

ARDEN UNIVERSITY QUALITY ASSURANCE DOCUMENT QA 6 – RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the process through which a student may be given formal recognition for learning achieved prior to their admission to the programme for which they are applying. RPL is used for exemption from a particular module(s) of a programme. Where prior learning is used to inform an admissions decision so relates to fulfilling entry criteria, this will be regulated by Arden University Admissions policies relevant to the specific programme. This policy is to be used where exemption is to be applied to module(s) and credit.

Provision for conferring exemption under these regulations applies to both Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL) and Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL).

Students may be admitted to the University with accredited prior learning where they have previously successfully completed relevant study at higher education level, in the UK or abroad. Students may also be admitted with accredited experiential learning based on relevant prior learning which has occurred outside a formal course of study, which may include in-company training or relevant work experience.

Responsibility for exercising these regulations may be delegated by Academic Board to an appropriate sub-committee.

General Principles

2. To receive an Arden University award, a student must study at least one third of the total required credits for the award, except for Degree Apprenticeships which must study a half (50%) of the award with the University. This means that credit previously achieved on conferred awards at lower levels to the award for which the student is applying, or on incomplete programmes, may be used for RPCL up to a maximum of two thirds of the credits required for the award, subject to any professional body requirements.
3. The minimum number of credits students must study and pass on their current course at Arden University are detailed below;

Qualification	Minimum credits required (from current course)
Bachelor’s Degree (including Joint Honours & Single Honours)	120 credits at level 6 including dissertation/project
Bachelor’s Degree Top-up (120 credits)	All credits must be studied and passed, no RPL permitted
Certificate of Higher Education	40 credits at level 4
Diploma of Higher Education	80 credits at level 5

Master's Degree	80 credits at level 7 including dissertation/project
Master's Degree Top-up	All credits must be studied and passed, no RPL permitted
Postgraduate Certificate	20 credits at level 7
Postgraduate Diploma	40 credits at level 7
University statements of credit	All credits must be studied and passed, no RPL permitted

4. Exemption will not be granted for Arden University Level 6 modules.
5. The Applicant and Student record will reflect where RPL has been applied and identify the specific modules exempt. The Arden University academic transcripts will indicate if an award which has been conferred includes RPL and will list modules against which the exemptions have been applied.
6. Students who seek admission to a programme with RPCL or RPEL are not permitted to register onto the course until such exemptions have been approved in writing.
7. Apprentices who seek admission to a programme with RPCL or RPEL (exemptions against the appropriate Apprenticeship standard Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs)) are not permitted to register onto the apprenticeship until such exemptions have been approved in writing and funding adjustments agreed.
8. Following admission, if a student subsequently discovers that they may have met the learning outcomes of modules, they may apply for RPCL or RPEL of those modules, provided that they have not previously been awarded credit exemptions for the prior learning being used for the new APCL claim. These late claims may only be made for individual modules, not to entire levels of programmes, and may **not** be made during the first 60 credits of study with Arden University.
9. Any marks or grades associated with the previous study and/or RPL will not be individually recorded and are excluded from the final classification calculations of an Arden University award, unless within the provisions of paragraph 14 below.
10. Modules which have been awarded a compensated or condoned pass will not be accepted for RPCL against an equivalent module.
11. Registration periods for students admitted with Recognition for Prior Learning and for students who choose to amend their mode of attendance will be calculated *pro rata*. These registration periods will be recorded on the student record.
12. The currency of learning will be considered when applying for RPL. For example, qualifications older than five years, will require further evidence that knowledge has been kept up to date through Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and/or Learning. Currency is very dependent on the subject to be determined by academic staff in liaison with applicant as to whether proposed learning is within acceptable timeframes. (Refer to paragraph 18 for additional information.)

Use of credits / double counting

13. Once credit has been used towards a qualification and an award given then the credit cannot usually be used again towards another qualification unless the transfer of credit would result in a student building on or broadening their learning.
14. The same prior learning credits may not be reused, double counted, towards more than one module or programme.

Process for consideration and approval of RPL claims – General

15. RPL decisions will be evaluated by an Admissions Tutor, who is able to provide the necessary support and guidance to facilitate students through the RPL process. In this capacity, the role of the Admissions Tutor includes:
 - a. Providing information and advice on all matters relating to RPL, to support Arden University Admissions and Recruitment Teams in communications with students.
 - b. Responsible for the final RPL decisions, determining which Arden University modules are required to be completed and confirmation of exempted modules.

