

# **Recognition of Prior Learning Guidelines and Procedures**

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Appendix for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) for Entry onto Pre-registration Nursing programmes approved 19/01/2023

Appendix for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) for Entry onto BSc Biomedical Science approved 05/06/2024

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## GLOSSARY

Within the Guidelines and Procedures the following definitions are used:

| Term   | Definition  |
|--|---|
| Advanced Standing                              | A substantial RPL claim may lead to an applicant gaining academic credit for an entire level(s) of a programme enabling them to enter the programme with 'advanced standing'.   |
| CertHE   | Certificate of Higher Education.  |
| Credit   | Credit is awarded to a learner in recognition of the verified achievement of designated learning outcomes at a specified level.   |
| Credit Accumulation                            | The process of achieving credits over time in relation to a planned programme of study.   |
| Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (CATS) | Leeds Trinity University subscribes to the CATS scheme. The system enables learners to accumulate credit and facilitates the transfer of that credit within and between providers. You can learn more about CATS from <a href="http://www.seec.org.uk/">http://www.seec.org.uk/</a> also provide NUCCAT details                   |
| Credit Level                                   | An indicator of the relative complexity, demand and/or depth of learning and of learner autonomy.   |
| Credit Level Descriptors                       | The generic characteristics of learning at a specific level, used as reference points.  |
| Credit Transfer                                | The mechanism which allows credit awarded by a higher education (HE) awarding body to be recognised, quantified and included towards the credit requirements for a programme delivered by another HE provider or within the institution.  |
| Credit Value                                   | The number of credits, at a particular level, assigned to a body of learning. The number of credits is based on the estimated notional learning hours (where one credit represents 10 notional hours of learning).  |
| Critical Reflection                            | A critical reflective thinking process explores, questions and analyses experience, and links it with knowledge, using academic content to enhance understanding. Students claiming credit for Experiential Prior learning (RPEL) are required to undertake a process of critical reflection upon their own skills and expertise. |
| DipHE  | Diploma of Higher Education.  |
| Direct Entry                                   | The term used to refer to applicants who enter a programme with <u>Advanced Standing</u> and enter directly into a level of a programme other than the first.   |
| FD   | Foundation Degree.  |
| FHEQ   | Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.  |
| General Credit                                 | Credit brought by the student from other institutions or gained via the RPEL process. General credit might be awarded for evidenced 'areas'   |

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
|                   | of learning rather than a precise mapping process (see Specific Credit) against a module or programme   |
| HEI               | Higher Education Institution.   |
| HNC               | Higher National Certificate.  |
| HND               | Higher National Diploma.  |
| Learning Outcomes | These are descriptors of the knowledge, understanding and skills a student should be able to demonstrate following the study of a module or programme.  |
| Level             | The accumulation of modules that equate to a recognised sum of learning, e.g. a full level of an award such as L4, the first year of an undergraduate programme.  |
| Module            | A module is a unit of study attracting a given number of credits at a particular level in direct proportion to the learning time.   |
| Module Leader     | The academic member of staff who is responsible for a named module within one or more programmes.   |
| PGCert            | Postgraduate Certificate.   |
| PGDip             | Postgraduate Diploma.   |
| PSRB              | Professional, Statutory and Regulatory body.  |
| QAA               | QAA is the acronym for the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.   |
| Recognition       | A term to signify the most formalised and widely practised forms of recognition of learning.  |
| RPCL              | The Recognition of Prior <u>Certificated</u> Learning (RPCL) refers to the formal recognition, assessment and award of credit for certificated learning. Certificated learning refers to qualifications or awards gained prior to the current programme of study, from a recognised body and based on a validated process of assessment.  |
| RPEL              | The Recognition of Prior <u>Experiential</u> Learning (RPEL) refers to the formal recognition, assessment and award of credit for experiential learning. Experiential learning may have been gained in specific contexts, including employment and voluntary work, or through general life experience. It refers to learning, derived from experience, which has not been assessed or certificated. |
| RPL               | The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is referring to the formal recognition, assessment and award of credit for all prior learning. It embraces both certificated and experiential learning.   |
| Specific Credit   | Credit awarded for prior recognition of learning which can be clearly mapped against the learning outcomes of a specific module or programme  |
| WBL               | Work-based learning (WBL) is what is learned by working; not studying work but actually undertaking it.   |

|      |  |
|------|--|
| WBLF | The LTU Work-Based Learning Framework (WBLF) allows students to tailor their HE learning experience to suit their individual profile. It consists of an already validated skeleton structure of shell modules at all levels and in varying amounts of credit. The initial module – Learning Review facilitates a self-audit process during which the students plan the remainder of their programme – taking account of their RPL claim. |
|------|--|

1. Advanced Standing A substantial RPL claim may lead to an applicant gaining academic credit for an entire level(s) of a programme enabling them to enter the programme with 'advanced standing'.
2. CertHE Certificate of Higher Education.
3. Credit Credit is awarded to a learner in recognition of the verified achievement of designated learning outcomes at a specified level.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Leeds Trinity University recognises the value of the learning gained from prior experience and formal/informal development opportunities in equipping individuals to benefit from its programmes of study. Applicants for admission claiming credit for advanced standing based on, or including consideration of learning gained in formal and non-formal settings are therefore encouraged as well as those claiming credit for learning they have previously gained by undertaking work activities.

The Recognition of Prior Learning Principles and Guidelines seek to ensure that applicants are admitted to the highest level of award for which they are qualified and for which they wish to apply. They also seek to ensure that applicants are awarded the maximum amount of relevant credit to which they are entitled by recognition of their prior learning achievements, via whichever route used.

