

Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) Guidance Notes

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The Principle of Credit on Entry

The core principle of accrediting prior learning APL is that an applicant can join a programme and eventually graduate from it without having to study all modules because previous experience or modules completed before the proposed registration (or a combination of the two) has equipped them to enter part way through a programme AS IF they are in the same position as the other students in their cohort.

APCL is the acronym used for accrediting prior **certificated** learning – that is modules or programmes taken that resulted in marks being recorded or a certificate being awarded.

APEL is the acronym used for accrediting prior **experiential** learning – that is work experience.

Could I apply for APL?

Any prospective applicant who thinks they have the relevant experience (APEL) or certificates (APCL) to replace part of the programme they want to take should discuss this with the Admissions Office or the Admissions Tutor who can provide guidance. It is the applicant's responsibility to fill out an application form and produce evidence for credit on entry. [The application form \(SF029b\) is available on the WUC website.](#)

How do I prove that I have achieved the relevant learning?

The applicant will need to produce certificates, transcripts and details about any programmes taken or modules/units of study successfully completed. For demonstrating experiential learning, a portfolio of work and references from, for example, an employer or a business client are required.

How do we gauge the quantity and level of previous learning against our modules?

We use the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) to measure what has been done in terms of level, and the standard credit weighting to measure quantity. For example, a 15 credit Level 4 module counts for the same amount and level from any UK university. For non-UK degrees information on the comparability of qualifications from overseas can be sought from UK ENIC. Please contact Admissions if you need assistance.

The table below shows the level and name of typical awards.

Level	Level Name	Typical Awards
8	Doctorate	PhD
7	Masters	MA/MSc
6	Honours	BA(Hons)/BSc(Hons)
6	Without honours	BA/BSc
5	Intermediate	FdA/FdSc/DipHE
4	Certificate	CertHE

One credit is calculated as 10 hours of study. Full-time study comprising eight 15 credit modules per year gives a study programme of $8 \times 150 = 1200$ hrs / year = 120 credits. The academic year normally comprises two semesters, with semester 1 running over 13 weeks and semester 2 over 14 weeks. The semesters include time for assessment, giving a weekly study expectation of 45 hrs /week for a full-time programme. Note that 7.5 ECTS are the same as 15 credits.

Can I use my FE level 3 credits?

No, the credit transferred must be at the same level as the module it will replace.

How do we interpret and gauge the content of previous learning against our modules?

To work out what the modules or work experience already achieved would be equivalent to, an Admissions Tutor will map the learning outcomes from the previous programme or experience against the learning outcomes for the modules that the applicant would like to be exempted from. To do this, the Admissions Tutor needs lots of information, for example, a transcript from the applicant's previous institution and other documents such as a module guide or a link to the institution's website where the contents of the module are available. For experiential learning, a portfolio of work and documents such as job descriptions as well as any references are required.

If the mapping doesn't work perfectly is there anything that can be done?

If many of the learning outcomes and the appropriate number of credits have been fulfilled by previous programmes/experience but there are some learning outcomes not covered, the Admissions Tutor might be able to set up a **bridging study** for the applicant to complete to fill in the gap(s).

What would a bridging study expect me to do?

A bridging study can be anything from a summer programme organised to bring a group of students up to speed on an aspect of the programme to an arrangement for a one-to-one tutorial to fill in a small knowledge gap. A bridging study can also be a piece of work to complete before starting the programme to demonstrate the necessary skill or preparation. It is very important that any work set as part of a bridging study is completed satisfactorily as registration on the programme will depend on this. An Admissions Tutor will only set work that is essential to ensure the applicant will not be disadvantaged on the rest of the programme.

Is it possible to carry over credit for part of a module?

No, this would be against the regulations governing APL arrangements.

Do I have to do all this if I am progressing from a WUC award to a higher award?

No, if the progression is part of what is called 'an articulated programme' i.e. a programme that has been designed with that progression from one level to another built in, it is assumed that the progression works and the mapping has already been done when the programme was designed. In this case the Course Scheme Manager will do what is necessary. For example, if a student enrolled on a Foundation Degree knows that they want to transfer to a BSc/BA (Hons) in the subject this should be discussed with the Course Scheme Manager at the earliest opportunity for further advice.

Can I use credit for a programme I have completed elsewhere to change my subject or add a dissertation to change my ordinary degree to an honours degree?

