Reference:	**QI_03_01**
Policy:	**Procedure for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for Higher Education students**
Owned by:	Quality, Compliance and Qualification Development Lead
Approved by:	Academic Board
Review date:	August 2024 Version: 3
Date of next review:	**August 2027**

Please contact us on 01904 770372 or email us at QI-admin@yorkcollege.ac.uk if you would like this document in an alternative format or have any questions about all or part of the document.

This is a procedure which falls under the Assessment Policy and should be read in conjunction with that Policy

Introduction

Purpose and Objectives

1. Purpose of the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

1.1. York College is committed to improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment for all students. The purpose of this policy is to encourage wider participation of students from diverse educational backgrounds, and to prevent repetition of learning to maximise student progress.

2. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

2.1. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a form of assessment which makes use of evidence of a student's previous non - certificated achievements to demonstrate competence or achievement within a unit or qualification. Through the RPL process, evidence of a candidate's previous achievement (learning) is assessed against the learning outcomes of a unit.

2.2. RPL policies and procedures have been developed over time, which has led to the use of a number of terms which broadly describe the same process. Among the most common are:

- Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)
- Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)
- Accreditation of Prior Achievement (APA)
- Accreditation of Prior Learning and Achievement (APLA).
- Recognition of Certificated Prior Learning (RCPL)

2.3. Definitions

a) NIACE (National Institute of Adult Continuing Education) provide the following RPL definition: *"A method of assessment that considers whether a learner can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning"* (learningandwork.org.uk, 2016).

3. When to use RPL

3.1 <u>For entry to an HE course without advanced standing</u>

The College will admit applicants without standard qualifications whom it identifies as being capable of benefiting from the chosen programme of study. To do so the Award Leader will seek to establish the applicant holds:

- appropriate subject knowledge or skills where relevant
- intellectual capacity
- ability in written and oral communication
- where appropriate, numeracy skills match between the skills and experience of the applicant and the skills profile and desirable characteristics for the programme.

Evidence may be presented by:

- previous professional experience and/or professional qualifications
- previous study e.g. OU credits, other HE module taken on a free-standing basis
- portfolio for APEL purposes
- success in an HE Access course
- any other evidence acceptable to the Award Leader

Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) is learning which you received certification for. This may or may not be on relevant HE frameworks such as the FHEQ. If your previous certificated learning is not at degree level (i.e. level 4 or above) then yo can work out its level using the Register of Regulated Qualifications, available through Ofqual. (2018)

Examples can include:

- If you apply for HND Business with a Level 4 Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) certificate
- If you apply for HNC Business with NVQ Level 6 Business and Management
- If you withdrew from a foundation degree in Performing Arts and after completing one year and received a Certificate of Higher Education and decide to recommence the foundation degree in Performing Arts programme at Level two years later. This type of RPL is known as advanced standing.

3.2 <u>For entry to an HE course with advanced standing</u>

Advanced standing is generally the result of a stage exemption (see section below). If you are entering onto a BA (Hons) top-up you will almost certainly not need to apply for RPL as you would usually have the qualification required. This type of progression is known as automatic progression*.

Examples of automatic progression could include:

- Completing a HND Business and progressing onto a BA (Hons) Leadership and Management top-up course
- Completing the first two years of a BA (Hons) Art and Design and progressing onto a BA (Hons) Contemporary Art and Design Practice top up
  *All other applicable entry criteria must also be met

Can I apply for an exemption so that I don't have to take some modules?

If you can demonstrate that your prior certificated learning meets the learning outcomes of one or more of the prospective programme modules, you can apply for and get a module exemption – which means you don't have to undertake that module. If your prior learning can be shown to match the outcomes required to complete the modules or units for a whole level, then this would allow you to enrol onto the next level – giving you a stage exemption.

4. Award Leaders and teaching teams are responsible for;

4.1. Advising applicants of evidence requirements, grading criteria, and any limits on the amount of credit that can be awarded. All applicants for whom RPL is being claimed MUST be directed to the relevant teams to ensure that the correct fees are charged if applicable.

4.2. Ensuring all RPL is appropriately documented in line with awarding organisations' requirements and made available to applicants, teaching and administrative staff and external quality assessors using the awarding organisations' documentation or the College's documentation where this is not available. (See Appendix A)

4.3. If further evidence is required in addition to the applicant's initial submission, informing the applicant as soon as possible regarding the evidence required, or options which are available to the applicant.

4.4. Assessing RPL evidence and determining whether it is valid, authentic, current, relevant, and matches the level of learning required.

4.5. Mapping achievement of RPL, identifying learning not evidenced and arranging additional learning and assessment where appropriate.

4.6. Grading RPL evidence where relevant.

4.7. Arranging internal quality assurance/moderation/standardisation and external quality assurance of the APL evidence in accordance with the awarding organisations' requirements.

4.8. Retaining RPL evidence, assessment records and IV documentation in line with awarding organisations' requirements and for a minimum of the period required by ESFA for funding purposes.

4.9. Retaining records of the units/modules that have been successfully accredited against applicant records, and recording the outcome of the awarding organisation communicated to the student.

4.10. Where the application for RPL fails, ensuring that the applicant is informed and that the applicant completes all units/modules required to achieve the full qualification.

4.11. Informing students of the Appeals Process, and following the College Appeals Procedure in the event of a student appeal.

