

Frequently Asked Questions (2024 edition)

Table of Contents

1. **What RPL is and What it is Not**
2. **Eligibility and Application**
3. **Financial**
4. **Scheduling and Timing**
5. **Resources**
6. **Exam and Interview Process**
7. **RPL Benefit**
8. **Other**

Section 1: What RPL Is, and What It Is Not

What is RPL?

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process to assess and recognize skills and knowledge an individual has acquired through work and personal experiences.

What are the 3 steps to RPL?

RPL is:

1. an intake assessment of your application
2. A written exam
3. A situational interview

These three steps are used for candidates to demonstrate that they have achieved the skill and knowledge level required to be classified as a Level 2 ECE in Nova Scotia.

Those who have diplomas or degrees in ECE work have already proven their knowledge & skills with the exams & other assessments they did in college or university. Therefore, the RPL exam and interview are intended to prove you have the knowledge and skills that you learned on the job but have not yet been tested on.

Is RPL a diploma, degree, or academic credit?

RPL is not an academic credit or credential of any kind. It is a process to enable individuals to demonstrate they possess the necessary skills and knowledge to perform at a certain level in a profession.

Is RPL the same thing as a PLAR?

Yes, they are effectively the same thing. Each profession, industry, and educational institution set their own criteria and process for RPLs/PLARs.

Section 2: Eligibility & Application Questions

How do I know if I am eligible for RPL?

Please see the criteria on our website [here](#):

Am I required to take any courses?

No, you are not required to take any courses on ECE skills or knowledge. The purpose of RPL is to prove you already have the skill and knowledge as despite not having taken the courses that typically lead to a Level 2 classification.

Do I have to participate in the prep support program offered through Opportunity Place?

Possibly. The requirement to take the Opportunity Place workshops depends on your post-secondary education experience and whether you're applying for government funding.

The OP workshops are to teach you skills in exam writing and interviews. They do NOT contain information on ECE skills and knowledge that can help you pass the exam.

If you have no college diplomas or university degrees in any subject, you will be required to take the OP workshops in order to access the government funding for the RPL fees.

If you have a college diploma or university degree, you do not have to take the exam and interview *preparation* workshops because you *have already proven* that you have exam & interview capabilities. If you are waiving your eligibility to funding, you do not have to take the OP workshops.

Please Note: waiving your option to take the OP workshops may lower your chances of success in the exam and the interview.

I am not able to provide my past employer contact information. What should I do for this section of the application?

In cases where past employers are unreachable for any reason, a sworn *and notarized* statement of self-reported hours of work experience will be accepted.

Section 3: Financial Questions

Do I need to pay the full amount when I apply?

No. Participants choosing to apply for the RPL program will be charged fees at each stage of the process. For example: applicants will only be charged for the exam after they have been successful in the application process. Applicants will only be charged for the interview if they have been successful in the exam portion of the RPL program.

Why is there a cost?

RPL programs in any profession are normally fee-based with the price often based on the costs to the organization administering the program to deliver it. Costs to administer an RPL program include payment for marking and assessing tests and interview results, costs for exam and interview facilities, assessor payment and confidential storage of candidate records. During the pilot, these costs were paid by the Provincial Government as part of the project to develop the program.

Is there financial assistance to participate?

Yes. The Provincial Government will provide financial support and funding may be available each year. Please [email](#) us for details and to see if you're eligible.

Can I apply for reimbursement through the Continuing Education program administered by the Department of Education and early Childhood Education?

No. The RPL program is not an eligible program for reimbursement.

Can I apply for Student Loan to cover RPL fees?

No. RPL candidates are not students in a course, so RPL is not student load eligible.

Why is the RPL program so expensive?

The application, exam, & interview fees cover the costs required to deliver the RPL program, including assessment, administering the exam, and interviewer assessment expenses.

Are there any administrative fees?

The full details on the fee structure are available on the [website](#) . There are no additional fees beyond those listed.

Section 4: Scheduling & Time Questions

When are the exams and interviews scheduled?

We hold 3 exams sittings per year, one each in spring, summer, and fall. Please visit our website for the deadlines to apply for each sitting.

Interviews are scheduled after the written exam, but only for those who pass the exam. Interviews will be scheduled on a case-by-case basis. Typically, exams are scheduled on Saturdays and interviews on weekends or evenings.

How long are the exams & interviews?

