

Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

Preamble

The recognition of prior learning is the recognition of credits, qualifications or professional experience that may be counted towards a Roehampton programme of study. The benefits for students are that it avoids repetition of previous learning, reduces tuition costs as well as lessening the time required for the completion of an award and increases the opportunities for flexible learning.

The QAA Quality Code states the following in relation to the recognition of prior learning:

“Degree-awarding bodies make explicit their arrangements for making decisions to recognise prior learning, including specifying where the authority lies to make such decisions, and the procedures to be followed centrally and/or at departmental or equivalent level. In deciding these matters they balance the need to ensure decisions are valid, reliable and consistent across students and programmes, with operating processes which are proportionate and flexible and which may operate on a different cycle compared with decisions about assessments within their programmes.”

QAA Quality Code, Part B, Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and Recognition of Prior Learning

This policy seeks to articulate the different forms of prior learning that the University recognises and the process for accrediting that learning within the University’s academic regulations.

a) Terminology

Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL)

RPCL is the recognition of credits or credit-bearing academic or professional courses that may allow exemption from part of a Roehampton programme. Credit transfer is the process of translating prior learning into University credits to contribute towards a Roehampton programme of study.

Articulation Agreement

An articulation agreement is another form of assessment of certificated learning and is an arrangement between the University and a partner institution which formalises the recognition of part, or all, of the partner’s programme as meeting the requirements for part of a Roehampton programme of study.

Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL)

RPEL is the recognition of learning, gained through professional or other experience, as equivalent to the learning outcomes of a Roehampton programme of study for which exemption of credit is being sought.

Transfer credits

These are credits that have been achieved at another institution.

b) Criteria

The following criteria should be applied when assessing RPL applications.

- Sufficiency – there is sufficient evidence to assess the claim
- Relevance – the evidence must be able to be mapped to the content and learning outcomes of the programme for which exemptions of credit are being sought;
- Authenticity – the evidence can be authenticated, for example, through the endorsement of an employer, or a reference from an educational establishment;
- Currency – the evidence of the learning has been achieved within a specified number of years prior to the start of the programme at the University.

c) Assessment

The University must satisfy itself that it is safeguarding academic standards around the awarding of credit. The principle behind assessing prior learning is that the candidate should demonstrate that the learning they have achieved through the award of individual credits, or through the completion of an academic or professional course, matches sufficiently the parts of the University programme of study from which the applicant is seeking exemption. Therefore, when making judgements on RPL, the assessor must be satisfied that:

- on the basis of academic judgement, there is a sufficient match between the content of the programme the applicant has studied mapped against the content (for example, module descriptors) and the learning outcomes of the target programme. This might be, typically, module or course handbooks, a portfolio of evidence, or a combination of the two. The content studied should enable the applicant to be able to progress on the target programme taking account of any pre-requisite knowledge ;
- there is evidence of the achievement, which maybe a transcript, or endorsement by an employer;
- the level of the prior learning is comparable to that of the Roehampton credits for which the exemption is being granted;
- the volume of credits, or content overall if the course is not credit-rated, should match the volume of the Roehampton programme for which exemptions are being sought;
- there is evidence of current learning. There is a limit to how long ago the credits were achieved, the course was passed, or the learning from the experience took place.

d) Restrictions

- (i) A previous award may count towards the requirements for a Roehampton programme of study where the exemption of credit from a higher award is being sought. An example of this is the use of the credits from a Foundation Degree towards a top-up level 6 Bachelor's Degree. The transfer of credits from an award at the same level, for example from one Master's programme to another, should not normally exceed 20 credits.

- (ii) There may be restrictions imposed by Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies.
- (iii) The transfer credits should normally have been achieved no more than five years before the proposed date of initial registration at the University.
- (iv) Only the number of transfer credits is recorded on a student's transcript, not the marks.
- (v) There are restrictions on the amount of credit that may be transferred into programmes of study at the University as follows:
 - (i) No more than 60 credits:
 - Certificate of Higher Education;
 - Graduate Diploma;
 - Postgraduate Certificate in Education;
 - Postgraduate Diploma;
 - Professional Graduate Certificate in Education.
 - (ii) No more than 120 credits:
 - Master's Degree.
 - (iii) No more than 120 credits at Level 4 and no more than 40 credits at Level 5:
 - Diploma of Higher Education;
 - Foundation Degree.
 - (iv) No more than 160 credits:
 - Master of Fine Arts.
 - (v) No more than 120 credits at Level 4, and no more than 120 credits at Level 5:
 - Bachelor's Degree.
 - Integrated Master's Degree

Applications for credit transfer will not be accepted towards programmes of study at the University comprising fewer than 120 credits in total.

e) Process

(i). Individual applications

Applicants seeking recognition of prior learning will be expected to submit evidence supporting their claim. For RPCL, this will include transcripts, certificates and information on the programme content of their previous study. The Programme Convener, admissions tutors, or nominee of Head of Department or School, will assess the evidence according to the criteria set out in c) above. Advice about levels, credit volume and equivalences are supplied by the Academic Office, or Admissions. Final sign-off will be through the Academic Office on behalf of the Academic Registrar.

Prior experiential learning will be assessed through a portfolio of evidence, including a statement of the credit being applied for and a summary of the learning claimed in relation to the programme the applicant is applying for. The statement should cross-reference the

module learning outcomes to the applicant's learning to demonstrate that the applicant has acquired the relevant knowledge and skills to be exempted from the Roehampton programme. The portfolio might include practice-based documents, certificates, employer references, or other endorsement, reports on observations of practice, video/audio tapes with commentary and analysis related to the applicant's achievement as well as an evaluation of how the experience demonstrates the learning achievements claimed, its authenticity as the applicant's own accomplishment and whether the learning is current or, if not, has been updated to make it so. Alternatively, RPEL may be assessed through a specific RPEL module attached to a programme with credit values assigned to it, typically, 20-, 40- and 60-credits. The portfolio of evidence will be assessed against the module content and learning outcomes.

b. Articulation agreements

Articulation agreements formalise the recognition of prior certificate learning at an institutional level, recognising exemption from part of a Roehampton programme of study. Academic tutors will compare the content and learning outcomes of the Roehampton programme against the source programme and will produce a mapping document that will be approved by the School or Department LTQG. A formal agreement will then be produced, outlining the conditions of entry for students to transfer into the Roehampton programme.