



UNIVERSITY OF
LINCOLN

Policy Front Sheet

NAME OF POLICY:	Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) Policy
VERSION NUMBER:	Version 1.0
POLICY AUTHOR:	Head of Student Administration
RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ COMMITTEE/INDIVIDUAL:	Academic Affairs Committee approved revised policy on 29 April 2015.
BACKGROUND AND SYNOPSIS OF CHANGES MADE TO POLICY :	<p>APL is the process of identifying, assessing and formally recognising prior learning, often measured as credit.</p> <p>The policy sets out the guiding principles and procedures for applicants and staff by which the University considers such applications.</p>
STAKEHOLDERS/STUDENTS CONSULTED IN DEVELOPING/REVIEWING POLICY:	The relevant Stakeholders were consulted in developing/reviewing this policy.
FINAL APPROVAL RECEIVED BY:	Academic Affairs Committee on 29 April 2015 To be received by Academic Board for their approval June 2015
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SECRETARIAT/COMMITTEE OFFICER:	Craig France
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DATE:	1 May 2015



Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)

Guidelines for Applicants

1.0 Introduction

APL is the process of identifying, assessing and formally recognising prior learning, often measured as credit. These guidelines are designed to assist you when submitting APL applications for Admission onto a programme.

2.0 What is credit?

Credit is a means of quantifying learning within a module of study. It consists of a numerical value normally measured in volumes of 15, 30, 45 or 60 and indicates the level of learning as follows:

- Level 4 (year 1): First year of an undergraduate programme of study
- Level 5 (year 2): Second year of an undergraduate programme of study
- Level 6 (year 3): Third year of an undergraduate programme of study
- Level 7: Postgraduate study

3.0 Different uses of APL

APL permits applicants to enrol onto a higher education course but study a reduced number of modules/credit. Your APL application may be based on prior certified learning (APCL) or experiential learning (APEL) and can be used as a means to:

- allow direct entry onto an intermediate stage of a course, for example level 5 (year 2) of an undergraduate course
- gain exemption from specific modules within a level of a programme

4.0 Types of APL

4.1 Accreditation of prior certified learning (APCL) is learning that has previously been gained following study of a professional award. Each module you have previously studied will have specified learning outcomes; if these map to learning outcomes of modules on a Higher Education course at the University of Lincoln, we may be able to grant you exemption from studying these modules with us. This may result in direct entry to an intermediate stage of the course and/or a reduced number of modules to study within a level of a course.

You will be required to provide evidence of the learning outcomes you have previously achieved as part of your application for APL.

4.2 Accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) is learning you have acquired through life experiences, which may include work and uncertified learning. Whilst you will not have gained a formal qualification in respect of this learning, learning outcomes you are able to evidence may still be deemed to map to learning outcomes of the course you are applying for.

5.0 Exclusions

5.1 Credit already awarded by the University as part of a University degree may not be used as part of an APL application against a second award which is at the same level and in a similar subject area.

For example, credit achieved as part of a postgraduate diploma may be used as credit towards a Master's degree, but cannot be used a second time as credit towards a different Master's degree.

5.2 APL is only permitted against whole modules and therefore applications cannot be made against individual elements of assessment, for example a piece of coursework or an exam, within a module. You must therefore be able to evidence that you have previously achieved the learning outcomes for the whole module concerned in order for an APL application to be approved.

6.0 How will my approved APL application be recorded?

In all cases, whether you have submitted an APCL or APEL application, approved APL will appear on your transcript of results as 'APL' against the relevant module(s) and you will not receive a mark or grade.

Where final degree classification is based on module marks achieved, modules with approved APL will be excluded from the calculations.

7.0 How much APL can I be awarded?

The number of credits of APL you may be awarded is subject to the level of the degree to which you are enrolling. Please refer to Appendix I

8.0 Fees

8.1 Administration fees

8.1.1 The University of Lincoln does not charge an administration fee for the processing of APL applications.

8.2 Tuition fees

8.2.1 In the case of direct entry onto an intermediate stage of a course, you will not be charged tuition fees for the stage of the course for which your APL application has been approved. For example, if your approved APL application permits you to enter a course at level 5 (Year 2), you will not incur a tuition fee charge for level 4 (Year 1).

However in the event that your approved APL application means you are only exempt from studying certain modules that make up part of the level of the course you are entering, you will be liable to pay the full tuition fee associated with that level of the course if you are enrolled as a full time student.

Exemption from tuition fees for modules for which there is an approved APL application will only apply if you are studying part time.

9.0 Procedure

9.1 Application

9.1.1 Your APL application should usually be made alongside your application for a place on your chosen course. Where this is not possible, your APL application should be made prior to the first enrolment on your course. All claims should be made using the University's APL application form – please refer to Appendix II.

