



# **CODE OF PRACTICE ON ASSESSMENT**

## **APPENDIX R**

### **Policy on Recognition on Prior Learning (RPL)**

#### **ANNEXE 2 STAFF GUIDE**

**2023-24**

Applicable to all cohorts

In the Code of Practice on Assessment and all Appendices the term “student” includes apprentices on degree apprenticeship programmes

## **Policy on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**

### **STAFF GUIDE**

These guidance notes should always be read in conjunction with Appendix R of the Code of Practice on Assessment and the guide for applicants for RPL.

#### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 In all cases of prior learning, Schools/Departments should adhere to the principles and procedures contained in the University's RPL policy. It is recognised however that Schools/Departments have developed satisfactory procedures to deal with the admission of students with non-traditional qualifications and in these cases established practice should continue.

#### **2 The Adviser/Assessor Roles**

- 2.1 The Faculty APVC for Education will nominate a member of staff who will act in the role of Faculty Lead for RPL. The Faculty Lead (or their nominated deputy), in consultation with the Heads of Department or level 1 School, will nominate local Advisers and Assessors to deal with specific RPL claims. There is no restriction on the numbers of Advisers and Assessors that can be nominated but there must be fair and consistent practice in dealing with RPL claims. In all cases the Adviser and Assessor must be separate individuals. All Advisers and Assessors must undertake appropriate staff training in advance of beginning their RPL work. The training will be provided by The Leadership, Organisational, Staff and Academic Development Academy.

##### **2.2 The Adviser**

- 2.2.1 Advisers should always provide realistic guidance regarding the likely amount of RPL credit which could be awarded. This avoids raising student expectations unrealistically.
- 2.2.2 Care should be taken when dealing with claims against 'mandatory' modules. Advisers should be aware that it may not be appropriate for students to claim RPL credit for certain mandatory modules or for modules which contribute to PSRB standards or competencies.
- 2.2.3 Evidence of prior learning to support an application may be collected into a portfolio. The application form for RPL requires applicants to provide a supporting statement but this can be supplemented in the portfolio with additional contextual information and a commentary or reflective summary that clearly demonstrates learning arising from prior experience.
- 2.2.4 Where an interview or additional form of assessment such as an observed performance is to be used, the Adviser should provide guidance to the student on what the interview or alternative assessment will cover. The RPL portfolio should also be passed back to the student to allow preparation for the interview or alternative assessment.
- 2.2.5 Registered students should normally claim exemption from a module in the preceding academic session. This may be waived where additional new programme modules are approved at a later date. For degree apprenticeship programmes, only prospective students are eligible for RPL. Any application must be made in good time prior to the programme start date.

2.2.6 On completion of the RPL assessment process the Adviser should provide feedback to the applicant on the acceptance or rejection of the prior learning claim. This can help the applicant to make informed decisions about future study or can provide them with the opportunity to obtain the credit by undertaking the relevant module(s) within the applicable programme. The Adviser should also invite the applicants to provide an evaluation of the RPL process.

### **2.3 The Assessor**

2.3.1 Assessors must be satisfied that RPL evidence is reliable and can be appropriately attributed to the student. Appendix R of the Code of Practice outlines the type of evidence that an applicant might provide.

2.3.2 There must be sufficient direct evidence to properly attribute RPEL to the student. Direct evidence of RPEL is generated personally by the student and may include:

- published articles
- assignments from previous non-academic-credit-bearing courses
- consultancy reports
- in-company projects and presentations
- reflective diaries
- professional or personal development portfolios compiled for professional bodies or for other awards.

2.3.3 Indirect evidence of RPEL may include:

- testimony and witness statements e.g. from an employer or client
- certificates of achievement/attendance from previous non-academic-credit-bearing courses.

2.3.4 It may also be appropriate to assess prior learning in ways other than or to supplement a portfolio, e.g. through a structured interview, the observation of performance, completion of a piece of work accompanied by a reflective account of the learning achieved. In these cases, care must be taken to document the assessment process.

2.3.5 When assessing a claim for admission onto a degree apprenticeship programme the Assessor must be mindful that apprentices will normally be recruited initially by the employer and entry decisions must therefore also satisfy their recruitment requirements. In addition, there will be entry requirements set in the approved applicable apprenticeship standard that should be considered.

## **3 The Process**

3.1 The applicant should contact the relevant nominated Adviser, whose contact details should be published on the School or Institute webpages.

3.2 The applicant should use the standard application form supplemented by the portfolio of supporting evidence.

3.3 No charge should be made for advising on and assessing a RPCL claim. A charge may be made however for advising on, assessment and other processes involved in considering a claim for RPEL. The current maximum fee is £100, unless the applicant is an apprentice on a degree apprenticeship programme, in which case no fee is payable. Should a fee be applicable, the School/Institute Office should issue the invoice and receive the fee. The Adviser nor the Assessor should raise the fee nor receive the payment.

