

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Sub-committee

Accreditation of Prior Learning Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Edge Hill recognises that learning may take place in a wide variety of settings including conventional taught courses; online learning; learning outside of courses; professional and employment experience; personal and leisure experience; self-directed study etc. The APL/APEL policy facilitates the formal recognition of learning gained elsewhere, and where appropriate provides for credit to be attached to that learning.
- 1.2 The APL/APEL process is a means of building on the existing strengths of individuals, encouraging a sense of life-long learning. Within a credit-based system, APL/APEL provides greater flexibility in admitting students to award-bearing courses and it links prior learning experiences to current programmes of study so that the student gains maximum benefit from their period study at Edge Hill University. As such the APL/APEL policy supports the University's aim of promoting and supporting the personal development, knowledge, skills and employability of students.
- 1.3 The APL/APEL process can be used
 - for entry into a programme of study at the institution
 - for the granting of credit to allow entry into a programme of study at a point subsequent to initial entry
 - for the recognition of credit which will count towards an award of the institution
- 1.4 APL (the Accreditation of Prior Learning) relates in this policy to learning for which certification has been awarded by an educational institution or another education/training provider. APEL (the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning) refers to uncertificated learning gained from experience. Although many of the principles contained in the policy paper also relate to learning gained from current experience, this paper concentrates solely on prior learning. Current experiential learning and its assessment for credit towards entry into, or exemption from portions of study in, an award is recognised within the University's curriculum frameworks.
- 1.5 The APL/APEL processes adopted by the University will be rigorous; fair to applicants; reflect the University's Equal Opportunities Policy; and ensure that the student's programme of study builds upon prior learning in a coherent way.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF THE APL/APEL POLICY AT EDGE HILL

2.1 The student makes the claim

It is the responsibility of the student to make a claim, and to support that claim with appropriate evidence. The student might need help with framing

and making the claim which may be provided by the institution - but prime responsibility rests with the student.

2.2 **Learning based on experience**

It is the evidence of learning that is being identified, assessed and accredited. For that evidence, the student will draw on the richness of their varied experience. The intellectual task of moving from a description of experience to an identification of the learning derived from that experience is crucial.

2.3 **Identification comes before Assessment**

There is a clear separation between the identification of prior learning and organising it into forms fit for presentation for assessment, and the assessment process itself. When assessing the claim, an independent assessor must be involved as a moderator. This independent assessor may be drawn from the Subject Tutors, but will not be the member of staff who has been involved in the formative process of identifying the learning.

2.4 **Responsibility for assessment**

Assessment is the responsibility of the teaching staff attached to the relevant degree scheme or award-bearing course. In making their assessment teaching staff will include consideration of the following criteria.

- **Authenticity**
The assessor will need to be sure that learning actually occurred
- **Relevance**
The assessor will need to be convinced that the evidence produced relates to the claim being made.
- **Quality**
The assessor will assess whether the structure, process and outcomes of the learning experience are of comparable quality with other accredited learning experiences, including attention to academic level.
- **Currency**
The evidence of achievement will be assessed to ensure its currency. Evidence of further development or updating is normally required if the certificated learning is more than five years old.

2.5 **The nature of assessment**

The method of assessment will be appropriate for the evidence which is being assessed. Hence staff may choose to use written evidence; the presentation of portfolios; oral testing or presentation; observation of performance etc.

2.6 **Quality assurance**

Decision taken by members of staff in relation to APL/APEL claims will be documented, and confirmed by the appropriate Scheme/Award Board. Evidence relating to any claim will be made available for consideration by the External Examiner to further ensure that academic standards are being maintained.

2.7 Accreditation as a proportion of a degree or award

Normally, the maximum credit for prior learning that can be counted towards a programme award is 66% (two thirds) for Honours and Masters degree programmes and 50% for all other awards, including Top-Up degrees. For specific regulations see section C8 of the academic regulations.

2.8 General and specific credit

A general credit represents a judgement that particular learning falls within the range of higher education and indicates its quality and level. These credits only gain value - become specific credit - when they are judged to be equivalent to learning matched to the outcomes of an Edge Hill award. The specific learning requirements of an Edge Hill award may mean that not general credits are appropriate for credit transfer into the institution

2.9 National framework for credit accumulation

Whilst there is no definitive national agreement on credit accumulation at the present time, Edge Hill will take full account of any agreements and practice within the Higher Education sector and in related professional accrediting bodies. The University will recognise credit awarded by accredited UK HE institutions subject to application of this policy.

3. THE OPERATION OF THE APL/APEL POLICY AT EDGE HILL

3.1 Within the general principles of the APL/APEL Policy set out above, the responsibility for the operation of the APL/APEL process rests with the relevant Degree Scheme or Award-Bearing Assessment Board. Each Faculty will produce an APL/APEL Protocol which will be available for all staff and students involved with the award which will inform the actions of Degree Scheme or Award-Bearing Assessment Boards. The formal reporting to assessment boards will ensure engagement of external examiners with the APL/APEL process. In drawing up or in revising the Protocol, Faculty will consult with the Dean of Teaching and Learning Development; Academic Registry, and Admissions. The Protocols and their operation will be approved, monitored and reviewed by Faculties and be subject to annual monitoring through the Faculty AMR process.

3.2 The Faculty Protocol should be should be compliant with QAA Code of Practice and included in validation documents with an indication of any special arrangements for that particular programme. It will cover the following:-

- a) The extent to which APL/APEL is applied, including its use for
 - i) initial admission to the degree/award-bearing course
 - ii) admission to an award bearing programme at a point subsequent to initial entry
 - iii) the recognition of credit which will count towards the award
- b) The preparation and checking of publicity and marketing materials to ensure potential applicants are aware of APL/APEL
- c) The procedures that applicants should follow in making a claim for APL/APEL at the various stages identified in a) above

- d) The forms of advice, guidance and support available for APL/APEL applicants.
- e) The procedures that will be followed in assessing and confirming a claim for APL/APEL. This will include the clear identification of the persons/sub committee responsible for these procedures.
- f) Details of the operation of the arrangements of the Faculty APL/APEL Panel(s).
- g) If it is a classified award, the extent to which grades/marks from other higher education institutions can be incorporated in the Edge Hill award in relation to the University Regulations.
- h) Any fees to be paid by the applicant in connection with the APL/APEL claim.

The Faculty APL/APEL panel has a delegated authority to make these decisions and retains the right for externals to view and comment on APL processes. The University requires that those responsible for such assessment have received proper training.

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