

Recognition of Prior Learning HE Policy and Procedure

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VERSION 1

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. If an applicant wishes to apply for or commence a degree at the University Centre with previous learning or qualifications at the same or higher level then admission may be gained without the satisfying the standard entry requirements, or with an exemption from completing certain modules, units or an entire level or stage.
- 1.2. Recognition of prior learning or RPL is the term given to learning that may have taken place at an earlier point such as within the workplace, on short courses or another degree programme, in a community setting or through a voluntary organisation. If it is to be formally accepted it needs to be documented and assessed through the process outlined in this policy.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1. This policy and procedure applies to prospective and existing students on University Centre delivered higher education programmes. A student may make the University Centre aware of relevant prior learning at any stage – although it is usually discussed during the application and interview stages – with a view to having it recognised.
- 2.2. A student may not request RPL for the activity itself (such as 100 hours voluntary work), but from the outcomes associated with the activity – i.e. the learning that has been gained through the participation in the activity. These outcomes need to be evidenced and matched against the outcomes for the course that is being applied for or studied on in order for them to be recognised and accepted.
- 2.3. There are two main types of RPL:
 - Recognition of prior certificated learning (RPCL)
 - Recognition of prior experiential learning (RPEL)
- 2.4. A student may pursue an RPCL application, an RPEL application, or a mixture of the two. It is the student's responsibility (with the support of a member of University Centre staff) to demonstrate how the prior learning will allow them to enter onto a University Centre course, enter at a higher level of a degree programme or obtain an exemption from completing specific modules, units or levels/stages.
- 2.5. All degree programmes, including those at the University Centre, are categorised by level according to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) in England and Wales and Northern Ireland. Programmes are made up of a specific amount of credit. Typically:

Level	Qualification	Credit
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HNC• Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)• First year of Foundation Degree, HND or Honours Degree	120
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HND• Foundation Degree• Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE)• Second year of Honours Degree	240
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• BA (Hons) Degree	360

- 2.6. Within each level, the total credits are divided into modules (or units on Higher National programmes). Students registered on foundation degree and BA (Hons) top-up programmes will study modules worth between 20 to 40 credits (depending on the programme). For example, on each year of a foundation degree, either four 30 credit modules or six 20 credit modules are studied. Whereas, on a BA (Hons) top-up, the final dissertation or major project is likely to be 40 credits or more.

3. DETAILS OF POLICY

Prior Certificated Learning

- 3.1. Prior certificated learning (RPCL) is learning which you received certification for. This may or may not be on relevant HE frameworks such as the FHEQ. If your previous certificated learning is not at degree level (i.e. level 4 or above) then you can work out its level using the Register of Regulated Qualifications, available through [Ofqual](#).
- 3.2. The minimum RPCL credit claim that will be considered is 20 credits. If a student is claiming for a module exemption then it would be advisable to check whether the number of credits already gained matches the number of credits of the module in question.
- 3.3. Any modules that are included in a successful RPCL claim will not have a mark next to them on the transcript of results but will be shown as a 'Pass'. No grades will be recorded for prior certificated learning; i.e. the final classification will be based on the average of the marks awarded during the University Centre programme of study only.
- 3.4. Any credits included in a claim for RPCL must have been gained within the previous 16 years. Any certificated learning gained outside this time limit will not be considered as part of a claim for RPCL.

Prior Experiential Learning

- 3.5. Prior experiential learning is a broad term that covers learning undertaken outside of formal qualifications. It can occur in many places, but the key environments include the workplace, in voluntary roles or in community settings.
- 3.6. The minimum RPEL claim that will be considered is the equivalent of a whole module. If a student is claiming for a module exemption then the claim will be assessed against the learning outcomes for the whole module in question. No exemptions for parts of modules or individual components will be considered.
- 3.7. An application for RPEL should include, as a minimum, evidence of two years' experience in a relevant position, whether paid employment or volunteering.
- 3.8. Any modules that are included in a successful RPEL claim will not have a mark next to them on the transcript of results but will be shown as a 'Pass'. No grades will be recorded for prior certificated learning; i.e. the final classification will be based on the average of the marks awarded during the University Centre programme of study only.
- 3.9. Any experiential learning included in a claim for RPEL must have been undertaken within the previous 8 years. Any experiential learning gained outside this time limit will not be considered as part of a claim for RPEL.

