

Policy on Credit Transfer and the Recognition of Prior Learning

Purpose

1. This policy details the principles and rules relating to Credit Transfer and the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL); that is, the acknowledgement of previously-achieved academic credits or prior learning experience, which can be recognised in place of a University of York module and counted towards the amount of credit required to achieve a University of York award.
2. This policy will inform staff in schools/departments, staff in partner institutions delivering collaborative provision and central university administrators in the effective and appropriate consideration of applications for credit transfer and RPL by potential students.
3. Students wishing to make an application for credit transfer or RPL will also find the document useful, but are additionally encouraged to consult [guidance for undergraduates](#) and [guidance for postgraduates](#).

Scope

4. This policy applies to all taught modules and programmes leading to the award of credit or qualifications of the University as delivered or awarded by the University, including collaborative provision, unless the form of provision is approved to be out of scope by the Chair of University Education Committee (UEC) in consultation with the Chair of the Standing Committee on Assessment (SCA).
5. This policy only applies to individual applications. Recognition of credit for whole cohorts entering the University as part of collaborative programmes or articulation agreements will be considered on a partnership basis.
6. Postgraduate research degrees are out of scope. However, credit transfer or recognition of prior learning may be offered for taught modules that are required for progression or form part of a taught award as part of an integrated postgraduate research programme: see the [Policy on Research Degrees](#) for more details.
7. Programmes delivered by the International Pathway College are not eligible for credit transfer or RPL.
8. Apprenticeships are out of scope: see the [Apprenticeships Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#).
9. Only credit at equivalent or higher level can be considered for credit transfer or RPL. Applications to enter University programmes based on an applicant having obtained credit at a lower level than the award for which they have applied will be considered under the admissions policy.

Definitions

10. Accreditation: In this context, refers to the awarding of credit for prior learning achievements.
11. Audit: To undertake the taught component, but not the assessment, of a module without gaining credit or a grade, or it forming part of an award.

12. Collaborative provision: For definitions of forms of collaborative provision, see [Taxonomy of Taught Educational Partnerships Models](#).
13. Credit transfer: The process by which credit or qualifications awarded by another UK higher education degree-awarding body or on an alternative University of York programme is accepted as contributing to part of the full programme applied for.
14. Currency: A defined time period within which credit and prior certificated/experiential learning is viewed to be current (usually five years).
15. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): The umbrella term for the recognition of prior certificated learning (RPCL) and prior experiential learning (RPEL), which can also be read as synonymous with Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL, and APCL and APEL).
 - a. RCPL: the recognition of certificated learning and training (such as professional development awards or employment-based awards), that has not led to the award of UK higher education credit but where learning can be assessed as being at a level comparable to the credit level of University programmes of study.
 - b. RPEL: the recognition of non-certificated learning and training (such as that gained through work experience) that can be assessed as being at a level comparable to the credit level of the York programme of study.
16. RPL is used throughout this document as an overall process/concept, encompassing credit transfer, RPEL and/or RPCL. Individual terms are used when appropriate to specifically refer to a distinct process or policy.

Exceptions

17. Exceptions to this policy will only be considered where they are deemed to be justified for at least one of the following reasons:
 - a. As part of the design and delivery of collaborative provision, alternative arrangements are agreed by the University and the Partner Organisation, including for wider legal requirements and different cultural contexts when working internationally.
 - b. PSRBs explicitly require an alternative approach.
18. All requests for exceptions on the grounds above must be approved by the Chair of UEC. Exceptions shall be requested in writing via the Academic Quality and Development Team.
19. Where schools/departments wish to support a claim that is not covered by this policy the case may be considered by the Board of Studies(BoS)/Department Education Committee (DEC) who may then request its consideration by the Chair of UEC.
20. Where a school/department expects to receive regular individual requests of an identical nature that are an exception to this policy they may apply to UEC for a standing exceptional process to consider such applications.
21. Schools/departments must seek approval from UEC if they wish to exempt a complete programme of study from this policy (which will be documented on the programme specification).

