

# **<sup>1</sup>Recognition of Prior Learning Principles and Guidelines**

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## GLOSSARY

Within the *Principles and Guidelines* the following definitions are used:

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'.
Automatic Progression	A form of 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>
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).
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.
HEART	HEART (Higher Education Access Rewarding Transforming) is a partnership of West Yorkshire higher education providers.
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.
PEBO	The Programme and Exam Board Officer who is responsible for processing and reporting result and award outcomes to the Board of Examiners.
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 Certificated 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 Experiential 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.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Leeds Trinity University recognises the value of prior experience and formal/informal learning in equipping students to benefit from its programmes of study. Applicants for admission with credit of advanced standing based on, or including consideration of learning gained in formal and non-formal settings are therefore encouraged.

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. It also seeks to ensure that applicants are awarded the maximum amount of relevant credit to which they are entitled by recognition of their prior learning achievements.

## 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 principle that RPL is an academic activity which should only be performed by academic staff competent in the process.

### 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 associated with a structured, formal course of study that has 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 may be UK degree awards such as a Certificate in Higher Education (CertHE) or a Diploma in Higher Education (DipHE) which are in accordance with the FHEQ. Requests for RPCL often arise when applicants have withdrawn from their previous course of study, or have decided to change their field of study. 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 [3.3 RPL for Advanced Standing](#)).

**ii. RPCL 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. RPCL on this basis should normally be conducted through the University’s ‘Accreditation Procedures’.

**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.

Typically, RPEL allows applicants to be awarded credit and therefore obtain exemption from some taught modules.

An applicant will need to demonstrate their learning through critical reflection and this is usually presented in the form of a portfolio which details how the applicant’s prior experience evidences their achievement of the module(s) and/or programme learning outcomes for which they are seeking credit.

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

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

**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 for admissions for the purposes of entry to the beginning of a programme of study**

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

As detailed within the Taught Course Academic Regulations, applicants who do not meet the General Entry Requirement in full can apply to be considered for admission with RPCL or RPEL, or a combination of both in place of all or part of the General Requirements of Entry.

### 3.3. RPL for Advanced Standing

**Advanced Standing** is, for 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.

### 3.4. RPL for Specific Credit

Credit known as **specific credit** can be awarded if prior learning matches module learning outcomes, level, content and volume (as stated within the programme specification). The limit on the number of specific credits normally accepted as RPL is 100 credit points per level. (See Section 6.1) Any exception to this would be considered on an individual basis. Specific credit is awarded in the form of **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)

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

As part of the HEART partnership, Leeds Trinity University offers exemptions in named business and management awards for applicants who have studied specific Chartered Management institute (CMI) or Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) awards. Further information is available at <http://www.heart.ac.uk/management-courses/>

Note: credit transfer is different to entry with advanced standing where a whole level may be recognised.

### 3.5. General credit

General credit is credit awarded that may be outside of the subject area. This means that not all credit may count, even if it is at the right level, because there is no relevance towards the programme for which the application is being made. For example, credit gained in the subject of psychology may have limited, if any, relevance to a theology programme and therefore the RPL claim may not be accepted. General credit can only become specific credit when it is judged to be equivalent to Leeds Trinity modules.

### 3.6. Internal Transfer

A credit transfer will occur if a student transfers from one programme to another within the University which 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.

### **3.7. RPL for Automatic Progressions**

In some instances, the admissions regulations as set out in the programme specification for a named award may allow entry with Advanced Standing to a later level of the award. This is on the basis of a well specified qualification or suite of qualifications that are deemed to be equivalent to the outcomes of the level for which advanced standing has been agreed. For example the attainment of a Foundation Degree in a cognate subject area giving admission to a specified Level 6 (top-up) degree award. This type of Advanced Standing is considered an **Automatic Progression** and decisions are made by admissions tutors through the admissions process under their normal powers of delegated authority.

**Automatic Progressions** where applicants are admitted to a later level having already completed the equivalent of the earlier level(s). They will be recorded as 'exempt' from the earlier level(s).

## **4. RPL AND PROFESSIONAL, STATUTORY AND REGULATORY BODY (PSRB) REQUIREMENTS**

- 4.1. If a programme is subject to PSRB requirements or has professional accreditation, the amount of RPL an applicant can claim may be restricted. PSRBs can limit RPL for core modules, or may not allow RPL to be claimed for any part of the programme.
- 4.2. It is vital that an applicant considering an RPL claim for a programme with PSRB or professional accreditation requirements is informed by the Admissions Tutor or Programme Leader of any potential restrictions or implications before the process commences.

## **5. AVOIDANCE OF DOUBLE COUNTING OF CREDIT**

- 5.1. 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 (such as a request for RPL of an HND made by an applicant for an FD), as this would constitute double counting, or re-use of credit. The only exceptions to this are:
  - If the applicant is seeking credit in a different subject, professional or vocational area to the prior award;
  - The award is at Level 7 and would enable the applicant to advance their subject, vocational area in a specialist or new direction;
  - If credit transfer is incorporated within a credit transfer agreement, such as through Study Abroad programmes.
- 5.2. Credit for successful completion of the final 60 credit component of any Masters cannot be used to request RPL against any other Masters programme.

## **6. HOW MUCH CREDIT CAN BE AWARDED?**

- 6.1. 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 a 10 credit module



- The limit on specific credits for exemption is normally 100 credit points per level.
- The maximum credit claimable through advanced standing is two thirds of the total credits for an award\*.

Foundation Degree: 160 credits of 240  
 (normally 120 credits at Level 4 and 40 credits at Level 5);  
 Bachelors Degree: 240 credits of 360\*;  
 Postgraduate Certificate: 40 credits of 60;  
 Postgraduate Diploma: 80 credits of 120;  
 Masters Degree: 120 credits of 180\*;

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

- 6.2.** Applicants may not wish to take up or claim the maximum amount of RPL that might be available to them. There is no requirement for them to do so, 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 will normally be considered

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

- 7.1.** The classification of an honours degree is determined on marks awarded at Level 5 and Level 6. Where an applicant is awarded credit at either of these levels as a result of a claim for RPL no marks will be awarded unless the claim or an element of the claim is for prior certificated learning that can be directly equated to the module(s)/level(s) of the Leeds Trinity award for which they are registered.

The classification will be based purely on the modules taken at Leeds Trinity. It is incumbent on the Admissions Tutor/Programme Leader to ensure that the applicant is aware of this and the potential impact on classification that this might have.

- 7.2.** Where an award offers the possibility of passing with merit or distinction as in the case of Foundation Degrees and taught Postgraduate programmes, a candidate who has been admitted with RPL credit must have attained the following amount of Leeds Trinity credit from modules with a *numeric* mark as part of the programme of study for the target award, to be eligible to be considered for merit or distinction:

- For a Foundation Degree, at least 80 credits of 240 of target award achieved at Leeds Trinity;
- For a PGCert, at least 20 credits of 60 of target award achieved at Leeds Trinity;
- For a PGDip, at least 40 credits of 120 of target award achieved at Leeds Trinity;
- For a Masters, at least 60 credits of 180 of target award achieved at Leeds Trinity.

- 7.3.** Modules which are marked on a pass/fail basis are discounted from the calculation of classification.

## **8. IMPACT ON FULL-TIME / PART – TIME STATUS**

- 8.1.** If RPL is given for less than an entire level then it is likely that the applicant 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'.

- 8.2.** For applicants in potential 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

## **9. PROCEDURES FOR RPL CLAIMS**

- 9.1.** The procedure for RPL claims differs slightly depending on whether the claim is for RPCL or RPEL and whether this takes place at the point of application or on programme:

### **Point of application**

- a. Applicant RPCL
- b. Applicant RPEL

### **On programme**

- a. Student RPCL
- b. Student RPEL

### **9.2. Applicant RPCL**

Admissions request proof of qualifications and complete Section A and Section B of the RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING CLAIM FORM with the applicant at point of application.

