



University of
Portsmouth

Recognition of Prior Learning - Guidance for Applicants and Students

Introduction

This guidance document is to assist applicants and students with claiming recognition for prior learning (RPL). It should be read alongside the Policy for Recognition for Prior Learning but this document should provide further guidance.

When should you claim for RPL?

Claims for RPL will be one of two types:

1. The first is to allow direct entry into a higher year of the course

If you think you are eligible to start on a higher year of the course rather than at the start (so for example you want to start in the second or final year of a degree course), you must submit your claim for prior learning before the first day of teaching in the academic year for which you wish to claim RPL. This will let us to put you onto the right year from the start.

2. The second is to allow for claiming specific credits, but not all credits, on a level of a course

If you wish to claim for some credits on a level of the course rather than a whole level (so for example if you did a 20 credit taster unit before the course), you must submit your claim for prior learning within 20 working days of the first day of teaching in the academic year.

How do you submit a claim for RPL?

If you only wish to claim for recognition of prior credits or qualifications, you should complete the application form here:

<http://www.port.ac.uk/accesstoinformation/policies/accreditationofpriorlearning/filetodownload,196201,en.docx>

and provide their transcript and any certificate together with an outline of the syllabus to the University Admissions Centre (UAC).

If you wish to claim for recognition of prior experiential learning (either with or without additional credits or certificates), you should use the application form found here:

<http://www.port.ac.uk/accesstoinformation/policies/accreditationofpriorlearning/filetodownload,196202,en.docx>

For experiential learning, you will normally have to submit a portfolio of evidence, or equivalent, to the UAC. Applicants should contact the course RPL Advisor in order to discuss the format of the portfolio and the evidence to be considered. This may include an essay or other appropriate assessment tool.

What evidence do you need to provide?

There are two different types of evidence:

1. The first is where you have previously completed a course which is directly related to your course and been awarded a certificate.

In this case you should provide:

- a) The certificate
- b) The transcript for the units you have completed
- c) The syllabus outline

The course should normally have been completed in the previous 5 years.

2. The second is where you have completed a course with no certificate (for example work based training courses) or any learning through experience which is related to the course

In this case you should contact the RPL adviser directly to see the form that the evidence should take. This would normally be a portfolio of evidence (guidance for preparing this portfolio is given in Appendix A) but may also include an essay or other assessment tool.

What are they looking for in your claim for RPL?

They will be looking for the following in the evidence:

Is it current? – it should be no more than five years old. For learning achieved more than five years ago, you must show how you have kept up-to-date and built upon this initial knowledge.

Is it authentic? – is it your own work or own contribution?

Is it relevant? – is it relevant to your area of practice, the subject area of the course you wish to undertake and linked to the course or unit learning outcomes?

Is it sufficient? – is it a coherent and concise package which includes enough evidence to approve your claim?

Should there be any gaps, the RPL advisor or assessor may request more evidence from you.

How quickly is the decision made?

You will get a decision from the Department within 20 working days of submitting your completed claim for RPL. If you are not happy with the decision there is an appeals process you can follow.

Is there a limit to the amount of RPL that you can claim?

The maximum amount of RPL that can be claimed is two thirds of the total credit value of the course. A standard degree course is 360 credits made up of three years of 120 credits each. The maximum you could claim would therefore be 240 credits (two thirds of 360 credits)

Sources of help

The Admissions Centre of the University (02392 845566) will be able to give you help and advice in completing the form. Should you need more subject specific knowledge, they will contact the RPL Advisor

Appendix A Guidance for Students Completing an RPL Claim Portfolio

In order to claim academic accreditation of your prior learning against part of the course you may need to submit a portfolio of evidence. This will ensure that you are not placed in a position of having to repeat study when you have already been assessed and demonstrated achievement. The course RPL adviser is available to help you and assessment of the portfolio will be by the relevant unit co-ordinators and/or other members of the course team.

The process will be confirmed at Faculty level and ultimately overseen by the external examiner. These guidelines have been put together to help you develop this portfolio. University regulations put a limit on the total amount of credit you may claim however and there may be some core units against which evidence **MUST** be directly mapped.

You may already have put together a professional portfolio and this may contain evidence that is relevant to your RPL claim. Do make use of this and it would be helpful to bring it with you when you meet the RPL adviser.

It is important that the contents of your portfolio for accreditation purposes are presented in a logical way. Not only does this demonstrate clear thinking on your part but it also makes the assessment process easier. A suggested format is given below. However if you are familiar with portfolio development and already have a framework that suits you, please continue to use it. Also you may have a CV which includes some of the information below. If you have any queries with regard to this, please discuss them with your RPL adviser.

Suggested format:

- Title page
- Table of contents
- Personal information
- A summary of those units for which you believe your previous experiential/certificated learning show equivalent learning outcomes; cross reference the evidence to the sections below:

(The RPL adviser will help you refine this section)

- Employment
- Education
- Training and professional qualifications
- Informal learning activities
- Additional information
- Appendices to include copies of certificates etc.

If you are to be successful in your RPL claim, it is essential that the evidence you use in the portfolio meets the following criteria:

Current – no more than five years old. For learning achieved more than five years ago, you must show how you have kept up-to-date and built upon this initial knowledge.

Authentic – your own work or own contribution.

Relevant – to your area of practice, the subject area of the course you wish to undertake and linked to course or unit learning outcomes

Sufficient – a coherent and concise package which includes enough evidence to substantiate your claim.

Before attempting to complete this portfolio the following points may be helpful:

- Ensure that you provide yourself with sufficient time to complete this portfolio. Do not plan to do it all at once, allow yourself several attempts.

- Think carefully about the information you wish to include. Do not assume that the reader will have an understanding of the points you are trying to make or know of the course you are referring to. Write clearly and give details about the courses that you have attended. Where possible include course programmes or course learning outcomes.

- Supply concise and coherent information. It should reflect an academic approach at the level that you are seeking credit. If you are unsure about what this level means ask your RPL adviser. It should, though, include evidence of substantial study and experience related to your area of practice and the course subject area for which you are applying.

- When presenting information for your portfolio, consider:

a) Is it worthwhile elaborating upon a particular course, project etc. or have I better evidence that is more relevant.

b) Was I assessed in any way or are there tangible outcomes that I can use as evidence. If so, include photocopies of feedback, comments or any other information relating to how the project outcomes were evaluated /received.

- Whilst it is generally permissible to include personal learning experiences outside of employment in RPL claims, it is unlikely that there will be great deal of scope for doing this on this course.

- It is essential that each learning experience included contains evidence that you have reflected upon what you have learned and how this has been applied to your practice to keep you up to date and enhance your practice.

Framework for reflection: in relation to the final point sometimes people find it helpful to use some sort of framework to help reflection so the following points are simply intended as a resource:

- What major events have you undertaken in your studies/experiences?

- What are your thoughts and feelings about these events? Think about the events you have referred to in the first point and reflect back on how you felt at the time and on how you feel about them now.
- What new skills have you developed as a result of these events? Apart from your thoughts and feelings about the events, what new skills do you think you have developed as a result of the experience? For example have you changed your attitude? Would you act differently if the same situation arose again? Have you transferred this learning to other situations?
- What new learning has taken place? As a result of the course/experience, what new concepts have you learned? Were you able to transfer these concepts into the work place?
- What reading have you undertaken? Which articles or books have you read that supports your learning? What did you think of them? Were they useful or confusing?
- What personal changes have taken place as a result of your learning? For example are you more confident?

Appendix B Recognition of Prior Learning – Process flowchart