RPCL claims

16. RPCL claim documentation, approved by the Admissions Committee, must be completed in respect of any RPCL claim. **(RPCL application form – Annex 1)** Recruitment Advisors will be responsible for the completion of these templates and collating documentation. The admissions team will make an initial assessment of the suitability, however **the final approval of the RPCL application must be provided by an Admissions Tutor**. The RPCL form will list all modules exempted and indicate the rationale for the exemption, and the provenance of the credits utilised. All certification will be held on the University's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.

The following general principles are provided for guidance:

- a. Prior learning must be clearly shown to be current; sufficient in terms of credit volume (minimum of 50% of Arden module credit), authentic, relevant and valid;
- b. Currency normally requires that the prior learning is no more than 5 years, see paragraph 16;
- c. A student cannot receive exemptions in excess of the credits presented for RPCL; prior learning at Level 4 may, in some circumstances, be used to exempt against Arden Level 5. Level 5 modules may be used for exemption against similar level 4 Arden modules. However, total exemptions at Level 5 must not exceed the prior learning evidenced at that level. For example, a student with 200 credits at Level 4 and 20 credits at Level 5 could receive maximum RPL of 120 credits at Level 4 and 20 credits at Level 5.
- d. Where a student presents a completed relevant award, for example a HND, and requests exemption from complete stages of an Arden University programme, then provided that award meets the learning outcomes of the exempted level and the requirements of 15c above, it may be accepted in its entirety. Programme Team Leaders are responsible for providing guidance on this, for example listing essential modules. Where applicants

- lack up to 20 credits in one 'core' subject, applicants would be required to study that module not contained within their award;
- e. Where it is not possible to consider exemption from a full stage under (d) above, exemption from individual modules may be considered. It is acceptable to split the credits from a prior learning module against several Arden University modules (where credit value allows) and is also acceptable to use multiple prior learning modules to cover the learning outcomes on an Arden University module.
 - f. In the case of international awards, the documentation should reference NARIC to show the value of the award.
17. If the qualification / learning presented within an RPCL claim is beyond the five-year currency limit, applicants must provide evidence of more recent updating of their professional knowledge and practice. This evidence may comprise some or all the following to be defined on an individual basis by the Admissions Tutor:
- a. Evidence of successful completion of relevant CPD learning, if applicable;
 - b. Reflective statement: detailing how knowledge and practice has remained up to date;
 - c. CV: to cover employment history, focussing on how the applicant has maintained their knowledge and practice since qualifying with the award(s) for which they are seeking credit;
 - d. Any claim to be supported by employment history, an employer reference(s): on organisational headed paper, Arden University reference form or, exceptionally, an email directly from the employer, confirming that the applicant's job title, responsibilities of the role and CPD has enabled them to keep up to date with information and current practices in the subject area in which the applicant is intending to claim in order to be awarded RPCL.
18. A register of recognised RPL conventions such as credit comparisons and international GPA equivalencies, both for UK and overseas awards, will be held by the Admissions Office.

APEL claims

19. APEL is the process through which informal learning can be recognised and awarded credit. Informal learning is that gained outside a formal learning setting, for example, through work experience, volunteering or leisure activities. It is important to stress that credit is not given for experience alone but rather for the *learning* gained through that experience.
20. APEL claim, documentation, approved by the Admissions Committee, must be completed in respect of any APEL claim. **(RPEL application form – Annex 2)** Recruitment Advisors working with the appropriate academic team will be responsible for the completion of these templates and collating documentation but **approval of the APEL application must be provided by the appropriate Programme Team Leader or another nominated academic.** The application form will list all modules exempted and indicate the rationale for the exemption and all evidence required. While these are all individual applications, the following general principles are provided for guidance:
- a. Prior learning must be clearly shown to be current; sufficient in terms of credit volume, authentic, relevant and valid;

- b. Currency normally requires that the prior learning is no more than 5 years, see paragraph 17;
- c. Where it is not possible to consider exemption from a full stage of an award, APEL will be considered initially against individual modules.
- d. A key element of the APEL application is the evidence provided which could be in the form of a portfolio containing both direct and indirect evidence and may include an overarching summary of how the applicants learning through experience and the evidence provided meets the required learning outcomes. (Refer to additional guidance in annex 2)
- e. Each applicant for APEL the applicant will be required to attend an interview with the Programme Team Leader as a part of the approval process.

Process for consideration and approval of RPEL claims – Degree Apprenticeships (DA)

21. This section should be read in conjunction with the guidance provided by the Education and Skills Funding Agency which states that 'before an apprenticeship begins, the main training provider must assess the individual's prior learning to establish the 'starting point', or baseline, of the apprentice. This informs how much of the apprenticeship training content the individual requires. It checks that the apprenticeship is an appropriate training programme for the individual'. This assessment of prior learning must include both certificated (RPCL) and experiential (RPEL) learning.
22. All applicants for Degree Apprenticeships wishing to seek Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) against the relevant Degree Apprenticeship Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSB) must first complete an RPL Evidence Checklist/Skills Scan and provide a portfolio of evidence.
23. The DA RPL Checklist/Skills Scan, approved by the Admissions Committee, and supporting evidence must be completed during the application stage and prior to final enrolment and on boarding. **(Degree Apprenticeship RPL Checklist/Skills Scan – Annex 3)**
24. The DA RPL Checklist/Skills Scan and supporting portfolio will be reviewed by a panel consisting of the Degree Apprenticeship Programme Team Leader and appropriate members of the Apprenticeship Team.
25. Applications for RPL against the Degree Apprenticeship's Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours will be considered on:
 - a. Previous credit bearing awards at the same or higher level that demonstrate the specific attainment of duties and Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours.
Or
 - b. Evidence of significant work experience that demonstrate achievement of the duties, Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours.
Or
 - c. A combination of credit bearing awards and significant work experience
26. The panel will meet prior to the start of each Degree Apprenticeship intake to consider the completed RPL Check list/Skills Scan and supporting evidence which

will be presented by the Degree Apprenticeship Programme Team Leader. The outcome of the panel meeting will be communicated to the employer

27. The total amount of funding discount and or reduction in programme duration available for each applicant is dependent on the RPL Checklist/Skills Scan and supporting evidence presented to the panel as described in paragraph 25 (a-c) above.
28. The total funding discount available and or reduction in programme duration per applicant is determined by the panel who will use the percentage of the Degree Apprenticeship's Knowledge Skills and Behaviours successfully covered by the completed RPL Checklist/Skills Scan and supporting evidence as a basis for calculating total percentage discount subject to the following conditions.
 - a. An Apprenticeship cannot be less than 12 months in duration
 - b. The maximum funding discount available per applicant is 50%**
 - c. The funding discount and or reduction in programme duration will be subject to conditions and specifically: any Degree Apprentice's employer in receipt of a funding discount or reduction in duration of the programme will be required to pay the discounted funding balance and extend the duration of the Apprentice's programme if the supporting evidence is found to be unsubstantiated or falsified at any point of the duration of the Degree Apprenticeship
29. Any agreed funding discount and or reduction in programme duration by the panel may result in an equal reduction to the Apprentice's access to Work Based Coaching sessions and Knowledge, Skills and Behaviour Development Days throughout the duration of the Degree Apprenticeship.
30. A summary of all prior learning contributing to a place on an apprenticeship programme is reported to the Degree Apprenticeship Management Committee and in order to comply with ESFA audit requirements:
 - where prior learning **is awarded** as contributing to a place on an apprenticeship programme this should be:
 - included in the apprentice registration with the ESFA and their Individual Learner Record (ILR) should actually reflect the agreed RPL any funding adjustment and period of registration.
 - recorded in the minutes of the DA Management committee and recorded in the apprentice's evidence pack;
 - all Apprentices must have a completed and signed Degree Apprenticeship Recognition of Prior Learning Declaration Form (Annex 4) appended to their student record and form a part of the apprentice's evidence pack.
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Credit awarded by Arden University (including learning undertaken at Associate Colleges)

31. Subject to these regulations, any student who has successfully completed modules when registered for an Arden University course leading to a named award which has **not** been conferred and who then applies for admission with prior learning to a further course leading to a subsequent Arden University award, may transfer to the second course, Arden University credits and their associated marks, subject to any restrictions within the Programme Specification and the provisions



on currency of APCL above. If the first named award has been conferred, the credits, but not the associated marks or grades, may be transferred to the second award.

32. Current students wishing to transfer between routes within a programme may do so subject to Arden University transfer rules and the Programme Specification and are not included within these regulations.

Quality Assurance

33. A report containing details of RPCL and RPEL decisions reached will be prepared quarterly and presented to each meeting of the Admissions Committee for scrutiny. These reports are to include information on number of applications considered / approved, per course and qualification type used for APCL and experience type use for APEL and any other data that has been identified to be used to inform and improve University practice.
34. As part of annual programme monitoring, each Course Committee will receive a report on RPL from the Admissions Team.
35. Admissions Committee will provide an evaluation of RPL decisions and present an annual report to Academic Board.

Policy Name:	RPL Policy and Procedures
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Responsible SMT Lead:	Academic Registrar
Responsible Department:	Academic Affairs
Policy Contact:	Emma Lanaghan, Head of Admissions (elanaghan@arden.ac.uk)
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