

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Annual Report June 2020



Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Annual Report 2020

RPL Annual Report

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process that involves the identification, documentation, assessment and recognition of formal, (specifically transfer credit), informal and non-formal learning acquired through education, work and life experience.

Red River College (RRC) evaluates and grants credit to students for qualifying previous formal, informal and non-formal learning that is equivalent to College courses or programs. Recognized prior learning is applied toward the requirements of College programs.

This report describes the assessment and recognition of **formal, informal and non-formal** learning applicable to College courses and programs in the 2018-2019 academic year. Updates on RPL Advising, RPL resource development and RPL training have also been included.

1. RPL Practices and Course Credits in College Programs

RRC's prior learning assessment processes follow the nine Guiding Principles for Quality RPL Practice in Canada (CAPLA). Successful RPL results in course credit awards for students in both full-time and part-time College programs. Previously completed formal learning, as well as informal and non-formal learning are assessed against learning outcomes in College programs.

During the past five years (2014-2019), RPL assessments for informal and non-formal learning were completed for **1960** students and **3660** courses. From 2014-2019, **7041** transfer of credits for formal post-secondary learning were awarded.

1.1 Recognition of Formal Learning

The College assesses and recognizes **formal transfer credits** from recognized post-secondary institutions in Manitoba, Canada and internationally. In 2018-2019, there were **1193 transfer credits** awarded in both full and part-time RRC programs. The majority of these transfer credits at 59.7% were from post secondary institutions in Manitoba.

RRC's International Credential and Transfer Credit Officer (ICTCO) assesses and recognizes formal learning for program admission and in 2018-2019 **181** international credential assessments were completed for *admission* into College programs.

1.2 Recognition of Informal and Non-formal Learning

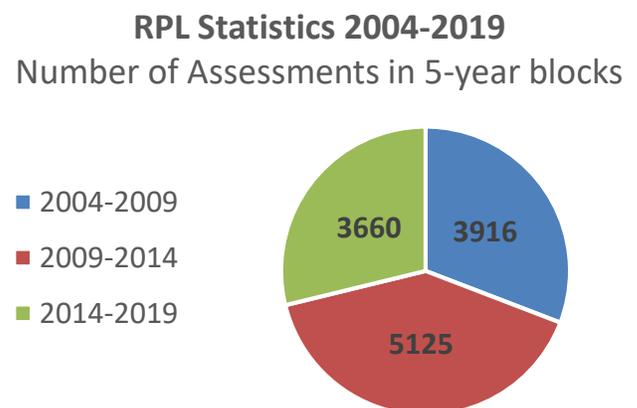
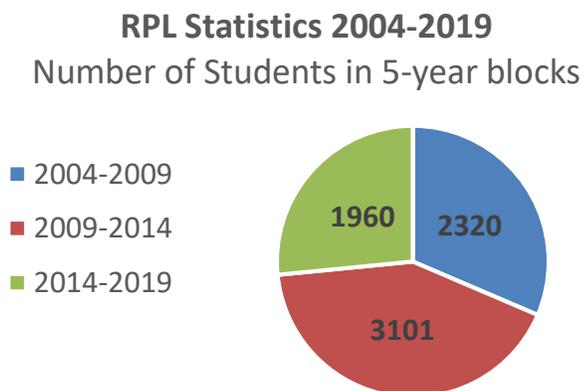
A variety of challenge processes are used at the College to assess and recognize **informal and non-formal learning**. Challenge processes include exams, tests, projects, assignments, interviews and skill demonstrations as well as portfolio/evidence collections. Non-formal learning gained through workplace and organizational training is reviewed to determine equivalency with College courses and programs.

Recognition of **formal learning** (transfer credit) is included only when the assessment of post-secondary transcripts is supplemented by additional validation or evidence of continued competency. This process is recorded as a combination of RPL processes (i.e. transcript plus interview, portfolio evidence collection, skill demonstration).

During the past 26 years, over **10,328** students completed RPL assessments for **18,276** courses. Students successfully achieved course credit in over 90% of the RPL assessments. **Please see Appendix 1: 26 Years of RPL Activity (1993-2019) - Number of RPL Course Assessments and Students.**

RPL Statistics – A 15-Year Review (2004-2019)

The charts below show the RPL statistics from 2004-2019 and include both the number of students who participated in RPL processes to prove prior informal and non-formal learning and the number of course assessments awarded over the past 15 years.



