

POLICY & PROCEDURE FOR THE ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING (APL) FOR HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

1. Purpose

The following details the procedure to follow when a student would like to apply for recognition of previous studies that are directly related, and at the same level of the learning they are planning to undertake. It is College policy to acknowledge and accredit a student's prior learning and achievement so that she/he may gain part of a qualification without undertaking a full learning programme. However, under all circumstances the Awarding Organisation regulations apply.

2. Responsibility

Overall responsibility lies with the Dean of Higher Education and Curriculum Innovation and the Quality Improvement Director.

Responsibilities of assessor's and Assistant Principal's are defined within the procedure.

3. Scope

APL is the process of awarding academic or unit credit for prior learning or experience. It is also known as an exemptions policy or a policy of advanced standing.

Note: APL should not be confused with exemption, unit equivalency or credit accumulation and transfer.

Policies and procedures have been developed over time which has led to the use of a number of terms to describe the process. Among the most common are:

- Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)
- Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)
- Accreditation of Prior Achievement (APA)
- Accreditation of Prior Learning and Achievement (APLA)
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

These terms broadly describe the same process.

Pearson use the term Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

The College has an approved RPL policy for Further Education qualifications.

The appropriate programme External Examiner will be notified of APL candidates and will review APL decisions.

The College will, where appropriate, undertake a process of accreditation of prior learning and achievement leading to the gathering of evidence which can be acceptable to an awarding body for part of a qualification. The evidence gathered allows a candidate to fast-track or to achieve parts of the qualification without attending a formal programme of learning.

It is College policy that students should be given encouragement and support so that they feel confident in initiating the APL process at any time during their programme. Students should be supported in this process by appropriately qualified and experienced staff.

4. Process

When a student initiates the APL process the Course Leader will assess the extent of the relevance of the prior learning and achievement which the student wishes to claim and will advise accordingly. When following the APL process, the Course Leader and specialist subject tutor should complete the relevant proforma (see Appendix 1).

When a student is claiming APL by providing evidence of an equivalent qualification from either abroad or the UK, the course tutor will require the student to provide an authenticated copy of the relevant certificate. The International Recruitment Officer will provide the course leader with a report from UK NARIC identifying the foreign qualification. The course leader will then identify the foreign qualification in NARICS, (The British Council International Guide to Qualifications in Education, available from the National Academic Recognition Information Centre for the UK), or will contact the relevant Professional Institute and identify the nature and extent of equivalency. To ensure rigour in this process, the support and approval of a specialist subject tutor may be required. It may also be necessary to obtain a complete transcript of the professional or foreign qualification and to map it against unit outcomes.

If a student is claiming APL through the submission of work related assessment and experience, the student must be made aware that the evidence proffered must be current, authentic, valid and sufficient. (Current usually means within the last two to three years, but this is subject to the discretion of the assessor and the nature of the evidence. Authentic means that any evidence must be genuine and supported by credible witnesses or referees. Valid means that evidence must be relevant to the outcomes or units claimed. Sufficient means that there is an adequate quantity of evidence that enables a rigorous assessment to be made).

It may be necessary for a subject specialist tutor to advise the course tutor and the student regarding the relevance of the evidence. (Note: there is a distinction between the APL assessor and the subject specialist adviser.)

The course tutor will complete an initial assessment form with the student which identifies the nature and form of the prior learning being claimed and will map this against the outcomes for the unit or units claimed. Where the mapping procedure identifies gaps in either knowledge or understanding or evidence, the course tutor will make a judgement as to whether the qualification or unit can be completed with a limited amount of additional evidence: or whether the student needs to attend the usual programme of learning.

Where it appears that the student can provide evidence, the course tutor will complete an action plan with the student which will include the following:

- The nature of evidence which is to be provided
- Where evidence requires further authentication
- The date by which this evidence will be provided and assessed
- Students should be given the opportunity to be able to sit the units if their APL claim is not successful within a reasonable timeframe
- Agreed dates for a progress check to see if students require tutorial or subject specialist support.

(*Where additional evidence is required, the tutor will provide assignments or other

appropriate means of assessment that will enable the student to provide sufficient evidence of the achievement of the unit outcomes).

The student will then submit a portfolio for assessment which will be subject to internal and external verification. The student will be provided with summative feedback on the success of their APL claim. If the claim is not successful but could, with additional evidence, meet the requirements; formative feedback may be provided to allow resubmission.

For HNC/D work-based evidence can only be awarded a Pass. Evidence from foreign or other qualifications may be graded Pass, Merit or Distinction after assessing equivalency through **UK NARIC**. Any units claimed by APL must be made clear to the Assessment Board and if approved will be entered on to the student's SRF.

Review of progress of students who have applied for APL will be analysed in the course Annual Monitoring Reports.

As with any assessment decision on procedural grounds; if a student wishes to appeal against a decision made about their assessment they need to follow the Solihull College & University Centre Appeals Policy and procedures.

Where evidence is assessed to be only sufficient to cover one or more learning outcomes, or to partly meet the need of a learning outcome, then additional assessment methods should be used to generate sufficient evidence to be able to award the learning outcome(s) for the whole unit.

Where APL evidence is being assessed against graded units only a pass grade can be awarded.

The APL process is not concerned with allowing for exceptional entry to, or exemption from, a programme of study.

The APL 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.

Normally the maximum amount of APL available to a candidate will be 50% of the qualification.

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Quality Code for Higher Education has a section on Assessment and accreditation of prior learning (<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/uk-quality-code-for-higher-education-chapter-b6-assessment-of-students-and-the-recognition-of-prior-learning1>) chapter B6.

**PROFORMA FOR APL - HIGHER EDUCATION
AWARDS**

Name of Student:

Date:

Assessor's Name:

Reasons why APL process initiated by student:

Date of initial interview with student and evidence requested

Date:

Evidence requested:

Date and details of evidence seen

Date:

Evidence Seen:

National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARICS) validity checked

Signature of assessor:

Date:

Attach photocopy to student file.

Transcription of qualification seen and mapped against awarding body learning outcomes

Signature:

Date:

Photocopy and add to student file.

Professional institute contacted for equivalency (i.e. a summary of their response)

A list of evidence supplied and assessed by subject specialist as sufficient, valid, relevant and authentic

Assignments set with dates for submission (or other means of assessment) that provide sufficient evidence

APL approved in the following units with final grade provisionally awarded

Evidence approved by assessor

Signature:

Date:

APL approved by Assistant Principal

Name:

Signature:

Date: