



MANUAL FOR THE CANDIDATE

This document accompanies the regulations for the recognition of prior learning, as approved by the Executive Board of the Antwerp University Association on 21 March 2018

Introduction

Who is this for?

Many people in our society possess a variety of knowledge and abilities that they have acquired in the course of their lives. Such knowledge, skills, insight and attitudes can be recognised in higher education, thus making it possible to utilise these experiences. Such prior learning could potentially result in a competence certificate, which you could use to request exemptions for programme components (courses) within a particular educational programme. The procedure for obtaining recognition of prior learning (RPL) is described in this manual.

In which institutions is this procedure used?

This procedure applies to the partner institutions of the Antwerp University Association (AUHA). More specifically, it applies to:

- Artesis Plantijn (AP) University College
- Antwerp Maritime Academy
- Karel de Grote University College
- University of Antwerp.

Throughout the text, the term 'institution' refers to one of these partners.

The term 'candidate' refers to an individual who is following the RPL procedure. The abbreviation 'AUHA' refers to the Antwerp University Association (in Dutch it is the As-sociatie Universiteit & Hogescholen Antwerpen).

Where can the full regulations be found?

This manual constitutes a whole with the 'Regulations for the recognition of prior learning' (hereinafter referred to as the RPL regulations), the document 'Procedure and time frames' and with the 'AUHA portfolio assignment'.

Anyone considering starting the RPL procedure should thus refer to all of these documents.

Where does the procedure take place?

Although the AUHA is the validating body, this RPL procedure takes place almost entirely at the level of the partner institution. The AUHA thus bears the ultimate responsibility for the quality of the procedure, but candidates usually communicate only with the institution.

Recognition of Prior Qualifications (RPQ) versus Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Qualifications and learning

The recognition of prior qualifications (RPQ) and the recognition of prior learning (RPL) are often mentioned in the same breath. These procedures often take place in parallel or in succession. There is nevertheless a clear distinction between the recognition of prior learning and the recognition of prior qualifications.

Each follows its own procedure, resulting in different certificates, and each has its own regulations.

It is important to check which procedure applies to you. You may wish to contact the institutional coordinator or your supervisor for a clarification.

What is RPQ?

Recognition of prior qualifications (RPQ)

Prior qualifications are competences that have been authenticated by proof of studies. A person has thus followed an educational programme in order to achieve these competences and obtained a proof of studies. The proof of study may have been earned in Belgium or abroad, and in an institution and educational programme other than the one where the person is applying for validation of the qualification. For credit certificates that have been earned within the institution and educational programme in which the person is applying for validation of the qualifications, and that are no older than five years, the institution's usual exemption procedures apply.

Requirements for a qualification (RPQ)

A recognised prior qualification (RPQ) must meet all of the following conditions:

- The objectives of the educational programme are specified in advance.
- The programme involves a well-defined learning pathway.
- The candidate has received a positive evaluation based on the objectives.

Certificates of participation in training courses or educational programmes thus do not qualify for RPQ.

What does 'prior' mean?	The government uses the term 'prior' to emphasise that the qualification has already been achieved outside or before the start of the educational programme for which a person seeks to use the qualification. The intention is to obtain one or more exemptions for the educational programme that the person wishes to begin.
What does 'elsewhere' mean?	The term 'qualification obtained elsewhere' is sometimes used to emphasise that the qualification has been obtained in a different location.
What about foreign degrees?	The Flemish government has regulations on the equivalence of foreign degrees. Additional information is available at: https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/buitenlands-diploma-of-beroepservaring
What is a competence?	<i>Recognition of prior learning (RPL)</i> The various parts are explained below. A competence consists of the combination of knowledge, insight, skills and attitudes. A competence equips a person to deliver effective, high-quality performance aimed at a particular position or role. Such performance is manifested in concrete actions, and it is always associated with a particular context.
What is RPL?	The recognition of prior learning (RPL) involves all of the competences obtained through learning processes that have not been authenticated by proof of studies. It involves what a person has learned without having participated in a formal learning pathway (e.g. through an occupation, volunteering, hobbies or voluntary healthcare).
What is the goal of the RPL procedure?	The AUHA can recognise such prior learning through the RPL procedure described here. Recognised learning results in a competence certificate for the competences that have been examined. This certificate is an official document, which can be used to request exemptions for a particular educational programme.
Where do I register for the procedure?	You can register for the RPL procedure at the partner institutions of the Antwerp University Association. It is best to do this at the institution where you subsequently wish to complete an educational programme.
RPQ or RPL?	<i>The distinction between RPQ and RPL is sometimes difficult.</i> In some cases, it is not clear whether a proof of study from a previously followed educational programme does or does not fall within the category of RPQ. If you have questions about eligibility for RPQ or RPL, you may contact the Institutional RPL Coordinator or an RPL supervisor at an institution (see also below).

Conditions for admission to the RPL procedure

Who may start the procedure?	You must meet the general and specific conditions for admission to higher education, as described in the educational regulations of the institution and the educational programme according to which you seek assessment. You must also be able to prove that you have met these conditions. You do not need to be enrolled in one of the institution's educational programmes to start the RPL procedure.
What can you expect?	The RPL procedure requires a serious investment of time and resources from you, as well as from the institution. You should have a good idea of what you would like to demonstrate, why you are starting the RPL procedure and why you think that you are able to provide evidence of certain competences.
How do you start?	The first step is thus to contact the Institutional RPL Coordinator or the RPL supervisor at an institution (see also below).

Decision on the RPL procedure and the competence certificate

The decision on the aptitude test	After the RPL procedure, you will receive the decision on the aptitude test. This decision will indicate the competences that have and have not been recognised. The decision will also contain supporting argumentation for any competences that have not been recognised.
The competence certificate	You will receive a competence certificate for the competences for which you have successfully completed the RPL procedure. This certificate will also indicate the reference framework referred to in the RPL procedure. In other words, it will indicate the educational programme and institution within which you have followed the RPL procedure.

From competence certificate to exemptions	<p>You can use the competence certificate to request exemptions in an institution. Such exemptions will not be granted automatically, even at the institution in which the RPL procedure was followed.</p> <p>The institution determines which exemptions a candidate will receive based on a competence certificate. To request exemptions, you will follow the procedure described in the institution's Education and Examination Regulations.</p> <p>PROCEDURE</p> <p>A schematic representation of the procedures is provided in the document entitled 'Procedure and time frames'.</p> <p>The procedure is the same for every candidate.</p> <p>The time frames for the examination of competences relating to graduate programmes are shorter than those for examining competences relating to Bachelor or Master programmes.</p> <p><i>Procedure Information and orientation</i></p>
Usual procedure periods and time frames	<p>Each institution has at least two registration periods for the RPL procedure: the autumn procedure (aimed at the second semester of the current academic year) and the spring procedure (aimed at the next academic year).</p>
Additional procedure periods	<p>An institution may also decide to arrange additional procedure periods. These additional procedures are also dependent on time frames and dates.</p>
Necessary documents	<p>At the time of registration, you must present your ID card. Any change in this information must be reported in full. You will also be required to provide official documents to demonstrate that you meet the conditions for admission to higher education.</p>
Where to register	<p>You must register for the RPL procedure at the institution providing the educational programme against which you wish to have competences assessed. This institution will act as the authorised representative of the Antwerp University Association for registering candidates.</p>
Administrative costs	<p>Upon registration, you will be expected to pay the administrative costs (see www.auha.be/RPL).</p>
Intake interview	<p>You are entitled to an intake interview. In this interview, the procedure for the portfolio assignment will be explained, and the reference framework will be clarified. We ask you to be well prepared for this interview.</p>
Preparation Intake interview	<p>Prior to the interview, you should formulate all of the competences that you would like to demonstrate. Review the competences of the educational programme carefully. They will form the basis for the formulating the competences that you would like to demonstrate. Include additional details for areas in which your experience differs from the described competences.</p> <p>You should also review the prospectus of the study programme and identify which programme components (or parts of them) you think correspond to the competences you want to demonstrate.</p> <p>You will sign a form in which you confirm that you have received information about the method applied within the RPL procedure of the Antwerp University Association.</p> <p>Each candidate is free to decide whether to continue the procedure.</p>
Application for the aptitude test	<p>On the 'Proof of competence' form, you will describe the competences that you would like to demonstrate and the programme components against which they should be tested: the reference programme components. This form also indicates the number of credits that are encompassed by these programme components.</p> <p><i>Procedure Acknowledgement</i></p>
Cost of the aptitude test	<p>You will pay an additional fee for the aptitude test, depending on the number of credits associated with the competences to be demonstrated. These credits will be used to determine the additional fee for the aptitude test. The exact amounts are listed in the addendum on costs.</p>
Preparation of the portfolio	<p>In order to demonstrate competences, you will compile a portfolio independently (see the document entitled 'Portfolio assignment'). The supervisor can provide advice in this regard (see the 'Supervisor' heading below).</p>

