



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>).