Policy statement

Context

22. The University recognises the importance of providing applicants the opportunity to demonstrate relevant prior learning and training, in order for them to gain York credit/awards. This includes:
 - a. Encouraging applications to programmes of study from students from diverse routes of access, whether UK or overseas, and which might involve RPL.
 - b. Facilitating visiting students' transfer by acknowledging the appropriate prior learning from their original institution along with the modules already undertaken at York if such students apply for RPL.
23. This policy has been written with the [Office for Students' Sector-recognised standards](#) and [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications \(FHEQ\) of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies \(2024\)](#) as primary external reference points. These benchmark expected standards and levels of student learning for providers of UK higher education and awards.
24. Where an assessment of the learning undertaken demonstrates its suitability for the York programme, and the credit from another provider is at the appropriate level according to the [sector-recognised standards](#) and [FHEQ](#), the University will regard this as comparable to University of York credit, and as qualifying for credit transfer without further assessment of the students' subject knowledge and skills.
25. UEC is responsible for policy and procedure relating to RPL, supported by the Standing Committee on Assessment (SCA), in consultation with appropriate professional services and schools/departments.
26. RPL will be considered where students enrol at the outset on a programme, or in the case of postgraduate taught provision, may undertake study on a credit accumulation basis in accordance with the [Taught Postgraduate Awards by Credit Accumulation - Programme Design Policy Statement](#).
27. The University is committed to managing RPL applications with due regard to its responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010) to promote access, inclusion and equality of educational opportunity for students that might identify as having a protected characteristic as defined by the Act.

Prior learning eligible for recognition

28. Allowed proportions of RPL are set out in table 1. The maximum proportions permitted balance the flexibility of educational opportunity with the assurance that awards of the University of York reflect sufficient evidence of study at the institution.

Table 1: Maximum proportions of permitted credit transfer and RPL

University of York Programme	Maximum Credit Total for RPL or Credit Transfer of non-York credit (%)	Minimum balance to be undertaken as taught York modules on the registered programme of study or including York credit obtained previously and transferred into the programme
University Certificate of Lifelong Learning (60 credits)	33.3% (up to 20 credits RPEL)	66.7%
Certificate of Higher Education (120 credits)	50% (up to 20 credits RPEL)	50%
Diploma of Higher Education (240 credits)	50% (up to 20 credits RPEL)	50%
Foundation Degree (240 credits)	50% (up to 20 credits RPEL)	50%
LLB Senior Status (240 credits)	0%	100%
Ordinary Degree (300 credits)	33.3% (up to 20 credits RPEL)	66.7% (All Level 6/Stage 3 modules must be completed at York)
Honours Degree (360 credits)	33.3% (up to 20 credits RPEL)	66.7% (All Level 6 (Stage 3) modules must be completed at York)
Integrated Masters Degree (480 credits)	25% (up to 20 credits RPEL)	75% (credit transfer and RPL may only be applied to Level 4/Stage 1 and Level 5/Stage 2 modules. All Level 6/Stage 3 and Level 7/Stage 4 modules must be completed at York)
Graduate Certificate (60 credits)	50% (up to 20 credits RPEL)	50%
Graduate Diploma (120 credits)	50% (up to 20 credits RPEL)	50%
Postgraduate Certificate (60 credits)	50% (up to 20 credits RPEL)	50%

University of York Programme	Maximum Credit Total for RPL or Credit Transfer of non-York credit (%)	Minimum balance to be undertaken as taught York modules on the registered programme of study or including York credit obtained previously and transferred into the programme
Postgraduate Diploma (120 credits)	50% (up to 20 credits RPEL)	50%
Masters Degree (180 credits)	50% of the taught credit component of the programme (up to 40 credits RPEL)	50% (excluding credits awarded for Capstone Project Modules, which must be completed at York)

29. RPL applications cannot be made against modules at honours level (level 6) or above on undergraduate programmes (see [table 1](#)). Applications from individuals for direct entry into stage 3 with advanced standing will not normally be permitted. In exceptional cases schools/departments can put a case to the Chair of UEC for consideration.
30. For taught postgraduate programmes, RPL claims may not be made against Capstone Project Modules (dissertations or project reports), which must be undertaken as part of the student's studies at York (see [table 1](#)).
31. Hull York Medical School (HYMS) students that register on a York programme of study for the purposes of intercalation as part of a medical degree will not normally be able to transfer credits from their MBBS (or equivalent) programme to the intercalated award.
32. The minimum credit transfer permitted is one full York module (that is students cannot apply to credit transfer or RPL a proportion of a module's credit value). The maximum credit value allowable varies according to the nature of the award to which the student will be entitled (see [table 1](#)).
33. Where applications are made for RPEL, the maximum number of credits that can be recognised is detailed in [table 1](#). RPEL credit may also be recognised when students are studying via credit accumulation for eventual award in line with the [Taught Postgraduate Awards by Credit Accumulation - Programme Design Policy Statement](#).
34. Credit and prior certificated or experiential learning is normally viewed as current if completed within five years of the expected date of registration on the programme applied for. If completed more than five years prior, additional evidence of continued learning or experience at a relevant level may be required.
35. In some circumstances schools/departments may recommend shorter currency periods, for instance due to Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) accreditation requirements or areas where curricula changes rapidly. In such cases, approval must be sought from the Chair of UEC (see also, [Exceptions](#)).

Department/School responsibilities

36. Schools/departments are required to consider applications that, through the evidence provided, justify exempting a student from the need to undertake some modules on a programme of study, unless good reason can be given for exempting specific programmes or applications (see [Exceptions](#) section).
37. To ensure applicants can access relevant information, the Head of School/Department must ensure that the roles and responsibilities of staff associated with RPL are publicised to all staff, students and applicants via any school/departmental statement on RPL.
38. The Chair of the BoS/DEC may delegate RPL responsibilities to a named individual member of staff to act as RPL Coordinator.
39. Schools/departments must give applicants a clear point of contact for information, advice and guidance in the school/department (who will be supported by central University services).
40. Schools/departments should support the applicant to understand the process and to evidence their application, including providing clear information about what they are required to produce to evidence their learning, by what deadline and how it will be assessed.
41. Where an RPEL portfolio is required, the school/department will provide the applicant with tutorial assistance (face-to-face or online) so that they understand what is required in order to prepare this.
42. Where possible, schools/departments should approve RPL applications before applicants enrol on a programme. Where this has not been possible, approval should take place before the applicant starts the relevant module, unless there are exceptional reasons to allow the student to begin the module.
 - a. Exceptional reasons may be such as in the Department of Health Sciences where students may start a module as a free-standing CPD registration based on an application for advanced standing by RPL having been submitted but not yet approved at the start of the module, which if then accepted can enable a transfer to registration onto a programme.
43. Schools/departments must identify where applicants may be required to undertake additional learning where prior learning or transferred credit has not covered all equivalent content to the York module/programme of study. The applicant is responsible for ensuring they sufficiently engage with any required additional learning.
44. Schools/departments should advise applicants to seek advice from the appropriate University services as to any implications for financial support they receive or for immigration student visa compliance if their use of RPL would result in a reduced workload or a shortened study duration compared to the standard programme of study.
45. Schools/departments should consider what solutions or advice they could give an applicant that has relevant prior learning or training but is unaware of a final award or programme they could work towards. This may include the school/department working with potential postgraduate taught applicants to identify routes they could take to combine prior credit or training with relevant new learning to build credit towards an award via the [Taught Postgraduate Awards by Credit Accumulation - Programme Design Policy Statement](#).

Applicant responsibilities

46. Applicants wishing to transfer credit from UK providers, or have prior certificated or experiential learning recognised, must contact the relevant school/department to express their interest and discuss their circumstances.
47. Applicants that have studied with non-UK providers must first contact Marketing, Recruitment, Admissions and Outreach (MRAO), who will check their qualifications and institution and then transfer the application to the school/department.
48. Applicants are responsible for sourcing, collating and providing the required evidence to demonstrate that their previous learning satisfactorily fulfils the requirements of the relevant module(s) (for example, through formal transcripts with supporting module information and learning outcomes, or a portfolio of evidence to support an RPEL application). Evidence and supporting materials should be provided in English. Translations into English must be certified, with original documents available on request.
49. Applicants are responsible for submitting their application and any required evidence within the appropriate timescales.

Considering applications: process

50. Schools/departments are responsible for processing and assessing RPL applications in liaison with MRAO, with the Chair of BoS/DEC or other appropriate responsible person (for example RPL Coordinator).
51. The assessment of applications is a matter of academic judgement (see [Academic Judgement - Policy](#)), which must be undertaken by the Programme Leader of the relevant programme or appropriate alternative.
52. The processes and considerations of applications concerning combined programmes (see [Policy on Undergraduate Programme Design](#)) must be agreed by all schools/departments contributing to the programme. The school/department in which the Programme Leader is based will oversee RPL applications for combined programmes to ensure applications are appropriately and consistently processed.
53. Applications concerning combined programmes should be approved with due consideration for the balance of modules to be taken in each discipline and school/department to ensure that students undertake sufficient York credits in the respective subjects of the programme (see [Policy on Undergraduate Programme Design](#)).
54. Schools/departments should consider carefully whether there are any health and safety implications of allowing students to be exempted from particular modules via RPL. Inductions for such students should be carefully reviewed. The decision on whether evidence of previous knowledge/experience satisfies any relevant safety requirements should be made by the School/Departmental Health and Safety Officer.
55. Schools/departments are responsible for assessing applications to determine whether the learning evidenced (and not the completion of the activity alone) demonstrates sufficiently that the applicant has the knowledge, skills and experience to meet the learning outcomes of the modules to be replaced.

This is to enable the student to successfully undertake the remaining programme of study, and/or for credit or learning recognised to contribute to a named award through the contribution to meeting Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs).

56. Applications will be assessed based on the authenticity, relevance, sufficiency, validity and currency of the qualifications and other evidence presented by the applicant (see [Procedure on Credit Transfer and the Recognition of Prior Learning](#)).