Making a claim

- 3.10. It is expected that a claim for RPL will be made at the earliest possible opportunity – ideally during the application or admission stages. However, if at any point during their course a student realises that there may be an opportunity to make a claim then they should make their programme leader aware as soon as possible.

Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL)

- 3.11. A claimant for RPCL will normally be asked to complete a portfolio with the evidence needed to assess the claim for RPCL.
- 3.12. The portfolio will typically include:
- i. Recognition of Prior Learning Application Form (see appendix i.). This will include details of which module/elements of the programme for which you are seeking exemption, including an overview of how the learning outcomes have been met through the prior certificated learning.
 - ii. Documentation from previous certificated learning including:
 - a. Certificate
 - b. Transcript
 - c. Programme specification
 - d. Module specification
 - e. Any other relevant information or documentation
- 3.13. If any of this documentation is missing the student should contact the organisation who awarded the original certificate and transcript. Please note there may be fees for duplicate documentation.
- 3.14. The programme leader will confirm whether the previous learning matches the requirements for the programme and that your prior learning demonstrates the required minimum pass mark for the module/level.

Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL)

- 3.15. An applicant or student wishing to claim previous experiential learning to gain a module exemption or stage exemption will complete a portfolio with the evidence needed to assess the claim for RPEL.
- 3.16. The portfolio will typically include:
- i. Recognition of Prior Learning Application Form (see appendix i.)
 - ii. Table of contents
 - iii. Detailed CV or personal profile including:
 - a. employment history
 - b. education and training history
 - c. professional qualifications
 - iv. Introduction to career goals and context of the application
 - v. Experience, which will build on the CV
 - vi. What learning has taken place and reflection on the learning from this experience
 - vii. Details and evidence of achievement, showing what behaviour or performance changes have arisen and been demonstrated from the learning
 - viii. The relevance of this learning/achievement to the claim being made
 - ix. Proof of the learning i.e. evidence that learning has been undertaken
- 3.17. It is the programme leader's responsibility to confirm that previous learning maps to the programme learning outcomes and provides the equivalent of the required minimum pass mark (i.e. 40) for the module or stage. The programme leader will also

ensure that accepting the claim will not be a disadvantage in later studies i.e. that core knowledge or key practical skills have not been missed.

Limits for RPL claims

- 3.18. The limits for credit that can be awarded through RPL are: no more than 50% of a foundation degree (120 credits) or two-thirds of a three-year BA (Hons) programme (240 credits).

The Open University Regulations allow that:

A student may be awarded recognition for prior learning (certified, experiential or uncertified), towards the requirements of a named award up two-thirds* of the total credit requirements for that award

**two-thirds of RPL is only permitted for full, three-year bachelor's degrees (360 credits) or full Masters degrees (a minimum of 180 credits) and not sub-awards, where the usual maximum is 50%.*

- 3.19. No credit can be claimed at Level 6 or on a Level 6 programme (such as the final year of a three-year honours degree or a BA (Hons) top up year).
- 3.20. If prior credit or experiential learning is successfully matched against modules or levels, any marks or grades received for the prior learning are not used in the calculation of the final classification for the programme.
- 3.21. No credit can be awarded for the dissertation or major project element of any programme.

For Open University-validated awards more detail on the regulations is available on the University Centre website <https://www.calderdale.ac.uk/about-us/student-handbooks-and-regulations/>.

Processing a claim

- 3.22. Consideration of a claim for RPL is the responsibility of the programme leader. The programme leader may consult with a member of UCMT or other suitably experienced member of staff to support their decision making.
- 3.23. The programme leader and a member of the University Centre Management Team (UCMT) must complete section C, giving a clear justification if all or part of the claim has been rejected.
- 3.24. Where a claim is accepted:
- i. A student's Promonitor record will be updated to show where RPL has been applied. For each module that RPL has been accepted the code 'EX' will be inputted against the grade.
 - ii. The Board of Examiners or applicable assessment body will be notified at the next available meeting to confirm that credit has been awarded through prior certificated or experiential learning and that completion of the applicable module/s does not need to take place.
 - iii. If the student is enrolled on an Open University-validated programme, the student's diploma supplement will show 'Pass' against the applicable module/s rather than a percentage mark. Only marks gained on modules completed and passed while enrolled at the University Centre will contribute to the final classification.
 - iv. If the student is enrolled on a Pearson awarded HNC or HND programme, the process for claiming the award will be completed in line with Pearson's procedures.

3.25. Where a claim is rejected:

- i. A full justification should be given in part C of the RPL Form, and this will be communicated to the claimant.
- ii. It may be referred back to the claimant where information is missing or incomplete to give an opportunity to provide the missing information or documentation.
- iii. A claimant may appeal on the basis that:
 - a. The information contained in the documentation originally supplied has been misinterpreted, critical elements missed, or mislaid;
 - b. New information or documentation has been found that will effectively support an alternative decision.
- iv. If an appeal is made, it will be considered by a second member of UCMT.

Charges for RPL

3.26. There is no charge for processing RPCL or RPEL claims.

4. MONITORING

This statement will be reviewed biannually, with changes being approved by the Policies and Procedures Committee.

5. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

This policy and procedure should be read in conjunction with:

- The Assessment Policy for Open University-validated Programmes
- Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment

6. REVIEW

Change(s) Made		Reason for Change			
New policy		Policy required to reflect differences between FE and HE			
Review Date	Reviewed by:	Initial Approval by:	Final Approval by:	Next Review Date:	Review Period
Sep 2020	David Clapham	Academic Board	Policies and Procedures Committee	Sep 2022	2 Years

7 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

First Assessment Conducted by:	Date:	Final/Approved Assessment Conducted by:	Date:
Angela Harrison – Quality Administrator	08.09.2020	Angela Harrison – Quality Administrator	08.09.2020

8 PUBLICATION

Audience:	Published:
Learners	Moodle
Staff	Intranet



Recognition of Prior Learning Application Form

Section A: To be completed by the claimant

Before you complete this form please ensure that you have read the Student Guide to Recognition of Prior Learning and spoken with your programme leader.

Name			
Programme title			
Mode of study	FT	PT	Programme Leader

Application for admission through Recognition of Prior Learning

Exemption sought from the following programme entry requirement(s)

Application for Recognition of Prior Learning (against modules(s)/level)

Module(s)/Level(s) for which credit exemption is requested	Type of Prior Learning (X)				
	Module title (if applicable) and code	Credits	Level	Certificated	Experiential

(add extra rows as necessary)

Section B: To be completed by the programme leader

Claims against entry requirements

Course entry requirement	Evidence of alternative experience/qualification(s) which satisfy the entry requirement	Programme leader comments (including approve/reject)

Claims against academic credit

Title of module or course level learning outcome	Evidence of prior learning	Assessor comments (including approve/reject)

Appendix i. Recognition of Prior Learning Application Form

Section C: To be completed by the programme leader and a member of UCMT

Programme leader		UCMT	
Signature		Signature	
Date		Claim recommended to Board of Examiners?	Y / N
If the RPL claim, in full or part, is rejected, please state reasons below, with as much detail as possible:		Date	
		If the RPL claim, in full or part, is rejected, please state reasons below, with as much detail as possible:	