

Policy on the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

1. It is College policy that King's College London recognises that knowledge and skills can be acquired from a wide range of learning experiences, both formal and informal. The College therefore encourages the recognition of prior learning (i.e. learning that has been assessed and for which credit has been awarded, often by other HEIs inside or outside of the UK) and experiential learning (i.e. learning that has taken place in the workplace as a means of providing entry to, or credit within, all of its taught programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Such recognition will take place within the context of the QAA Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (FHEQ).
2. Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is a process through which previously assessed ~~and~~ learning is considered and recognised towards a defined King's award. Credit can be used from a previously uncompleted or completed award. Credit may only be recognised for King's awards when it is at the higher education level (e.g. levels 7 of the FHEQ).
3. Recognition of prior experiential learning is the process of recognising, learning which has, as its source, some experience which occurred prior to the point of a candidate entering her/his current programme and has been undertaken within a workplace. Experiential learning is defined in this context as knowledge and skills gained through work experiences as well as through non-formal learning, development and training activities. For example a student may have worked in an area related to their degree prior to commencing that degree, and may have acquired the learning outcomes of an individual module as a direct result of their work experience.
4. It is College policy that there is no general right of entry; the final decision rests with the admitting Faculty/Department. The admitting Faculty/Department may, in order to ensure that such students fulfil the objective of the programme of study, make admission conditional upon the undertaking of preparatory or supplementary studies, or the inclusion of particular modules in the programme to be taken by the student. Any such conditions shall be agreed by the Faculty/Department and the student before admission.
5. Regulations G7 provides further information on the criteria to be followed for recognition of prior learning.
6. It is College Policy that marks are not awarded for prior learning.
7. Recognition of prior learning: It is College policy that responsibility for the award of any credit always falls within the remit of the Assessment Sub-board. In most cases, the initial assessment of prior learning will be undertaken by the Admissions Tutor for the programme; it should be recognised that, in such cases, the Admissions Tutor is acting on behalf of the Assessment Sub-board. Admissions Tutors should report decisions formally to the Sub-board, which should record them at the next available meeting.
8. Recognition of experiential learning: It is College policy that responsibility for the award of any credit for experiential learning always falls within the remit of the Assessment Sub-board. However, discussions of this nature may need to be managed at departmental level, with academic judgement concerning the suitability of the learning key to the decision to award credit. Admissions input should be utilised where required e.g. where there may be VISA implications.

Admissions Process

9. Applications for consideration of RPL should normally be submitted prior to commencement of the programme.

10. Application processes for consideration of RPL should be defined in detail for individual programmes; such processes should be published in the Department's Handbook. Details will include specific guidance on the evidence that should accompany applications, arrangements to support applicants through any application process and details of any additional fees that may be incurred.
11. Applications should be considered by the appropriate Assessment Sub-board or the Sub-board's nominee (for example the admissions tutor).
12. Applications should detail the amount and level of credit being claimed and details of any modules that the applicant wishes to be exempted from; detail of what the applicant has achieved that merits recognition and any appropriate evidence supporting the claim. For recognition of prior learning this will normally include a transcript from the applicant's previous institution outlining the credits and marks obtained previously as well as module outlines as appropriate; for experiential learning this may consist of a portfolio of work demonstrating how the applicant meets the learning outcomes of the module being waived.
13. Where the Assessment Sub-board, or their nominee, is satisfied that learning being claimed for is of an appropriate level, that the learning outcomes of any previous learning are equivalent to the learning outcomes of the programme that the applicant is now registering for and that the evidence provided confirms the achievement by the applicant of these learning outcomes, then the board may confirm the award of RPL credit towards the relevant King's award, in accordance with the regulations. The Assessment Sub-board should arrange for the student to be advised of their decision and any exemptions, and the King's student record system should be updated to record the award of credit.
14. Marks for study at institutions other than King's will not normally be included in decisions on classification of awards, and Assessment Sub-Boards may need to approve an alternative method to derive the classification of awards for students with RPL.
15. The support and evaluation of experiential learning is undertaken at programme level. Assessment Sub-boards, or their nominee may consider applications and either:
 - Proceed to assessment (see paragraphs 17 - 18);
 - Refer the application back to the applicant, requesting further evidence;
 - Reject the application where, in the academic judgement of the board, there is no reasonable chance of the application being successful.

