

Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure

Category:	Academic - Student
Subject:	Recognition of Prior Learning
Approving Authority:	Academic Standards Sub-Committee
Responsible Officer:	Executive Director, Education and Students
Responsible Office:	Academic Regulations, Quality and Standards
Related Procedures:	N/A
Related College Policies:	Academic Regulations
Effective Date:	1 August 2023
Supersedes:	Recognition of Prior Learning Policy
Next Review:	September 2026

1. Introduction

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is a process through which the College recognises two types of previously attained learning;

- Prior certified learning (RPCL) - learning that has been assessed and for which credit has been awarded, often by the College or another Higher Education Institution inside or outside of the UK;
- Prior experiential learning (RPEL) - learning generated by experience or non-formal learning, development or training. This learning usually occurs in a workplace and before the applicant enters the programme.

This procedure should be read in conjunction with Admission with Recognition of Prior Learning in Chapter 1 of the [Academic Regulations](#).

Assessment Sub-Boards have overall responsibility for implementing the process by which applications for RPL will be considered and overseeing the administration of the RPL regulations.

2. Decision making

The Assessment Sub-Board can devolve responsibility for making decisions to an academic of appropriate experience, or to a panel including academics. This person, or panel, is known as the 'decision maker'. It is recommended that the admissions tutor is part of the decision-making process, and that the decision maker will liaise with appropriate colleagues, for example:

- Heads of Departments
- Departmental Education Leads
- Programme Leads

Input from professional services colleagues should be sought where required e.g., where there may be VISA implications.

3. Application and supporting information

Faculties should make information on how to apply for RPL and on how applications will be considered, available on externally facing websites accessible to those who may consider applying. This should include:

- guidance on the evidence that should accompany applications;
- arrangements to support applicants through any application process;
- deadlines and timescales for applications.

Applications for RPL can be submitted from the point the student applies for the programme and should normally be submitted before the date that the programme starts.

An application submitted after the date that the programme starts may be considered as long as the decision maker is satisfied that there is a valid reason for the late application that was beyond the student's control.

4. Application and evidence

An application for RPL is an indication that the student believes that they may meet the learning outcomes of a module or modules on the programme. The student should submit evidence supporting their application, but faculties should be aware that the student may not have access to detailed information about the learning outcomes of the modules of the programme when the application is made. Faculties should make sure that the initial stage of the application supports the student to identify appropriate modules that may be exempted. See Appendix 1 for information on the types of acceptable supporting evidence.

A successful application for RPL will focus on assessing the comparability of the outcomes of prior learning to those of the new module or programme thereby demonstrating that the student has the skills, knowledge and understanding required to progress successfully within the relevant programme.

5. Review of application and evidence for recognition of prior learning application

Initial review

The applicant is responsible for demonstrating their prior learning through their application and the supporting evidence supplied and, if considered necessary, via an additional assessment.

The decision maker should evaluate the application and evidence supplied and decide on one of the following outcomes:

- a. the application proceeds to the assessment stage of the process;
- b. the applicant is asked to submit further evidence;
- c. the application is rejected as there is no reasonable chance of it being successful.

Assessment Stage

If a student is claiming RPL on the basis of **prior certified learning**, it may be possible to approve the application on the basis of the supporting evidence alone. When assessing evidence of certified learning, the decision maker should consider:

- a. whether the learning being claimed for is of an appropriate level;
- b. whether the outcomes of previous certified learning are equivalent to the learning outcomes of the module/s within the programme that the applicant is claiming;
- c. whether the evidence supplied with the application confirms the achievement of these learning outcomes;
- d. if learning credited towards an award is reasonably current and relates to the achievement of learning outcomes that would remain relevant in the subject area.

If the application is for **prior experiential learning** or the supporting evidence for certified learning is insufficient to make a decision, the decision maker should define the method by which they will assess whether the applicant has achieved the learning outcomes being claimed. They may use one of the following assessment methods:

- formal examination;
- completion of a piece of coursework or similar;
- production of a portfolio of work; or
- some other method.

The assessment method must be approved by an external examiner of the Assessment Sub-Board, who must also approve the outcome of the assessment.

The assessment method should be devised to consider:

- a. whether the learning is transferable, and not just context specific;
- b. whether the learning being claimed for is of an appropriate level;
- c. whether the evidence supplied with the application confirms the achievement of learning outcomes from previous experiential learning that are equivalent to the learning outcomes of the module that the applicant is claiming.

6. Outcomes

The faculty or department should tell the student about the outcome of their application, modules that are exempted and any conditions attached. Relevant teams should also be informed including;

- Student Records Team
- Visa and International Students Team
- Credit Control

Reasons for rejection of applications for RPL may include, but are not limited to, the following:

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

The decision maker should report RPL decisions formally to the Assessment Sub-Board, which should record them at the next available meeting.

7. Appeals

Students cannot appeal against the judgement of the Assessment Sub-board or their nominee on an RPL application unless there is clear evidence of a significant administrative or regulatory error.

If the student believes there is clear evidence of a significant administrative or regulatory error, they may appeal, in writing, 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.

Appendix 1 Supporting information for an application for RPL

RPL Category	Evidence required
Credit awarded by UK institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transcript• Module outline/ specification
Credit awarded by overseas institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transcript (translated to English as necessary)• Module outline/ specification including student workload (hours)
Experiential learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A reference/supportive letter from employer• CV or job description• Portfolio/ examples of work undertaken• Personal statement demonstrating how each of the learning outcomes have been achieved