

# ABMA Education Exemptions, Equivalences and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

## Introduction

This policy is aimed at our customers, including learners, who are delivering/enrolled on or have taken an ABMA Education (hereafter 'ABMA') approved qualification or unit. It sets out the process learners and centres should follow when applying for exemptions, equivalences and recognition of prior learning (RPL).

## Centre responsibility

It is important that your learners are aware of the contents of this policy.

It is also important that members of your staff involved in the management, delivery, assessment and quality assurance of our qualifications are aware of the contents of this policy.

## Review arrangements

We will review this policy annually as part of our self-evaluation arrangements and revise it as and when necessary, in response to lessons learned, customer and learner feedback or requests from, or good practice guidance issued by, Ofqual, or other relevant bodies.

If you would like to feed back any views please contact us via the details provided at the end of this policy.

## What are Exemptions?

An exemption is **certificated learning from non-regulated provision**.

If a learner has completed a course or qualification that is *not* regulated we will review this qualification/course under exemption.

## What are Equivalences?

An equivalence is **certificated learning from other regulated provision**.

If a learner has completed a course or qualification that is regulated by Ofqual, or similar, we will review this qualification/course as equivalent.

## **Evidence to support Exemption and Equivalence applications**

### **ABMA recognised exemptions and equivalences**

Recognised exemptions and equivalences are published in the qualification specification.

In order to be considered, centres must complete and submit the Exemptions, Equivalences and RPL Application Form. This must be completed and submitted for ABMA Education units as well.<sup>1</sup> Without receipt of this form, a learner's exemption or equivalence cannot be considered.

When applying for recognised exemptions and equivalences, centres will be expected to submit copies of their learners' certificate(s). If the certificate does not provide a breakdown of the units completed, then centres will also be expected to submit a copy of the qualification transcript/breakdown.

The onus is on the centre to supply ABMA with all the evidence needed to support the application at the time of submission.

ABMA will then review the evidence submitted.

### **Other exemptions and equivalences**

For other types of certificated learning not published in the qualification specification, centres will need to submit:

- Copies of certificates
- Copies of transcripts/breakdowns
- Copies of the course syllabus
- Other relevant information which we request
- Relevant fees (as per the fee structure)

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<sup>1</sup> If there are shared units between ABMA Education qualifications, or there are ABMA Education units which the qualification specification has identified as exempt, centres must still submit an application on their learners' behalf. Exemptions are not automatically given. There is no fee when applying for ABMA Unit to ABMA Unit exemptions.

The onus is on the centre to supply ABMA with all the evidence needed to support the application.

ABMA will then review the evidence submitted.

### What is RPL?

RPL is **non-certificated learning** and must not be confused with equivalences or exemptions.

RPL is defined as “a method of assessment that considers whether learners can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess and so not need to develop through a course of learning”.<sup>2</sup>

Examples of non-certified learning includes, but is not limited to:

- Work experience
- Non-certified training
- Volunteer work
- Hobbies

### Evidence to support RPL application

Centres must submit as much evidence as they can when applying for RPL on a learner's behalf. They must submit both what they would consider relevant and perhaps less relevant.

For example, if applying for RPL because of work experience, the centre would need to submit a letter, on company headed paper, from the learner's employer detailing what the learner does/has done as part of their role.

The onus is on the centre to supply ABMA with all the evidence needed to support the application at the time of submission.

ABMA will then review the evidence submitted.

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<sup>2</sup> Ofqual, DCELLS and CEA (2008). *Regulatory Arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework*. Ofqual, DCELLS and CEA, p. 42

## RPL review criteria

When reviewing an RPL application, we must assure ourselves that the evidence negates the need for the learner to be taught the specific unit(s) of the qualification. Therefore the evidence submitted must cover **all** the learning outcomes and associated criteria of the unit(s).

We will ask, is the evidence:

- Valid
  - The evidence submitted is cross-referenced with **all** the learning outcomes and associated criteria of the unit(s)
- Authentic
  - The evidence is assessed for authenticity. For example, if a letter outlining a learner's work experience has been submitted, we would contact the employer to verify the letter's authenticity
- Sufficient
  - There must be enough evidence submitted to cover **all** the learning outcomes and associated criteria for the unit(s)
- Reliable
  - The evidence is assessed against **all** the learning outcomes and associated criteria of the unit(s) to determine whether or not the learning demands of the unit(s) has/have been met
  - We would assess whether or not we are confident that the evidence:
    - (a) negates the need for formal learning, and
    - (b) whether the learner could undertake the formal assessment if they did not partake in the formal learning

The learner is either granted or not granted RPL.

## What does being granted RPL mean?

If a learner has successfully demonstrated that they qualify for RPL, then they do not need to be taught the unit, i.e. they will not be expected to undertake formal learning such as lectures, seminars, classes, etc.

However, what is important about RPL is Ofqual's General Condition E10.2 (b) which states that RPL is "recognition by an awarding organisation of that learning and/or attainment through amendment to the requirements which a Learner must have satisfied **before the Learner will be assessed** or that qualification will be awarded".

**ABMA learners will, therefore, be expected to be formally assessed** to ensure that they have completed the unit/set of learning outcomes.

So, learners granted RPL will be expected to complete the formal assessment alongside those learners who have undertaken the formal learning associated with that unit.

Types of formal assessment include, but is not limited to:

- External Examinations
- Controlled Assessments
- Internal Assessment (e.g. essays, reports, etc.)

### **How to submit an application for Equivalences, Exemptions and RPL**

As the learner is central to the process – it will be ultimately their choice and responsibility whether their centre applies for equivalences, exemptions or RPL on their behalf. Learners must therefore play an active role and contact their centre to request an application be made.

Applications for equivalences, exemptions and RPL must be submitted by centres on their learners' behalf. Prior to submitting the application, it is the centre's responsibility to make the initial consideration and determine if the learner's request is appropriate. If the centre is in any doubt they should request advice/clarification from ABMA.

Upon authorising the request, the centre must ensure that appropriate evidence and documentation is reviewed and/or maintained and ensure that this is submitted to ABMA upon application.

### **Fees for applications**

Centres wishing to apply for exemptions, equivalences or RPL from a single unit(s) on their learner's behalf must also submit the necessary fees with the application before it can be considered. The fees, which are charged per unit, can be found in the fee structure on our website.

### **Deadlines for applications**

Applications for exemptions, equivalences and RPL, with any necessary fees, must be received by the examination spreadsheet deadline.

## Appeals

If you wish to appeal against our decision to not grant exemptions, equivalences or RPL, please refer to our Appeals Policy.

## Contact us

If you have any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact our Quality Department at:

ABMA Education  
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Lyndhurst Road  
Ascot  
Berkshire  
SL5 9FE  
United Kingdom

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