

Higher Education Accreditation of Prior Learning: Guidance and Code of Practice

This Code of Practice relates to processes that must be adhered to when a student wishes to make an application for Accreditation of Prior Learning in relation to Higher Education Programmes of Study.

The Code does not supersede any regulations in place at partner Universities or Examining Bodies and will only be utilised in circumstances where there is no procedure in place at any such partner, or where the University Centre is deemed to have responsibility for such processes by any such partner.

Full account has been taken of the UK Quality code for Higher Education, in particular the Advice and Guidance on Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access (2018), which embeds the core practices that:

Higher education providers use fair, reliable and appropriate assessment methods that enable them to select students with the potential to complete the course successfully; and Higher education providers reduce or remove unnecessary barriers for prospective students.

1. This Code of Practice (“The Code”) is applicable for students who wish to claim an award of credits based upon learning which has occurred in the past, prior to the current, or planned programme of study.
2. The Code offers appropriate procedures and general guidance for the utilisation of APL for credit exemption on the following programmes of study:
 - HNC/HND
 - Foundation Degree
 - Undergraduate Degree or Top Up
3. The Code covers two clear categories:
 - APCL: Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (i.e. any learning for which certification has been provided by an educational institution or an alternative education/training provider) (please see application form in Appendix 1)
 - APEL: Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (i.e. any learning which has taken place via experience rather than certification. This may occur in several ways including (but not exclusively) paid or unpaid work, courses attended as part of a job role, self-directed study, leisure pursuits) (please see application form in Appendix 1).
4. Any APL awarded under 3b must be specifically relevant to the current or intended programme of study.
5. It should be noted that any APL decision is one of academic judgement and The Heart of Yorkshire Education Group (“the Group”) reserves the right to reject APL applications where the judgement of the panel finds that evidence of any prior learning is insufficient in terms of credit alignment or in terms of relevancy to the chosen or intended programme of study. The panel may decide to award partial credit in appropriate circumstances.
6. An award of APL credit is applicable to an individual module/unit and exempts a student from that module/unit only, not from any other programme component.

7. Some University partners, examining or awarding bodies (“partner organisations”) may restrict the amount of APL credit that can be awarded. In circumstances where that restriction relates to fewer credits than the Group is prepared to award, the regulations of the partner organisations will over-ride those of the Group.
8. Any application for APL should ideally take place prior to commencement of study, or within the first 3 weeks after study commences and should be submitted to the relevant Programme Leader. Once an application for APL is received by the Programme Leader, it should be sent to the HE Administrator within 48 hours of receipt (excluding weekends, bank holidays and periods of Group closure).
9. An APL Panel will be convened which will comprise of either the Director of Higher Education and Access/Head of Higher Education and Access (Chair), the HE Administrator (minutes), the Programme Leader for the relevant programme of study and at least one other higher education academic staff member (who should normally be from a different curriculum area). The Panel should be held within 7 working days of receipt of the application by the HE Administrator.
10. The decision of the APL Panel will be clearly minuted in order that consistency of decision making can be applied. These minutes to include a rationale for the decision made. The decision of the Panel will be communicated to the applicant in writing within 3 working days of the Panel meeting.
11. The Panel will produce a semesterly report for the Access to HE & HE Quality, Standards and Enhancement Committee (“QSEC”) detailing the applications made and their outcomes.
12. No APL will be awarded for partial modules; credit will only be permitted against complete modules.
13. Responsibility for the completion of the application and any necessary supporting documentation is the responsibility of the applying student, however, students are encouraged to ask for support and guidance from the Group’s higher education staff.

14. For the Group to be able to award credits for APCL the following criteria must be met:
- a. The applicant's previous study and the programme of study they are applying for must match in terms of both level and breadth of content. The match does not need to be exact but must be of an appropriate level
 - b. The applicant's previous study must have been taken within the last five years in order that it holds appropriate value
 - c. Appropriately detailed supporting documentation must be provided by the student (see 15)
 - d. The Group does not permit that APCL applications are applicable for all its programmes of study and nor does it offer any guarantees that an application will be successful
 - e. The regulations and procedures of validating partners will be considered in all decisions.
15. Documentation required for the support of an APCL application is likely to include, but is not restricted to, the following:
- a. Transcript of previous study
 - b. Syllabus/programme specification of previous study
 - c. Pieces of assessed work
 - d. Evidence from diagnostic assessments.
16. Where necessary, the Group reserves the right to obtain confirmation of the authenticity of the documentation provided.
17. In order for the Group to be able to award credits for APEL the following criteria must be met:
- a. The applicant must be able to identify skills, learning and knowledge derived from an experience which adequately match the level and breadth of content in the programme of study they are applying for.
 - b. The applicant's experiential evidence must relate to activities and experiences undertaken in the last five years in order that it holds appropriate value
 - c. Detailed supporting documentation must be provided by the student (see 18) in the form of a portfolio of evidence

