Aalto University - Language Centre
Recognition of Prior Non-formal and Informal Learning of English: Part A - Self-Assessment Guide

Part A: Do self-assessment (linked to this page)

4. How do my skills & knowledge meet the RPL learning outcomes?

1. What do I know and/or what can I do?

Start here!

3. What evidence do I have of my skills and knowledge?

2. Where/how did I learn my skills and knowledge?

- Reflect and self-assess
- Register in Oodi
- Schedule consultation appointment
- Meet with the teacher
- Construct an ePortfolio
- Submit for evaluation

Register — oodi

Via MyCourses — Schedule an Appointment

Bring your completed self-assessment — See teacher

Policies guiding evaluation

Prior learning of English **equates the knowledge and skills of an undergraduate English course**
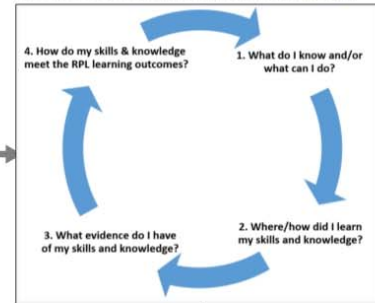
Demonstration must cover both **oral and written skills**

Prior learning supports your **academic / professional use of English in your field of study**
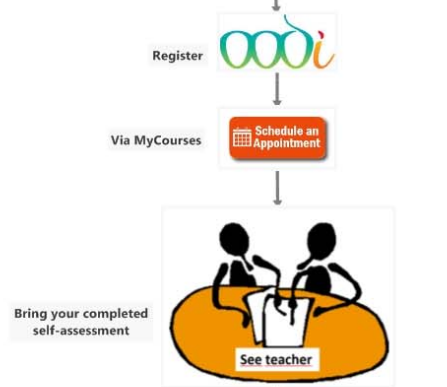
Minimum level of English is **B2 or higher level** (see *Common European Framework of Reference to Languages*)

Note: To assemble portfolio, see
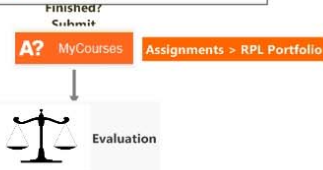MyCourses > Materials > Part B: Portfolio preparation guide

PORTFOLIO PRODUCT	PORTFOLIO PROCESS
Cover page	Complete the portfolio assessment declaration form. Print, sign, and insert it (as an image) as the cover page of your portfolio
Table of Contents	Present a list of the portfolio contents, including the items below and in the same order presented.
CV	Describe educational and career accomplishments relevant to your RPL application, i.e. working in English as related to your field of study. Use reverse chronological order.
Worksheets	Identify knowledge, skills, evidence, and RPL learning outcomes acquired through life and work experiences. Include in the portfolio your completed worksheets from the self-assessment.
Learning narratives	List each learning outcome and identify how it has been met.
Documentation	Provide a balance of direct and indirect evidence as proof of learning and capability to perform. This evidence must be authentic, clear and complete, reliable, sufficient, and valid.

Finished? Submit

A? MyCourses   Assignments > RPL Portfolio

Evaluation

CONTENTS

Note: Part B is the portfolio construction, for which a separate document provides guidelines on how to assemble it. To access that part, you need to register in Oodi.

Introduction

Recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning (RPL) is a process to recognize and grant credit for knowledge and skills acquired through non-credited, non-credentialed experiences that are relevant to your professional English. This process requires a demonstration for which you will construct a portfolio. Your aim with the portfolio is to reliably demonstrate and document your prior learning as related to your field of study, where the prior learning equates that of an undergraduate English course. This **demonstration** includes

- An oral presentation or equivalent (videoed, minimum 10 minutes) relevant to an academic or professional context (within the student's field of study).
- A formal text (minimum 2 pages) on a field-specific topic intended for an academic or professional audience that is written solely by you.
- A portfolio where you reflect on your prior learning of English achieved through out-of-classroom contexts, connect the prior learning to the learning outcomes of an undergraduate English course, and present evidence to validate your claims. The portfolio must be constructed according to the guidelines given in MyCourses.

