

## HE Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

<u>Policy Title</u>	<b>Higher Education Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)</b>	
<u>Policy Category</u>	Compliant	
<u>Owner</u>	Academic Registrar	
<u>Group Executive Lead</u>	Deputy Principal (HE)	
<u>Date Written</u>	June 2023	
<u>Considered By</u>	HE Quality and Standards	
<u>Approved By</u>	HE Academic Board	
<u>Date Approved</u>	November 2023	
<u>Equality Impact Assessment</u>	The implementation of this policy is not considered to have a negative impact on protected characteristics.	
<u>Freedom of Information</u>	This document will not be publicly available through the Group's Publication Scheme.	
<u>Review Date</u>	November 2026	
<u>Policy Summary</u>	The policy recognises learning wherever it may take place and that knowledge and skills can be acquired from a whole range of learning experiences, both formal and informal. It encourages credit transfer and RPL as a means of entry to, or credit within, all our programmes. The purpose is to ensure the recognition of prior learning is implemented consistently across the institution and that the requirements of awarding bodies are met.	
<u>Applicability of Policy</u>	<u>Consultation Undertaken</u>	<u>Applicable To</u>
Newcastle	Yes	Yes
Newcastle Sixth Form	No	No
Carlisle	Yes	Yes
Kidderminster	Yes	Yes
Lewisham	No	No
Southwark	No	No
West Lancashire	Yes	Yes
Professional Services	No	No
HE Partnerships (*partner may have an equivalent policy)	No	Yes
<b><u>Changes to Earlier Versions</u></b>		
<u>Previous Approval Date</u>	<u>Summarise Changes Made Here</u>	
June 2019 (updated June 2023)	Minor updates to reflect changes in ownership and role titles. Removal of reference to RPL Module and external links updated.	
December 2016	Transfer to new NCG policy template. Updating links and reference to linked documents to reflect currency.	
<b><u>Linked Documents</u></b>		
<u>Document Title</u>	<u>Relevance</u>	
HE Admission Policy	Recognition of prior learning implemented as part of the admissions process to enable student to obtain recognition for previous certificated or experiential learning.	
HE Academic Appeals Procedure	Students have to opportunity to appeal against the decision of the Recognition of Prior Learning Panel if they believe a procedural error has occurred. Students are not able to appeal against an academic decision.	

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### Equality Impact Assessment

	Judgement
<b>EIA 1 - Does the proposed policy/procedure align with the intention of the NCG Mission and EDIB Intent Statement in 2.0?</b>	Yes
<b>EIA 2 - Does the proposed policy/procedure in any way impact unfairly on any protected characteristics below?</b>	
<b>Age</b>	No
<b>Disability / Difficulty</b>	No
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>	No
<b>Marriage and Civil Partnership</b>	No
<b>Race</b>	No
<b>Religion or Belief</b>	No
<b>Sex</b>	No
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	No
<b>EIA3 - Does the proposed policy/processes contain any language/terms/references/ phrasing that could cause offence to any specific groups of people or individuals?</b>	No
<b>EIA4 - Does the policy/process discriminate or victimise any groups or individuals?</b>	No
<b>EIA 5 - Does this policy/process positively discriminate against any group of people, or individuals?</b>	No
<b>EIA 5 - Does this policy/process include any positive action to support underrepresented groups of people, or individuals?</b>	No
<b>EIA 6 - How do you know that the above is correct?</b>	Consultation has been carried out with relevant colleagues within NCG and with a higher education (HE) committee within our HE deliberative structure, which includes HE student representation.

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### 1. Scope and Purpose of Policy

This policy applies to all staff teaching on higher education programmes/awards and students undertaking a higher education programme/award within NCG, (the institution).

Its purpose is to ensure the HE Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy and procedures are implemented consistently across the institution and that the requirements of awarding bodies are met. In addition, the HE RPL policy and procedures are fully informed by the [UK QAA Quality Code for Higher Education and Securing student success: Regulatory framework for higher education in England \(officeforstudents.org.uk\)](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk).

The institution recognises learning wherever it may take place and that knowledge and skills can be acquired from a whole range of learning experiences, both formal and informal. We therefore encourage credit transfer and RPL as a means of entry to, or credit within, all our programmes. Such recognition will take place within the context of the institution's policy and procedures and within the specific requirements of the awarding body.

NB: The term Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) (formally known as Accreditation of Prior Learning - APEL) used throughout this policy document includes ACL (Accreditation of prior Certificated Learning) and Direct Entry (advanced standing).

All applications for RPL must be submitted online via the 'Recognise Me' website which is available at <https://recogniseme.ncgrp.co.uk>.

### 2. Policy Statement

The institutional policy is to operate a system for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in all programmes where it is acceptable to national awarding bodies. For HE provision the institution will operate a system for RPL in line with the Office for Students.

#### 2.1 Aim of the Policy

The aim of the policy is to enable individuals to:

- a) obtain qualifications without necessarily undertaking formal training and/or exams/assessment;
- b) identify their own training and development needs and be in control of their progress;
- c) demonstrate their knowledge and skills against national standards to achieve qualifications;
- d) recognise skills, knowledge and experience gained outside of the formal curriculum delivered by educational institutions;
- e) signpost students to a mechanism that enables them to develop a successful RPL claim.

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The policy will also reassure and support employers to:

- a) meet their needs to ensure the accreditation and flexibility of their workforce;
- b) be flexible and responsive in order to meet the skills demanded by the national and regional economy;
- c) support for employees undertaking RPL.

The institution recognises that many prospective students may have acquired prior knowledge and skills for success on a programme of study through previous educational achievement, work or other life experiences, but have not achieved commensurate academic qualifications. This learning can be used either as entry to programmes or to exempt students from modules of learning.

