



Recognition of Prior Learning Toolkit

Guidelines to Support Implementation

28 August 2025

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Acknowledgements

This Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Toolkit is informed by the generous insights and experiences shared by over 30 individuals across Aotearoa New Zealand's food and fibre sector. We acknowledge the contributions of training providers, employers, iwi-operated trusts, and others in strategic and operational roles who participated in interviews and shared their perspectives on RPL. Insights from these individuals informed the milestone report 'Recognising Prior Learning (RPL) in New Zealand's Food & Fibre Industry: Current State & Good Practices' published by the Food & Fibre Centre of Vocational Excellence in May 2025. This report is available [here](#).

We are especially grateful to the members of our RPL Steering Group, whose guidance and sector knowledge helped shape this work:

- Food and Fibre CoVE – Jackie Lynch
- Muka Tangata – Lester Hoare
- Primary ITO – Andrea Leslie
- EIT (Eastern Institute of Technology) – Ondene van Dulm
- NZQA – Neil Miller, Melinda Hall
- Te Wānanga o Aotearoa – Emma West

We also acknowledge the inspiration and knowledge drawn from local and international training providers, RPL experts, research publications, RPL Centres of Excellence and other organisations. Their policies, practices, research projects and insights have informed examples to support with our understanding of RPL good practices.

This RPL Toolkit was developed by RippleEd – Jackie Messam and Ramon Messam – with research support from Kathryn Koopmanschap of Boost Business Services. It reflects our current understanding and experience of RPL and is intended as a starting point. We hope it will continue to evolve as others deepen their own experience with RPL and contribute new insights and practices over time.

Ngā mihi nui to all who contributed to this work.

What is RPL (Recognised Prior Learning)

In New Zealand learners have an opportunity to have their prior skills and experience recognised towards gaining a qualification or credential. This process, known as Recognised Prior Learning (RPL), is intended to help learners avoid repeating what they already know, allowing them to complete qualifications more efficiently.

NZQA (New Zealand Qualifications Authority) describes RPL as a learner's existing skills and knowledge recognised as equivalent to those taught in a formal education setting. The learner's existing skills and knowledge may be gained through work (paid or voluntary), independent study or informal learning and life experience. RPL is used to award credits toward a qualification.

There is another method for recognising learning for credit defined by NZQA as CRT (Credit Recognition and Transfer). CRT generally describes gaining credit from formal learning that has been provided and credentialed by another tertiary provider. For example: a learner who has completed some study at one education provider may receive credit towards a qualification at a different education provider if the learning outcomes are comparable.

This distinction between RPL (informal learning) and CRT (formal learning) is consistent with international practice.

Background to this RPL Toolkit

Why RPL?

The purpose of RPL is to formally acknowledge the skills and knowledge individuals have gained through work, life, or previous study, without requiring them to repeat learning they already know.

When used effectively, RPL benefits multiple stakeholders, for example RPL:

- supports learners by making pathways to qualifications more accessible and relevant
- helps employers and industry by recognising existing workforce capability and fast-tracking upskilling
- enables training providers to offer more tailored, efficient training programmes
- contributes to national and regional goals by improving workforce participation, reducing duplication, and supporting a more responsive and inclusive education and training system.

Is the RPL process widely understood?

To understand how RPL is currently used and perceived in the Food & Fibre sector in New Zealand, [RippleEd](#) was contracted by the Food & Fibre Centre of Vocational Excellence to carry out a research project in 2025. The goals of the project were to:

- consider the current status of RPL in the Food & Fibre sector in New Zealand
- identify RPL good practices, both in New Zealand and internationally
- develop RPL tools and guidance material to support the RPL process

The report ‘Recognising Prior Learning (RPL) in New Zealand’s Food & Fibre Industry: Current State & Good Practices’ based on the first two goals can be found [here](#).

In the report, it was found that RPL is not widely used by the nine training providers that were interviewed as part of the research project, and very rarely used for food and fibre programmes. All but one of the nine employers and two iwi-operated trusts interviewed were not familiar with RPL as an option.

“Most employers and iwi operated trusts had little or no knowledge of RPL, and several employers commented along the lines of ‘RPL is something we used to do.’”

(RippleEd, 2025, p. 11)

Why isn’t RPL used much in the food & fibre sector?

1. Cost and time for providers to carry out RPL

International best practice highlights that the RPL process should be learner-focused and takes time to do well. However, training providers lack dedicated funding to support

this, making it difficult to implement RPL effectively. In the report, providers identified costs and time associated with carrying out RPL as the main challenge.

“Cost and time pressures were considered especially challenging when recognising non-formal learning and work experience. At present, providers explained that TEC (Tertiary Education Commission) funding only covers the cost of training, however RPL is considered a “huge amount of work” (Provider 6).”

(RippleEd, 2025, p. 23)

2. Belief that RPL may not be relevant to the Food & Fibre sector

Amongst those employers interviewed for the research project, there was a common belief that RPL may not be relevant to the food and fibre sector. However,

“It is worth noting that as the interviews progressed and employers became aware of what RPL was, three employers showed more interest in potential opportunities.”

