

STUDENT GUIDELINES FOR RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING CLAIMS

With effect from September 2021

Introduction

At the University of Greenwich, we recognise that knowledge and skills come from many different formal and informal learning environments and that many students acquire learning and skills, in employment or other working/voluntary contexts, which may be directly relevant to their planned higher education programme. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process we use to recognise that learning for academic purposes. This recognition may allow your prior learning to be counted towards the completion of an award with us and may also reduce the length of time required for formal study towards that award.

The award of any form of RPL is applied and mapped against whole modules and no partially completed modules will be considered. The acceptance of a claim for any form of RPL is entirely at the discretion of the University of Greenwich and is based upon the academic judgement of the relevant colleagues assessing the claim.

RPL: Recognition of Prior Learning

RPL is the process through which the University recognises a student's prior learning through an evidence-based application. All students seeking to demonstrate equivalence to modules on the basis of prior learning, must meet the learning outcomes for the programme as set out in the programme specification, either through studying the programme, and/or through RPL, in order to qualify for an award.

That prior learning can be evidenced through different approaches such as qualifications gained at School, College, University or an alternative educational provider, or through experiential learning where vocational evidence such as time in employment, work experience, volunteer work or placements can be demonstrated.

The University will assess claims for RPL by mapping the evidenced prior learning against modules within the applied to programme of study. Where RPL is confirmed as being applicable, exemptions from a module or modules will be awarded, but credits can only be mapped against entire modules and not against parts of modules or single items of assessment.

The University of Greenwich awards RPL under two defining strands:

RPCL: Recognition of Prior Certified Learning

RPCL is certified learning awarded at another Higher Education Institute (HEI) that did not lead to the award of an equivalent level qualification.

RPEL: Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning

RPEL is non-certificated learning, a process through which a student can claim academic credit for prior learning gained through the demonstration of experience, vocational or otherwise. Learning may take place in a variety of contexts including work situations (paid and voluntary), training programmes in formal (e.g. further

education colleges) and informal settings, Continuing Professional Development (CPD), web-based learning and/or through a variety of life experiences.

RPEL can only be awarded where there is clear and demonstrable evidence that the learning outcomes from which exemption is requested have been met through experience.

Why claim credit through RPL?

- You can save time by completing your studies quicker;
- You can avoid having to repeat learning you have already undertaken;
- You can have learning gained through experience recognised at Higher Education level;

How does the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) work?

This process of awarding credit from previous learning is intended to:

- Support your admission to a programme here at the University of Greenwich;
- Lead to the award of credit or an award in full;
- Allow you to enter the programme at a later stage (this is known as direct entry).

How does RPL credit contribute towards your degree?

To make a successful claim for RPL you must be able to evidence that the learning you have already achieved is at the same level as the learning you would be expected to achieve as part of your programme of study. For example, to count towards the first year of an undergraduate degree your previous learning must have been from the first year of another degree programme or equivalent level of qualification such as a Foundation Degree, HND/C, professional/vocational qualification or evidence of learning from experience of equivalent level.

The grade for any credits gained via RPL will not be transferred for the purpose of making the University of Greenwich award and so will not contribute to how we calculate your overall classification, unless the credits achieved have been recognised as a result of an external credit-rating by the University, or where there is an agreement with another Higher Education Institution (HEI) to recognise such a transfer of grades.

Your final award will therefore normally be calculated using only the grades you have achieved whilst studying at the University of Greenwich. For example, where a student has been given direct entry to a later stage in a programme and undertaken only the final stage of an undergraduate degree at the University of Greenwich, the Honours classification will be based on the grades attained in that final stage.

How much RPL credit can I claim?

For the majority of its awards, the University will recognise RPL up to a maximum limit of 50% of the credit requirements for that particular named qualification.

When can I apply for RPL?

An application for RPL **MUST** be made as early as possible, as part the application process, and normally before you are formally registered on to a programme. This allows your claim to be considered in a timely fashion and for you to be given clear information about the modules you will need to take at the University before you embark on the programme.

You should not assume that you are exempt from any stage/module until your claim has been formally accepted and you have been notified in writing.

Students requesting direct entry, in other words not to have to complete one or more stages of an award offered at the University, and applying via UCAS, are not required to make a separate claim for RPL. Instead the relevant admissions tutor and/or staff within Admissions assess the applicant's request for direct entry in conjunction with their application.

The applicant must indicate their preferred year of entry in the 'point of entry' section of the UCAS application form.

Before submitting your UCAS application you are strongly advised to contact the relevant admissions tutor to discuss the feasibility of making a claim for direct entry for a specific programme. The admissions tutor will be able to advise if they will consider claims for direct entry to that programme and whether your claim would be appropriate

It is YOUR responsibility to submit evidence in support of a claim for direct entry. Supporting evidence is likely to include an academic transcript and programme syllabus, but the relevant admissions tutor will advise you about the documentation required.

Applicants seeking exemption from less than a whole stage of study, or not applying via UCAS, are required to make an RPL application directly to the University Faculty where their programme will be based.

