

# Accreditation of Prior Learning at the University of Gloucestershire

## Policy

### Introduction

The University's Policy on Accreditation of Prior Learning has been informed by the QAA UK Quality Code, particularly Ch. B2 Admissions, Ch. B6 Assessment of students and accreditation of prior learning and Ch. B10 Managing higher education provision with others. Accreditation of prior learning (APL) is a formalised process through which credit may be awarded for learning undertaken prior to the commencement of a University course or learning completed alongside, but not a part of the University course for which a student has applied or is registered. The appropriate use of APL procedures avoids the necessity of duplicating previous learning, whilst ensuring that credit is only awarded when robust evidence is presented of successful attainment of the learning outcomes appropriate to the level and content of the award for which the student has applied or is registered. Usually only qualifications and experience acquired within ten years of the date of an APL claim will be admissible as evidence to support a claim. Certain courses may apply a different time period to reflect professional and other regulatory requirements.

Prior learning may be experiential or certificated:

**Certificated Learning (APCL)** is learning for which a formal qualification has been received, for example a Foundation Degree, Postgraduate Diploma or individual modules/course units completed at another institution.

**Experiential Learning (APEL)** is learning achieved outside of a formal learning environment. It may include learning gained as part of life and work experience, volunteer work, or as part of a training course for which no formal qualification has been received.

The University's recognition of prior learning may be facilitated by different processes:

1. Individual APL application enables learners who submit an individual claim, supported by appropriate evidence of learning, to gain advanced standing on a UoG course.
2. Articulation Agreements with collaborative partners enable the University to guarantee progression. Applicants who have successfully completed specified credit or a specific award will be recognised for entry with advanced standing on a specified UoG course. Articulation Agreements are subject to review on at least an annual basis.
3. Approved Qualifications enable the University to consider for entry with advanced standing on a specified UoG course any applicant who has successfully achieved a specific qualification. Approved Qualifications are subject to annual review.

In the following sections the University's policy for the accreditation of prior learning is presented.

### Scope

This policy addresses all aspects of the Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) for all taught provision within the University. The policy adheres to the University's Academic Regulations for Taught Provision ([ARTP](#)), see 2.1.7. The policy is informed by the UK Quality Code, for example, Ch. B2 [Admissions](#), Chapter B6: [Assessment of students and accreditation of prior learning](#) and [Ch. B10 Managing higher education provision with others](#)

### Principles

A fundamental part of the University mission is to be student-centered.

The presence of an accessible and transparent policy that informs a set of procedures for the accreditation of prior learning is one example of how the University responds to students and potential students as individuals, providing those with a learning history that could be used as the evidence base for an APL claim with the detailed guidance they require to make a submission.

**The following principles underpin the University's approach to accreditation of prior learning:**

- 1.1 APL is a form of assessment and therefore the policy and procedures in place for APL are compliant with the University's [principles and procedures for assessment](#).
- 1.2 APL is a judgement about a student's ability to study at a particular level taking account of their previous study and experience.
- 1.3 The assessment of an APL claim will
  - o exercise robust, academic judgement;
  - o take an holistic approach to the student's experience, previous study and intended award;
  - o recognise the need for flexible consideration of each aspect of the intended award in the light of previous study or experience;
  - o and take account of university and external reference points.
- 1.4 An APL claim based on learning completed prior to admission to a University course should be submitted during the process of applying for the course so that the claim can be judged, and any credit awarded, before the course commences.
- 1.5 Only APL claims based on learning completed whilst undertaking a University course, but that is not a part of that course, will be considered once a course has commenced.
- 1.6 An APL Board of Assessment exists to provide a moderation process and to ensure academic integrity and institutional consistency.

**2. The following principles underpin the University's approach to individual claims for the accreditation of prior learning**

- 2.1 Responsibility for making the claim for credit and for providing supporting evidence rests with the learner.
- 2.2 The different functions of advising a learner on the preparation of a claim for learning, and for assessing that learning should be kept separate.
- 2.3 A range of support mechanisms will be available for the development of individual APL claims.
- 2.4 The development of an APEL claim should be seen as a learning activity.
- 2.5 Structured support and guidance will be provided at the outset, and where the applicant is not initially successful.

**3. The following principles underpin the University's approach to approved qualifications and Articulation Agreements:**

- 3.1 Assessment will take account of appropriate national and international award levels
- 3.2 Proposed agreements for approved qualifications or Articulation will be assessed independently of their development.
- 3.3 A central record of all approved qualifications and Articulation Agreements will be held by the University.
- 3.4 Recognition of an award in one institution will not guarantee recognition of a similar award in another institution
- 3.5 Agreements will be subject to review on at least an annual basis.

3.6 Support will be available to external educational institutions presenting evidence of the suitability of their awards or programmes for recognition.

3.7 Day to day management of Articulation Agreements lies with the receiving course.

3.8 Both parties will notify each other of the impact on the operation of Agreements of curriculum changes, institutional strategic developments, or other university and sector-wide policy changes.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The University's policy on Accreditation of Prior Learning will be monitored by ASQC

### **Review**

The University's policy on Accreditation of Prior Learning should be reviewed every three years.

### **Appendices**

Appendix A: [QAA UK Quality Code](#)

Appendix B: The University of Gloucestershire [Assessment Principles and Processes](#)

Appendix C: The University of Gloucestershire [Learning and Teaching Strategy 2011 - 15](#)

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