## 2. THE DEFINITION OF THE RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

### 2.1. The definition adopted in these Principles and Guidelines is that:

*The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a generic and all-encompassing term referring to the formal recognition, demonstration, and assessment of prior learning and achievement.*

There are two distinctive types of RPL:

- i. Recognition of prior certificated learning (RPCL)
- ii. Recognition of prior experiential learning (RPEL)

Leeds Trinity University accepts the principles of RPL and utilises it as both an activity performed at the point of admissions, performed by academic and/or admissions staff competent in the process in order to offer advanced standing to prospective students, but also as a process which can be utilised after admission in order to allow students to progress more quickly in their studies by awarding them credit for previous relevant learning which they can evidence. When used as an admissions tool RPL is most often certificated, when used after admission it is usually a mixture of both certificated and experiential. LTU strongly believes that students should not be expected to duplicate learning.

### 2.2. Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL)

Typically, RPCL allows applicants to gain admission to a programme through Advanced Standing and/or gain exemption from some taught modules through credit award or credit transfer.

Prior certificated learning is usually gained from structured, formal courses of study that have already been assessed and for which certification has been awarded by an educational provider such as a HEI, an FE college, private training provider or professional body. (A database of recognised non-University awarding bodies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is regularly updated by [Ofqual](#)).

There are two main categories of RPCL:

**(i) RPCL for prior learning on relevant national HE qualifications frameworks**

Prior certificated learning is often UK degree awards such as a Certificate in Higher Education (CertHE), Diploma in Higher Education (DipHE) or Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) which are in accordance with the FHEQ.

Requests for RPCL sometimes arise when applicants have withdrawn from their previous programme, decided to change their field of study or wish to continue studying at a higher level than what they have previously achieved, for example those who were awarded a PGCert choose to continue their studies at a later point to achieve a Masters award. As these awards are typically awarded through a UK HE provider, it allows claims for certificated learning to be made through **credit transfer** (often in the form of Advanced Standing).

RPCL can occur as a student completes an award such as a Foundation Degree (FD) DipHE or a Higher National Diploma (HND) and wishes to continue to study towards a corresponding Honours Degree. This is a form of Advanced Standing (see section 3.5 RPL for Advanced Standing).

RPCL will only be validated if the prior learning in question can be deemed to have sufficient relevance to the proposed new learning programme, as well as being achieved within the last 5 years. (Sometimes this age stipulation is waived if the candidate can adequately evidence that they have been using and building upon the learning from their previous certificated qualification, typically through their work activities. This evidence could take the form of a short narrative reinforced by salient artefacts, for example).

**(ii) PCL for prior learning not on relevant national HE qualifications frameworks**

These are often professional or employment-based awards which may not be positioned on HE qualification frameworks (such as the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications – FHEQ) or carry the credits that awards positioned on the FHEQ typically do. These will be considered on an individual basis through a process of mapping the prior learning to the learning outcomes required for those part of the programme for which the applicant is seeking exemption through RPL.

### **2.3. Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL)**

Often considered as informal or non-formal learning, prior experiential learning may have been achieved through life and work experiences such as community-based learning; workplace learning and training; continuing professional development or independent learning.

RPEL can allow applicants to be awarded credit and therefore obtain exemption from some taught modules, but more importantly it can facilitate the award of general credit. This is much more flexible than specific credit and can allow a student to be exempted from large sections of their proposed programme of study – up to 240 credits if appropriate. General credit is awarded because the student can prove their learning in general areas of expertise, at the appropriate level, such as project management, or communication skills.

These skills must be relevant to the proposed new programme of study, but the evidence used to demonstrate them may not precisely map to a specific existing module's outcomes.



LTU's generic level descriptors are used to map the sophistication and difficulty of the learning claimed and the programme leader makes an informed decision as to the relevance of the claim against the coherence of the new programme. General credit will not be accepted on all programmes – for example where very specific outcomes are measured – however, it is widely used in Work-based learning programmes across the UK sector where students are asked to prove the areas where they have gained expertise and knowledge and furthermore the HE level these have reached.

An applicant will need to demonstrate their learning using critical reflection and this is usually presented in the form of a portfolio of evidence which details how the applicant's learning from prior experience proves their achievement of the module(s), programme's or area of learning's learning outcomes, for which they are seeking credit.

The types of experience through which applicants can demonstrate prior experiential (informal) learning include:

- The experience of doing a job (paid or voluntary), or performing a particular role, over a period of time;
- Tasks or projects undertaken at work, through community or voluntary work, or through independent learning;
- 'On-the-job' training, or being mentored;
- A non-credit rated educational or training course, undertaken in community or workplace setting;
- The experience of training, teaching or mentoring others, either formally or informally.

Experiential learning from, or about work is often called work-based learning. Work-based learning recognises the workplace as a site of knowledge production; with new learning arising from authentic activity and the practitioner's ability to solve the real problems of their work context. The RPEL process allows such learning to be recognised and accredited at HE level, where appropriate.

## **2.4 RPL for the purpose of admission only for entry to the beginning of a programme of study**

Leeds Trinity University encourages applicants to apply for programmes based on, or including consideration or learning that has taken place in formal and non-formal settings.

RPL may therefore be used as the basis for consideration of applicants to LTU programmes who do not meet the stated entry requirements in full. In these instances the admissions tutor will assess the applicant based on an interview and/or written assessment. The outcome will be advised to the Admissions Office on a completed RPCL form, who will contact the applicant. The admission with RPL will be noted on the student's record.

## **3. HOW CREDIT IS AWARDED FOR RPL PURPOSES**

### **3.1** Decisions about the type and amount of credit awarded for prior learning may be based on certificated outcomes which demonstrate that learning has been assessed (**RPCL**), or may take into account learning from experience that is considered worthy of credit (**RPEL**).

In all cases, credit is awarded for prior learning that can be demonstrated, not for the experience itself. The resulting credit is of equal standing to that awarded to students following a more traditional route to an award.



### 3.2 RPL Credit

Credit can be awarded if prior learning matches the HE learning outcomes within the relevant programme specification. The limit on the number of specific credits normally accepted as RPL is 120 credit points per level up to specified limits per award. (See Section 5.1) Any exception to this would be considered on an individual basis. The recognition of credit will lead to credit transfer.

### 3.3 Credit Transfer

**A credit transfer** occurs if an applicant has studied a similar programme (or component of the programme) to the prospective programme at another UK HE provider and the learning outcomes of both programmes are aligned. The applicant should be able to evidence their pass marks (usually with a transcript), assessment and module content (if applicable).

For a credit transfer to take place, a mapping exercise is undertaken to confirm that the standard achieved is comparable to the Leeds Trinity University programme. Marks recognised through credit transfer (RPCL) are not factored into Leeds Trinity University's award classification (at either undergraduate or postgraduate level). (See Section 7)

Credits awarded in this way would allow the applicant to receive exemption from the modules against which the credit has been mapped.

Example: an applicant admitted to the BA (Hons) Business and Enterprise makes an RPCL claim for two Level 4 modules in Business having previously studied and completed an Institute of Leadership and Management Award at an appropriate level. A successful claim would allow the applicant to receive an exemption from studying these two modules.

### 3.4 Advanced Standing

Credit transfer applies to individual modules. Advanced Standing applies where a whole level of study is recognised the credit transfer.

Example: where an applicant is admitted onto BA (Hons) Journalism at Level 5 when they demonstrate evidence of learning equivalent to Level 4 through their work as a journalist for a local newspaper or completion of Level 4 in an equivalent or cognate subject at another HEI.

Any applicant considering an RPL claim for a programme with professional accreditation requirements should speak to the Admissions Tutor or Programme Leader during the early stages of the application as recognition of prior credit may be more restrictive than that for other programmes without PSRB requirements.

### 3.5 Internal Transfer

A credit transfer will occur if a student transfers from one programme to another within the University that shares common modules. Marks for these modules will usually stand.

RPL between Leeds Trinity University awards does not usually require the applicant to relinquish any prior awards on conferral of a higher award.

### 3.6 Former student returning to study at Leeds Trinity

The circumstance when a former student may wish to return to undertake further study at Leeds Trinity will usually pertain at postgraduate level, for example having completed a Postgraduate Diploma the applicant now wishes to study for the Masters.

In those circumstances a mapping of curriculum and learning outcomes will be required (as per any other RPL application). For the previous learning to be recognised it will have to have been undertaken within 5 years of the application (see 5.2) and be in a relevant subject. The applicant will not be required to relinquish any higher awards on conferral of a higher award.

Specific arrangements for the MA Education are as follows.

If an applicant has previously studied on an initial teacher-training programme at Leeds Trinity they may already have Masters level credits that can count towards the MA in Education. For example:

- They may have studied the Secondary PGCert programme and so have 30 credits that will allow them to claim exemption from SEDM1133 (Critical Thinking in Secondary Education).
- They may have taken the BA (Hons) Primary Education with QTS programme and gained 30 credits as part of their study at Level 6 which would most likely allow them to claim exemption from SEDM 1033 (Curriculum Development and Change).

Applications under RPL arrangements for the MA Education should be made within 5 years of undertaking the above programmes at Leeds Trinity University, or equivalent elsewhere. As with other RPL, only relevant credit may be recognised, marks from any Masters level modules are not counted in the final award calculation.

### 3.7 RPL for Work-Based Learning programmes

A key difference for the allowance of RPL for Work-based Learning programmes is that any claim for RPL usually (but not exclusively) occurs after enrolment.

As with any other type of RPL restrictions may apply as a result of PSRB requirements.

## 4. AVOIDANCE OF DOUBLE COUNTING OF CREDIT

- 4.1. Applicants can gain credit as part of an RPL assessment for a completed prior award (e.g. a HND, FD) if they are using it to progress to a higher award (e.g. an Honours Degree). Credit for a completed award cannot normally be used towards another award at the same level.

Example: An applicant cannot use an HND to claim a Foundation Degree. They could however, use the HND to gain admission to Level 6 of a Bachelors' Degree.

## 5. HOW MUCH CREDIT CAN BE AWARDED?

- 5.1. Applications can be made for any level of Leeds Trinity award subject to any limitations detailed in the programme specification (including limits imposed by course teams or professional bodies) and as stated below. The smallest amount of credit that can be claimed is 10 credits.

**Definition of Specific Credit:** This is when the prior learning being claimed for recognition directly maps to an existing LTU module. Therefore, for example, if an applicant for credit transfer (i.e. not advanced standing) has already passed a Level 5 Module in Business Ethics at another University and is applying to a BA (Hons.) Business programme which has a similar module against which the already achieved learning outcomes can be mapped – they will get ‘specific credit’ which will be shown on the transcript with the LTU module title. (However, the mark for the module will be shown as a ‘pass’ and not an actual numeric result.)

- The limit on **Specific Credits** for exemption is normally 120 credit points per level.

**Definition of General Credit:** This is when the prior learning being claimed for recognition does not directly map to an existing LTU programme. Instead, the prior learning is mapped against generic outcomes and at LTU this will almost exclusively be in the context of the Work-based Learning Framework which is created around the shell modules which are not subject specific but rather have generic outcomes and descriptors.

- The limit on **General Credits** for exemption is normally 120 credit points per level.
- **The maximum credit claimable through RPL is two thirds of the total credits for a whole award\*.**

- 5.2. Applicants are not obliged to take up or claim the maximum amount of RPL that may be available to them, although the Admissions Tutor/Programme Leader should ensure that the applicant is aware of the opportunity to do so.

Only formal certificated learning that has occurred **up to five years prior** to the start date of the award, **and is in a relevant subject area** will normally be considered.

## 6. IMPACT ON DEGREE CLASSIFICATION AND AWARD OF MERIT OR DISTINCTION

- 6.1. Leeds Trinity awards are calculated only on credit and *numeric* marks achieved at Leeds Trinity. This applies to the calculation for honours, merit or distinction and is applicable to any award – target or fallback.

To be eligible for classification (UG & PGT) one-third of the total credit for the award is the minimum amount of credit which must have been achieved at Leeds Trinity University.

The table shows: Maximum allowable credit on entry and minimum LTU credit required for award.

| Award                      | Maximum RPL credit claimable (two-thirds of total credit) ( <u>Entry point</u> ) | Minimum LTU credit*** required for calculation of award (one-third of total credit) ( <u>Exit point</u> ) |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| Cert. HE (120 credits)     | (not available as target award)  | 40 credits (as fallback)  |
| Dip. HE (240 credits)      | (not available as target award)  | 80 credits (as fallback)  |
| Ordinary (300 credits)     | (not available as target award)  | 100 credits (as fallback)   |
| Bachelors' Degree Honours* | <b>240/360</b>   | 120 credits   |

|                              |                    |            |
|------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Foundation Degree            | <b>160/240</b>     | 80 credits |
| PG Cert                      | <b>40/60</b>       | 20 credits |
| PG Dip                       | <b>80/120</b>      | 40 credits |
| Masters*                     | <b>120/180</b>     | 60 credits |
| <b>WBL Awards**</b>          |                    |            |
| Certificate                  | RPL not applicable | -          |
| Cert. HE                     | <b>80/120</b>      | 40 credits |
| Diploma                      | <b>120/180</b>     | 60 credits |
| Diploma of HE                | <b>160/240</b>     | 80 credits |
| Professional Diploma         | RPL not applicable | -          |
| Advance Professional Diploma | RPL not applicable | -          |

\*No RPL credit will be awarded for the final extended project or dissertation element of an undergraduate or Masters programme.

\*\*These are not target awards outside of the WBL Framework.

\*\*\*At the highest academic level within the award.

## 7. IMPACT ON FULL-TIME / PART-TIME STATUS

- 7.1. If RPL is given for less than an entire level then it is likely that full-time applicants will have to undertake part-time mode to allow them to complete the level within the modular calendar.

The student will be registered 'on a full-time programme studying in part-time mode'.

For WBLF students it is likely that most of these will be studying on a part-time basis.

- 7.2. For applicants in receipt of a student loan, part-time status will have an impact on their eligibility to access this loan and, for example, exemption from council tax and if RPL is given retrospectively (i.e. after registration) this may result in the applicant having to pay back all or part of a student loan. The full implications for RPL should be discussed with potential applicants.

## 8. PROCEDURES RPL CLAIMS

### 8.1. RPL at the point of Admission (not WBL).

The procedure differs slightly depending on whether the claim is for RPEL or RPCL and whether this takes place at the point of application or once enrolled on a programme:

Point of application (prior to enrolment)

- a. Applicant RPCL
- b. Applicant RPEL

On programme (post enrolment)

- a. Student RPCL and RPEL

### 8.2. Applicant RPCL

Admissions request proof of qualifications and then forward the application to the Admissions Tutor/Programme Leader who signs off approval/rejection and returns the decision to Admissions who notify the applicant of the outcome in writing.

The approved claim is then passed to the Student Records Officer to be added to SITS after the student has registered.

### **8.3. Applicant RPEL**

The applicant consults with the relevant member of academic staff (usually the Programme Leader) and submits supporting evidence at point of application (see section 11.2)

The Admissions Team forward the application and its supporting evidence to the RPEL Panel that considers the application. The RPEL Panel signs off the approval/rejection and returns the application to Admissions who notifies the applicant of the outcome in writing.

The approved claim is then passed to the Student Records Officer to be added to SITS after the student has registered.

In both instances the Student Record will show the RPL credit given which will form part of the assessment record presented to Progression & Award Board of Examiners.

### **8.4. Student RPCL and RPEL – as assessment**

RPL for a student already enrolled on a programme is treated as a matter of assessment for the purposes of credit (not marks) and the usual internal assessment and standardisation processes apply to ensure that successful claims are recorded, are externally examined, and form a part of the evidence base that is used to approve award of credits and full certification. It is essential to treat evidence of successful RPL claims in the same way as traditional evidence for the purposes of assessment and student achievement.

In summary, the process is as follows:

The Programme Leader/designated member of academic staff\* requests evidence of the prior learning being claimed be this certificated learning and/or experiential learning (for which the evidence as in Section 10.3 will be required).

The Programme Leader/member of staff will undertake an assessment of the RPL evidence and the learning demonstrated against the learning outcomes of the module/programme and will make a judgement as to the amount of credit which can be RPL'd. The Programme Leader completes the Recognition of Prior Learning Claim form and forwards it, together with the evidence to the Academic Administration Office. The RPL claims will be submitted to the relevant Assessment Panel for consideration and approval or rejection. (Special note: Learning outcomes which are RPL'd are within the remit for moderation by External Examiners therefore RPL claims and their associated evidence should be made available to External Examiners if requested.) The Student Records Team will be informed of the outcome who will inform the student of the application outcome via e:Vision.

*\*If the claim is for Study Abroad, the Recognition of Prior Learning Claim is completed by Student Administration.*

### **8.5 Work-based Learning Framework RPL Claim**

WBLF students submit a claim for credit, in the form of a portfolio, which will include RPCL and/or RPEL evidence through the first module on their programme 'Learning Review'.

This RPL is therefore embedded into the module's assessment and is considered in accordance with the same arrangements as in 8.4 above, that is through the normal processes for consideration of assessment outcomes, including submission to relevant Assessment Panel and Progression & Award Board of Examiners meetings. (See also 12.1)

## 9. PROVIDING GUIDANCE FOR RPL CLAIMS

- 9.1. The advice and guidance required by RPL applicants will vary from case to case. As a general guide, it is anticipated that the support needs of applicants for RPCL for entry at the beginning of the programme could be met in a single conversation with Admissions simply through consideration of relevant evidence, such as certificates and academic references.

For claims involving RPCL on programme, or RPEL, further engagement between applicant/student and the appropriate member of academic staff would be expected.