The Admissions Team forward the application to the Admissions Tutor/Programme Leader who signs off approval/rejection and returns the application to Admissions who notify the applicant of the outcome in writing.

The approved claim form is then passed to the Student Records Officer to be added to SITS.

### **9.3. Applicant RPEL**

The applicant consults with the relevant member of academic staff (usually the Programme Leader) and completes Section A and Section B of the RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING CLAIM FORM and submits supporting evidence at point of application (see section [12.2. RPEL Portfolio Contents](#)). Payment is also made as required.

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

The approved claim form is then passed to the Student Records Officer to be added to SITS.

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

#### 9.4. Student RPEL

In brief:

The applicant consults with the relevant member of academic staff (usually the Programme Leader) and completes Section A and Section B of the RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING CLAIM FORM at point of application and submits supporting evidence (see section [12.2. RPEL Portfolio Contents](#)) at point of application. Payment is also made as required.

The Admissions Tutor/Programme Leader forwards the application and its supporting evidence to the Panel of Examiners that considers the application, signs off the approval/rejection and forwards the application to the Programmes and Exam Boards Officer (PEBO) for approval by the Board of Examiners. The Student Records Officer informs the student of the application outcome via e:Vision.

#### 9.5. Student RPCL

In brief:

The Admissions Tutor/Programme Leader/designated member of academic staff\* for the relevant Department requests evidence of the evidence (certification) and completes the RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING CLAIM FORM. The tutor forwards the application to the Programmes and Exam Boards Officer (PEBO) for approval by the Board of Examiners. The Student Records Officer informs the student of the application outcome via e:Vision.

*\*If the claim is for Study Abroad, the RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING CLAIM FORM is to be completed by Student Administration.*

### 10. PROVIDING GUIDANCE FOR RPL CLAIMS

- 10.1. 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 (4.2) 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.

#### 10.2. RPCL Claims

Detailed advice can be provided by a designated Admissions Tutor/Programme Leader or other member of academic staff<sup>2</sup> which in more complex cases may be the responsibility of the relevant Programme Leader.

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;

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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.

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 Student Administration.

### 10.3. 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;
- 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;
- Directs the applicant to make fee payment (for RPEL) via the Finance Office.

## 11. THE RPEL PORTFOLIO

11.1. For a request for RPEL, the applicant:

- 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.
- Pays the administration fee as required. (See Section [18. FEES](#)).

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.

### 11.2. 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.

## 12. TIMESCALES FOR RPL CLAIMS

The applicant is responsible for completing the RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING CLAIM FORM and submitting it with evidence to the nominated individual/team within the agreed timescale.

In the case of RPEL the claim form should be accompanied with a portfolio and evidence of payment of RPEL fees (see section [12. THE RPEL PORTFOLIO](#) and section [18. FEES](#));

- 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.

### 13. ASSESSING THE CLAIM

Assessing RPL claims is the sole prerogative of academic members of staff<sup>3</sup>. These assessor(s) will have subject expertise relevant to the specific credit claimed.

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.

The extent to which RPL applicants must evidence all the learning outcomes of a module is a matter for academic judgement. 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, it may be justifiable to expect evidence of achievement of all learning outcomes.

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.

#### 13.1. RPCL Claims

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 FORM;
- Return the application form to:
  - Admissions for **applicant** RPCL, or,
  - the PEBO for **student** RPCL claims.

#### 13.2. RPEL Claims

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*

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<sup>3</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.

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?

### 13.3. Assessment of RPEL Claims by the RPEL Panel

The RPEL Panel is convened and Chaired by the Academic Registrar. The RPEL Panel comprises the Admissions Tutor and Programme Leader together with an academic assessor<sup>4</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 FORM, signed and dated by the Programme Leader;
- The RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING CLAIM FORM countersigned by Student Administration
- Communication of the outcome to the applicant via Admissions;
- Retention of the RPEL evidence by the Programme Leader so that it is available to the External Examiner if so required.

