

**Recognition of Prior Learning**

**1 What is recognition of prior learning (RPL)?**

1.1 Applicants to University programmes can claim academic credit for relevant previous study or learning experiences (“prior learning”). If you can demonstrate that you have already achieved learning which is equivalent to one or more modules, or to a whole year or level of study, relating to the course you wish to apply for at the University of Worcester, then you may make a claim for recognition of that prior learning. This applies to both undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

1.2 Claims are not automatic; they have to be assessed by the University. Claims should be agreed at the point of entry to a programme, and are normally discussed and assessed alongside the application process. If your claim is successful it means that you do not have to take the modules for which credit has been awarded, or you may be able to enter directly to a higher level of study or into the second or third year of a course.

1.3 There are three forms of recognition of prior learning:

1. **Credit transfer** - recognition of credit or qualifications at HE level (4 or above) awarded by a UK higher education degree-awarding body in accordance with the relevant higher education qualifications framework;
2. **Recognition of prior certificated learning** - (such as professional development awards or employment-based awards) which is at higher education level but which has not led to the award of credits or qualifications positioned on the relevant higher education qualifications framework;
3. **Recognition of prior experiential** or informal **learning**.

**2 How do I make a claim for recognition of prior learning?**

2.1 If you have already undertaken relevant study at higher education level for which academic credit have been awarded by a University or College, you should complete a [CREDIT TRANSFER FORM](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/documents/RPL_Application_and_Record_Form_Credit_Transfer_July_2014.docx). The learning for which you are claiming credit must normally have been completed within the last six years, and it must be relevant and of the appropriate level and volume. You must provide evidence of your completed study – eg copy of certificate or transcript together with the completed Credit Transfer Form.

2.2 If you wish to make a claim based on certificated learning from professional or employment related learning but which does not have academic credit associated with it, you may wish to first consult with the University’s Admissions Office/Graduate Research School (see section 6), to find out if you are likely to be able to make a claim. (The Admissions Office will deal with enquiries relating to undergraduate or taught postgraduate courses; the Graduate Research School will deal with enquiries relating to research degrees.) The Admissions Office/Graduate Research School will advise you to either complete the [RECOGNITION OF PRIOR CERTIFICATED LEARNING FORM](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/documents/RPL_Application_and_Record_Form_Recognition_of_prior_certificated_learning_July_2014.docx)  and/or will arrange a meeting or conversation for you with an Admissions Tutor. To make a claim you will need to demonstrate that your learning is equivalent to the learning in the module(s) or part of the course for which you are claiming credit. This involves a mapping exercise and you will be provided with guidance on completing this. You will also be required to provide a copy of certificates or other evidence of your previous study. Your claim will be considered/evaluated by two independent assessors in terms of the relevance, level and volume of credit that can be awarded.

2.3 If you wish to make a claim based on experiential learning, eg from paid work, voluntary pursuits or personal uncertificated study, you should contact the Admissions Office/Graduate Research School in the first instance. The Admissions Office/Graduate Research School will arrange for you to meet/speak with an Admissions Tutor or RPL advisor who will discuss with you the process for making a claim.

2.4 Applications are normally considered at the point of application to a course or programme at the University, and decisions made alongside the admissions process. Claims should be submitted as soon as possible and no later than six weeks after the commencement of the programme. Only in exceptional circumstances will later claims be considered. If you wish to make a claim that involves both certificated and experiential learning and/or credit transfer, the University will guide you through the process, and ensure you submit the right information.

**3 How much credit can be claimed?**

3.1 Credit can only be given for whole modules, and so the minimum that can be claimed is a single module.

3.2 The maximum credit that can be awarded under credit transfer or RPL is no more than two thirds of the total credit value of the award, and recognition of experiential learning is limited to one third of the credit awarded.

