

1.0 Accreditation of Prior Learning in HE

1.1 Overview and Scope

The College Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) process is one which aims to recognise learning in whatever context it has taken place. It is based on the premise that learning can be identified, measured, assessed and accredited within academic courses, regardless of the context in which it is acquired.

Two forms of prior learning are recognised:

1. *Prior Certificated Learning (APCL)*. This is learning associated with a structured, formal course of study, which has already been assessed and accredited, either in higher education or by a professional body.
2. *Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)*. This is learning acquired through life, work experience and study not previously attested through formal education or certification.

To be given credit on this programme, such previous learning needs to be at the appropriate level or have the potential to reach that level with further study and reflection.

The procedure is informed by the DEL working group on APL and QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education chapter B6.

The general principles apply to all HE students but processes may be shaped by awarding body requirements.

1.2 Principles

The following principles are fundamental to the achievement of awards that meet nationally recognised standards of achievement.

- › Learning shall be recognised irrespective of the context in which it is achieved.
- › It is the achievement of learning, or the outcomes of that learning, and not just the experience of the activities alone that shall be accredited.
- › Claims for APL must be made using the application form (Appendix 1) and submitted with evidence of learning, evidenced in writing and authenticated at the appropriate level.
- › All claims for APL shall be considered with the same degree of rigour and shall be comparable in terms of evidence and effort.
- › Decisions regarding the accreditation of prior learning are a matter of academic judgement, informed by professional bodies and other stakeholders.
- › The entire APL process shall be transparent to all stakeholders and demonstrably rigorous and fair.

- › All staff associated with the accreditation of prior learning shall have their roles clearly and explicitly defined, and underpinned by appropriate staff induction/development.
- › Limitations to APL shall be clearly defined. These will be reviewed in light of the awarding body requirements.
- › Policy and procedures for the accreditation of prior learning shall be subject to regular monitoring and review every five years.

1.3 Procedure

1.3.1 Process for the accreditation of prior learning:

- › Where a module tutor identifies a situation where accreditation of prior learning is appropriate, then that module tutor shall identify with the course tutor a suitable form of documentary evidence in line with the guidance below.
- › The tutor shall then collect and take steps to authenticate the evidence that has been provided by the student. Based on this evidence the tutor shall then recommend or otherwise accreditation for the required learning outcome(s).
- › On completion of this assessment the tutor shall present to the course tutor the evidence and a brief written statement supporting his/her decision. The course tutor shall then discuss the application with the Course Director, Head of Quality (HE) and the Subject Partnership Manager or the External Examiner depending on the awarding body.

The Course Director/Coordinator will:

In relation to Foundation Degrees and other programmes provided in conjunction with other Institutions, ensure that specific details regarding the appropriate credit for Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL) and/or Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) will be established in line with the guidelines approved by the partner Institution.

In all cases of accreditation of prior certificated learning (APCL) or accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) students must demonstrate that they have fully met all of the learning outcomes of the module for which exemption is sought.

1.4 Evidence for APCL

- › Regard shall be taken in relation to the currency of certificated evidence.
- › Determine whether the certificated evidence is commensurate with the learning outcomes of that part of the programme for which exemption is sought.
- › The Course Co-ordinator will seek, where appropriate, approval for internal decisions

- › It is the responsibility of the student to furnish the Course Co-ordinator with the required information.

1.5 Evidence for APEL – Admission and Exemptions

- › The student will provide a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate suitability and experience for entry to the programme. The evidence is likely to include (see Appendix 2):
 - Section 1 Personal Reflection.
 - Section 2 Appendices – evidence of learning (as appropriate)
 - Curriculum Vitae
 - Employment
 - Education
 - Training and Professional Qualifications
 - Informal Learning Activities
 - Additional Information
- › The Course Co-ordinator and/or module tutor will in consultation with the student, determine whether the evidence presented is likely to meet the criteria of being authentic, current valid, reliable and sufficient.

ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING (APL)

APPLICATION FORM

Please indicate if you are applying for certificated and/or experiential learning

I wish to apply for APCL - certificated learning

I wish to apply for APEL - experiential learning

(Any APEL claim may include some certificated evidence)

PART 1: PERSONAL INFORMATION
Surname:
Forename(s):
Title: (e.g. Dr, Mr, Ms, Miss, Mrs)
Contact details: Address: Postcode: Telephone Number(s): Home: Work: Mobile Email address:

PART 2: PROPOSED COURSE OF STUDY

Programme applied for:

Course Title:

Campus:

Mode of attendance: Full-time
Part-time

PART 3: OUTLINE OF APCL CLAIM

I wish to apply for APCL for:

Admission to the programme named above for the following modules/years (delete as appropriate)

.....
.....

I enclose the following documentation:

Covering Letter	<input type="checkbox"/>
APL1 Form	<input type="checkbox"/>
Academic Transcript(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Certificates of Awards	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reference(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Statements authenticating claim	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme Descriptors	<input type="checkbox"/>
Module Descriptors	<input type="checkbox"/>
Graduate Qualities	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other please state:

PART 4: OUTLINE OF APEL CLAIM

Your claim for APEL is to be supported by a Portfolio of Evidence including a Personal Reflection and examples of evidence to authenticate your claim.

I enclose the following documentation:

APL1 Form:

Portfolio:

- Section 1 Personal Reflection.
- Section 2 Appendices – evidence of learning (as appropriate)

Curriculum Vitae

Employment

Education

Training and Professional Qualifications

Informal Learning Activities

Additional Information

Signature:

Date:

Please return this form and evidence the relevant Course Director/APL Adviser

NB You will not receive confirmation of APL awarded until you have submitted confirmed results.

Additional information on evidence for APEL

Evidence of prior experiential learning shall be presented in the form of a portfolio of evidence. The portfolio shall contain written material which clearly demonstrates how the student's prior experience is evidence of his/her achievement of the requisite learning outcomes:

A typical portfolio should normally contain:

- Title page
- Table of contents
- Curriculum Vitae
- Employment History
- Education and Training History
- Training and Professional Qualifications

And include the following sections

Introduction	Setting the context of the claim in the overall academic and career plans of the student
Experience	An expansion on a curriculum vitae or other significant life events including a description of experiences including informal learning activities eg conferences/workshops.
Learning Account	An account of the learning that has resulted and reflections on what has been learned from the experience
Learning Outcomes	Clear statements of demonstrable behavioural change/performance resulting from the learning together with a list of demonstrable learning outcomes
Evidence	Evidence of the achievement of each learning outcome was completed by the applicant

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accreditation: the process of identification, assessment and formal acknowledgement of prior learning and achievement.

Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL): a process for assessing and, as appropriate, recognising prior experiential learning or prior certificated learning for academic purposes. This recognition may give the learning a credit value in a credit-based structure and allow it to be counted towards the completion of a programme of study and the award of qualifications associated with it.

The term 'accreditation of prior learning' is used here to encapsulate the range of activity and approaches used formally to acknowledge and establish publicly that some reasonably substantial and significant element of learning has taken place. Such learning may have been recognised previously by an education provider described as 'prior certificated learning'; or it may have been achieved by reflecting upon experiences outside the formal education and training systems, described as 'prior experiential learning'.

Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL): a process through which previously assessed and certificated learning is considered and, as appropriate, recognised for academic purposes.

Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL): a process, through which learning achieved outside education or training systems is assessed and, as appropriate, recognised for academic purposes.

Authenticity: the evidence should clearly relate to the applicant's own effort and achievements.

Credit: is an educational currency which provides a measure of learning achieved at a given level.

Currency: the evidence should relate to current learning. Where the subject/course teams and/or professional, statutory or regulatory bodies have specific requirements and/or time limits for the currency of evidence, certification or demonstration of learning, these shall be made clear and transparent.

Exemptions: is the awarding of academic credit against specific outcomes on a modular basis.

Level: the standard of achievement reached on completion of the specified outcomes for which accreditation is being claimed.

Module: a module is a component of a programme with its own approved aims, objectives, learning outcomes and assessment methods.

Reliability: the extent to which there is inter-assessor agreement or consistency in the assessment of claims.

Sufficiency: there should be sufficient written evidence to demonstrate fully the achievement of the learning being claimed.

Validity: there should be a clear and transparent link between the learning being evidenced and the outcomes against which recognition is being sought.