RPL Statistics – A 5-Year Review (2014-2019)

The chart below provides the number of students who participated in RPL processes and the number of RPL course assessments awarded over the past five years.

These statistics do not include transfer credit, program admission or course exemption.

Year	RPL Course Assessments	RPL Students
2014 – 15	944	564
2015 – 16	575	380
2016 – 17	848	408
2017 – 18	497	321
2018 – 19	796	287
Total – 5 years	3660	1960

RPL in College Programs (July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019)

Appendix 2 – RPL Statistics for Formal, Informal and Non-formal Learning (July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019) provides a summary of the RPL activity for the past academic year.

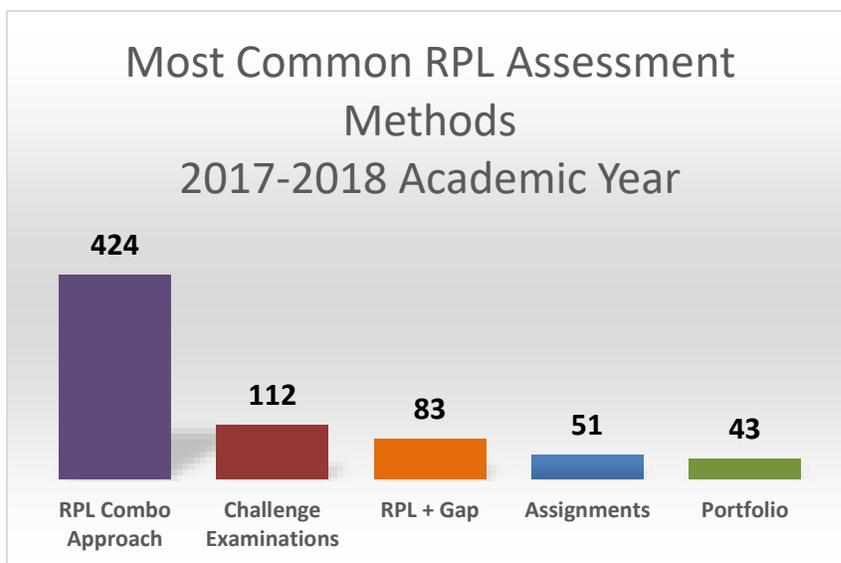
In 2018-2019, the total number of students accessing any type of RPL process, including transfer of credit was **857**. Assessments of previously acquired formal, informal and non-formal learning were conducted for **1989** courses. Forty percent (40%) of these assessments were for informal and non-formal learning gained through work and life experiences and 60% were for transfer of credit for formal learning.

RPL statistics are provided in **Appendix 3 – RPL Activity 2018-2019 – Statistics for RPL – Informal and Non-formal Learning**. These statistics do not include transfer credit, program admission or course exemption.

In 2018-2019, **796 RPL course assessments** were conducted for **287 students** in **38 full-time and part-time College programs**. The most common methods used in assessing prior learning included: RPL combo approach including formal plus informal learning; challenge examinations; RPL plus additional learning to address learning gaps; assignments and portfolio assessment.

The **success rate in RPL assessments** resulting in course credit in both full-time and part-time programs was very high at 99%.

The process to assess workplace training and courses completed at other non post secondary institutions is described in RRC Policy A14. There were **41 course assessments** from workplaces and other organizations. Programs recognizing courses



from non post-secondary institutions include Educational Assistant, Business Administration, Business Analyst, Volunteer Management and Health Care Aide.

Program faculty conducted **128 RPL assessments** for **Work Integrated Learning (WIL)** experiences including **practicum, clinical, field placements and co-op work experiences** in a variety of programs to assess students for previously learned skills and abilities. Examples of assessment methods included: faculty observation and evaluation at an approved workplace, employer validation of required skills and abilities, skill assessments and/or portfolio/evidence collections.

RPL Activity in Full-Time College Programs

In 2018-19, **182 students** completed **675 RPL course assessments in 23 full-time programs**. This is a decrease in numbers of both students (**17** fewer students) completing RPL assessments and of programs (**9** fewer programs) as compared to the previous year. The number of RPL course assessments increased and there were **342** additional course assessments.

Examples of full-time programs with a high number of RPL assessments are: Nursing, Early Childhood Education, Disability and Community Support, Early Childhood Education (ECE) Workplace and Construction Management programs.

In the **Early Childhood Education** Diploma program, RPL practices are well developed and successfully implemented. Students have access to RPL orientations, advising and online self-assessments. RPL Resource Guides assist students to prepare for RPL assessments that are conducted by the ECE RPL assessor.

The **ECE Workplace Program** is an accelerated program implementing RPL processes for students with a minimum of two years full-time employment in a licensed early learning and child care centre, licensed family child care home or an approved combination of education and employment. Students attend classes two days per week and continue employment in a licensed children's centre for three days per week. RPL is embedded throughout the program and combines recognition of prior learning with delivery of new learning to cover course learning outcomes. In the past year, **40** students received recognition of prior learning credit awards using RPL plus additional learning to address learning gaps in **48 ECE courses**.

RPL Activity in Part-Time Programs and Adult Learning Centres

In 2018-19, **107 students** completed **124 RPL course assessments in 17 part-time programs** including the Certificate in Adult Education and at the College's Adult Learning Centres (ALC's). There was one (1) RPL assessment conducted at a RRC Regional Campus. For a breakdown of students accessing RPL in these programs, see **Appendix 3 – RPL Activity 2018-2019 – Statistics for RPL – Informal and Non-formal Learning**.

In the **School of Continuing Education**, **47** students completed **59** RPL course assessments in **16** programs. This is a decrease of **48** students and **73** assessments over the previous year. RPL assessments occurred in several programs in the School of Continuing Education (CE) with Educational Assistant having the most RPL activity.

In the **Certificate in Adult Education (CAE)** program (a part-time certificate for faculty at Manitoba colleges) **18** individuals were awarded credit for **20** courses through RPL processes. Examples of courses accessed for RPL included: Introduction to Education, Instructional Methods and Practicum in College Education.

RPL activity was also recorded at two of the College's **Adult Learning Centres** (i.e. Notre Dame and Steinbach) with **41** students completing RPL for **44** high school courses. Examples of secondary courses assessed using RPL included Academic Foundations Math 1, Essentials Math 20S, English Language Arts 20F and German 40S.

2. RPL Advising Services

The College **RPL Advisor** assists prospective and current students to identify relevant and current learning and compare it with learning outcomes in specific College programs.

Between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019, the RPL Advisor:

- Provided **RPL pre-enrolment information and advising 608 individuals** to facilitate access to RPL processes. This was a slight decrease from 2017-2018 where the RPL Advisor provided pre-enrolment information and advising for **629** individuals. Additionally, program RPL advisors in Early Childhood Education, Disability and Community Support, Child and Youth Care, Nursing, Business Information Technology and the Certificate in Adult Education provided RPL information to students.
- Provided RPL advising services to **164 individuals** with international credentials. This was a decrease of **68** from the previous year.
- Assisted **124 individuals to develop action plans, complete self-assessments and prepare for assessments**. This was a decrease of **20** students from 2017-2018. The RPL Advisor also conducted individual sessions to assist students to document learning through a portfolio/evidence collection process for College courses.
- Provided **6** RPL Orientations for **78** current and prospective students. This was thirteen fewer RPL orientations and **165** fewer participants than the previous year.
- Provided **19** RPL Outreach sessions/group presentations to **353** students, which included **18** faculty. This was a decrease of **16** RPL Outreach sessions/group presentations and **489** fewer students.

* The RPL Advisor role was monitored by other staff members during November and December 2018 and during May and June 2019.

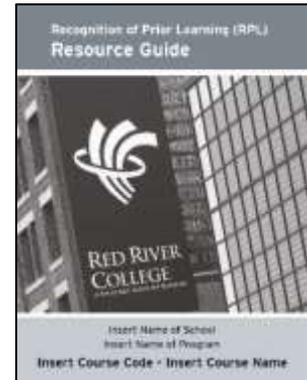


3. Development of RPL Practices and Processes in College Programs

The Centre for Learning and Program Excellence (CLPE) was restructured in August 2019 and the department of **Academic Quality and RPL** was created. [Academic Quality](#) works closely with CLPE team members, academic schools and senior academic leadership across the College by providing advice, guidance and coordination of activities relating to academic quality assurance and academic quality enhancement. [RPL Services](#) continues its work as part of this new department.

