Don’t undervalue yourself) – what the trainee have done, skills demonstrated, qualities required, knowledge gained;
* Military service – position, duties, and qualities required, skills demonstrated, knowledge gained.
* Travel – skills, qualities that the trainee needed to travel, knowledge gained;
* Education/training details – education/training (especially that relevant to this application). Consider from most recent to least recent – course completed (include level of study, subject/unit details), training undertaken at work or for interest (include components of training where possible, not just course names), current enrolment.

**Plan the trainees Evidence:**

* How does the trainees past experience and training relate to the critical evidence for each of the units of competency.

Before submitting the trainees evidence, or the range of information the trainee is using to support the trainees application for RPL, the trainee will need to compile it in a manner that is easily referred to by the trainees Assessor. The trainee needs to relate the trainees evidence to the unit/s of competency. This is achieved by directly listing the trainees evidence sources and any notes along side the appropriate section on the unit of competency, as per this example:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Element** | **Performance Criteria** | ***Evidence Sources and Notes*** |
| Undertake clean up  procedures | 5.1 Clean area; remove waste and excess materials from the confined space.  5.2 Clean, maintain and store personal protective, fall prevention and rescue equipment after use. |  |

**What can be used as evidence:**

A range of different things can be used to prove that the trainee has relevant skills and knowledge. These are called evidence. The trainee need to decide what types of evidence the trainee can use and what best shows the trainees skills and knowledge. If the trainee would like to discuss what the trainee could use please contact the trainees RPL Assessor.

Evidence may be direct, indirect or supplementary.

* **Direct evidence** is work produced by the trainee e.g. a report, samples or work.
* **Indirect evidence** is about the trainee (for example; references, certificates, supervisor’s reports)
* **Supplementary evidence** supports and adds weight to the evidence e.g. a test.

Some types of evidence the trainee might like to consider include:

* **Certificate or qualifications** – these may be from previous training attended or courses completed e.g. First Aid, Safe Lifting, or Occupational Health and Safety training courses the trainee may have attended. Include any details the trainee have, which outline what was covered in these courses.
* **Copies of school reports**.
* **References of statements** – from supervisors or work peers that can state what the trainees skills are. This is particularly relevant if the person currently sees what the trainee does as part of the trainees job. The trainee may also use references from people that the trainee have had contact with, in out of work activities, for example if the trainee is involved in any voluntary work.
* **Samples of the trainees work** – the trainee can use examples of the trainees work or from the trainees workplace to support the trainees claim.
* **Complete projects.**
* **Video or audio tapes** – the trainee can organize to get a video or audio tape taken of the trainee demonstrating relevant tasks, for example communicating with others in the workplace. Consideration must be given to confidentially issues when choosing to use video or audiotapes.
* **A diary of journals** – containing details of what the trainee currently do each day.
* **Direct observations** – the trainee may choose to negotiate having an assessor come into the trainees workplace to directly observe certain skills. This must be discussed with the trainees workplace supervisor.
* **Statutory declarations** - this is a legal document written by the trainee and witnessed by an authorized person. The trainee can use it to make a declaration about work or other relevant experience.
* **Documents** – such as examples of letters or memos that the trainee may have written, photographs showing the trainee undertaking particular activities.
* **References/performance appraisals** – from employers and colleagues.
* **CV/Resume’** – a document outlining details of where the trainee have worked in the past and the kinds of workplace experience that the trainee have had.
* **Phone contacts** – people that the assessor can contact to verify skills and knowledge.
* **Interviews or presentations** – of past or current work.

The trainee should compare the trainees evidence against the critical evidence required for each unit/s for which the trainee is claiming RPL, as per the example table on the previous page.

Remember that Recognition of Prior Learning applies only to an **entire unit** within a program of study. If the trainee is unable to collect enough evidence for a complete unit, the trainee should **not** apply for RPL, but instead negotiate **acceleration progression** (early completion of the unit) directly with the trainees teacher/trainer. In this case, the evidence that the trainee provide will be considered and training and assessment will be negotiated to fill any “gaps”.

**5. Assessment**

The supervisor will assess the evidence supplied and evaluate it against the competency listing for each unit. If insufficient information is provided, the trainee may need to undertaken supplementary assessment. This may include providing additional information; undertaking refresher or selected retraining; contacting additional employers or direct supervisors for interview; or, as is the case with High Risk Work, undertaking the formal written and practical assessments as prescribed under the licence conditions.

This will determine if RPL can be granted.

**Key Qualities of Evidence**

There are a number of criteria that underpin decision-making in RPL or in undertaking an assessment of current competence. These criteria help the Assessor in determining whether or not the skills the trainee have can be matched to the competency unit/s. They include:

* **Authenticity** – do the trainee actually have the skill and do the trainee have the evidence to prove this? Is the evidence yours?
* **Currency** – are these skills current, do the trainee still have the skill, is the evidence sufficiently recent?
* **Quality** – can the trainee perform these skills to the right standard?
* **Relevance** – are the skills the trainee learnt elsewhere relevant to the trainees current workplace; is the evidence the trainee is providing appropriate to the unit of competency being claimed?
* **Sufficient** – is there sufficient evidence to prove the trainee is competent?
* **Transferability** – is the skill able to be transferred, can the skill the trainee have be applied in more than one situation?
* **Validity** – can the trainee demonstrate the skill required?

**Results of Assessment**

A result is issued to the trainee following assessment. This result is identical to that issued to a trainee who completes the same unit of training in a traditional format. The result will be either Competent or No Yet Competent. If the assessment is No Yet Competent the Assessor will provide the trainee with feedback. The Assessor will also advise the trainee of the trainees options which are:

* Exit with a Not Yet Competent result,
* Submit the trainees evidence for re-evaluation,
* Formally appeal the result, and
* Complete the unit through a formal study pathway (perhaps with the negotiation of Accelerated Progression).