To qualify for APL the applicant must be transferring to a programme to **complete their studies**, for example changing institutions mid-programme and bringing the successfully completed modules, or transferring to a **higher award** and bringing the completed lower award, for example topping up a foundation degree to an honours degree. APL cannot be

used to convert an awarded BSc (Hons) in one subject to a BSc (Hons) in a related subject by taking some additional modules in the new subject. Also a completed ordinary degree cannot be used as credit towards an honours degree as both reach level 6 so the honours degree is not technically a higher award. The exception to this is with articulated postgraduate programmes such as PGCert, PGDip, MSc/MA packages. A student at WUC can receive the smaller award and then at a later point continue to a larger award even though they are all at level 7.

Is there a limit to how many credits I can claim credit for?

Yes, this varies depending on the type of programme. The table below details this.

Award	Maximum credits that may be imported	Minimum credits to be taken at WUC	Total credits for award
Master's Degree	60	120 (QCF Level 7)	180
Postgraduate Diploma	40	80 (QCF Level 7)	120
Graduate Diploma	40	80 (QCF Level 6)	120
Postgraduate Certificate	20	40 (QCF Level 7)	60
Graduate Certificate	20	40 (QCF Level 6)	60
CHEP (Cert of HE Practice)	30	30 (QCF Level 7)	60
Honours Degree	240	120 (must be Level 6)	360
Foundation Degree	120	120 (must be at least Level 5)	240
Diploma of HE	120	120 (must be at least Level 5)	240
Certificate of HE	60	60 (must be at least Level 4)	120

How long ago can it be since I studied for my credits?

Normally five years maximum. If credit is more than five years old, but the applicant has been in relevant work, the Admissions Tutor can discuss whether a joint APCL and APEL claim should be made.

Are the marks awarded by my old university carried over to the new programme?

When credit is brought in from another institution it is thought of as a block of credit that exempts the applicant from a similar amount of credit to be taken at WUC. However, we are not in a position to award those marks, only to exempt the student from our own modules. The final degree classification is calculated on the basis of WUC marks only. When

the marks on the credit being imported were generated by WUC, then the marks can be used and the degree classification is calculated in the usual way.

What appears on my final transcript?

If the credit was imported from another institution it appears as a block of credit imported and the modules taken at WUC appear with their titles and the marks. If it was all WUC modules (as in an articulated top-up) then all module titles appear with their marks.

Who is responsible for what and how does the process work?

Step 1

Applicant contacts Admissions Tutor or Admissions Office to discuss their situation and flag-up a potential application for credit on entry.

Step 2

Admissions Tutor or Admissions Office directs student to APL Application Form (SF029b).

Step 3

Student completes applicable sections of SF029b and submits form and evidence of previous certificated or experiential learning (for example scanned certificates and transcripts) to Admissions Tutor, who contacts applicant for more information about previous study or experience (where necessary) and completes mapping process to work out exactly which modules can be exempted by credit on admission.

Step 4

Application form returned to student for signing - **this does not mean that the claim has been accepted** only that the student and the Admissions Tutor are in agreement about the application.

Step 5

Admissions tutor forwards to Admissions Office (admissions@writtle.ac.uk) and Quality Office (qualityoffice@writtle.ac.uk)

Step 6

At the next CAB meeting the application is reviewed by the Board and either:

- agreed and signed off
- sent back to Admissions Tutor to gather more evidence from student,
- turned down.

The decision is communicated to the student, Admissions Tutor and Admissions Office.

Step 7

Any bridging study proposed and/or conditions takes place. Registration on the course is dependent on all work set as part of a bridging study or a condition being completed satisfactorily.

Important

Please note that until the application is agreed by the CAB and signed off, the applicant is not registered on a programme at WUC. This is why it is called **credit on entry**. Not being

registered on a programme can create problems for any student and for international students can result in a breach of visa requirements.

If an application is turned down by the CAB what can the applicant or Admission Tutor do?

It is possible to Appeal against a decision by contacting the Secretary to the Credit Approvals Board who will advise on the procedure. Where an appeal is made, an independent panel will be called and their decision will be final.

Help at hand

Secretary of the Credit Approvals Board (CAB) - qualityoffice@writtle.ac.uk

APL Admission / General Admission enquiries - admissions@writtle.ac.uk