Evaluation of RPL

16. The evaluation of an application for RPL must centre on the demonstration by the applicant of the skills, knowledge and understanding required to progress successfully within the relevant programme. The focus is therefore on assessing the comparability of the outcomes of prior learning to those of the module or programme.
17. All learning must have been assessed in order that students can be seen to have demonstrated the achievement of the specified learning outcomes.
18. Where an application proceeds to assessment, the Assessment Sub-board (or their nominated individual) must define the method by which they will assess whether the applicant has achieved the learning outcomes being claimed for. This may be by formal examination, completion of a piece of coursework or similar, production of a portfolio of work or some other method at the discretion of the programme Assessment Sub-board. The assessment method should be devised taking the following into account:

- Recognition is given for learning, not for experience alone;
 - The learning that is recognised should be transferable, and not just context-specific;
 - Credit awarded as a result of recognition of prior experiential learning is of the same value as credit gained through formal learning;
 - The applicant is responsible for demonstrating their prior learning.
19. The assessment method defined to confirm experiential learning by the Assessment Sub-board in paragraph 18 must be approved by an external examiner. The outcome of the assessment undertaken by the applicant must also be approved by the appropriate external examiner.
20. Where the outcome of the assessment is that the application is accepted then the College student record system should record the award of credit together with any appropriate exemptions.
21. Credit may be awarded, and exemptions applied, for specific modules or levels of individual programmes. Applicants accepted for admission with advanced standing (see regulation G7) will normally only be permitted to commence studies at the beginning of the appropriate year of the programme.
22. Credit awarded as part of the RPL process must be awarded at a specific level, and must be for a specific amount of credit. The minimum award by this process will be 15 credits
23. Learning credited towards an award should be reasonably current; a judgement on currency will be dependent upon the subject area. The College's Academic Regulations state that the time between registration on previous programme and award of a degree should be no more than 10 years for the previous programme's credit to count towards the new degree. Assessment Sub-Boards (or any nominated individual acting on their behalf) should consider whether any credit previously awarded relates to the achievement of learning outcomes that would remain relevant in their subject area.
24. The consideration of credit towards a King's award is a matter of academic judgement for the relevant Assessment Sub-boards (or any nominated individual acting on their behalf). Assessment Sub-boards have overall responsibility for defining any process by which RPL will be considered for that programme, or alternatively may consider that RPL is not appropriate for any programme within their remit.
25. For Experiential learning the following should be taken into account:
- Recognition is given for learning, not for experience alone;
 - The learning that is recognised should be transferable, and not just context-specific;
 - Credit awarded as a result of recognition of prior experiential learning is of the same value as credit gained through formal learning;
 - The applicant is responsible for demonstrating their prior experiential learning and how that maps onto the programme they are applying for.
26. Reasons for rejection of applications for RPL may include, but are not limited to, the following:
- There is insufficient evidence to confirm that the learning claimed for is of the appropriate credit level;

- There is insufficient evidence to confirm that the learning outcomes claimed are the equivalent of relevant learning outcomes for the module or programme;
- The learning claimed for took place outside of a reasonable timescale before the end of the programme of study to which the application relates;
- The student has not been able to demonstrate achievement of appropriate learning outcomes from the learning claimed;
- RPL is not appropriate for the relevant programme of study.

The Use and Re-use of Credit

27. Normally credit for a completed award can only be used to seek advanced standing to an award at a higher level. Credit for a complete award cannot normally be used towards another award at the same level, as this would constitute double counting of credit. Credit from a complete award can be used towards another award at the same level only if the following criteria are met:
- The award towards which the student is seeking credit is in a different subject, vocational or professional area to her/his prior award;
- OR
- The award is at Master's level and enables the student to advance her or his existing subject, professional or vocational area in a new or specialist direction
28. Where the module being waived is using learning gained from one of the College's free-standing module(s), that has not been used as credit elsewhere within the College then the marks from that free-standing module can be used as part of the final degree calculation of the new degree programme the student is registering on.

Appeals

29. Appeals against decisions in respect of applications for RPL will only be considered where there is clear evidence of a significant administrative or regulatory error; there is no provision for appeal against the academic judgement of the Assessment Sub-board or their nominee.
30. Any appeal must be made in writing and submitted to the Student Conduct and Appeals Office within 14 days from the date of issue of the decision, citing the grounds and basis of the appeal, with evidence as appropriate.
31. Where a *prima facie* case of a significant administrative or regulatory error is established the appeal will be referred to the relevant Dean of Faculty¹ (or her/his nominee) to adjudicate. The Dean, or her/his nominee, may reject the appeal or refer the application back to the Assessment Sub-board with recommendations. The decision of the Dean, or her/his nominee, shall be final.

College Assessment and Standards Committee
 January 2015
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¹ In this context "Faculty" includes the Dental Institute, Dickson Poon School of Law or Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience