



Accreditation of Prior Learning Policy

The term 'Accreditation of Prior Learning' (APL) in this policy document encompasses APL, ACPL, and APEL, as outlined in the definitions under 1 below. The APL process allows for the formal **recognition of prior learning**, involving the exercise of professional judgement on the part of academic staff to establish that a substantial element of learning has taken place prior to the candidate's admission to a programme. This recognition, when formally agreed and ratified, will lead to the award of credit and allow the credit value gained to be counted towards the completion of a University programme of study and associated award(s). Please note that this policy does not encompass direct entry arrangements, as these are subject to collaborative provision approval processes (see http://ses.leeds.ac.uk/info/22170/quality_assurance-related_policies/782/collaborative_provision_approval).

1. Definitions

Accreditation of Prior Learning - previously assessed and certificated learning through an education provider is recognised for academic purposes, in adherence with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) (also referred to as **Credit Transfer** in some contexts).

Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (ACPL) - the assignment of credit for learning (such as professional development or employment-based awards) that has already been prescribed and recognised by an organisation deemed appropriate to offer awards but which has not led to the award of credit or positioned within the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)

Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) - experiential learning outside formal education or training is considered and, where appropriate, is recognised for academic purposes.

2. Principles

To claim exemption the applicant's prior learning will have normally been awarded or undertaken within the previous **5 years** (also refer to 'currency' under 4 below). Prior certificated learning leading to the award of credit must have been awarded by a recognised higher education institution.

The maximum allowance of credit to be imported or exempted will normally be **one-third** of the total minimum credit requirement for the programme (e.g., 120 credits for a 360 credit degree programme).¹ Candidates allowed to import credit must have pursued an approved course extending over at least the equivalent of one year of full-time registration.

If a student leaves the programme before completion, a University of Leeds exit award can be conferred only if stipulated in the programme specifications and the student has undertaken at least two thirds of the award at the University of Leeds.

3. Application Process

Applications must normally be submitted by the applicant and processed prior to an offer letter being given.

¹ With the exception of intercalated programmes in the medical curriculum or where otherwise specifically approved by the Taught Student Education Board.

4. Consideration of Applications

Decisions to allow the Accreditation of Prior Learning should take account of the learning outcomes of the University's provision and demonstrate a clear match with content and overall equivalence of the applicant's prior learning.

All recommendations for the Accreditation of Prior Learning involve formal approval and ratification by the Faculty/School Taught Student Education Committee (see appendix 1, guidance for faculties/schools attached).

For the consideration of cases requesting the Accreditation of Prior Learning, criteria used to judge claims should take account of:

- a. *Validity*: is there an appropriate match between the evidence presented and the learning being demonstrated?
- b. *Authenticity*: is the evidence clearly related to the applicant's own efforts and achievements?
- c. *Currency*: Does the evidence relate to current learning (i.e. no more than 5 years old)? For learning achieved more than 5 years ago applicants should show how they have kept up-to-date and built upon their existing knowledge. Where HE providers 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 should be made clear and transparent
- d. *Reliability and relevance*: Is the evidence reliable and relevant to the learning being accessed.

Judgements relating to the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning should require the submission and consideration of evidence that can be assessed according to the criteria above. Guidance for applicants required to submit a portfolio, to inform such judgements, is attached as appendix 2.

5. Further Guidance

Further guidance to applicants and faculties/schools, and relevant proformas are contained within the following appendices:

Appendix 1 – Guidance for faculties/schools

Appendix 2 – Guidance for applicants on the Accreditation of Prior Learning (required to submit a portfolio)

Appendix 3 – Application form for Accreditation of Prior Learning

Appendix 4 – Undergraduate Accreditation of Prior Learning proforma/Postgraduate Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning proforma (long form)

Appendix 5 – Postgraduate Accreditation of Prior Learning proforma (short form)

Approved by Taught Student Education Board on 3 May 2017

Appendix 1 – Accreditation of Prior Learning – Guidance for Faculties/Schools

Applications

1. Faculties/Schools should provide guidance and support to students who may wish to apply for APL, including information on acceptable evidence, the volume of material required and the proof of authenticity. Students should be made aware of any professional body requirements which may apply (see Appendix 3 for a standard application form for APL).
2. The Faculty/School Assessor (e.g. Admissions Tutor or Programme Leader) should determine if the prior learning can be accepted and the appropriate route for advanced standing, upon receipt of an application and supporting documentation. A Faculty/School may decide to establish a panel to determine application outcomes when dealing with a number of applications.

Guidance on decision making

3. Decisions on the acceptability of credit obtained through free-standing modules and short courses must be reviewed in light of the learning objectives of the programme concerned. Outcomes might include partial accreditation of prior learning or require achievement of work passed at a particular grade.
4. When considering applications, faculties/schools should reduce the potential for re-use of credit (double counting). Faculties/Schools should be mindful of implications for progression. Advanced standing can be awarded against any element of provision, including optional and discovery modules, where generic programme learning outcomes have been met.
5. Modules/courses including projects or dissertation designated as comprising the final year of an undergraduate programme, penultimate year of an Integrated Masters programme, PGT dissertations or qualifying examinations for registrable awards etc. cannot be discounted. Imported credit should not normally be used for classification purposes.

Approval

6. A written judgement on whether the applicant's prior learning can be accepted, together with the claim, should be submitted to the appropriate STSEC or its Chair to take action.
7. To support reliable and consistent decision-making, and monitoring of how the policy is being applied across cohorts and programmes, decisions should be ratified by STSEC. Where practicable, faculties/schools are encouraged to consider feedback from applicants for advanced standing on the process and track the progress and performance of successful applicants on their chosen programmes as a means of comparison with the wider cohort.
8. After approval of the claim, confirmation should be sent to the applicant. The Faculty/School should complete the correct APL form depending on level and type of APL (see appendices 3-5). Completed forms should be sent to central Admissions and Faculty/School Programme Support teams informed. The Faculty/School should liaise with colleagues responsible for generating the Student Transcript to ensure that all credit is transferred and exemptions given as appropriate.
9. In the event of a claim being denied, the applicant is entitled to feedback.

Complaints

10. The University will consider all applications fairly and effectively in line with the procedures outlined in this document.
11. Applicants who wish to challenge a decision to reject their application should write to, or where agreed email the relevant Head of School to which they applied detailing the nature of their complaint. The complaint must typically be made within 14 days of the decision. On receipt of

a complaint, the Head of School (or nominee not involved in the admissions process) will review the decision to reject the applicant. Following this review the Head of School (or nominee) will write to the applicant giving grounds for their decision, normally within 14 days.

12. Applicants who have complained to the Head of School and remain dissatisfied may submit their complaint to the University's Complaints Officer within 14 days of the Head of School's response. This Officer (or their nominee) will not review academic or professional judgements that have been made but will review matters relating to process. The Officer or nominee will aim to provide a response – a reasoned judgement – within 14 days of receiving a complaint. This judgement will represent the University's final decision on the matter.
13. The Officer will report the outcomes of any reviews they conduct to the Recruitment Committee.

Exclusions

14. The policy on Accreditation of Prior Learning is not relevant for students entering the University via articulation routes with partners. These arrangements are governed by the individual agreement for each articulation, incorporating specific requirements for entry and progression.

Further Guidance

15. Further guidance on the recognition of prior learning can be found within Chapter B6 of the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education (<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#.WGuZyU1XXcs>).

Appendix 2 - Accreditation of Prior Learning – Guidance for Applicants

Exemplar guidance to applicants on portfolio completion and framework for reflection

1. The range and forms of assessment appropriate to consider claims for recognition of prior learning may include: focused interviews, completion of a piece of work or reflective diary, or learning journal, or portfolio. Applicants are encouraged to discuss what documentation is required with the appropriate Faculty/School Admissions Tutor. The following guidance is intended for APEL applicants who are required to complete a portfolio:
 - a. Ensure that you allow sufficient time to complete the portfolio, which may require several drafts.
 - b. Think about the information you wish to include. Do not assume the reader will have an understanding of the points you are trying to make or know of the programme you are referring to. Write clearly and give details about the programme(s) you have attended. Where possible include programme learning outcomes.
 - c. Provide information concisely and coherently. It should reflect an academic approach at the level that you are seeking credit. It should include evidence of substantial study and experience related to your area of practice and the programme subject area for which you are applying.
 - d. Each learning experience included should contain evidence that shows reflection on what has been learned and how this has been applied in order to maintain and enhance current practice.
 - e. When presenting information for your portfolio, consider:
 - i. Whether it is worthwhile to elaborate on a particular programme of study, project etc or on practical evidence that is more relevant
 - ii. Whether there are tangible outcomes from previous study that can be used as evidence, for example, photocopies of feedback, comments or any other information relating to how project outcomes were evaluated/received
2. A framework to support *Reflection* might focus on:
 - a. Major events undertaken in studies/experiences
 - b. Thoughts and feelings about such events – reflecting back on feelings and thoughts at the time compared with now
 - c. New skills or learning developed as a result of the events – have these led to changes in attitude or actions and has the learning been transferred to other situations?
 - d. What reading has been undertaken, including articles or books that support learning? Were these useful or not?
 - e. What personal changes have taken place as a result of the learning – for example, greater level of confidence?
3. The Faculty/School will provide you with information on the presentation of acceptable evidence, the volume of material required and the proof of authenticity. You will be made aware of any professional body requirements which may apply. Applications (see Appendix 3 for a standard application form for APL) should be made directly to the Faculty/School and the Faculty/School will provide you with a timeframe of which the request is considered.
4. The University will consider all applications fairly and effectively in line with the procedures outlined in this document. In the event of a claim being denied, you are entitled to feedback

