



Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

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1. Introduction

Trent Education Centre (TEC) is dedicated to increasing access to and involvement in Higher Education, particularly for underrepresented and marginalised community members. TEC recognises that rather than formal degrees, many of the individuals we seek to support have prior knowledge or experience that helps them succeed in higher education. It is possible that some students have completed part of a qualification on a course at another college or university that is comparable to the qualification they wish to join at TEC. This is referred to as Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). If TEC applies recognition of prior learning it will be subject to the approval of the relevant Awarding Organisation.

2. Purpose

This policy explains to staff members what to do when students apply for a course without formal qualifications but have relevant prior knowledge or experience. They may also substitute their prior knowledge or credentials for some of the requirements of the course they want to enrol in as proof of accomplishment. If students can show that they have equal prior learning, they will be exempt from attending courses and turning in assessments for portions of the course. The purpose, methods, and procedures for granting recognition of prior learning (RPL) are outlined in this policy.

RPL is helpful for students who have relevant learning experience but lack the required credits and are transferring between different learning programmes. Students transferring from one accredited awarding organisation to another can take advantage of this.

3. Scope

This policy applies in the following two ways:

3.1. Entry Requirements

Applicants who wish to enter a course on the basis of prior learning or experience as opposed to meeting the standard entry requirements for a course. For example, two years of relevant work experience, rather than a level 3 qualification, can be considered as an alternative which helps satisfy the entry requirements for a level 4 course, as long as the applicant is 21 years or over. In extraordinary cases, TEC may accept one year of work experience, provided that the experience is judged comparable to the standard entry level requirements.

3.2. Unit or Module Exemptions

Applicants can be considered for an exemption from having to take certain modules or units of a course because of their partial success in another course. Applicants cannot gain exemption from examinations. They may only be exempted from assessments that require written reports and oral activities. Applicants must demonstrate how the units or modules they have passed in another course are equivalent to the units or modules they wish to be exempted from taking in the course they are joining at TEC. Applicants at TEC cannot use RPL to gain exemption from more than 50% of the modules or units of a course they wish to join.

4. Descriptions of RPL

When learners can show they have already met the requirements for a unit without needing to study for that unit or take the assessment, they are eligible for recognition of prior learning, or RPL. This is a commonly accepted form of assessment for nationally regulated qualifications. The two subsets that make up RPL are as follows:

4.1. Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)

This procedure allows applicants to have their earlier learning from experience—such as paid or volunteer work—and/or self-directed study acknowledged.

4.2. Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL)

This procedure allows an applicant to request official recognition for past learning from credentials that aren't acknowledged by the combination guidelines for the proposed qualification. The terms listed below are frequently referred to as RPL by the following abbreviations.

- Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)
- Accreditation of Prior Achievement (APA)
- Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)
- Accreditation of Prior Learning and Achievement (APLA)

5. Guarantees

RPL seeks to ensure that a broad range of learning and accomplishments are accurately and fairly acknowledged by making the following guarantees:

- RPL is authentic, current, reliable, valid, and sufficient.
- Accurate recording of RPL procedures, such as experiential and certified learning.
- Keeping accurate records of the instances in which experiential or certified learning has satisfied learning objectives.
- Academic team members qualified to make decisions about RPL review applications for RPL.
- The certified accomplishments from the past that are utilised for RPL meet the requirements for the applicable learning outcomes, and assessment criteria.
- RPL assessed evidence from certified learning is at the same educational level as the evidence it is substituting for

6. Pearson and RPL

The Pearson awarding organisation has specific expectations concerning the [recognition of prior learning](#) for students claiming exemption from specific units of a Pearson BTEC HND.

An award for higher education that has received Pearson certification cannot be used to satisfy the requirements for another Pearson award of the same level through recognition of prior learning. The term "award" refers to a full qualification, like a Higher National Diploma or Certificate. A single unit can be used for RPL but is not considered an award.

TEC will evaluate whether Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is appropriate on an individual basis in cases where awards for higher education have been certified by another awarding body with a Pearson licence.

Units may be used towards RPL when students want to top-up from an equivalent Level 4 programme to a Level 5 HND programme on the RQF framework. However, TEC must assign extra tasks for Learning Outcomes that are not met by the prior qualification.

The highest mark possible for a unit in which RPL is used to evaluate the fulfilment of learning objectives for a Pearson HND award is a Pass if the RPL was completed through experiential learning.

Explicit proof of how RPL meets the Merit or Distinction requirements for every learning outcome is required if Merits or Distinctions are to be awarded for prior learning .

