Recognition of Prior Learning

Version:	2
New or Replacement:	Replacement
Approved by:	
Date approved:	
Effective date:	August 2022
Author:	Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality
Responsible Committee:	SLT
Corporation Committee (if applicable):	
Date of next review:	August 2025
Equality Impact Assessment Date:	
Lead responsibility:	
Policy Category:	Quality

1. Purpose

1.1. The purpose of this policy is to outline the principles and processes that must be adhered to when making claims for recognition of prior learning (RPL), a process a process categorised into two distinct categories- experiential and certificated

2. Scope

2.1. This policy applies to all teachers, trainers, assessors, verifiers, learning support staff and learners and apprentices within the organisation.

3. Definitions

3.1. **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** (formerly known as Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL); the demonstration, assessment and formal recognition of prior learning and achievement. This may either be prior certificated learning or prior experiential learning.

3.2. **Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL);** a process through which learning achieved outside of formal education or training is assessed and, as appropriate, recognised for training purposes, sometimes with an award

3.3. **Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL);** a process through which previously assessed and certificated learning is considered and, as appropriate, recognised for awarding purposes, sometimes with an award of credit

3.4. In every instance the final arbitrator of any RPL application will be the awarding body

4. Main Body

4.1. Prospective and current learners will be made aware of the opportunity to submit a claim for recognition of prior learning through promotional materials and information published on the College website. This includes the option to claim prior learning in place of specified entry requirements, when applying for acceptance on to a programme of study, and the option to make a claim for exemption from credit at the point of admission or during the course of the programme.

4.2. It is the responsibility of the applicant or learner:

- to make the claim

- to demonstrate they have acquired knowledge and skills

- to support the claim with appropriate evidence

4.3. The identification of prior experiential learning is achieved through:

- The systematic reflection on experience

- The writing of clear statements about the learning achieved through experience

- The collection and collation of evidence to support those statements

4.4. When an RPL application has been made it must be carried out under the conditions below:

- The claim must be made prior to the start of the qualification

- Decisions will be made within 30 days (see 4.5)

- Where an awarding organisation needs to be involved to confirm RPL, they will be contacted as soon as the claim is made. Decisions may be delayed whilst waiting for conformation by the awarding organisation.

4.5. Wherever possible, all decisions on applications for RPL will be made and communicated to the applicant prior to commencement of the unit/programme of study. If a decision has not been made on the validity of the application, the learner must attend and submit any appropriate assessment for those elements of the programme for which RPL is being sought, until the outcome of the application is communicated to them.

4.6. Some awards may exclude the use of RPL due to professional, statutory and/or regulatory body requirements or where an award is validated on the basis of requiring all learners to study and be assessed for the full award, or where an award is validated on any other basis that does not permit, or restricts the use of RPL.

4.7. Applicants/learners must attend all scheduled modules until formal approval is given for any exemption from a module.

4.8. Course handbooks for learners should include information on College and awarding body appeals processes

4.9. Malpractice in assessment and verification are covered in a separate policy. Course handbooks for learners should include information on malpractice & plagiarism

4.10. Standardisation meetings are regular and schedules are produced annually to meet on-site and off-site delivery and consistency across the organisation.

4.11. Standardisation of assessment and academic standards should be a standing item on team meetings and RPL will be considered as necessary.

4.12. Claims for RPL will be evaluated against the following criteria:

- **Acceptability** - is there an appropriate match between the evidence presented and the learning being demonstrated? Is the evidence valid and reliable?

- **Sufficiency** - is there sufficient evidence to demonstrate fully the achievement of the learning claimed?

- **Authenticity** - is the evidence clearly related to the applicant's or learner's own efforts and achievements?

- **Currency** - does the evidence relate to current learning? Are there any professional, statutory or regulatory bodies' specific requirements and, if so, have these been addressed?

- **Directness** – was the learning specific? Can it be identified and categorised?

- **Relevance** – is the learning relevant to the claim/future programme?

- **Level** – did the learning reach the appropriate level to allow the learner to benefit from the proposed programme?

- **Breadth** – was the learning in a context understood by the learner?

- **Volume** – was the prior notional learning time, or academic credit, equivalent to the amount of credit being sought for APL?

4.13. Learners may appeal the decision regarding RPL within 10 days of the intial decision. Appeals must be made to the Director of Quality in writing.

4.14. Any specific requirements of Awarding organisations regarding prior learning not covered by this policy must be adhered to at all times.

5. Accountability

5.1. The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality is responsible for the drafting and implementation of this policy.

5.2. He or she is also responsible for ensuring that this document is regularly reviewed and updated – and is the first contact point for managers seeking advice and guidance about the Recognition of Prior Learning or making enquiries about its interpretation.

5.3. All managers are responsible for ensuring that they and their team members follow the requirements set out in this document.

5.4. All employees are responsible for adhering to the requirements set out in this document.

6. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

6.1. The College has paid due regard to equality considerations during the preparation and implementation of this Policy.

6.2. These considerations included the potential for any differential negative effect on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race (including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality), religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership.

6.3. The College's judgement is that there is no such negative effect on those grounds and, consequently, no potential breach of the Equality Act 2010.

6.4. The operation of this Policy and Procedure will be monitored by the Executive Director of People and Organisational Development in order to establish that no unlawful discrimination is taking place and to identify opportunities for the College to enhance equality of opportunity and fair treatment.

7. Review

7.1. This document will be reviewed by August 2025

7.2. The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality will undertake this review, taking into account the outcomes of the monitoring process, legislative changes and developments in good practice.

7.3. As part of the review, the Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality will seek and consider the views of the College's employees and, where appropriate, of the recognised trade unions.

7.4. The outcome of the review will be reported to the Senior Leadership Team.

8. Policy Category

Category [select ONE only]	☐ Business Development, Marketing and Subcontracting ☐ Corporation ☐ Data Protection ☐ Equality & Diversity ☐ Estates / Facilities ☐ Executive Support, Administration and Reception ☐ Finance ☐ Health and Safety ☐ International ☐ IT Services ☐ Management Information Systems ☐ People and Organisational Development ☒ Quality ☐ Learner Services & Safeguarding
Audience [select ALL that apply]	☒ Employees ☐ Governors ☒ Learners ☐ Partners ☐ Suppliers