

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING PROCEDURE

1) Introduction

East Kent Colleges Group (the Group) is committed to the principle that learning, wherever it occurs, should be recognised in an appropriate way within its academic provision. This procedure is designed to ensure that an individual's prior learning achieved through formal and informal training, work experience or other life experiences is appropriately recognised.

Recognition of Prior Learning allows individuals to claim credit for experience and learning irrespective of how and where that learning took place and can be used for entry on to programmes of learning where an applicant does not have the requisite qualification(s) or to claim for credit towards units on their chosen course. RPL can include Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL), Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) and Credit Transfer.

The main objectives of this procedure are:

- To assist learners in identifying relevant prior learning, achievement and/or experience.
- To assist staff with the RPL process and ensure it is fair and transparent.
- To determine if evidence presented by the learner should follow the RPL, or related Credit Transfer or Exemption procedures of the awarding organisation.
- To agree and review an action plan to enable candidates to receive accreditation for prior learning, achievement and/or experience.
- To support candidates in preparing and presenting evidence of prior learning, achievement and/or experience for assessment.

The procedure covers generic standards and processes for all RPL claims and specific processes and conditions in relation to RPL for Higher Education and Apprenticeships.

2) Assessment of RPL Evidence

2.1 Assessment methods for RPL will be of equal rigour to other assessment methods, be fit for purpose and relate to the evidence of learning. Credit may be claimed for any unit through RPL unless the assessment requirements of the unit do not allow this.

Policy Owner: Chief Student Officer
Approving Body: Policy Development Group
Stage of Approval: Date of approval: December 2023

2.2 Assessment will follow the RPL criteria of awarding bodies.

2.2 The methods of assessment used will be determined by the assessment strategy for the qualification being assessed but might, for example include:

- Examination of documents
- Witness testimony
- Reflective accounts
- Professional discussion

2.3 Where units are assessed against assessment criteria or grading criteria, then all evidence must be evaluated using the stipulated criteria. In assessing a unit using RPL the assessor must be satisfied that the evidence produced by the learner meets the assessment standard established by the learning outcome and its related assessment criteria.

2.4 It is the role of teachers, assessors and internal quality assurers to ensure that evidence of learning is:

- **Valid** – The evidence provided by the learner must genuinely demonstrate that it conforms to the demands of the learning outcome.
- **Current** – Currency of evidence is particularly important. For example, does the evidence meet up-to-date demands or does it reflect a practice that has significantly changed? Evidence of current knowledge, understanding and skills will vary from sector to sector. It will depend on the extent of the experience, technological changes and the nature of the outcome claimed. If the currency of any evidence is in doubt, the assessor may use questions to check understanding, and for competence.
- **Sufficient** – There must be enough evidence to fully meet the requirements of the learning outcome, or learning outcomes, to be considered. If there is insufficient evidence to fully meet requirements, then evidence obtained through RPL must be complemented by evidence gained through other suitable assessment methods before requirements can be said to have been met.
- **Authentic** – The evidence being examined must genuinely be the work of the learner. If the evidence produced is the result of teamwork, then it is acceptable providing the new learning outcome is related to team / joint working, but not if it was being used as

evidence of an activity which should have been carried out individually. It is important that learners understand what plagiarism means and sign a declaration of authenticity.

- **Reliable** – Evidence obtained through RPL should be such that an assessor would arrive at the same assessment decision, were the assessment to be repeated.

3) RPL Assessment Process

The RPL assessment should be carried out as an entire process. This means that the assessor/tutor should:

- Plan with the learner
- Make a formal assessment decision
- Feedback assessment decisions to the learner, confirming decision and giving guidance on the available options (particularly in situations where the decision has been not to award credit).
- Maintain records of assessment as for any other unit / qualification.
- Ensure that all relevant evidence is assessed before assessment decisions are confirmed through verification procedures.
- Ensure that learners are aware of their right to access the appeals process should they feel the assessment decision was unfair.
- Ensure that certification and claims are made according to normal procedures.
- Ensure that the process is subject to the same quality assurance requirement as all other assessment methods.

