
Florence Nightingale Faculty of Nursing, Midwifery & Palliative Care Policy and Procedure for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for Undergraduate and Postgraduate (Master's Level) Students

This Policy applies when an applicant wishes to apply to have previous learning experience(s) recognised towards a King's award offered by the Florence Nightingale Faculty of Nursing, Midwifery & Palliative Care on the basis that the prior learning is relevant to the programme concerned.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Academic Regulations – T24-26 Academic Policy <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/campuslife/acservices/Academic-Regulations/index.aspx>.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is an assessment process which allows applicants to demonstrate that previous learning they have undertaken can be recognised against a (new) qualification and thus gives credits or exemption from taking part of the programme for which they are applying. Applicants to a programme would still be required to meet the admissions requirements for that qualification but would be able to submit a claim for exemption from part of the programme. The award of credit for prior learning against an individual module exempts a student from taking that module. It does not exempt the student from any other components of the programme unless specifically stated.
- 1.2. For prior learning to be recognised, an academic assessment must be made of the level, content, quality, currency, and the congruence of the learning outcomes of the prior learning to the learning outcomes of the programme of study for which credit or exemption is being sought.
- 1.3. Unless agreed otherwise by the College Education Committee, the prior learning must have been undertaken **no more than five (5) years** before the proposed date of entry to the programme of study for which exemption/credit is being sought.
- 1.4. The decision to award credit for prior learning is an academic judgement and the university reserves the right to reject applications for the award of such credit where, in the judgement of the Faculty's RPL Panel, there is insufficient evidence that the applicant's prior learning is adequate and relevant to the module and/or programme.
- 1.5. The RPL membership includes representatives from the adult nursing, child and family health, mental health and midwifery. In addition, the RPL panel has a designated external examiner.
- 1.6. The academic judgement of those evaluating and/or making a decision on an application for RPL may not be challenged. An appeal against a decision relating to the award of any RPL credit may therefore only be made if the applicant can establish a case that the assessment of the application was not in accordance with the principles outlined in this policy. Any

such appeal should be made in writing in accordance with the university's appeals process <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/aboutkings/orgstructure/ps/acservices/conduct/Academic-Appeals.aspx>.

- 1.7. Possession of prior learning does not confer right of entry to any programme of study.

2. Definitions

The Faculty uses the follow definitions:

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): The identification, assessment and formal acknowledgement of learning and achievement that occurred at some time in the past (perhaps as the result of a previous course, self-directed study, or active experience), which is taken into account when admitting a student to a programme of study.

Recognition of Prior Certified Learning (RPCL): The identification, assessment and formal acknowledgement of learning and achievement which is at a higher education level that occurred at some time in the past, prior to entry to a programme of study, but which has not led to the award of credits or qualifications positioned on the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree Awarding Bodies (FHEQ), and for which the learning was awarded some form of official recognition.

Examples of RPCL include professional development awards, employment based awards, undergraduate students transferring to Imperial in their first year where no assessment has taken place or Imperial short course delegates who have not taken the assessment.

Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL): The identification, assessment and formal acknowledgement of learning and achievement that occurred at some time in the past prior to entry to a programme of study, but not in the context of formal education or training. RPEL can also be used to demonstrate continued professional development when a Certificated Learning was completed over 5 years before the proposed date of entry to the programme of study.

Examples of RPEL include work-based or professional experience. (With RPEL applications it is the learning gained through the experience, which is assessed, not the experience itself.).

Proportion of Prior Learning which may be accredited

- 3.1 The Faculty may recognize prior certificated and prior experiential learning. For example:

- a) where an undergraduate student applies to transfer from another Higher Education Institution without having obtained credits for the learning undertaken (for example, a student transferring during the Autumn term of their first year);

- b) where a postgraduate student has attended one of the Faculty's Continuing Professional Development (CPD) short courses or similar but has not taken the assessment. (Where a student has taken the assessment and credit has been award this is covered under Sections [T24-26](#) of the College's Academic Policy).

RPL applications may be approved provided that the student is considered able to achieve the required learning outcomes and credit for the award based on their submitted portfolio of evidence.

- 3.3 For the proportion of prior learning and minimum periods of attendance, see the Academic Regulations.
- 3.4 RPL is only granted for whole modules and never for part of a module. The minimum award by this process is 15 credits.
- 3.5 It is university policy that marks are not awarded for prior learning.
- 3.6 An applicant will not be granted exemption from the project or dissertation component of a programme of study.
- 3.7 Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) Standards specify restrictions in the amount of RPL credit that may be awarded on accredited pre-registration nursing programmes. Should the maximum amount of credit permitted by the NMC be lower than that permitted by the Faculty, then the regulations of the NMC shall override those of the Faculty. The NMC (2018) Standards for pre-registration nursing permit the use of RPL at admission but not during the programme.
- 3.8 RPL can be used by nursing students on the established programme ensure timely completion of progression points if they have successfully achieved all requirements for progression at the end of a part in the Practice Assessment Document (PAD).

