

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

**RPL Services**



**Portfolio  
Development Guide**

**Student Information**

**January 2017**



PREPARED BY:

Lauren Waples  
RPL Facilitator  
Recognition of Prior Learning  
Red River College  
DM13J-2055 Notre Dame Avenue  
Winnipeg, MB R3H 0J9  
Ph. 204-632-2065  
[lwaples@rrc.ca](mailto:lwaples@rrc.ca)

Stacey Thorarinson  
RPL Advisor  
Recognition of Prior Learning  
Red River College  
D105F-2055 Notre Dame Avenue  
Winnipeg, MB R3H 0J9  
Ph. 204-632-3094  
[stthorarinson@rrc.ca](mailto:stthorarinson@rrc.ca)

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the written permission of the copyright holder. Inquiries should be addressed to:

Revised: January 2017

# Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

## PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND SUBMISSION OF A COURSE PORTFOLIO(S)

1. Prior to beginning the process, please contact the RPL Advisor, Stacey Thorarinson (632-3094, stthorarinson@rrc.ca) about attending a RPL Orientation session and/or to arrange an advising appointment. You need to have met the established College admission and registration requirements for a course or program.
2. With the assistance of the RPL Advisor and/or program faculty, you will determine your eligibility for prior learning assessment. You will complete a self assessment process to determine if your prior learning from work and life experience is of sufficient breadth and depth to continue with the RPL process. The RPL Advisor will request course learning outcomes/outlines for the course(s) and if available, other RPL resources, such as RPL Resource Guide(s), for the course/program for which you will prove your prior learning through portfolio development.
3. Please contact the RPL Advisor to declare your wish to proceed with the Portfolio Development process. The RPL Advisor will contact the relevant program area to confirm that portfolio development is the appropriate RPL process and will advise you to begin to develop your portfolio.
4. Your completed portfolio should contain the following:
  - **Cover Page**
  - **Table of Contents**
  - **Letter of Introduction**  
This letter should outline your request for assessment of prior learning and include the following: the program you are enrolled in, course for which you are requesting RPL and reasons/rationale for your recognition of prior learning credit request.
  - **Current Résumé**  
A résumé describes your qualifications in terms of your skills, education and training and employment history.
  - **Learning Outcomes and Narrative description of your learning as it relates to the learning outcomes/objectives of the course(s)**

In this section you should first outline the learning outcomes to describe the learning that you have for the course.

You will then write a narrative i.e. detailed explanation describing and verifying how you have met the learning outcomes/objectives of the course.

Your learning must be college level and must meet or exceed the assessment criteria established for the course. This portfolio will be assessed by an instructor (i.e. content expert) who teaches the course and who will decide whether or not your documented learning is equivalent to the course outcomes.

Your Narrative description for each course should include the following:

- i. Description of experience (i.e. list/describe those experiences which have helped you learn the course outcomes/objectives). Please include learning from all experience which relates to the course outcomes/objectives (i.e. work, volunteer activities, independent study, community activities etc.).
- ii. Learning from experience (i.e. this is where you relate your own learning to each of the objective/outcomes in the course). Address each learning outcome/objective in the course and describe:
  - what you know
  - how you learned this knowledge
  - how you apply this learning

- **Documentation**

This is the evidence which proves or verifies the learning you have described. Please list the evidence/documentation after your learning outcomes and narrative description section and include the documents at the end of your portfolio.

i.e. Examples of Documentation

1. verification of learning letter from supervisor
2. performance appraisal
3. sample of written report

5. A **Portfolio Development Resource Information** guide, to assist you in developing your portfolio, is included with this information. (Please see **Appendix 1**).

When you are ready to submit your portfolio, please contact the RPL Advisor for assistance with the process. You will need to complete an "Application for Portfolio and/or Challenge Process Assessment" form and pay the required assessment fee.

6. Your portfolio will be assessed in a timely manner. Assessors (i.e. program instructors/subject matter experts) are asked to assess a portfolio within three weeks of receiving it. **Please note that the assessor may request additional information or requirements** such as an interview, oral or written examination, assignment or product assessment etc. Results of your assessment will be provided through your Web Advisor account or through receipt of "Results of Portfolio and/or Challenge Process Assessments" form.

**Note: Please contact the RPL Advisor (632-3094) for assistance as you are developing your portfolio(s).**



# **RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)**

## **Appendix 1**

### **Portfolio Development Resource Information**

# CONTENTS

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Description of a portfolio .....	8
Developing a portfolio .....	8
Portfolio Process.....	8
Benefits of the Portfolio Process .....	9
Components of a completed portfolio .....	9

## 2. GUIDELINES FOR PUTTING YOUR PORTFOLIO TOGETHER

Documenting course learning outcomes in your portfolio .....	10
Documentation.....	11
Preparing your portfolio.....	16
Assembling your portfolio.....	17
Portfolio Development Checklist .....	21

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## DESCRIPTION OF A PORTFOLIO

A portfolio is a detailed document developed by the learner which articulates and verifies the learning acquired through work and life experience. This learning may be equivalent to the learning outcomes in a college course(s) to competencies in the workplace, etc.

## DEVELOPING A PORTFOLIO

Assistance for portfolio development can be provided through:

- Individual advisement for development of a course portfolio from RPL Advisor or program faculty.
- Training seminar(s)/workshops on RPL and portfolio development with independent study modules and tutorial assistance etc.
- A portfolio development course offered through RRC School of Continuing and Distance Education.

## PORTFOLIO PROCESS

☆  
(Learner)

### IDENTIFY

Identify college-level learning acquired through work and life experience.

☆  
(Learner)

### ARTICULATE

Explain how and what parts of the learning are related to the course outcomes.

☆  
(Learner & Evaluators)

### DOCUMENT

Verify or provide evidence of learning.

☆  
(Faculty)

### MEASURE

Determine the depth and breadth of the learning required.

☆  
(Faculty)

### EVALUATE

Decide whether the learning meets the required acceptable standard and determine its credit equivalency.

☆  
(Institution)

### TRANSCRIBE

Record the credit or recognize the learning.

## **BENEFITS OF THE PORTFOLIO PROCESS**

- Extremely learner centered.
- Enables learners to recognize own skill and knowledge development.
- Allows learners to present knowledge from their own perspective.
- Enables learners to organize and articulate knowledge from a variety of learning experiences by...
  - ❖ Taking inventory - *Where are they?*
  - ❖ Setting goals - *Where do they want to go?*
  - ❖ Documenting learning - *What have they done?*
  - ❖ Verifying learning - *How can they prove it?*
  - ❖ Preparing an educational/career plan - *How do they get there?*
- Increases learner's self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Validates learning gained through work and life experiences.
- Identifies program areas requiring further study.
- Assists with career development and educational planning.
- Encourages the development of life long learning strategies.
- Articulates knowledge and skill for employment purposes.
- Acts as a planning tool for further learning.

<b>PROCESSES IN CREATING A PORTFOLIO</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO PRODUCT</b>
1. Describe life and work experiences	Chronological record, resume
2. Identify learning from life and work experiences	Learning statements/outcomes
3. Express the learning as it relates to a course/program	Learning statements/outcomes, learning narratives
4. Relate learning to course/program educational goals/plan	Educational plan, goals/plan
5. Compile evidence to prove learning and ability to perform.	Documentation

## **COMPONENTS OF A COMPLETED PORTFOLIO**

- Title page
- Table of contents
- Letter of Introduction
- Résumé
- Learning outcomes, narrative
- Documentation

## **2. GUIDELINES FOR PUTTING YOUR PORTFOLIO TOGETHER**

### **DOCUMENTING COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES IN YOUR PORTFOLIO**

#### **THIS SECTION OF YOUR PORTFOLIO INCLUDES:**

##### 1. Course Match Narrative

Write a narrative for the learning outcomes that have been identified in the course for which you are seeking credit. Please describe and match your learning to each of the course learning outcomes. The appropriate faculty assessor will review this narrative and will evaluate it against the course learning outcomes.