4) RPL in Higher Education

4.1 Key Principle

In the administration of RPL the HE programmes will be guided by the policies and principles of their relevant awarding bodies. Any application for RPL or credit transfer will be considered in context with the awarding body regulations of the validating institution of the programme of study being undertaken by the relevant student.

Awarding body policy is published on each validating organisation website. The Group Head of Higher Education and Careers will be responsible for advising on the administration and application of the correct policy and procedures for each individual RPL application for Higher Education. The necessary work to be completed to achieve RPL will be undertaken by the applicant with the support of the appropriate Programme Director/Leader as it requires a judgement around validity, currency and level of

knowledge/skills/experience against mapping of subject expectations as they stand within the qualification now being studied.

4.2 Administration of RPL

RPL is both student-centred and voluntary. Applications for RPL should be made by the student to their Programme Director/Leader. Students must speak to the Programme Director/Leader regarding any intention of using RPL as part of their application for a course.

All RPL claims for admission onto a programme must be made a minimum of six weeks before the start of the academic year to ensure adequate time for preparation and assessment of the application. Where there is not enough time to complete the process the applicant may be advised to defer their application to the following year.

All RPL claims for Credit Transfer must be made and approved prior to the start of the modules for which credit is being claimed for with adequate time for assessment of the application.

Any student seeking to use RPL will be offered advice and guidance on the nature, range and complexity of evidence required to support a claim for credit through their awarding body. Such advice and guidance will be supplied by their Programme Director/Leader and the Group Head of Higher Education and Careers.

Each applicant is responsible for the collection of evidence related to an RPL claim in the first instance, and is responsible for completing any additional processes or procedures and for collecting any additional evidence required once the initial application has been reviewed.

The evidence provided as part of the RPL request will be assessed by the Programme Director/Leader who will consider the currency/relevance and level of the knowledge/skills/expertise being claimed against and will make their recommendation.

The Group Head of Higher Education & Careers will then review the application and either decide in the case of RPL for admissions or refer the application to the awarding body if the application is to claim for credit towards units on their chosen course.

It should be noted that if an RPL claim is refused by the Group or awarding body the student is responsible for completing any additional study and assessment required to

complete their award. Should they have received a discount on any tuition fee, due to the RPL claim, then refusal of that claim may result in additional costs for the student.

4.3 RPL Decision

Where the RPL application is for admissions purposes to enable entry onto a particular course or apprenticeship where the applicant does not meet the entry criteria, the decision will be made by the Group Head of Higher Education and Careers.

The process for approval or refusal of RPL for Credit Transfer is dependent upon each awarding body. The responsibility for approval and the timing of such an RPL decision varies with each awarding body. The responsibility for an RPL decision may in some instances be given by the awarding body to EKC Group. Where this is the case, the decision will be made by the Group Head of Higher Education and Careers.

Following refusal of an RPL application the Programme Director/Leader will review the student's assessment requirement ensuring that they are advised of any additional assessment/learning requirements to successfully complete their programme or gain entry onto the course.

4.4 Appeal

For Higher Education University of Kent students, judgements are seen as an academic decision and therefore there is no right to appeal. Applicants can reapply with different evidence/requests, but the first application will not be reconsidered.