3.1 RPL Resource Guides - Development and Implementation

RRC develops resources and tools to assist with the transparency, consistency, rigor, fairness and validity of RPL assessments. **RPL Resource Guides** use a consistent template, and program faculty add course learning outcomes, a self-assessment checklist, and identify assessment options and criteria for assessment. RPL Resource Guides are developed, used and updated regularly to ensure consistency with current course outlines and course expectations. There are over **110** RPL Resource Guides currently available for students.



[RPL Services](#) provides support for development and implementation of RPL Resource Guides including faculty and staff training in the development of RPL Resource Guides; RPL Resource Guide template and technical support; expertise and resources for RPL assessments; review and feedback on drafts; and assistance with RPL Resource Guide completion. Information to assist with RPL Resource

Guide development is available on the RRC Staff Forum website under RPL Development and Consultation.

RPL Services provided support for program faculty to develop and/or revise RPL practices and resource guides in the following programs – **Disability and Community Support, Nursing and Legal Assistant.**

3.2 Health Care Aide Equivalency

Red River College's Health Care Aide Equivalency process provides an evaluation for recent graduates of designated HCA programs within Canada and for Bachelor of Nursing students who have completed year one courses and who are seeking employment within Manitoba.

In the 2018-2019 academic year RRC's HCA Equivalency process received applications from 22 individuals. Results of the assessments included:

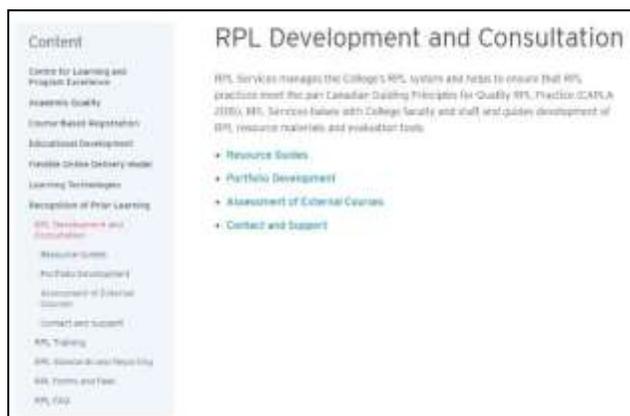
Number of Applicants	Assessment Results
1	Full RRC HCA Equivalency
2	Learning gaps identified and completion of HCA skills lab and 6 week clinical required
1	No equivalency
18	Functionally equivalent to RRC HCA for employment (BN students)

The HCA Equivalency process for employment purposes in Manitoba was updated to include submission of an application and assessment fee. This process is available to recent graduates of specific HCA programs in Canada and RN/LPN HCA graduates with a Canadian credential and recent employment as a HCA.

3.3 RPL Designation for Courses RPL

The RRC RPL flag/icon RPL on program websites identifies courses with an RPL process established and available. Over **345** courses for **79** programs are designated with the RPL flag. Students and faculty can see at a glance where RPL development has occurred and where an RPL process is available. If the RPL flag is not visible, it means that the program area has not specified a RPL process for the course. RPL development is ongoing in response to both student and faculty requests and new RPL processes continue to evolve.

3.4 RPL Section on the Staff Forum



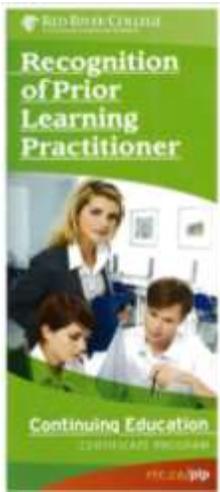
The RPL section on the **Staff Forum** <http://www.rrc.ca/RPLservices> includes **RPL Information for Staff and Faculty, RPL Professional Development, RPL Resource Guides, Research and Reports, and Frequently Asked Questions.**

RPL Quality Assurance (QA) is infused in the development, implementation and renewal of RRC RPL policies and practices. One of the six goals in RRC's RPL Strategic and Operational Plan (2012-2017) is **Quality in RPL: The College**

will ensure that programs include RPL as an integral part of curriculum development, assessment and delivery and apply best practice guidelines to ensure quality RPL standards, processes and practices.

