

What is Accreditation of Prior Learning?

Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) is an opportunity for students to be credited for learning that they have done before they started at the University. It avoids the necessity of duplicating previous learning, whilst ensuring students have attained the learning outcomes appropriate to their award. Prior learning may be certificated or experiential:

Certificated learning is learning for which there is a formal qualification, for example a Certificate or Diploma of Higher Education, an HNC or HND, a Foundation Degree, or individual modules/course units completed at another institution.

Experiential learning is learning achieved outside of a formal learning environment. It may include learning gained as part of work experience, volunteering or as part of a training course, but for which there is no formal qualification.

See 'How do I know if I am eligible to apply for APL?' for further information.

How to Apply for APL

All applications for APL should be made **when you apply for admission to a course**, and no later than two weeks after enrolment on a course. To make an application for APL simply do one of the following:

Either: email the APL team at apl@glos.ac.uk, indicating in the email subject header *FAO APL*, followed by your *Full Name*, followed by the *Course Title* you have applied to; AND attach or enclose evidence of your claim (see below for information about the evidence you will need to provide).

Or: post your evidence to Admissions / APL, University of Gloucestershire, Laurie Lee Building Pittville Student Village, Albert Road, Cheltenham GL52 3JG, marking the envelope and each piece of evidence 'FAO APL' (and include your full name where relevant).

If you have already indicated that you have a claim for APL via an online application, and/or uploaded evidence direct to our system, we will normally contact you to let you know what to do next.

Evidence required to support a claim for Certificated Learning (APCL)

1. **A description of the content and learning outcomes of the programme/modules you have completed** (e.g. extracts from a course handbook, module descriptors, a programme specification, or links to relevant web pages).

2. **An academic transcript of your previous programme of study.** This should normally include confirmation of the institution and validating body; the course/programme title studied; your name; dates of study; and (where appropriate) modules passed, credit points achieved and final award.

If you have not yet received all your final results, please send as much of the above information as you can, including a list of all the modules and credits that you have completed, and intend to complete, at your prior institution, so that we can make a provisional assessment. You will then need to submit the final academic transcript as soon as you receive it, and no later than the end of the first semester of your UoG course. (NB The University's APL Board of Assessment will not accept web-based results as final verification. You should also note that if you submit a copy of your transcript, we reserve the right to contact the institution to verify details, or we may ask you to present an original before your APL can be confirmed.) If you do not present a final academic transcript to confirm your prior learning by the end of the first semester of your UoG course, you may be required to register for, pay for, and successfully complete ALL the course modules before you can graduate.

Evidence required for Experiential Learning (APEL)

It is unusual to claim for, or be awarded, APEL for more than one or two modules, although individual claims will be assessed on their own merit. Initially you should email the Admissions /APL office with a brief summary explanation of why and what you are claiming. You will then be directed to a member of academic staff for further guidance.

A portfolio of evidence will be required to support your claim for each module. This should normally include:

- Personal reflection on experiences relevant to each of the learning outcomes of the module.
- Relevant job descriptions.
- Independent verification of dates of relevant employment.

The portfolio might also include:

- Character references.
- Samples of work you have produced.
- Relevant certificates of non-credited courses of study completed (together with a course syllabus or other explanatory information).

You will be assessed against each of the learning outcomes of the module(s) for which the claim is made. It is helpful to complete a grid, or provide an equivalent document that clearly maps materials in the portfolio against the learning outcomes for one module. Each piece of evidence should have a title and a label (e.g. a letter or number code). If making a large or complex claim you may also find it helpful to provide an overall commentary on your experience.

You will be expected to demonstrate *broad* equivalence; therefore strong evidence against some learning outcomes might be sufficient to make up for weaker evidence against others. If the module is a prerequisite for another, or if it is a core or compulsory module within a programme, you must provide evidence to indicate adequate preparation for progression to the next module or level.

There are five features which will be considered as part of the assessment:

- Content: Evidence should indicate that you have acquired the types of knowledge/understanding and skills developed in the module(s).
- Level: Evidence should indicate that you have acquired knowledge/understanding and skills that can be considered as appropriate to the level of the module. At a minimum, you should provide evidence that your learning is equivalent to that of an undergraduate student – or, if you are claiming against a L7 module, of a postgraduate student.
- Volume: Evidence should indicate that you have *sufficient* experience. NB This is particularly important in claiming against a module that includes a placement of a specified number of days or weeks.
- Currency: Learning should be relatively recent, in relation to the module learning outcomes. As a rule of thumb, ten years is considered the maximum 'shelf life' over which the learning is considered current. However, this will depend on subject. For instance, learning in subjects where there has been rapid technological development, or where professional requirements have changed, will have briefer currency.
- Authenticity: You will need to provide independent verification of each of your significant job roles or relevant experiences. This should be provided by your employer, normally via a signed letter or email that includes the registered address of the employment. We reserve the right to contact the employer in the event of any queries about authenticity.

You will be given a deadline for submission, which will normally be no later than the actual module assessment deadline date. When your portfolio is complete, please submit it direct to the module leader, who will assess it and make a recommendation to the APL Board of Assessment. Please alert the APL Administrator straightaway (via apl@glos.ac.uk) to confirm that you have submitted the portfolio. Please ensure that you keep a copy of all documents submitted.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I know if I am eligible to apply for APL?

Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) is not applicable to every student – only those who wish to be *exempt* from a module/modules, because they have already passed (or are shortly to pass) a module/modules that may be deemed equivalent in terms of level, CATs (credit values) AND content. Therefore, you might consider applying for APL if you meet the following criteria:

- You have completed part or all of a CertHE, an HNC, HND or Foundation Degree and are applying for an Honours Degree in a similar subject area (normally with entry at Level 5 or Level 6).
- You have completed part of a Degree programme, and are applying to transfer to a Degree in a similar subject area.
- You have completed part or all of a postgraduate qualification (Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma) and wish to use some of or all of that credit to exempt you from the postgraduate certificate or diploma stage of a Masters Degree in a similar subject area.
- You have completed significant work experience that covers the specific learning outcomes of a UoG module – and that work experience was initiated by you, independently of the UoG course, and normally prior to your UoG course start.

APL is NOT applicable to a student whose highest qualification/module achieved is of a lower level than the modules of the course to be studied at UoG (such as A Level, a BTEC L3 or NVQ L3 qualification). Your existing qualifications may give you *eligibility for entry to the course* – and our Admissions department will contact you separately about this. However, an entry qualification will not give you eligibility for APL.

You should be aware of the following:

- It is your choice to apply for APL. Even if you have already covered some prior learning, you or your course leader may consider it sensible and worthwhile for you to complete the course in its entirety.
- An application for APL is no guarantee that APL will be awarded. All APL claims and recommendations are subject to assessment and approval by the University's APL Board of Assessment. Unless you have made an application for APL and your prior learning has been formally approved by the APL Board of Assessment and transferred to your record, you will not have enough credit on your University of Gloucestershire programme to graduate.
- APL will not be awarded automatically simply because you have been accepted into a higher level, or because a member of staff at the University has verbally indicated that you will be given APL.
- **APL will only be awarded when your prior learning has been formally assessed against the learning outcomes of your chosen course; when that assessment has been approved by the APL Board of Assessment; and when final evidence has**

been received to confirm that you have successfully completed that prior learning. You will receive confirmation when this process is complete and credit has been transferred to your record.

- Students claiming APL will not be eligible also to apply for a Postgraduate Student Loan.

NB You do not need to make an application for APL if you are applying for entry to a L6 120-CAT top up only programme (e.g. BA Business Management and Strategy or BSc Applied Sport & Exercise Studies). Your prior learning is then counted as an 'entry requirement' but credit is not transferred to your UoG record. Your UoG final transcript will reflect that you have studied on a Level 6 Top up only programme and that your results should be read in conjunction with a separate transcript.

How much credit can I be awarded?

You can only be awarded credit for prior learning that matches the learning outcomes of the programme that you are studying. This could be done on the basis of individual modules or for an entire level, or stage of programme.

You can be awarded up to two-thirds of most courses in credit (for example, credit for all of the first two levels of a normal three-level degree course). However, there are some exceptions to this, including some courses and modules which do not permit any APL at all. Full details are set out in the APL section of the University's [Academic Regulations for Taught Provision](#).

Although you can be awarded **credit**, which is recorded as 'CR' on your final transcript, you will not receive a **grade** for any modules/levels credited via APL.

Will I be charged for making a claim for APL?

Information about fees for Accredited Prior Learning may be found in the Tuition Policy for your year of entry (see the [Fees](#) webpage). Please note that you will be charged for any additional modules you are required to take as part of your University of Gloucestershire programme. For example, if you apply for APL for Level 5 of your degree programme (120 credits), but find that you have not met all the learning outcomes and are awarded only 105 credits, you will be charged a fee for the additional module that you must take to meet the requirements of the degree. If you have any queries about fees, please contact our Finance department (Tel: 01242 714222, Email: feesadmin@glos.ac.uk)

How long will it take to process my claim for APL?

Assessment of APL normally occurs concurrently with the assessment of your course application, but the time this process takes will depend on the amount of detail you are able to provide on your prior learning. The University will need sufficient detail to make an assessment of equivalence/level with modules taught at UoG. If there is insufficient detail, we may need to make further enquiries, either with you, or with the institution concerned. The claim will be assessed as soon as possible; however, you should note that course leaders are busy people, particularly at the start of the academic year and at examinations and marking time. The Admissions & APL team will endeavour to keep you informed about any significant delay, and you may be invited to proceed with enrolment on the course in the meantime.

Who will assess my claim for APL?

Your claim will normally be assessed by the course leader, and approved by an appropriate member of the University's APL Board of Assessment. In exceptional circumstances, a claim may also be referred to a full meeting of the APL Board.

What is the APL Board of Assessment?

An APL Board of Assessment exists to provide a moderation process and to ensure academic integrity and institutional consistency. Membership of the Board comprises Faculty and other relevant professional services representatives, who are responsible for overseeing the assessment and approval of each claim for APL. The APL Board of Assessment meets periodically to make recommendations around policy and regulations for APL. For further information see the University's [APL Policy](#).

What happens after my claim for APL has been assessed?

Following assessment, you will be notified of the outcome. If the APL Board's decision is not to award credit then you will be given advice which should help you judge whether to make another application. The Fees Administration team will also be notified, and they will make any necessary adjustments to your tuition fees. Once you have sent us final evidence of any prior learning results outstanding, and enrolled on the course, the credit will be transferred to your academic record. It is important to send these results as soon as you have them and no later than the end of the first semester of your UoG course. Otherwise you may be required to take and pay for additional modules to make up the requirements.