

CREDIT TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

The University of Surrey recognises that you may have a broad range of prior knowledge, skills and experience (academic, professional or vocational) to bring to your University life. Such previous experience/qualifications may allow you to be exempted from certain elements of study in your Surrey degree programme.

DOES THE UNIVERSITY OF SURREY ACCEPT COURSE TRANSFERS FROM ANOTHER HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION?

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 are also referred to as “recognition of prior credit”. However, previously achieved UK/EU academic credit cannot be transferred to any of the University of Surrey programmes automatically. You should contact the University to find out whether you meet the entry requirements for the programme of study you wish to transfer to and whether there are spaces available.

WHAT IS THE RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) AND RECOGNITION OF PRIOR CREDIT (RPC)?

1. Recognition of Prior Credit (RPC) is the recognition of prior formal learning in a Higher Education (HE) Institution that has led to the award of academic credit or a [Framework of Higher Education Qualifications](#) (FHEQ) award. The RPC policy also applies to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) process.

2. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): there are two types of prior informal learning that are recognised under this category:

- **Prior Experiential Learning** is the recognition of prior informal learning achieved within the context of work-based and/or life experience, etc.
- **Prior Certificated Learning** refers to prior learning that has been accredited or certificated through a training provider, but which has not led to the award of HE credits, or recognised awards within the [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#) (FHEQ).

If you are applying for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), ask yourself the following questions:

- What did I learn from my previous experience/staff development course/training?
- What skills/learning can I demonstrate competency in following this activity?
- What did I do and why?
- What issues in this activity can I relate to the learning outcomes mentioned in the module descriptor/programme specification?

HOW TO APPLY FOR THE RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) AND PRIOR CREDIT (RPC)?

Before applying for RPL/RPC, you need to check whether you have already achieved some of the requirements for your chosen Surrey degree award. Please visit the University programme/module catalogue for further information about the programme and modules you will be studying at Surrey: <https://catalogue.surrey.ac.uk>.

If you are planning to apply directly into Year 2 or 3 of an undergraduate programme and claim exemption credits for a full level or levels of study, then you may need to follow the UCAS application process. Once your UCAS application has been received by the University, you will be contacted by the Admissions team and asked to submit evidence to support your application, for example, a copy of your transcript showing all marks obtained, as well as the syllabus and/or the programme specification of your previous study.

Non-UCAS applicants or UCAS applicants wishing to claim exemption for individual modules, will need to complete a relevant [University of Surrey application form](#) (Section A of the form):

1. *Application form for the credit exemption based on Recognition of Prior Credit (RPC)* – this form to be used for credit transfers for a full level or levels of study, or individual modules.
2. *Application form for the credit exemption based on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or a combination of Prior Learning (RPL) and Prior Credit (RPC)* – this form to be used for experiential or certificated (non-HE) learning, or a combination of prior informal learning and credit transfer.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I CONSIDER BEFORE APPLYING FOR RPL/RPC?

The advantages are:

- You may finish your programme earlier.
- You have more time to focus on the rest of your modules.
- You pay a much smaller tuition fee for exempted modules (between 0%-30% of the full module fee).

The disadvantages are:

- You have less contact time with your fellow peers and less of a chance to develop support networks.
- After joining a degree programme part-way through, you will have little opportunity to refresh your skills and knowledge or adjust to the demands of academic study. This may be particularly challenging if you are new to studying at an HE level or have had a long break in your academic studies.

HOW MANY CREDITS ARE ALLOWED TO BE TRANSFERRED UNDER THE RPL/RPC POLICY?

There is a strict limit on the maximum number of exemption credits that could be claimed on the basis of prior learning and/or prior credit. Depending on the programme's study level, this is typically between 50%-75% of the total number of credits required for an award. Please refer to the [A1: Regulations for taught degrees](#), Table 5: *The minimum number of credits that must be taken by transferring students to achieve a University award*.

However, individual programmes of study that are accredited by Professional, Statutory and Professional Bodies (PSRBs) may apply additional, specific restrictions on the maximum number of RPL/RPC credits. It is important to check this information with the programme team before applying for the RPL/RPC exemption.

HOW IS MY RPL/RPC CLAIM ASSESSED?

You must present evidence to support your RPL/RPC claim. **This 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. Academic staff can choose to recognise formal or certified learning from an earlier point provided they are satisfied as to its equivalence and currency.
- *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.
- *Range and 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. A-level results or the equivalent entry qualifications are not applicable.
- *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).

WHAT EVIDENCE IS REQUIRED TO SUPPORT MY APPLICATION FOR THE CREDIT EXEMPTION?

It is important that the evidence provided by you matches the module and/or programme level **learning outcomes**. This will assure the University that you have achieved the same learning requirements as those students who have studied the module(s)/programme level(s) at the University. These **learning outcomes** can be found on the programme specification and on the individual module descriptors (<https://catalogue.surrey.ac.uk>).

If you are applying on the basis of prior certificated (non-HE) learning or you would like to transfer credits from another HE Institution, you will need to submit the following from your previous provider/s:

- Copy of award certificate/s or an authorised transcript
- Copy of the programme specification or course details
- Copy of the module descriptions or syllabus.

If you are applying on the basis of experiential learning, then make sure that your evidence is submitted as a hard copy and is placed securely in a folder. All written evidence must be Word processed, ideally font size 11, and double spaced. It must also be signed and dated by the author. It is acceptable to use the same piece of evidence more than once if it demonstrates the achievement of more than one outcome.

You may need to provide some of the following (the list is not exhaustive):

- A Curriculum Vitae
- Employer statement
- Witness testimonies
- Recordings of practical demonstrations
- Evidence of practice hours
- Portfolios
- Written narratives/reports
- Webpages/websites

In all cases, you may be requested at a later date to present your original certificates/transcripts to either the Admissions Office or the [Hive](#) in order to progress your claim.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE CREDIT TRANSFER/RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING AND/OR PRIOR CREDIT?

FOR FURTHER DETAILS ABOUT THE RPL/RPC APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESSES, PLEASE VISIT THE [CODE OF PRACTICE FOR RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING AND PRIOR CREDIT](#).