

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Annual Report June 2021



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Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Annual Report 2021

RPL Annual Report

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a systematic 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 Polytechnic 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 2019–2020 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

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) processes at Red River College Polytech follow the nine Guiding Principles for Quality RPL Practice in Canada as set forth by the Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment (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 courses and programs.

During the past five years (2016-2020), RPL assessments for informal and non-formal learning were completed for 1706 students and 3820 courses. From 2016-2020, 6748 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 2019-2020, there were **1005 transfer credits** awarded in both full and part-time RRC Polytech programs. The majority of these transfer credits at 89.8% were from post secondary institutions in Manitoba.

RRC Polytech's International Credential and Transfer Credit Officer (ICTCO) assesses and recognizes formal learning of internationally educated domestic applicants for program admission. In 2019–2020, **238** International Credential Assessments were completed for College admission.

1.2 Recognition of Informal and Non-formal Learning

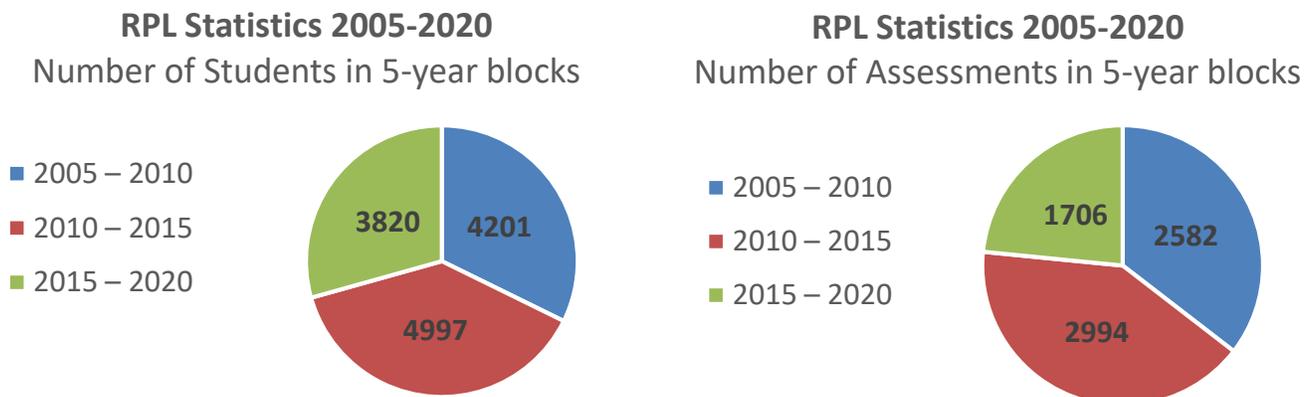
A variety of challenge processes are used at the College to assess and recognize **informal and non-formal learning**. Challenge processes include skill demonstrations, portfolio/evidence collections, interviews, projects, assignments and exams. Non-formal learning gained through workplace and organizational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

Recognition of **formal learning** (transfer credit) is included only when assessment of post-secondary transcripts are supplemented by additional validation or evidence of current competency. Assessment of a transcript accompanied by evidence of informal learning which may include an interview, a portfolio/evidence collection or skill demonstration is recorded as a RPL combo approach.

During the past 27 years, over **10,638** students completed RPL assessments for **19,380** courses. Students successfully achieved course credit in over 90% of the RPL assessments. **Please see Appendix 1: 27 Years of RPL Activity (1993-2020) - Number of RPL Course Assessments and Students.**

RPL Statistics – A 15-Year Review (2005-2020)

The charts below show the RPL statistics from 2005-2020 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 (2015-2020)

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
2015 – 16	575	380
2016 – 17	848	408
2017 – 18	497	321
2018 – 19	796	287
2019 - 20	1104	310
Total – 5 years	3820	1706

RPL in College Programs (July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020)

Appendix 2 – RPL Statistics for Formal, Informal and Non-formal Learning (July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020) provides a summary of the RPL activity for the past academic year.

In 2019-2020, the total number of students accessing any type of RPL process, including transfer of credit was **738**. Assessments of previously acquired formal, informal and non-formal learning were conducted for **2109** courses. Fifty two percent (52%) of these assessments were for informal and non-formal learning gained through work and life experiences and forty-eight (48%) were for transfer of credit for formal learning.

RPL statistics are provided in **Appendix 3 – RPL Activity 2019-2020 – Statistics for RPL – Informal and Non-formal Learning**. These statistics do not include transfer credit, program admission or course exemption.

In 2019-2020, **1104 RPL course assessments** were conducted for **310 students** in **45 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; portfolio assessment; skill demonstration; RPL plus additional learning to address learning gaps; and challenge examinations.

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 Polytech Policy A14.

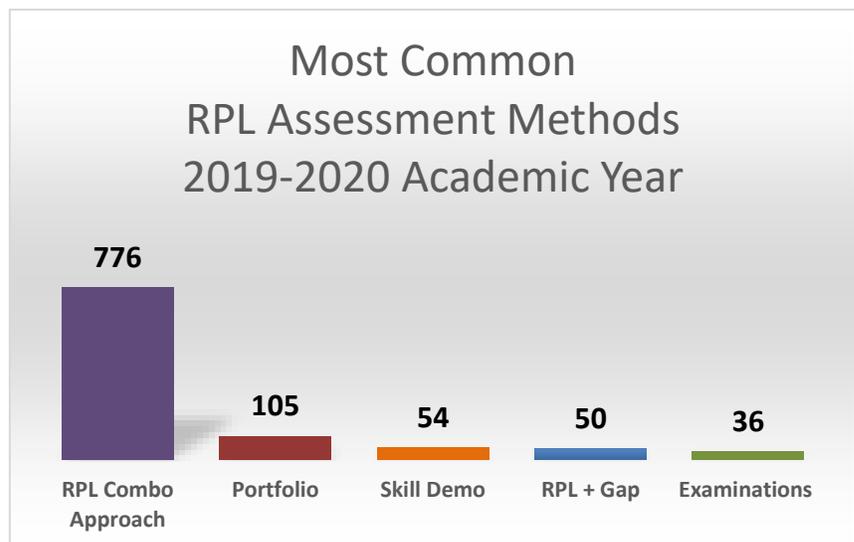
There were **63 course assessments** from workplaces and other organizations. Programs recognizing courses from non post-

secondary institutions include Educational Assistant, Culinary Arts, Health Care Aide, Professional Baking and Pastry, Justice and Public Safety and Therapeutic Recreation Facilitator for Older Adults.

Program faculty conducted **192 RPL assessments** for **Work Integrated Learning (WIL)** experiences including **practicum, clinical, field placements and co-op work experiences**. WIL assessments recognized prior learning gained in workplaces that was equivalent to College learning outcomes in a variety of programs. 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 2019-20, **202 students** completed **952 RPL course assessments** in **24 full time programs**. This was an increase in numbers of both students (**20** more students) completing RPL assessments and of course assessments (**277** additional course assessments). There was an increase of one (1) in the number of full time programs where RPL activity occurred as compared to the previous year.



Examples of full-time programs with a high number of RPL assessments are Nursing, Disability and Community Support, Early Childhood Education (ECE) Workplace, Early Childhood Education, Educational Assistant and Business Information Technology 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 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 childcare centre, licensed family childcare 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, **32** students received recognition of prior learning credit awards using RPL plus additional learning to address learning gaps in **45 ECE courses**.

RPL Activity in Part-Time Programs and Adult Learning Centres

In 2019-20, **108 students** completed **152 RPL course assessments** in **21 part-time programs** including the Certificate in Adult Education and at the College's Adult Learning Centres (ALC's). There were **eight (8)** RPL assessments conducted at RRC Polytech Regional Campuses. For a breakdown of students accessing RPL in these programs, see **Appendix 3 – RPL Activity 2019-2020 – Statistics for RPL – Informal and Non-formal Learning**.

In the **School of Continuing Education**, **67** students completed **73** RPL course assessments in **20** programs. This is an increase of **20** students and **14** assessments over the previous year. RPL activity occurred in many Continuing Education programs with the Educational Assistant program having the highest number of RPL assessments.

In the **Certificate in Adult Education (CAE)** program (a part-time certificate for faculty at Manitoba colleges) **29** individuals were awarded credit for **66** courses through RPL processes. Examples of courses accessed for RPL included: Introduction to Education, Instructional Methods and Diversity and Inclusiveness.

RPL activity was also recorded at two of the College's **Adult Learning Centres** (i.e. Notre Dame and Steinbach) with **12** students completing RPL for **13** high school courses. Examples of secondary courses assessed using RPL included Academic Foundations Math 1 and 2, and German 20S and 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, 2019 and June 30, 2020, the RPL Advisor:

- Provided **RPL pre-enrolment information and advising 570 individuals** to facilitate access to RPL processes. This was a decrease of **38** students from 2018-2019 where the RPL Advisor provided pre-enrolment information and advising for **608** 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 **214 individuals** with international credentials. This was an increase of **50** from the previous year.
- Assisted **199 individuals to develop action plans, complete self-assessments and prepare for assessments**. This was an increase of **75** students from 2018-2019.
- Shared a pre-recorded RPL Orientation for students on [the RPL Advising site](#). No in-person RPL Orientation sessions were held during this reporting period.
- Provided **13 RPL Outreach sessions/group presentations** to **278** students. This was a decrease of six **(6)** RPL Outreach sessions/group presentations and **75** fewer students.

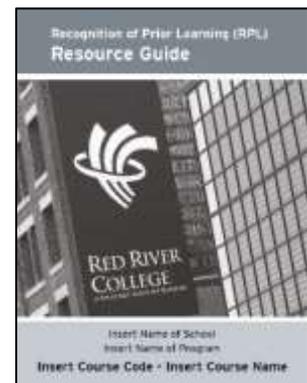
3. Development of RPL Practices and Processes in College Programs

The **Academic Quality and RPL** department in the Centre for Learning and Program Excellence (CLPE) manages both [RPL Services](#) and [Academic Quality](#). The department expanded in November 2019, with the addition of an Educational Developer focused on RPL.

3.1 RPL Resource Guides - Development and Implementation

RRC Polytech 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 currently **111 RPL Resource Guides** 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 about [RPL Resource Guides](#) and support for [Developing RPL Resource Guides](#) is available on the RRC Polytech 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 –

Business Information Technology, Library and Information Technology, Project Leadership Certificate and Occupational Health and Safety.

3.2 Health Care Aide Equivalency

Red River College Polytech'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 2019-2020 academic year RRC Polytech's HCA Equivalency process received numerous requests for information and five (5) formal applications. Results of the assessments included:

Number of Applicants	Assessment Results
2	Learning gaps identified and completion of HCA skills lab and 6 week clinical required
2	Learning gaps identified and completion of HCA skills lab and 3 week clinical required
1	No equivalency
40*	Functionally equivalent to RRC Polytech HCA for employment (BN students)

*Approximately 40 letters were issued to confirm education that is functionally equivalent to HCA.

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

The RRC Polytech RPL flag/icon  on program websites identifies courses with an approved RPL process available. Over **361** courses for **88** programs are designated with the RPL flag. This is an increase of **16** courses and nine (**9**) programs designated with RPL flags. These courses are in a variety of full and part time programs available at RRC Polytech Winnipeg and Regional campuses. 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 Polytech RPL policies and practices. One of the six goals in RRC Polytech'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 Polytech RPL Practitioner Certificate, Professional Development and Other RPL Activities

4.1 RPL Practitioner Certificate

RPL Practitioner courses completed between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020 include PLAR-1200 RPL Foundation – five (5) students and PLAR-1203 RPL Practicum – 1 student.

One International Student from Barbados successfully completed program requirements and became a RPL Practitioner Certificate graduate!

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

Manitoba Adult Learning Centres include one or more staff members trained in RPL processes and practices. A [bursary for PLAR-1200 RPL Foundation](#) may be available to qualifying ALC staff through the Adult Learning and Literacy (ALL) office.

More than **785 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 a practicum experience for one International Student from Barbados. The student travelled to Red River College Polytech and spent two weeks on campus immersed in RPL experiences and activities.

RPL Services facilitated a RPL orientation as part of the New Faculty and Staff Drop-In Sessions hosted by CLPE.

4.3 RPL Committee

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 2019-2020 academic year there were two regular meetings of the RPL Committee.

In addition, RPL Committee members participated in a RPL Strategic Planning session facilitated by Mike Krywy in December 2019. Subsequently, the RPL Services team and Mike Krywy met to review and establish next steps.

[RPL Policy A14](#) (approved April 2018) includes recognition of formal, (specifically transfer credit), informal and non-formal learning acquired through education, work and life experience. A RPL Policy Sub-Committee was created to review RPL application timelines and currency guidelines.

Two new RPL forms were developed to facilitate multiple RPL course requests on one application. The Certificate in Adult Education (CAE) program is piloting both the RPL Multiple Course Challenge Process and/or Portfolio Assessment application and the RPL Multiple Course Results of Challenge Process and/or Portfolio Assessment forms.

A Course Based Registration (CBR) Checklist for SAC (Phase 2) was implemented to guide programs to identify changes that may be required when transitioning to CBR. RPL visibility was enhanced through questions (#13 to 15) which include course pre-requisites and co-requisites, RPL processes available for students and articulation, block credit or transfer credit opportunities that may be impacted by the move to CBR.

4.4 RPL Networks and Other RPL Activities

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



RRC Polytech's RPL Services presented *Recognition of Prior Learning at RRC Polytech* at MPLAN's RPL Advising Workshop in November 2019.

RPL Services is represented on the Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment (CAPLA) Board of Directors. Lauren Waples, elected to the CAPLA Board in November 2019, participates in and contributes to regularly scheduled meetings.

RPL Services continues to work with the **National Advanced Placement and Prior Learning (N-APPL)** and British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) as a member of 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 contribute to development of pathways to recognize military training and experience and offer advanced placement into the second year of RRC Polytech's Business Administration program. RPL Services collaborated

with Enrolment Services to develop and confirm N-APPL processes and forms.

Red River College Polytech, Humber College and NorQuest College formed a consortium and successfully responded to a **Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan) Request for Proposal (RFP): for the Consultancy on Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)**.



"Young Africa Works-Kenya: Youth Employability Through TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) project is a partnership between Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan), the Mastercard Foundation, the Kenyan Ministry of Education and the private sector.

The project focuses on strengthening the quality and relevance of TVET institutions and systems in Kenya for the key economic growth sectors identified under the Big Four agenda (manufacturing, universal healthcare, food security, affordable housing) and digital sectors.” Source: [CICan International Partnerships website](#).

The Humber, NorQuest and Red River College Polytech consortium was selected to implement the YAW-K-TVET Thematic Partnership (2020-2024) focused on Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR).

Conclusion

RRC Polytech’s centrally coordinated RPL system managed by the Manager Academic Quality and RPL, includes an Educational Developer – RPL, 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) guides RPL activity at RRC Polytech.

During the 2019-2020 academic year there was an increase in number of RPL assessments and a decrease in numbers of RPL students. There were **1104** course assessments for informal and non-formal learning in 2019-2020, which was an increase of **308** over the **796** RPL assessments in 2018-2019.

The total number of students accessing any type of RPL assessment (including formal transfer credit, informal and non-formal learning) decreased from **857** in 2018-2019 to **738** in 2019-2020. This was a decrease of **119 students**.

There were **1005** transfer credit awards in 2019-2020, which was a decrease of **188** from the **1193** transfer credit awards in 2018-2019. The number of students assessed for informal and non-formal learning was **310** which was an increase of **23** from the **287** in 2018-2019.

The College continues to increase the number of programs using [Course Based Registration \(CBR\)](#). “Increased recognition for prior learning” is identified as a benefit for students who are able to select and register for courses that meet their needs. RPL activity is anticipated to increase as students use RPL processes to achieve credit for courses that include learning outcomes describing what they already know and can do.

For further information, please contact:

Lauren Waples
Manager Academic Quality and RPL
Red River College Polytechnic
FM28 – 2055 Notre Dame Ave.,
Winnipeg, MB R3H 0J9
lwaples@rrc.ca

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

Appendix 1

27 Years of RPL Activity (1993-2020)

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 Polytech from 1993-2020. RPL statistics for assessment of formal learning/transfer credit, program admission or course exemption are not included below.

1993-2020		
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
2019-2020	1104	310
Total 1993-2020 (27 years)	19,380	10,638

Appendix 2

RPL Statistics for Formal, Informal and Non-formal Learning (July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020)

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 Polytech programs.</p>	1005
<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>	1041
<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>	63
<p>Total RPL course assessments based on assessment of prior informal and non-formal learning</p>	1104
<p>Total number of students using <i>any type</i> of RPL assessment (formal including transfer credit, informal and/or non-formal learning)</p>	738
<p>Total number of students using RPL processes to prove <i>informal</i> and <i>non-formal</i> learning</p>	310

Appendix 3

RPL Activity 2019-2020

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 Polytech in 2019-2020.

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 Polytech July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020			
	Number of College Students (S)	Number of RPL Course Assessments (A)	Number of College Programs
1. Full-time programs with RPL activity	202	952	24
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 (67S, 73A) • Regional Campuses (5S, 8A) • Adult Learning Centres (12S, 13A) • CAE 29S, 66A) 	108	152	21
Total: RPL Stats 2019-2020	310 Students	1104 Course Assessments	45 College Programs

