

Higher Education Award Regulations: Part B

Section: 8: Recognition of Prior Learning

Version: 1.3

Academic Year: 2023/24

REVISION HISTORY

Ver	Date	Author	Description
1.0	May 2014	Scott Smith	Initial approval
1.1	September 2017	Scott Smith	A change from Accreditation to Recognition of Prior Learning
1.2	March 2019	Scott Smith	Removal of reference to the section of the old Quality Code
1.2.1	May 2021	Scott Smith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removal of references to Liverpool John Moores and Salford University Update to Quality Code reference B8.4 amended panel membership
1.2.2	August 2021	Scott Smith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor typographical updates
1.3	July 2023	Scott Smith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Review

APPROVAL

Ver	Committee	Date Approved
1.0	HEAB	May 2014
1.1	ASDC	Sept 2017
1.2	ASDC	March 2019
1.2.1	ASDC	May 2021
1.2.2	ASDC	Oct 2021
1.2.3	ASDC	July 2022
1.3	ASDC	July 2023

CONTENTS

B8 Introduction	4
B8.1 Overview	4
B8.2 Permitted Quantity of Credit.....	6
B8.3 Procedures for the Award of RPL Credit.....	6
B8.4 RPL Panel.....	7
B8.5 Appeals.....	7
Appendix B8 - A – RPL Process	8

B8 INTRODUCTION

These regulations relate to the provision of higher education programmes awarded by Blackpool and The Fylde College.

B8: Recognition of Prior Learning has been produced following consideration of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the process for recognising previous learning that has taken place in informal and/or formal contexts: for example, in the workplace and through life experiences. Once recognised through this process, prior learning can be used to gain credit or exemption for qualifications, and/or for personal and career development. It should be noted that RPL may not be applied to Blackpool and The Fylde College, College Higher Education Certificates.

Applications for RPL against higher or degree apprenticeships should first consider the initial assessment process located in Blackpool and The Fylde College's Apprenticeship Strategy document.

B8.1 OVERVIEW

Blackpool and The Fylde College is responsible for assessing all applications for the award of RPL credit that counts towards a Blackpool and The Fylde College programme. Where a programme is that of a validating partner, the partner's regulations on RPL will take precedence.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the process used to assess and formally recognise learning which has taken place in the past. Such learning may have been:

1. **Certificated**, relating to credit undertaken at another educational institution where qualifications and/or academic credits were achieved – referred to as Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL)
2. **Experiential**, whether Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) or Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning [APEL] enables students to gain credit for relevant prior experience in the workplace, through life experience or via non-credit bearing programmes (e.g., in house training). This requires students to provide evidence of prior workplace learning which can be matched against their current programme of study or is considered relevant towards their current programme of study. It can take the form of a reflective account of the learning experience, but the curriculum area may see other sources of evidence presented such as case study, report, testimonials, publication article or a conference presentation.

Assessing experiential learning would normally involve some of the following:

- Practice based documentation and reports video/audio analytical evaluations of practice.
- Analysis of issues underlying practice.
- Evidence of planning for practice.

- Analysis and evaluation of training undertaken for practice.
- Supporting statements from managers or supervisors in relation to practice.
- Computer programmes.
- An assessor's observation.
- Taking traditional or oral examinations.
- Submission of essay(s) on appropriate topics.

The format for the submission of evidence would normally be:

- A statement of credit claimed.
- A detailed curriculum vitae to provide a context for the claim.
- A summary of the achievements (learning outcomes) claimed.
- Detailed evidence supporting each of those achievements which demonstrates critical reflection, knowledge and skills acquired, a process of professional development and a capacity for autonomous study.

The basic criteria to satisfy accreditation is that:

- The evidence is valid and reliable.
- The evidence is sufficient to demonstrate the achievements claimed.
- The evidence clearly indicates the candidate's personal efforts and attainments.
- The achievements claimed are relevant to the award toward which it will count.
- The achievements are equivalent in depth and level to the successfully completed structured learning (i.e., programme/modules) for which equal credit is to be granted.
- The achievements can be authenticated by external referees.

It is crucial to maintain the quality of Blackpool and The Fylde College awards. The RPL process enables applicants to present prior learning to claim credit and therefore exemption from part of a programme of study. The credit or experience to be used for RPL must be relevant to the applicant's programme of study. The process of accreditation must be rigorous to ensure the integrity of the awards.

The relevance of RPL frequently declines over time. The effect of time varies by subject area and programme type. The responsibility for determining the maximum period that can elapse before RPL cannot be given will rest with the RPL Panel.

Where RPL is referred to in this document it should be taken to mean either type of accreditation.

Note: All RPL applications are considered on an individual case by case basis.

B8.2 PERMITTED QUANTITY OF CREDIT

Blackpool and The Fylde College permits the award of credits by RPL at a single level of study. Where experiential learning is being considered, (either solely or in combination with certificated learning) credit may only constitute a maximum of 60 credits.

Note:

- RPL may only be approved against entry to a Foundation or Bachelors' Degree.
- RPL may only be awarded for whole, not partial, modules.
- RPL credit may only be awarded against level 4 modules.
- No more than 120 credits may be awarded through RPL.
- RPL credit may only be awarded from either the same or higher level as the module(s) for which exemption is sought.
- RPL credit, which is more than 5 years old will, normally, will not be considered unless the applicant can evidence, in some way, that they have been maintaining relevant subject knowledge e.g., the applicant has been or is current working in a relevant industry. Applicants, in this instance, may be required to attend an academic refresher programme before entry to their speciality programme of study.
- No RPL may be permitted for work or other experience that has already been counted for exemption purposes elsewhere.

B8.3 PROCEDURES FOR THE AWARD OF RPL CREDIT

Any application for RPL should be completed by the programme team and submitted on the RPL Application pro-forma, in most cases it will involve close cooperation with the applicant. Applications must be considered prior to enrolment onto a programme.

Documentation submitted in support of an application will normally map the programme level 4 module learning outcomes against the learning outcomes of the previously achieved module(s).

The assessment of the application should consider the following:

- Subject content and knowledge
- Volume of learning
- Level of learning
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment styles experience in prior certificated learning.

The mapping exercise should include a matrix of module learning outcomes and must always include supporting evidence. Where certificated RPL is claimed, a copy of the relevant certificate/transcript must be provided.

Where Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL) is claimed, a copy of the relevant certificate/transcript must be provided.

Where Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) is claimed, independent, relevant evidence must be provided.

B8.4 RPL PANEL

The RPL panel convenes to consider the appropriateness of all applications relating to advanced entry to B&FC programmes. Final approval of the award of RPL credits is the role of the RPL Panel.

The Panel will consist of:

- Higher Education Academic Registrar (Chair)
- Assistant Academic Registrar
- The relevant Programme Leader/Curriculum Manager

The Panel may decide one of four outcomes:

- Approved, each module where RPL has been applied for has been accepted.
- Partially Approved, some of the modules where RPL has been applied for are accepted.
- Defer, the Panel may wish to enquire about some element of the application or may require additional evidence.
- Reject.

Applications are for the award of credit only; marks or grades are not allocated as part of the assessment of RPL i.e., any modules where credit has been awarded are not included in the calculations relating to degree classifications or grades.

The student or apprentice transcript will clearly indicate those modules for which credit has been awarded by RPL.

The process is set out in Appendix B.

B8.5 APPEALS

Students and apprentices have the right of appeal when an application has either been partially or wholly rejected.

Where the original panel's decision is to reject, either because the application form was incomplete, or they were unable to decide because of a lack of evidence, students or apprentices should submit a new application and not an appeal.

Appeals will therefore only be heard when a student or apprentice believes that the rejection of their application has been in some way unreasonable or prejudiced.

RPL Process