- d. The Group does not permit that APEL applications are applicable for all of its programmes of study and it does not offer any guarantees that an application will be successful
 - e. The regulations and procedures of validating partners will be considered in all decisions.
18. Documentation required for the support of an APEL application, due to the nature of the application, is likely to be varied in nature and will be much more difficult to assess than the documentation required for APCL. For guidance purposes, such documentation may include (but not exclusively):
- a. Direct evidence such as an essay or report, artefact, computer programme, piece of artwork or portfolio
 - b. Information provided by third parties such as a testimonial from an employer or academic supervisor or a sector-based expert
 - c. The documentation may be written, or where appropriate may take the form of an oral presentation (which must be recorded)
 - d. Competence statements relating to specific learning outcomes may also be helpful in terms of assessing alignment. Any such statement must be appropriately qualified.
19. The portfolio of evidence submitted for an APEL application will be assessed against the following criteria:
- a. Has the student clearly articulated their learning/skills/knowledge in terms of the specific learning outcomes of the module/units(s) in question
 - b. The closeness of the learning/skills/knowledge undertaken in relation to the proposed programme of study
 - c. That the modules/units for which exemption is requested are clearly identified by the applicant
 - d. That sufficient evidence exists, and is presented to support the application
 - e. There is comparability between the level of the learning/skills/knowledge and that of the proposed programme of study
 - f. That the learning/skills/knowledge are current and up to date
 - g. That none of the evidence presented relates to learning below the Framework for Higher Education Qualification level 4 study.

20. Where additional subject-specific criteria are necessary within an APEL portfolio of evidence, these will be clearly articulated to the applicant in advance of the application being made, and support and guidance offered in terms of their completion.
21. Any applicant who does not speak English as their first language will be required to satisfy the English language requirements which apply to the proposed level of study, as well as meeting the relevant APL criteria. These requirements will be specified in the relevant programme specification.
22. An overseas award will not prevent an applicant for APL however, the Group will make appropriate enquiries, for example through its International Office to ensure that any credit being applied for under APCL is appropriately aligned to a UK equivalent qualification. Translated documentation relating to module descriptors and specifications, transcripts etc. may need to be provided as part of the supporting evidence if the certification does not provide enough detail to make a clear decision around the suitability of individual modules for APL purposes. Any costs relating to any such translation will be the responsibility of the applicant.
23. A pro-rata tuition fee discount will be applied to any student who has been awarded APL credit.
24. In certain specific cases the Group can offer direct entry to the second or third year of a programme by agreeing that the prior learning/skills/knowledge of an applicant covers all of the learning outcomes of the modules/units contained within the earlier years of the programme.
25. Students who are unhappy with the decision of the panel are directed to the Group's Higher Education Admissions Appeals Code of Practice.

Appendix 1: Accreditation of Prior Learning Application Form: Accreditation of Prior Certified Learning

NB: Please read the Accreditation of Prior Learning Guidance and Code of Practice prior to completing this Application Form.

TO BE COMPLETED BY APPLICANT

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

TO BE COMPLETED BY GROUP HIGHER EDUCATION STAFF

Date Received: _____

Received by: _____

Original Certificates Seen: _____

Date Sent to Panel: _____

Section 1:

List all certificated qualifications that you have gained at Level 4 or above. Please provide details of the individual modules/units you have studied and the academic year in which they were studied.

Qualification (and modules/units)	Certificating Institution	Date Studied	Certificates Seen
<i>e.g. HND Business</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Introduction to Finance (Yr1)</i> • <i>Principles of Management (Yr. 2)</i> 	<i>Leeds City College</i>	<i>2011/12</i>	<i>Signature of College Staff</i>

Section 2:

Please specify the modules/units you wish to receive APCL credit for. Please provide the module/unit name and indicate the grounds for exemption that you wish to claim. You should provide module/unit specifications or a programme specification as evidence to underpin your claim, clearly indicating the material which you feel constitutes a match for the proposed programme of study. You may claim up to a maximum of 120 credits (subject to the provisions of section 7 in the code of practice).

Module/Unit Title:

Grounds for Exemption:

Reference to Supporting Evidence:

Module/Unit Title:

Grounds for Exemption:

Reference to Supporting Evidence:

Module/Unit Title:

Grounds for Exemption:

Reference to Supporting Evidence:

Module/Unit Title:

Grounds for Exemption:

Reference to Supporting Evidence:

Module/Unit Title:

Grounds for Exemption:

Reference to Supporting Evidence:

Module/Unit Title:

Grounds for Exemption:

Reference to Supporting Evidence:

Section 3:

Please provide any additional supporting information that you feel may assist the panel when considering your application.

Signature of Applicant: _____

Date: _____