4. RRC RPL Practitioner Certificate, Professional Development and Other RPL Activities

4.1 RPL Practitioner Certificate



The RPL Practitioner Certificate is currently available to new students on a cohort/project basis through RRC's School of Continuing Education. Continuing students are working towards program completion and are finishing any outstanding course requirements. RPL Practitioner courses completed between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019 include PLAR-1200 RPL Foundation – 5 students; PLAR-1203 RPL Practicum – 3 International students from Barbados and PLAR-1204 RPL Practicum – 1 student.

Four students successfully completed program requirements and became RPL Practitioner Certificate graduates! This includes three International student RPL Practitioner Certificate graduates from Barbados.

PLAR-1200 RPL Foundation continues to be offered online annually through Continuing Education. Remaining courses from the RPL Practitioner Certificate will continue to be offered through RRC's Corporate Solutions in a cohort/project basis.

More than **781 individuals** have completed the RPL Foundation course from across Canada and internationally.

4.2 RPL Professional Development

[RPL Services](#) continues to provide leadership and support to implement the College's RPL system. RPL training and professional development is available and provided to staff and faculty on an ongoing basis.

RPL Services facilitated practicum experiences for three International Students from Barbados. Each of the three students travelled to Red River College and spent two weeks on campus immersed in RPL experiences and activities.

RPL Services staff developed and delivered two RPL Assessment workshops for 48 staff and faculty at Fanshawe College in London, Ontario.

4.3 RPL Committee and Other RPL Activities

The College's **RPL Committee**, comprised of representatives from academic programs and schools as well as from College service areas, acts in an advisory capacity regarding recognition of prior learning processes, resources and issues. The Manager of Academic Quality and RPL chairs the RPL Committee.

In the 2018-2019 academic year there were two regular meetings of the RPL Committee and two additional meetings dedicated to the RPL Strategic Plan renewal process.

The RPL Committee established RPL fee increases to reflect services provided and the new RPL fees became effective July 1, 2018. Updated and fillable RPL Forms were introduced.

The process for requesting RPL HCA Equivalency Assessment for employment purposes in Manitoba was revised and a RPL Health Care Aide ([HCA Equivalency Assessment Form](#)) was created.

The [RPL Assessment of External Courses](#) from Non Post-Secondary Institutions Manual was revised to reflect current practice and reflects policy A14 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Including Transfer of Credit.

RRC continued to support both the **Manitoba Prior Learning Assessment Network ([MPLAN](#))** and the **Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment ([CAPLA](#))**.



RRC's RPL Services partnered with MPLAN to host a workshop on RPL in the Military in May 2019 and RPL Services staff presented *RPL and the Military at RRC*.

At CAPLA's invitation, RPL Services presented *RPL Services at RRC* to eight members of an Estonian RPL Study Tour in Toronto ON.

RPL Services worked with representatives from [National Advanced Placement and Prior Learning \(N-APPL\)](#) and British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) to facilitate membership in the consortium of Canadian post-secondary partners.



The National Advanced Placement and Prior Learning ([N-APPL](#)) program evaluates and recognizes the skills and expertise gained through military education and training and offers advanced entry to College programs. RPL Services staff participated in training sessions delivered by BCIT to learn to create the standard pathways used to process assessment of military members. Red River College became a member of the N-APPL consortium with the signing of an MOU on April 4, 2019.

RPL Services participated in research conducted by Mary Harrison of Fanshawe College. RPL best practices at RRC are referenced in the report *Best Practices in PLAR in Ontario Colleges & Universities* published in December 2018.

Conclusion

RRC's centrally coordinated RPL system managed by the Manager Academic Quality and RPL, includes RPL Advisor(s) in Enrolment Services and in selected programs, the College-wide RPL Committee, and dedicated College staff, faculty and administration. RPL Policy A14-Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Including Transfer of Credit guides RPL activity at RRC.

During the 2018-2019 academic year there was a decrease in RPL activity. The total number of students accessing any type of RPL assessment (including formal transfer credit, informal and non formal learning) decreased from **935** in 2017-2018 to **857 in 2018-2019**. This was a decrease of **78 students**.

There were **1193** transfer credit awards in 2018-2019, which was a decrease of **285** from the **1478** transfer credit awards in 2017-2018. The number of students assessed for informal and non formal learning was **287** which was **34** fewer than the **321** in 2017-2018.

There were **796** course assessments for informal and non formal learning in 2018-2019 which was an increase of **299** over the **497** RPL assessments in 2017-2018.

The College introduced [Course Based Registration \(CBR\)](#) which supports customization of education to meet students' needs and interests. One of the benefits identified for students is "Increased recognition for prior learning". Students select and register for courses that focus on specific skills and competencies and avoid registering for courses that include learning outcomes that describe what they already know and can do. RPL activity is anticipated to increase as students demonstrate their competence through RPL processes.

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RPL Annual Reports from previous years may be viewed on the [RRC Staff Forum](#) site under [RPL Standards and Reports](#).

Appendix 1

26 Years of RPL Activity (1993-2019) Number of RPL Course Assessments and Students

The statistics that follow reflect the minimum number of students who accessed RPL to prove prior informal and non-formal learning and the minimum number of RPL course assessments recorded at Red River College from 1993-2019. RPL statistics for assessment of formal learning/transfer credit, program admission or course exemption are not included below.

1993-2019		
Years	Number of RPL Course Assessments	Number of Students
1993-94	2065	1005
1994-95		
1995-96		
1996-97		
1997-98		
1998-99	320	204
1999-00	404	255
2000-01	808	367
2001-02	762	387
2002-03	538	334
2003-04	678	395
2004-05	787	409
2005-06	667	426
2006-07	740	485
2007-08	803	454
2008-09	919	546
2009-10	1072	671
2010-11	973	612
2011-12	928	564
2012-13	1004	703
2013-14	1148	551
2014-15	944	564
2015-16	575	380
2016-17	848	408
2017-18	497	321
2018-19	796	287
Total 1993-2019 (26 years)	18,276	10,328

Appendix 2

RPL Statistics for Formal, Informal and Non-formal Learning (July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	Number of Course Assessments
<p><u>Formal Learning</u></p> <p>Assessment of educational documents for <i>transfer credit</i> from recognized post-secondary institutions in Manitoba, Canada and internationally. This also includes transfer credits between RRC programs.</p>	1193
<p><u>Informal Learning</u></p> <p>Assessment of prior learning from work and life experience using methods such as tests/exams, portfolio/evidence collection, interviews, projects, skill demonstrations and a combination of formal education and RPL.</p>	755
<p><u>Non-formal Learning</u></p> <p>Assessment of prior learning from workplace training and from courses offered through business, industry and community organizations.</p>	41
<p>Total RPL course assessments based on assessment of prior informal and non-formal learning</p>	796
<p>Total number of students using <i>any type</i> of RPL assessment (formal including transfer credit, informal and/or non-formal learning)</p>	857
<p>Total number of students using RPL processes to prove <i>informal</i> and <i>non-formal</i> learning</p>	287

Appendix 3

RPL Activity 2018-2019

Statistics for RPL – Informal and Non-formal Learning

Statistics reflect the minimum number of students who used RPL to prove prior informal and non-formal learning and the minimum number of RPL course assessments awarded at Red River College in 2018-2019.

RPL statistics for assessment of formal learning/transfer credit, program admission or course exemption are not included in the statistics below.

RPL Statistics – Red River College July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019			
	Number of College Students (S)	Number of RPL Course Assessments (A)	Number of College Programs
1. Full-time programs with RPL activity	182	675	23
2. Part-time programs, Regional Campuses, Adult Learning Centres and Certificate in Adult Education with RPL activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School of Continuing Education (45S, 56A) • Regional Campuses (1S, 1A) • Adult Learning Centres (41S, 44A) • CAE 18S, 20A) 	105	121	15
Total: RPL Stats 2018-2019	287 Students	796 Course Assessments	38 College Programs

Note: RPL statistics from the pre-employment programs were unavailable. In 2017-2018 there were 32 students and 32 assessments in the pre-employment programs including Electrical, Plumbing and Power Engineering.



RED RIVER COLLEGE
OF APPLIED ARTS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY