Code of practice for the recognition of prior learning and prior credit: taught programmes

Academic year 2016/17
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Purpose and aims

1. This *Code of practice for the recognition of prior learning and prior credit: taught programmes* applies to all taught programmes of study at the University of Surrey and its Associated and Accredited Institutions (AIs) which lead to University awards as described in the *Regulations for taught programmes*.

2. The *Code of practice* is based on the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning and the SEEC definition of academic credit and recognised learning. The QAA explicitly links the “assessment used as the basis for recognising learning gained outside a defined (or formal) higher education programme and that used for learning within such a programme”.

3. The *Code of practice* focusses on processes for assessment and recognition of prior learning that enable learners to gain credits as part of a programme of study leading to a University of Surrey award.

Scope

4. The term “recognition”, used in this *Code of practice*, replaces the formerly used “accreditation” and applies to all cases where applicants/students are able to successfully demonstrate that they have previously achieved learning outcomes either for an individual module(s), or for a whole level(s) of study. Following an application for RPL or RPC, the University may recognise the previously achieved informal, experiential or certificated learning (RPL), or formal credit previously awarded by UK/EU Higher Education institutions (RPC).

5. Based on the QAA’s definition of the recognition of prior learning, there are two recognised forms: prior experiential (or informal) learning and prior certificated learning:

   - the *recognition of prior experiential learning* is an assessment process that leads to recognition of prior informal learning achieved within the context of further learning and staff development. The essential feature of this process is that it is the learning gained through experience which is being assessed, not the experience itself.

   - the *recognition of prior certificated learning* involves a process of assessment that enables a decision to be made about whether the prior certificated learning is suitable for recognition. Examples of prior certificated learning are professional development awards or employment-based awards which are at HE level, but have not led to the award of HE credits or recognised awards within the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ).

6. In addition to the recognition of prior informal (experiential and certificated) learning, the University of Surrey has also adopted one of the key components of the flexible learning system - the principles of credit transfer, which is referred to in this *Code of practice* as “recognition of prior credit”. Previously achieved UK/EU credit cannot be transferred to any of the University of Surrey programmes automatically. The recognition of prior credit (RPC) policy principles are defined within the *University Regulations* and are applicable

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in all cases where applicants or current students successfully demonstrate that they have already achieved the learning outcomes for one or more modules within a University award-bearing programme, based on their prior formal learning in the Higher Education institution (HEI) that led to the award of HE credits or a recognised FHEQ award. The RPC policy also applies to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) process, as described in paragraph 11 below.

7. The University has implemented a number of other flexible learning pathways which are covered by the collaborative provision arrangements, such as progression and articulation arrangements (see Code of practice for collaborative provision) and thus outside the scope of this Code of practice.

8. This Code of practice also does not refer to admissions processes that allow applicants to gain entry to a programme of study leading to a University of Surrey award. Where an applicant has relevant prior learning experience which is at a lower level than the programme, then that learning is considered in terms of entry requirements for the programme. The recognition process in this case is a part of the admissions process. Therefore, comparability of entry equivalencies and any offer made is done accordance with the Undergraduate Admissions Policy and Postgraduate Admissions Policy.

9. A small number of undergraduate programmes in the University and its AIs require advanced standing entry as a standard admissions requirement. The process of advanced standing entry refers to credit achieved at either another HEI or at the University of Surrey (usually at a lower level FHEQ award), for a whole level(s) of study. These programmes have a direct “advanced” entry requirement to either FHEQ Level 5 or Level 6. Programmes with advanced standing are not considered by this Code of practice, as the minimum programme entry requirements are governed by the admissions processes.

10. This Code of practice defines the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in the RPL/RPC processes, deadlines for submission of claims, timescales for consideration/approval and other procedures that enable individual applicants and students to be awarded partial exemption from a programme of study.

Key principles of the University policy on recognition of prior learning and prior credit

11. The University recognises credits from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) that use UK or ECTS credits where these are of the same value and level as those gained from studying at the University. In the case of ECTS a conversion is applied to ensure parity with the UK HE system in which 1 credit equals 10 learning hours (Notional Student Workload). One ECTS credit equals 2 UK credits. Credit is only awarded for the successful achievement of defined learning outcomes.

12. The maximum amount of credit exemption is determined in the University regulations (Regulations for taught programmes, regulation 55). Any decision regarding direct entry, based on an RPL/RPC claim, should be made on an individual basis.

13. The minimum amount of learning recognised through all types of prior learning and prior credit is equivalent to the size of the smallest taught module within any given programme (currently 15 credits). The University does not permit exemption from part of a module; however, a combination of RPC and RPL may be used to claim the credit exemption. At the discretion of the Faculty, specific self-directed study may be suggested to enable
claimants to “top up” their prior learning evidence to the required level and volume in order to claim credit for the whole module.

14. Where a student is exempted from a year of study that would normally contribute to the final award mark and/or degree classification, no weighting will be given to the exempted year for the purposes of calculating the final award mark and the degree classification/grading. The relevant weighting must be applied, on a pro rata basis, to the remaining years of study. For example, where students have been exempted from levels 4 and 5, the degree classification will be calculated as follows:
   - Bachelors (Honours) 3-year degree: 0:35:65 will become as 0:0:100
   - Integrated Masters 4-year degree: 0:25:35:40 will become as 0:0:35:65

15. Credit exemptions can be awarded against core, compulsory or optional modules, as defined in the University regulations (Regulations for taught programmes, regulation 10), excluding any final year project or a dissertation module. Where the programme of study is accredited by a PSRB, guidance must be sought by the Faculty/AI concerned that any proposed exemption is acceptable to the PSRB. RPL/RPC claims cannot be accepted where this would contravene PSRB requirements.

16. Double counting of prior learning and/or prior credit is not permitted. Credit exemption obtained from learning acquired through a recognised HE institution, or otherwise derived from the assessment of prior experiential or certificated learning, may be considered on one occasion only towards a University of Surrey award.

17. The University regulations also prescribe key principles for rescinding a previously acquired University of Surrey intermediate awards (Regulations for taught programmes, regulation 52).

RPL/RPC process outline

18. For the purposes of clarity and transparency, the RPL/RPC process is divided into two stages: pre-entry (admissions) and post-entry (current students). In each of these stages both types of claims can be submitted for recognition: 1) RPL: recognition of prior learning, acquired from informal/certificated learning and/or work and life experience and 2) RPC: recognition of prior credit, acquired from previous study at UK/EU HEI.

19. The central point of contact for applicants submitting their RPL/RPC claims is the University Admissions Office.

20. All decisions regarding the acceptance of prior credit (RPC) are made by the School/Departmental Admissions Tutor within three working weeks from submission of the RPC claim (see Appendix 1, Flowchart 1). Applicants’ claims based on their prior learning (RPL) experience, are assessed by the School/Departmental Assessor, moderated and subsequently approved by the Chair of the Board of Examiners’ action on behalf of the Board of Examiners (see Appendix 1, Flowchart 2).

21. Normally, the decision on RPL/RPC claim should take no longer than three working weeks from the point of submission of the complete documentation of the claim, subject to paragraph 54 below regarding indicative timings for submitting RPL/RPC claims.

22. The initial point of contact for advice for current students submitting an RPL/RPC claim is Faculty Student Services. All relevant documentation for RPL/RPC claims is also available online.
23. Academic decisions regarding the acceptance of prior credit are made by the Faculty within three working weeks from submission of the RPC claim (see Appendix 1, Flowchart 3).

24. Post-entry RPL claims, submitted by students within agreed timescales, are assessed by the School/Departmental Assessor, moderated and subsequently approved by the Chair of the Board of Examiners’ action on behalf of the Board of Examiners (see Appendix 1, Flowchart 4). Normally, the assessment decision process should take no longer than three working weeks from submission of the RPL claim.

25. Prospective and current students registered/applying for registration for Surrey-validated programmes in AIs should contact the AI’s Academic Registry office (see Appendix 1, Flowchart 5. Flowchart of the recognition of prior learning and prior credit process: Associated and Accredited Institutions (AIs)).

Roles and responsibilities for the RPL/RPC process

Applicant/student

26. It is the responsibility of the claimant to prepare and submit their application, and to demonstrate their prior learning and/or prior credit to the satisfaction of the University. The claimant is required to:

- make contact with the Admissions Office (applicants), Faculty Student Services (current students) or the AI’s Academic Registry office (applicants and students in Associated and Accredited Institutions) and obtain the required paperwork, including details of admission requirements and learning outcomes for the module(s)/programme
- identify their existing skills and knowledge
- match what they have learned against the requirements of the module(s)/programme
- collect and collate the evidence to support the claim
- formally submit the claim in line within agreed deadlines
- where required, pay the appropriate fee within required timescales

University Learning and Teaching Committee (ULTC)

27. ULTC is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the University’s policy and procedures with regard to RPL/RPC.

Faculty/AI Lead

28. It is the responsibility of the Faculty Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching)/AI Director of Higher Education (HE) to oversee and support the implementation of the RPL/RPC policy at the Faculty/AI level.

29. The Faculty Associate Dean (Learning & Teaching)/AI Director of Higher Education (HE) is required to:

- be familiar with RPL/RPC principles and practice provided by the University
- support nominated academic members of staff involved in the RPL/RPC processes
Admissions Office

30. The University Admissions Office coordinates and monitors RPL/RPC processes at pre-entry (admissions) stage.

31. It is the responsibility of the Admissions Office to process RPL/RPC claims through the admissions process, refer these claims to the School/Departmental Admissions Tutor, inform applicants about outcomes of their claims and record documentation on their student record.

32. Normally, the Academic Registry department in AIs is responsible for coordinating and monitoring RPL/RPC processes at pre- and post-entry stage (AI’s applicants and students).

Admissions Tutor

33. The main responsibilities of the School/Departmental Admissions Tutor in relation to the RPL/RPC process include:

- providing academic advice relating to RPL/RPC policy and procedures for RPL/RPC claimants during the pre-entry (admissions) stage as required
- providing support to applicants in preparing the claim as agreed
- decision making regarding recognition of prior credit (RPC) claims made by applicants
- assessment and decision making regarding recognition of prior learning (RPL) claims made by applicants or, where required, forwarding these to the relevant RPL Assessor and subsequently to the RPL Moderator and the Chair of the Board of Examiners for the relevant programme of study

Faculty Student Services/AI’s Academic Registry

34. The appropriate Faculty Student Services/ AI’s Academic Registry team should be able to provide practical advice to current students on how to access the appropriate forms online in order to make and submit an RPL/RPC claim and provide guidance on:

- the RPL/RPC policy, including the University regulations
- the credit requirements of the programme and information about specific learning outcomes for individual modules
- the RPL/RPC procedure, including information about any relevant fees, limits on the amount of credit that can be claimed for exemption, and the process of making the RPL/RPC claim

35. It is also important to ensure that student records are kept up-to-date at every stage of the RPL/RPC process. Faculty Student Services/ AI’s Academic Registry should facilitate the processing of RPL/RPC claims by:

- logging the date when the RPL/RPC claim was received
- where appropriate, recording the decision outcome in SITS (for applicants this should be done retrospectively, upon their registration)
- progressing any documentation to the Board of Examiners
- notifying Student Fees of the decision, where required
• sending a statement of any credit awarded, together with the feedback (RPL claims only) to the student to notify them of the outcomes of the process
• keeping all relevant records on the student file

RPL/RPC Assessor
36. The RPL/RPC Assessor is an academic member of staff\(^2\), e.g. Programme Leader or subject expert, who has the competence to support the student in preparation of the RPL/RPC claims and to exercise academic judgment in assessing these claims and forming a decision. Where required, the RPL/RPC Assessor will take advice from colleagues about the specialist subject area(s) covered in the credit exemption claim.

37. In cases of credit exemption claims based on the recognition of prior learning (RPL), the key elements of the RPL/RPC Assessor’s role also include producing written feedback and forwarding the paperwork to the RPL Moderator for second marking or moderation and, subsequently, to the Chair of the Board of Examiners for further consideration and approval on behalf of the Board of Examiners.

38. The evidence, presented in individual RPL claims, must be assessed against the defined assessment criteria, based on the programme and module learning outcomes.

39. The RPL/RPC Assessor is responsible for the following records:
• where required, the agreement reached with the student on any additional “top up” work / self-study to be undertaken to be able to claim credit for a full module (see Appendix 4, Request for additional support with RPL and RPC claims, Section B. Record of session(s) with student/applicant)
• notes of briefing and subsequent meetings / telephone conversations / videoconferencing (see Appendix 4, Request for additional support with RPL and RPC claims, Section B. Record of session(s) with student/applicant)
• decision outcome report (see Appendix 3, Application form for the recognition of prior learning (RPL) and/or prior credit (RPC), Section C1)

40. Therefore, the main responsibilities of the RPL/RPC Assessor include:
• providing further advice and support relating to the recognition of prior learning and/or prior credit claim at School/Departmental or programme level, as appropriate. In cases of RPL claims, the further advice should cover the following areas:
  o formulating a claim in terms of reflecting upon and demonstrating achieved prior learning and prior credit
  o the assessment process of a prior learning experience
  o the structure and content of a draft claim
• making a decision regarding RPL/RPC claims made by students during the post-entry stage (Appendix 3, Application form, Section C1)
• producing written feedback for RPL claims (Appendix 3, Application form, Section C1)

\(^2\) Academic staff are as defined in Regulation 5 of the Introduction to the Regulations.
• forwarding the paperwork, including the student’s RPL claim form(s) and the assessment decision to the RPL Moderator and the Chair of the Board of Examiners (Appendix 3, Application form, Section C1)

RPL Moderator

41. The role of the RPL Moderator must be kept separate and distinct from the role of RPL/RPC Assessor. The RPL Moderator is an academic member of staff who has the competence to exercise academic judgment in assessing credit exemption claims based on the recognition of prior learning (RPL).

42. The RPL Moderator is responsible for forming an academic decision in respect to the RPL claims and forwarding the relevant paperwork, including the completed Section C of the Application form (see Appendix 3), back to the School/Departmental RPL Assessor within the specified timeframe.

RPL/RPC Adviser

43. The School/Department may appoint a designated RPL/RPC Adviser, particularly where programmes of study have traditionally a very high volume of RPL/RPC claims (for example, in the School of Health Sciences). Where appropriate, the Director of Learning and Teaching may take the responsibilities of the School/Departmental RPL/RPC Adviser.

44. The RPL/RPC Adviser is an academic member of staff who has the competence and responsibility to provide further advice and support to the student on how to make and submit an RPL/RPC claim.

45. The main responsibilities of the RPL/RPC Adviser include:
   • coordination and monitoring RPL/RPC processes at Faculty, School or Departmental level
   • providing academic advice relating to the RPL/RPC policy and procedures at Faculty, School or Departmental level
   • gathering student feedback on the RPL process

46. Advice to students may be provided on an individual or group basis. Where advice is provided in a group setting, the RPL/RPC Adviser will ensure that adequate time is also set aside for provision of individual advice, where required. In certain circumstances, an RPL/RPC Adviser may advise against making a claim. The RPL/RPC Adviser should, however, always make clear that his/her view on a draft claim does not guarantee the outcome of the assessment process.

47. The RPL/RPC Adviser may act as the RPL/RPC Assessor as described in paragraphs 36-40 above. Where the RPL/RPC Adviser does not have the necessary subject knowledge to enable them to make an informed academic judgement, it is important to seek advice from the relevant programme team.

Reporting templates

48. All relevant template forms can be found in Appendices 3 and 4 and are available to download from the University website.
Training and staff development

49. Faculty ADs (L&T)/AI Director of HE and Heads of School/Department must ensure that all nominated academic members of staff undertake the appropriate staff training and development before they can act as RPL/RPC Advisers, Assessors or Moderators.

Assessment of RPL/RPC claims

Student support system

50. The University recognises that students require special help and support in their reflective and evidence-gathering process to claim RPL/RPC credits.

51. The University website provides centralised resources to support the RPL/RPC process, such as Application form for the recognition of prior learning (RPL) and/or prior credit (RPC) and further templates.

52. Faculties and AIs should consider the use of other enhanced forms of support, such as the use of exemplars and case studies as well as developing mechanisms for peer support that would enable RPL/RPC claimants to benefit from the experience of students who have already successfully gone through the process. The University expects that all academic Departments/Schools provide sufficient support to students to claim their RPL/RPC credits, via consultations, one-to-one tuition and personal tutor support.

Timing of claim

53. Normally, all RPL/RPC claims for credit exemption should be made before the module(s) has commenced. As an exception, RPL/RPC applications for exemption against the first modules in a claimant’s programme of study must be made by no later than within the first two weeks of Semester 1 (see Table 1 below).

54. Applicants may submit their claims for exemption from the programme of study once they can demonstrate that they have met, or are likely to meet, the programme admissions criteria. Normally, applicants and current students must submit their RPL/RPC claims no later than given in the table below.

Table 1. Indicative timing of submitting RPL/RPC claims*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FHEQ level of study</th>
<th>Deadline for submitting the RPL/RPC claim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Undergraduate programmes:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>4pm on Friday of Week 2, Semester 1, Level 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5</td>
<td>4pm on Friday Week 11, Semester 1, Level 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 6</td>
<td>4pm on Friday Week 11, Semester 2, Level 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 7 (Integrated Masters programmes)</td>
<td>4pm on Friday Week 11, Semester 2, Level 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Postgraduate (Taught) programmes:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 7 (1-year programmes)</td>
<td>4pm on Friday of Week 2, Semester 1, Level 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 7 Year 1 (2-year programmes)</td>
<td>4pm on Friday of Week 2, Semester 1, Level 7 (Year 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 7 Year 2 (2-year programmes)</td>
<td>4pm on Friday Week 11, Semester 1, Level 7 (Year 1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* - where programmes have an alternative start date, ie not in October, these deadlines need to be revised and applied accordingly.
The process of assessment of credit exemption claims

Learning outcomes

55. The University follows the QAA’s approach to the recognition of prior learning in setting up the principles of the assessment of RPL claims: “Assessment processes for the recognition of prior learning […] are designed to be equally informative and to reflect the interest of the higher education provider’s intended audiences”\(^3\).

56. The University expects that all credit exemption claims should involve the development of learner-defined learning outcomes aligned to programme-level learning outcomes and FHEQ level descriptors. The criteria used in marking an assessment and on which credit exemption may be based should be as stringent and rigorous as that used for any other assessment of student work.

57. In order to enhance the accessibility of the RPL/RPC process, the RPL/RPC claim form (Appendix 3, Application form) is based on the use of mapping learner-defined statements of learning or workplace-derived skills and knowledge against the UK FHEQ level descriptors to demonstrate transferable competencies and capacities:

- **claiming exemption against individual modules**: Section A3.1 of the Application form is based on mapping against learning outcomes of individual module(s)
- **direct entry to programmes**: Section A3.2 of the Application form is based on level descriptors to enable articulation of prior learning for the entire level of study
- **claiming exemption for large amounts of credits** (covering more than one level of study): Section A3.3 of the Application Form is based on mapping against programme level outcomes and level descriptors

Assessment criteria

58. It is the responsibility of the applicant/student to ensure that all presented evidence is appropriate to the programme or module(s) for which the credit exemption claim is being made. The presented evidence will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- **currency of learning**: claims would normally be made with reference to formal learning, certificated or experiential learning which took place less than five years prior to submission of the RPL/RPC claim
- **detail**: claimants (applicants or current students) should ensure that relevant claim forms are used and that these are filled in appropriately for the amount of credit being claimed
- **depth**: in cases of RPL claims, these should provide sufficient range and depth of evidence, and, where appropriate, include reflection upon prior learning experience in an “academic context”, for example, relating it to academic theory and mapping against the module(s) learning outcomes
- **level**: all RPL/RPC claims should be appropriate for the specific credit exemption claimed. The standard University claim form requires provision of cross-reference to an existing module(s) or level(s) of study of the programme

\(^3\) QAA Quality Code, Section B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning
• authenticity: RPL/RPC claims must be the claimant’s own work and the University has the right to use any existing mechanisms to detect possible plagiarism (for example, Turnitin UK).

Methods of assessment of prior learning (RPL) claims

59. The process of assessment of RPL claims is based on a wide range of evidence-gathering mechanisms and involves various methods of assessment, including, but not limited to:

• the use of oral examinations and interviews
• portfolios
• presentation of artefacts
• essay: a written piece of work of normally between 1,500 and 5,000 words, depending on the amount of credits claimed for exemption (the word limit should reflect the complexity of the claim and the credits)
• documentation/certification
• references

Assessment decision and the award of the credit exemption

60. The credit exemption based on RPL and/or RPC claims should be awarded in amounts as determined in the University Regulations and based on one of the following assessment decisions:

• successful: the level/volume/currency of presented evidence for claiming achieved prior learning and/or credit (RPL/RPC) is sufficient
• referred: the evidence is incomplete and the claim is referred back to the claimant for resubmission
• rejected: the assessment criteria are not met, for example, level/volume/currency of learning in the presented evidence for claiming achieved prior learning and/or credit (RPL/RPC) is not sufficient and/or not appropriate

61. Credit exemption based on the recognition of prior learning (RPL) or prior credit (RPC) is always ungraded.

Feedback

62. Upon completion of the assessment process, the School/Departmental RPL Assessor or Adviser should inform the claimant of the outcome of the RPL claim. The claimant should receive a statement of any credit exemption awarded/rejected and written feedback (using the standard RPL feedback proforma in Section C of the Application form, see Appendix 3).

63. The written feedback should provide a commentary in relation to the verified assessment decision and be constructive in nature, especially in cases of rejected RPL claims.
Time limit for consideration and processing an RPL/RPC claim

64. The overall process of consideration of RPL/RPC claims, from the time of submission until receipt of final decision, should normally take no longer than three working weeks, subject to paragraphs 21 and 54 above.

65. Where applicants submit an RPL/RPC claim for the credit exemption from a programme of study, this does not alter or affect the standard admissions process. Deadlines for acceptance of an offer of a place will not be extended to accommodate the timing of RPL/RPC assessment decisions.

Payment of fees for RPL/RPC claims

66. The initial and follow-up interviews or tuition with an academic member of staff (Admissions Tutor, RPL/RPC Adviser or Assessor) regarding RPL/RPC applications are offered to claimants free of charge.

67. The University does not charge any administrative or other types of fees for RPL and/or RPC claims.

68. RPL claims based exclusively on an assessment of prior informal learning may be liable to a fee of maximum 30% of the cost of the module for which exemption is being considered. This fee is designed to cover any academic costs arising from the setting and assessing the piece of work.

Appeals and complaints

69. The University procedures for addressing complaints about admissions procedures, can be found in the Admissions complaints procedure.

70. Academic appeals may be formally requested in accordance with the Regulations for academic appeals.

71. Complaints may be made in accordance with the Procedure for complaints.

Record keeping and monitoring

Record keeping

72. The AD (L&T)/AI Director of HE has overall responsibility for their Faculty’s/Al’s records in relation to RPL/RPC procedures.

73. The Faculty Student Services/Al’s Academic Registry team is responsible for the record keeping of RPL/RPC claims made by claimants (successful/rejected/referred), as described in paragraphs 34-35 above. All exemption claim forms must be kept on the student file in accordance with the University Functional Retention Schedule: Student Administration and Support.

74. The awarded credit exemption for a specific module should be entered into SITS in accordance with the standard University procedures. Al’s should ensure that procedures for recording student data have been followed effectively and the awarded credit exemption is kept on the student file.
Monitoring and evaluation of the RPL and RPC processes

75. Faculty ADs (L&T)/AI Director of HE should ensure that the RPL/RPC procedures are implemented and maintained effectively and reported to the FLTC and ULTC on annual basis. The annual summary (presented as a part of the overview of annual programme review reports/ AI’s annual review reports) should include:

- where appropriate, the outcomes of the on-going monitoring of the student experience of this group
Appendix 1 - Flowcharts

1. Flowchart for the recognition of prior credit (RPC) process: Applicants

An applicant receives guidance from the central Admissions Office/University web site and applies to programme via appropriate route(s)

Central Admissions Office receives the application form and “portfolio of evidence”, checks documentation and passes it on to the School/Departmental Admissions Tutor for decision

Is the claim based on the prior credit alone?

Yes

Decision is made by the Admissions Tutor and passed on to the Admissions Office

No

Consideration under the recognition of prior learning (Flowchart 2)

Is the claim accepted?

Yes

Admissions Office informs the applicant. RPC claim is recorded in SITS retrospectively by the Faculty Student Services.

No

Admissions Office formally informs the applicant.
2. Flowchart for the recognition of prior learning (RPL) process: Applicants

An applicant receives guidance from the central Admissions Office/University website and applies to programme via appropriate route(s)

Central Admissions Office receives the application form and “portfolio of evidence”, checks documentation and passes it on to the School/Departmental Admissions Tutor

Is the claim based on the RPL alone?

Yes

Assessment decision is moderated by the RPL Moderator (where applicable), approved by the Board of Examiners/Chair of BoE and referred back to the Admissions Office.

No

Consideration under the recognition of prior credit (RPC) procedures (Flowchart 1): RPC decision is made by the Admissions Tutor and referred back to the Admissions Office.

Is the claim accepted?

Yes

Admissions Office informs the applicant. RPC/RPL claim is recorded in SITS retrospectively by Faculty Student Services.

No

Admissions Office informs the applicant.
3. Flowchart for the recognition of prior credit (RPC) process: Current students

Faculty Student Services /University website provide information, guidance and forms to students. Any additional academic support provided by the department where required.

RPL/RPC Assessor receives the application form and supported evidence, checks documentation and provides further support and guidance where appropriate.

Is the claim based on the prior credit alone?

Yes

Decision is made by the RPL/RPC Assessor

No

Consideration under the recognition of prior learning (RPL) procedure (Flowchart 4)

Is the claim accepted?

Yes

Faculty Student Services informs the student. The exemption credit is recorded in SITS

No

Faculty Student Services informs the student. The decision is recorded formally (on the student file)
4. **Flowchart for the recognition of prior learning (RPL) process: Current students**

Faculty Student Services /University website provide information, guidance and forms to students. Any additional academic support provided by the department where required

RPL/RPC Assessor receives the application form and supported evidence, checks documentation and provides further support and guidance where appropriate

Is the claim based on the prior learning alone?

Yes

Assessment decision is moderated by the RPL Moderator (where applicable) and approved by the Board of Examiners/Chair of BoE

No

Consideration under the recognition of prior credit (RPC) procedures (Flowchart 3)

Is the claim accepted?

Yes

Faculty Student Services inform the student. The exemption credit is recorded in SITS

No

Faculty Student Services inform the student. The decision is recorded formally (on the student file)
AI /University website provide information, guidance and forms to claimants (applicants and students). Any additional academic support provided by the department where required.

RPL/RPC Assessor receives the application form and supported evidence, checks documentation and provides further support and guidance where appropriate.

Is the claim based on the prior credit alone?

Yes

Decision is made by the RPL/RPC Assessor

No

Assessment decision is made by the RPL/RPC Assessor and moderated by the RPL Moderator (where applicable) and approved by the Board of Examiners/Chair of BoE

Is the claim accepted?

Yes

No

Academic Registry office informs the claimant. The decision is recorded formally (on the student file)
Appendix 2 - Overview of the University of Surrey approach to RPL and RPC

Stage 1. Initial information and guidance
Various modes and types of information available to prospective and current students. Clear contact points during all stages of submitting claims.

Stage 2. Support processes/system
Use of the Library web site
Faculty academic and administrative support
Centralised resources

Stage 3. Assessment process/system
Programme/module learning outcomes and level descriptors
Learner-defined assessment methods (RPL claims)
Interviewing/videoconferencing
Workplace artefacts evaluation processes
Integration into standard assessment processes

Stage 4. Recording, monitoring and evaluation
Data capture in SITS and business analytics
Feedback on student experience (where applicable)
Review of processes to enhance practice (FLTC and ULTC)
Appendix 3 - Application form for the recognition of prior learning (RPL) and/or prior credit (RPC)

SECTION A. Details of RPL/RPC claim (to be completed by the applicant/student)*

Before completing this form, please read the Guidance for Completing the Mapping Tool for recognition of prior learning and prior credit at the end of this form and, if any further help is required, contact the Admissions Office (applicants) or Faculty Student Services (current students) to schedule a meeting or consultation with a relevant member of academic staff. Please download the request form from the University website and send it electronically as specified on the form.

*If you are applying for the exemption credit for the Health Care programmes please complete the Submissions coversheet form, found on the School of Health Sciences website.

A1. Personal and programme information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applicant/Student’s title, first name and surname</th>
<th>Applicant ID/Student URN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programme title (in full)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your start date (or intended starting date)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode of study (Full-Time/Part-Time)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Leader name (if known)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A2. Summary of request for RPL and/or RPC against academic credit (add additional rows if required)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module(s)/Level for which exemption is requested</th>
<th>What type of evidence is used for claiming credit exemption on the basis of RPL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Module(s) title</td>
<td>No. of credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A3. Mapping against programme level(s) and/or module(s) learning outcomes (add additional rows if required). These learning outcomes require evidence of your learning rather than attendance at teaching sessions or reading for example. For all claims using non-UK/EU credits, please seek academic advice (complete the Request for additional support with RPL and RPC claims form) before completing this section. Complete either Section A3.1, A3.2 or A3.3 as appropriate.

A3.1. Claiming exemption against individual modules:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme / Module name</th>
<th>No. Credits</th>
<th>Please state the learning outcomes for the module(s)/programme you are claiming exemption against</th>
<th>Describe how provided evidence (eg various professional and training courses certificates / evidence of employment/ portfolio/ assignment/ etc) supports the RPL/RPC claim against each of the learning outcomes and identify the corresponding section in your application.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. [Insert learning outcome]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme of study (full title)</td>
<td>FHEQ Level and the total number of credits for exemption</td>
<td>Please state the FHEQ level descriptors for the programme you are claiming exemption against</td>
<td>Describe how provided evidence (eg various professional and training courses certificates / evidence of employment/ portfolio/ assignment/ etc) supports the RPL/RPC claim against the level descriptors and identify the corresponding section in your application.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[E.g. BA in English Literature]</td>
<td>[E.g., FHEQ Level 4 – 120 credits]</td>
<td>[Insert level descriptors here]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**A3.2. Claiming exemption for large amounts of credits (more than one level of study)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme of study (full title)</th>
<th>FHEQ Level and the total number of credits for exemption</th>
<th>Please state the FHEQ level descriptors for the programme you are claiming exemption against</th>
<th>Describe how provided evidence (eg various professional and training courses certificates / evidence of employment/ portfolio/ assignment/ etc) supports the RPL/RPC claim against each of the level descriptors and identify the corresponding section in your application.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[E.g. BA in English Literature]</td>
<td>[Insert level descriptors here]</td>
<td>[Insert level descriptors here]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION B. Evidence for RPL (to be completed by the applicant/student for the recognition of prior learning claims only)

**B1. Education and qualifications:** Please provide details of educational qualifications obtained that are relevant to your RPL claim

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>College, University or any other recognised HE provider</th>
<th>Examinations taken/to be taken and qualifications obtained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From</td>
<td>To</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**B2. Training and Development:** Please provide details of relevant training and development taken

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course/ name of providing body</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**B3. Membership of Professional Bodies / Professional or Vocational Qualifications**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of body / qualification</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B4. Present and/or any previous relevant employment (add additional rows if required)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job title and company name and address</th>
<th>From:</th>
<th>To</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Please give a description of duties, describe the learning gained from that employment and major tasks accomplished. Please provide a summary of the aspects of learning gained from that experience which will be directly relevant to the learning outcome(s) of the module(s) or level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job title and company name and address</th>
<th>From:</th>
<th>To</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

B5. Please describe/attach any other relevant information to support your claim, for example:

- Applicant/student’s authored reports/papers produced for the employer, or as an outcome of self-directed study or research;
- Any evidence that can demonstrate your professional competencies, skills and expertise (e.g., testimonials from your manager(s), team meeting notes, etc)
- Assignment (essay/portfolio/etc) as agreed with the academic member of staff.

