Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure

Section 1 - Introduction

Purpose and Parent Policy

(1) This procedure sets out the steps to be taken in the event of an application for the recognition of prior learning by a prospective student under the [Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#) and the [Access, Transfer and Progression Policy](#).

Responsibilities

Applicant Responsibilities

(2) Applicants are responsible for supplying evidence of prior learning achieved.

Staff Responsibilities

(3) The Registrar is responsible for determining if an application for recognition of prior learning is possible in respect of the relevant programme and applicant.

Faculty Responsibilities

(4) The Programme Director or nominee is responsible for determining whether (and to what extent) the applicant's prior learning meets the criteria for entry to the programme and/or the intended learning outcomes of the programme.

Section 2 - Procedure for the Recognition of Prior Learning

Application

(5) The applicant submits an application in writing to the Registrar using the appropriate form, identifying the:

a. Learning for which they are seeking recognition and information as to whether it is formal, non-formal or informal
b. The purpose for which they wish the learning to be recognised, i.e. to meet an entry requirement or to meet one or more of the programme learning outcomes, or an associated module learning outcome

Assessment of the Application: Prior Formal Learning

(6) The Registrar, or their nominee, in consultation with the relevant Programme Director or nominee determines if the prior formal learning aligns to the associated programme or module learning outcomes and what exemptions can be granted.

Response: Prior Formal Learning

(7) The Registrar, or their nominee, responds to the applicant stating what if any exemptions can be granted. They

also include information about:

a. The programme learning outcomes and the module learning outcomes which have been addressed by the applicant in previous formal learning
b. The implications of grading or non-grading and any associated issues of classification (refer to the [Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#))
c. Any specific programme rules or professional body rules pertaining to recognition of prior learning, including information about the currency of learning.

(8) Where an application for recognition of prior learning cannot be processed, the Registrar provides clear information to the applicant about this.

Assessment of the Application: Prior Informal or Non-Formal Learning

(9) The Registrar, or their nominee, consults with the relevant Programme Director or nominee to determine if and how any prior informal or non-formal learning will be assessed. They also consult the Finance Department to determine a fee for the process.

Response: Prior Informal or Non-Formal Learning

(10) The Registrar, or their nominee, responds to the applicant stating whether or not the assessment of any informal or non-formal prior learning is possible for the purpose requested, and if it is, they provide information about:

a. The learning outcomes and criteria against which their learning will be assessed
b. The nature of the assessment
   i. Possible assessment instruments for informal and non-formal prior learning include:
      - The submission of a portfolio for assessment
      - Participation in examinations
      - Completion of a piece of project work
c. The implications of grading or non-grading and any associated issues of classification (refer to the [Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#))
d. Any specific programme rules or professional body rules pertaining to recognition of prior learning, including information about the currency of learning
e. The relevant fee

(11) Where an application for recognition of prior learning cannot be processed, the Registrar provides clear information to the applicant about this.

Possible Outcomes from the Assessment of Informal or Non-Formal Prior Learning

(12) Potential outcomes from an assessment include the following:

a. An applicant may be offered a place on a programme.
b. An applicant may be offered a place on a programme without exemptions. In this case, the College advises the applicant of this decision and refers them to the Admissions Office for continuation of entry to the programme.
c. An applicant may be offered a place on a programme with exemptions.
d. In the recognition of prior learning, the work may or may not be graded. There are different consequences for this and these are communicated to the applicant.
e. An applicant may choose to decline an exemption where it has classification consequences that the applicant perceives as disadvantageous.

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Right of Appeal

(13) Applicants have the right to appeal a decision on an application for recognition of prior learning to an Appeals Committee in line with the [Appeals Policy](#).

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	2nd November 2020
Review Date	2nd November 2023
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Approval Date	23rd September 2020
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Enquiries Contact	Quality Assurance

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Applicant" - An applicant is a person who has submitted an application to undertake a programme of study with the College.

"Module" - A programme of education and training of small volume. It is designed to be capable of being integrated with other modules into larger programmes. A module can be shared by different programmes. Some modules are designed to lead to minor or special-purpose awards. In describing the educational formation provided by an independent module, it is sufficient to specify the learning outcome and (the assumed (i.e. minimum) prior learning (prerequisite learning). Assumed prior learning is sometimes specified by listing prerequisite modules.

"Non-Formal Learning" - Learning which is acquired through planned activities but does not result in formal certification

"Prior Formal Learning" - Learning which has already attracted formal certification within an education system, including the NFQ

"Procedure" - Procedures are the broad actions that must be carried out to implement a policy. They set out 'how to do' what the policy specifies must be done.

"Programme" - A programme of education and training refers to any process by which learners may acquire knowledge, skill or competence. It includes courses of study or instruction, apprenticeships, training and employment. A programme offers learners the learning opportunities by which they may attain educational goals (expressed as the intended programme learning outcome) by learning activities in a learning environment. A programme is normally comprised of modules. A programme leading to a major award will normally require a 'cohesion generating' process which integrates constituent modules so that the minimum intended programme learning outcomes are supported. The cohesion generating process should establish the epistemological and cultural identity of the programme. It should also coordinate alignment of activities with the minimum intended programme learning outcomes and introduce learners to the broader community of practice to which they aspire. (QQI (2013) Assessment and Standards Revised)

"Recognition of Prior Learning" - Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is defined as a process whereby prior learning is given a value (European Commission, 2008; NQAI, 2005; OECD, 2004). RPL can operate to provide recognition for advanced entry and non-standard admissions to educational pathways and is also used to award credit for elements within programmes.

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