IALA GUIDELINE

G1017
ASSESSMENT FOR RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING IN VTS TRAINING

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DOCUMENT REVISION

Revisions to this document are to be noted in the table prior to the issue of a revised document.

Date	Details	Approval
June 2001	Edition 1.0 New guideline on the Assessment of training requirements for existing VTS Personnel, candidate VTS Operators and the revalidation of VTS Operator Certificates.	Council 26
July 2005	Edition 1.1 Entire document reformatted to reflect IALA Documentation Hierarchy. Change of title to "Assessment of Training for VTS".	Council 36
June 2021	Edition 2.0 Entire document reviewed and updated. Change of title to "Assessment for Recognition of Prior Learning in VTS Training".	Council 73
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CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is a process of assessing the experience, knowledge, skills, attitudes and competencies acquired by an applicant (through formal or informal learning) against a given set of learning outcomes, objectives, or standards to determine whether the required learning and competency has been achieved.

RPL is often described using different terminology such as Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL), Crediting Current Competence (CCC), Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) and Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR).

In order to recognise prior learning, it is necessary to:

- compare the formal or informal learning that the student has achieved against the learning outcomes or performance criteria of the course, which the student is seeking recognition for; and

- determine appropriate evidence to support the prior learning claim.

Practices that require students to repeat learning previously mastered are inefficient, ineffective and costly. It is important that prior learning, previous qualifications and maritime knowledge are recognised when training organisations assess the training requirements of students. Exemptions from subjects, or modules may result in the allotted time to complete the model course being reduced.

A competent authority should ensure that an accredited training organisation has procedures and processes in place to assess and recognise prior learning.

2. PURPOSE OF GUIDELINE

The purpose of this guideline is to provide guidance to training organisations when developing a framework to assess and recognise the prior learning of students. The objective of the assessment is to grant exemptions from subject areas or modules within an IALA model course.

2.1. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER DOCUMENTS

This Guideline is associated with IALA Recommendation *R0103 (V-103) Training and Certification of VTS Personnel*. Recommendation R0103 is a normative provision of IALA Standard *S1050 Training and Certification*. To demonstrate compliance with this Recommendation, the provisions of this Guideline should be implemented.

3. KEY PRINCIPLES

In RPL the review of qualifications and previous experience should be a systematic process that involves the identification, documentation, assessment of formal (academic) and informal (non-academic) learning. The following principles should be considered when developing a framework for RPL:

- Fair, Transparent and Valid:
  - Processes are unbiased.
  - Processes are clear and instructions are easy to follow.
  - Results of RPL assessment are provided.
  - An appeal mechanism is provided.

- Accessible, Flexible and Consistent:
  - The assessment processes should be comparable to other assessment processes used to assess whether the learning or competency outcomes of the model course have been met.
  - A variety of effective assessment options are available.
  - Criteria, training, tools, procedures are consistent.
  - Information and guidance on assessment processes are publicly available to applicants.
- Quality Assurance:
  - Policies and processes should be included within the training organisation's quality management system.
  - Qualifications should be of the same quality and have the same standing as qualifications achieved through formal education and training regardless of how, when and where it was acquired, provided that the learning is relevant to the learning or competency outcomes in a subject, module, or model course.
  - All assessments should be recorded by the training organisation.

4. DEVELOPING PROCEDURES TO RECOGNIZE PRIOR LEARNING

Accredited training organisations should develop and maintain procedures that support RPL. These may include areas such as:

- Information and advice to students about which subjects, modules, competencies and courses that RPL can be used.
- Information to students about how to apply for RPL, who to contact for further information and support in preparing their application, and other useful information such as timelines, appeals processes and possible fees.
- An outline of the learning competency outcomes against which students will be assessed.
- Advice to students as to the nature of the RPL assessment process, the kind of evidence that can be used, the forms in which it can be presented, and, where appropriate, a guide as to what is considered sufficient and valid evidence (e.g. acceptable equivalent courses and learning experiences).
- Administrative processes for receiving RPL applications, assessments, recording results, advising students of the outcome, and administering appeals processes.
- An outline of the different assessment processes that may be used.

5. PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT METHODS

A variety of assessment methods may be used by the training organisation to assess and ensure that all aspects of RPL are considered, for example:

- Assessment based on a portfolio of evidence.
- Direct observation of demonstration of skill or competence.
- Participation in the same or modified versions of the assessment that the student would be required to complete as part of the full course.
- Informal learning:

- Provision of examples of the student's work drawn from the workplace, social, community or other setting in which the student applies their learning, skill or competence.
- Testimonials of learning, skill or competence.
- Combinations of any of the above.

5.1. ASSESSMENT BASED ON A PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE

A portfolio of evidence provides an extensive means to assess prior learning. In the review of a portfolio, credentials, references, formal learning (e.g. certificates, diplomas, degrees) and informal learning should be checked and validated.

The training organisation should provide students with guidance on how the portfolio should be prepared. The portfolio review will not, in itself, be enough to satisfy all competencies required by the relevant model course.

5.2. DEMONSTRATION OF SKILLS OR COMPETENCY

The demonstration assessment method should be designed to meet specific competencies as indicated in the model course and should be carried out in a controlled, monitored environment. This method concentrates on a formal list of stated skills or competencies.

Demonstration should normally be carried out in a simulated work environment; however, it may be carried out in an On-the-Job environment if the competencies can be fully demonstrated in a controlled manner.

5.3. TESTS

Assessment tests may be used to confirm competency in that subject area or module. This may either be the same, or a modified version of the assessment normally used to assess competency with that model course.

5.4. INFORMAL LEARNING

Informal learning describes the learning that occurs in daily life, the workplace, and through the interests and activities of individuals that could apply to a competency required by the model course.

6. ASSESSMENT PROCESS

RPL assessment processes and procedures consist of the following stages:

- establishing the purpose of the assessment;
- identifying the relevant evidence using appropriate evidence-gathering methods;
- interpreting the evidence and making a judgement; and
- recording the outcome.

These processes should be timely, and where possible, decisions should be made prior to the subject commencement of the course, subject or module for which RPL is being claimed.

6.1.   PURPOSE OF THE RPL ASSESSMENT

The purpose of the RPL assessment is to ensure each student's evidence of prior learning is assessed in alignment with the standard required for the relevant model course. Training organisations use RPL to assess the prior learning of the students in an unbiased and consistent manner.

6.2.   IDENTIFYING RELEVANT EVIDENCE

The assessment methods described in section 5 form some of the methods that a training organisation may use to assess prior learning against the competence requirements of the model course.

6.3.   JUDGING EVIDENCE

As with all assessments, RPL assessment should be undertaken by instructors and assessors with expertise in the subject, content or skills area, as well as knowledge of, and expertise in, RPL policies and procedures.

The following criteria may be considered when assessing evidence:

- Acceptability - Is there an appropriate match between the evidence presented and the learning being demonstrated? Is the evidence valid and reliable?

- Sufficiency - Is there enough evidence to demonstrate fully the achievement of the learning claimed?

- Authenticity - Is the evidence clearly related to the students' own efforts and achievements?

- Currency - Does the evidence relates to current learning? For example, there may be specific requirements and/or time limits for the currency of evidence, certification, or demonstration of learning.

In particular, the RPL assessment processes should be comparable to other assessment processes used to assess whether the learning or competency outcomes in a subject, module, or course have been met.

6.4.   RECORDING THE OUTCOME

The evidence provided should be substantiated and validated during the assessment process. All assessment outcomes (successful or otherwise) should be properly documented and records maintained.

Students may be exempted from that subject area or module where the competence level of prior learning is assessed as being at least equal to that required by the model course. However, where the assessment indicates the required competence level has not been met, appropriate training should be given to ensure the competence level can be achieved.

All RPL decisions should be accountable, transparent, and subject to appeal and review.

7.   DEFINITIONS

The definitions of terms used in this Guideline can be found in the *International Dictionary of Marine Aids to Navigation* (IALA Dictionary) at http://www.iala-aism.org/wiki/dictionary and were checked as correct at the time of going to print. Where conflict arises, the IALA Dictionary should be considered as the authoritative source of definitions used in IALA documents.