



Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy

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Equality impact

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|---|---|
| Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities) | |
| Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect) | X |
| Negative equality impact (i.e. increasing inequalities) | |



Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy

Scope of Policy/Procedure/Guideline

The British School of Osteopathy (BSO) RPL policy establishes the context of accreditation of prior learning (for certificated learning) for applicants and provides an overview of the process for those wishing to apply.

Further details of the process relevant to specific courses delivered at the BSO and the units eligible for RPL can be found in the relevant RPL handbooks.

Details of Policy/Procedure/Guideline

Definition:

“RPL: Assessing previous learning that has occurred in any of a range of contexts including school, college and university, and/or through life and work experiences. Once recognised through this process, prior learning can be used to gain credit or exemption for qualifications and/or personal and career development.” QAA 2014¹

RPL is based on the principle that learning, wherever it occurs, can count towards an academic qualification provided that it can be measured, authenticated and is at an appropriate level. The RPL decision-making process is a matter of academic judgment.

RPL can be awarded for certificated learning (RPCL).

Any certificated learning will have taken place in a recognised Higher Education institution, or equivalent, and will have been internally and externally assessed. The outcome of such learning is the production of an authenticated certificate or transcript. Certificated learning may have resulted in a particular qualification.

Context:

The provision of the accreditation of prior learning demonstrates the commitment of the School to support widening participation and to provide access to a quality higher education experience. As the diversity of applicants to courses delivered by the BSO has increased, so has the need to enhance existing policies that recognise the value of prior learning. The BSO would like to recognise the achievements of the students and credit them for the work they have already achieved. These applicants are therefore eligible to apply for RPL against **whole units** of BSO courses, the details of which are outlined within this policy and in further detail in the relevant RPL Handbooks for each course where RPL is recognised.

The School follows the principles and guidance for conduct as expressed in the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Part B6: Assessment of students and accreditation of prior learning, October 2013 and the Guidelines on the accreditation of prior learning, September 2004.

¹ <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/glossary>



Principles of the Accreditation of Prior Learning Procedures

The principles for the recognition of prior learning procedures which follow the QAA guidelines are:

- RPL policies, processes, procedures, practices and decisions should be transparent, rigorous, reliable, fair and accessible to individuals and stakeholders to ensure that users can be confident of the decisions and outcomes of RPL.
- The process of assessment for RPL is subject to the same quality assurance and monitoring standards as any other form of assessment.
- Availability and procedures will be clearly publicised to all prospective and current students on the BSO website and other relevant documentation.
- Applicants are only able to undertake the RPL process for whole units and not for the specific content of a course.
- Applicants are normally expected to apply for RPL prior to the commencement of the relevant units.
- RPL is dependent on the provision of documentary evidence of the achievement of learning or experience at the appropriate level by the applicant. The learning should be consistent with the course and unit/s for which RPL is to be applied.
- It is the responsibility of the RPL applicant to evaluate their existing evidence and to provisionally map this evidence against the Unit learning outcomes so that they are able to make an informed decision prior to applying for RPL.
- RPL credits may only be awarded for certain units defined in the relevant course RPL handbook and will be recorded on the student's transcript.
- Award of RPL credits is presented at the appropriate board of examiners.
- The RPL process does not award grades or marks.
- Where RPL credits have been used for an award, these credits cannot be used again for a subsequent award at the same level.
- Support will be provided to RPL applicants through the provision of a course specific RPL handbook. Further support will be provided through the Schools Admission team.
- RPL applications will normally only be considered once an applicant has accepted an offer to study at the BSO and following receipt of payment for the RPL application process.
- RPL involves a process of documenting and mapping learning achievements against learning outcomes of a unit for which they are applying for RPL credits, and is evaluated by an appropriate academic subject specialist (Normally the Unit Leader for that unit).
- Unit Leader recommendations will be considered by an RPL committee which will make the final decision as to the awarding of credits for units of study.
- Normally, RPL applications must be completed in advance of commencing the modified course of study.
- Certificated evidence submitted to RPL will be considered based on credit that was obtained no more than five years previously. However, claims based on credit outside this time limit may be considered under accredited prior experiential learning where a candidate is able to demonstrate evidence of continuous application, updating and relevance to their practice and the award sought.



Process:

The detail of the application included here provides an overview of the stages of the process.

Full details of units eligible for RPL, how to complete an application and how to present a portfolio of evidence can be found in the relevant Course RPL handbook.

Stages:

Stage 1

- 1) During the application process, prospective students are made aware of the RPL process, if their academic qualifications or experience are appropriate. At the interview phase of the process, the interviewers can investigate whether RPL is a possibility with the applicant. Applicants can also access the RPL policy at any time through the BSO website.
- 2) Normally the RPL process will only be initiated once an applicant has accepted an offer to study at the BSO and would normally need to be initiated and completed prior to the commencement of the course for which RPL is being applied.
- 3) Potential RPL applicant's student will be identified by the relevant Course Recruitment Group (CRG) and will be given the appropriate RPL handbook containing information required to complete the application. Each applicant will be able to contact the RPL co-ordinator to help support them in their application. Deadlines will be given for the submission of the evidence appropriate to course entry dates.
- 4) Each application will normally take a maximum of 4 weeks to process.

Stage 2

- 5) Applications will be submitted to the RPL co-ordinator who will then complete an RPL checklist to ensure that the application form has been completed.
- 6) The RPL application will then be passed to the course leader for review to ensure that the mapping evidence is appropriate and relevant. If it is felt that there limited evidence the applicant will be informed asked to submit further supporting evidence. Details of any further evidence needed will be provided to the applicant.

Stage 3

- 7) Once checked and deemed to be complete the application will be forwarded to the appropriate unit leader(s). The evidence will be assessed to ensure that the learning outcomes listed in the Unit Information forms have been successfully met from prior experience or prior learning. The unit leader will subsequently make a recommendation on the application and return the application to the RPL co-ordinator.
- 8) The RPL co-ordinator will convene the RPL committee (either face to face or electronically) who will review each RPL application and recommendations made by the unit leader(s). The Role of the RPL committee is to ensure that the assessment of portfolios is rigorous and consistently applied, and that the evidence provided meets the learning outcomes.
- 9) The RPL committee will consist of:
 - Course Leader (Chair)
 - Registrar/Assistant registrar
 - Unit Leader(s) relevant to the units for which the applicant has applied for RPL to.



- 10) The RPL committee will make one of two recommendations:
 - a) The RPL application is successful: The student will not be required to sit the assessments relating to unit(s) that has been successfully transferred using credits from previous qualifications.
 - b) The RPL application has been unsuccessful: The prospective student will be told why the application has failed. End of APCL application.
- 11) Each applicant will be contacted in writing to inform them of the outcome of their application and with details of their modified course of learning. They will also be provided with confirmation of the adjusted fees they will be required to pay for their year of study.
- 12) A record of RPL credits awarded will be made against the student's record.
- 13) The registrar will include all successful applications for RPL at the appropriate Board of Examiners meeting to note.

Appeal Process

- 14) If the applicant is unhappy with the outcome of the RPL process they may lodge an appeal. There are two grounds for appealing:
 - a) The application process was not administered appropriately.
 - b) Additional information in support of the RPL has become available that would address identified short-fallings in the initial application.
- 15) If an applicant wishes to appeal they should submit a written request to the RPL co-ordinator detailing the grounds for their appeal. The appropriate Course Leader will review the appeal and rule as to whether it should be upheld. The applicant will be informed in writing within 5 working days.
- 16) The RPL coordinator will undertake a review of the process to identify if there was any maladministration of the application, and will report their findings to the Course Leader. If upheld the RPL co-ordinator and Course Leader will review the application.
- 17) If additional information in support of the application becomes available then RPL applications can be reviewed at the discretion of the appropriate Course Leader and the Vice Principal (Education). The applicant will be required to map any new evidence and resubmit their application, in line with the RPL process.
- 18) All appeal outcomes will normally be communicated to the applicant in writing within 4 weeks.

For further information regarding RPL, please contact the RPL Coordinator

Flow chart describing the RPL process