Candidates have up to three hours to complete the exam and one and half hours to complete the interview. Preparation for the assessments will depend on your individual knowledge; however, it is recommended people allow sufficient time to review the resource materials.

Section 5: Resources Questions

What is the competency profile?

A: The Level 2 Early Childhood Educator Competency Profile describes the knowledge, skills and abilities identified as required to be able to perform at a Level 2 classification in Nova Scotia: The Competency Profile was created for the purposes of the project and will be updated and released on an on-going basis.

Section 6: Exam & Interview Process Questions

What is the exam format?

The exam is all multiple-choice questions.

What happens if I fail the exam or interview?

You have up to 3 chances to pass the exam and interview. If you fail the exam, you can attempt it again in the next session. You will receive a slightly different exam each time (see below for exam structure information). If you fail the interview you can reschedule in the next session as well.

Can I do the interview before the exam?

No. The written exam must be passed before the interview is scheduled.

How do we know the RPL exam candidates cannot cheat when writing, especially when three attempts are allowed?

The RPL exam is administered by a question bank database. There are hundreds of exam questions in each competency area in the database. This allows the database administrators to randomly select enough questions for each competency area to build multiple unique exams for each sitting. Therefore no one can memorize the questions on their first attempt in order to pass on the second or third attempts.

Also, we have multiple exam question sheets in each sitting. Candidates are seated in such a way that no one near them is writing from the same question sheet, therefore no one can pass by looking at someone else's answers.

How do we know the exam & interview is being graded fairly?

Exams are graded by the database administrators who are off site and work for an external company. The exams they get have a candidate ID number, so they do not know whose exam they are marking.

Section 7: RPL Benefit Questions

If I enroll in the RPL program, will my pay increase?

No. You must first successfully complete the RPL Program and be issued a Level 2 classification before you are eligible to be paid in accordance with the provincial [ECE Wage Scale](#).

I want to apply for a job that requires me to be working towards Level 2. Will being a candidate for RPL count for that even if I haven't done the exam/interview yet?

Possibly. It is up to individual employers if they will accept being in the RPL program, but not yet finished the process, as grounds for hiring.

If you are in this situation and have been accepted into the RPL Program, please email us at rpl@aecens.ca for a letter of acceptance proving you are in the program.

Section 8: Other Questions

I have a bachelor's degree that is not related to early childhood education. Can I apply for a Level 3 classification if I successfully complete the RPL program?

No. A Level 3 classification is only available to those who have completed a degree in early childhood education or a diploma in early childhood education and also have a bachelor's degree in any subject (defined in [Section 37 of the Early Learning and Child Care Act and Regulations](#)).

I have a diploma in Early Childhood Education from another jurisdiction. I am considered a Level 1 but feel I should be a Level 2. Will this this process help me get my Level 2?

Yes, if you meet the eligibility criteria and successfully complete the RPL Program you will be able to apply to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development for a Level 2 ECE Classification.

I have a Level 1 ECE certification, and I recently completed the Forest School Practitioners Course through the Child and Nature Alliance. Is this something that would count as "Continuing Education" when it comes to the RPL?

If you meet the eligibility criteria it could count.

I am officially able to teach a primary class and can officially work in a preschool that doesn't require me to hold the ECE degree, but I am not considered "qualified" to work in the pre-primary classrooms. How can I find out more information about this program and if it would benefit me in getting my classification?

A: The criteria and other details related to the RPL Program can be found in the program guide on our [website](#). You can also send us an [email](#) and inquire about your specific circumstances before applying to participate in the RPL Program.

When will applications be accepted?

A: Applications are accepted on a continuous basis. There is no application deadline.

When are Level 2 classifications given out?

A: Upon successful completion of the RPL Program you will receive documentation stating that you have successfully completed the ECE RPL Program, and you can then apply to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to receive a Level 2 Classification.



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I currently have a Level 1 Classification; will my previous experience be acknowledged on the new ECE Salary Scale once I complete the ECE RPL Program successfully?

A: Yes, if you have a Level 1 classification and are upgrading using the RPL Program once you receive your new classification Level 2 you will move up to a Level 2 on the salary scale with your previous experience because you were on the wage scale as a Level 1.

I currently have an Entry Level Classification; will my previous experience be acknowledged on the new ECE Salary Scale once I complete the RPL Program successfully?

A: No, if you have an Entry Level classification and complete the RPL Program successfully, once you receive your Level 2 classification you will be placed on the ECE Salary Scale at Level 2 step 1.

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