Coaching Development Programme for Ireland

NGB Guidelines

Recognition of Prior Learning

14th November 2023

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1. Purpose

This policy sets out requirements for National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and coaches seeking to formally recognise prior learning to gain a coaching qualification under the Coaching Development Programme for Ireland (CDPI).

2. RPL and RPA

The policy refers to Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Recognition of Prior Award (RPA). RPL is the formal recognition of prior learning or experience gained by an individual for the purpose of achieving a formal qualification. Recognition of Prior Award (RPA) is the recognition of a formal award for the purpose of achieving another formal qualification. In simple terms, RPL primarily relates to the learner and RPA relates to an award. RPL recognises all types of learning a learner may have achieved, be it from formal accredited programmes, non-formal learning or learning acquired through day-to-day activities (which may be unplanned and unintentional). RPA is limited to learning acquired from formal accredited programmes and does not include any other type of learning an individual may have.

RPA is most often used by an organisation (such as an NGB) where there are several learners presenting with the same award (i.e. a common formal award) who want to get the equivalent Irish award. For example, coaches with a common qualification from a different jurisdiction (such as a UK coaching qualification) who want to get a formal coaching qualification under the Coaching Development Programme for Ireland. Rather than the NGB dealing with multiple individual RPL applications, the NGB could chose to use RPA to recognise common awards. This reduces the number of individual applications the NGB must process. When a learner presents with the common award, the NGB would know what the learner has/hasn't covered as they have mapped the common award with the equivalent Irish award as part of the RPA process. The NGB could then offer the learner a modified route to gain the equivalent Irish award. It is important to note however that RPA does not recognise any additional learning the learner may have achieved outside of the award. If a learner would like to get this additional learning recognised, they would have to apply for RPL.

3. Different Types of Prior Learning

There are different types of prior learning that need to be considered when looking at RPL and RPA. Prior learning can be;

a) Prior formal learning - Learning which has previously been formally accredited e.g. coach qualification from another NGB or from another jurisdiction
b) Non-formal learning - Learning acquired through planned activities but does not result in formal certification
c) Informal – Learning acquired through day-to-day activities which may be unplanned and unintentional

RPA is limited to learning acquired from formal accredited programmes but RPL can include all the different types of learning an individual may have – formal, non-formal and informal.

In relation to the Coaching Development Programme for Ireland (CDPI), both RPL and RPA can be used by coaches and players/athletes for the following purposes:

1. Non-standard entry to a NGB coach programme
2. Exemption from modules/elements of a NGB coach programme
3. Exemption from the entire NGB coach programme

4. RPL and RPA Scenarios

Potential applicants for RPL or RPA could include (but are not limited to) the following:

1. Coaches[1] with qualifications from another country or jurisdiction (e.g. UK coach award) who want to get a NGB award that is currently included on the CDPI.
2. Coaches with qualifications from another country or jurisdiction who DO NOT want a CDPI award but want to get their existing award accepted for use by the relevant NGB on the island of Ireland.
3. Coaches with qualifications from another country or jurisdiction who want to get a NGB award but their existing award is considered to be higher than the NGB's highest CDPI award.
4. Coaches with a CDPI qualification who want to gain another CDPI award in a different sport or discipline. For example, a coach with a Canoeing Ireland Level 2 Kayak instructor award who wants to gain a CDPI award in a different sport such as an Irish Sailing Dinghy Instructor award or who wants to get a CDPI award in a different discipline within the same NGB, such as a Canoeing Ireland Open Canoe instructor award.
5. Coaches with significant coaching experience but no formal coaching qualifications who want to get an NGB coach award that is currently included on the CDPI.
6. High performance players/athletes, with limited or no coaching experience or formal coach education, who want to get an NGB coach award that is currently included on the CDPI.

Sport Ireland Coaching request that NGBs consider these different types of scenarios when identifying and documenting their RPL and RPA process. Diagram 1 highlights some important questions that should be considered to help identify the most appropriate route for dealing with RPL and RPA applications.

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[1] In this document, the term "coach" is used in the widest sense to include coaches, instructors and leaders working with participants in competitive and non-competitive sport, physical activity and outdoor recreation.

