

**REGIONAL TEACHING PARTNERS
POLICY ON THE RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING**

SEC/2016/3/0709 (amended 02.06.23)

1. PURPOSE, DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE

- 1.1 The Lancaster University policy on the Recognition of Prior Learning must be adhered to by the Regional Teaching Partners. The full Lancaster policy and procedures should be referred to here: <https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/academic-standards-and-quality/regulations-policies-and-committees/manual-of-academic-regulations-and-procedures/>

The Colleges should take note in particular to the following aspects.

- 1.2 The prior learning to be considered will fall into one or more of the following categories.

- (a) **Credit transfer:** formal learning which has led to the award of credit or qualifications by a UK higher education degree-awarding body, in accordance with the relevant higher education qualifications framework.¹
[Credit transfer does not require an assessment decision.]
- (b) **Certificated learning (APL):** formal learning at a higher education level but which has not led to the award of credit or qualifications positioned on the relevant higher education qualifications framework; for example some professional development awards, employment-based awards or non-UK awards.
- (c) **Experiential learning (AP(E)L):** informal learning achieved through experience and practice (for example through employment or voluntary activities) rather than through a certificated programme of study or training.

[APL and AP(E)L are assessment decisions and require ratification through external examiners and exam board procedures. A formal record of the decision must be presented at the next available exam board].

- 1.3 This policy does not cover pre-defined institutional arrangements for the recognition of credit. Examples of such arrangements include:

- articulation arrangements leading to a Lancaster validated award;
- progression routes and step-off qualifications predetermined as part of a programme validation.

2. PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 Normally (unless there is an approved variation) a maximum of one-third of the credits of an undergraduate programme may be awarded as RPL credits and these are normally only allowable at Level 4 of *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of Degree-Awarding Bodies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*.

¹ Either *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of Degree-Awarding Bodies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* or *The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland* (QAA

Quality Code, Part A).

The following table illustrates the level of RPL credits permitted per award.

Award	Total Credits	Maximum RPL Credits
HNC	120	40
HND	240	80
ECMS	120	40
EDMS	120	40
PDCMS	75	25
PDDMS	90	30
Foundation Degree	240	80
Ordinary Degree	120	40
Honours degree	360	120

To Note: AP(E)L may only be awarded for whole, not partial, modules.
Credits will only be permitted for passed modules.

- 2.2 Credit may only be awarded for learning which has taken place within the five years immediately prior to the start of the course unless the applicant can provide evidence that his/her learning has continued in a professional or similar context. In such cases the College may choose to set an assessment to test an applicant's current knowledge.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 The College is responsible for considering and assessing all claims for RPL and for determining the form of evidence required in support of claims. But the final approval of the award of RPL credits is given by Lancaster University.

- 3.2 There are three stages to the approval process:

- i) The College should verify the RPL application and make a recommendation for the transfer/award of credit;
- ii) An internal College panel of at least three people, one of whom should be the programme leader, should consider the application;
- iii) Recommendations for the transfer/award of credit must be submitted for approval, together with the covering pro-forma and the supporting evidence to AQSC, normally prior to entry onto the programme. AQSC staff will liaise with the programme consultant in approving recommendations.

- 3.3 The College is responsible for ensuring that credits obtained via RPL are recorded as such on the student transcript.

4. PROCEDURES

- 4.1 All enquiries/requests for RPL should be initially considered by the College who will provide guidance on the process and on the amount of credit that might reasonably be sought. It remains the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate the relevance of any prior learning and to produce the supporting evidence.

- 4.2 **For credit transfer claims**, there is no requirement for the formal assessment of the applicant's previous work. However in such cases the College must ensure:

- (a) that there is a valid transcript providing evidence of the credits awarded by the relevant UK higher education provider; and

- (b) that the prior learning is at the same (or higher) level than that for which the credit transfer is being claimed and has not been used for the award of an end-of-cycle qualification gained elsewhere; and
- (c) that, having reviewed the course descriptions for the unit(s) for which credit has already been awarded, they are satisfied there is a sufficient match between these and the Lancaster validated module(s) in regard to learning outcomes and content.

Please note: credit awarded elsewhere can only be transferred where it has been awarded for a passed module.

Outcomes from the consideration of individual claims must be auditable through the College's records of assessment.

4.3 **For APL/APEL claims**, there must be a formal assessment of the applicant's portfolio of evidence by the College. Applications should be submitted in the form of a portfolio consisting of:

- (a) a written request stating the module(s) for which the student is seeking APL/APEL credits;
- (b) documentary evidence of the prior learning; and
- (c) a reflective analysis of how this experience/learning demonstrates successful achievement of the learning outcomes of the module(s) for which credit is sought.

Documented evidence may include and/or be drawn from: course descriptions, certificates of learning/records of achievement, interviews, oral assessments, diagnostic assessments, references/testimonials, learning logs, work reports, work products, records of volunteer learning and experience etc.

In some cases the student may also be invited to complete the summative assessments normally associated with the Lancaster validated module(s) in order to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes, or an alternative assessment or assessments may be set.

Assessment of APL/APEL should be on a pass/fail basis only.

4.4 Approval of APL/APEL credit is recommended by the College and ratified through external examiner and exam board procedures in the normal way. The decision must be clearly documented in the assessment records and the supporting evidence retained alongside the assessments for the module(s) in question. Work for APL/APEL credit should be moderated by the external examiner(s). For *ad hoc* cases of APL/APEL it is expected that the external examiner would review the individual portfolio and evidence of the department's assessment of this. Where assessment is undertaken as part of a specific RPL module, a sample of this module's assessed work should be made available to the external examiner in the normal way.

4.5 RPL credits count towards the total number of credits required for the award of the Lancaster qualification aimed for and are clearly indicated as such on the student transcript. However marks for credits achieved elsewhere and for credits awarded by Lancaster on the basis of APL/APEL are not normally carried into the Lancaster validated programme. They are not normally used in the calculations to determine the class of degree awarded or used to help determine progression from one year to the next.

4.6 Where an APL/APEL claim has not been successful, applicants will have the right to one reassessment opportunity, as if they had failed the module.