NB: do not include any sensitive information or personal details within your evidence and ensure that you get authorisation from your current/previous employers/managers where necessary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Print name of Applicant/student</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

NB: Once you completed sections A and B, please send this form and scanned (electronic) copies of any relevant evidence to support your claim to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University of Surrey Faculty</th>
<th>During admissions stage: upload the completed form and any relevant scanned evidence to the applicants’ web portal</th>
<th>Point of contact for current students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FASS</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:fasshelp@surrey.ac.uk">fasshelp@surrey.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEPS</td>
<td><a href="http://www.surrey.ac.uk/applicantportal">http://www.surrey.ac.uk/applicantportal</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:fepshelp@surrey.ac.uk">fepshelp@surrey.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FHMS</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:fhmselp@surrey.ac.uk">fhmselp@surrey.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associated/Accredited Institutions</td>
<td></td>
<td>Point of contact during admissions stage and for current students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCOT</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:s.titchard@farn-ct.ac.uk">s.titchard@farn-ct.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION C. Assessment of the recognition of prior learning and/or prior credit claim (to be completed by academic members of staff)

C.1: Decision outcome (choose one and fill in the appropriate section): Accepted / Further evidence required/ Rejected

C.1.1: Evidence accepted as representative of prior learning/credit (in relation to the module(s)/programme learning outcomes. In cases of RPL claims – the decision should be based on the assessment criteria)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme title</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programme level(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of credit exemptions awarded</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module(s) title and module(s) credits against which the exemption claim was made successfully (insert additional rows if required)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C.1.2: Further evidence required: please note here what additional type of evidence is required and how applicants/students may change their approach in describing supporting evidence, employ additional procedures or techniques etc.
C.1.3: Evidence rejected: please provide reasons and describe how applicants/students may change their approach in describing supporting evidence, employ additional procedures or techniques etc for future credit exemption claims.

C.2: General comments

C.2.1: RPL/RPC Assessor's comment:

C.2.2: RPL Moderator's comment (for RPL claims only):
C.2.3: Chair of Board of Examiner’s comment (for RPL claims only):

C.3 Signatures / dates (to be completed by academic members of staff)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the role</th>
<th>Signature (electronic where possible)</th>
<th>Date when the decision is made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admissions Tutor / RPL/RPC Assessor’s title and name (print name)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPL Moderator’s title and name (for RPL claims only) (print name)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair of Board of Examiners title and name (for RPL claims only) (print name)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION D: RPL/RPC record keeping and fees (to be completed by University/AI/Faculty student services and central professional services members of staff)

D.1: Record keeping

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RPL/RPC decision outcome and feedback (where applicable) sent to the RPL/RPC claimant</th>
<th>RPL/RPC decision outcome is recorded in SITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Completed by whom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D.2: RPL fee payment trail (indicate which is applicable)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Payment trail</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Completed by whom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total fee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invoice sent to claimant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invoice sent to Trust/Organisation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payment received</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Depending on the complexity of the case under consideration, the assessment process may involve significant staff time. It is recommended that a charge be made by Faculties for this service, at the discretion of the Faculty itself, in accordance with the following guidance:

- for an initial consultation/interaction and/or for a prima facie case based on qualifications and educational experience(s) with which a Faculty is familiar: **No fee**
- for a *prima facie* case based on qualifications and certified learning with which a Faculty is unfamiliar and requires careful scrutiny: **No fee**
- for a *prima facie* case based exclusively on an assessment of prior experiential learning or combined with qualifications and certified learning with which the Faculty is unfamiliar: **up to a maximum of 30% of the cost of the module from which exemption is being considered**
The applicant or student should ensure that all presented evidence is appropriate to the programme or module(s) for which the credit exemption claim is being made. The academic decision to accept or reject RPL/RPC claims is the outcome of the assessment process of the submitted evidence. Please note that the presented evidence will be assessed against the following criteria:

- **Currency of learning.** All RPL/RPC claims will normally be made with reference to formal learning, certificated or experiential learning which has taken place less than five years prior to submission of the RPL/RPC claim.

- **Detail.** Applicants and current students must use only the relevant claim form (Application form for the recognition of prior learning (RPL) and prior credit (RPC)) is used and that all fields completed appropriately for the amount of credit being claimed and the range of supporting evidence is sufficient.

- **Depth.** In cases of RPL claims, based on informal learning rather than academic credit awarded by a Higher Education institution, these should provide sufficient range and depth of evidence, and, where appropriate, include reflection upon prior learning experience in an “academic context”, for example, relating it to academic theory and mapping against the module(s) learning outcomes.

- **Level.** All RPL/RPC claims should be appropriate for the specific credit exemption claimed. The standard University claim form (Application form) requires provision of cross-reference to an existing module(s) or level(s) of study of the programme:
  - In cases where exemption is sought against *individual modules*, claimants (applicant/students) must include in Section A3 of the application form all module learning outcomes for University of Surrey modules and cross-reference these against supporting evidence.
  - In cases where exemption is sought against *a whole level(s) of study* (for example, 120 credits at FHEQ Level 4), claimants (applicant/students) must include in Section A3 of the application form the programme learning outcomes that have been previously achieved and how these are relevant to the University of Surrey programme of study.

- **Authenticity.** RPL/RPC claims must be the claimant's own work and the University has the right to use any existing mechanisms to detect possible plagiarism (for example, Turnitin UK).

It is essential that evidence is provided of both theoretical and practical learning where relevant. This can be broken down into specific pieces of evidence which meet the criteria of the individual outcomes or presented as more generalised evidence which demonstrates achievement of a module or part of a
programme of study

It is acceptable to use the same piece of evidence more than once if it demonstrates the achievement of more than one outcome.

The theoretical learning should predominantly consist of the content/learning outcomes of previous programme(s) undertaken although it may be acceptable to include some additional previous or subsequent theoretical learning.

The evidence should be brief whilst ensuring that enough information is provided to clearly demonstrate achievement of the appropriate module or programme learning outcomes.

The evidence can be supported by additional materials such as portfolios and personal professional profiles where appropriate. Applicants are expected to select the relevant information that demonstrates achievement of the programme learning outcomes and summarise this within this mapping tool.

Use of abbreviations and acronyms should be avoided. If numbers or codes are referred to in relation to previous programme learning outcomes, then a full explanation of these should be provided – it may be helpful to provide a copy of any previous programme transcript’s and refer to this within the mapping tool.

When citing evidence to support your application please reference as per the University of Surrey referencing guidelines - here is the link: http://www.surrey.ac.uk/library/learning/informationskills/referencing.htm

All supporting evidence for RPL/RPC claims must be scanned and sent together with this application form as an attachment to an e-mail. RPC claimants (applicants/students) may be requested by Faculty/AI staff to present original certificates/transcripts, where necessary, in order to progress the claim.

All written evidence, including essays submitted for RPL claims must be word processed, font size 11, double spaced ideally and sent as an email attachment together with the application form. All evidence that is submitted as hard copy should be placed securely in a folder. DO NOT put written evidence in plastic sleeves (transcripts, certificates of attendance etc may be presented in plastic sleeves).

All applicants/students submitting RPC claims that are based on previously achieved academic credit abroad (i.e. not in the UK or EU Higher Education Institutions), must contact Faculty academic members of staff before submitting their claims. For additional academic support and help with submitting the RPL/RPC claim, the Request for additional support with RPL and RPC claims form must be completed and sent to the appropriate office (e-mail address is included in Section A.4 of the form).
Appendix 4 - Request for additional support with RPL and RPC claims

Section A. Details of the claim (to be completed by an applicant/student)

Please complete this form if you would like to receive additional academic help and support from the relevant School/Department (Admissions Tutor or an RPL Adviser/Assessor). Once you submitted the form, you will be contacted by a member of the academic staff to discuss the nature of your claim and evidence and to provide further support with this process.

A1. Personal details and nature of claim (all fields must be completed by the claimant)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title/first name/surname</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current address, including postcode</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail address</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile telephone number</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student URN number (for current students only)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme of study for claim</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of claim (tick all boxes that apply)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior credit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior (informal) learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both types</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A2. List all formal completed or partially completed qualifications, HE awards and/or learning gained via work and life experiences. Please include dates/institutions to indicate when these certificates, awards, qualifications, etc were achieved and which institutional bodies have issued/approved these:

A3. Briefly describe the nature of the evidence on which your claim(s) is based:

Print name
Signature (where possible)
Date

A4. Once completed, please send this form to the relevant office as below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University of Surrey Faculty</th>
<th>Point of contact during admissions stage</th>
<th>Point of contact for current students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FASS</td>
<td><a href="mailto:admissions@surrey.ac.uk">admissions@surrey.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:fasshelp@surrey.ac.uk">fasshelp@surrey.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEPS</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:fepshelp@surrey.ac.uk">fepshelp@surrey.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FHMS</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:fhmshelp@surrey.ac.uk">fhmshelp@surrey.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Associated/Accredited Institutions</th>
<th>Point of contact during admissions stage</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FCOT</td>
<td><a href="mailto:s.titchard@farn-ct.ac.uk">s.titchard@farn-ct.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:s.titchard@farn-ct.ac.uk">s.titchard@farn-ct.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section B. Record of session(s) with student/applicant (to be completed by an academic member of staff)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/time of the session</th>
<th>Type (one-to-one session, group consultation, telecommunication (phone, Skype), e-mail)</th>
<th>Brief summary of the advice given, including any specific timeframe/deadline for submission, etc.</th>
<th>RPL/RPC Adviser’s name (print) / signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB. Once the process is completed and the claimant has submitted the main application form for RPL/RPC (Application Form for the recognition of prior learning (RPL) and prior credit (RPC)) and all relevant evidence, including written assignment, the Request for additional support with RPL and RPC claims form should be send to the appropriate office as below to be kept on the file in accordance with the University Records Retention Schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University of Surrey Faculty</th>
<th>Point of contact during admissions stage</th>
<th>Point of contact for current students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FASS</td>
<td><a href="mailto:admissions@surrey.ac.uk">admissions@surrey.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:fasshelp@surrey.ac.uk">fasshelp@surrey.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:fepshelp@surrey.ac.uk">fepshelp@surrey.ac.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>FHMS</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:fhmshelp@surrey.ac.uk">fhmshelp@surrey.ac.uk</a></td>
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<td><a href="mailto:s.titchard@farn-ct.ac.uk">s.titchard@farn-ct.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>