	Issue Date: March 2019 **Review Cycle (Years):** 3 year **Next Review Date:** March 2028 **Person Responsible:** Centre Manager

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) POLICY

1. PURPOSE AND PRINCIPLES

1.1 CMBD is committed to increasing the achievement of its learners by adopting a comprehensive strategy for the Recognition of Prior Learning and Achievement.

1.2 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a method of assessment [leading to the award of credit] 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 do not need to develop through a course of learning.

1.3 RPL enables recognition of achievement from a range of activities using any appropriate assessment methodology. Provided that the assessment requirements of a given unit or qualification have been met, the use of RPL is acceptable for accrediting a unit, units or a whole qualification. Evidence of learning must be:

- Valid
- Reliable
- Current – within 5 years.

2. COVERAGE, SCOPE AND APPLICATION

2.1 The use and application of RPL is of particular value to learners without formal qualifications, who are either in employment, preparing to enter, or returning to employment. It enables them to gain part or all of a qualification without having to undertake a formal learning programme.

2.2 RPL can be used where a learner has not had their prior learning formally recognised.

2.3 RPL focuses on assessment and awarding for prior learning which may count as evidence towards:

- A unit accumulated towards a full Awarding Organisation qualification.
- Unit or units recognised by an Awarding Organisation Certificate of Achievement.
- A full Awarding Organisation qualification.

2.4 All evidence must be evaluated using the stipulated learning outcomes and assessment criteria from the relevant qualification specification. In assessing a unit using RPL the assessor must be satisfied that the evidence produced by the learner meets the assessment standard established by the learning outcome and its related assessment criteria.

2.5 Most often RPL will be used for units. It is acceptable to claim for an entire qualification through RPL although this is not the normal practice because it would be unusual for a learner to be able to offer prior achievement that completely matches every aspect of a qualification's assessment requirement.

2.6 The prior achievement that would provide evidence of current knowledge, understanding and skills will vary from sector to sector. It will depend on the extent of the experience, technological changes and the nature of the outcome claimed. If the currency of any evidence is in doubt, the assessor may use questions to check understanding, and ask for the demonstration of skills to check competence. Note that the assessment strategy for each qualification must be adhered to and applied.

2.7 The RPL process is **not** concerned with allowing for exceptional entry to, or exemption from, a programme of study.

3. ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

3.1 Assessors wishing to carry out RPL must ensure that:

- Learners are registered as soon as they formally start to gather evidence.
- Records of assessment against prior learning are maintained.
- Certification claims are made according to normal procedures.
- All relevant evidence is assessed before assessment decisions are confirmed.
- All relevant evidence is internally verified to support and assure the RPL process.

3.2 THE RPL PROCESS

Stage 1 – Awareness, Information and Guidance

- Ahead of enrolling a potential learner, the possibility that they may be able to claim credit for some of their previous learning should be raised with them. If the learner is interested in this, they will need to know the:
- Process of claiming achievement by using RPL.
- Sources of support and guidance available to them.
- Timelines, appeals processes and any fees involved.

Stage 2 – Pre-assessment; gathering evidence and giving information.

- At this stage the learner will carry out the process of collecting evidence against the requirements of the relevant unit(s). In some cases, the development of an assessment plan and tracking document or similar may be required, to support the learner through the process. The evidence gathered will need to meet the standards of the unit, or part of unit, that the evidence is being used for.

Stage 3 – Assessment/documentation of evidence

- Assessment as part of RPL is a structured process for gathering and reviewing evidence and making judgements about learners' prior learning and experience in relation to unit standards. The assessor may be looking at work experience records, validated by managers; previous portfolios of evidence put together by the learner or essays and reports validated as being the learners' own unaided work. Assessment must be valid and reliable to ensure the integrity of the award of credit and, as above, the evidence gathered needs to meet the standards of the unit, or part of unit, that the evidence is being used for. The assessment process will be subject to the usual quality assurance procedures of the centre, for example: internal standardisation and internal verification.

Stage 4 – Claiming Certification.

- Once the internal and external quality assurance procedures have been successfully completed, certification claims can be made by the centre. Assessment and internal verification records, along with any additional RPL records completed, should be retained for the standard 3-year period following certification.

Stage 5 – Appeal

- As with any assessment decision, if a learner wishes to appeal against a decision made about their assessment, they need to follow the standard CMBD Appeals Procedure.