3. Procedure

- 4.1.1 Postgraduate and workforce development:
The applicant submits the RPL claim form with supporting evidence and the required feeⁱ to Nursingrpl@kcl.ac.uk. Applications must be made against whole module(s). Applicants cannot apply for credit against part of a module.
- 4.1.2 Established Pre-registration Nursing programme:
Consideration for RPL will be made by the Programme or Cohort Lead (PL/CL) on an individual basis. Students may be able to RPL hours undertaken two years before the programme in a relevant setting. RPL of hours and experience during a period of interruption from the programme may be considered on an individual basis. The application form can be downloaded by the student from the Cohort Administration page on KEATS.
- 4.1.3 MSc with Registration as a Nurse (Adult/Child/Mental Health):
Applicants must demonstrate 575 hours of prior learning as part of their application to the programme.
- 4.3 The application is checked by a member of the RPL panel (or nominee) who confirms whether enough evidence has been provided to make a decision or requests further evidence from the applicant via the Nightingale Student Hub.
- 4.4 The Nightingale Student Hub will arrange for the application to be considered by two members of the RPL Panel. The RPL Panel members assess the level, content, quality, currency, and the congruence of the learning outcomes of the prior learning against the learning outcomes of the programme of study for which credit or exemption is being sought. The Panel members may decide on the information provided or may require the student to pass an assessment or interview.

- 4.5 Where the Panel sets an assessment for an RPL applicant this must be approved by external examiner(s) and Assessment Sub-Board. Possible assessment types include but are not limited to: reflective portfolio; examination and coursework.
- 4.6 Once a decision has been reached, they will submit their recommendation to the RPL Panel for ratification. The Chair of the RPL Panel will then notify the Nightingale Student Hub who, in turn, will notify the applicant.
- 4.7 RPL Panel decisions must be recorded at the next Faculty's Assessment Sub-Board.
- 4.8 Applicants whose prior learning claim is rejected by the Panel (including where the student fails the assessment and/or/interview) will be permitted a maximum of one further attempt. Only two attempts are permitted to gain successful recognition of any claim. The RPL application fee is non-refundable.

4. Evidence to be provided by applicant

5.1 RPL will be based on consideration of the RPL Claim Form accompanied by the following evidence to be provided by the applicant:

- a brief description/reflective narrative of how the prior certified learning or experience maps to the learning outcomes as defined in the programme specification and/or module outline(s) for the King's award;
- A reference from the institution(s) where the prior learning/experience was undertaken.

Additionally,

For RPCL applications:

- a transcript (including any marks awarded) and/or description (including learning outcomes) of the modules /course/training attended (for example from the student handbook) which is certified by the appropriate officer or officers of the institution or institutions where the prior learning was undertaken.
- where RPL is sought on a programme leading to Registration with the NMC, evidence of NMC proficiencies achieved during the period of prior learning should be provided by the awarding institution. NMC proficiencies achieved will be mapped against those for the module(s) where RPL is being sought.

For RPEL applications:

- a description of the experience including the name of the employer or institution, location and date of the where the experience was a gained.
- evidence the NMC proficiencies gained in the prior experiential learning. These will be mapped against those for the module(s) where RPL is being sought.

5.2 RPL Panel members (or their nominee) may request additional documentation to satisfy themselves that previous certified learning or experience is supported by evidence and meets the learning outcomes of the module and/or programme. Panel members may request to see examples of work undertaken.

5. Consideration of evidence and approval process

6.1 The evaluation of RPL claims is undertaken by the RPL Panel on the grounds of relevance of prior study in terms of level, quality, currency and coherence with the King's programme of study. The RPL Panel convenes three times per year.

6.2 The RPL Panel will determine whether and how much RPL can be granted or whether an assessment or interview needs to be passed. In the case of students who have attended a King's CPD short course without assessment, the Panel will decide whether the equivalent module can be taken without attendance and only the assessment attended.

- 6.3 Each RPL claim is considered by two RPL Panel members who make a recommendation to the RPL Panel for ratification.
- 6.4 Following consideration by the RPL Panel, the Nightingale Student Hub will inform the applicant of the outcome of the application.
- 6.5 RPL Panel decisions are also communicated to the Faculty's next Assessment Sub-Board for recording in the minutes.
- 6.6 The RPL Panel should report to the Faculty Education Committee (FEC), annually in the autumn term, the numbers of applications accepted and rejected per programme.

6. Marks credited for Prior Learning

- 7.1 It is university policy that marks are not awarded for prior learning so while RPL credits count towards the number of credits needed for the award, they will not be used in the final degree classification. In most instances, an average of marks across all modules but excluding the RPL modules will be used to calculate mark for the year (or in the case of Master's level programmes, the award) in which RPL credit has been used. Where a student has sat an assessment set by the RPL Panel, the Assessment Sub-Board will decide whether the marks awarded should be included in the student's assessment profile.
- 7.3 Prior learning recognised by the Faculty will be clearly identified on students' transcripts.

Approved: Faculty Education Committee, July 2020.

To be reviewed: July 2021.

ⁱ A fee is not required for pre-registration nursing RPL claims