No more than 50% of a Higher National award's total credit value can be granted through RPL. All RPL decisions must be approved by the Assessment Board, with delegated powers from the Academic Board. All decisions and documentation must be approved by the Academic Board and available for Pearson-appointed External Examiners to access.

Students will be registered with Edexcel online as soon as their RPL has been approved by the Academic Board. The assessment records shall be kept up to date in compliance with standard operating procedures. The assessment decisions will not be confirmed until all pertinent data has been considered. Tracking sheets of student results will include units achieved through RPL.

7. Responsibilities

In addition to overseeing the quality of the RPL process, the Quality Nominee and/or Head of Higher Education works with Programme Leaders and Internal Verifiers to support RPL claimants and keep accurate documentation.

8. RPL for Units

The RPL process is student-centred and optional. Students requesting credit through RPL will be assisted in comprehending the kinds of proof needed to support their claims. They will also receive guidance on how to present their case persuasively.

The RPL assessment procedure follows the same quality assurance and monitoring guidelines as any other assessment procedure. The same internal assessment and verification procedures that apply to other credits will apply to credits granted through RPL.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) can be used to get credit for any unit unless the assessment rules of the awarding organisation prevent it.

When utilising RPL as evidence of passing a unit, the assessor must make sure that the student's evidence meets the standards and satisfies the assessment criteria for the learning outcome.

Different sectors may generate different examples of relevant prior learning. The assessor may use interview questions to assess the student's understanding and competency if there is any doubt about the validity of the evidence. Each qualification's assessment methodology will be adhered to.

TEC must carry out a mapping exercise to make sure that the learning outcomes of a given unit of an award are equivalent to the learning outcomes of the other award if students desire to transfer their learning from one awarding organisation to another.

RPL will be reviewed as part of TEC's overall Annual Academic Management Review (AAMR). RPL is also subject to regular internal verification.

9. Course Entry Requirements

Candidates may choose to use Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) to meet the prerequisites for any programme offered by TEC. The Admissions requirements may include job documentation, such as reference letters, payslips, or other pertinent records, to verify work experience. The original certificates and transcripts must be reviewed and verified by a member of the admissions team and the academic interviewer.

The academic interviewer interviews candidates who have submitted RPL to satisfy the entry requirements. They will evaluate the applicant's experience and/or qualification during the interview to see if they meet the prerequisites for the programme, they want to enrol in. Before an applicant is accepted, the application interview form will record their suitability for the course they are applying.

10. RPL Process

10.1. Stage 1 – Pre-assessment

- Students are advised about the possibility of using RPL to claim up to 50% of the units for a course they wish to enrol onto and qualification they wish to attain.
- A senior faculty member such as the Head of Higher Education evaluates the validity of the evidence submitted by students requesting RPL.

10.2. Stage 2 - Mapping Plan

The student must submit an assessment plan that maps all the learning outcomes they have studied in a previous course against the learning outcomes of a unit they wish to be exempted from taking. Students should provide a certificate and transcript from the relevant awarding organisations showing which learning outcomes they have met. Student may offer the following as evidence but they are under not guarantee that it will be accepted by TEC as RPL.

- Non-certificated education or learning
- Paid job experience backed by employer references.
- Community or voluntary work experience backed by employer references.
- Student-provided academic work, such as prior essays
- The Assessor may ask questions or require the learner to demonstrate their skills to ensure that their knowledge, comprehension, and abilities are up to date.
- The Assessor may generate new assignment briefs or tasks to fill in any gaps in the learner's work.

10.3. Stage 3 - Assessment of RPL

- A senior faculty member such as the Head of Higher Education or whoever acts as the Quality Nominee considers the learning objectives and assessment standards for the claimed qualification or unit while evaluating the supporting documentation. The assessor must be confident that the applicants evidence satisfies all relevant learning outcomes and assessment criteria before approving RPL and granting a student exemption from a unit or part of unit.
- Assessment records pertaining to prior learning are kept up to date and easily available for internal verification and External Examination upon request.
- If there are gaps in the learner's work during RPL, additional assessment techniques should be used to obtain enough evidence for awarding the learning outcome of the entire unit.

10.4. Stage 4 - Outcomes of RPL

- Giving a learner feedback is essential after assessing their evidence and making an assessment determination. In addition to outlining the assessment decision, this feedback should outline the learner's alternatives if the unit or qualification is not awarded through RPL.
- If the student is unhappy with the assessment's outcome, you should confirm that they are aware of the appeals procedure. Students may file an appeal or a complaint in line with TEC's Academic Appeals and Complaints and Appeals Policy.

10.5. Stage 5 Appeals

Students must pursue the Appeals Process specified in the Admissions Policy if they would like to contest an admission decision based on an assessment of RPL.

11. RPL flow Chart