#### **DIRECTIONS:**

1. Write a short introduction to your narrative identifying the course(s) you have selected and describing the learning the narrative will prove (see the sample provided).
2. Use each of the course outcomes and match your learning by writing a paragraph explaining:
  - What you know.
  - How you learned it and how it relates to the course learning outcome(s).
  - How you apply this learning in other contexts (clear examples would be helpful).
  - How this relates to university/college level learning.
3. Write a short conclusion summarizing your learning and relating it to the course learning.

**The Course Match Narrative will be used with appropriate proof/documentation to determine the credit you receive for your learning. Please focus on the course(s) learning outcomes and clearly describe your relevant learning. There is no set length for the narrative. Generally, a narrative is approximately 3 to 5 pages in length. Complete as many pages as is necessary to describe your learning.**

## **DOCUMENTATION**

Documentation is the evidence that supports the prior learning described in your portfolio. Its purpose is to prove that the identified learning has occurred and has been demonstrated. Just as traditional students prove their learning through assignments, research papers, projects, tests, etc., you too must verify or prove your learning. Your course match narrative statements will describe your learning and the documentation or evidence will provide the proof. Relevant evidence will validate learning acquired from your work and life experience and will assist the assessor to determine if you have proven your learning outcomes.

When selecting documentation ...consider the RPL assessor's perspective. What kinds of evidence or proof would you look for if you were to make a judgment for credit? What would convince you, as an RPL assessor, that someone has the learning required for a course? What kinds of documentation or proof would allow the RPL assessor to award credit based on demonstrated prior learning? An RPL Assessor will compare your learning to the learning outcomes of his/her course.

- Documentation usually falls into two categories:
  1. Direct Documentation
  2. Indirect Documentation

### **1. DIRECT DOCUMENTATION**

This refers to the products, reports, plans, performances that you, the learner, have created. It is usually the strongest evidence source because it is something you did or created yourself, something that was produced in whole or in part by you and therefore you must have learned from it. This documentation will validate your learning, and will help you realize how much learning you have accumulated.

#### **EXAMPLES OF DIRECT DOCUMENTATION**

- Reports, assignments
- Management reports
- Articles or stories
- Audio/video tapes of speeches, training demonstrations or performances
- Brochures, manuals
- Computer programs
- Work samples, products
- Journal articles
- Curriculum or lesson plans
- Workshops, lectures, training courses/programs
- Poems, plays
- Blueprints
- Drawing, sculptures, paintings

## 2. INDIRECT DOCUMENTATION

This documentation refers to the evidence about you and your accomplishments. This is third party validation/verification of your learning. The best sources of indirect documentation are letters written by individuals qualified to verify your learning. This documentation is usually provided by employers, co-workers, business partners etc. It is best not to use family or close friends to verify your learning.

The key word to keep in mind with indirect documentation is “**verification**”, that is...not just a recommendation or reference but a verification that learning has occurred.

### EXAMPLES OF INDIRECT DOCUMENTATION

- Letters written on your behalf by employers, teachers, business partners, members of professional organizations, etc. (i.e. verification of learning letters)
- Promotion evaluations, evidence of promotion
- Awards, letters of commendation, medals, official recommendations, licenses
- Formal performance appraisals, job evaluations completed by supervisors
- Official records documenting completion of training programs, transcripts of examination results or courses passed, certificates/diplomas
- Newspaper or magazine articles about your accomplishments
- Course descriptions or course outlines from post-secondary education, union training, on the job training, workshops/seminars, descriptions for work, community, and volunteer work
- Written descriptions of work exhibited or performed by you (i.e. job descriptions which include tasks performed, classification, etc.)
- Membership in trade professional organizations, unions
- Licenses and performance standards for acquiring licenses
- Scores on licensing examinations
- Military records
- Letters of corroboration from co-volunteers, clients served, supervisors, etc.

There are many types of indirect and direct documentation that can be used to support your learning. Some examples are better than others. Please avoid using the following sources of weak documentation.

- General performance appraisals that are not specific about what you did or the specific skills and knowledge demonstrated.
- Job evaluations that only state you were a “good” employee.
- Newspaper or magazine articles about events you participated in but don’t mention you specifically.
- Letters from family, friends who have been used as a personal reference.