How much does RPL cost?

There is normally no fee for the assessment and award of credit for RPL. Please check with your University Faculty. **The University of Greenwich does not discount personal tuition fees for RPL being granted. If you are going to be sponsored by the NHS/Health Sector then please check with your University Faculty.**

What effect might there be on my student funding position?

An application for RPCL or RPEL may have implications for your student funding and financial support arrangements. If you are thinking of applying for RPL please contact the Student Finance and Financial Support Team for advice on how it may affect you financially, at the following campuses where your programme will be based:

Greenwich Campus – 020 8331 8526

Avery Hill Campus – 020 8331 9585

Medway Campus – 020 8331 9324

There may be fee or visa implications for International Students who obtain credit and are therefore no longer registered for a sufficient number of modules to be equivalent to full-time study. Advice should be sought from the International Student Advisers based in the Campus Student Centres.

How do I apply?

Each University Faculty has a member of staff who acts as the first point of contact for all prospective applicants making an RPL claim. This is usually the Programme Leader for the programme the applicant wishes to study, but there could be an RPL Co-ordinator. Either the Programme Leader or the RPL Co-ordinator will be responsible for dealing with RPL claims.

What constitutes a good application?

In considering RPL applications, the University will focus on:

- a) **Authenticity** – is the evidence genuine and is the achievement clearly your own?
- b) **Relevance/Equivalence** – does the prior learning cover a similar knowledge and skills base as the knowledge and skills which would be acquired in the programme to be studied? This is described as ‘meeting learning outcomes’ on the programme.
- c) The mapping of prior learning against learning outcomes is a matter of academic judgement. RPL credit can only be awarded for whole modules, not for part of a module.
- d) **Sufficiency** – is there sufficient evidence to support the claim?
- e) **Currency** – both formal certificated learning and experiential learning will normally be considered current when they have occurred up to 5 years prior to the start date of the University of Greenwich programme.

The Responsibilities of the Student

It is your responsibility to prepare and submit an application. You are required to:

- make contact with the Programme Leader/RPL Co-ordinator and obtain the required paperwork and information (including details of admission requirements/ learning outcomes for the programme and/or the specific module(s) for which you might be claiming exemption);
- identify your existing skills and knowledge;
- match your prior learning against the requirements of the module(s)/programme;
- collect and collate the evidence to support the application (see below);

- formally submit an application to the Programme Leader/RPL Co-ordinator within required deadlines;
- inform the Programme Leader/RPL Co-ordinator of any change of contact details.

The Responsibilities of the Programme Leader/RPL Co-ordinator

It is the responsibility of the RPL Co-ordinator to provide advice on:

- the nature of RPL;
- the credit requirements of the programme, including specific learning outcomes for modules;
- University procedure, including limits on the amount of credit that can be claimed and the process of making the RPL application;
- the content of the claim, in terms of reflecting upon and demonstrating how you meet programme/module learning outcomes;
- how you should structure your claim;
- the method(s) that will be used to assess an applicant's **certificated and/or experiential** learning and the evidence to be submitted.

It is also the responsibility of the Programme Leader/RPL Co-ordinator to receive and progress a claim.

Evidence/Documentation Required

At all times the onus is on you to provide the necessary **evidence** to support your application for RPL. The evidence and documentation required will differ, depending on whether you are applying for Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL) or Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL).

RPCL

Documentation should confirm:

- the title of the award/qualification for which RPCL recognition/credit is being sought. Original copies of certificates should be provided;
- the name and address of the awarding body;
- the entrance qualifications for the award for which RPCL recognition/credit is being sought;
- the institution/organisation where the certificated learning was undertaken;
- the dates and duration of the study;
- the mode of study (i.e. full-time, part-time, etc.);
- details about syllabuses, assessment and which components of the award/qualification were successfully completed;
- details of any credit awarded for your previous learning;
- details of the grades attained.

A transcript from your previous institution will be helpful in confirming the above.

RPEL

Claims for the *Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning* tend to be more complex and carry additional evidence requirements. Applicants should note that an RPEL application and its consideration can take a significant length of time.

It is vitally important that you discuss the exact requirements/evidence base of your application with the Programme Leader/RPL Co-ordinator and agree deadlines for submission.

In the first instance, applicants must complete an application form outlining:

- the number of credits for which RPEL is being sought and the module(s) against which the credit might be counted;
- an outline of the nature of the experience and its relevance to the University programme;
- where the experiential learning took place;
- when the learning took place.

An RPEL application may be assessed by one or more of the following:

- a focussed interview (also known as a viva);
- a simulation exercise;
- a practical demonstration;
- diagnostic or written tests emulating the usual assessment for the module(s);
- special assignments;
- submission of a portfolio of evidence containing samples of work, a reflective narrative and testimony from somebody who can witness that learning took place.

More advice on making an RPL application will be available from the University Faculty where you will be studying.

If you think your previous study or experience might be eligible, please do not delay in contacting your Faculty