5. If you wish to challenge a decision to reject your application you should write to, or where agreed email the relevant Head of School to which you applied detailing the nature of the complaint. The complaint must typically be made within 14 days of the decision.
6. On receipt of a complaint, the Head of School (or nominee not involved in the admissions process) will review the decision to reject the application. Following this review the Head of School (or nominee) will write to you giving grounds for their decision, normally within 14 days.
7. If you have complained to the Head of School and remain dissatisfied you may submit your complaint to the University's Complaints Officer within 14 days of the Head of School's response. This Officer (or their nominee) will not review academic or professional judgements that have been made but will review matters relating to process. The Officer or nominee will aim to provide a response – a reasoned judgement – within 14 days of receiving a complaint. This judgement will represent the University's final decision on the matter.
8. A standard charge may be levied for consideration of APEL, which will be clearly communicated to you, the applicant, prior to consideration of evidence.

Appendix 3 – Application form for Accreditation of Prior Learning



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Application Form for Accreditation of Prior Learning*

Name:

Student ID Number:

(If applicable)

Address:

Home tel:

Mobile:

Email:

Programme of Study:

Application for:

Accreditation of Prior Learning** Yes/No

Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning** Yes/No

Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning** Yes/No

Enter details of all learning you wish to be considered***

Institution	Name of Award/module	Credit value	Level (1,2,3,M)	Date obtained

Details of Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning achieved outside of education or training*:**

Signature:

Date:

*Please refer to Guidance for applicants and seek guidance from appropriate Faculty/School Admissions Tutor when completing this form.

**Please refer to the Accreditation of Prior Learning Policy for definitions.

***Please append appropriate evidence to the application and send to the relevant Faculty/School.

Appendix 4 – Undergraduate Accreditation of Prior Learning / Postgraduate Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning proforma (long form)



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning

Applicant's lastname:

Applicant's initials:

BANNER ID no.(if applicable) :

Date of commencing studies at Leeds:

Programme title:

Programme code:

1) Credit Transfer (CT) – details of credit arising from prior certificated learning

Institution	Qualification	Date obtained	Credit value*

* on Leeds system

2) Accreditation of prior certificated learning (APCL) – details of previously assessed and certificated learning

Awarding Body	Qualification	Date obtained

3) Accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) – details of learning achieved outside of education or training

Details of Exemptions approved by STSEC

- 1) Entry onto level (e.g. 2 or 3)
- 2) The student will be exempt from studying all modules at earlier levels Yes/No

OR

- 3) Exempt from the modules listed below:

Core Modules			
Code	Title	Credits	Level

Elective Modules	No of Credits:	Level:
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Conditions

In comparing the contents of the core modules in programmes of the University of Leeds with the **APCL, APEL or CT** tutors may identify particular Leeds modules which a student should be **required** to undertake - and others which he or she should **not be allowed** to undertake - in order to ensure that the overall balance of studies is appropriate to obtain the award at the successful conclusion of the programme in question. Please list such **particular** modules in the section below:

Particular modules to be studied for award of Leeds degree/diploma/certificate			
Code	Title	Credits	Level

Particular modules to be excluded			
Code	Title	Credits	Level

Further Notes

Please include in this section any further conditions attached to the offer (eg, grades to be obtained in examinations yet to be taken or requirements for official transcripts not yet obtained).

Signature of Admissions Tutor (on behalf of STSEC) **Date**

Name of Admissions Tutor

Once permission is granted for APL by the relevant School Taught Student Education Committee (STSEC), please complete the proforma and return to TP Admissions (tp_enquiry@leeds.ac.uk).

Appendix 5 – Postgraduate Accreditation of Prior Learning proforma (short form)



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Accreditation of Prior Learning

Applicant's last name:

Applicant's firstname:

BANNER ID (if applicable):

Date of commencing studies at Leeds:

Programme title:

Programme code:

1) Credit Transfer (CT) – details of credit arising from prior certificated learning

Institution	Qualification	Date obtained	Credit value*

* on Leeds system

Details of Exemptions approved by STSEC

1) Entry onto level (e.g. 2 or 3)

2) Exempt from the modules listed below:

Core Modules			
Code	Title	Credits	Level

Signature of Admissions Tutor (on behalf of STSEC)

Date

Name of Admissions Tutor

Once permission is granted for APL by the relevant School Taught Student Education Committee (STSEC), please complete the proforma and return to TP Admissions (tp_enquiry@leeds.ac.uk).