### 9.2. RPCL Claims

Detailed advice can be provided by a designated Admissions Tutor/Programme Leader or other member of academic staff<sup>1</sup> which in more complex cases may be the responsibility of the relevant Academic Group Lead.

This member of academic staff:

1. Identifies what certificated learning achievements in the last five years the prospective applicant is seeking credit for, and within which named programme;
2. Discusses with the applicant the types of evidence that will need to be provided, e.g. certificates, transcripts, references;
3. Advises the applicant on the potential impact on their award classification as a consequence of RPL;
4. Completes and submits the formal application for RPCL on the applicants' behalf in liaison with Admissions.

### 9.3. RPEL Claims

Giving detailed advice will usually be the responsibility of the relevant Admissions Tutor or Programme Leader<sup>1</sup> and, where necessary, other academic colleagues.

The member of academic staff:

- Identifies what learning achievements the prospective applicant is seeking credit for and within which named programme;
- Discusses with the applicant how their experiential learning is or is not relevant to the module or level learning outcomes for which they are seeking credit. Where there is a gap the applicant may be advised to complete a piece of work to be included in their submission portfolio, or in lieu of a portfolio;
- Discusses with the applicant how experiential learning might best be evidenced and where applicable the types of evidence needed;

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<sup>1</sup> In cases where National Occupational Standards and/or Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) are involved the member of academic staff **must** be suitably qualified.



- Encourages the applicant to **reflect and self-evaluate** their prior experience and recognise the learning;
- Determines the appropriate method(s) to be utilised to assess the applicant's experiential learning;
- Offers guidance on completing and submitting the formal application for RPEL, or where applicable a combination of RPEL and RPCL.

## 10. THE RPEL PORTFOLIO

10.1. For a request for RPEL which is not through WBLF, the claimant:

- Produces a portfolio as set out below;
- Revises their portfolio, as required, on advice of the Admissions Tutor/Programme Leader or other member of academic staff;
- Informs the nominated academic member of staff of any difficulties in meeting deadlines as soon as possible.

Evidence of prior experiential learning achievement is frequently drawn from a combination of direct evidence (reports, drawings, presentations etc.) and indirect evidence (testimonials, witness statements etc.).

Indirect evidence is important for verification purposes, but cannot on its own be enough. Similarly, a verbal or written list of activities undertaken by the applicant will not suffice. The applicant must provide clear evidence of learning achievements which is demonstrably their own.

10.2 For a request for RPL, through WBLF, the claimant:

Undertakes the Learning Review module and prepares a credit claim via a portfolio of evidence – guided by the module leader – as part of the module's assessment.

### 10.3. RPEL Portfolio Contents

Applicants need to carefully consider how to present their evidence of prior learning achievements. While there is no set format for this, it is suggested that a portfolio includes the following:

- A completed RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING CLAIM FORM;
- A contents list;
- A statement of authenticity;
- A brief curriculum vitae or autobiography to put the claim in context;
- Current or past job descriptions.
- Any additional work recommended by the Admissions Tutor/Programme Leader to bridge gaps in meeting learning outcomes of the module(s)/level for which they are seeking credit;
- A reflective report demonstrating how, through their analytical/reflective commentary, their prior experiences have resulted in learning and how that learning is relevant to the learning outcomes of the module(s)/level for which they are seeking credit;
- An appendix comprising appropriate documentary evidence to support the learning claimed.

In identifying appropriate evidence, the applicant should be advised to bear the following points in mind:

- Evidence for experiential learning may largely consist of the reflective report itself. For example, if the reflective report centres on some activity in the work place, the ability to reflect on and evaluate learning from these experiences will be evidenced by the text itself, with documentary evidence being confined to, say, confirmation that the activity took place and the part the applicant played in it;
- A single piece of evidence may be relevant to more than one learning outcome. A comprehensive report, for example, may provide a major source of evidence for their claim and be relevant to a number of learning outcomes;
- They should be selective about their documentary evidence selecting concise clear examples;
- Documentary evidence might include; witness statements from employers/ customers/colleagues, supporting letters from managers, job performance reviews, examples of their own work;
- Whenever possible the submission should include some third party evidence to corroborate their learning.

For WBLF claimants, further detailed guidance is provided to students of the WBLF via tutorials and the module handbook.

#### **10.4 Assessing the RPEL Claim**

Assessment of prior experiential learning is subject to the same principles of academic judgement that govern all Leeds Trinity assessments. Evidence presented in support of an RPEL claim must satisfy the criteria of CRAGS:

✓ *Current*

Is the learning recent or has it been updated recently? It must represent the applicant's present knowledge and abilities.

✓ *Relevant*

Is the learning relevant to the programme against which the applicant is claiming?

✓ *Authentic*

Is there clear evidence that the learning evidenced is that of the applicant?

✓ *Good quality*

Is the learning equivalent to the level(s) for which the applicant is claiming?

✓ *Sufficient*

Is there sufficient evidence to support the applicant's claim?

### **11. TIMESCALES FOR RPL CLAIMS**

#### **11.1 For new admissions to LTU**

The RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING CLAIM FORM will normally be completed on the applicant's behalf by the Admissions Team working with relevant academic staff. Evidence to support the claim may be requested.

- Claims for RPCL or RPEL or combination of both should normally be made as early in the application process as possible and prior to the commencement on programme.
- Applicants seeking RPL for undergraduate programmes and applying through UCAS, are recommended to align their application with the usual UCAS application deadline of 15 January.
- Applicants may be provisionally registered on the modules for which they are seeking RPL pending the completion of their application if the process has not been completed prior to registration however, there may be implications regarding full-time and part-time status and impact on fees and funding for the applicant in these circumstances which need to be made known to the applicant;
- An RPCL claim can normally be processed in 10 working days.
- An RPEL claim normally takes significantly longer and at least six weeks should be allowed for the preparation of the claim and its assessment.

## 11.2 For students enrolled on the Work-based learning framework

These students will enrol on the Learning Review module of the Framework and in this module create their credit claim. The result of this will be that the students then know which other modules they need to complete in order to finish their programme.

## 12. ASSESSING THE CLAIM

Assessment of prior learning is subject to the same principles of academic judgement that govern all Leeds Trinity assessments. The assessment of RPL claims is the sole prerogative of academic members of staff<sup>2</sup>. These assessor(s) will have subject expertise relevant to the specific credit claimed.

For the award of specific credit (5.1.i): when assessing a claim based upon module equivalence, the applicants' prior learning should be mapped directly to the learning outcomes of the individual modules that comprise the programme.

For the award of general credit (5.1.ii): the applicant must evidence the learning outcomes of the WBLF modules in question and/or<sup>3</sup> the generic LTU level descriptors. It would be inequitable to expect significantly higher levels of achievement for RPL claimants than the threshold for students enrolled upon the equivalent taught programme. However, in some subject areas, particularly where issues of competence arise, care must be taken to thoroughly evidence achievement.

When assessing a claim for advanced standing based on a whole level(s) of a programme, the claimant's previous certificated and experiential learning should be mapped directly to the learning outcomes as stated in the programme specification. QAA Subject Benchmark Statements may also be used as a point of reference together with Qualifications Frameworks and the Leeds Trinity University generic level descriptors.

The WBLF claims for credit will be initially assessed by the module tutor and then moderated by the programme leader, who will seek specific expert advice if needed.

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<sup>2</sup> In cases where National Occupational Standards and/or Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) are involved the member of academic staff **must** be suitably qualified.

<sup>3</sup> When general credit is not being claimed in connection with the WBLF.

## 12.1. Procedures for Assessment (See also Section 8.4)

### (i) RPCL Claims – applicant prior to enrolment

The relevant Admissions Tutor/Programme Leader<sup>3</sup> either acts as the assessor, or if it is considered more appropriate, nominates an academic colleague<sup>6</sup> to undertake the assessment. The assessor will:

- Determine the specific academic credit to be approved in respect of a named programme;
- Record the decision on the RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING CLAIM FORMS<sup>4</sup>;
- Return the application form to:
  - Admissions for **applicant** RPCL, or,
  - Student Records for **student** RPCL claims.

### (ii) RPEL Claims – applicant prior to enrolment

An RPEL Admissions Panel<sup>5</sup> is convened and Chaired by the Head of Academic Quality. The RPEL Admissions Panel comprises the Admissions Tutor and/or Programme Leader together with an academic assessor<sup>6</sup>, not previously involved in the application. A record of the panel's deliberations is made.

The RPEL Panel will take into account guidance presented within these Principles and Guidelines and ascertain whether evidence presented in support of an RPEL claims satisfies the criteria of [CRAGS](#).

The outcomes of the RPEL Panel will result in the following:

- A determination of the specific academic credit to be awarded in respect of a named programme;
- If required, an annotated portfolio, particularly where the evidence is rather weak, showing shortfalls and suggesting ways in which it might be remedied;
- A record of the decision on the RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING CLAIM FORMS, signed and dated by the Programme Leader;
- Communication of the outcome to the applicant via Admissions Team.
- Retention by the Programme Leader (whenever feasible) of the RPEL evidence (or copies thereof) so that it is available to the External Examiner if so required.

### (iii) RPEL Claims – student on programme

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<sup>4</sup> There are two forms: WBL RPL Claim Form and General RPL Claim Form (for everything not WBL).

<sup>5</sup> RPEL Admissions Panel considers RPEL Applicant non-WBLF cases only.

<sup>6</sup> In cases where National Occupational Standards and/or Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) are involved the member of academic staff **must** be suitably qualified.

The relevant Module Tutor/Programme Leader<sup>3</sup> either acts as the assessor, or if it is considered more appropriate, nominates an academic colleagues to undertake the assessment. The assessor will:

- Determine the specific academic credit to be approved in respect of a named programme;
- Record the decision on the relevant RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING CLAIM FORMS;
- Return the application form and evidence to the Academic Administration Officer;
- The AAO will present the RPEL claim to the next appropriate Panel of Examiners meeting.
- The decision of the Assessment Panel will be reported to the Progression and Award Board for confirmation.
- The outcome will be reported to the student by Student Records via e:Vision.

#### **(iv) RPL Claims - WBLF**

For WBL Framework claims the module tutor and/or programme leader:

- Determine the specific academic credit to be approved in respect of a named programme;
- Record the decision on the relevant RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING CLAIM FORMS;
- Return the application form as part of the module assessment for the Learning Review Module
- The WBLF administration team will present the RPEL claim to the next appropriate Assessment Panel meeting.
- The decision of the Assessment Panel will be reported to the Progression and Award Board for confirmation.
- The outcome will be reported to the student by Student Records via e:Vision.

### **13. PROCESSING OUTCOMES**

#### **13.1.** The Admissions Team and/or Student Records Team will:

Verify that the decision has been recorded appropriately, and is consistent with the *Guidelines and Procedures for Recognition of Prior Learning*, referring the claim back, in the first instance, to the Admissions Tutor/Programme Leader in the case of any discrepancies;

#### **13.2** The Admissions Team for applicants, prior to enrolment will:

- Advise the applicant formally in writing of the decision;
- Record the decision in the RPL Monitoring Report.

The Student Administration Team students on programme, post enrolment will:

- Advise the claimant of the assessment outcome through e:Vision;
- Input all successful claims for RPL on the Leeds Trinity Student Records System (SITS). Credit assigned upon the basis of module equivalences will be represented by the appropriate module(s) together with an indication that credit has been assigned through RPL. This manner of recording will enable RPL claims to be reported to Boards of Examiners.
- Credit awarded to WBLF students for RPEL should name the 'Areas of Learning'.