## **VERIFICATION OF LEARNING LETTERS**

One of the best sources of indirect documentation is a verification of learning letter written by someone who can verify your learning for the specific learning outcomes you've identified. When you ask for a verification of learning letter, keep in mind the following:

- The person verifying your learning must have observed you directly.
- One person may verify more than one of your learning experiences and comments need to focus on specific areas of learning.
- The letter should describe the learning experience, identify the learning acquired and address the quality as well as the quantity of learning.
- The person writing the letter needs to identify his/her relationship to you (i.e. supervisor, co-worker) as well as his/her qualifications.
- The letter should be written on official company/organization letterhead and must be dated and signed.

Your request for a verification of learning letter may involve an initial contact to confirm the verifier's willingness to participate in the process. Providing guidelines helps to ensure that you get the specific validation that you are seeking. A letter, such as the attached example, could be sent.

**FORMAT FOR LETTER REQUESTING VERIFICATION OF LEARNING  
FROM SUPERVISOR**

---

*Current Address  
Postal Code  
Date*

*Documenter's Name, Title  
Company/Organization Name  
Current Address  
Postal Code*

*Dear **FULL NAME** (Avoid Sir, Madame):*

*Introduce yourself. Remind person of the nature of your relationship (i.e. what you did (title)) where (location within company/organization) and when (dates).*

*Explain why you need a letter and how it will help you. Ask him/her to follow the enclosed guidelines when completing your request.*

*Provide a list of clearly written learning outcomes (i.e. learning identified) for each area that you believe the documenter can attest to.*

*Thank him/her for assisting you.*

*Ask that the letter be sent to you in the self-addressed, stamped envelope.*

*Sincerely,*

*(Sign your letter)*

*Type your full name.*

*Note: you will need to include a stamped, self-addressed envelope for the verification letter. Please include a copy of "Guidelines for Writing Verification Letters" when requesting your verification.*

## **GUIDELINES FOR WRITING VERIFICATION LETTERS**

Please note: This information provides you with some guidelines when requesting a Verification of Learning letter from your supervisor or someone who knows your current skills and abilities relevant to the course/program learning.

*Guidelines for writing a verification of learning letter:*

1. Please send your written evaluation on letterhead stationary if possible. If you do not have letterhead, please include your address and daytime telephone number in case you need to be contacted for clarification.
2. Please describe your present position and pertinent past experiences as they relate to the field.
3. Identify our working relationship (e.g. co-worker, supervisor, etc.).
4. State specifically what learning (i.e. competencies, skills or knowledge) you are able to verify. Describe when and where you observed this learning. If you are unable to verify some of the learning, please note this and provide a reason(s) why you are unable to do this.
5. Describe my specific knowledge and competencies in your own words. Please comment on the skill level performed and the amount of supervision required.
6. Please evaluate how effectively I've demonstrated the learning by using statements such as average, above average, exceptional etc. Provide examples if possible.
7. Please send your verification letter back to me in the self-addressed, stamped envelope included and keep a copy for your records.

I realize that this is an imposing task and thank you in advance for your cooperation in assisting me. Your accurate evaluation will be most helpful in verifying the learning identified.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Your name:

Phone:

Fax:

## **PREPARING A PORTFOLIO**

Portfolio development includes choosing the parts of the portfolio that will be included in your completed package and assembling the portfolio for submission. Please review the parts of the portfolio.

1. **Title Page**—introduces you to the assessor(s).
2. **Table of Contents**—directs the assessor(s) to the appropriate sections of your portfolio.
3. **Letter of Introduction**—summarizes why you are applying for credit. May include your education and career goals.
4. **Academic Transcripts**—includes relevant post-secondary level training or education you have received.
5. **Resume**—describes your qualifications in terms of your skills, education/training and work history.
6. **Learning Outcomes and Course Match Narrative**—describes how you meet the learning outcomes of a course(s).
7. **Documentation**—documents/evidence which prove or verify your learning.

**(Please note: Keep a photocopy of your complete portfolio before submitting it to be assessed.)**

## **ASSEMBLING YOUR PORTFOLIO**

### **Title Page**

The portfolio title page provides introductory information and includes the following:

- The name of the college/university/company/organization to which you are submitting your portfolio
- Your name and address, appropriate phone, fax and email numbers
- Your student number, if applicable
- A declaration of accuracy and verification
- The date of submission of the portfolio

A sample of a title page has been included for your reference (Sample—Title Page).

### **Table of Contents**

The Table of Contents is a map of the information included in the portfolio. It includes the major headings of your portfolio and the page numbers on which they can be found. A sample of a Table of Contents has been included for your reference (Sample—Table of Contents).

### **Letter of Introduction**

The letter of introduction for a portfolio is very similar to that which accompanies a resume. It functions as a formal introduction of you and stimulates the reader's interest in your portfolio. It is imperative that you link your prior learning to the learning required in a course if you are seeking credit, or a prospective position if you are seeking employment. A sample letter of introduction has been included for your reference (Sample—Letter of Introduction).

**Sample Title Page**

**Portfolio for Recognition of Prior Learning**

***Submitted to:***

**Program: Human Resource Management Certificate**

**Red River College**

***Submitted by:***

**Name: XXX XXXX** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student #: 12345** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address: 123 Anywhere Street** \_\_\_\_\_

**Winnipeg, Manitoba R0Z 0Z0** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Numbers: (204) 166-1234 (home)** \_\_\_\_\_

**(204) 211-9876 (work)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Fax: (204) 166-4321** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email: XXX@XXX.com** \_\_\_\_\_

**I declare that all of the information in this portfolio is accurate and true.**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Sample Table of Contents

### Table of Contents

---

---

Letter of Introduction.....	1
Academic Transcripts.....	3
Resume.....	4
Learning Outcomes and Course Match Narrative for (Name of Course) Course.....	8
Documentation Index.....	10
Documentation.....	21

---

---

## Sample Letter of Introduction

123 Anywhere Street  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R0Z 0Z0  
July 30, 2012

Early Childhood Education  
Red River College  
2055 Notre Dame Avenue  
Winnipeg, MB  
R0H 0J9

To whom it may concern:

I respectfully submit my portfolios for evaluation of my prior learning. Through these portfolios, I hope to receive credits for five courses in the Early Childhood Education Diploma at Red River College (RRC).

I am currently a family day care provider and licensed for eight children aged 12 weeks to 12 years. I have been caring for children for 12 years and have found it to be a very gratifying and rewarding experience. In addition, my active participation on the board of the Family Day Care Association of Manitoba (FDCA) since 2000 and my professional development and training activities have offered opportunities for my professional growth and the promotion of my career.

In the 12 years I have been in the child care field, professional growth has always been a priority. I have taken every opportunity to attend workshops and conferences, both as a participant and facilitator, to keep abreast of current theory and practice. My professionalism has been furthered through my service in the FDCA, the community and at RRC in the Family Day Care Provider training and Early Childhood Education Programs. In addition, I have been honoured with the publication of two of my articles in "Today's Parent" and a number of newspaper articles. In 2002, I graduated from the Family Day Care Provider Training Program and shortly after began the Early Childhood Education Program at RRC. I have completed the first year of this program. It is with this commitment to professional growth that I am submitting my portfolios for your assessment of prior learning credits for courses in the second year of the Early Childhood Education Diploma Program.

I thank you for your time and careful consideration of my portfolios. Please do not hesitate to contact me for any clarification of the information I have presented. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
XXXXXXX XXXXXXX

## PORTFOLIO DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST

As you assemble your portfolio for assessment, and prior to submitting your portfolio, ensure that you can answer “yes” to each of the following questions.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the title page identify the course name and number and the program of study where you request that the credits be applied? If you are submitting your portfolio for employment purposes, does the title page identify the employment position you are seeking?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the Table of Contents clearly identify all the parts of the portfolio?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have you included a letter of introduction explaining and linking your prior learning to the learning required in a college course/program, or to an employment position?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have you included your transcripts (if applicable)?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have you included your current résumé?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have you addressed and explained your learning for each of the major learning outcomes for each course for which you are requesting credit?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does your narrative detail the learning that was acquired and describe the environment in which the learning took place?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have you included samples of direct and indirect documentation relevant to the course/program credit recognition you are requesting?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have you photocopied your originals documents? (Never hand in your originals.)