

Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and Procedure

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This document brings together the internal and external frameworks for the consideration of claims of RPL. The Policy aims to bring together the principles contained within the Academic Regulations for Taught Awards, the Guidance for Students when completing a claim for RPL and the QAA's credit framework principles of practices.	

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1. INTRODUCTION

At the University of Greenwich, we recognise that knowledge and skills come from many different formal and informal learning environments and that many students acquire learning and skills, in employment or other working/voluntary contexts, which may be directly relevant to their planned higher education programme. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process we use to recognise that learning for academic purposes. This recognition may allow your prior learning to be counted towards the completion of an award with us and may also reduce the length of time required for formal study towards that award.

The award of any form of RPL is applied and mapped against whole modules and no partially completed modules will be considered. The acceptance of a claim for any form of RPL is entirely at the discretion of the University of Greenwich and is based upon the academic judgement of the relevant colleagues assessing the claim.

2. DEFINITIONS

RPL: Recognition of Prior Learning

RPL is the process through which the University recognises a student's prior learning through an evidence-based application. All students seeking to demonstrate equivalence to modules on the basis of prior learning, must meet the learning outcomes for the programme as set out in the programme specification, either through studying the programme, and/or through RPL, in order to qualify for an award.

That prior learning can be evidenced through different approaches such as qualifications gained at School, College, University or an alternative educational provider, or through experiential learning where vocational evidence such as time in employment, work experience, volunteer work or placements can be demonstrated.

The University will assess claims for RPL by mapping the evidenced prior learning against modules within the applied to programme of study. Where RPL is confirmed as being applicable, exemptions from a module or modules will be awarded, but credits can only be mapped against entire modules and not against parts of modules or single items of assessment.

The University of Greenwich awards RPL under two defining strands:

RPCL: Recognition of Prior Certified Learning

RPCL is certified learning awarded at another Higher Education Institute (HEI) that did not lead to the award of an equivalent level qualification.

RPEL: Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning

RPEL is non-certificated learning a process through which a student can claim academic credit for prior learning gained through the demonstration of

experience, vocational or otherwise. Learning may take place in a variety of contexts including work situations (paid and voluntary), training programmes in formal (e.g. further education colleges) and informal settings, Continuing Professional Development (CPD), web-based learning and/or through a variety of life experiences.

RPEL can only be awarded where there is clear and demonstrable evidence that the learning outcomes from which exemption is requested have been met through experience.

Direct Entry

Students may also use RPL to enter a programme at a direct year within a programme, this is defined as Direct Entry. Where a student can demonstrate they have already completed a qualification or received an exit/interim award then they may be entitled to join a later year in a programme for which the earlier qualification maps directly against the learning outcomes of the equivalent year for the new programme.

3. CRITERIA FOR CLAIMS

In order to be granted, the learning evidenced in any RPL application must meet the following criteria;

1. Validity; It must be at least at the same level and of the same credit value as the modules from which the exemption is being sought.
2. Sufficiency; It must adequately match the learning outcomes of the modules from which exemption is being sought.
3. Currency; It must represent the student's current knowledge and abilities, and be within the currency of learning limit of 5 years (outlined in section 6).
4. Authenticity; It must be genuine and the applicant's own. For RPCL, pass marks must have been awarded for the modules or units being evidenced.

4. PROCEDURE FOR MAKING A CLAIM FOR RPCL

If you wish to make an RPCL claim you will be asked to complete the [RPL claim form](#) via the Admissions process and provide accompanying evidence. This may include (but is not exhaustive):

- Your relevant programme certificates
- Copies of programme materials, handbooks, timetables or other related documents
- Marking schemes and feedback sheets for assessments*
- Letters confirming grades and programmes completed

*Programme work and other assessed work will not be accepted as evidence.

Once you have submitted your claim and the relevant evidence, this will be assessed by the Programme Leader (or nominee) for the programme you wish to

join. They will make a decision on the suitability of your RPCL claim and may confirm that your claim is:

1. Accepted in full
2. Accepted in part
3. Requires further information in which case you may be requested to attend an interview to discuss your application
4. Rejected

If your RPCL claim is successful the you will receive the credit but no mark will be recorded. The award of academic credit through the RPL procedure is recommended for approval by the Faculty Learning and Quality Standards Committee and ultimately the Progression and Award Board (PAB).

If your claim is unsuccessful, you may wish to appeal the outcome and follow the steps provided below.

5. PROCEDURE FOR MAKING A CLAIM FOR RPEL

If you wish to make an RPEL claim you must complete the [RPEL claim form](#) via the Admissions process and produce the evidence to support you claim. This will involve identifying your appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding acquired from your prior experience and the ability to express your learning in a way which can be assessed for academic credit.

The evidence to support your claim may include any or all of the following:

- Transcripts of training
- Evidence of relevant CPD
- Letters of support from current and/or previous managers
- A personal statement outlining your experience and why it is relevant. This will demonstrate your learning, knowledge and skills appropriate to the academic credit that you are claiming.

You are required to organise, present and submit your evidence for assessment to your admissions tutor or programme leader for consideration.

Your RPEL claim will be assessed by the Programme Leader (or nominee) for the programme you wish to join. They will make a decision regarding the suitability of your claim and may confirm that your claim is:

1. Accepted in full
2. Accepted in part
3. Requires further information in which case you may be requested to attend an interview to discuss your application
4. Rejected

If your RPEL claim is successful the you will receive the credit but no mark will be recorded. The award of academic credit through the RPL procedure is recommended for approval by the Faculty Learning and Quality Standards Committee and ultimately the Progression and Award Board (PAB).

If your claim is unsuccessful, you may wish to appeal the outcome and follow the steps provided below.

6. APPEALS AGAINST THE OUTCOME

If an RPL claim is rejected, applicants can appeal this decision through the normal University of Greenwich Admissions Appeals process.

Appeals can be made on the basis of material or procedural irregularity but cannot be made on the basis of academic judgment of whether the evidence meets the criteria. For exemptional in-year claims, the student may query the outcome, via the complaints procedure. Complaints can be made on the basis that there was a material or procedural irregularity in how the outcome was reached.

7. LIMITATIONS ON RPL

Recognition of prior learning at the University of Greenwich is limited to a maximum of 50% of the value of the award to be conferred. RPL on top-up degree programmes or for Sandwich/Placement Year credit is not permitted. The table below details the amounts of RPL permitted against each available award:

AWARD	MAXIMUM RPL (CREDITS)	MINIMUM CREDITS TO BE STUDIED AT THE UNIVERSITY
Certificate of Higher Education/HNC (120 credits)	60	60
Diploma in Higher Education/Foundation Degree/HND (240 credits)	120	120
Honours Degree (360 credits)	180	180
Honours Degree – direct entrants (360 credits)	240*	120
Honours Degree – Single stage (level 6) (120 credits)	60	60
Integrated Master's Degree (480 credits)	240	240
Postgraduate Certificate (60 credits)	20	40
Postgraduate Diploma (120 credits)	60	60
Masters Degree (180 credits)	90	90

*Applicants applying for Direct Entry to the final stage of an Honours Degree will need to evidence certificated learning equivalent to 240 credits; e.g. completion of a Foundation Degree or Diploma of Higher Education but will not be required to make a formal claim for RPL. Where a student has been allowed Direct Entry to the final stage of an Honours Degree, no further credit may be awarded through RPL.

Some programmes of study that are accredited by professional bodies may be unable to offer any form of RPL-based exemption.

RPL is not normally permitted for credit which has been previously counted as part of an award which is at the same level as the award for which the student is now aiming. RPL will only be accepted if it does not result in 'double counting'. This means that the earlier credit that has already contributed to the award of one qualification cannot then be used to gain an RPL-based exemption in another qualification at the same level or lower. However, in the case of interim exit awards, this would be permitted (e.g. modules that had led to the award of a PGCert could be used to gain exemption from modules on an MA).

Approved RPL will normally be considered current when it has occurred up to 5 years prior to the start date of the University of Greenwich programme. Exceptions to the 5 year maximum period may be permitted where the learning is deemed still appropriate and relevant.

8. TIMING OF CLAIMS

A claim should normally be submitted during the application process and before you join the programme. Applications for credit can be considered and approved by Faculties in advance of registration or during studies with the exceptional agreement of Faculty Learning and Quality Standards Committee.

It is important that any claim for credit which will permit advanced entry to the programme is concluded promptly so the student can enter the programme at the correct point.

Where possible, all claims should be submitted, considered and an outcome reached prior to the start of the programme or prior to the modules the student is required to undertake.

Where an outcome has been reached in relation to the RPL claim then the Faculty should ensure the confirmation of this decision is communicated to the Student Records Team before the end of the first term of study.

9. GOVERNANCE

The FLQSC is responsible for considering and noting all RPL claims, outcomes and for confirming the award of credit.

10. OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES

[Admissions Policy](#)

[QAA - Credit Frameworks](#)

[Complaints Policy](#)

[RPL Form Guidance](#)