

Recognition of Prior Learning

What does it mean and who is it for?

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is educational terminology for exempting a person from part, or all, of the requirements of a qualification because of the skill and knowledge that person has accumulated as a result of significant industry and life experience.

For over 25 years turf qualifications were centred on written examinations. Exemptions from the two main components of turf training programmes, i.e. correspondence courses and block courses, were awarded by various educational bodies over the years, mainly on the basis of the applicant's age and practical experience in the industry. Exemptions were given pretty much on the understanding that if a person was good enough to sit and pass an exam, then that person must be competent.

With the formation of the NZ Qualifications Authority (NZQA) and the introduction of the National Qualifications Framework in 1990, things have changed. Written examinations in practical trades such as turf management are seen as testing only knowledge, not skill. The current view is that there are all sorts of ways to test a person's knowledge and skill other than by written examination. In the absence of exams, people who don't hold a turf qualification, but who nevertheless have had significant industry experience, shouldn't have to start a training programme from scratch like someone straight from school. They should be able to have their current level of skill and knowledge recognised, by receiving credit into a qualification and then only have to finish off those skills in which they are not yet competent, to complete the requirements of that qualification.

Who can apply for RPL?

From 1 January 1997, the NZ Sports Turf ITO has been offering an RPL service for people who have had 10 or more years experience in the sports turf industry. RPL recognises the skills and knowledge people have achieved by awarding them credits into the National Certificate in Sports Turf Management qualification registered on the National Qualifications Framework.

What should I include in an RPL application?

You must provide detailed up-to-date curriculum vitae. Included in the curriculum vitae should be:

Copies of any completed or part-completed qualifications, e.g. secondary school qualifications such as School Certificate and University Entrance; GROWSAFE® Certificates; certificates in word processing and spreadsheet use; any turf management correspondence assignments completed through The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand etc.

- A copy of your current Record of Learning issued by the NZQA if applicable.
- Your employment history including job descriptions and key responsibilities for each position you have held.
- The names, addresses and contact numbers of three people who would be prepared to act as referees for you.
- References from your previous employers and your current employer.
- Evidence to support key achievements that you believe you have made in your career to date in the sports turf industry.

How much will it cost to have my RPL application evaluated?

A \$1000.00 +GST evaluation fee will apply which covers the following costs incurred by the NZ Sports Turf ITO in processing the RPL application:

- Evaluation of evidence (competence) against current L4 National Certificate requirements
- Phone calls to speak with referees
- Correspondence and general postage
- Information transfer to the NZ Qualifications Authority.

Will there be any additional costs?

Additional costs will depend on the scope of work required to complete the L4 National Certificate in Sports Turf Management following completion of the RPL evaluation process.

There may be some additional costs relating to training and assessment requirements associated with block course on-job and off-job training activities.

An accurate estimate of training costs can be provided by the NZSTITO once a final decision is reached on the RPL evaluation

The following NZQA costs also apply:

- A \$334.50 + GST Credit Fee paid to the NZ Qualifications Authority for the costs associated with reviewing unit standards and monitoring the quality of National Certificate training. Every trainee pays \$1.50 per credit for this purpose and the National Certificate in Sports Turf Management is a 223 credit qualification.
- \$15.00 fee for the issue of a National Certificate in Sports Turf Management from the NZ Qualification Authority.

Completed RPL applications, including Training Agreement, Hook-on form, Curriculum Vitae and cheque for \$1000 GST exclusive. (Payable to NZ Sports Turf ITO) should be forwarded to:

**To: The Training Operations Manager
 The NZ Sports Turf ITO
 PO Box 347
 PALMERSTON NORTH
Ph: 06 355 7020
Fax: 06 354 0081
E-mail: ktimms@nzstito.org.nz**

What do I need to do if I still require further credits following completion of the RPL evaluation?

Even if you receive a large number of credits towards the National Certificate qualification by RPL, chances are you will probably need some training to finish off those skills in which you are not yet competent.

The NZSTITO will guide you regarding what you need to do in order to complete the National Certificate in Sports Turf Management Level 4.

Broadly speaking, the following applies:

- 1 Sign a Training Agreement with your employer, and complete a NZQA Hook-on Registration form

Why do I need to sign a Training Agreement?

A Training Agreement is used by the NZSTITO as verifiable evidence to the Government that you work in the NZ Sports Turf Industry and you meet the requirements to receive subsidised training. It is also a commitment between Employer and Trainee to assist each other in ensuring that the trainee will earn a minimum of 20 credits of learning per year.

The Hook-on form is used to register your personal details onto the National Qualifications Framework so that as you earn credits toward the National Certificate in Sports Turf Management, or any other qualification linked to the Framework, those credits can be recorded on your personal Record of Learning.

NOTES ON PREPARING YOUR RPL APPLICATION

- ▶ A CV with job descriptions and references from your employers. Particular reference should be made to your staff management abilities.
- ▶ Copies of turf management reports that you have submitted to any of your employers.
- ▶ Copies of any budgets that you have submitted to any of your employers.
- ▶ Copies of NZ Sports Turf Institute (NZSTI) advisory reports.
- ▶ Copies of your qualifications e.g. GROWSAFE® Certificates; certificates in word processing and spreadsheets; School Certificate, University Entrance etc.
- ▶ Letters of support from your local regional association in terms of your practical abilities, and the contribution you make or have made to the regional and national associations.
- ▶ Copies of any papers that you have presented at field days and conferences.
- ▶ Details of conferences you have attended.
- ▶ Copies of any articles you have written for turf management publications.
- ▶ Details of your experience or involvement with sectors of the turf industry other than the one you work in. For example, if you are working on a golf course, what experience or involvement have you had with bowling greens, cricket wickets and outfields, winter sportsfields, race tracks, tennis courts, croquet lawns and artificial turf surfaces?
- ▶ Details of your experience with turf machinery and equipment (including tractors). Make a list of the machinery and equipment you have used and then indicate how many years experience you have had with each one.
- ▶ Details of your experience with machinery and equipment repair and maintenance.
- ▶ Details of any tree planting and/or tree maintenance programmes you have developed and/or carried out.
- ▶ Details of any drainage or irrigation systems you have installed and/or maintained.

- ▶ Details of any reconstruction work you have carried out including the reasons behind reconstructing and the method of rootzone construction used.
- ▶ Details of any surveying work you have carried out. State the surveying equipment you are familiar with.
- ▶ Details of your renovation programmes and the reasons behind any physical treatment options you use.
- ▶ Details of your weed, pest and disease control programmes.
- ▶ Details of your fertiliser programmes - how you decide on a programme, types of fertiliser used, how often they are used and rates.
- ▶ Details of your mowing practices - height of cut and frequency in particular. Turf species selection should also be covered here i.e. what species you use, why you use them, where you use them.
- ▶ Details of any tournaments or regional, national or international events you have prepared a turf facility for.
- ▶ Details of your computer skills.
- ▶ A list of key achievements that you believe you have made in your career to date in the sports turf industry.
- ▶ A list of the skills outlined in the National Certificate in Sports Turf Management training programme that you believe you require additional training in to meet the industry standards specified for the skills concerned.
- ▶ Details of health and safety procedures and requirements with which you are familiar in your workplace.