5. Curriculum Standards Managers are Responsible for;

5.1. Curriculum Standards Manager must be certain that the relevant validating institution organisation has a policy on RPL and where an awarding organisation has in place a policy for the recognition of prior learning it must –

(a) ensure that the policy which it has in place enables the awarding organisation to award qualifications in accordance with its Conditions of Recognition,

(b) publish that policy, and

(c) comply with that policy.

5.2 Countersigning and recording RPL applications and outcomes.

5.3. Supporting staff to confirm whether RPL application is appropriate, valid, authentic, current, relevant, and sufficient for the current qualification.

5.4. Ensuring that all applicants are aware of the RPL policy during admissions and course advice and guidance.

5.5. Ensuring that the College RPL Policy is implemented.

5.6. Supporting staff to ensure that they can meet the requirements of the policy.

5.7. Monitoring RPL applications to ensure that the criteria for RPL remain objective and are being fairly and consistently applied to all applicants across the College.

5.8. Monitoring the achievement, success rate, and progress of students admitted with RPL to determine the suitability of qualifications for the granting of credit exemption.

6. IQA/ Lead IQA is responsible for;

6.1. Conducting IQA on RPL in the same manner as traditional evidence.

6.2. Malpractice checks when internally quality assuring work.

6.3. Using robust IQA and audited record keeping procedures in line with College policies.

6.4. Auditing student records, assessment tracking records and certification claims.

6.5. Ensuring that awarding organisation and national standards are maintained.

7. Quality, Compliance and Qualification Development Lead is responsible for;

7.1. Disseminating information from the awarding organisations and keeping staff up to date on the current and likely developments in terms of assessment.

7.2. Informing staff about the college procedures for dealing with RPL.

Procedures

8. Assessment of RPL Evidence

8.1. Evidence obtained through RPL must meet the same rigorous quality criteria that other assessment methods must conform to, assessors and IQA's must ensure that evidence is:

8.1.1. Valid: Evidence genuinely demonstrates that the demands of the learning outcome and criteria have been met and currency of evidence has been considered e.g. whether evidence meets up-to-date demands/standards or is it representative of practice that may have changed significantly. If the currency of any evidence is in doubt, the assessor may use questions to check understanding, and ask for the demonstration of skills to check competence. Care should also be taken to ensure that the assessment strategy for each qualification is adhered to.

8.1.2. Authentic: It must be clear that evidence being examined is genuinely the work of the individual student.

8.1.3. Sufficient: There must be sufficient evidence to fully meet the requirements of the learning outcome(s) and assessment criteria from the relevant qualification specification. If there is insufficient evidence to fully meet requirements, then evidence obtained through RPL must be complemented by evidence gained through other suitable assessment method(s) before requirements can be said to have been met.

8.1.4. Reliable: The evidence obtained through RPL should be such that an assessor would arrive at the same assessment decision, were the assessment to be repeated

9. Outcomes of RPL

9.1. Once the RPL procedure has been completed, the applicant can be fully enrolled as a student. They will be enrolled to the full qualification, or to a bespoke timetable and assessment plan of that qualification, depending on the outcome of the process. Fees, and Funding claims, for students admitted with RPL will be varied according to the proportion of RPL granted in accordance with ESFA funding rules.

9.2. If an individual can meet all the learning outcomes and assessment criteria in a unit, then they can claim credit for that unit solely on the basis of their RPL achievement. If however, evidence from RPL is only sufficient to cover one or more learning outcomes, or to partly meet the need of a learning outcome, then additional assessment methods should be employed to generate the sufficient evidence required to make a safe assessment decision.

10. Funding for RPL

The Education & Skills Funding Agency provider support manual details the current funding guidelines for Prior Learning. This document must be consulted prior to enrolment.

References:

Ofqual (2018) Guidance to the General Conditions of Recognition For Awarding Organisations

Education & Skills Funding Agency: ILR Provider Support Manual (in year guidance to be used)

Appendix A: Recognition of Prior Learning application form

Name:	Student reference:

Your proposed course and course code (To be completed by tutor):

Overview of proposed RPL request:

To help us understand your request, please give details of how you think RPL could help with your study progression. Please indicate where you gained evidence that you have relevant skills, knowledge or behaviours, including any qualifications achieved (give date of achievement, and name of awarding organisation). Evidence may include previous study, work history, certificates etc.

RPL Summary

Total number of Modules in the qualification:		Internal Verifier	
Module Number and Title for RPL	Evidence collected/ approved by Tutor	Approved / Not approved	
Total Number of Modules with RPL claimed		**% of RPL:**	

RPL HoD Approval:

Form received by CSM on: (date)

Decision made by CSM on: (date)

Applicant/student informed on: (date)

Outcome:

The student will:

☐ not claim any exemption from units

☐ claim RPL for unit(s) …… for a total of ….% of the course

Brief rationale for approval/non-approval

(if credit is being accepted which has been awarded at another institution, please include the name of the institution and the date and details of the credit awarded)

Signed: ..... Date: .....

(CSM)

Forward to Student Data for action on completion

<u>Student Data only</u>

Fees updated?

Funding updated?

Enrolments updated?

Track changes

Policy: HE_Assessment_Procedure_RPL-HEv2 Aug 27
Version: 2 changed to Version 3
Date: 27th July 2026

Name change of the Owner
To: Quality, Compliance and Qualification Development Lead
From: Senior Quality and Compliance Officer

Policy: HE_Assessment_Procedure_RPL-HEv2

Changes Version 1 to Version 2

Date: 27th January 2026

Main document changes and comments

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