9.2 What evidence must I provide?

9.2.1 For APCL applications you may provide the following evidence:

- a transcript of the courses taken, credits achieved and the marks awarded for the prior learning, certified by the appropriate officer or officers of the institution or institutions where the prior learning took place.
- the learning outcomes for the prior learning, as defined in the programme specification, course handbook or other official documentation from the institution where the prior learning took place;
- references from the institution where the prior learning took place.

9.2.2 For APEL applications you may provide the following evidence:

- a portfolio of evidence
- a structured interview
- completion of a piece of work accompanied by a reflective account of the learning achieved
- a performance-based assessment
- completion of the assessment used to demonstrate learning in the module/programme for which comparability is being claimed.

It is important that all evidence presented is directly linked to the learning claimed. This means that references and testimonies should not be general statements about good character, but should focus on supporting your skills.

10.0 Outcome and next steps

10.1 In the first instance, your claim will be considered by a relevant academic member(s) of staff, who will consider key factors including the match between the presented evidence and the learning claimed (relevance), whether the evidence sufficiently demonstrates the learning claimed (sufficiency), whether the evidence relates to your own efforts and achievements (authenticity) and whether the learning is still regarded as current in relation to the course applied (currency).

10.2 Assessed claims will then be forward to Student Administration who will write to you to inform you of the University's decision.

10.3 If your claim is rejected, you are entitled to appeal this decision under the same regulations as appeals against rejected admission applications.

Approved Exemptions to University Policy on Accreditation of Prior Learning

The policy may be varied in order to allow an award to satisfy the published requirements of Professional, Statutory & Regulatory Bodies.

The following exemptions have been approved:

To allow APL at Level 6 (year 3) on BSc (Hons) Nursing approved by the Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee on 20 June 2011.

To allow APL at Level 6 (year 3) on BSc (Hons) Interprofessional Practice to meet General Social Care Council (GSCC) requirements – Academic Registrar, 6 June 2006 and Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee on 10 June 2011.

To allow APL at Level 6 (year 3) HLSS short course "Supporting Learning and Assessment in Practice" - approved by Academic Affairs Committee on 26 May 2010

APPENDIX I

Maximum credit allowed for APL

The University's approved list of qualifications with the credit structure and the maximum amount of credit that can be awarded for prior certificated or experiential learning APL is shown below:

Award	Tariff/Credit (level)	Maximum APCL/ APEL credit that may be awarded	Notional learning hours
Higher National Diploma (HND)	120 (level 4 - year 1) 120 (level 5 – year 2)	120 (level 4 - year 1) 30 (level 5 – year 2)	2400
Certificate of Higher Education	120 (level 4 - year 1)	75 (level 4 - year 1)	1200
Diploma of Higher Education	240, with at least 120 at level 5 – year 2	120 (level 4 - year 1) 30 (level 5 – year 2)	2400
Foundation degree	240, with at least 120 at level 5 – year 2	120 (level 4 - year 1) 30 (level 5 – year 2)	2400
Ordinary (without Honours) degree	300, with at least 60 at level 6 – year 3 and 120 at level 5 – year 2	120 (level 4 - year 1) 120 (level 5 – year 2)	3000
Honours degree	360, with at least 60 at level 6 – year 3 and 120 at level 5 – year 2	120 (level 4 - year 1) 120 (level 5 – year 2)	3600
Integrated Master's degree	120 (level 4 - year 1) 120 (level 5 – year 2) 120 (level 6 – year 3) 120-180 (Level 7 - Masters level)	120 (level 4 - year 1) 120 (level 5 – year 2)	4800
Postgraduate Certificate	60 (Level 7 - Masters level)	30	600
Postgraduate Diploma	120 (Level 7 - Masters level)	60	1200
Masters	180 (Level 7 - Masters level)	120	1800
Master of Fine Art	240 (Level 7 - Masters level)	120	2400
Master of Architecture	240 (Level 7 - Masters level)	120	2400
Professional Doctorate	540 (M/D) between 120 and 270 credits of taught provision. No more than 180 credits at Level 7 - Masters level	100 (not including Research Methods)	5400



Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)

Guidelines for Staff

1.0 Introduction

APL is the process of identifying, assessing and formally recognising prior learning. These guidelines are designed to assist members of staff in evaluating Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) claims made by applicants for admission.

2.0 Different uses of APL

APL can be used in the following ways:

- As a means of accessing a course. Applicants can make claims on prior certified learning and/ or experiential learning.
- As a means of allowing direct entry onto an intermediate stage of a course, for example year 2 of an undergraduate programme. Applicants can make claims on prior certified learning and/ or experiential learning.
- As a means of gaining exemption from specific modules. Applicants can make claims on prior certified learning.
- Recognition of a named award/course for which the University has an approved progression agreement.

