



# RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING PROCEDURE (FURTHER EDUCATION)

**Originator:** Nina Spencer  
**Date:** 27 January 2014  
**Approved by:** Academic Board 12 March 2014  
**Type:** Procedure  
**Revised:** December 2019; June 2020

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a general term and is a process of recognising previous learning, experience or achievement which may satisfy the requirements of unit yet to be assessed or awarded. Prior experience/achievements may have resulted from past or present employment, previous study or voluntary activities.
- 1.2 RPL may be used by students/applicants as a means of gaining:
- Admission part way onto a course
  - Accreditation for specific units within a qualification
  - Exemption from assessment of units

## **2 Definitions of Prior Learning**

### **2.1 Prior Certificated Learning (PCL)**

Prior Certificated Learning is learning that has been previously assessed in a formal learning environment, e.g. learning arising from academic and professional awards such as certificates, diplomas and other courses at an appropriate level.

### **2.2 Prior Experiential Learning (PEL)**

Prior Experiential Learning denotes learning obtained from experience which is uncertificated and not previously assessed. For example, learning from unpaid work or paid work, community activities, leisure pursuits and other informal experiences.

## **3 Principles**

- 3.1 The University believes that learning, wherever it occurs, should be recognised in an appropriate way within its academic provision, subject to evidence of the prior certificated and/or experiential learning.
- 3.2 Applications for RPL must be supported by evidence that is of an equivalent level and content to the units for which the application is being made.
- 3.3 Decisions will be based on the identification, and mapping of evidence against unit learning outcomes. The evidence must be valid, authentic, sufficient and reliable. Even if the learning outcomes can be demonstrated, credit may not be awarded if the learning process has not given students/applicants the opportunities to acquire necessary study skills or gain familiarity with essential equipment, facilities, software or assessment methods such that the success of future study might be jeopardised.
- 3.4 RPL may be awarded for up to 50% of the units comprising a qualification. RPL cannot be awarded for the partial completion of a unit.
- 3.5 RPL relates to summative assessment rather than formative assessment.
- 3.6 RPL is a student/applicant centred, voluntary process. The student/applicant should be offered advice on the nature and range of evidence considered appropriate to support a claim for assessing RPL, and be given guidance and support to make their claim.
- 3.7 Leeds Arts University aims to assess prior learning with equity and fairness and any decision made may be subject to appeal through either the University's Admissions appeal process or, for registered students, through the University's academic appeals process.
- 3.8 The following principles form the basis for good practice and inform the approach to RPL taken:
- a) RPL is a valid method of enabling individuals to claim credit for units irrespective of how the learning took place or the assessments undertaken. There must be no difference between the achievement of the required standards (as set out in the unit specification) through prior learning or through a formal programme of study.

- b) RPL policies, processes, procedures, practices and decisions must be transparent, rigorous, reliable, fair and accessible to students/applicants and the awarding body to ensure that users can be confident of the decisions and outcomes of RPL.
- c) The process of RPL is subject to the same standard of quality assurance and monitoring processes as any other form of learning and assessment.
- d) Assessment methods for RPL must be of equal rigour to any other assessment methods, be fit for purpose and relate to the evidence of learning. A student/applicant can claim RPL against any whole unit unless awarding body regulations states otherwise.

#### **4 Awarding Bodies**

- 4.1 The opportunity to claim credits or exemptions through the process of Recognition of Prior Learning is subject to regulations set by the University's further education awarding bodies, namely University of the Arts London Awarding Body (UALAB) and Certa.
- 4.2 Application for RPL is forwarded to the awarding body. The final decision for RPL accreditation is made by the awarding body.
- 4.3 This procedure should be read in conjunction with awarding body RPL policies and procedures, available on their websites.

#### **5 Procedure**

- 5.1 Discussion regarding eligibility for RPL may take place at application, interview or induction stages.
- 5.2 If it is considered that an applicant may be eligible for Recognition of Prior Learning, this should be discussed at interview or induction tutorial. Information on RPL is made available to applicants and students via information on the Portal and Course Handbooks.
- 5.3 If it is recognised that a student/applicant could be eligible for RPL, a meeting should be arranged with the Course Leader to discuss arrangements for making an application.
- 5.4 The Course Leader will refer to the University procedure and Awarding Body RPL policies for guidelines on which units are eligible for RPL and any fees payable. They will then talk to the student/applicant to explain RPL principles. If the student/applicant wishes to proceed and if it is considered that there is a possibility of RPL, an application form should be completed. The Course Leader will then begin the RPL procedure as follows:
- 5.5 Stage 1: Advice and Guidance  
The Course Leader and student/applicant will look at the content of the course unit descriptors and begin to identify the learning outcomes the student/applicant may have achieved.

In so doing, the Course Leader will explain and provide guidance to the student/applicant about:

- the completion of mapping pro-formas which will state where the student/applicant believes they may have achieved the learning outcomes at the level of performance required.
- the demonstration of evidence which will prove that the student/applicant has achieved the learning outcomes at the level of performance required.
- In most cases a portfolio of work will be used as the evidence.
- The student/applicant will also be informed of the time-scale of the process.

#### 5.6 Stage 2: Pre assessment - gathering evidence and giving information

During this stage, the student/applicant will carry out the evidence collection and complete the mapping pro forma. The evidence required for the award of credit will depend on the learning outcomes and assessment criteria for the relevant unit(s) of the qualification.

In many cases the collection of evidence is straightforward as the student/applicant's portfolio of work will be the main source. Sometimes the student/applicant has written projects or assignments from other courses or employment that can also be used.

Sometimes where the Course Leader knows the content of previous courses for which the student/applicant has gained the qualification and this can be confirmed by qualification documentation (specifications), accreditation can take place on the production of the qualification document.

Guidance from a tutor should be available to the student/applicant throughout this stage.

#### 5.7 Stage 3: Assessment/documentation of evidence

The mapping proforma and portfolio evidence are then reviewed and assessed by the Course Leader following course assessment and moderation procedures.

If, as a result of assessment the student/applicant is accredited for the units claimed, the Course Leader will record the achievement according to awarding body guidelines.

If the assessment reveals that further learning is required, or further evidence produced, the student/applicant will be advised as to how this can be achieved.

#### 5.8 Stage 4: Feedback

After the assessment the Course Leader will provide feedback to the student/applicant, discussing the results and giving support and guidance on the options available to them, which may include, for example, further learning and development.

#### 5.9 Stage 5: Application to Awarding Body

Once the assessment is completed and confirms that the student/applicant may be eligible for RPL, the Course Leader will complete the relevant awarding body documentation and send to the awarding body for their approval.

Applications must be sent to and approved by the awarding body prior to the student being registered with them.

#### 5.10 Appeal

If an applicant wishes to appeal against the decision made about their claim for credit, they should follow the University's Admissions Appeal and Complaint Policy and Procedure or, for registered students, the University's Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure. If dissatisfied with the result of the University appeal outcome, further appeal can be made to the awarding body.

### 6 **Timescale**

Course Leaders should refer to awarding body guidance regarding timescales for RPL accreditation.

# APPLICATION FOR RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

(Further Education)



## SECTION A - APPLICANT / STUDENT & COURSE DETAILS

Applicant/Student Name	
Date of Birth	
Applicant/Student No. (if known)	
Course applied for	
Year/Level	

## SECTION B - APPLICATION DETAILS

Application in regards to:

- Admission onto a course
- Accreditation for a specific units within a qualification
- Exemption from assessment of units even though attendance is required

Type of Recognition of Prior Learning:

- Prior Certified Learning
- Prior Experiential Learning

<b>Reason for application</b>

<b>Qualifications previously achieved</b>

<b>Current employment role</b> <i>(if applicable)</i>

<b>Relevant study/employment role and experience</b> <i>(if applicable)</i>

<b>Potential RPL opportunities identified</b>

<b>Suitability for qualification and level of study</b> <i>(with rationale for decision)</i>

**SECTION C - RPL SUMMARY**

<b>Unit title:</b>	
--------------------	--

learning outcome / -Assessment Criteria	Candidate evidence provided	Course Leader/assessor comments	Achieved?
			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N
			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N
			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N
			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N
			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N
			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N
			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N
			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N
			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N
			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N
			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N
			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N

*Copy and paste above box for each unit Recognition of Prior Learning is being applied for.*

If the applicant is applying for admission onto a course, state the course entry requirements and outline how the evidence provided by the student demonstrates suitability for course entry or how it is equivalent to the entry requirements.

--

I confirm that, to the best of my knowledge, the information provided on this form is correct and that the evidence detailed is authentic. I agree to this information being shared with the relevant awarding body.

Applicant signature		Date	
---------------------	--	------	--

**SECTION D - RECOMMENDATION FOR APPROVAL & SIGNATURES**

<b>Application recommended for approval by RPL Assessor?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Y	<input type="checkbox"/> N *
*If no, state reason why:		

**Application recommended for approval by RPL Assessor**

Name	
Signature	
Job title/role	
Date	

**Application recommended for approval by Academic Registrar**

Name	
Signature	
Date	