UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Archived Legislation

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Please use documents found there rather than archived documents.

Welcome to Guidance to Students on Accreditation of Prior Learning

Introduction

This document aims to explain the term Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) and how you can claim credit for prior certificated learning within the University.

What is APL?

APL is a process by which this University (and many others) gives credit against part of a programme for traditional study or course-based learning which has been achieved before entry to the programme of study and has been assessed or given credit by another institution. It may also give entry to a programme.
Learning which has been acquired before entry to the course through life or work experience may also be recognised and this is called APEL. Separate guidelines are available.

What is Credit?

Credit provides a means of quantifying learning outcomes achievable in a given number of notional hours and at a given level. In this way previous learning can be identified which can be assessed and 'credited' against an award. 120 credit points represent the normal workload for a full-time programme of study in the standard academic year and includes class contact, private study and assessment. The credit may be used either to gain entry to the course in the absence of other qualifications or may be used to gain exemption from modules on a programme of study.
Credit transfer is the process by which that credit can be assigned to a programme other than that on which it was gained.
General Credit is the attainment of credit which has no subject relevance to the programme being applied for and is more likely to be used solely for entry to a course.
Specific Credit can be attained when the credit identified can by shown to have particular relevance to a module or modules on a programme. It therefore allows exemption from taking those modules.

What is a module?

A Module is a component of a course with its own approved aims and objectives and assessment methods. Modules normally consist of 10 or 20 credits. Credit cannot be given for part of a module.

What are Learning Outcomes?

The University uses learning outcomes to identify whether students have demonstrated through assessment the minimum level of learning required to pass a module and thus gain the required credit. This learning may be achieved at different levels representing developing ability as identified below. The equivalent NVQ levels are also given.

Level	NVQ	
Foundation	3	Work of a standard suitable for entry to a degree
1	4	*Stage 1 of undergraduate degree (Certificate in Higher Education)
2	4	Stage 2 of undergraduate degree (Diploma in Higher Education)
3	5	Stage 3 of undergraduate degree
M	6/7	Postgraduate degree work

* Stage is the equivalent of 1 year's full-time study

Limitations on Credit (a health warning!)

The University is concerned to ensure that all its students meet a required standard on its awards and that all students are treated equitably, so it will be concerned to ensure that prior learning is at the required level. Also, the learning must have been gained sufficiently recently to still be of value. The time limits on learning will vary according to subject area but qualifications more than 5 years old are unlikely to be considered.

Underlying Principles of Assessment for Credit

Relevance. You should be able to demonstrate that the learning for which you make a claim is appropriate to the programme of study.

Level. It should also be at the same level as the taught modules.

Authenticity. The evidence should be clearly related to your own efforts and can be verified as such.

Sufficiency. Whether you have sufficient evidence to demonstrate fully the achievement of the credit being claimed.

Currency. In some subject areas the knowledge-base may become out of date. Where your qualification may have been gained more than 5 years ago, , some evidence of updating may be required.

How to claim for credit for learning through APL

A. If you wish to gain credit for prior certificated learning you will need to:

Fill in a special application form. (attached)

On this you will need to indicate whether your application covers admission or a request for credit against the course to which you are applying. If you have any query about which applies to your situation, the University can advise you.

If possible attach evidence of learning gained. These may include:

Transcripts
Syllabi
References

At this stage photocopies will be sufficient but at some point you will be required to produce originals or means by which the Univerisity can determine the authenticity of the document.

You may be asked to provide additional information concerning the course content and assessment details of an award for which you are claiming credit in order for the University to determine its appropriateness and the amount and level of credit which can be awarded.

If possible you should identify for which areas of your chosen course you want to do that you are claiming credit.

A. Upon receipt of your application the relevant Admissions Tutor will review your application and may call you or ask you to attend for an advice session if there are any difficulties over identifying what is being claimed. Once the nature of the claim is clear, a decision will be made.

B. You will normally receive a decision on your application within XX weeks of a full application being made.
A statement of the credit awarded will be sent to you.
If your application for credit is not approved you may request a review of the decision but only on the basis of additional evidence which was not available at the time of the application. Further information on this process is available on request.

Fees/Cost

Although you do not receive formal tuition during the process of making an APL claim, additional support is given to you during this time for which a fee may be charged. If a charge is to be made, it will be a standard charge notified to you in advance.

The University of Birmingham

Academic Office

CREDIT TRANSFER REQUEST

If you would like credit accrued on a previous award bearing course which you have followed to be taken into consideration for exemption from elements of a programme of study at this University, please complete this form as fully as you can. Unless there are exceptional reasons, we would not normally consider results which are more than five years old. If you are making a request with qualifications which are more than five years old, please give reasons why you consider them to be appropriate.

Please attach a cheque for £25 to your application. Cheques should be made payable to "The University of Birmingham". **There is no charge if you want only qualifications obtained, or modules taken, at the University of Birmingham to be taken into consideration.**

PLEASE NOTE THAT COMPLETION OF THIS APPLICATION DOES NOT GUARANTEE THAT EXEMPTION WILL BE GRANTED

Personal Details:

Student No ……

Forenames ……...

Surname ……

Address ……

……

……

Tel No ……

E-mail ……

Academic Record Details:

Name of Study Programme (applying for) ……..

Length of Programme in Years (also indicate full-time or part-time) ……

Name of Study Programme for which you are claiming credit ……...

Name and Address of College, Polytechnic or University ……..

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Date Qualification Awarded ……
(if the programme of study was completed)

Level of Study: Level 1, 2, 3 or M (please specify) …….

Total Number of Credits Required for Award of Qualification ……..

Total Number of Credits Obtained at Each Level ……...

Titles of Modules/Courses and Amount of Credit Gained for Each Module/Course …….

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Mode of Study (please specify) ……...

Descriptive Outline of Course (50 words max.) …….

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In addition, please attach to this form any further relevant information (e.g. syllabuses, course activities) along with copies of transcripts, certificates, etc.

Details of Formal Assessment (e.g. examinations taken, number of assignments, word length, grade)

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Signature …… Date ……

Please return this form to:

Melissa Thomas
Admissions Manager
Admissions
Academic Office
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 2TT