Where the aim is to demonstrate the following **learning outcomes**

1. Successful students will reliably demonstrate and document their prior learning of professional English for their field of study.
2. Apply effective strategies to the delivery of an oral presentation (videoed) suitable for a relevant academic or professional context
3. Produce a well-structured and well-organized text for an intended audience in a professional and/or academic context (i.e. formal writing), written solely by the applicant, i.e. no multiple authors

Here are **four policies that guide the evaluation of the learning outcomes**

- Prior learning **equates the knowledge and skills acquired in an undergraduate English course**
- Minimum level of English is **B2 or higher level** (see *Common European Framework of Reference to Languages*)
- Prior learning supports your ability to use **professional English related to your field of study**
- Communicative ability for professional purposes includes **oral and written communication**

See the **assessment criteria** outlined in the portfolio guidelines.

This guide aims to assist you in compiling, documenting, and reflecting on your prior experiences to be presented as a portfolio for RPL assessment.

After compiling your portfolio, you will submit it for evaluation. Your electronic portfolio should be comprehensible and clear for the assessors to evaluate.

This guide is divided into two parts:

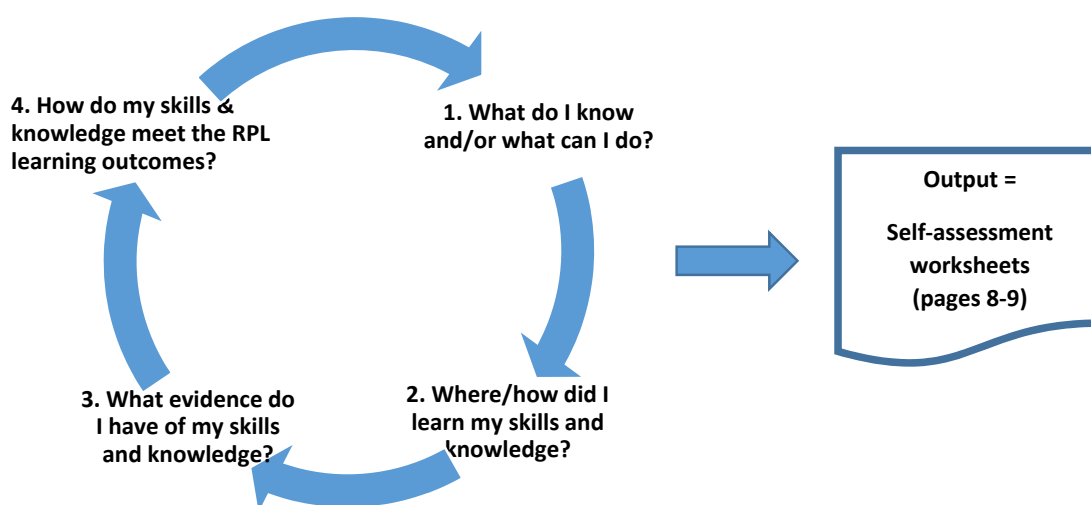> **Part A** assists you with identifying your prior learning through self-assessment
> **Part B** provides guidelines for preparing an RPL portfolio for English

To get started with this RPL process, read the following information to ensure proper preparation of your e-portfolio.

Part A: Self-assessment

To identify the essential parts of your prior English learning, you'll need to reflect on your prior experiences. This reflection will help you to *identify and describe how your learned/developed your current English skills and knowledge*. To document this prior learning, you will need to *pinpoint evidence that shows you have the skills and knowledge*. To earn credit for the relevant prior learning, you need to *identify how your skills and knowledge correspond to the RPL learning outcomes for which you seek credit*. This self-assessment is cyclic, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. CYCLE: IDENTIFY & REFLECT

1. What do I know and/or what can I do?

2. Where/how did I learn my skills and knowledge?

3. What evidence do I have of my skills and knowledge?

4. How do my skills & knowledge meet the RPL learning outcomes?

Output =

Self-assessment worksheets (pages 8-9)

You may start anywhere in the **cycle** and move around within it, depending on which aspects you find easiest to identify. You may also need to do this several times. This cyclic approach will help you with generating the **essential information needed for your self-assessment**, the output of which you will record in the **worksheets** at the end of **Part A**.

