



Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Student Portfolio of Evidence Guide

Summary

1. Mature student entry is no longer automatic on the basis of age alone. Applications should include work/life-learning evidence, formal RPL assessment, and proof of English/Mathematics readiness.
2. Evidence should be mapped to programme or module learning outcomes if exemption is requested.
3. English and Mathematics testing should be framed as readiness assessments.

Part A. Student guide: how to prepare a Portfolio of Evidence (PoE)

1. What is a Portfolio of Evidence?

A Portfolio of Evidence is an organised collection of documents and examples that shows what you already know and can do. Its purpose is not to tell your life story. Its purpose is to prove, with evidence, that your prior learning meets the entry requirements of a programme or the learning outcomes of specific modules.

Remember: RPL recognises demonstrated learning and competence. Experience by itself is not enough unless you can show what you learned from it and provide evidence.

2. What evidence should students include?

- A brief cover page and table of contents.
- A current curriculum vitae (CV).
- A short personal statement explaining why you are applying through RPL and what programme or module(s) you want access to.
- Certified identity document or passport copy, where required.
- Academic records, transcripts, certificates, short-course records, or seminar/workshop certificates.
- Workplace evidence such as job descriptions, letters from employers, performance appraisals, reports, projects, presentations, designs, products, publications, case logs, or portfolios.
- Professional registrations, memberships, licences, or awards, where relevant.
- Community, voluntary, leadership, entrepreneurial, or other non-formal learning evidence, where relevant.
- References or attestations from supervisors, mentors, clients, or community leaders.
- A mapping section that links each piece of evidence to the relevant learning outcomes or admission requirements.

3. What makes evidence strong?

Criterion	What it means	Good examples
Authentic	The evidence really belongs to you and can be verified.	Signed employer letter; named report; certificate; dated project output.
Current	The evidence is recent enough to show that your knowledge or skill is still usable.	Recent work samples or updated proof of practice.
Relevant	The evidence matches the programme or module outcomes.	A management report for a business module; a teaching file for an education module.
Sufficient	There is enough evidence to make a sound judgement.	Several pieces of evidence from different sources, not only one certificate.

4. Recommended PoE structure for students

1. Section 1: Applicant details and contact information
2. Section 2: Programme or module(s) applied for
3. Section 3: Personal statement / motivation
4. Section 4: CV / résumé
5. Section 5: Formal academic evidence
6. Section 6: Non-formal and informal learning evidence
7. Section 7: Work experience evidence
8. Section 8: Reference letters / attestations
9. Section 9: Evidence matrix (how each item matches learning outcomes)
10. Section 10: Applicant declaration confirming that the portfolio is truthful and complete

5. Sample evidence matrix

Evidence item	What this shows	Related learning outcome / entry requirement	How it can be verified
Employer letter	Confirms 6 years of supervisory work	Leadership / communication / workplace experience	Employer contact details and signature
Project report	Shows analysis, writing, and problem-solving	Programme entry-level academic readiness	Named report with date

Short-course certificate	Shows recent professional learning	Relevant subject knowledge	Certificate number and provider
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6. Common mistakes students should avoid

- Submitting many documents without explaining why they matter.
- Sending evidence that cannot be verified.
- Submitting old evidence only, where recency matters.
- Giving experience descriptions without examples, products, or confirmation letters.
- Failing to match evidence to learning outcomes.
- Submitting incomplete or badly organised portfolios.

7. Student checklist before submission

- ☐ I have included a contents page.
- ☐ I have clearly labelled all documents.
- ☐ I have explained how each item supports my application.
- ☐ My strongest evidence is easy to find.
- ☐ My documents are legible and, where required, certified.
- ☐ My references or attestations include contact details.
- ☐ I have signed the declaration.

Part B. Clarification note on mature student entry via RPL

Mature students (age 30 years and older) are not granted automatic admission based only on age. Age may open the door to the RPL route, but admission should still depend on evidence of prior learning, the required minimum experience, the outcome of assessment, and proof of English/Mathematics readiness.

Question	Recommended answer	Note
Is age enough on its own?	No.	Age only determines possible eligibility for the mature-entry route.
What minimum age should be used?	30 years	This is a requirement from NAQAA.
Is work experience required?	Not always, prior learning may be sufficient.	Especially in the absence of prior learning, experience should be evidenced and should be relevant where possible.
Must the applicant still be assessed?	Yes. The type of assessment will be dependent on the case.	Assessment may include PoE review, interview, challenge tasks, and readiness tests.

Can admission be conditional?	Yes.	Use bridging, extended support, or foundation conditions where needed.
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Overview

Mature student entry through RPL is an alternative access route for applicants who do not meet the standard academic admission requirements. Meeting the age threshold does not guarantee admission. Applicants must also meet the institution's minimum experience requirements, submit a Portfolio of Evidence, complete any required assessments or interviews, and demonstrate sufficient English and Mathematics readiness for successful study.