

B2. ADVANCED STANDING AND EXEMPTIONS BASED ON RECOGNITION OF OTHER LEARNING

For prospective students on programmes and awards validated by Plymouth University this section of the consolidated Academic Policies and Regulations (CAPR) has been agreed by the University (as the awarding institution) as meeting its admission policy and regulatory requirements. The shaded sections below form GSM London regulatory and policy framework as applied to Plymouth University and GSM London (The College) awards.

Related guidance and codes of practice can be found at the QAA Code of Practice, Admissions in Higher Education, Chapter B6 Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning.

Purpose and scope

2.1. This section of the Consolidated Academic Policies and Regulations (CAPR) explains how the College may recognise learning that takes place outside the College; what this recognition may give exemptions from; and how it is approved and documented.

2.2. These regulations apply to all applicants to, and students of, the College.

The Admissions Team will be pleased to answer any questions on this.

Definitions

2.3. 'Recognition of prior certificated learning' (RPCL) means the use of any learning that has been or will be awarded recognised documentation such as transcript for exemption from a programme requirement

2.4. 'Recognition of prior experiential learning' (RPEL) means the use of any learning that the applicant or student acquires through experience – including formal tuition, training programmes, work or professional experience – for which no formal documentation has been awarded for exemption from a programme requirement.

2.5. 'Academic stage' means any section of a programme that forms a separate element. The programme's stages are decided as part of its approval.

2.6. 'Advanced standing' means a student starting a programme with exemptions from an academic stage in recognition of previously completed studies or prior learning.

2.7. 'Articulation agreement' means an agreement between awarding or teaching bodies that students who satisfy academic criteria on one (1) programme

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automatically satisfy all entry criteria so they can be admitted with advanced standing to a subsequent stage of a programme of a degree-awarding body.

Introduction

Overview

- 2.8. As an academic community, it is important that the College recognises the academic and professional achievements of all its members; upholds its beliefs in social justice and inclusion; and seeks to maintain public confidence in the integrity of its awards.
- 2.9. As part of this, the College may recognise prior learning to grant exemptions from entry criteria, modules or an academic stage of a programme.

Principles

- 2.10. The College awards credit or exemptions based on evidence of relevant learning, not on experience or qualification alone. Applicants may seek recognition of prior learning for one (1) or more purposes, and for RPEL or RPCL or both.
- 2.11. The College's decisions to award specific credit and therefore to exempt students from modules are based on identifying, describing and assessing how far recognition of prior learning (RPL) outcomes are equivalent to its specified module learning outcomes. For certificated learning, the College must be familiar with the marking scheme and academic standards of the awarding body.
- 2.12. The College's decisions to exempt the student from entry criteria are based on identifying, describing and assessing that recognition of prior learning (RPL) will provide the student with a 'fair and equitable chance of success' on the programme.
- 2.13. The College's judgments about the equivalence of RPCL and RPEL to admissions criteria and to module or stage outcomes will take into account the principles of relevance, currency, level, sufficiency and authenticity.
- 2.14. The College may only recognise prior learning if it is consistent with:
 - (a) the terms of any recognition or accreditation of the programme by a professional, statutory or regulatory body; or
 - (b) the regulations it made when approving the programme.
- 2.15. Exemptions from admission criteria will be considered on a case-by-case basis and subject to academic approval except where an approved articulation agreement exists.
- 2.16. For exemption from a module or stage on a programme:
 - (a) the minimum exemption is one (1) module;

- (b) the maximum exemption is modules to the credit value of two-thirds of a programme; and
- (c) there is no exemption from a module or any component that forms part of the final stage of study on a programme.

Procedures

Overview

2.17. The recognition of prior learning procedure contains three (3) stages:

- (a) Stage 1 – Applying for recognition of prior learning
- (b) Stage 2 – Considering the application
- (c) Stage 3 – Reporting the decision

Stage 1 – Applying for recognition of prior learning

2.18. A person may only apply:

- (a) in writing on the application form with the applicant's full name, student or application number, and signature;
- (b) to the place and person stated in the written instructions.

2.19. The application must include:

- (a) transcripts, programme handbook and certificates;
- (b) all relevant evidence or details of events in support of the request; and
- (c) a list of any person (with contact details) who is known to have relevant information.

2.20. Applications must be submitted:

- (a) before the College considers the applicant's full application if they seek exemption from entry criteria; or
- (b) after the College offers the applicant a place on the programme but before the programme begins if they seek exemption from modules.

Stage 2 – Considering the application

2.21. On receiving the application and supporting evidence, the College will arrange for the relevant academic staff to consider it and make a decision. The College will normally make a decision and inform the applicant within 25 working days from receiving all the required documentation.

2.22. They will examine:

- (a) any academic study already done, including certificated learning;
- (b) any prior experiential learning (personal, professional or both);

- (c) how far the applicant's supporting statement shows understanding of and commitment to the subject applied for, including their knowledge of the subject matter; and
- (d) any references in support of the application indicating the applicant's potential to achieve the standard required for the award.

2.23. An applicant's experience and subject knowledge needs to be related to the module, entry criteria or academic stage of the programme in terms of:

- (a) Relevance – Is the knowledge, experience or both relevant to the credit or exemption applied for?
- (b) Currency – Is the knowledge or experience or both up to date (usually within five (5) years of application)?

NOTE: Credit for prior certificated learning which occurred more than five (5) years ago will not normally be accepted. Earlier deadlines may apply for particular subject areas. Where outdated certificated learning exists, but can be combined with more recent experiential learning, the certificated learning should be considered as part of an RPEL claim.

- (c) An appropriate level – Is the knowledge, experience or both at an appropriate level associated with the credit or exemption applied for?
- (d) Sufficiency – Is there enough evidence to show they fully achieve the learning outcomes associated with the credit or exemption?
- (e) Authenticity – Does evidence show the applicant completed what is claimed?

2.24. After the College has considered the application, it must inform the student that the application:

- (a) does not meet the grounds given above so it will not grant the requested exemptions;
- (b) meets the grounds given above so it will grant some or all of the requested exemptions;

2.25. Decisions on applications for recognition of prior learning are academic judgments and may not be appealed. However, if applicants believe there has been a procedural error or administrative fault, they may use the relevant policy on Appeals and Complaints for Applicants for requests for exemptions from admissions criteria and the Administrative Verification process for current students.

Stage 3 – Reporting the decision

- 2.26. Decisions on applications for recognition of prior learning must be reported to the relevant programme's Board of Examiners. All RPL decisions must be recorded and clearly identified in all papers considered by Subject Assessment Panels and Boards of Examiners and in the student transcript. These will be examined in line with the standard quality assurance procedures including external examining where appropriate.
- 2.27. The consequent effect, which is determined by the Academic Registrar, on the calculation of final aggregate marks including classifications for undergraduate awards and merits/distinctions for postgraduate awards should be made clear in writing to students.

Advice

- 2.28. If a student is thinking about applying for recognition of other learning, they may wish to discuss their situation with the Course Advisors or Admissions Team before starting the formal process.
- 2.29. Advice for students on recognition of other learning, and the associated lower-level College rules is available from the Admissions Team (admissions@gsmlondon.ac.uk).
- 2.30. Advice for staff on recognition of other learning for students is available from their nominated Academic Policy Partner or Head of Admissions.
- 2.31. If any staff development needs are identified, these may be discussed with members of the Educational Development Unit.

Fees

- 2.32. A charge may be made for consideration of an RPL application, as set out in the College's list of charges. The charge may vary according to the nature of the claim and the level of support needed to complete the application (e.g., support to enable a student to put together a portfolio for consideration).
- 2.33. Charges will be clearly stated in publicity material and communicated to applicants before they submit evidence.
- 2.34. The College is not liable for financial or other consequences arising from action under this policy.

Legal and regulatory context

- 2.35. This policy has been informed by the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (UKQC), "Chapter B6: Assessment of students and the recognition of prior

learning". The UKQC is the definitive reference point for all UK Higher Education institutions and sets out how academic standards are established and maintained and how the quality of learning opportunities is assured and enhanced.

- 2.36. The College is not be bound by all the principles and indicators outlined in the code, and this policy alone may not provide the procedure to meet all of these principles or indicators, some of which may be met by other College policies and procedures.. It uses the indicators and principles as guidance only, to help it deal soundly with these matters.

Enforcement, monitoring and review

- 2.37. If any person or body in the College refuses to comply with a request or decision made to enforce these regulations, their refusal must be reported to the Academic Registrar, who will take such action to enforce this policy as they think necessary.
- 2.38. Each year, the College must receive a report that enables it to monitor, identify and act on any shortfalls in how these regulations are interpreted and applied.
- 2.39. The annual report must include statistical data on the number of application for recognition of prior learning; the outcomes, Departments and programmes from which they originate; the length of the process; and the equality characteristics (including sex, disability and ethnicity) of those who apply, and separately those that are successful.
- 2.40. Every two (2) years, the College must review this policy to ensure that:
- (a) it remains up to date and continues to meet the expectations of the UK Quality Code, applicable legislation or guidance;
 - (b) areas of improvement, or any concerns, raised by students, external examiners, or professional bodies have been addressed; and
 - (c) opportunities to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy have been taken.

Schedule (not part of the policies or regulations):

Schedule:

Responsible Officer:	Head of Admissions
Approved by:	Board of Directors and Academic Board
Version:	2.0
Date:	June 2017
Monitoring and Review Body:	Academic Board
Effective From:	July 2017
Next Scheduled Review:	June 2019