1. What do I know or what can I do?

To begin building up a general picture of your skills and knowledge of English, you can look at learning which occurs in your daily life, at work, and in other activities. For examples, see the **worksheets** at the end of **Part A**. By identifying these, you can reflect more easily on your prior knowledge and skills. **To record the results of your reflection, use the worksheets**. Note, you will need to **include these worksheets in your e-portfolio.**

2. Where/how did I learn my skills and knowledge?

As you begin to identify your prior skills and knowledge of English, consider where and how you learned them. For example, perhaps you did an internship in India, where you used English as the working language. Note down any details in the **worksheets** at the end of **Part A**.

3. What evidence do I have of my skills and knowledge?

You will need to *provide direct and indirect evidence* of the knowledge and skills that you claim to possess. For the RPL portfolio, you must provide evidence that meets the assessment criteria.

Sources of evidence include the following . . .

A. **Direct evidence**, which includes products you have produced yourself, such as
   i. Media copies of speeches, training demonstrations or other spoken performance.
      a. To create and upload video files, see the instructions in MyCourses > Materials > Panopto
      b. If you don't have an existing video that demonstrates your spoken professional English, an alternative is to record a presentation for demonstrating your previously acquired skills for delivering a professional presentation on a topic from your field of study.
   ii. Research articles, proposals, training manuals, reports
   iii. Blogs or other relevant social media
B. **Indirect evidence**, which acknowledges your skills and knowledge in using professional English, such as
   i. Self-directed learning from books read, online resources which result in an annotated bibliography or narrative on an area of study. In other words, a detailed account or narration of your experience and reflection on that experience, i.e. what you did and what you learned.
   ii. Evidence of training/education, including certifications or statements, and where possible the course description and outline of the contents.
   iii. Letter(s) of validation: Letter from a credible and trustworthy source, **providing verification of your claims to learning English**. This letter must specifically state the knowledge and skills you claim about English. It is not necessarily equivalent to a letter of recommendation. **Nor** can it be written by family or friends. Examples of credible sources include: previous or current employer, previous or current teacher or coach.

   What constitutes a good letter of validation?

   To be of most value, the letter should be written by the person who has direct knowledge of the learning for which the applicant has claimed RPL. The request letter should clearly state its purpose, i.e. why the recipient is contacted. The letter of verification should contain:
   - Name of the applicant
   - Dates of employment, or of the time the applicant has been known to you

- Position held by the applicant; or the capacity in which the applicant has been known
- Writer's relationship to the applicant
- For each claim to knowledge or skill, a statement of verification (if agreed) that the applicant can perform the skills to the level indicated, without supervision; or possesses the knowledge/skills claimed
- To help verify each claim, the writer should include comments on the quality of the applicant's performance.
- The writer should not testify to any claim for which the applicant does not have full competence. Regarding (applicant) claims to which the writer does not agree, it may be helpful to describe the level of skill or knowledge that the applicant has attained.
- The letter must be on official company/organization letterhead and signed by the writer, who should indicate the position he/she holds, or held, in relation to the applicant

Here is an example of how to write a request for a letter of validation.

26 Main Street
Anytown, AS 55511
United States

XX October, 20XX

Mrs M Johnson
Architects Anonymous
81 Side Street
Sometown, ZX 11155
United States

Dear Mrs Johnson:

This letter is in reference to my application for recognition of prior learning at Aalto University. Through this process my aim is to gain credit for the skills and knowledge which I have learned and shown while working as an assistant designer in your Architect Company during the last three summers.

Attached is a list of my claims to learning which must be validated. I would appreciate your help with verifying some or all of my claims.

I look forward to your reply by (*insert date*). Please send the letter to the address listed above. Your assistance on this matter is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Andy Architect

Claim to Learning by Andy Architect
I claim to have the following learning/skills:
1. Can effectively communicate with customers in both written and spoken English
2. Can apply good intercultural communication skills for working in a team of English users
3. Can plan and deliver project presentations in English
4. Can negotiate adequately in English
5. Can produce the required professional documentation in English

4. How do my knowledge and skills correspond to the RPL learning outcomes for which I seek credit?

The following steps will help you to identify how your prior skills and knowledge correspond to the RPL learning outcomes:

Step 1: Review the RPL learning outcomes in Figure 2.
Step 2: For each RPL learning outcome:
  ➢ Identify the knowledge and skill(s) you have learned that match that specific outcome. Refer back to your **worksheets** in Part A.
  ➢ Ensure that you obtain the necessary **evidence** to show that you have the claimed knowledge and skill(s) relevant to the learning outcome.
Step 3: Assemble your evidence
  ➢ Write to everyone from whom you want to obtain letters of validation.
  ➢ Obtain certified copies of certificates or statements. Where possible, this evidence includes the course description and outline of the contents.
  ➢ Include your evidence in the Documentation section of the portfolio (see Table 1 in Part B, which outlines the sections of the portfolio), and use appropriate cross referencing in your Learning Narrative (a section of the portfolio as shown in Table 1 in Part B).
  ➢ For digital evidence (e.g. video), please provide a link in the Documentation section.
Step 4: Keep a record of your (collected) evidence
  ➢ Record the evidence in Column 4 of the **worksheets.**

Figure 2 presents the RPL learning outcomes, which you are challenging in this portfolio process. Your aim is to demonstrate that you have achieved the learning outcomes via alternative learning paths.

Aalto University: Language Centre
RPL Learning Outcomes

Through a portfolio, successful students will reliably demonstrate and document their prior learning as related to their field of study, where the prior learning equates the learning outcomes of an undergraduate English course, as follows

1. Successful students will reliably demonstrate and document their prior learning of professional English for their field of study.
2. Apply effective strategies to the delivery of an oral presentation (videoed) suitable for a relevant academic or professional context
3. Produce a well-structured and well-organized text for an intended audience in a professional and/or academic context (i.e. formal writing), written solely by the applicant, i.e. no multiple authors

> **Learning Outcome:**
> A statement that specifies what students should be able to demonstrate as a result of their learning. They identify knowledge and skills relevant to a given subject. They are, in effect, statements of competence or capability.

Figure 2 RPL learning outcomes for English at the Aalto University Language Centre.

WORKSHEET 1 LIFE EXPERIENCE

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4">List life experiences that have helped me to gain skills and knowledge relevant to my RPL application. This prior learning of English may include being educated in English in the field-specific area, attending workshops or conferences, participating in school or community activities (e.g. team, club, society, association or organizations), being in an English-speaking relationship, traveling, and actively practicing a hobby.</td></tr>
<tr>
<td>Things I have done in English
e.g. volunteering at some type of student or community activities; coaching others, participating in student exchange or conferences</td>
<td>What I learned or developed
e.g. knowledge and skills for intercultural communication, constructive feedback, questioning, presenting, etc.</td>
<td>What evidence I have - to include in the portfolio
e.g. certificates, letters of recommendation, awards, learning diary, other documented proof (e.g. video presentation)</td>
<td>Identify the Learning Outcomes (outlined in Figure 2) to which this relates</td>
</tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>

WORKSHEET 2 WORK-RELATED EXPERIENCE

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4">List work-related experience (full-time, part-time, voluntary or unpaid work) that has helped you to gain skills and knowledge of English relevant to your RPL application. Start with the most recent experience.</td></tr>
<tr>
<td>Things I have done in English
<i>Project manager</i>
AB Industries Inc.
Main Street, London
Jan 2013 – present
<i>On-the-job training</i>
e.g. customer service, communication, English, industrial processes</td>
<td>What I learned or developed
• Communication skills
• Negotiation
• Teamwork skills</td>
<td>What evidence I have - to include in the portfolio
• Letter from employer
• Employment certificate
• User /product /process manual that I wrote</td>
<td>Identify the Learning Outcomes (outlined in Figure 2) to which this relates</td>
</tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>

WORKSHEET 3 TEACHING YOURSELF

List things you have learned on your own to gain skills and knowledge of English relevant to your RPL application. This prior learning may include private study, doing research, computer-assisted learning, or publication of any work.

Things I have done in English e.g. self-study, writing a blog, publishing research, gaming	What I learned or developed e.g. structuring text for an intended purpose and audience, building field-specific vocabulary, giving constructive feedback	What evidence I have - to include in the portfolio e.g. certificate, learning diary, blog, essay, or published paper	Identify the Learning Outcomes (outlined in Figure 2) to which this relates