(RippleEd, 2025, p. 29)

3. Challenges implementing the RPL process

The report also identified challenges linked to carrying out the RPL process, specifically:

- initiating the RPL process
- documenting prior learning
- assessment of prior learning

Learners can lose confidence in the RPL process if they have to find and collect large amount of evidence on their own.

What could support the RPL process here in New Zealand?

In New Zealand there is currently no cohesive, government skills strategy or policy to support businesses to grow through the acquisition of skills. This is in direct contrast to other countries, particularly in Europe. In Ireland for example, the government has invested almost \$14 million in ‘The RPL in Higher Education Project’ as a Human Capital Initiative. The goal of this project is to embed and streamline RPL in higher education; enhance higher education staff capacity to practice RPL and to work with employers to develop upskilling and reskilling opportunities for staff.

The milestone report ‘Recognising Prior Learning (RPL) in New Zealand’s Food & Fibre Industry: Current State & Good Practices’ identified three enablers that could lead to increased and improved RPL implementation. These enablers have the potential to shape policy, practices, resource flows, relationships and connections, power dynamics and mental models – across the six conditions of systems change, as defined by Kania, Kramer and Senge (2018). These enablers include:

1. Improved RPL funding, guidance and capable assessors
2. Enhanced tools for gathering documentation and assessment
3. Purpose driven RPL projects

Note: The 'Recognising Prior Learning (RPL) in New Zealand's Food & Fibre Industry: Current State & Good Practices', coins the term 'purpose-driven RPL projects. It describes a targeted, one-off initiative designed to meet a clear, time-bound objective - such as helping workers gain qualifications to secure new contracts, meet legislative requirements, or improve their future job prospects and mobility. International examples of this approach can be found in the milestone report 'Recognising Prior Learning (RPL) in New Zealand's Food & Fibre Industry: Current State & Good Practices' pg. 30.

While some enablers - such as improved RPL funding - sit outside the scope of this toolkit, it brings together good practices as well as RPL resources for training providers to use or adapt to suit their own needs and contexts.

A draft example of a purpose driven work-based provider RPL assessment tool is included in the appendix. Many thanks to the Primary ITO for allowing us to work with them and this Skill Standard to create a draft RPL Assessor Guide that has the potential to be a purpose driven RPL assessment tool for use in the shearing industry.

Although there were constraints around developing an assessment tool for a provider-based programme, the toolkit holds links to examples from providers from other countries. Our recommendation is that this toolkit is considered a working document, and provider-based RPL tools are added at a later date.

How to use this RPL Toolkit

In this toolkit the RPL process is broken down into the following five stages. These stages are closely linked to the European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning (Cedefop, 2023).

The RPL Process

1. **Information** – At this stage, user-friendly information about the RPL process is made available to learners and all stakeholders.
2. **Identification** – An initial screening process that explores a learner's prior learning in relation to the programme's learning outcomes.
3. **Documentation** – At this stage of the process, documentation is gathered and submitted as RPL evidence.
4. **Assessment** – The RPL application is assessed and verified. An individual's evidence is compared against programme learning outcomes.
5. **Certification** – If successful, the learner receives recognition for their prior learning.

At each stage of the RPL process, there is:

- a short description of the stage
- a list of research based good practices
- what this stage might look like for learners, employers and training providers
- resources to support RPL stakeholders to understand or implement RPL at that stage

Stage 1: Information about RPL

At this stage, user-friendly information about the RPL process is made available to learners and all stakeholders.

Research based good practices

- The learner understands there are options for RPL at application and enrolment, the commitment and costs involved, the benefits for them, and the choices they can make in terms of how their results will be used
- Employers know the benefits of RPL and the commitment involved
- Industry peak bodies understand how RPL can be applied to meet skills needs within their industry
- Training provider staff understand their role in promoting RPL and providing clear, accessible information about it, for example:
 - Leaders value and promote RPL and then work comfortably within any risks the process may carry. User-friendly good practice based policies and procedures for RPL implementation in their training context are available.
 - Assessors, Kaiako, Tutors, Training Advisors, Counsellors understand their role within the RPL process and the skills and knowledge required to carry out RPL.
 - Heads of department, programme chairs, programme directors, or quality team members understand and are skilled at ensuring the RPL process is robust.
 - RPL experts within the organisation are identified and supported.
 - Programme designers know how to embed RPL within the design of new programmes, modules or assessment tools.

What this might look like

For learners	For employers*	For training providers
Enrolment team member explains options for RPL and an introduction to the RPL process to learners before enrolment.	Training Advisor explains the options for RPL to employers before enrolment of an apprentice.	Leadership commits to RPL.
Assessor/Kaiako/Training Advisor/Counsellor speaks with learner at enrolment about prior learning and aspirations.	An RPL Employer Guide supports RPL discussions around the benefits of RPL and an introduction to the RPL process.	Current, clear and accessible RPL policies and procedures.
Training provider website holds clear, user-friendly RPL information, videos,	<i>*In some cases, a past employer may not be involved in the RPL process</i>	Coordination between and commitment from all staff who understand that the award of credits can be a way of encouraging people to enrol in a programme of study.

For learners	For employers*	For training providers
FAQs or success stories for learners and employers. During learner recruitment activities, information about RPL is provided. An RPL Candidate Guide supports discussions and outlines the commitment from required from the learner, as well as the benefits (e.g. avoiding the full enrolment cost for the programme, reduced time commitment, travel costs etc). Learners are mentored and coached through the RPL process.		Implementation of research informed RPL practices. RPL assessment exemplars/models and templates are available. Robust RPL quality assurance and continuous improvement practices are in place. Business model allows for costs involved to carry out the RPL process. This includes a transparent process to calculate a break-even RPL fee for each type of programme. An RPL Community of Practice is established and supported.

Resources to support RPL stakeholders at this stage

To support learners understand RPL

Website: Prior Learning Ireland - RPL Learner Guide

<https://www.priorlearning.ie/resources-tools/rpl-learner-guide>

Website: Capable NZ - How it Works <https://capable.nz/home/how-it-works>

Website: Capable NZ - FAQs <https://capable.nz/faqs>

Website: Capable NZ - Success Stories <https://capable.nz/home/success-stories>

Website: Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board (Canada)

<https://www.pfhcb.com/learning-assessment>

To support employers understand RPL

Video: Prior Learning, Ireland - About RPL <https://www.priorlearning.ie/what-rpl/information-employers>

To support training providers understand RPL

Guidelines: NZQA - Recognising learning for credit: Guidelines for the recognition and award of credit for learning (2017) [Guidelines-for-the-recognition-and-award-of-learning-for-credit.pdf](https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Qualifications-standards/Understanding-NZQF/The-New-Zealand-Qualifications-and-Credentials-Framework.pdf)

NZQCF: The New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (July, 2025) <https://www2.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Qualifications-standards/Understanding-NZQF/The-New-Zealand-Qualifications-and-Credentials-Framework.pdf>

Report: Recognising Prior Learning (RPL) in New Zealand's Food & Fibre Industry: Current State & Good Practices' (2025): <https://foodandfibrecove.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/RPL-Current-State-Good-Practices.pdf>

Guidelines: European Guidelines for Validating Non-Formal and Informal Learning (2023) https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/3093_en.pdf

Guidelines: Swedish Council for Higher Education - RPL in practice. Self-assessment template – The four phases of validation https://www.uhr.se/contentassets/e9abf4935ad94f308eaf84082313a608/self-assessment-template-for-rpl_incl.-comments_final.docx

Policy example: Atlantic Technological University <https://www.atu.ie/app/uploads/2024/10/recognition-of-prior-learning-rpl-policy.pdf>

Video: University of Galway <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c3JDg-UCnbM&t=8s>

Community of Practices/Centres of RPL Excellence

- Australia: RPL Matters <https://www.skillseducation.com.au/bundles/rpl-matters>
- Canada: CAPLA | Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment (CAPLA) <https://capla.ca/>
- Ireland: Home | Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) <https://www.priorlearning.ie/>

Programme: Skills Education Advanced RPL Assessor Certification (Contains an example of a Candidate RPL Pre-enrolment guide for Training Providers to use with learners) <https://www.skillseducation.com.au/pages/advanced-rpl-credentials>

Programme: Skills Education Advanced RPL Assessor Certification (Contains an example of an Employer RPL guide for Training Providers to use with employers) <https://www.skillseducation.com.au/pages/advanced-rpl-credentials>

LinkedIn article: Deb Carr 'The Implementation Playbook: How to Build a Sustainable APL/RPL Service' <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/implementation-playbook-how-build-sustainable-aplrpl-service-deb-carr-jwvx/>

To support Programme Designers embed RPL

As above plus:

Programme: Skills Education Advanced RPL Assessor Certification (contains examples of RPL assessment tools) <https://www.skillseducation.com.au/pages/advanced-rpl-credentials>

Stage 2: Identification of Prior Learning

An initial screening process that explores a learner's prior learning in relation to programme learning outcomes. The learner is asked questions that connects to their prior experience, knowledge and skills matched to the programme's entry requirements and learning outcomes. This prior learning can be formal (e.g. NZQCF qualifications, Microcredentials, Skills Standards, Unit Standards), informal (e.g. work-based training courses) or non-formal (e.g. volunteering, work experience).

Research based good practices

- Make this stage straightforward and supportive by using plain language, so learners can focus on showcasing their skills and experience with confidence
- Take a learner-centred approach. Bearing in mind that learners have gained knowledge, skills and experiences in different ways e.g. at home, in education, during work or through volunteering activities etc, a 'one-size-fits-all' approach is not recommended
- Prioritise interviews and dialogue-based approaches to provide greatest value to the candidate, so they become increasingly aware of their prior achievements
- IT based approaches (e.g. online screening) may support scalability and reduce cost...
- However, IT approaches must be carefully balanced with human contact to support shy/unconfident learners and to ensure authenticity

What this might look like

For learners	For employers	For training providers
Assessor/Kaiako/Training Advisor/Counsellor speaks with learner about their prior knowledge, skills and experience linked to the Graduate Performance Outcomes (GPOs) and learning outcomes. Learners complete an online questionnaire or form to identify (self-assess) prior knowledge, skills and experience linked to the programme learning outcomes. AI agent asks a series of learning outcome based	Assessor/Kaiako/Training Advisor explains the RPL process to employers and how the GPOs or learning outcomes link to what happens at work. An RPL Employer Guide supports RPL discussions and outlines the commitment required from a *past or current employer to support the RPL process. <i>*In some cases, a past employer may not be involved in the RPL process</i>	Baking the RPL process into programme design. A reflective, project-based approach is simpler to RPL, and could provide opportunities for learners to reflect on their prior knowledge, skills and experiences in relation to the programme learning outcomes. Clustering (integrating) learning outcomes allows for an holistic approach, identifies required knowledge, skills and experience and avoids repetition.

For learners	For employers	For training providers
questions, or uses scenarios and questions to assess RPL suitability.		RPL ‘experts’ or ‘centres of expertise’ are available within the system, e.g. an advisory organisation sitting external to any provider or industry. RPL experts are available at the training provider.

Resources to support RPL stakeholders at this stage

To support learners

Video explainer - how to complete an online RPL application form: Hame University of Applied Science (Finland)

https://kultura.hamk.fi/media/Pakki+Student+InstructionsA+Work+Experience+to+Credits+%28RPL%29/0_2mad34w1

Student Form for Credit Recognition/Transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning: EIT (Eastern Institute of Technology) <https://www.eit.ac.nz/wp-content/uploads/ppgdocs/Student-Form-for-Credit-Recognition-Transfer-and-RPL.pdf>

To support training providers

Guidelines: Swedish Council for Higher Education - RPL in practice. Self-assessment template – The four phases of validation

https://www.uhr.se/contentassets/e9abf4935ad94f308eaf84082313a608/self-assessment-template-for-rpl_incl.-comments_final.docx

Video (first part) explains the RPL Identification stage to staff: University of Galway <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c3JDg-UCnbM&t=8s>

Website/RPL Exemplar: ‘A real-world example of the recognition of prior learning process used to gain module exemptions – University of Galway

<https://www.priorlearning.ie/resources-tools/rpl-exemplar-university-galway-0>

Website/RPL Exemplar: How a learner’s prior experience led to direct entry into Year 2 of a BA in Early Childhood Education – Atlantic Technological University

<https://www.priorlearning.ie/resources-tools/rpl-exemplar-atlantic-technological-university-advanced-entry>

Website/RPL Exemplar: How one applicant used RPL to access a Level 9 Postgraduate Diploma in Building Surveying at DkIT – Dundalk Institute of Technology

<https://www.priorlearning.ie/resources-tools/rpl-exemplar-dundalk-institute-technology>

Note: There are many RPL Exemplars to be found at priorlearning.ie

Website: Example of a scenario based oral assessment tool. A similar tool may be created by training providers as an initial online screening tool.

<https://nimodemo.com/futuremakers>

Website: Examples of AI in assessment and delivery – oral assessment tool (New Zealand) <https://scarlatti.co.nz/case-studies/ai-in-assessment-and-delivery-seven-types-of-futuristic-agents/>

Stage 3: Documentation of Prior Learning

At this stage of the process, documentation is gathered and submitted as RPL evidence.

Research based good practices

- At a programme level, agreement on which evidence is to be accepted for RPL (at the training provider level and nationally) is crucial for trust in the RPL process
- A combination of tools and methodologies should be used to capture the complex range of learning involved
- “...evidence must allow (future) external readers and users to judge and eventually trust the learning outcomes acquired by the individual: simply listing job-titles or positions is not enough.” (Cedefop, 2023).
- Build relationship and trust with the learner, a verbal approach is best, ask for demonstrations where possible (if work-based), assessors should get out and on the job to form a relationship with the employer and learner
- Ensure that evidence types are reliable, valid, accessible, fair, authentic and consistent

What this might look like

For learners	For employers	For training providers
Assessor visits workplace to collect evidence matched to the GPOs and learning outcomes, OR Assessor asks learner/employer to submit a list of evidence. Assessor works with the learner to support evidence collection matched to the GPOs and learning outcomes, OR Assessor asks learner to submit a list of evidence.	The Training Advisor proactively partners with employers, HR, and L&D teams to encourage the creation of individual portfolios that can support future RPL for their employees.	Programme based assessment tools are aligned to the relevant NZQCF level and contain a range of evidence types based on the learning outcomes in the programme document. Examples of evidence types could include: • Interviews • Observations of simulated and controlled job practice • Scenarios/professional discussions • Written tests

For learners	For employers	For training providers
		• Portfolio of evidence • Third-party reports

Resources to support RPL stakeholders at this stage

To support learners and training providers

Application: Voice to Text tool (e.g. Otter AI) to capture oral speech in written form
<https://otter.ai/>

Software: AI skills recognition or mapping tools (e.g. Chat GPT, SkillsAware AI engine, Pricky2Sweet) <https://skillsaware.com/solutions/>

[About | Pricky2Sweet](#)

Digital portfolios

To support training providers

NZQCF: The New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (July, 2025)
<https://www2.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Qualifications-standards/Understanding-NZQF/The-New-Zealand-Qualifications-and-Credentials-Framework.pdf>

Draft RPL Assessment Tool – (see Appendix: Draft RPL Assessor Guide)

Programme: Skills Education Advanced RPL Assessor Certification (contains examples of RPL evidence types) <https://www.skillseducation.com.au/pages/advanced-rpl-credentials>

Report: Recognising Prior Learning (RPL) in New Zealand's Food & Fibre Industry: Current State & Good Practices' (2025 pages 19, 20): <https://foodandfibrecove.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/RPL-Current-State-Good-Practices.pdf>

Stage 4: Assessment of Prior Learning

The RPL application is assessed and verified. An individual's evidence is compared against programme learning outcomes.

Research based good practices

- A SME works alongside an assessor to check the quality of evidence against the learning outcomes.
- Moderation processes ensure reliability, validity and authenticity etc (e.g. sent to a programme committee, WDC moderation)
- Specific training for RPL Assessors
- An RPL co-ordinating organisation should be identified and appointed

What this might look like

For learners	For employers	For training providers
Learner may be involved at this stage if follow-up is required.	Employers may be involved at this stage if follow-up is required.	SME (Subject Matter Expert) collaborates with Assessor to verify evidence is reliable, valid and authentic. Work-based Providers follow internal moderation procedures and may be required to submit RPL decisions to relevant WDCs for external moderation or as part of an NZQA monitoring activity. Campus-based Providers follow internal moderation procedures and must submit RPL decisions to relevant internal committee for approval. May be required to submit RPL decisions to other providers for external moderation purposes or for NZQA monitoring activities.

Resources to support RPL stakeholders at this stage

Guidelines: Swedish Council for Higher Education - RPL in practice. Self-assessment template – The four phases of validation

https://www.uhr.se/contentassets/e9abf4935ad94f308eaf84082313a608/self-assessment-template-for-rpl_incl.-comments_final.docx

Report: Recognising Prior Learning (RPL) in New Zealand's Food & Fibre Industry: Current State & Good Practices' (2025 pages 19, 20): <https://foodandfibrecove.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/RPL-Current-State-Good-Practices.pdf>

Stage 5: Certification of Prior Learning

If successful, the learner receives recognition for their prior learning. Examples of recognition include:

- advanced entry to a programme
- credit towards a programme or exemption from some modules, skills standards or unit standards
- full award of a qualification, skills standard or unit standard

In certain areas (economic sectors and industries), certification may also involve issuing a licence allowing the individual to carry out specific tasks. Digital badges or vendor certificates may also be a form of certification of prior learning.

Research based good practices

- It is important for learners to be aware of the different types of credentials, as well as their value and currency
- The awarding body should be well known and legitimate
- The RPL process leading to an award must be transparent
- Credentials that are awarded to learners should lead to job opportunities or further study

What this might look like

For learners	For employers	For training providers
Learner receives informal updates from their Assessor/Kaiako/Training Advisor/Counsellor overseeing the RPL process. When a decision is made, the learner receives a formal notification from the Training Provider. Grades are typically not assigned.	Employers not involved	Assessor/Kaiako/Training Advisor/Counsellor keeps in touch with learner to update them on the progress of their RPL application. Training Provider formally notifies the applicant of the RPL decision.

Resources to support RPL stakeholders at this stage

To support training providers

Guidelines: Swedish Council for Higher Education - RPL in practice. Self-assessment template – The four phases of validation

https://www.uhr.se/contentassets/e9abf4935ad94f308eaf84082313a608/self-assessment-template-for-rpl_incl.-comments_final.docx

Policy example: Atlantic Technological University

<https://www.atu.ie/app/uploads/2024/10/recognition-of-prior-learning-rpl-policy.pdf>

Note: There are many policy examples to be found at priorlearning.ie

Future recommendations

As outlined in the 'Next Steps' section of the milestone report 'Recognising Prior Learning (RPL) in New Zealand's Food & Fibre Industry: Current State & Good Practices', there are three main opportunities to strengthen RPL in the Food & Fibre sector.

1. By improving funding settings, providing clear and consistent RPL guidance to training providers, and building assessor capability, we can make RPL more accessible and trusted.
2. By adopting digital tools - such as AI-driven platforms - to streamline evidence gathering, we can reduce cost and time for learners, providers, and employers while improving consistency and fairness. However, while technology could streamline parts of the RPL process, a learner-centred approach to RPL is viewed as best practice internationally. There is a risk of digital tools undermining *whanaungatanga* and the personal, trust-based relationships essential to supporting learners and employers through the RPL process.
3. By embedding purpose-driven RPL projects into programme design from the outset, we can address specific workforce needs, engage stakeholders, and create models that others can follow.

These opportunities build on proven international approaches and emerging technologies. What's needed now is coordinated commitment from funders, policymakers, industry and providers to turn these ideas into practical action that benefits learners, employers, and the sector as a whole.

Appendix: Draft RPL Assessor Guide

The RPL Assessor Guide below is a draft example of a work-based RPL assessment tool created for the Primary Industry Training Organisation (PITO). Initial feedback about improvements to this tool from Primary ITO and the Workforce Development Council - Muka Tangata - has been integrated, however it has not been piloted with learners and employers. Please note also, that it is still in draft form and has not been checked by a Subject Matter Expert.

DRAFT RPL Assessor Guide

Skill Standard: 40150 v 1 Shear crossbred sheep at commercial throughput rate

Level: 4 Credits: 30

Note: For each Learning Outcome (LO) below, there are a range of evidence types. Following their provider's RPL policy, the RPL Assessor makes a judgement based on the evidence type(s) that are most appropriate and available to the RPL candidate and the employer context for each LO.

Evidence types

- **EP** – Evidence Portfolio
- **CT** – Challenge Test
- **S** – Scenario
- **TPR** – Third Party Report
- **PD** – Professional Discussion

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria	Evidence types
1. Identify and report hazards in a woolshed	a. Identify and report work hazards and any hazards which may impact on the safe set up and operation of the woolshed	EP 3,4 TPR 1 PD 1
2. Contribute to safe set up of the woolshed for use	a. Work with a team to set up the woolshed for use, demonstrating safe work practices and maintaining awareness of potential hazards.	EP 1-4 TPR 2,3 PD 2
	b. Identify and report maintenance that is required to ensure the safe set up and operation of the woolshed.	

3. Select and assemble equipment appropriate to the job requirements.	a. Identify and select appropriate combs for the job requirements.	EP 1,2,5 CT 1 TPR 4-8 PD 3,4,5
	b. Inspect combs and manually rectify comb faults.	
	c. Set lead and throw and tension settings and lubricate the handpiece.	
	d. Check the handpiece to ensure that it meets safety requirements.	
	e. Lubricate down-tube components in preparation for shearing.	
4. Catch sheep for shearing efficiently and safely.	a. Approach and catch sheep safely and efficiently.	EP 1,2,5 CT 1 TPR 9,10 PD 6
	b. Move sheep safely to the stand and present for shearing.	
5. Shear crossbred sheep.	a. Handle sheep during shearing safely and efficiently.	EP 1,2,5 CT 1 TPR 11-13 PD 7
	b. Apply sequence and pattern to shear sheep without injury to self or sheep.	
	c. Maintain shearing output and quality that meets minimum industry requirements.	
6. Identify wool contaminants and damaged and injured sheep	a. Identify and report wool contaminants	CT 2 S 1,2 TPR 14,15 PD 8,9,10
	b. Mark damaged or injured sheep	

Evidence Type 1: Evidence Portfolio

Note: In an employer-supported RPL process, the evidence may be collected by the RPL Assessor. The evidence below is indicative of what might be included if available and the success of the application is not dependent on the availability of each piece of evidence listed below.

For EP 1 and EP 2 below the learner may have no experience in developing a resume, and/or the Employer may not have a Job Description. In either instance it is acceptable for the RPL Assessor to work with the learner or employer and support the development of the relevant document.

Generic Evidence:

EP 1	resume indicating the learners past experiences related to this Skills Standard. Should include dates, approximate length of time in the role, contact details not going back more than 5 years
EP 2	Job Descriptions from current/previous employment outlining related tasks undertaken

Specific Evidence:

EP 3	examples of two (2) Hazard ID documentation completed by the learner
EP 4	any related Health and Safety certification held by the learner
EP 5	any related qualifications, for example: Shearing Essentials (Junior) - Micro-credential or National Certificate in Agriculture (Level 2)

Evidence Type 2: Challenge Test

Note: It is assumed that the RPL Assessor or a Verifier will complete this form.

You are assessing the learner's ability to shear crossbred sheep at a commercial through-put rate.

- The minimum completion requirement for this standard is **20 sheep per hour** of continuous shearing. However, variables may affect this completion rate, for example – sheep breed, class, temperament, condition, comb type, combing potential and staple length.
- Shearing safely and efficiently includes avoiding shearing faults such as second cuts, skin cuts, ridges and tassels or cuts to udder/teats.

Work Details: Challenge Test		
Date:	Learner:	Location:
Type of sheep:		
Type of shears/combs:		
Hazard ID completed and sighted:	Yes	No

The learner must demonstrate competence in each of the following during this task.

Tick each assessment criteria to confirm competent practice.

Challenge Test 1			
LO	Assessment criteria	✓	✗
LO 3 Select and assemble equipment appropriate to the job requirements	a. Identified and selected appropriate combs for the job requirements.		
	b. Inspected combs and manually rectified any comb faults ☐ Blunt or damaged combs ☐ Improperly aligned combs ☐ Burred or rough edges ☐ Incorrect tension settings		
	c. Set lead and throw and tension settings and		
	lubricated the handpiece.		
	d. Checked the handpiece to ensure it meets safety requirements.		

	e. Lubricated down-tube components in preparation for shearing.		
LO 4 Catch sheep for shearing efficiently and safely.	a. Approached and caught sheep safely and efficiently.		
	b. Moved sheep safely to the stand and presented for shearing.		
LO5 Shear crossbred sheep.	a. Handled sheep during shearing safely and efficiently (i.e.) no rough handling		
	b. Applied sequence and pattern to shear sheep without injury to self or sheep.		
	c. Maintained shearing output and quality that meets minimum industry requirements of 20 sheep per hour		

If the opportunity arises during the Challenge Test, the following learning outcome may also be assessed. If no natural-occurring opportunity arises, choose another evidence type.

Challenge Test 2			
LO 6 Identify wool contaminants, and damaged and injured sheep	a. Identified and reported wool contaminants		
	b. Marked any damaged or injured sheep		

Additional Assessor comments

Evidence Type 3: Scenarios

Note: The RPL Assessor could use relevant pictures/cards and a voice to text app to record the learner's answers and then to transfer to a word document as evidence.

Below are two examples of the pictures/cards that could be used. The scenario cards are not complete.

Scenario

“You are on a shearing gang and having a quick briefing with the shed manager. The manager reminds everyone to check for wool contaminants, sheep injuries and diseases before shearing. To refresh your memory of what these look like, he has bought in some pictures. He wants to know what team members will do when they see these issues.”

1. Look at the pictures of the wool samples below.
 - a. For at least **two (2)** of the pictures, name the contaminant in the wool sample.
 - b. What are the requirements for you to follow to report these contaminants if you found them?

Wool sample		Example answers (TBC with SME)
1.	 <i>AI generated image: Chat GPT</i>	a. Urine-stained wool. b. Tell the shed manager
2.	Fly strike on wool – pic not yet added	Example answers not yet added
3.	Black wool – pic not yet added	Example answers not yet added
4.	Wire – pic not yet added	Example answers not yet added
5.	Lambs' purses– pic not yet added	Example answers not yet added

2. Look at the pictures of damaged or injured sheep below.

- a. For at least **two (2)** pictures, name the injury or damage.
- b. For each sheep, where you would mark the sheep as damaged or injured?

Damaged or injured sheep		Example answers (TBC with SME)
1.	 <i>AI generated image: Chat GPT</i>	a. <i>Skin cut</i> b. <i>Example answer to be added</i>
2.	Signs of disease – pic not yet added	<i>Example answers not yet added</i>
3.	Existing injury– pic not yet added	<i>Example answers not yet added</i>
4.	Second cuts– pic not yet added	<i>Example answers not yet added</i>
5.	Ridges and tassels– pic not yet added	<i>Example answers not yet added</i>
6.	Cut udder/teats– pic not yet added	<i>Example answers not yet added</i>

Evidence Type 4: Third Party Report

Note: Usually, the person completing this report will be a supervisor or employer, but in some cases, it might be someone not employed at the same workplace, e.g. an accountant reporting on the learner's financial skills.

The role of the person completing a Third-Party Report:

Your main responsibility is to verify that the learner can demonstrate the knowledge or skills outlined in the report. To complete this report, you must have worked closely with the learner within the past 12 months.

The learner's demonstration of knowledge and skills must meet health and safety requirements and your workplace procedures. If you are confident the learner has demonstrated each of the required knowledge and skills below repeatedly (e.g. at least 5 times?) within the last 12 months (e.g. under limited supervision?), tick 'Yes' for the question. If you have not observed the learner demonstrating the knowledge and skills repeatedly, tick 'No for the question'. Note, your answers will NOT be shared with the learner.

As the person completing a Third-Party report, you should:

- answer all questions in the Third-Party Report honestly
- enter additional comments to add clarity or context to your responses, only where relevant
- complete your contact details below and sign the signature box
- return the completed Third Party Report to the RPL Assessor
- be prepared to verify that it was you who completed and signed the form.

The role of the RPL Assessor:

- The responsibility of an RPL Assessor is to decide if the learner has achieved the knowledge and skills required for this micro-credential. To do this, the RPL Assessor will use a variety of evidence (e.g. Third-Party reports, professional discussions, scenarios, challenge tests, evidence portfolios).