3.0 Different types of APL

3.1 APL has two components APCL (accreditation of prior certified learning) and APEL (accreditation of experiential learning) which are defined below:

3.2 APCL is learning that has previously been gained from professional awards, for example Foundation Degrees and Higher National Diplomas. Consideration should be given to the **maximum credits allowed for APL – see appendix I**

3.3 APEL which is learning acquired through life experiences including work and uncertificated training, for which no formal qualification has been gained **and which matches the learning outcomes from the module(s) from which the applicant is to be exempted.**

4.0 Procedure

4.1 Application

4.1.1 All applications for APEL should normally be made prior to the student's date of enrolment and usually as part of the admissions process. All claims should be submitted using the University's APL form – see appendix II.

4.1.2 Applications will be received by Student Administration who will then seek guidance from the nominated admissions tutor in the College.

4.1.3 At this stage clarification should be sought as to what learning outcomes the applicant is seeking credit for and advice given as to how and when to submit evidence.

4.2 Submission of evidence by the applicant

4.2.1 Applicants are required to provide evidence of having achieved the specified learning outcomes of the modules for which credit is being claimed.

4.2.2 For APCL, the applicant may provide the following evidence:

- a transcript of the courses taken, credits achieved and the marks awarded for the prior learning, certified by the appropriate officer or officers of the institution or institutions where the prior learning took place.
- the learning outcomes for the prior learning, as defined in the programme specification, course handbook or other official documentation from the institution where the prior learning took place;
- references from the institution where the prior learning took place.

4.2.3 For APEL, the applicant may provide the following evidence:

- a portfolio of evidence
- a structured interview
- completion of a piece of work accompanied by a reflective account of the learning achieved
- a performance-based assessment
- completion of the assessment used to demonstrate learning in the module/programme for which comparability is being claimed.

4.2.4 It is important that all evidence presented is directly linked to the learning claimed. This means that references and testimonies should not be general statements about good character, but should focus on supporting the skills and knowledge of the applicant.

4.3 Academic considerations and assessment

4.3.1 Recognition of prior learning is a matter of academic judgement, with the main consideration being whether the prior learning is broadly equivalent to the learning that would otherwise have been assessed during the course module.

4.3.2 When assessing the evidence against the requirements of the intended learning outcomes of the programme and modules, the following key criteria should be considered:

- Relevance – is there an appropriate match between the evidence presented and the learning claimed?
- Sufficiency – is there sufficient evidence to demonstrate the achievement of the learning claimed?
- Authenticity – is the evidence clearly related to the applicants' own efforts and achievements?
- Currency – does the evidence relate to current learning? Where more than five years has elapsed, the applicant should provide evidence of having kept up to date with developments within the subject area.

4.3.3 The Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) qualification descriptors should be referred to when assessing whether the claim is acceptable (see the QAA website for further information - <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/The-framework-for-higher-education-qualifications-in-England-Wales-and-Northern-Ireland.aspx>).

4.3.4 APL credit will normally be accepted within a maximum of five years from the date it was awarded. If not, consideration may be given to evidence of continued development in a professional or similar context.

4.3.5 Consideration should also be given to the maximum credits allowed for APL. – see appendix I

4.4 Outcome and next steps

4.4.1 Assessed claims should be returned to Student Administration who will inform the applicant in writing of the decision as soon as possible.

4.4.2 APEL decisions will be recorded on the student record system by Student Administration and clearly identified on a student's transcript, including the amount and level of credit from which exemption has been granted.

4.4.3 For any module exempted by means of APL, no actual percentage mark will be awarded and the module will be discounted for the purpose of progression or classification.

4.4.4 Applications for APL are considered on academic grounds and may be rejected at any stage. Appeals against judgments on applications for APEL will be treated in the same way as appeals on admissions applications.

5.0 Internal transfers

5.1 Students may transfer within the first six weeks of the beginning of their award, at the discretion of the programme leader. At this stage, students will have no credit to transfer and therefore APCL will not be required.

5.2 Students wishing to transfer between awards at a later stage in their studies should discuss the possibility with the relevant programme leader who will determine which modules are appropriate for APCL.

5.3 Credits already awarded by the University as part of a University award may not be used as APL credit against a second award which is at the same level and in a similar subject area.

6.0 External transfers into undergraduate programmes

6.1 All applicants must first submit a standard UCAS application.

6.2 Students applying for direct entry into the second or third year will normally have studied on a similar degree programme at another institution.

6.3 APCL may be granted for formal learning from other institutions, including where this learning has resulted in the award of a similar qualification. The maximum amount of credits that can be awarded for APCL are listed in appendix I.

6.4 Applicants will be invited to submit an APL form in support of their application if there are vacancies available on the programme.

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