Collaborative partnerships

57. Partner institutions delivering collaborative provision must also publicise their RPL process and responsible staff to all staff, students and applicants via an appropriate statement on RPL.
58. Staff at partner organisations responsible for any validated or franchised collaborative provision will consider RPL applications for those programmes through the appropriate academic forum in the same way as for programmes delivered by the University of York.
59. Applicants to collaborative programmes will be treated in the same way as applicants to and students on programmes delivered by the University of York itself and with account for the nature of the collaboration (for example validation or joint programme). As part of the approval process for collaborative provision, consideration will be given as to how the partner organisation will process RPL applications.
60. An applicant that has completed a collaborative programme, or a joint award of the University of York and a partner organisation (such as HYMS), will be treated in the same way as students/graduates of programmes delivered by York.

Application outcomes

61. As the assessment of applications is a matter of academic judgement, RPL decisions are not subject to appeal (see [Academic Judgement - Policy](#)). If an applicant is unhappy with the processing or outcome of their application they have the right to make a complaint or appeal on grounds that are admissible within the relevant procedures (see [Complaints and Appeals](#)).
62. Feedback is an important part of the assessment process in order to enable applicants/students to understand the rationale for academic decisions and for their personal development. The school/department must provide applicants that are unsuccessful in their claim for RPL with sufficient feedback to understand the academic judgement made, or any other reasons as to why their application cannot be approved.
63. Schools/departments must maintain records of all applications for RPL, of the decisions made and the reasons for the decision. This is the responsibility of the Chair of BoS/DEC or the RPL Coordinator where relevant. Any issues arising from the administration of RPL applications must be reported to the Chair of UEC through SCA. The Academic Quality and Development Team may also request evidence of a school/department's handling of RPL applications as part of quality assurance processes.

Fees

64. Where students are enrolling at the outset on a programme of study, they will not normally be eligible for a fee reduction to account for the reduction in taught modules where RPL has been applied.

65. No fee will be charged for the assessment and recognition of any prior learning that may be accepted by the University as credit to then contribute to an eventual award, including where students are undertaking study via credit accumulation activity, and paying on a module-by-module basis.

Using transferred/recognised credit for awards

66. If a student that received, or is eligible for, an exit award of the University of York (see [Policy on Taught Programme and Module Design](#)) wishes to complete a higher award using the credit of the lower award this lower award will not be withheld or rescinded. Similarly the University does not have the authority to rescind lower awards granted by other institutions when a student applies for RPL onto a York programme.
67. Where a student progresses from one award to a higher volume award (for example on a staged postgraduate programme or after previous study resulting in an award), they must not exceed the maximum allowable credit transfer or RPL for the higher award (see [table 1](#)).
68. Where a student leaves a programme before completing an intended award and is eligible for an exit award, they must not exceed the maximum allowable RPL credit for that level of award (see [table 1](#)).
69. Schools/departments must ensure that students will undertake some study in all the semesters/terms that they are registered for in order to satisfy programme registration and attendance requirements. Exceptions to this are students undertaking study via credit accumulation (see [Taught Postgraduate Awards by Credit Accumulation - Programme Design Policy Statement](#)), or those undertaking York Online programmes and Apprenticeships where there is the option to take study breaks (see [York Online information](#) and [Apprenticeships information](#))).
70. Students, by agreement with the school/department may audit alternative modules for academic interest so as to have a full credit load in terms of teaching hours. Results from such modules will not be included in progression or award calculations.
71. A postgraduate programme may contain a module a student has already successfully completed as part of their undergraduate programme at York within the agreed period for currency. This could be at honours (level 6) or masters (level 7) level. In such cases, the student must advise the Programme Leader they have already completed the module, and the credits will be transferred to the postgraduate programme. The student will have the opportunity to audit the module (or an alternative one) to replace the credit load of the module in question.
72. Where a student on a York Online programme has used RPL against a module, there may be circumstances where there is no alternative module for them to audit. In such circumstances, they will be placed on a 'no module to study' leave of absence. This can happen more than once depending on the individual student's trajectory, or not at all depending on their start date. This can therefore reduce a student's programme duration to less than 2 years of part time study.
73. In cases of credit transfer, and unless agreed as part of a partnership for collaborative provision for example, only marks awarded at the University of York will be included in progression decisions, calculation and classification of the final award. That is, credit transferred from another degree-awarding body will be treated as though obtained on a pass/fail basis and not used to calculate the final award. For policy relating to the recognition of marks obtained from a partner institution see [Agreeing Marks and Awards for Collaborative Provision Programmes - Policy](#).

Monitoring and review

74. UEC will monitor, review and improve this policy by utilising feedback from a range of stakeholders including RPL applicants, staff in schools/departments, external examiners and professional service teams.

Document control

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