

Procedure 2.2

Recognition of Prior Learning

1. Introduction

The Head of Courses (HoC) is responsible for the quality assurance of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process and, together with the internal verifier, will provide support for RPL claimants and maintain appropriate records. Where appropriate LFA follows its validating partner processes for RPL <https://www.derby.ac.uk/about/academic-regulations/recognition-of-prior-learning/>

2. Terminology

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the term commonly used throughout Europe and is also the definition used in the *UK Quality Code*. Other terms which have been used in the past include:

APL	<i>Accreditation of Prior Learning</i>
APEL	<i>Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning</i>
APA	<i>Accreditation of Prior Achievement</i>
APLA	<i>Accreditation of Prior Learning and Achievement</i>

3. Recognition of Prior Learning

LFA is committed to the responsibilities and types of assessment set out below and will ensure at all times that assessment is fair, reliable, valid, transparent, and that it recognises and respects equality and diversity. All assessment of modules or programmes leading to an academic award of LFA must be in the English language.

LFA recognises that while Course Teams and tutors have the primary responsibility for the implementation of assessment which reflects the nature of the subject that responsibility for effective assessment is shared with many others.

- Students have the responsibility to engage effectively with assessment, as a vital component of their learning
- Course Teams and tutors have responsibilities:
 - to design and implement assessment in ways that encourage and promote effective learning, and that measure student achievement effectively with reference to stated intended learning outcomes
 - to make reasonable adjustments to the design and conduct of assessments to meet disabled students' needs; to provide constructive feedback on assessed work to students
 - to review assessment methods as part of annual and periodic quality assurance procedures
- Course Teams, in conjunction with the Head of Courses (HoC), have responsibility for ensuring that relevant information about assessment is included in module or course handbooks and is available to all students
- Assessment Boards, internal moderators/verifiers and external examiners have the primary responsibility for assuring the academic standards of awards and the effectiveness of assessment in the subject.

The Academic Board has the responsibility of overseeing all aspects of assessment within LFA, including, where relevant, liaising with external professional or statutory bodies to seek clarification of competence standards for academic programmes.



The term Recognition of Prior Learning encompasses the range of activities and approaches used formally to acknowledge and establish publicly that a reasonably substantial and significant element of learning has taken place. Such learning may have been recognised previously by an education provider, (prior certificated learning), or it may have been achieved by reflecting upon experiences outside the formal education and training systems (prior experiential learning).

These approaches typically include policies and practices designed to accredit learning and achievement that occurred:

- and has been previously assessed and certificated
- in a work/community-based or related setting, but is not a formal part of that experience
- at some time, prior to the formal Higher Education course on which an applicant is about to embark
- concurrent with participation in a Higher Education course, but is not a formal part of that experience
- through experience and critical reflection, but was not part of a formal learning programme.

The theme common to prior certificated learning, prior experiential learning and to all of the illustrative activities above, which must be properly considered for recognition, is learning. It is the achievement of learning, or the outcomes of that learning, and not just the experience of the activities alone, that is being accredited, whenever and wherever the experience occurred, evidence must be presented to demonstrate that learning has taken place.

3.1 Process

RPL is a student-centred, voluntary process. Individual student claimants will be offered advice on the nature and range of evidence considered appropriate, to support a claim for credit through RPL, and will be given guidance and support to make a claim.

The process of assessment for RPL is subject to the same quality assurance and monitoring standards as any other form of assessment. The award of credit through RPL will not be distinguished from any other credits awarded.

Assessment methods for RPL are of equal rigour to other assessment methods. They must be fit for purpose and relate to the evidence of learning. Credit may be claimed for any module through RPL unless the assessment requirements of the module do not allow this, based on a rationale consistent with the aims and regulations of the framework.

RPL can be of value to students transferring across various courses who have relevant learning but do not hold relevant credits or certificates.

The use and application of RPL is of particular value to students without formal qualifications, who are either in employment, preparing to enter, or returning to employment. It enables them to gain all or part of a qualification without having to undertake a formal course.

Most often RPL will be used for modules. It is theoretically acceptable to claim for an entire qualification through RPL, although this is unlikely. It would be very unusual for a student to be able to offer prior achievement that completely matches every aspect of a qualification's assessment requirements.

The prior achievement that would provide evidence of current knowledge, understanding and skills will vary and will depend on the extent of the experience, technological changes and the nature of the outcome claimed. If the currency of any evidence is in doubt, the assessor will require additional evidence which may include testimonials and reference checks.

