

## ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR EXPERIENCE OR LEARNING FOR HE STUDENTS

### Introduction

The College embraces difference and diversity amongst its students and welcomes applications from prospective students seeking to gain exemption from some parts of an academic programme through the accreditation of their prior experience or learning.

Accreditation of prior experience or learning may be fulfilled either through the recognition of certificated learning, or through the recognition of experience or learning derived through work or other life experience.

### Scope

This policy applies to students undertaking HE qualifications at Grantham College except where the regulations of the awarding body or validating institution take precedence.

### Definitions

The term accreditation of prior experience or learning (APEL) denotes the process by which a substantial and significant element of prior experience or learning is identified, assessed and formally acknowledged.

Accreditation of prior experience or learning can be applied to three types of claim:

- Claims for entry with advanced standing (i.e. entering a programme of study at a higher than normal entry level);
- Claims for entry on the basis of transfer from another institution;
- Claims for exemption from specific units.

The learning may have been gained through a programme of study publicly recognised through certification. The certification may or may not have been provided within the context of a credit transfer system. Alternatively, the learning may result from reflection upon experience gained outside the formal education and training system. In this instance for prior experiential learning accreditation is given for evidence of learning gained through experience and not for the experience alone.

Accredited prior experience or learning may be used to gain exemption from specified elements of a programme of study at the College, but it is the responsibility of the student to determine whether they are potentially eligible for the award of credit and to initiate any claim.

In all cases, it is the responsibility of the student to demonstrate the equivalency of their claim, either to the minimum entry qualifications for the programme they are seeking admittance to or to the learning outcomes for those parts of a programme of study for which they are seeking exemption. In addition to any specific requirements, a claim for credit must seek to demonstrate that the applicant is adequately prepared for the level of study for which admission is sought.

It is a matter of academic judgement whether a claim is accepted or rejected and submission of an application for exemption does not constitute automatic entitlement to the credit being claimed. Evidence provided by applicants needs to be relevant, sufficient, authentic and current.

## **Admission on the basis of previous certified learning**

A student's entitlement to academic credit should be established prior to admission to a programme and any credit granted entered onto the individual learning record on enrolment. Initial enquiries regarding entry with APEL should be made to the appropriate Course Leader stating clearly the programme for which the application will be made and an indication of those elements of the programme for which exemption is to be claimed. Applicants will in other respects be subject to normal entry requirements and procedures.

Where the prospective student is applying for APEL on the basis of prior certificated learning the applicant will need to supply the original formal certification showing their achievement on the previous programme, information about the programme typically the programme specification (or, if not available, a statement of the aims and learning outcomes) and the relevant module descriptors.

If the applicant has not yet completed their previous programme then their approval will be conditional on their achievement of the award.

## **Admission on the basis of previous learning gained through experience**

A meeting will normally be arranged between the Course Leader and applicant at which the nature of the applicant's experience and an outline of the evidence of learning or experience that would be required to support the claim will be discussed.

The Course Leader will draw up an assignment brief setting out the nature of the assessed work that will be required.

The prospective student will be offered advice on how to approach the assignment, especially with regard to the collection of appropriate evidence of achieved learning outcomes and the style in which such an analytical account should be presented. An experienced tutor will be nominated by the Course Leader for this purpose but they will not be involved in the assessment of the claim. It may also be appropriate to refer the applicant to Student Support for further guidance.

## **Assessment of a claim for accreditation of prior experience or learning**

Once the validity of the claim has been established by the Course Leader the claim will be passed to the Vice Principal: HE & IoT for approval; where appropriate the Committee can co-opt a subject expert to assess the claim. The claim may also be referred to the External Verifier or the link tutor at the validating institution where further guidance is required.

Where credit is awarded this is identified on the individual student record.

## **Review of accreditation of prior experience or learning decisions**

The College always seeks to process claims carefully, and to assess each claim fairly and equally, but it recognises that some students may be dissatisfied with the manner in which their claim was processed.

Students are entitled to obtain feedback on their claim from the Assistant Principal: HE who will provide further information on why the decision was made.

There can be no appeal process for APL decisions.

Quality Assurance – version control			
Review period	2 yearly	Review carried out by	VP: HE & IoT
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