Diagram 1: How to Deal with RPL and RPA Applications
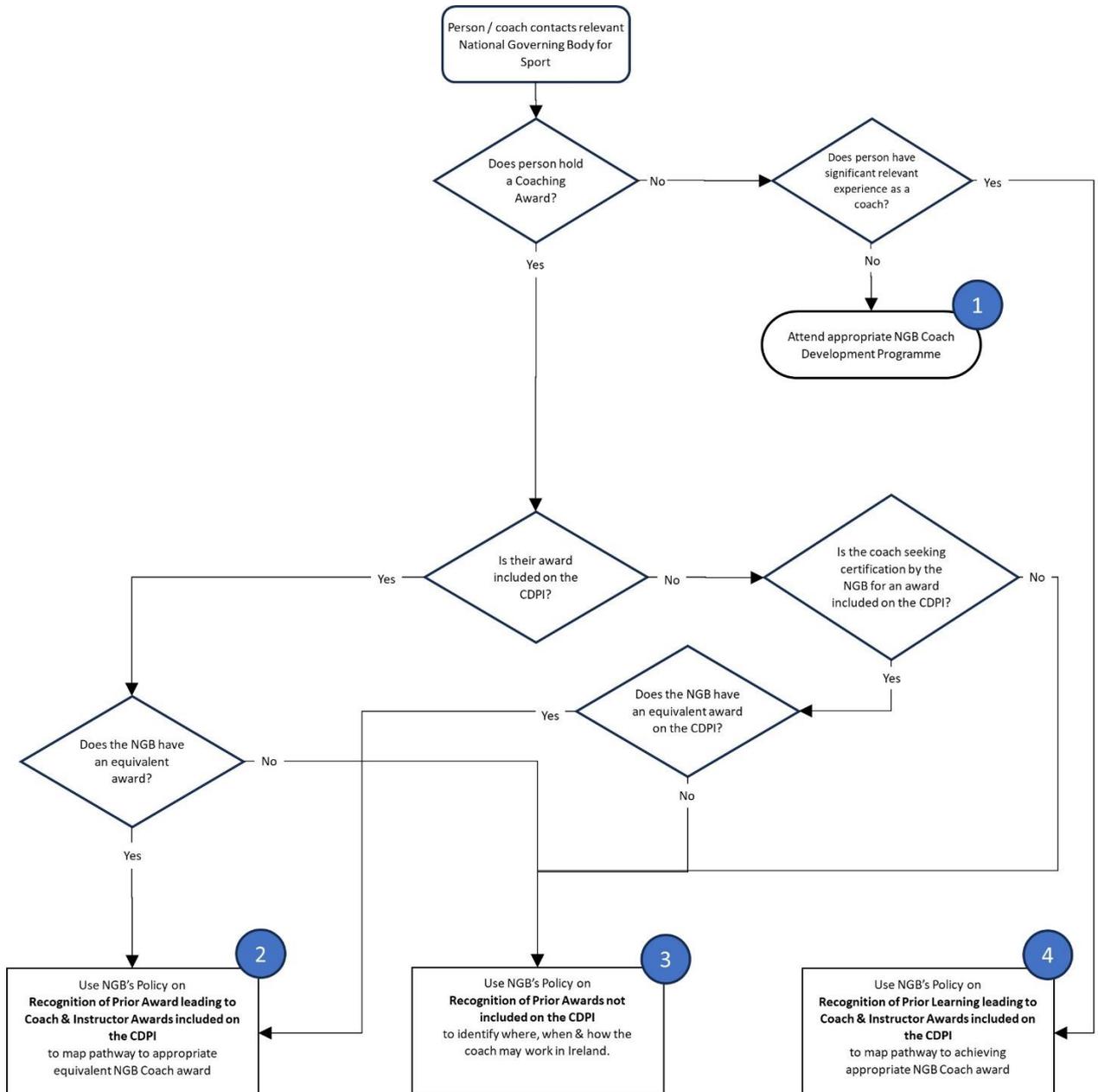
 In some situations, the applicant may be looking for an NGB coach award included on the Coach Development Programme for Ireland (Option 2) whereas in other situations the coach may not want a CDPI award but still want to coach in Ireland (Option 3). The NGB policy on RPL and RPA needs to cater for these different types of situations.

Here are some examples of different types of RPL and RPA scenarios and how they could be dealt with.

	Scenario	Solution
a)	Pierre is a French sailing instructor who wants to teach sailing in Ireland for a short period of time (e.g. summer months) – he has no intention of staying permanently in Ireland.	Option 3: Pierre applies to Irish Sailing for *Recognition of Prior Awards not included on the CDPI.* Irish Sailing maps Pierre's French Instructor award(s) against Irish Sailing's Instructor awards to identify: • What role he can play in sailing clubs and centres affiliated to Irish Sailing • What additional requirements he may need to fulfil e.g. Garda Vetting, Safeguarding • What induction/orientation training he should receive from the organisation deploying him
b)	Ana is a Portuguese cycling coach with a sports coaching degree in cycling. She has moved to Ireland permanently and wants to coach in a Cycling Ireland affiliated club	Option 3: Ana applies to Cycling Ireland for *Recognition of Prior Awards not included on the CDPI.* Cycling Ireland map Ana's award and finds that they do not have an award at an equivalent level on the CDPI. Cycling Ireland need to decide: • What role Ana can play in Cycling Ireland clubs • What additional requirements she may need to fulfil e.g. Garda Vetting, Safeguarding • What induction/orientation training she should receive from the organisation deploying her
c)	Margaret's local soccer club has said she needs an FAI coach award in order to continue coaching with them. Margaret has 20 years coaching experience in her club since she stopped playing but has no formal coaching qualification.	Option 4: Margaret can use her significant experience as a coach to apply for *Recognition of Prior Learning leading to Coach & Instructor Awards included on the CDPI.* In doing so the FAI will look at her experience and decide: • What gaps exists and identify a pathway to achieving an identified FAI coach award. • To offer her direct entry into a higher-level coach programme.
d)	Paul is a high performance athlete, with limited coaching experience who wants to get an Athletics Ireland coach award	Option 1: As Paul has limited coaching experience and no coach award, Athletics Ireland could ask Paul to complete an Athletics Ireland coach programme in order to gain a coach award

e)	Terry has a Canoeing Ireland Level 2 Kayak instructor award and now also wants to become a Dinghy Sailing Instructor with Irish Sailing	Option 2: As Terry's Canoeing Ireland award is at a similar level on the CDPI to the Irish Sailing award, Terry could apply to Irish Sailing for *Recognition of Prior Award Leading to Coach & instructor Awards included on the CDPI.* Irish Sailing could: • Identify the differences between the Canoeing Ireland award and the equivalent Irish Sailing award • Provide Terry with a pathway to demonstrate that he meets the requirements for the Sailing Instructor award. This might be taking part in modules within a Sailing Instructor course or a standalone assessment of his sailing and instructional skills
f)	Holly is an experienced Irish archer and coach. While travelling abroad she completed a World Archery Level 3 award and now wants to use it to coach in Ireland (where the highest level coaching award in the NGB is Level 1)	Option 3 – Holly applies to Archery Ireland for to *Recognition of Prior Awards not included on the CDPI. Ar*chery Ireland could: • Examine the World Archery award to identify what role Holly could play in archery clubs or centres affiliated to Archery Ireland • Identify what additional requirements she may need to fulfil e.g. Garda Vetting, Safeguarding • Identify what induction/orientation training she should receive from the organisation deploying her.

5. Procedure for RPL and RPA

Sport Ireland Coaching requests that NGBs identify and document their policy for dealing with RPL and RPA applications. The policy should be agreed with Sport Ireland Coaching **before** processing any applications[2].

An important part of the process is to set up a **RPL Coaching Panel**. This could be made up of the NGB Head of Coaching/Coaching Director (if applicable), NGB Coach Development Officer and 1-2 Coach Developers/Coach Developer Assessors. The aim of the Panel is to:

i) Identify and agree the NGB's policy and procedures for dealing with applications for RPL and RPA.

ii) Evaluate individual applications for RPL and RPA.

iii) Decide on the outcome of each RPL and RPA application.

The application process for RPL and RPA should include a formal application document (see Appendix for sample application form) that applicants can complete identifying the learning for which they are seeking recognition and the purpose for which the learning is to be recognised e.g. to meet the learning outcomes of the NGB Level 1 coach award. Guidelines should be provided for applicants on how to supply sufficient evidence of prior learning achieved and for showing how they meet the learning outcomes of the NGB award for which they are applying (Section 6 Evidence of Prior Learning).

The RPL and RPA process will involve reviewing applicant's prior learning against the learning outcomes of the NGB award sought. This can involve the following:

- Mapping the learning outcomes of the applicant's formal award against the relevant NGB award to determine whether (and to what extent) the applicant's prior learning meets the intended learning outcomes of the NGB award. This step applies when the prior learning to be recognised is formal[3]
- Considering the appropriateness of the evidence of the learning outcomes
- Determining the equivalence of the learning gained with the award level
- Identifying the currency, reliability and validity of the evidence gained

The NGB RPL Coaching Panel will identify and agree any exemptions to be granted and the course of action the applicant will need to take to be recognised as a coach by the NGB. If the applicant is going to be exempt from certain elements of a CDPI coach award, this would need to be

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[2] **NOTE:** The RPL and RPA process for **Coach Developer** and **Instructor Developer** awards and associated modules is managed directly by Sport Ireland Coaching. Further information on this can be found on the Sport Ireland Coaching website Sport Ireland Coaching | Sport Ireland

[3] Examples of formal learning could include a coach qualification from another NGB or another jurisdiction or a formal qualification in an associated field.

communicated and agreed by Sport Ireland Coaching before communicating with the applicant. If the application cannot be processed, the NGB must provide clear information to the applicant outlining why it could not be processed.

