



THE  
**TRAFFORD**  
**COLLEGE**  
GROUP

**HE Accreditation  
of Prior Learning  
Procedure**

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## **1. Purpose**

- 1.1** Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) is a generic term used for the award of credits on the basis of demonstrated learning that has occurred in the past. This Procedure gives overall guidance on APL for direct entry or credit exemption on Higher Education programmes and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
- 1.2** Within APL and/or RPL there are two main categories: Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL) and Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL). APCL is learning for which certification has been awarded by an Educational Institution, Awarding Body or Education/Training Provider. The procedure underpinning this policy will ensure that all students are given the opportunity to gain credit for previous experience and study.

## **2 Scope**

This Procedure is made for the use of employees and students of the Trafford College Group, comprising of Trafford College, Stockport College, Cheadle College and Marple Sixth Form. For convenience, and unless otherwise indicated the group of colleges is referred to as 'we', 'our', or 'the College'. 'You' and 'your' refer to all students of the Trafford College Group

## **3 Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL): Guiding Principles**

- 3.1** APCL is learning for which a recognised certification has been awarded by an Educational Institution, Awarding Body or Education/Training Provider.
- 3.2** It is the students' responsibility to prepare an application on the appropriate forms and provide adequate documentation. Guidance may be sought from the relevant Course Leader.
- 3.3** APCL claims should be submitted to the relevant Head of Studies at any time during application stage and no later than 14 days of enrolment. Decisions will be stored centrally in accordance with the GDPR.
- 3.4** Where credits are given, they should be for certificated learning. The resulting credits are of the same value, as those gained within TCG.
- 3.5** Unit/Module Credit may be given for prior learning where the level, grade attained, content, relevance and currency of that learning are appropriate to the programme.
- 3.6** Although it is possible (e.g. Higher National conversions, top ups) to claim for an entire qualification through APCL, this is not the norm. The amount of unit/module credit awarded is based on principles of academic judgement determined by the subject specialists; normally, this would be up to a maximum of 50% with the exception of Foundation Degrees whose progression from level 5 to level 6 may already be determined as an articulated route.
- 3.7** The appropriate tuition fee must be paid by the applicant.
- 3.8** Credit can only be given for whole course units or modules.

## **4 Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL): The Process**

**4.1** The APCL process involves the following:

- Application: recording, advice, guidance
- Assessment of evidence/documentation
- Decision making
- Monitoring progression

**4.2** Application:

**4.2.1** Applications should be made by the student on the appropriate form. Students will need to provide commentary as to how their prior certificated learning meets the learning outcomes of the units/modules they are seeking accreditation for.

**4.2.2** The Course Leader will act in an advisory capacity to ensure the student is providing appropriate evidence and commentary and fulfilling their obligations as required.

**4.3** Assessment of evidence/documentation:

**4.3.1** The student must provide relevant supporting documentation.

**4.3.2** The relevant Head of Studies will check the authenticity of the documentation seeking advice where necessary.

**4.3.3** The relevant Head of Studies will use precedents and previous experience of students with similar qualifications to determine whether the prior learning is acceptable seeking advice where necessary.

**4.3.4** In cases of doubt (such as marginal academic standard or where there is little previous knowledge or experience of the qualification) the claim should be submitted to the Head of Higher Education and Higher Skills.

**4.3.5** In assessing the documentation staff should take account of the level, grade attained, content, relevance and currency of the prior learning.

**4.4 Decision making:**

**4.4.1** In most cases the relevant Head of Studies will judge whether prior certificated learning is of a suitable type and standard.

**4.4.2** Having decided to admit a student the relevant Head of Studies should submit a copy of the evidence of prior learning together with the completed forms to the registry department.

**4.4.3** Complex applications should be referred to the Head of HE Registry, Standards and Compliance.

**4.4.4** In some cases, it may be appropriate to convene a panel meeting with the relevant department to discuss APCL claims. These panels will act as a subgroup of the HE Committee. It is recommended that this panel comprise:

- Assistant Principal
- Heads of Studies
- Head of HE and Higher Skills
- Course Leader

#### 4.5 Monitoring progression:

4.5.1 The relevant Head of Studies should include the approved applications in any statistics which are reported to the Examination/Assessment Board.

4.5.2 It is important that the progress of students admitted with APCL is monitored so that information is built up on the suitability of particular qualifications when approving direct entry or credit exemption.

### 5 Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL): Guiding Principles

5.1 APEL is the process of awarding academic credits for uncertificated learning gained from experience, for example:

- In paid or unpaid work
- Courses attended in educational establishments or at work
- Through self-directed study
- Through leisure pursuits

5.2 Credit should be allocated for learning from experience on the basis of appropriate and assessed learning outcomes, not for the experience itself.

5.3 The learning outcomes achieved through learning from experience should include appropriate knowledge and understanding in order to lead to the award.

5.4 Information materials outlining the process should be clear and accurate and identify a point of contact within the Department.

5.5 Candidates should be carefully informed by an adviser (usually the Course Leader) within the department of the range of evidence that would be considered appropriate in a submission.

5.6 Evidence presented should be appropriate to proposed programme, sufficient in length, depth and level, authentic and recent and include underpinning knowledge.

5.7 Where an APEL submission has demonstrated learning equivalent to an existing course unit or module, the unit or module level allocated will be the same.

5.8 APEL should be limited to a maximum of one third of the credit for a given award.

### 6 Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL): The Process

6.1 Applications should be made by the student using the appropriate forms.

6.2 The APL/APEL form will be accompanied by a portfolio of evidence that demonstrates how the students' prior experiential learning meets the learning outcomes of the units/modules for which accreditation is being sought.

- 6.3** The portfolio might comprise written statements from the student detailing how they meet the learning outcomes or references from previous employers/teaching staff that verify claims.
- 6.4** It is the responsibility of the relevant Head of Studies to ensure that records for APL/APEL/APCL are kept for monitoring and audit.
- 6.5** For each APL/APEL claim, the relevant Head of Studies should ensure that there is:
- An Academic Adviser (usually Course Leader) who has the competence to advise a student on the production and submission of an APEL claim, and
  - An Assessor (usually relevant Head of Studies), an employee who has the competence to exercise academic judgement in assessing the APEL claim to work with the applicant.
- 6.6** The role of Adviser and Assessor must be undertaken by different people.
- 6.7** The assessment of learning from experience follows the same process as the conventional study route. The submission will be subject to sampling by the External Examiner and ratified by the Examination/Assessment Board.