## **14. PROCEDURE FOR APPEAL**

**14.1.** It is anticipated that the ready availability of guidance notes, combined with appropriate staff support, will ensure that most applicants who proceed to make a formal claim for RPL do so with some reasonable expectation of a successful outcome. Nevertheless, there may be cases where the assessment decision is unfavourable to the applicant. In these circumstances, post RPL guidance will be available, on request, from the relevant RPL Tutor, who will:

- Explain to the applicant the reason(s) for the assessment decision;
- Review the applicant's claim in terms of the evidentiary requirements for currency, relevance, authenticity, good quality and sufficiency;
- Consider with the applicant the possibility of resubmission and, where appropriate, offer advice and guidance on improving the claim;
- Offer the applicant referral for more general academic guidance where resubmission seems advisable;
- In situations where the applicant is still not satisfied with the outcome, advise on the Academic Appeals Procedure.

## **15. ADMINISTRATION OF CLAIMS**

### **15.1 Recording - Student Records and Transcripts**

When an RPL claim has been assessed and approved, and the applicant notified of the decision, the Administrative Team<sup>7</sup> will ensure that a record of the RPL agreed, the finalised RPL claim form and a record of the outcome communication are placed on the student's file. Where credit has been awarded, this will be entered on the Student Records System (SITS) in one of three ways by being:

1. Attached to one or more specific modules within a named programme;
2. Attached to a designated RPL module code in the case of credit awarded for a complete level of an award.
3. Listed as 'Areas of Learning' for which general credit has been awarded via RPEL

Entry onto the Student Records System (SITS) ensures that credits gained through RPL, as well as those achieved through Leeds Trinity study, are presented to Programme & Award Board of Examiners to enable the processing and ratification of results to take place.

Transcripts are provided on completion for all students that will include all credit awarded through RPL for both individual modules, complete level(s) and areas of learning (general credit).

### **15.2 Recording for Monitoring Purposes**

From time-to-time reports on RPL may be required to provide information to Schools/University management on the number and type of RPL claims and to update Schools on RPL activity at regular intervals.

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<sup>7</sup> For applicant RPL this will be Admissions Team. Where RPL has been treated as assessment this will be Student Records Team.

## 16 STUDENT FUNDING AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

An application for RPCL or RPEL may have implications on student funding and financial support arrangements. Applicants for RPL should be directed by the RPL Tutor to contact the Student Adviser on [e.quirke@leedstrinity.ac.uk](mailto:e.quirke@leedstrinity.ac.uk) / 0113 283 7173 for advice on how it may affect them financially.

## **17 QUALITY ASSURANCE**

### **17.1. Annual Academic Review**

The Head of School has particular quality assurance responsibilities with regard to the following:

- For monitoring RPL activity and discussing any programme specific issues with programme staff;
- Receive a summary report of RPL drawn from SITS on an annual basis to contribute to Annual Academic Review;
- Comment on the volume and nature of RPL activity (including that associated with collaborative arrangements and distributed learning modes of delivery as appropriate) in Annual Academic Review (or equivalent) taking into account any issues raised by the External Examiner(s);
- Inform Admissions of any RPL related issues, concerns or developmental needs which may need to be raised and addressed on an institutional basis.

### **17.2 Assessment Panel**

Prior to the relevant Assessment Panel the nominated External Examiner(s) should have access to:

- A representative sample of RPEL evidentiary material for those applicants on the named programme (s);
- The External Examiner(s) will not have the authority to change individual decisions regarding RPL claims, but may wish to comment on matters of principle or procedure, or raise issues both positive and negative, in the Examiner's report. Procedures for responding to issues identified in this way will be those normally applied to any issues highlighted in External Examiner reports.

### **17.3 Institutional Level**

The Head of Academic Quality will identify any issues for institutional attention arising from Annual Academic Review. Through the Academic Quality Office, these Guidelines and Procedures will be reviewed periodically and substantive changes considered as required through appropriate forum such as the WBLF Approvals Panel, Learning and Teaching Committee and/or Planning Committee which have delegated institutional oversight for academic quality assurance systems and processes and the admissions policy respectively.

## **18 DOCUMENTATION**

The following documents are associated with the RPL process:

- WBL RPL Claim Form
- General RPL Claim Form (for General and/or Specific Credit)
- Student Guide to WBL – Recognition of Prior Learning
- Student Guide to RPCL – Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning
- Student Guide to RPEL – Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning

The forms are available through admissions web page.



## **APPENDIX 1 – Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) for Entry onto Pre-registration Nursing programmes**

### **1. Background**

The Faculty of Social and Health Sciences has a range of programmes in which RPL/RPEL may be regularly used to gain entry on to one of its NMC-accredited undergraduate nursing programmes. The purpose of this appendix to the RPL Guidelines and Procedures is to:

- i) Ensure that Leeds Trinity University's regulations for the accreditation of certificated and experiential learning are upheld as appropriate.
- ii) Ensure that applications for RPL/RPEL in NMC approved programmes are conducted in line with the requirements of the regulatory body with oversight from the Faculty of Social and Health Sciences
- iii) Support the achievement of validity, currency, sufficiency and authenticity when making RPL judgements for direct applications and RPEL related to NMC regulated learning programmes

### **2. Programmes covered by this policy**

- BSc (Hons) Adult Nursing
- BSc (Hons) Learning Disabilities Nursing
- BSc (Hons) Mental Health Nursing

### **Pre-registration nursing programme - BSc (Hons) Nursing (ROUTE)**

#### **3. Context**

**3.1** Pre-registration nursing programmes are required by the NMC to permit recognition of prior learning that is capable of being mapped to the Standards of Proficiency for registered nurses and the programme outcomes to a maximum of 50% of the programme.

**3.2** The exception to the 50% maximum is when a nurse currently registered with the NMC, applies to undertake further pre-registration training to achieve a second nursing qualification in an alternative field of practice. In this circumstance the NMC expect that recognition of prior learning that is capable of being mapped to the Standards of Proficiency for registered nurses and programme outcomes which may be more than 50% of the programme.

**3.3** The NMC requirement to restrict RPL to 50% of the maximum of the programme is less than the maximum amount of two thirds of the programme allowed by the university. Therefore, an exemption to regulations is necessary for the BSc (Hons) Nursing (ROUTE) programmes.

#### **Process for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Certificated and Experiential Learning (RPEL)**

#### **4.0 Direct Entry onto the BSc (Hons) Nursing (ROUTE) for non- registered nurse applicants (available for entry: Level 4 (January 2024), Level 5 (January 2025), Level 6 (January 2026)).**

**4.1** Applicants who have successfully completed certificate level studies (120 credits at HE Level) on a pre-registration graduate nursing programme in another NMC approved AEI or who have

previously successfully studied a Foundation Degree Nurse Associate programme may apply for transfer / direct entry onto the BSc (Hons) Nursing (ROUTE) programme.

**4.2** Applicants must also meet all the normal academic and professional entry requirements of the BSC(Hons) Degree (ROUTE) programme for RPL to be considered. Academic entry requirements must be achieved before any consideration of RPL is undertaken. Any offer is conditional on the achievement on the achievement of all values, health, character, numeracy, literacy and digital capability admissions requirements. This must include a character reference from the prior institution including the reason for exiting the programme and indication of any outstanding Fitness for Practice enquiries.

**4.3** Applications for RPL via University admissions will be referred to the admissions team. In addition to the normal entry academic and professional programme entry requirements, the applicant will be required to provide a transcript of study from their prior institution including number of theoretical and practice hours and the theoretical and clinical assessment previously undertaken.

**4.4** Direct applicants to the degree will not be considered.

**4.5** In line with the University's RPL policy and processes, there must be an appropriate match in both level and content between the applicant's previous studies and the BSc (Hons) Nursing (Adult) Nursing indicated programme outcomes. This includes mapping to the relevant NMC proficiencies using the approved mapping document. The Academic Lead for Nursing will review the application to ensure that learning derived from the previous study is equivalent to that of the identified programme learning outcomes

**4.6** The applicant will normally have completed their first year of certificated nursing study in the previous five years. Experienced registered nurse associates who meet the entry requirements will be considered after this 5-year period but will be required to present both a certificated and experiential claim.

**4.7** The applicant is required to provide sufficient evidence of the previous certificated study and practice experience to support their request for direct entry. For example, through an academic transcript of completed study, course curriculum and assessments and the approved clinical assessment document. **Where relevant, experiential learning can be recorded and demonstrated in an e-portfolio such as Pebblepad or in written form as needed.**

**4.8** Two references will be required including one academic and character reference from the prior AEI.

**4.9** Once all evidence has been provided, a member of the Admissions Team will review and cross reference the evidence provided to:

- i) Level 4 programme outcomes
- ii) the approved mapping document for NMC Standards of Proficiency for Registered Nurses and
- iii) Application of theoretical learning across the four fields of practice

**4.10** If an individual is already a Registered Nurse on the NMC register in a different field of practice than adult (Learning Disability, Mental Health, Child) then a check is required to ensure that they are active on the NMC register for that field, as a mechanism of checking their suitability to get RPL onto second registration programmes.

If they are not on the register in the one field of practice, they would need to do a 'Return to Practice' programme first then apply for RPL onto the adult programme to gain a second field registration.

## **APPENDIX 2 – Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) for Entry onto BSc Biomedical Science**

### **1. Background**

The purpose of this appendix to the RPL Guidelines and Procedures is to:

- i) Ensure that Leeds Trinity University's regulations for the accreditation of certificated and experiential learning are upheld as appropriate.
- ii) Ensure that applications for RPL/RPEL in IBMS approved programmes are conducted in line with the requirements of the regulatory body with oversight from the Faculty of Health, Wellness and Life Sciences.
- iii) Support the achievement of validity, currency, sufficiency and authenticity when making RPL judgements for direct applications and RPEL related to IBMS accredited programme.

### **2. Process for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Certificated and Experiential Learning (RPEL)**

**2.0 Direct Entry onto BSc (Hons) Biomedical Science (available for entry: Level 5 (September 2025)).** Direct entry, with recognition or accreditation of 240 credits from another programme, to level 6 will not be permitted.

**2.1** Applicants who have successfully completed the appropriate level of studies (120 credits at HE Level 4 for Level 5 entry) on another IBMS accredited programme or a programme that maps to both the programme Level 4 learning outcomes and QAA subject benchmark statement for Biomedical Science may apply for transfer / direct entry onto the BSc (Hons) Biomedical Science programme.

**2.2** Applicants must also meet all the normal academic and professional entry requirements of the BSc (Hons) Biomedical Science programme for RPL to be considered. Academic entry requirements must be achieved before any consideration of RPL is undertaken.

**2.3** Applications for RPL via University admissions will be referred to the admissions team. In addition to the normal entry academic and professional programme entry requirements, the applicant will be required to provide a transcript of study from their prior institution including information confirming the either the programme's accreditation through the IBMS or Level 4 mapping to the QAA subject benchmark statement for Biomedical Science.

**2.4** Direct applicants to the degree will not be considered, all applications must be made through UCAS.

**2.5** In line with the University's RPL policy and processes, the applicant will normally have completed their study in the previous five years and there must be an appropriate match in both level and content between the applicant's previous studies and the BSc (Hons) Biomedical Science indicated programme outcomes. The Academic Lead for Biomedical Science will review the application to ensure that learning derived from the previous study is equivalent to that of the identified programme learning outcomes, mapping the content of both programmes.

**2.6** The applicant is required to provide sufficient evidence of the previous certificated study to support their request for direct entry. For example, through an academic transcript of completed study, course curriculum and assessments.

**2.7** Once all evidence has been provided, where the study is complete and where the content maps, an unconditional offer will be made by the Admissions team. Where study is ongoing, any offer will be conditional, ensuring that the applicant achieves all required credits.