



This document is primarily intended for:

Directors of Studies
Other departmental staff involved with admissions

Queries:
First point of contact–
Academic Registry

Quality Assurance Code of Practice

Recognition of Prior Learning (Apprenticeship Courses)

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1 Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 This statement provides guidelines on the University's procedures for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for apprenticeship courses.
- 1.2 Throughout this document, RPL refers to the process by which the University recognises prior learning and experience and adjusts the content, duration (to include off-the-job hours) and price of an apprenticeship course. Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) and Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) refers to the process by which the University awards credit for this prior learning and experience.
- 1.3 The University's procedures for the APL and APEL are outlined in [QA45 Accreditation of Prior Learning](#).
- 1.4 This statement should be read in association with:
- [Assessment Regulations](#)
 - [Education and Skills Funding Agency \(ESFA\) Funding Rules](#) (relevant to the year of entry onto the course)

2 Principles

- 2.1 Decisions on RPL are a matter of academic judgement.
- 2.2 The decision-making process and outcomes should be transparent and demonstrably rigorous and fair. It should be undertaken in accordance with the guidance set out in the ESFA Funding Rules.
- 2.3 Staff and Student Apprentices should be able to access adequate and timely information, guidance and support at all stages of the process ([QAA UK Quality Code Advice and Guidance: Assessment](#); [QAA UK Quality Code Advice and Guidance: Research Degrees](#); [Education and Skills Funding Agency \(ESFA\) Funding Rules](#)).

3 Process

- 3.1 Prior to the registration of a Student Apprentice onto an apprenticeship course, the University must undertake a detailed Initial Needs Assessment (INA) with the Student Apprentice and their employer, to include a review of the Student Apprentice's prior learning and experience. The INA verifies the Student Apprentice's suitability for the apprenticeship course and includes eligibility checks (see [QA22\(A\)](#) Annex A), English and maths attainment and any additional learning support and/or other needs.
- 3.2 The INA is supported by a detailed self-assessment (skills scan) undertaken by the Student Apprentice in consultation with their employer, and verified by the University, to ensure the apprenticeship course delivers new learning (Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs)).
- 3.3 The skills scan is an assessment of the apprentice's current level of competence against the requirements of the apprenticeship standard.
- 3.4 The INA will determine the start point for the apprenticeship from which the University, the apprentice and their employer will measure the Student Apprentice's progress towards meeting the KSBs set out in the relevant apprenticeship standard and achieving occupational competence.
- 3.5 Prior to commencing the apprenticeship courses, a portfolio of evidence will be collated by the Director of Studies to inform the INA discussion with the Student Apprentice and the employer. The evidence will demonstrate a clear alignment of any proposed RPL to the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) set out in the relevant apprenticeship standard.
- 3.6 Applicants for an apprenticeship course will be required to submit evidence to demonstrate their prior learning and experience (e.g., certificates of qualification, evidence of professional training, C.V.) through the application process.
- 3.7 Directors of Studies are responsible for ensuring there is a formal record in the Student Apprentice's Training Plan where RPL has been applied. This must be signed by the University, the apprentice and the employer prior to the apprentice starting their apprenticeship course.
- 3.8 Directors of Studies are responsible for ensuring there is a formal record within the Student Apprentice's Training Plan where no RPL has been applied. This must be signed by the University, the apprentice and the employer prior to the apprentice starting their apprenticeship course.

4 Outcomes

- 4.1 Following an INA, the University may determine the following:
 - a) No relevant prior learning exists for a prospective Student apprentice.
 - b) A prospective Student Apprentice has relevant prior learning and/or experience. The University must adjust the content, duration and price of the apprenticeship, where applicable. The University must either:
 - i. Recognise prior learning on the Training Plan but still require a Student Apprentice to complete the applicable unit(s) and assessment(s) for the apprenticeship course.
 - ii. Recognise prior learning on the Training Plan and require a Student Apprentice to complete only the summative assessments associated with the unit(s).
 - iii. Recognise prior learning on the Training Plan, and not require a Student Apprentice to complete the applicable unit(s) and assessment(s). In this

instance, the Faculty/School should apply the AP(E)L procedures outlined in [QA45](#).

- c) A prospective Student Apprentice is not eligible for an apprenticeship if the level of their prior learning and experience means that content of the course is adjusted to extent where there is insufficient content remaining to meet the minimum 12-month course duration and associated off-the-job hours requirement.

5 Calculating RPL Reductions

- 5.1 The INA should establish the content of the apprenticeship course which needs to be removed from the Student Apprentice's Training Plan due to prior learning, where applicable. This will result in a reduction in the percentage of off-the-job training hours compared to a Student Apprentice with no assessed prior learning and experience, and lead to a reduction in the duration of the apprenticeship course and price. Any savings from the recognition of prior learning must come from within the funding band.
- 5.2 To reduce the total negotiated price the University must:
- **Calculate the percentage of prior learning that the prospective Student Apprentice has, as a percentage of the off-the-job training hours that would be delivered to an individual with no relevant prior learning for the same standard.** For example, if the individual's prior learning accounts for 300 off-the-job training hours and typically, for the same standard, 1,000 off-the-job training hours would be delivered to an individual with no prior learning, this would equate to 30% prior learning.
 - **Reduce the total price by at least 50% of the prior learning percentage, from the maximum funding band (the 50% reduction recognises that there are fixed costs in the course).** For example, where the apprentice has 30% prior learning, this means there must be a reduction in the total price of at least 15% of the maximum funding band (i.e., £1,500 price reduction if the funding band is £10,000). This reduced price (e.g., £8,500) is the maximum that will be paid using apprenticeship funding.
 - **This new maximum funding amount becomes the starting point for any further price negotiation with the employer.** Additional discounts could be applied, for example, where the apprentice is part of a large cohort.
 - **The final price must be split between fields TNP1 and TNP2 in the ILR.** TNP1 is the price of the training and on-course assessment, TNP2 is the price agreed for the End Point Assessment Organisation.

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