Submission of the portfolio

The portfolio must be submitted before the final deadline. You will be notified of this date upon registration.
 You will submit four copies of the portfolio to the supervisor or a designated representative. You should retain the original carefully. It can still be requested.
 Upon receipt of the completed portfolio, the supervisor or a designated representative will sign the 'Receipt of portfolio' form. This document will be prepared in duplicate: you will retain one copy, and one copy will be retained by the institution.

Procedure | Assessment

Who will assess your portfolio?

Three assessors will review the portfolio. These assessors together constitute the Assessment Committee. They will review and evaluate the portfolio according to the criteria described in the document entitled 'Portfolio assignment'.

Criterion-based interview

The Assessment Committee will invite you for a criterion-based interview. During this interview, the portfolio will be reviewed and targeted questions will be asked according to the competences to be recognised.

Supplementary skills test

The assessors may require you to take supplementary skills tests. These tests are intended to assess the competences as they are being carried out. You will be notified about this well in advance (see the RPL regulations).

Decision of the Assessment Committee

The Assessment Committee will decide by majority vote which competences are to be awarded. The Committee is also responsible for providing supporting argumentation for any competences that are not recognised. Any skills tests that have been required will also be considered in this decision.

Procedure | Recognition

Decision on the aptitude test

You will receive the decision on the aptitude test, listing the results for each requested competence. This decision will serve as the supporting argumentation for competences that have been examined but not recognised.

Competence certificate

You will receive a competence certificate stating all of the competences that you have acquired.

Procedure | Objection

What should you do if you do not agree with the results?

If you do not agree with the decision of the Assessment Committee or the decision on the aptitude test, you may file an objection with the policy secretary of the Antwerp University Association within seven calendar days: Prinsstraat 13, 2000 Antwerp. We refer you to the RPL regulations and the document on 'Procedure and time frames'.
 An objection procedure with AUHA can be started only with regard to the RPL procedure.

Higher appeals procedure

Once the appeals procedure within the AUHA has been exhausted, an appeal can be made to the Council for Disputes with Regard to Decisions on Academic Progress (<http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/raad/default.htm>).

From competence certificate to exemption

A competence certificate can be converted into exemptions after enrolment in an institution. Exemptions are the responsibility of the institution, and they fall outside the responsibility of the AUHA. For additional information, see the Education and Examination Regulations of the relevant institution.

Termination of the procedure

You would like to withdraw...

A candidate may stop the process at any time by written notification.

Termination 'by statute'

If a candidate does not adhere to the time frames and/or agreements specified in the regulations with regard to registration, payment, submission of the portfolio or the assessment interview, the procedure shall be closed by statute.

Supervisor

Supervisor

Throughout the RPL procedure, you will be advised by a supervisor, who will be designated by the institution.

**Institutional
RPL Coordinator**

There is only one Institutional RPL Coordinator within each institution. This is not necessarily the person who will supervise you in the procedure.

**What can you expect of
the supervisor?**

During the intake interview, the supervisor will inform you about the procedure, method, regulations, the applicable competence profiles of the relevant educational programme and the time schedule.

The supervisor will give you non-committal advice upon request with regard to the competences that you would like to demonstrate and the programme components against which they could best be assessed. You should not contact the instructors of these programme components on your own. The supervisor might be able to present your questions to the relevant instructor.

**One-off
coaching session**

In addition to the intake interview with the supervisor, you are entitled to have one coaching session during the compilation of the portfolio. This will take place at your own initiative. The supervisor will not evaluate your portfolio as it is being compiled. You must collect supporting documents independently and provide arguments for why they demonstrate particular competences. You may ask the supervisor questions. The supervisor will provide non-committal advice.

Self-assessment

You will assess your own portfolio for completeness and quality. The document on the 'Portfolio assignment' provides tips for this self-evaluation.

**Independence of the
supervisor**

The results of the assessment by the Assessment Committee are independent of the supervision provided by the supervisor, and they can therefore not be ascribed to the supervisor.

**You must request
supervision!**

The supervisor will provide advice only at your request.