

Application of Recognition of Prior Learning for Apprenticeship Programmes

1. Scope/Background

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance and information around the need for undertaking initial assessment and recognition of prior learning (RPL) when engaging apprentices in line with the ESFA [funding rules](#).

RPL extends beyond existing qualifications into the knowledge, skills and behaviours already set out in the relevant apprenticeship standard and it is a requirement that these knowledge, skills and behaviours are considered when reviewing the prior learning of potential apprentices. Whilst the University already has a robust process for the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL), RPL under ESFA rules will feed into the level of funding allowed for each apprentice.

The ESFA rules state that the apprenticeship content, duration and price must be reduced where the individual has relevant prior learning, and this must be factored in when negotiating the price of the apprenticeship with the employer.

An apprentice must not effectively be being taught knowledge, skills or behaviours they already possess and require significant and sustained new training in order to reach the competencies required in the relevant standard.

2. Initial Assessment of Apprentices

On engagement of Apprentices, it is the School's responsibility to ensure that:

- the learning and job role undertaken is appropriate for the individual: apprentices should not undertake paid training they do not need;
- how much of the programme the individual is required to study to reach occupational competency and meet the employer's expectations;
- Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs) dictated within the apprenticeship standards have been addressed through the learning journey or are recognised through prior learning and experience.

Each Apprenticeship Programme should undertake an initial assessment of prospective apprentices which should include the following:

- Benchmark the learner's starting point of learning;
- Inform the learner journey and individual learning plan;
- Ensure the appropriateness of assessment and off-the-job training;
- Identify and evidence any accreditation of prior learning, including experiential learning;
- Carry out identification and analyses of skills gaps;

- Inform the amount of funding to be drawn;
- Identify any potential barriers to learning;
- Ensure appropriate recording of the initial assessment;
- Map the competencies and practitioner elements of the apprenticeship standard.

The responsibility for the initial assessment belongs to the School/Programme Director or a nominated member of the delivery team. The initial assessment should be completed at application stage and recorded accordingly.

The School/Programme Director will explore recognised accredited prior learning and experiential learning with the candidates. RPL can be applied, on evidence of the certification, and the learner journey must be adjusted accordingly to acknowledge the accreditation.

If it is agreed that there is relevant existing prior learning, the programme team must assess whether the individual still meets the eligibility criteria of requiring 'significant and sustained' new training (a minimum duration of 12 months with at least 20% off-the-job training).

3. Recognition of Prior Learning

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) allows training providers to value knowledge, skills and experience of individuals regardless of where they have been acquired. RPL offers individuals and businesses the chance to accredit their employees' learning and experience through an RPL application process.

Where prior learning has been identified through the initial assessment and applied to the apprentice standard, evidence of knowledge, skills or behaviour needs to be shown and recorded.

To align with the ESFA funding rules, any accepted recognition of prior learning must result in an adjustment of both costs and duration of programme length. The Programme Director should work with the apprentice and the employer to complete the RPL application. An RPL application will consist of the following steps:

- Mapping of the initial assessment findings against the apprenticeship standard;
- Development of assessment and a submission of evidence in the case of experiential learning;
- Development of learner journey and individual learning plan to account for existing KSBs;
- Application of the University's existing APEL processes where necessary.

4. After Initial Assessment

Following the initial assessment, if the decision is made that the learner is eligible for the apprenticeship, the School must ensure the following:

- The RPL is documented in the evidence pack and summarised in the commitment statement;
- An agreement between the School and employer is reached regarding both reductions in price and duration of the apprenticeship;
- An agreement between the School and employer is reached and documented on the delivery of the apprenticeship programme to reflect the learner's existing KSB's.

5. Applying RPL for apprenticeship re-starts

In accordance with ESFA funding rules, where an apprentice ceases employment with one employer but continues with another, recognition of prior learning must be taken into account when agreeing the new price and duration of the apprenticeship with the new employer. Recognition of prior learning is to be applied for all apprenticeship re-starts, regardless of the length in break in learning.

Recognition of Prior Learning should be recorded in the evidence pack for the new employer to identify that all previous learning on the apprenticeship has been taken into account.

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