3.3 The following table sets out the maximum RPL credit permitted for different awards.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Award**  | **Credit required****for award** | **Maximum RPL****credit allowed** | **Level** |
| Certificate of Higher Education  |  120  |  60  |  4  |
| Higher National Certificate  |  150  |  75  |  4/5  |
| Diploma of Higher Education  |  240  |  120  |  4/5  |
| Higher National Diploma  |  240  |  120  |  4/5  |
| Foundation Degree  |  240  |  120  |  4/5  |
| Degree  |  300  |  240  |  4/5  |
| Degree with Honours  |  360  |  240\*  |  4/5/6  |
| Postgraduate Certificate  |  60 (M)  |  30(M)  |  7  |
| Postgraduate Diploma  |  120 (M)  |  60 (M)  |  7  |
| Taught Master’s Degree (MA or MSc, MEd, MBA etc) |  180 (M)  |  120 (M)  |  7  |
| Masters by Research (MRes) |  180 (M)  |  60 (M)  |  7  |
| Professional Doctorate |  180 (M) +  360 (D) |  180 (M)  |  7 and 8 |

3.4 Prior achievement of HE credit or qualifications is not automatically granted recognition in relation to University of Worcester (UW) programmes; it depends on the currency and the relevance of the learning to the UW programme, as well as it being at the appropriate academic level and of sufficient volume.

**4 How much does it cost?**

4.1 Recognition of prior certificated learning

Applications for the award of credit equivalent to either a full undergraduate level

(e.g. Level 4) or a Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma towards a Masters level will not incur a charge. Applications for credit for individual modules at all levels will be charged a fee of 10% of the prevailing module rate.

The remaining modules to be taken will be charged for at the prevailing module rate. For example, if you apply for APL for the first year of an undergraduate (Level 4) of a degree programme (120 credits), but find that you have not met all the learning outcomes and are awarded only 105 credits, you will be charged a fee for the additional module that you must take to meet the requirements of the degree.

4.2 Recognition of prior experiential or informal learning

Applications for credit awarded using experiential prior learning will be charged a fee of 30% linked to the credit awarded at the prevailing module rate.

The remaining modules to be taken will be charged for at the prevailing module rate.

4.3 Payment

At the point of registration, students will be invoiced the normal advertised fee for the relevant module/level they are hoping to be awarded credit for, unless the application can be assessed prior to registration. Students will be asked to pay, or agree to pay the full tuition fee by direct debit, until the outcome of the RPEL or RPCL assessment is known.

Upon successful accreditation of the prior learning the student will be refunded the value of the module(s) for which credit has been awarded less the applicable RPL charge.

The same percentage charges apply to both Home/EU and International Students.

**5 What happens once I have submitted a claim?**

5.1 Claims for credit transfer are normally fairly straightforward, although in some cases you may be asked to supply additional information, or be asked to discuss your claim with an Admissions Tutor. It is important that in granting credit the University is sure your learning is current and relevant, so that you are not disadvantaged in starting the course at a later stage. Normally you should receive formal notification of the outcome of your claim within

6 weeks.

5.2 Claims for recognition of prior certificated or experiential learning are usually a little more complex, as these involve an assessment of your claim by two independent assessors, and in some cases an external assessor will also be asked to confirm the judgement. Sometimes the assessors will consider that it may be helpful to discuss the claim with you. Should this be the case it may mean that it could take a little longer to reach a decision, but normally you should receive formal notification of the outcome of your claim within 12 weeks.

5.3 The University will provide you with feedback on your claim if it is not successful.

5.4 Decisions on claims for RPL are final and appeals against decisions are not permitted, although the complaints procedure may be followed if an applicant is unhappy with the process or feedback followed.

**6 How can I get further advice?**

6.1 You can seek advice at any stage of making a claim for credit transfer or RPL, by contacting the:

Admissions Office -

* email - admissions@worc.ac.uk
* tel - 01905 855111
* post - University of Worcester, Henwick Grove, Worcester WR 2 6AJ

Graduate Research School -

* email - research@worc.ac.uk
* tel - 01905 542182
* post - University of Worcester, Henwick Grove, Worcester WR 2 6AJ.