3.4 When complete the application should be forwarded by the Adviser to the Assessor.

3.5 Appendix A to this guide provides sample items for inclusion on the Adviser's RPL record form.

- 3.6 The Assessor will assess each claim on an individual basis by defining the assessment criteria for the claim, based on the relevant module and/or programme learning outcomes, and by assessing the submitted evidence against the defined criteria. Where necessary the Assessor will take advice from colleagues about the subject(s) covered in the claim.
- 3.7 The Assessor will recommend, record and report the outcome of the assessment process within the required time-scale (normally within four working weeks from the date of submission of the full application).
- 3.8 Appendix B to this guide provides sample items for inclusion on the Assessor's RPL record form.
- 3.9 The Faculty Lead should countersign all RPL Assessor decisions in the Faculty.
- 3.10 The Advisers should return the RPL portfolio and all original documentation to the student following the assessment decision, clearly indicating that the originals of all RPL related documentation should be kept by the applicant until their graduation.
- 3.11 The Adviser should send the applicant, whether successful or unsuccessful, the RPL process evaluation form for completion and return. A sample form is provided at Appendix C to this guide.
- 3.12 The School/Institute should notify SAS of all decisions regarding RPL. Where an applicant is not yet a registered student (i.e. if RPL is allowed for exemption from a module as part of the admissions process) then the School/Department should notify SAS retrospectively. If the RPL is not linked to a specific module, the RPL will be recorded as a credit value only.

#### **4 Monitoring RPL practice at Departmental Level**

- 4.1 The University expects Schools/Institutes to monitor RPL activity and to report on an annual basis to the Faculty Lead for RPL, who in turn will report to the relevant FAQSC/FEEAC. The Faculty reports should be submitted to the University AQSC.
- 4.2 Monitoring data should include:
- number and nature of applications,
  - types of applicants e.g. by gender, ethnicity, age, etc.
  - types of applications e.g. for admission, exemption, for UG or PGT programmes
  - level and volumes of credit claimed
  - number of applications dealt with within time period (within four working weeks from the date of submission of the full application documentation)
  - applicants' evaluations of the RPL process where this has been provided
  - number and proportion of students with RPL credits in their profile who progressed satisfactorily
  - achievement of students with RPL credits in their profile (awards and class)
- 4.3 It is good practice for the Adviser to report periodically on RPL activity within the department to the relevant Board of Studies.

#### **5 Complaints or appeals**

- 5.1 There is no right of appeal regarding the academic decision. Appeals can only be made in the event of a perceived procedural irregularity and should be submitted in writing to the Student Conduct, Complaints and Compliance Team in Student Administration and Support ([appeals@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:appeals@liverpool.ac.uk)) within ten working days of receipt of the decision. The Student Conduct, Complaints and Compliance Team will ask the appropriate Faculty Lead for RPL to consider the appeal and a response will normally be provided to the student within four weeks of submission of the appeal. There will be no further right of appeal within the University but a

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student who remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal may request a Completion of Procedures letter from the Student Conduct, Complaints and Compliance Team to take a complaint, if eligible, to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (the OIA).

**Appendix A RPL Adviser’s Record Form**

<b>Initial Enquiry</b>		
Name of applicant		
Student ID (if already registered)		
Contact details of applicant		
Mode of initial contact by applicant e.g. phone, email, letter, other		
Date of initial contact		
Date and method of Adviser’s first response to enquirer		
Summary of initial advice:		
<b>Claim submitted</b>		
Date application form received		
Check of the application form and supporting documents	Complete	Not complete
Date invoice raised for RPEL fee (if applicable)		
Amount of fee paid and date paid (if applicable)		
Subsequent action by Adviser	Refer to Assessor	Contact applicant
	Date	Date
Comments (if applicant contacted):		
<b>Outcome of claim</b>		
Final outcome of the assessment of the claim		
Date Faculty RLP lead countersigned the decision		
Date applicant notified of the decision		
Summary of any feedback provided to the applicant with the decision		
Date SAS (student records) notified of the assessment decision		
Date of Board of Studies to be reported to		
Date the evidence received back from the Assessor		
Date evidence returned to applicant		

If preferred the form can be adapted to suit local processes e.g. to record any agreement reached with the student on any additional work to be undertaken to be able to claim credit for a full module, notes of briefing and subsequent meetings / telephone conversations, method by which the evidence was returned to applicant

**Appendix B RPL Assessor’s Form**

to be returned to Adviser once countersigned by Faculty RPL Lead

NAME OF ASSESSOR		
Name of applicant		
Student ID (if already registered)		
Contact details of applicant		
Date application received from Adviser		
Confirmation that the evidence is authentic		
Relevance of evidence supplied (please comment on the appropriateness of the subject(s) covered, the depth of understanding shown, the (FHEQ) level of learning, and the currency of the learning):		
Match of prior learning to learning outcomes claimed (please list):		
Match of prior learning to KSBs in degree apprenticeship programmes (please list):		
In the case of approval of non-standard entry onto a degree apprenticeship programme please indicate how the apprentice will be supported in developing any pre-requisite KSBs that they should have had at entry.		
Assessment decision	Amount of credit awarded	
	Level of credit awarded	
	General or specific credit	
	If specific – full name and code of module	
Signature of assessor		
Date of assessment decision		
Signature of Faculty RPL Lead		
Date of Faculty RPL Lead countersignature		
Approximate hours spent by Assessor on assessment		

**Appendix C            Applicant evaluation of the RPL process**

to be issued by and returned to the Adviser

Name of applicant	
Student ID (if already registered)	
Contact details of applicant	
Date assessment decision received	
Please comment on:	
How easy it was for you to find the contact details of your Department/School RPL Adviser	
The documentation you received from the Adviser after you had made the initial contact	
What additional information would have helped with your application	
The usefulness of briefing session(s) you had with the Adviser	
The usefulness of the student guide to the RPL policy	
The feedback you received on the assessment of your claim	
Response time of the assessment decision	
Response times of the Adviser throughout the process	
Any other issues you wish to raise	

If preferred the form can be adapted.