

# Accreditation of Prior Learning

## Policy for Partners

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# Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)

## 1 Introduction

1. Accreditation of prior learning (APL) is defined as a system whereby academic credits can be awarded for previous learning that has taken place either through formal courses of study (Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning - APCL) or in other ways (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning - APEL).

Credits gained can be:

- Accumulated - counted towards an award (for example, a Diploma/Degree);
- Transferred - to another course of study or to another institution;
- Used to grant exemption from part of a course of study.

A distinction between general and specific credit should be noted as follows:

General credit is awarded by the body which validates a course/qualification and demonstrates for external reference the volume and level of work associated with that course/qualification. The award of general credit makes no commitment about the use of that course/qualification by another body/institution for the award of specific credit via APL towards a subsequent qualification.

It is the responsibility of a receiving institution/UEA, to decide how much specific credit to award an individual student via APL, based on the level, extent and perceived relevance of the material (both knowledge and skills based) contained within the course/qualification offered by the applicant when compared with his/her intended course of study.

2. The following guidelines aim to clarify the position concerning cases of APL but additional, more specific guidelines may be used in certain subject disciplines where approved by the University Learning and Teaching Committee.

## 2 APL Principles

3. Specific credit may be awarded for courses which form a substantial part of a degree/higher education qualification, that carry a credit-rating and are clearly comparable in level, academic standard, content and learning outcomes to an equivalent award at UEA.

4. Applicants must note, however, that the award of specific credit via APCL towards their intended course of study is not guaranteed and may not necessarily directly reflect the value/level of the general credit assigned to their current/previous qualification by the validating body, i.e. it may be less.

5. Exemptions are not awarded for courses/qualifications that were awarded five years ago or longer, prior to the enrolment date for the intended course of study, unless the candidate can provide supporting evidence which gives an account of ways in which learning achieved through the course/qualification has been applied actively and updated within the past five years.

Exemptions may not normally be granted where a student has previously registered for and failed part of an award and wishes to seek readmission to the same or similar award.

6. Partner institutions may not award exemptions for pre-requisites in certain disciplines e.g. where the modules are required for Law Society recognition or are needed for professional practice, unless the applicant can show that the identical modules have been completed elsewhere.

7. For undergraduate Honours degree courses and Integrated Masters degrees, a candidate must normally attain all level 5 credit and above at the partner institution.

8. Postgraduate taught students may be granted APL for 50% or less towards the total number of credit points for an award. APL shall not be granted in respect of the dissertation component of a course.

### **3 Application Process**

9. The applicant's request must be made in writing, enclosing:

(1) A certified copy of certificate(s) or parchment(s);

(2) a syllabus;

(3) a completed application form, which asks for a transcript of the subjects taken, a full record of academic results achieved and contact details of an academic referee at the institution which awarded the qualification.

All applications should be sent to the partner institution.

10. Procedure for the approval of APL:

*For Undergraduate/Integrated Masters Candidates:*

Level 4

Delegated to partner institutions

Level 5 and above

Academic Director of Partnerships

*For Postgraduate Taught Candidates:*

Exemption for 50% or less towards the total number of credits for an award

Delegated to partner institutions

11. Requests for approval/concessions to the Academic Director of Partnerships should be sent to Academic Partnerships at UEA.

12. Partner institutions may charge an APCL assessment fee. Please contact the partner institution for further details.

13. APCL applications may take up to 6 weeks to complete. All applicants should be advised of this, and should be aware of restrictions concerning APL for half year arrangements, especially if the intended course of study involves year-long modules.

14. The partner institution will notify the candidate of the outcome in writing, and a copy will be sent to Academic Partnerships at UEA.

## **4 APEL Principles**

15. APEL exemptions are not normally awarded for certain professional disciplines. Applicants should consult their partner institution for further advice.

16. APEL applications will be assessed individually. Candidates must demonstrate that relevant, practical experience has been gained, and compile a portfolio of evidence using:

- (1) where applicable, confirmation by line-manager of job responsibilities and job description;
- (2) a record of achievements;
- (3) where applicable, details of specialist training/skills;
- (4) contact details of two referees, who can comment on the candidate's achievements;

(5) documentation to demonstrate the learning outcomes achieved and the candidate's personal reflection of how the experience has furthered his/her understanding of the relevant subject area;

(6) a completed application form.

In the first instance, applicants should contact the partner institution and obtain the programme specification for the intended course of study. Candidates should indicate the relationship between the programme specification and their portfolio of evidence, and may consult the appropriate Course Leader/Admissions Officer for advice.

The responsibility for assessing APEL cases shall be delegated to two members of the academic staff within the partner institution, who will interview candidates on the basis of their portfolios. The APEL interview may last up to an hour and may be recorded to enable interviewers to check the validity of their eventual assessments. The interview should focus on key, relevant learning experiences and candidates will be invited to give a detailed narrative account of the relationship between their prior learning and their intended course of study. The assessors should forward their joint recommendations to Head of HE or equivalent.

Records relating to the APEL assessment must be retained. The candidate should also keep the portfolio of evidence for future reference.

The Head of HE or equivalent will consider the evidence put forward by the applicant and the recommendations of the assessors. The Head of HE or equivalent may approve and endorse the APEL exemption and inform the candidate in writing.

If the Head of HE or equivalent agrees with the assessors' judgement that no exemption should be granted, based on the evidence presented, the applicant shall be notified in writing.

17. For postgraduate taught applicants, APEL exemptions may not be granted for more than 25% of the total number of credit points required for an award.

18. For undergraduate/integrated masters applicants, APEL exemptions may not be granted for more than 60 credits of the total number of credit points required for an award.

19. The partner institution may charge an APEL assessment fee. Please contact the partner institution for further details.

**Summary of normal requirements for admission via APL:**

Award	Maximum credits which may be imported	Minimum credits to be taken on University of East Anglia validated courses	Total credits for award
Masters Degree	90	90	180
Graduate Certificate	30	30	60
Graduate Diploma	45	45	90
Bachelors Degree	120	240	360
Bachelors Degree (top-up)	0	120	120
Foundation Degree	120	120	240