6. Evidence of Prior Learning

Applicants need to provide evidence of their prior learning. This is a very important part of the application and NGBs should consider how appropriate information and support could be provided to applicants in this area. Types of evidence of prior learning that could be provided by applicants include:

a. Experiential log/reflective account of the experience and learning gained through the experience
b. Statement detailing the learning acquired and details/evidence of relevant activities attended e.g. training/workshops
c. Statements from other coaches, employers, training providers etc. in support of the evidence provided
d. Provision of certificates, transcripts and programme documents (if relevant)
e. Personal supporting statement identifying the learning gained as opposed to the experience gained.

NGBs should also identify how records and documentation related to the RPL and RPA process are to be stored securely by the NGB and how they may be made available to Sport Ireland.

7. Principles for RPL and RPA

The following principles should be adhered to when recognising learners' prior learning to achieve CDPI coaching awards:

a) RPL and RPA processes in the NGB support and promote lifelong learning by coaches.

b) RPL and RPA processes in the NGB are documented, accessible, transparent, fair and consistent.

c) All applications are assessed against the learning outcomes for the relevant NGB award.

d) Learners (e.g. coaches, players/athletes) provide appropriate evidence that they have attained the learning outcomes identified.

e) NGBs gather and keep records of each application for RPL or RPA – as they would for any coach programme they run.

f) When assessing a claim for prior learning, NGBs must consider the appropriateness of the evidence of the learning outcomes, equivalence of the award level of the learning gained and the currency, reliability and validity of the evidence provided

8. Possible Outcomes

There are many possible outcomes from processing RPL and RPA applications. These can include:

a) The applicant is offered non-standard entry to a NGB coach programme (e.g. exempt from some or all of the entry requirements of the programme)

b) The applicant is exempt from certain modules/elements of the NGB coach programme. NOTE: any exemptions must be clearly identified and documented

c) The applicant is exempt from the programme but must complete the assessments

d) The applicant is awarded the NGB coach award without any exemptions.

e) The applicant is eligible to coach in NGB affiliated clubs/centres under specific conditions

9. Appeals Process

Applicants should have the right to appeal a decision on a RPL/RPA application. The NGB must have in place an appropriate and accessible Appeals Policy to deal with appeals in this area. This should be communicated to applicants.

Issued / Revisions

Issued:- 15-08-2023
Revised:- 31-10-2023

Appendix: Possible Template for RPL Application Form

This is a template NGBs can use for dealing with applications for Recognition of Prior Learning. This template is an example of what the application form could look like. The NGB is welcome to amend as needed.

Section 1: Contact Details

Name	
Date of Birth	
Email	
Phone	
Gender	
Name of Programme/Award the Learner is Seeking	*(Please insert the name of the NGB award you are looking for exemptions from)*

Section 2: Prior Learning

What learning are you seeking recognition for? This section should focus on learning that is <u>relevant</u> to this area NOT an exhaustive list of all learning. Use the table below to identify the learning relevant to this area and if the learning was formal, non-formal or informal[4]. Further detail on the learning can be provided in Section 3.

Learning	Date (From – To)	Formal/Non-Formal/Informal *(please identify)*

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[4] Formal learning is learning which has previously been formally accredited within an education system. Non-formal learning is learning acquired through planned activities but does not result in formal certification. Informal learning is learning acquired through day-to-day activities which may be unplanned and unintentional.

What purpose do you wish the learning to be recognised for (please tick which applies)?

Non-standard entry to the programme	
Exemption from modules/elements of the programme	

Section 3: Details of Prior Learning

Provide a brief description of the prior learning you are seeking recognition. For example, provide details of the relevant activities attended, learning gained etc. Focus on the learning gained rather than the experience. If possible, compare the learning achieved to the learning outcomes for the relevant programme.

Section 4: Evidence/Supporting Documentation

You are responsible for supplying <u>sufficient</u> evidence of the prior learning achieved. Evidence of learning may be demonstrated through a portfolio that includes, amongst other things,

     a. *Provision of certificates, transcripts and programme documents*
     b. *Details/evidence of relevant activities attended e.g. non-accredited training/workshops*
     c. *Reflective accounts of the experience and learning gained*
     d. *Statements from employers, NGBs, training providers etc.*
     e. *Personal supporting statement*

List the evidence included in your portfolio and include it with your application. List each separate document and other material you are submitting to substantiate this claim

	List of Evidence Submitted	**Description** *(Provide a brief description of how this evidence meets the needs of the programme/award you looking for exemption from)*
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

Add as many rows as needed

Section 5: Signatures

Applicant Signature	
Date	
NGB/Organisation Signature	
Date	

For Office Use Only

Education & Training Quality Officer	
Programme Lead Officer/Coaching Officer	
Date Application Received	
Date Application Processed	
Result	