



Recognition of Prior Learning Policy for Higher Education

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Revision history

Version	Type (e.g. replacement, revision etc...)	Date	History (reason for changes)
V1	New	Sept 2016	Significant change of previous policy due to new awarding body confirmation
V2	Revision	Jan 2020	Revision due to College restructure
V3	Revision	Sept 2021	Revision due to changes in roles and responsibilities
V4	Revision	Oct 2022	Change in Ownership
V5	Annual Review	August 2023	No significant changes
V6	Annual review	July 2024	No changes

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed by the Academic Board and SLT at least every 2 years.
Policy category: Governance (Academic)

1. Executive Summary

This purpose of this policy is to:

Identify the principles which underpin the operation of College processes for the recognition of students' prior learning.

The recognition of prior learning is the generic term used for the recognition of certificated, and non- certificated (experiential) learning that has occurred at some time in the past, and can be assessed as equivalent to the learning of modules/units or stages of study in a chosen course of study, within a higher education programme (e.g. degree, certificate and Edexcel Pearson BTEC HNC/D).

This policy and associated procedures follow the principles and guidance contained in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and has been developed with reference to associated Advice and Guidance relating to Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access.

The Policy is also aligned with the requirements of the College's validation partner (University of Bolton) and Awarding Body (Pearson).

This policy supports the College's commitment to support widening participation and access to higher education.

The policy is supported by the 'Bradford College Recognition of Prior Learning Procedures'. Applicants will not be disadvantaged in anyway because they have used these procedures. All correspondence must be completed in accordance with the associated procedures.

2. Definitions

Key word/Acronym	Definition
RPL	The generic term used for the recognition of certificated, and non-certificated (experiential) learning that has occurred at some time in the past, and is of equivalence to modules/units or stages of study in their chosen course of study, and which can be assessed and accredited within a higher education programme.
RPCL	Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning i.e. learning for which certification has been awarded by an educational institution or another education/training provider i.e. this is normally a recognised course of study that is at a particular academic level and carries a credit rating.
RP(E)L	Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning i.e. uncertificated learning gained from prior experience, work experience or training/study, and which is capable of being assessed and accredited as equivalent to the learning outcomes of modules/stages of study.
Advanced Standing	Occurs where an applicant enters an approved course of study at a stage later than the normal entry point of the course, with a previous qualification or other certificated learning, that is current and at the appropriate academic level, and maps against the learning outcomes of the earlier stage of study.
General credit	Credit for prior learning that indicates a particular quality and level – but only become of value in terms of accreditation when they are matched against a particular set of learning outcomes and become specific credit.
Specific credit	Prior learning that has been assessed against a particular set of learning outcomes and can be accredited against a specific module and/or stage of a programme leading to an award.
Portfolio of evidence	A collection of evidence completed by an applicant which is used to judge individual achievement, usually as part of a claim for experiential learning: <ol style="list-style-type: none">It demonstrates reflection in the learning from prior experienceIt presents claims to that learningIt contains relevant evidence, enabling claims to be evaluated

3. Introduction

The College wishes to promote the recognition and accreditation of students' prior learning and experience wherever it is current, valid, capable of objective assessment and verification, and of sufficient quality and quantity to be regarded as equivalent to specific units/modules or stages in a programme of study.

The central principle in awarding student's credit is that credit is granted for learning achieved, not just for experience alone. Students making a claim for credit must be able to demonstrate:

- a. that valid learning has taken place
- b. that it is sufficient to substantiate their claim
- c. that it is of the same value as that which would have been gained by study at the College.

Within its Higher Education Degree Awards, regulations will normally set a maximum limit to the amount of credit that a student can be awarded, and the College applies these requirements to its higher education programmes.

A five-year rule normally applies to the currency of certificated learning. This aligns with the requirements of the University of Bolton.

4. Forms of Prior Learning

- (a) Formally certificated learning that is usually accredited by a University or other Higher Education institution. Such learning will usually carry a credit rating, level and grade from that institution (RCPL);
And,
- (b) Uncertificated learning that has not been formally certificated by a recognised higher education provider. Uncertificated learning may derive either from 'on the job' training, courses provided by bodies which are not recognised by HE providers, from learning acquired, for example, at work; through training activities; in voluntary activities; from hobbies and personal interests; through self-directed study (RPEL).

5. RPL and student entitlement

All students are entitled to apply for RPL, providing that this meets the specific requirements of the validating/awarding body; and/or any PSRB requirements, in relation to their chosen course. RPL can be used by student to:

- gain entry to a programme of study;
- secure credit against specific units in a programme of study;
- gain advanced standing (e.g. admission to year 2 or 3) into a programme of study.

6. Assessment of RPL

This must normally be conducted at the admissions stage of the entry to a course, and is an academic judgement to assess the validity of the claim against the learning outcomes of the module/unit or stage of the course, in order to ascertain:

- (i)** If a student is entitled to gain entry to a higher level i.e. entry with advanced standing

And/or

- (ii)** If a student can be exempted from any modules of study (subject to regulatory requirements).

Assessment and recording of RPL is conducted in accordance with College procedures.

Related Policies/Procedures/Regulations

- Recognition of Prior Learning Procedures
- University of Bolton Recognition of Prior Learning Policy