The institution's provision for RPL seeks to ensure that applicants are admitted to the highest level of award for which they are qualified, are able to benefit from the credits for which they wish to apply, and that they are awarded the maximum amount of relevant credit to which they are entitled by virtue of their prior learning achievements. These principles apply equally to pre-entry, post-entry or credit transfer applications.

Credit may be awarded only on the basis of achieved learning and not on the basis of experience itself. Although credit may be awarded for all learning, wherever that learning occurs, it must first be identified and then assessed in terms of its amount, level, relevance, status and currency.

Credit may only be given in line with the limits imposed by individual awarding bodies in recognising the proportion of learning eligible through the accreditation process. In addition, the institution will ensure that for each awarding body the implications for progression, award of interim qualifications and classification or grading of final result are clear and transparent to staff and applicants.

Learning from *planned* experience as part of the programme of study relating to an award, where the learning may be more structured and systematised, is to be distinguished from learning from *prior* experience in terms of credit transfer.

Prior learning is not graded and therefore not included in classification decisions at the Board of Examiners.

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### 2.2 Principles

The institution adopts the following principles:

- a) Decisions regarding RPL are a matter of academic judgement. The decision-making process and outcomes will be transparent and demonstrably rigorous and fair.
- b) Approval/annual programme evaluation and periodic review processes will ensure that RPL is embedded in programme specifications and handbooks/guidance material.
- c) 'Recognise Me' is the on-line, web-based system for tracking the progress of RPL students.

### 2.3 RPL Process

The table below summarises the RPL process.

Stage 1	Applicant discusses interest in RPL with programme leader.
Stage 2	Applicant registers on the Recognise Me system site.
Stage 3	Applicant submits evidence for any modules they wish to claim against on the Recognise Me system site.
Stage 4	The module/programme leader checks Recognise Me system site for new applications, reviews evidence and provides feedback to applicants on suitability of evidence and whether additional evidence is required to support a RPL application.
Stage 5	The module/programme leader approves evidence and the claim is submitted to RPL Board for approval.
Stage 6	RPL Board reviews RPL application and either approves or rejects the application. Recognise Me system site automatically sends decisions out to applicants via email.

Applicants are advised through an evidence matrix and accompanying guidance as to what would comprise adequate evidence of prior learning. A submission should include:

- A summary of the learning claimed by module and learning outcomes.
- Reflection on the learning claimed in relation to the target programme.
- A summary of evidence against each element of learning, cross-referenced against the full evidence.
- Full evidence as appropriate taking into account ethical due diligence.

Evidence may include:

- Certification (academic/professional).
- Practice-based documents.

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- Reports on observations of practice.
- Media files (audio/video) with commentary and analysis related to achievement of learning outcomes.
- Analytic and evaluative description of practice.
- Statements from supervisors in relation to aspects of practice.
- Full and up to date curriculum vitae.
- Letter of endorsement from the employer

### 2.4 Assessment at RPL Board

Assessment may require, in addition to the submission via Recognise Me, the production of artefacts, a project, performance, viva voce, and/or one or more traditional examination(s). Whatever the form of evidence, the assessment process must identify the locus of authority and responsibilities for those making and verifying decisions. Submissions are evaluated or assessed in terms of:

1. Acceptability - is the evidence valid and reliable?
2. Sufficiency - is the achievement of the claimed learning level fully demonstrated?
3. Authenticity - is the evidence clearly the achievement of the applicant?
4. Currency - is the learning current, if not, is there evidence of updating?

Most importantly, evidence must be presented to demonstrate that the applicant is familiar with the appropriate knowledge base of the learning claimed. This should include 'reflective expertise', which includes the ability to sustain analytical review and the application of relevant concepts to the planning and evaluation of practice.

The amount and level of credit awarded through RPL will be measured against the identified learning outcomes of existing validated courses and of the target programme. Where general RPL credit awards do not precisely match the learning outcomes of validated courses but are related or comparable, professional and academic judgement will be invoked to determine a credit award with consistency and fairness in relation to other credit award decisions and programme learning outcomes using the following guidance:

- a) Assessment methods will be clearly stated and appropriate to the evidence provided.
- b) RPL claims will be subject to internal and external quality assurance procedures as normal.
- c) Assessment deadlines and the dates of assessment boards will be published in advance, together with an indication of when the assessment results will be available.
- d) Applicants will be supported by effective, timely and appropriate feedback regardless of whether the claim is successful or unsuccessful.
- e) Staff, and external examiners, associated with the support, guidance and assessment of RPL claims will be adequately informed, appropriately trained and supported to undertake their role(s).
- f) Recognition of credit awarded for RPL and other learning that has been

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accredited by other HE providers will be included on student marks profiles and diploma supplements (academic transcripts).

### **2.5 Appeals**

As with assessment students may appeal against the RPL process but not the academic judgement made about the RPL evidence provided. This can be done through the Higher Education Academic Appeals Procedure.

### **2.6 Staff Development and Training**

All staff associated with the support, guidance and assessment of claims on 'Recognise Me' will be given appropriate training and development and meet the requirements of the awarding body and where appropriate, the UK QAA Quality Code.

### **2.7 Regulatory Requirements of Awarding and Professional bodies**

The institution requires that all staff are aware of and operate under the specific regulatory requirements of its awarding bodies and, where appropriate, professional bodies. The institution has developed appropriate internal policies and procedures that cover major requirements.

### **2.8 Consistency of Recognise Me Service**

Higher Education leads to allocate a deputy as a point of contact during non-term time periods, to ensure consistency of service. This will ensure queries from students due to start regarding module options are answered and that external applicants receive a holding response.