Third Party Report**Name of Learner:****Date:**

Does the Learner:			Yes	No
Set up for shearing	1	a) identify and report (common) work hazards?		
		b) identify and report any (other) hazards which may impact on the safe set up and operation of the woolshed?		
	2	a) work within a team to set up the woolshed for use?		
		b) demonstrate safe work practices?		
		c) maintain awareness of potential hazards?		
		a) identify (any) maintenance required to make sure the woolshed is set up and operating safely?		
		b) report (any) maintenance required?		
	3	a) identify and select appropriate combs for the job (sheep breed?) requirements?		
		b) inspect combs?		
		c) manually rectify (fix?) comb faults?		
		d) set lead and throw and tension settings?		
		e) lubricate (grease?) the handpiece?		
		f) check the handpiece to ensure that it meets safety requirements?		
		g) lubricate (grease?) down-tube components in preparation for shearing?		
Catch and handle sheep	4	a) approach and catch sheep safely and efficiently?		
		b) move sheep safely to the stand?		
		c) present sheep for shearing?		

Machine shear sheep	5	a) handle sheep safely and efficiently during shearing?		
		b) apply sequence and pattern to shear sheep without injury to themselves or sheep?		
		c) maintain shearing output and quality that meets minimum industry requirements (i.e. 20 sheep per hour of continuous shearing).		
Identify any issues	6	a) identify and report wool contaminants? (e.g.)		
		b) mark damaged or injured sheep?		

Additional questions

How many sheep does the learner typically shear per hour of continuous shearing?

Have you ever had concerns about the learner's rough handling of animals? If yes, describe what happened and the outcome.

Additional comments

Name of person completing this Third-Party Report:

Current workplace:

Qualifications or role and years of experience:

Length of time working with learner:

Address:

Contact phone daytime:

Email:

Evidence Type 5: Professional discussion

Note: The RPL Assessor could use a voice to text app to record the learner's answers and then to transfer to a Word document as evidence.

The learner must correctly answer each of the questions below to demonstrate their understanding of sheep shearing.

Number	Questions and example answers (TBC with SME)
1	How would you report any hazards in this workplace? LO1 (a)
	<i>Responses will vary but must relate to the procedures of the workplace. The learner may give an example to show they understand who to report a hazard to and the importance of doing so promptly.</i>
2	Describe two (2) safe working practices you and the team must be aware of when setting up the woolshed for a day of shearing LO2 (a)
	<i>Responses will vary but must relate to the context of the workplace. For example:</i> <i>Maintain clear walkways and workspaces.</i> <i>Check and secure all equipment to avoid malfunctions or tripping hazards</i>
3	Describe two (2) basic maintenance tasks for shearing equipment when you set up the woolshed for a day of shearing. LO2 (b)
	<i>Responses will vary but must relate to the context of the workplace. For example:</i> <i>Check combs and cutters and sharpen if needed</i> <i>Inspect, lubricate and test handpieces.</i>
4	Identify three (3) things you need to consider when you select combs for shearing? LO3 (a)
	<i>Responses will vary and may include the following considerations:</i> <i>Wool type and condition – Match comb to fleece type (e.g. fine, crossbred) and sheep condition to ensure clean, efficient shearing.</i> <i>Sheep breed and shearing history – Consider wool length, density, and previous shearing to avoid skin cuts and maximise fleece quality.</i>

	<i>Environmental and shed conditions – Adjust comb choice for weather, sheep dryness, and gear performance to maintain safety and wool integrity</i>
5	Give one (1) example of a safety requirement when checking your handpiece. LO3 (d) <i>Responses will vary but demonstrates understanding of handpiece safety.</i> <i>For example: Check tension, cord, and insulation – Ensure no frayed wires, loose parts, or overheating to prevent injury or equipment failure</i>
6	Keeping yourself and the sheep safe is important. Give two (2) examples of what you might need to consider when you are approaching, catching and moving sheep safely. LO4 (a & b) <i>Responses will vary, for example:</i> <i>Approach calmly and quietly to avoid startling the sheep</i> <i>Use proper catching techniques to prevent strain to your body and the animal.</i>
7	Identify two (2) ways you must handle sheep during shearing to keep them safe? LO5 (a) <i>Responses will vary, for example:</i> <i>Maintain firm but gentle control to avoid stress or injury.</i> <i>Support the sheep's body properly to prevent strain or slipping during shearing.</i>
8	What are two (2) wool contaminants you would need to report? LO6 (a) <i>Contaminants could include black wool, wire, lamb's purses and flystrike.</i>
9	How do you report any wool contaminants you find during your work? LO6 (a) <i>Responses will vary but must relate to the procedures of the workplace.</i> <i>The learner may give an example to show they understand who to notify if they find evidence of wool contamination and the importance of doing so promptly.</i>
10	What are you looking for when you mark any damaged or injured sheep? LO 6 (b) <i>Or</i>

	How would you mark damaged or injured sheep in this workplace? LO 6 (b)
	<i>Examples of damage or injury to sheep may include:</i> <i>Signs of disease</i> <i>Existing injury</i> <i>Shearing-related injury</i>

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- RippleEd. (2025, May 20). Recognising prior learning (RPL) in New Zealand’s food & fibre industry: Current state & good practices [Milestone report]. Food & Fibre Centre of Vocational Excellence. <https://foodandfibrecove.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/RPL-Current-State-Good-Practices.pdf>