



**KING
GEORGE V
COLLEGE**



Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy Academic Year 2019-20

Author:	Name: J Kelly
	Job Title: Assistant Principal Curriculum and Quality
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The College is committed to an inclusive approach to the assessment of learning, including the recognition of prior learning and/or achievement.
- 1.2 The College will ensure that the process of assessment for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is subject to the same quality assurance and monitoring standards as any other form of assessment.
- 1.3 **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** is a method of assessment [leading to the award of credit] that considers whether students can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning (*Regulatory arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework Ofqual/08/3726*).
- 1.4 RPL includes:
- **Accreditation of prior certificated learning** [APCL] – qualifications or academic credits completed through another qualification and/or at another educational institution
 - **Accreditation of prior experiential learning** [APEL] - achieved outside formal education and training systems (e.g. work/ life experience), or via non-credit bearing courses such as in-house training.

2. Aim

2.1 The aim of the policy is to enable students to apply for RPL against any recognised qualification for which they are currently enrolled to recognise learning based on experience and/or other previous formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts. The knowledge, understanding and/or skills in question may have been acquired in any area of life, e.g. domestic / family life, education and training, work related activities or voluntary activities.

3. Scope of policy

3.1 This policy applies to most qualifications, including those awarded by Higher Education institutions and those on the National Qualification Framework (NQF), the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), Self-Regulated Framework (SRF) and other national frameworks in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and self-regulated qualifications. However, where learning is only evidenced through a national examination the student is required to sit this examination, e.g. general qualifications such as GCSEs are not within the scope of this policy.

3.2 Prior learning must be relevant to a student's course of study and at the same academic level.

3.3 Higher education students on programmes of study with **UCLAN and the University of Cumbria** are subject to the academic regulations for these institutions in respect of prior learning. Requests in respect of accreditation of prior learning for students studying on these programmes will be referred to the relevant institution for confirmation of RPL.

3.4 Any higher education award (carrying academic credit) which has been certificated by Pearson, cannot be used as prior learning to contribute to the achievement of another higher education award of an equivalent level to be certificated by Pearson. Therefore, any part of a Level 5 Higher National Diploma that has been certificated cannot be used as evidence for RPL towards the achievement of an additional Level 5 Higher National Diploma. Where learning has not been certificated this does not apply.

3.5 Retrospective claims for RPL from students who are no longer registered for a programme of study at the College will not be considered.

4. How RPL is applied

4.1 Provided that the assessment requirements of a given unit or qualification have been met, the use of RPL is acceptable for accrediting a unit, units or a whole qualification. Evidence must be:

- **Valid:** The evidence provided by the student must demonstrate that it conforms to the requirements of the learning outcome. In assessing a unit using RPL the assessor must be satisfied that the evidence produced by the student meets the assessment standard established by the learning outcome and its related assessment criteria.
- **Current:** The assessor will need check that evidence meets up-to-date requirements rather than reflecting a practice that has significantly changed. Evidence of current knowledge, understanding and skills will vary from sector to sector. If the currency of any evidence is in doubt, the assessor should use questions to check understanding, and for competence.

- **Reliable:** Evidence obtained through RPL should be such that an assessor would arrive at the same assessment decision, were the assessment to be repeated.

4.2 Assessors wishing to carry out RPL must ensure that:

- Students are registered as soon as they formally start to gather evidence
- Records of assessment against prior learning are maintained
- Certification claims are made according to normal procedures
- All relevant evidence is assessed before assessment decisions are confirmed

4.3 RPL should not be confused with the following:

- Exemption - the facility for a student to claim exemption from some of the achievement requirements of a qualification, using evidence of certificated achievement deemed to be of equivalent value.
- Equivalent unit(s) - a unit/units from a different qualification or submitted by another recognised organisation that is/are deemed to be of equivalent value and so can count towards a qualification in place of designated mandatory or optional units from it.

4.4 The RPL process is not concerned with allowing for exceptional entry to, or exemption from, a programme of study. The RPL process does not allow the recognition of any unit or qualification assessed by external assessment only. This is because such units are subject to specific evidence requirements.

4.5 For students undertaking higher education programmes the maximum number of credits for which RPL can be applied for is as follows:

Award	Credit requirement for this award	Max RPL allowance
Foundation Degree	240	160
Honours Degree (1 year top up)	120	60
Higher National Diploma	240	120
Higher National Certificate	120	60

5. RPL procedure for students

5.1 Stage 1 – Awareness, information and guidance

Ahead of enrolling a student, the possibility that they may be able to claim credit for some of their previous learning should be raised with them. If the student is interested in this, they will need to know the:

- Process of claiming achievement by using RPL
- Sources of support and guidance available to them
- Timelines, appeals processes and any fees involved

5.2 Stage 2 – Pre-assessment; gathering evidence and giving information.

At this stage, the student will carry out the process of collecting evidence against the requirements of the relevant unit(s) and will submit a written application indicating their intention to apply for RPL for a specific unit of their current course/framework to the course tutor. In some cases the development of an assessment plan and tracking document or similar

may be required, to support the student through the process. The evidence gathered will need to meet the standards of the unit, or part of unit, that the evidence is being used for.

In all cases students will need a Certificate and/or transcript of results from their previous institution along with their application. For international qualifications, it is the applicant's responsibility to gain a statement of comparability from NARIC prior to application. If transcripts of results are not yet be available, and once it has been confirmed that the mapping of learning outcomes has been successful, the College may then make a conditional offer subject to receipt of Certificate/transcript of results.

5.3 Stage 3 – Assessment/documentation of evidence

Assessment as part of RPL is a structured process for gathering and reviewing evidence and making judgments about a students' prior leaning and experience in relation to unit standards. The assessor (usually the Curriculum Leader or Internal Verifier) may look at work experience records (validated by managers); previous portfolios of evidence put together by the student, or essays and reports validated as being the student's own unaided work. The assessment process will be subject to the College's quality assurance procedure, e.g. internal standardisation and internal verification. For courses awarded by the College's Higher Education institution partners or awarding bodies (UCLan, the University of Cumbria and Pearson for Higher Nationals) the relevant institution will be consulted, in line with academic regulations, to confirm whether RPL is acceptable. Evidence gathered through RPL should be clearly referenced and signposted to aid internal assessment and internal and external verification. The methods of assessment used will be determined by the assessment strategy for the qualification being assessed but might, for example, include:-

- examination of documents,
- witness testimony
- reflective accounts
- professional discussion.

5.4 Stage 4 – Claiming certification

Once the internal and external quality assurance procedures have been successfully completed, certification claims can be made by the College. Assessment and internal verification records, along with any additional RPL records completed, should be retained for a 3 year period following certification. The assessor must ensure that all learning outcomes and assessment criteria being claimed for each unit are achieved and that the records of assessment are maintained in the usual way.

5.5 Stage 5 – Appeal

As with any assessment decision, if a student wishes to appeal against a decision made about their assessment they should follow the Academic Appeals procedure. For further information please contact your course tutor or a member of the Guidance team.

6. Funding for RPL

6.1 The funding adjustment for prior learning field should be completed with the proportion of the learning aim that is still to be delivered if the student is not undertaking the full scope of the learning aim because of prior learning. This can be because of

- a break in learning,
- a transfer from another provider, or

- prior learning when they join as a new student on a new learning aim

6.2 Should a charge be applied by an awarding body for the administration for RPL then the applicant will be advised in advance of any such charge being made and passed on to the applicant or sponsor.

7. Processes for investigating malpractice or maladministration

7.1 Allegations of fraudulent applications or administration of RPL will be investigated in accordance with the College's Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

8. Related policies and procedures

- Assessment Policy
- HE Assessment Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Higher Education Admissions Policy
- Academic Appeals Procedure
- Malpractice and Maladministration Policy & Procedure
- Higher National programmes delivered at Southport College – [Academic Regulations](#)
- Higher Education partners' academic regulations:
 - [UCLan](#)
 - [University of Cumbria](#)

9. Regulatory references

9.1 Ofqual and SQA require all awarding organisations to establish and maintain their compliance with regulatory conditions and criteria. This policy addresses the regulatory criteria and conditions as set out in the *Ofqual Handbook: General Conditions of Recognition 2017*.

9.2 In respect of Higher Education programmes this policy addresses the following aspects of the **UK Quality Code for Higher Education**:

- **Expectation for Standards**: The academic standards of courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework
- **Advice and Guidance for Assessment**
 - Core practice four: assessment and classification processes are reliable, fair and transparent
 - Guiding Principles 2 and 3 pertaining to 'recognition of prior learning',