

Academic Credit

What Is It And How Can I Use It?



This leaflet is designed for practitioners in health and social care settings who have taken credit-bearing courses with the University of Greenwich. It provides an overview of how credit fits into the academic framework and how it can be used.

What is an academic framework/credit scheme?

An academic framework/credit scheme is a menu of education courses worth differing credit values and at different levels. These are drawn together to form programmes of study, which lead to awards, e.g. a diploma or an undergraduate or postgraduate degree.

Each programme is made up of a range of courses with a credit value. In the University of Greenwich School of Health

& Social Care we design courses in multiples of 15 credits; courses vary between 15 and 60 credits and there is a relationship between the amount of work involved in a course and the number of credits awarded to it.

Credits are awarded on successful completion and assessment of a course.

How is a programme of study structured?

Each award requires the accumulation of a number of credits at a given level.

Undergraduate

A full-time undergraduate student takes courses worth a total of 120 credits per year to a total of 360 credits. The number of courses undertaken depends on the credit values available, e.g. multiples of 10, 15, 20 or 30 credits.

Postgraduate

A full-time postgraduate student takes courses in three phases to a total of 180 credits. The number of courses undertaken depends on the credit values available, e.g. multiples of 10, 15, 20 or 30 credits.

Each award is made up of core and option courses. The core courses are compulsory and must be taken unless exemption is awarded.

The option courses are strongly linked to the named award. Students select the options that suit them best from a range of topics.

By organising professional development courses for health and social care professionals within this framework, it is possible to provide a flexible structure that offers awards and shorter programmes, as well as individual self-contained courses.

It also enables the university to give credit for professional development carried out in a variety of settings across the health and social care sector.

The university believes it is important to recognise students' prior learning and, if appropriate, allows accreditation of prior learning to be awarded.

What is Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)?

Accreditation is the umbrella term for the formal recognition by a particular institution of previous learning.

By making an accreditation claim you can gain credit for prior learning, if it is considered relevant to the programme you want to study. As a result, you could access a programme without meeting the formal entry requirements, and/or could progress to a later stage of a programme.

Accreditation can normally be given up to a maximum of 50 per cent of any award subject to programme regulations.

There are two types of APL:

- *Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL)*, sometimes known as transfer credit, is for students claiming credit for prior learning that has been formally assessed.

This is credit awarded for learning that has been validated or accredited by another education institution.

Courses that have been credit-rated by a university fall into this category.

Each university has its own way of attributing and awarding credit.

Figure 1 Academic framework/credit scheme. At the end of each year is a stepping-off point for students wishing to complete or interrupt their studies.

	Dissertation: 60 credits Core								= MSc/MA (180 credits inc. 120 credits at PGDip/PGCert level)
Level 7	15 credits Core		15 credits Core		15 credits		15 credits		= PGDip (120 credits inc. 60 credits at PGCert level)
	15 credits		15 credits		30 credits Core				= PGCert (60 credits)
Level 6	15 credits Core	15 credits Core	30 credits Core		30 credits Core		30 credits Core		= BSc Hons/BA Hons (360 credits inc. 240 at Level 4 and 5)
Level 5	15 credits Core	15 credits Core	15 credits Core	15 credits Core	15 credits Option	15 credits Option	15 credits Option	15 credits Option	= DipHE (240 credits inc. 120 at Level 4)
Level 4	15 credits Core	30 credits Core		45 credits Option			15 credits Option	15 credits Option	= CertHE (120 credits)



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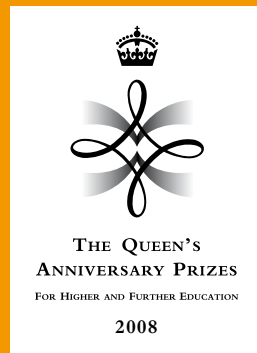
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If you were to make a claim for transfer credit, you may find there is a difference between the amount of credit you claim and the amount granted by the university (so, for instance, 15 credits earned at another university may not be equivalent to 15 credits at Greenwich).

- *Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)*, for students claiming credit for learning that has not been formally assessed.

Credit is not awarded for experience, it is awarded for what is learned from experience. You must be able to demonstrate that this learning is equivalent, in terms of level and outcome, to part of a programme of study.

Can I use my credits for programmes offered outside the university?

Yes. Credit awarded at a particular level will normally be used towards an award at the same level. However, in certain circumstances, where regulations permit, credit may be used at different levels, e.g. Level 6 against Level 5.

Registered health and social care practitioners will be awarded credits for their existing first-level qualification, providing they are still practising. This varies according to the professional qualifications.

Different institutions have their own academic regulations for APL. Accreditation is also tailored to individual student needs.

It is therefore essential that you obtain detailed information from the institution where you intend to study in order to check regulations and terminology.

Most universities have specific staff to advise about this, and you should make enquiries when you apply. The procedure for application is usually in the university's prospectus.

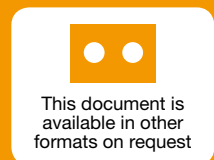
If not, ask the admissions tutor or tutor responsible for your programme. Some universities have an APL co-ordinator/tutor.

For APL information from the School of Health & Social Care, e-mail apl.hsc@gre.ac.uk.

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