

POLICY ON RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) AND CREDIT TRANSFER

Summary

Heriot-Watt University is committed to providing opportunities to applicants who have a wide range of prior experiences.

The *Policy on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Transfer* sets out the key requirements for awarding credit for prior learning to enable an applicant to gain advanced entry to a programme and/ or to gain exemption from individual courses within a programme.

The policy is accompanied by a series of Procedures.

Policy on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Transfer

In May 2015, the Senate approved, for implementation from 2015/16, a **Policy on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Transfer**.

The policy replaces the former policy on Accreditation of Prior Learning, which was incorporated within Regulation 46.

The policy and procedures specify a series of key principles which the University, Schools and individual staff members must follow in relation to awarding credit based on prior learning. The policy specifies the types of prior learning which may be recognised through the award of credit. The procedures outline:

- **The application process**
- **Awarding credit and allocating levels**
- **Restrictions on prior learning**
- **Approval procedures**

A key point of principle: *credits from an award already held by an applicant can contribute to a higher award, but cannot be used towards another award of equivalent or lower level in the same discipline.*

Definitions

1. Prior Certificated Learning

Learning which has previously been rated at a particular SCQF level. Known as *Credit Transfer*: exemption is given from earlier stages of a programme or certain courses. Most applications to HWU are based on prior certificated learning, ie an existing academic qualification.

2. Prior Experiential Learning

Assessing and credit-rating learning which has not been rated at an SCQF level (eg learning gained through work experience, training programmes).

Scope

The key features of the Policy on Recognition of Prior Learning are:

- applies to all undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate taught programmes, and the taught element of research degrees.
- UG: at least 50% of credits of the stage at which a student enters must be completed at HWU to qualify for the award associated with that stage.
- PGT/Graduate: at least 50% of the award credits must be completed at HWU to qualify for the award.
- Undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate taught applications are approved by the School Director of Learning and Teaching.

Exclusions

The RPL Policy does not cover:

- Students admitted via Articulation Agreements
- Exchange Students
- Students on Individual Study Placements

References and Further Information

Recognition of Prior Learning + Credit Transfer Policy: <https://www.hw.ac.uk/services/docs/rplpolicy.pdf>

Procedures: <https://www.hw.ac.uk/services/docs/rplpolicy.pdf>; <https://www.hw.ac.uk/services/docs/rplprocedures.pdf>

Learning and Teaching Policy Bank: <https://www.hw.ac.uk/services/academic-registry/quality/learning-teaching/policy-bank.htm>

Learning and Teaching Briefing Papers

This briefing paper has been produced by Academic Quality and is one of a series related to Learning and Teaching. The briefing papers aim to provide a concise, informative overview of key policies, and include links to relevant procedures and templates.