**6. Post Assessment Review**

The trainee will be provided with post assessment guidance in the form of a written report or an interview.

If the trainee is unhappy with any decision made in relation to the application, the trainee can seek to have the decision reviewed. The supervisor will ensure that the trainee is aware of the re-evaluation and appeal process and of any fees that may be applicable. The supervisor may also follow up any other options for review of the process. Full details in relation to the Review and Appeal process are documented in a separate policy

The trainee will be provided with feedback about the assessment and information in relation to future training and development options.

The trainee also has the option to provide feedback about the process.

## Appendix A: Key Personnel

**The Supervisor**

A HaloNT RPL Supervisor has a good understanding of the outcomes of the nominated competency units and qualifications and is able to judge whether the trainees skills and knowledge can be matched against these benchmarks. Their role is to:

* Have a sound knowledge and understanding of the relevant competency standards,
* Compare the trainees skills and knowledge against the relevant competency standards, and
* Make the decision of whether or not RPL can be granted.

The Supervisor may use an independent assessor, a content expert or a combination to evaluate the evidence provided by the trainee. This will be dependant upon the level of rigour the assessment requires.

The trainee may be asked to meet with the assessor or content expert to clarify the critical evidence that the trainee has provided. If there is insufficient evidence to make a judgment at this stage, the trainee may be asked to supply more evidence, to complete assignments, and/or to demonstrate skills. The trainee may need to provide a written overview of the evidence, attach copies of relevant documentation and attend an interview to explain the evidence.

**Support Person**

It is possible for the trainee to nominate a support person to accompany the trainee to any assessment or interview conducted as part of the RPL process. The role of this person is to:

* Provide the trainee with support throughout the process
* Provide any language support necessary
* Help the trainee to explain or give evidence

It is up to the trainee whether the trainee wish to nominate a support person and to determine who that person may be. This person could be a friend, family member, mentor, or colleague. However, they should be someone that the trainee feel comfortable with, that is aware of the trainees work in the workplace and that the trainee feel has a good knowledge of the RPL process and the trainees skills. If the trainee chooses to have a support person for any assessment or interview, the trainee is required to notify the Assessor of this.

## Appendix B: Question and Answers

**Q Do I need to have good literacy skills to participate in the RPL process?**

**A** The level of literacy that the trainee need, will depend on the competency unit that the trainee believes the trainee can prove the trainee have the skills for. If literacy skills are not necessary to undertake the skill then the trainee do not need to have particular literacy level.

**Q I want someone to help me with my English at the RPL Interview. Who should I choose for this?**

**A** It needs to be someone who the trainee feels comfortable with, is able to assist with any translation needs, and is aware of the trainees skills and knowledge.

**Q Is there an age limit to apply for RPL?**

**A** The trainee is never too old to take up training or education opportunities. There is no age limit for RPL or to undertake further training opportunities, unless specified by Regulators in the course information.

**Q I have been working for the same organization for over 10 years is this sufficient evidence to gain RPL?**

**A** No. The length of time in a workplace is not by itself sufficient evidence – the trainee must be able to demonstrate that the trainee can undertake the skills required to the standard required. Some people may work for many years in one place but still need to develop new skills.

**Q How is it possible to gain a qualification if I have not attended any formal training and will it be as good as one gained through a training company?**

**A** The training system recognizes skills and knowledge irrespective of where the trainee learns those skills. The trainee does not have to attend formal training in order to get these skills recognized. The qualification will be the same as any gained through a training company.

**Q I do not believe that I got a fair assessment, what can I do about this?**

**A** All assessments are subject to appeal and the trainee should have received a copy of the RPL appeal process when the trainees application was accepted. If the trainee contacts the trainees RPL Co-ordinator, they will assist the trainee to apply for a review of the assessment.

## Appendix C: Glossary of Terms

Assessment: The process of collecting evidence and making a decision on whether the outcomes have been met.

Authorized Person: A person who can legally cite the authenticity of a document e.g. Justice of the Peace.

Benchmark: A reference point or standard for determining a person’s skills, knowledge and abilities in a defined area.

Competency Standards: Standards, which describe the skills and knowledge, required to undertake a particular set of tasks in the workplace. These standards are set by Industry.

Competency Unit: One unit within a set of Competency Standards.

Competent: Having sufficient skills and knowledge in the prescribed area (Collins Dictionary)

Current Competence: Being competent now, irrespective of previously learnt skills.

Elements: The skills that are directly related to the competency unit purpose.

Evidence: Difficult things that can be used to prove competency.

Formal Training: Includes courses, study or training undertaken at a recognized training organization in Australia or overseas.

HaloNT Partner: Trainer or assessor who has entered into a formal VQF Partnership Agreement and Services Agreement with HaloNT.

Informal Training: Includes in-service and other informal training not undertaken through a recognized training organization.

Life Experience: Includes skills gained through everyday life, recreational pursuits, running a household, caring for family members or voluntary activities.

Performance Criteria: How to evaluate whether someone has the skill described in the element.

Qualification: A certificate or document, which shows that the trainee have undertaken training or studied in a particular area.

Recognition of Current Competence (RCC): An organization registered by a State/Territory training authority as nationally recognized to deliver a range of training programs and services.

Self-Assessment: The trainee makes a judgment as to whether the trainee meets the prescribed outcomes.

Statement of Attainment: A certificate recognizing competency in a single unit of competency.

Vocational Education and Training: Educational courses concerned with skills needed for an occupation, a trade or profession

Work Experience: Includes both paid and unpaid work (e.g. helping in a family business). It means the things that the trainee have done at work, either here or overseas