For Pearson students, once the College processes have been exhausted, the student can appeal to Pearson following their appeals policy: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/understanding-our-qualifications/policies-for-centres-learners-and-employees.html>

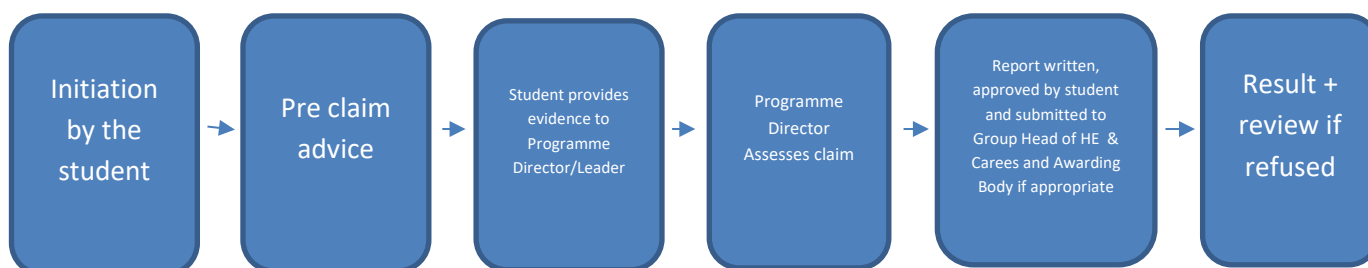
4.5 Further information from Awarding Bodies

Students on University of Kent programmes can find more information and supporting documentation/templates in Annex R of the following University of Kent Recognition of prior learning policy and process.

Students on Pearson programmes can find more information available here: Pearson Recognition of prior learning policy and process.

Policy Owner: Chief Student Officer
Approving Body: Policy Development Group
Stage of Approval: Date of approval: December 2023

4.5 RPL Process summary



5) Apprenticeships

5.1 Administration of RPL

To verify an apprentice's suitability for their chosen standard and to tailor the learner's training plan, EKC Training will review the individual's prior learning and experience. Funds will not be used to pay for training for knowledge, skills and behaviours already attained by the apprentice.

Prior learning and experience includes the following:

- Prior education, training or associated qualifications in a related subject sector area, including any previous apprenticeship undertaken; and
- Learning or competence gained from prior work experience, particularly where the apprentice is an existing employee, or is beginning their apprenticeship after completing another programme with a relevant work placement.

Further information about recognition of prior learning can be found on GOV.UK.

5.2 Assessment of prior learning and experience (16–18-year olds)

Prior learning is unlikely to exist for apprentices aged 16-18 unless they have:

- Previously enrolled in an apprenticeship; or other training that is aligned to IfATE's occupational standards in the same sector; or
- They have relevant prior work experience.

It is accepted that prior learning is less likely to exist for 16-18 year-olds but, where this is the case, EKC Training will evidence this with a check of the personal learning record and a discussion. There is no requirement to complete a skills scan in this scenario.

To establish this EKC Training will check the individual's personal learning record, if they have one, and have a discussion with the learner about the likelihood of relevant prior learning against the proposed apprenticeship standard.

Policy Owner: Chief Student Officer
 Approving Body: Policy Development Group
 Stage of Approval: Date of approval: December 2023

Where relevant prior learning and experience is not identified, this will be documented and agreed with the employer.

5.3 Assessment of prior learning and experience (19+ year-olds)

For all apprentices aged 19+ EKC Training will:

- Check the individual's personal learning record, if they have one, to identify relevant qualifications;
- Have a discussion with the learner about the likelihood of relevant prior learning against the proposed apprenticeship standard;
- Conduct a skills scan against the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the proposed apprenticeship standard;
- If considered relevant by EKC Training, or required by the standard, this skills scan can be supplemented with additional diagnostic testing, of either occupational competence or of English and maths prior attainment.
- Take account of the published progression profiles, if the individual has completed a T-Level. These will identify if a subsequent apprenticeship in the same occupational area can be funded, and if so, whether that apprenticeship must be an 'accelerated apprenticeship' with an adjustment in content, duration and cost.
- Take account of progress profiles, where published and relevant, if the individual has taken part in a skills bootcamp.

Where relevant prior learning and experience is not identified, this should be documented and agreed with the employer.

5.5 Taking account of prior learning and experience (all learners)

Where relevant prior learning and experience is identified, EKC Training will summarise the impact, including whether, and by how much, the apprenticeship content and duration has been reduced.