## 14. PROCESSING OUTCOMES

### 14.1. The Academic Registrar will:

Verify that the decision has been recorded appropriately, and is consistent with the *Principles and Guidelines 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;

### 14.2 The Student Administration Admissions Team will:

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

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<sup>4</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.

assigned through RPL. This manner of recording will enable RPL claims to be reported to Boards of Examiners.

## **15. PROCEDURE FOR APPEAL**

**15.1.** 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.

## **16. ADMINISTRATION OF CLAIMS**

### **16.1. Assessment**

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.

### **16.2. The Claim Form**

The RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING CLAIM FORM may be obtained from Student Administration Admissions. A copy of the completed form is retained by the Student Administration Admissions Team for the Student File.

### **16.3. Recording - Student Records and Transcripts**

When an RPL claim has been assessed and approved, and the applicant notified in writing of the decision, the Student Administration Admissions Team will ensure that the finalised RPL claim form and a copy of the letter of notification are placed on file. Where credit has been awarded, this will be entered on the Student Records System (SITS) in one of two 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.



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 Boards 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 and complete level(s).

#### **16.4 Recording for Monitoring Purposes**

The RPL Monitoring Report is maintained by the Student Administration Admissions Team. The RPL Monitoring Report is used to enable Leeds Trinity to keep a record of the number and type of RPL claims and to update Schools on RPL activity at regular intervals.

### **17. FEES**

**17.1.** The fee (if any) that may be charged for an RPL claim will depend upon the circumstances in which the claim is being made.

**17.2.** Fees **will not** be charged for:

- Applications for RPCL.
- RPEL claims used purely for admissions purposes. Charging a fee for RPEL in this circumstance could be regarded as providing a barrier to entry and therefore against the principles of widening participation;
- RPEL applications from members of Leeds Trinity staff.

**17.3.** Fees **will normally be** charged in the case of applications involving RPEL that are intended to result in the award of credit against one or more modules, or a whole level of study.

**17.4** Where fees are incurred, they will be payable:

- In **advance** of submitting the formal application for RPEL (since the charge is for the process not the outcome);
- At the rate of 20% of the module fee for which specific credit is being claimed (see Student Guide to RPEL)
- At the rate of 20% of the total level fee for the named programme (see Student Guide to RPEL)
- No refunds will be made for unsuccessful claims.

### **18. 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.Crompton@leedstrinity.ac.uk](mailto:E.Crompton@leedstrinity.ac.uk) / 0113 283 7173 for advice on how it may affect them financially.

### **19. QUALITY ASSURANCE**

#### **19.1. School Level**

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 Monitoring prepared by Student Administration on an annual basis to contribute to Annual 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 Review (or equivalent) taking into account any issues raised by the External Examiner(s);
- Inform the Academic Registrar of any RPL related issues, concerns or developmental needs which may need to be raised and addressed on an institutional basis.

Prior to the relevant Panel of Examiners 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 particular issues of concern, in the Examiner's report. Procedures for responding to issues identified in this way will be those normally applied to any concerns highlighted in External Examiner reports;

## 19.2 Institutional Level

The Academic Registrar will conduct an annual review of RPL activity which will be incorporated into the institution's Annual Report on Academic Quality & Standards.

The RPL Review will focus on:

- The level and nature of RPL activity across the Institution (including that associated with collaborative arrangements and distributed learning modes of delivery as appropriate);
- Operational aspects of the *Recognition of Prior Learning Principles and Guidelines*.
- Resource issues arising from the *Recognition of Prior Learning Principles and Guidelines*;
- Recommendations for amendments to the *Recognition of Prior Learning Principles and Guidelines*;
- Issues of academic standards vis-à-vis RPL;
- Other Institution-wide issues arising from or related to the *Recognition of Prior Learning Principles and Guidelines*.

## 20. DOCUMENTATION

The following documents are associated with the RPL process:

- RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING FORM
- Student Guide to RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning)
- Student Guide to RPCL – Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning
- Student Guide to RPEL – Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning