
Section 6

Justifying the Evidence

Key words / Concepts

Credit rated learning

You may have done courses which have already been assessed and which have received an academic credit rating i.e. a certificate or transcript which clearly identifies the credit points and credit levels of the learning. Such courses may be included in your RAL portfolio, providing they meet the criteria given.

This refers to the 'recognition' part of the title of this module - the 'Recognition and Accreditation of Learning', since TSD may be able to *recognise* the academic credit attached to these courses.

Key words: *Area of Learning*

Most individuals who make a claim for accreditation of prior learning wish to have experiential learning accredited i.e. learning which is acquired through work or other experiences. To make such a claim, you must define discrete fields, topics or themes of the experiential learning for which you are claiming credit.

Deciding on these 'areas', in which you already have learning, involves critically reviewing your experience and deciding on categories or groupings into which your learning falls. Each area of learning must be supported by evidence. It is in the 'areas of learning' part of your portfolio that you will actually be making your claim for academic credit.

This refers to the 'accreditation' part of the title of this module, since the University may be able to *accredit* learning gained from your experience.

How to present evidence

Evidence is never self-explanatory. How you intend your evidence to be understood must be explicit to the assessors. We suggest that you attach a short commentary to each piece of evidence explaining how it authenticates a particular area of your learning.

The evidence you use to support the learning for which you are claiming academic credit should be illustrative. Remember that quantity of evidence does not equate with quantity or quality of learning. As a rough guide, you might think of selecting between two and four substantial pieces of evidence for each area of learning.

It is often possible to find a piece of evidence that demonstrates several skills or that can be used in more than one area of learning. Be sure to cross-refer clearly in this case.



Example: the fire fighter from the previous example may choose “managing people” and “managing resources” as two areas of learning which will both use evidence from his fire fighting activity.

Evidence can also be effected by describing what you learnt and writing a short narrative illustrating the learning in practice. This is sometimes called a ‘case study’, ‘vignette’ or ‘cameo’.



EXERCISE - Supporting your Areas of Learning with Evidence

Purpose

- *To decide on the evidence you will use to support the learning you claim for in each of your areas of learning.*
- *To link each piece of evidence clearly to the appropriate area of learning.*

What you should do

1. Use the information given above to make a preliminary selection of evidence for each of your areas of learning. Be discriminating in your evidence; quantity does not always mean quality.
2. It is important to check this selection against the following criteria:
 - **Validity**
Evidence must be directly related to the learning claimed for in a particular area of learning. If you claim you have an ability or skill, your evidence is only valid if it illustrates that skill or ability.
 - **Authenticity**
It must be clear that evidence submitted originates from you, or refers specifically to you. One way is to ensure that each piece of evidence is signed and on appropriate headed paper.
 - **Currency**
Evidence should be recent, and dated if possible. Where you are claiming for prior learning, supplementary evidence may be necessary to show that you are still capable of achieving the same level of learning. Evidence more than five years old should only be included if you are able to demonstrate that the learning has been in use more recently and, if appropriate, has been updated.
 - **Sufficiency**
You must submit enough evidence to cover the range of the learning that you are claiming for in any particular area. You can use evidence for more than one area of learning if appropriate. e.g. a letter may support communications skills, organisational activities and administrative procedures
 - **Reliability**
You should be able to show that learning you claim for can be repeated, that the evidence provided from one instance could be repeated in another instance.
3. Put each piece of evidence into your portfolio, supported by the short commentary (as mentioned above). Each commentary should make clear how you intend the evidence to support your learning. It should also state which area of learning the evidence is illustrating. You will need to decide how to do this, for example, by using appendices. There is no right or wrong way of doing this.
4. As you write your area of learning, link it to the evidence

- If you are putting evidence into plastic inserts please do not place multiple sheets into one insert.
- When you have drafted your area of learning make your own assessment of it:

- Have you analysed your learning?
- Have you shown how your learning has grown and changed?
- Does your evidence show what you learned?
- How have you used the level and volume descriptors?

The format, content and assessment of your RAL portfolio and ongoing reflection upon your practice



At this stage you need to be absolutely clear about what your RAL portfolio must contain, how to lay it out, and how it will be assessed. It is also important to continue to reflect upon your learning diary in preparation for your reflective essay. (Section 7).

What you need to do now:

- Understand the necessary elements of a RAL portfolio.
- Read the explanatory notes on the format, content and assessment of your portfolio (you will need to refer back to these again when you begin to write up your portfolio).
- Annotate your CV with a description of your work based activities
- Work in the same way on your job description, tracking and reflecting upon your work based learning and competences across the two documents.



Log on to the VLE for further resources which will support you at this stage of the module and follow the links to PebblePad.

Content of the RAL portfolio

To submit a claim for credit at University of Wales Trinity Saint David the elements of your portfolio must be as follows:

- Standard cover page
- Standard first page
- Curriculum vitae
- Job description(s)
- Credit rated learning (if applicable) i.e. higher education level credits already gained
- Areas of learning
- Evidence

The seven elements of the portfolio shown above are not equal in importance, though each element is compulsory. It is the 'areas of learning' that are the most important part of your portfolio, since it is here that you actually make your claim for credit. If you have already completed courses which have been assessed at Higher Education level and are relevant to your study these may be recognised by us as 'credit rated learning.'

Format of the RAL portfolio

Your claim should be word processed. As a general guide, an A4 ring binder can contain an adequately sized complete portfolio. You may of course submit via PebblePad, e-mail or through Blackboard.

Please use the following headings to structure your portfolio.

Cover Page (in this order)

*Application for Recognition and Accreditation of Learning
Your full name and student number
Date of submission*

First Page

Write as follows:

Your work address/telephone number

I wish to apply to the University of Wales Trinity Saint David for accreditation of my prior learning in respect of: (either or both)

*Credit Rated Learning
(Give the titles of qualifications which you describe more fully later in your portfolio.)*

*Uncertificated Areas of Learning
(Give a list of the headings of the areas of learning which you describe more fully later in your portfolio)*

Declaration: I hereby testify that the information contained in this portfolio represents an accurate reflection of work I have undertaken.

Print your name and sign, with date.

Then: -

Curriculum Vitae
Job Description(s)
Credit Rated Learning
Areas of Learning
Evidence