Where content is to be omitted from the training plan, this will be shown as a volume of off-the-job training hours. This reduction in hours will translate to a reduction in duration and price.

If there is insufficient content remaining (i.e. less than 12 months), the individual will be ineligible for apprenticeship funding.

If EKC Training cannot reduce the duration, they will meet the minimum requirements of the off-the-job training policy for the full duration of the apprenticeship that has been reported to Gov.UK in the ILR.

Some standards linked to regulated professions (e.g. the nursing associate standard) require that prior learning, including experience in the workplace, is formally accredited.

Where training needs to be repeated to meet the accreditation requirements of a regulated profession then this is eligible learning; this will be documented as part of the assessment. The relevant industry / professional body can provide further advice.

To calculate the reduction in price EKC Training will:

- Calculate the percentage of prior learning that the individual has, as a percentage of the off-the-job training hours that would be delivered to an individual with no relevant prior learning for the same standard. For example, if the individual's prior learning accounts for 300 off-the-job training hours and typically, for the same standard, 1,000 off-the-job training hours would be delivered to an individual with no prior learning, this would equate to a 30% prior learning percentage.
- Reduce the total price by at least 50% of the prior learning percentage, from the funding band maximum (the 50% reduction recognises that there are some fixed costs in the apprenticeship). For the example in the paragraph above, where the apprentice has 30% prior learning, this means there will be a reduction in the total price of at least 15% from the funding band maximum (e.g. £1,500 price reduction if the funding band maximum is £10,000). This reduced price (i.e. £8,500) is the maximum that will be paid using apprenticeship funding (i.e. £8,500 for a £10,000 funding band where there has been a 15% price reduction).
- This new maximum funding amount (i.e. £8,500) becomes the starting point for any further price negotiation with the employer. Additional discounts could be applied, for example, where the apprentice is part of a large cohort.
- The final price (i.e. £8,500, if there is no further employer discount in the example above) will be split between fields TNP1 and TNP2 in the ILR. TNP1 is the price of the training and on-programme assessment, TNP2 is the price agreed for the end point assessment organisation.

5.6 Evidence requirements

For all learners EKC Training will have:

Policy Owner: Chief Student Officer
Approving Body: Policy Development Group
Stage of Approval: Date of approval: December 2023

- Checked the individual's personal learning record. Where this information is unavailable or an apprentice is unable to provide evidence of prior attainment, refer to get a replacement exam certificate on GOV.UK. Evidence of proof of equivalency from UK ENIC can be used where an individual has an international qualification.
- Had a discussion with the learner about the likelihood of relevant prior learning against the proposed apprenticeship standard.

For learners aged 19+ (and 16-18 year old learners if appropriate) EKC Training will have also:

- Conducted a skills scan against the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the proposed apprenticeship standard and where relevant, will have supplemented this with additional diagnostic testing, of either occupational competence or of English and maths prior attainment.
- Where relevant, has used the published progression profiles.

Where relevant prior learning and experience does not exist, EKC Training will have recorded this and the reason for this assessment. This has been agreed with the employer.

Where relevant prior learning and experience does exist, this has been agreed with the employer and EKC Training will have:

- Summarised the impact, including whether, and by how much, the apprenticeship content and duration has been reduced. This summary confirms that the resulting apprenticeship meets the funding rules in relation to the minimum duration and off-the-job training.
- Where content is to be omitted from the training plan, this will be shown as a volume of off-the-job training hours.
- Where the standard is linked to a regulated profession, and this impacts the reduction, this will be documented.
- Calculated the reduction in price by following the example above and has split the outcome over fields TNP1 and TNP2 in the ILR.

6) Related Policies and Procedures

HE Admissions Policy

Group RPL Application Form

Pearson Recognition of prior learning policy and process

University of Kent Recognition of prior learning policy and process

Policy Owner: Chief Student Officer

Approving Body: Policy Development Group

Stage of Approval: Date of approval: December 2023