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

Academic year 2019/20

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Contents

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* and the *Regulations for Degree Apprenticeships.*

2. The *Code of practice* is based on the *QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education* , the *SEEC guidance* and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) requirements.

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. The *Code of practice* also outlines the process for initial assessment of prior learning for Degree Apprenticeship programmes.

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 the recognition of prior learning or prior credit, the University may recognise the previously achieved informal, experiential or certificated learning (RPL), or formal credit previously awarded by UK/EU Higher Education institutions or by other bodies where the level of formal credit awarded maps to the *QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)* (RPC).

5. 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 *Regulations for taught programmes* and the *Regulations for Degree Apprenticeships* and are applicable 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 12 below.

7. The initial assessment (IA) process, which can also be referred to as an Initial Needs Assessment (INA), is based on the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Guidance *"Apprenticeships: initial assessment to recognise prior learning"* . According to

the ESFA's Guidance, the key points of the initial assessment of prior learning are (the list is not exhaustive):

- Recognition of prior learning extends beyond English, maths and existing qualifications;
- All the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the standard should be considered in reviewing the prior learning of the apprentice;
- Recognition of prior learning is part of the learner eligibility assessment.

Further information about the initial assessment of prior learning is included in the Apprentice Application Guide. This guide is available on the University Apprenticeship webpages and from the Degree Apprenticeship Team at apprenticeships@surrey.ac.uk.

8.   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 are outside the scope of this *Code of practice*.

9.   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.*

10.   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.

11.   This *Code of practice* defines the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in the recognition of prior learning and prior credit, 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

12.   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.

13.   The maximum amount of credit exemption is determined in the *Regulations for taught programmes*. Any decision regarding direct entry, based on an RPL/RPC claim, should be made on an individual basis. The maximum amount of exemption for Degree Apprenticeship programmes is determined by the *Regulations for Degree Apprenticeships* and the ESFA rules which require that the apprenticeship content, duration and price must be reduced where the individual has relevant prior learning, subject to:

- the minimum threshold of 12 months must be met and

- at least 20% of the paid hours for the new (reduced) duration must be spent on off-the-job training.

14. 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.

15. Where applicable, apprentice applicants for Surrey Degree Apprenticeship programmes should provide evidence of achievement of programme/module learning outcomes based on prior learning of relevant Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs). Subject to p.14 above, where an apprentice applicant achieves recognition of prior learning for only part(s) of a module, and self-directed study to "top up" their evidence is not possible or practicable, the University will reduce the price of the programme accordingly. However, as the module credit would not have been achieved in such a case, the apprentice should take all elements/units of assessment of the module in question during the study period of the programme.

16. 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 0:0:100

- Integrated Masters 4-year degree: 0:25:35:40 will become 0:0:35:65

17. Credit exemptions can be awarded against core, compulsory or optional modules, as defined in the *Regulations for taught programmes* and the *Regulations for Degree Apprenticeships* 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.

18. 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.

19. The *Regulations for taught programmes* and the *Regulations for Degree Apprenticeships* also prescribe key principles for rescinding a previously acquired University of Surrey intermediate awards.

20. 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.

Degree Apprenticeship programmes: outline of the initial assessment of prior learning

21. The initial assessment of prior learning is a multi-purposed process and includes the following elements:

- Recognising the prior learning of the individual, including all the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the apprenticeship standard, before the apprenticeship can begin;

- Recording prior learning in the evidence pack and commitment statement;

- Considering evidence of Level 2 English and maths, or their equivalencies;

- Considering impact of learning difficulties and/or disabilities on the outcome and any necessary adjustments required.

22. Before the start of an apprenticeship, the University will assess the applicant's prior learning to establish the 'starting point' against Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs), that are based on the programme's learning outcomes. Initial assessment checks how much of the apprenticeship programme study/training content the apprentices will require in order to successfully complete the End Point Assessment.

23. The central point of contact for applicants seeking advice and support with the initial assessment of prior learning is the Degree Apprenticeship Team at apprenticeships@surrey.ac.uk:

- Compliance Manager (Degree Apprenticeships) has overall responsibilities for managing and monitoring the evidence pack that includes the initial assessment of prior learning;

- The Degree Apprenticeship Team is responsible for coordination of the initial assessment and works closely with all relevant School/Departmental Admissions Tutors, employers and applicants.

24. All decisions regarding the recognition of prior learning and/or prior credit are made by the School/Departmental Admissions Tutor/ RPL Assessor or their nominee (see Appendix 1, Flowchart 6).

25. All relevant forms and guidance for apprentice applicants regarding initial assessment and recognition of prior learning is included within the on-line application form on Aptem. Aptem is a complete end-to-end apprenticeship and vocational training delivery platform, developed by MWS Technology. It is designed to capture applicable information, assessments, record learner progress, CRM etc. Aptem is compliant for ESFA, Ofsted and GDPR. Degree Apprenticeships Team is responsible for creating the programmes within this platform and data population and maintenance. Aptem data is shared with the University of Surrey programme and student records database, SITS.

26. Normally, the decision on the initial assessment of prior learning should take no longer than one working week from the point of submission of the complete documentation of the claim, including all required evidence and any additional assignments, portfolios, observations, references, etc. Where additional evidence is requested, a further one working week will be allocated to allow gathering this information and/or conducting any additional observations, assignments, etc.

RPL/RPC process outline

27. 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 another higher education institution.

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

29. All decisions regarding the acceptance of prior credit (RPC) are made by the School/Departmental Admissions Tutor (see Appendix 1, Flowchart 1). Applicants' claims based on their prior learning (RPL) experience, are also 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).

30. The initial point of contact for advice for current students submitting an RPL/RPC claim is Faculty Academic Hives.

31. RPL/RPC claims, submitted by current students, are considered by the School/Departmental Assessor (see Appendix 1, Flowchart 3). Current students' claims based on their prior learning (RPL) experience, are also 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).

32. All relevant documentation for RPL/RPC claims is available online from the Quality Enhancement and Standards website.

33. Normally, the decision on RPL/RPC claims should take no longer than three working weeks from the point of submission of the complete documentation of the claim.

34. 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 recognition of prior learning and prior credit processes

Applicant/student

35. 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:

   (i) make contact with the Admissions Office (applicants), the Degree Apprenticeship Team (apprentice applicants), Faculty Academic Hives (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;

   (ii) identify their existing knowledge, skills and behaviours;

   (iii) match what they have learned against the requirements of the module(s)/programme;

   (iv) collect and collate the evidence to support the claim;

   (v) formally submit the claim in line within agreed deadlines;

   (vi) where required, pay the appropriate fee within required timescales.

36. Prospective undergraduate students with previously achieved formal HE credit from UK/EU HEIs and applying via UCAS directly to levels 5 or 6, should follow the standard UCAS procedure. No RPC claim forms are required in such cases.

Overall responsibility for the implementation, support and monitoring of the University RPL/RPC policy and procedures

37. The University Learning and Teaching Committee (ULTC) is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the University's policy and procedures with regard to RPL/RPC.

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

39. Faculty ADs (Education)/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.

40. The Faculty Associate Dean (Education)/ 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 initial assessment of prior learning and recognition of prior learning and prior credit processes.

41. 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).

42. School/Department may appoint a designated RPL/RPC Adviser or Tutor, particularly where programmes of study have traditionally a very high volume of RPL/RPC claims (for example, in the School of Health Sciences).

Roles and responsibilities of academic and administrative members of staff

43. Responsibilities for the RPC process based on previously achieved formal HE credit are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Recognition of prior credit (RPC) process only

Stage	*Administrative responsibilities for processing RPC claims:*	*Academic responsibilities for processing RPC claims:*
Pre-entry: *Applicants*	*Admissions Office:* - to process RPC claims through the admissions process; - to refer these claims to the Admissions Tutor; - to inform applicants about outcomes of their claims;	*Admissions Tutor:* - to provide academic advice on regulations, policy and procedures; - to support applicants in preparing the RPC claim; - to make a decision regarding RPC claims
Post-entry: *Current students*	*Faculty Academic Hives:* - provide practical advice on how to access the appropriate forms online; - provide guidance on the University regulations, policy and procedures, the credit requirements of the programme and information about specific learning outcomes for individual modules; - log in the date when the RPC claim was received and, where appropriate, record the decision outcome in SITS (for applicants this should be done retrospectively, upon their registration); - progress any documentation to the Board of Examiners via the Assessment and Awards Office; - send a statement of any credit awarded to the student to notify them of the outcomes of the process	*RPC Assessor* (Programme Leader or other nominated academic member of staff): - to provide academic advice and support relating to the recognition of prior credit claim; - to make a decision regarding RPC claims made by current students.

44. Staff responsibilities for dealing with RPL claims, based on previously achieved informal learning and/or various non-HE certificates, employer awards are shown in Table 2 below. Staff responsibilities for dealing with the initial assessment of prior learning (Degree Apprenticeship programmes) are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 2. Recognition of prior learning (RPL) process only

Stage	Administrative responsibilities for processing RPL claims:	Academic responsibilities for processing RPL claims:
Pre-entry: *Applicants*	*Admissions Office should:* • process RPL claims through the admissions process; • refer these claims to the Admissions Tutor; • inform applicants about outcomes of their claims.	*Admissions Tutor (for applicants) / nominated RPL Assessor (for current students) should:* • provide academic advice relating to the RPL claim, including the assessment mechanism; • provide support in preparing the RPL claim; • assess, make a decision and produce written feedback regarding RPL claims; • forward the paperwork to the RPL Moderator.
Post-entry: *Current students*	*Faculty Academic Hives should:* • provide practical advice on how to access the appropriate forms online and guidance on the University regulations, policy and procedures, the credit requirements of the programme and information about specific learning outcomes for individual modules • log in the date when the RPL claim was received and, where appropriate, record the decision outcome in SITS (for applicants this should be done retrospectively, upon their registration) • progress any relevant documentation to the Board of Examiners via the Assessment and Awards Office • notify Student Fees of the decision, where required • send a statement of any credit awarded to the student to notify them of the outcomes of the process	*RPL Moderator should:* • second marking or moderating the RPL claim and subsequently forwarding it to the Chair of the Board of Examiners. *Chair of the Board of Examiners should:* • consider and approve the outcomes of the RPL claim on behalf of the Board of Examiners.

Table 3. Degree Apprenticeship programmes: initial assessment and recognition of prior learning (RPL)

Stage	Administrative responsibilities for processing the initial assessment of prior learning:	Academic responsibilities for processing RPL claims:

Apprentice applicants	Degree Apprenticeship Team should:	Admissions Tutor / nominated RPL Assessor should:
	• provide practical advice on how to access the appropriate forms online and guidance on the University regulations, policy and procedures, the credit requirements of the programme; • provide applicants with necessary support and guidance regarding the Evidence Pack, including evidence of Level 2 English and Maths (provided normally as part of entry qualification); • to ensure continuous monitoring, oversight and review for ESFA compliance and contact the School/Department if further detail/information is required • process documentation for the initial assessment of prior learning; • refer this documentation to the School/Departmental Admissions Tutor or RPL Adviser (where applicable); • help applicants to liaise with Disability and Neurodiversity to identify and agree any additional learning support plans where required; • recalculate the duration of the programme and liaise with Fees and Funding team to calculate the programme price; • log in the date when the RPL claim was received and, where appropriate, record the decision outcome in Aptem, and liaise with Fees and Funding who will log the outcome in SITS • inform applicants and employers about outcomes of the initial assessment of RPL and send a statement of any credit awarded to the applicant as part of the commitment statement.	• provide academic advice relating to the recognition of prior learning process, including the assessment mechanism; • provide information about specific learning outcomes of individual modules • provide support in preparing the RPL claim; • to contact the apprentice/ employer to gather any further evidence required to ensure ESFA compliance; • assess, make a decision and produce written feedback regarding recognition of prior learning; • analyse Skills Gap to demonstrate the new skills needed by the applicant for the End Point Assessment and how the apprenticeship (content and experience) will address these; • to record the decision outcome (including how many credits against which module(s) recognition is given for each competency) and confirmation that the initial assessment process is completed (via Aptem) for the Degree Apprenticeship Team to review.

Assessment of RPL/RPC claims

Applicant/Student support system

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

46. 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)*, further templates and guides for applicants, students and staff.

47. 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

48.	Normally, current (already registered) students should make their RPL/RPC claims for credit exemption 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 4 below).

49.	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.

50.	Normally, current (already registered) students must submit their RPL/RPC claims no later than the dates given in the table below.

Table 4. Indicative timing of submitting RPL/RPC claims* by <u>current students</u>

What level of study is the student at currently?	Claiming the exemption credit for modules at level:	Deadline for submitting the RPL/RPC claim for initial assessment*
Undergraduate programmes:		
Level 4	Level 4	4pm on Friday of Week 2, Semester 1
Level 4	Level 5	4pm on Friday of Week 11, Semester 1
Level 5	Level 6	4pm on Friday of Week 11, Semester 1
Level 6	Level 7 (Integrated Masters programmes)	4pm on Friday of Week 11, Semester 1
Postgraduate taught programmes:		
Level 7	Level 7 (1-year Masters programmes)	4pm on Friday of Week 2, Semester 1
Level 7 Year 1 (2-year programmes)	Level 7 Year 1 (2-year programmes)	4pm on Friday of Week 2, Semester 1, Level 7 (Year 1)
Level 7 Year 1 (2-year programmes)	Level 7 Year 2 (2-year programmes)	4pm on Friday Week 11, Semester 1, Level 7 (Year 1)

* - where programmes have an alternative start date, i.e. not in October, these deadlines need to be revised and applied accordingly.

Criteria for the assessment/recognition of credit exemption

51.	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

- *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).

Application process

52.   In order to enhance the accessibility and clarity of claiming credit exemption process, there are two procedures for dealing with RPC and RPL/Combination of RPL and RPC claims. All relevant template forms are available to download from the QES website, including:

- *application forms for the recognition of prior credit (RPC)*

- *application form for the recognition of prior learning (RPL) or a combination of RPL and RPC claims*

53.   Apprentice applicants should use the following template to submit their evidence and claim for recognition of prior learning:

- *application form for the initial assessment and recognition of prior learning (IA – RPL)*

54.   The RPC claim form is based on the use of mapping learner-defined statements of previously achieved HE credit at UK/EU/Overseas HEIs against the UK FHEQ level descriptors to demonstrate transferable competencies and capacities (to use on these sub-sections):

- for claiming exemption against individual modules: Section A2 of the *Application form for RPC* is based on mapping against learning outcomes of individual module(s);

- for claiming exemption for the entire level of study (direct entry to programmes): Section A3 of the *Application form for RPC* is based on the UK FHEQ level descriptors to enable articulation of prior credit for the relevant level of study;

- for claiming exemption for large amounts of credits (covering more than one level of study and/or individual modules from different levels): use both sections, A2 and A3 of the *Application Form for RPC*.

55.   The process for dealing with RPC claims is described in Appendix 1, Flowcharts 1 (applicants) and 3 (registered students).

The recognition of prior learning (RPL) claim form

56.   The RPL/Combination of RPL and RPC claim 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:

- for claiming exemption against individual modules: Section A2 of the *Application form for RPL* is based on mapping against learning outcomes of individual module(s);

- for claiming exemption for the entire level of study (direct entry to programmes): Section A3 of the *Application form for RPL* is based on level descriptors to enable articulation of prior learning for the entire level of study;

- for claiming exemption for large amounts of credits (covering more than one level of study): Sections A2 and A3 of the *Application Form for RPL*;

57.   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

58.   The process for dealing with RPL claims is described in Appendix 1, Flowcharts 2 and 4.

Degree Apprenticeship programmes: types of evidence for required for the initial assessment and recognition of prior learning

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

- references

- 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

- observations

60.   The process for dealing with the initial assessment of prior learning is described in Appendix 1, Flowchart 6.

Decision making and awarding the credit exemption

61.   The credit exemption based on RPL and/or RPC claims should be awarded in amounts as determined in the *Regulations for taught programmes* and the *Regulations for Degree Apprenticeships* 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

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

Providing feedback for RPL claims

63.   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 for RPL*).

64.   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.

Payment of fees for RPL claims

65.   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.

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

67.   RPL claims based exclusively on an assessment of prior 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

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

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

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

Record keeping and monitoring

Record keeping

71.   The AD (Education)/AI Director of HE has overall responsibilities for their Faculty's/AI's records in relation to RPL/RPC procedures.

72.   The Faculty Academic Hives/ Degree Apprenticeship Team / AI's Academic Registry team are responsible for the record keeping of RPL/RPC claims made by claimants (successful/rejected/referred), as described in paragraphs 43-44 above. All exemption claim forms must be kept on the student file in accordance with the University Functional Retention Schedule: Student Administration and Support.

73.   The awarded credit exemption for a specific module should be entered into SITS in accordance with the standard University procedures. AIs 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

74.   Faculty ADs (Education)/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*

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Is the applicant making a RPC claim for a full year of study (120 credits)?
    │                                    │
   Yes ──────┐                          No ──────► Applicant fills in Application form to claim exemption for specific modules
             │                                                      │
             ▼                                                      │
    Is the applicant applying via UCAS?                             │
    │                        │                                      │
   Yes                      No                                      │
    │                        │                                      │
    ▼                        ▼                                      │
Via UCAS, applicant     Applicant fills in                         │
selects which year      Application form                           │
(point of entry) they        │                                     │
want to start their          │                                     │
degree                       │                                     │
    │                        ▼                                      │
    ▼          Admissions Office receives Application form ◄────────┘
Admissions Office       and contacts applicant
receives UCAS
application and
contacts applicant
    │                        │
    ▼                        ▼
Applicant sends copy of their transcript (with marks), the syllabus (eg module descriptions) and programme specification of previous studies to Admissions Office
                             │
                             ▼
Admissions Office liaises with relevant School Admissions Tutor
                             │
                             ▼
                    Is the claim accepted?
              │                          │
             Yes                        No
              │                          │
              ▼                          ▼
Admissions Office informs the      Admissions Office informs
applicant.                         the applicant.

RPC claim is recorded in SITS
by Faculty Student Services.
Student Fees and Assessments
notified
```

2   Flowchart for the recognition of prior learning (RPL) process or a combination of RPL and recognition of prior credit (RPC): applicants

Applicant receives advice from Admissions Office, fills in Application form to claim exemption from either full year of study (120 credits) and/or for specific modules.

↓

Admissions Office receives Application form and contacts applicant

↓

Is the claim based on RPL alone?

Yes ← → No

Yes: Applicant sends in evidence eg CV, employer statement, portfolios, evidence of practice hours, recordings of demonstrations etc to Admissions Office

No: Applicant also sends in copy of their transcript (with marks), the syllabus (eg module descriptions) and programme specification of previous studies to Admissions Office

↓

Admissions Office liaises with relevant School Admissions Tutor

↓

Assessment decision is moderated by the RPL Moderator (where applicable). Approved by the Board of Examiners or the Chair.

↓

Is the claim accepted?

Yes ← → No

Yes: Admissions Office informs the applicant.

RPL or RPL & RPC claim is recorded in SITS by Faculty Student Services.   Student Fees and Assessments notified

No: Admissions Office informs the applicant.

3 *Flowchart for the recognition of prior credit (RPC) process: current students*

Student receives advice from Faculty Academic Hive, fills in appropriate Application form to claim exemption for either full year of study (120 credits) and/or for specific modules.

↓

Faculty Academic Hive receives Application form and contacts student

↓

Applicant sends copy of their transcript (with marks), the syllabus (eg module descriptions) and programme specification of previous studies to Faculty Student Services

↓

Faculty Academic Hive liaises with the nominated School/Departmental RPC Assessor

↓

Is the claim accepted?

Yes → Faculty Academic Hive informs the applicant.

RPC claim is recorded in SITS by Faculty Academic Hive. Student Fees and Assessments notified

No → Faculty Academic Hive informs the applicant.

4   *Flowchart for the recognition of prior credit (RPC) or recognition of prior learning (RPL) or combination of both: current students*

Student receives advice from Faculty Academic Hive, fills in appropriate Application form to claim exemption for either full year of study (120 credits) and/or for specific modules.

↓

Faculty Academic Hive receives Application form and contacts student

↓

Is the claim based on RPL alone?

Yes ←   → No

↓ (Yes)

Student sends in evidence eg CV, employer statement, portfolios, evidence of practice hours, recordings of demonstrations etc to Faculty Academic Hive

↓ (No)

Student also sends in copy of their transcript (with marks), the syllabus (eg module descriptions) and programme specification of previous studies to Faculty Academic Hive

↓

Faculty Academic Hive liaises with the nominated School/Departmental RPC/RPL Assessor

↓

Assessment decision is moderated by the RPL Moderator (where applicable). Approved by the Board of Examiners or the Chair.

↓

Is the claim accepted?

Yes ←   → No

↓ (Yes)

Faculty Academic Hive informs the student.

RPL or RPL & RPC claim is recorded in SITS by Faculty Academic Hive

↓ (No)

Faculty Academic Hive informs the student.

5 _Flowchart for the recognition of recognition of prior learning (RPL) and prior credit (RPC) process: Associated and Accredited Institutions (AIs)_

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ AI website provide information, guidance and  │
│ forms to claimants (applicants and students). │
│ Any additional academic support provided by   │
│ the relevant department where required.       │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                     │
                     ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ RPL/RPC Assessor receives application form    │
│ and supported evidence, checks documentation  │
│ and provides further support and guidance     │
│ where appropriate                             │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                     │
                     ▼
        ┌─────────────────────────┐
  Yes ◄─┤ Is the claim based on    ├─► No
        │ RPC alone?              │
        └─────────────────────────┘
   │                                    │
   ▼                                    ▼
┌────────────────────────┐  ┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ Decision is made by     │  │ Assessment decision is made  │
│ RPL/RPC Assessor        │  │ by the RPL/PRC Assessor, and │
│                         │  │ moderated by the PRL         │
│                         │  │ Moderator (where applicable).│
│                         │  │ Approved by the Board of     │
│                         │  │ Examiners or the Chair.      │
└────────────────────────┘  └─────────────────────────────┘
        │                              │
        ▼                              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Is the claim accepted?                        │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
        │                              │
        ▼                              ▼
      Yes                            No
        │                              │
        ▼                              ▼
┌────────────────────────┐  ┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Academic Registry       │  │ Academic Registry        │
│ informs the student.    │  │ informs the student.     │
│                         │  └─────────────────────────┘
│ RPL/ RPC claim is       │
│ recorded formally on    │
│ the applicant/student   │
│ record.                 │
└────────────────────────┘
```

6 Flowchart for the initial assessment and recognition of prior learning process: apprentice applicants

Admissions receives notification from a DA Team report that application and Initial Assessment has been completed in full by the applicant

Admissions notifies School (and Disability & Neurodiversity Team if applicable) that application is ready for assessment

School (and Disability & Neurodiversity Team if applicable) review the Initial Needs Assessment & Application form

Is evidence sufficient to make a full assessment?

Yes

No

School (& Disability & Neurodiversity Team if applicable) make assessment, record outcome onto Aptem and Commitment

School (and Disability & Neurodiversity Team if applicable) contact Applicant to discuss more evidence needed, interview, do an observation or relevant information required

School (and Disability & Neurodiversity Team if applicable) inform Admissions of completed Assessment and outcome recorded

Admissions review completed Assessment and advises Degree Apprenticeship Team

Degree Apprenticeship Team review completed Assessment and advise Fees and Funding

Is the assessment robust enough and ESFA compliant?

No

Yes

Fees & funding calculate cost and advise Degree Apprenticeship Team

Degree Apprenticeship Team populate applicable fields on Aptem and Commitment

Degree Apprenticeship Team advises employer and Learner of ILP and cost and obtain applicable signatures

Appendix 2 - Overview of the University of Surrey approach to RPL and RPC

Stage I. 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)