

**ACCREDITATION
OF PRIOR
LEARNING
WITH
PLYMOUTH
UNIVERSITY**



**ACCREDITATION OF
PRIOR LEARNING (APL)**

Contents

Welcome	3
What are AP(C)L, AP(E)L and RPL?	4
Accreditation of Prior (Certificated) Learning (AP(C)L)	4
Transfer of previous certified credits	5
Upgrade from diploma to degree	6
Upgrade from degree to masters	6
Voucher scheme	7
Accreditation of Prior and (Experiential) Learning (AP(E)L)	8
Preceptorship	11
Mentorship	11
How to apply	12
Discover more	12



Welcome

Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) is a tool we use to recognise learning already achieved and to make gaining academic credit easier.

We value your existing experience, knowledge and learning, and don't expect you to repeat learning you have already achieved.

There are many different ways that you can achieve credit and we consider every claim on an individual basis. All of the examples in this brochure are scenarios we consider daily.

We are continually developing new ways to offer accreditation of learning to help you achieve your goals, so please contact us for further help or information.

What are AP(C)L, AP(E)L and RPL?

AP(C)L, AP(E)L and RPL are the processes by which previous formal certificated learning and informal non-certificated learning can be awarded academic credit. These credits can be used towards Plymouth University modules.

Whatever type of prior learning and experience you have, it is the skills and knowledge gained from that learning, and the extent to which the knowledge and skills can be applied that is important, not the learning experience itself. The process of giving recognition is based on a comparison of these existing skills and knowledge against the requirements of the learning course for which you are claiming credit.

Definitions

AP(C)L Accreditation of Prior (Certificated) Learning

AP(E)L Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning

RPL Recognised Prior Learning

The process of making an APL claim is formal: it can take time and be as demanding as completing the course of study for which you are claiming credit.

Accreditation of Prior (Certificated) Learning (AP(C)L)

AP(C)L gives recognition to learning which has been formally assessed and for which a certificate has been awarded.

If you have achieved certificated learning with another higher education institution, you may be able to accredit this into one of our degree courses or masters programmes. You'll need to provide a copy of your relevant certificate and/or transcript, and any information on the learning outcomes and/or assessment criteria.

We'll compare what has already been learned with what would be studied on the course or programme for which you are claiming credit. This will show whether the learning on each course or programme is identical or sufficiently similar to enable you to claim that you have already achieved the learning outcomes. If it is, we'll award you the relevant modules and credits. If it is not identical or sufficiently similar, we'll award you general credits



Transfer of previous certified credits

Case study 1

Degree started at a different university

A student had already commenced an undergraduate degree with another university and wanted to transfer her existing credits into the Plymouth University's BSc (Hons) Professional Development in Health and Social Care.

She provided a copy of the transcript and information on the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the modules she had completed. The modules equated to one core module, one optional module, plus general credits, so she was awarded 60 degree-level credits. She enrolled on the BSc and completed the remaining required modules to achieve her degree.

Case study 2

Advanced diploma achieved at a different university

A student had achieved a graduate diploma in nursing at another university. He sent us a copy of his advanced diploma certificate and transcript, and information on the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of his diploma modules. He was awarded 60 degree-level credits, so he only needed to study a further 60 credits to achieve his chosen degree at Plymouth University.

Case study 3

Already achieved a 30 credit degree-level module

A student sent us a transcript and information on the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of a 30 credit degree-level module she had completed with a different university. We offer 20 or 40 degree-level modules, so we contacted the awarding university for more details on their assessment criteria, and after consideration awarded her 40 general credits at degree level.

Case study 4

Masters programme started at a different university

A student had already commenced his MSc in neurological rehabilitation with another university and had achieved 120 credits. Now wanted to transfer his credits into Plymouth University's MSc Advanced Professional Practice in Neurological Rehabilitation.

He sent us a transcript and information on the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the modules he had completed. He was awarded 120 masters-level credits towards his chosen masters at Plymouth University.

Upgrade from diploma to degree

To upgrade a diploma-level module to degree level, we must have an equivalent module at degree level. You'll enrol on the module (but not need to attend the lectures) and your tutor will support you on completing the assignment.

Case study 5

Upgrading a diploma-level module to a degree-level module

A nurse had studied a palliative care diploma-level module but wanted to upgrade her credits to degree level. She discussed her requirements with us and was put in contact with the relevant module tutor who agreed to support her. She enrolled on a module and liaised with the tutor directly regarding her assignment, her tutor marked on completion and she was awarded 20 degree-level credits.

Upgrade from degree to masters

To upgrade a degree-level module to masters level, we must have an equivalent module at masters level. You'll enrol on the module (but not need to attend the lectures) and your tutor will support you on completing the assignment.



Case study 6

Upgrading degree-level modules to masters-level modules

A dietician who had completed a British Dietetic Association course at degree-level wanted to upgrade the course modules to masters level. He sent us the course certificate and transcript, and information on the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of his course modules.

The learning content from his course was similar to that of some of the modules on our MSc Advanced Professional in Paediatric Dietetics so he enrolled on the MSc. With support from the relevant module tutors, he completed the assignment for modules he was upgrading (he didn't need to attend the lectures for these modules), and was awarded 20 masters-level credits towards the MSc. Then he completed the rest of the MSc modules and graduated with an MSc in Paediatric Dietetics.

Voucher scheme

Plymouth University issues vouchers for attendance at short courses and conferences offered by the Faculty of Health and Human Sciences, an NHS trust or another professional/academic organisation (subject to prior agreement with Plymouth University).

When you have evidence of attending 5 full days, you can request a claim for APL to be considered. On successful completion of an assessed piece of coursework, you'll gain 20 academic credits at degree or masters level.

Case study 7

Degree-level claim

An occupational therapist assistant working in community rehabilitation had attended a number of study events. Together we decided which events to consider towards vouchers. These were Parkinson's awareness course, e-learning on safeguarding vulnerable adults, Mental Capacity Act Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, and the College of Occupational Therapists annual conference. This was a total of five days equalling ten vouchers.

For his APL claim assignment, he identified his personal development as a result of the learning from the events, and used case studies to demonstrate how his new knowledge had improved his practice for the benefit of patients and his workplace. He was awarded 20 credits at degree level, which he used towards his BSc (Hons) Professional Development in Health and Social Care.

Case study 8

Masters-level claim

A midwife had attended a range of study events at her NHS trust and wanted to get some credit for that learning. Together we decided which events to use towards vouchers. These were PROMPT – training the trainer, maternity clinical risk management, child protection foundation course, and an obstetric ultrasound course. This was a total of five days of study equalling ten vouchers.

For her APL claim assignment, she considered each learning event and the skills associated, and how she effected changes in her working environment as a result of these learning events. She also included a personal reflection on her learning. She was awarded 20 general credits at masters level that she used to finish her MSc Advanced Professional Practice (Nursing and Midwifery Professions).

Accreditation of Prior and (Experiential) Learning (AP(E)L)

AP(E)L gives recognition for knowledge and skills that have been gained from experience – rather than from a certificated programme of study or training – and refers to prior learning which has not been assessed. Such learning may have been gained in a number of different ways:



- experiential learning acquired in paid work
- experiential learning acquired in unpaid or voluntary work
- experiential learning acquired from leisure activities
- un-certificated learning from self-directed study

AP(E)L is more difficult to assess and requires consideration of what has been learned, and comparing this with what would be studied on the course for which you are claiming credit. Without certificates, a portfolio of evidence is usually required to look at and assess both the content of the learning and the level.

Case study 9

Social work experience

A student had been working as a support worker for his local authority social services for five years and felt it would be beneficial to get credit for some of that experience to use towards his BA (Hons) Social Work. He had to submit a portfolio of evidence which consisted of ten items including:

- a CV and personal statement mapping his professional journey
- a case study on direct work with a person using the service, demonstrating his understanding of the National Occupational Standards and the GSCC values from the Codes of Practice

- a direct observation of practice by a suitably experienced social worker or professional in his agency, to include his reflection on the observation process and the observer's feedback
- a reflective journal consisting of four entries, two of which are accounts of his direct working, one on his observations of shadowing an experienced social worker, and another focusing on a discussion or interview with a person using services to ascertain their views in a particular service area
- an evaluation reflecting on the whole learning process of undertaking the portfolio.

The portfolio was marked and he was awarded 20 general credits to use on his degree.

Case study 10

Diabetes nursing experience

A Level 2 Registered Nurse wanted to upgrade her Nursing and Midwifery Council registration to Level 1 so she had enrolled onto our BSc (Hons) Professional Development in Nursing. She had been working in primary care and as part of her role, supported patients with diabetes. She wanted to gain credit towards her degree for her experience of working with this client group.

She developed a portfolio of evidence that focused on her experience supporting the person with diabetes or related syndromes, which included:

- a clinical log documenting her experiences and learning in practice
- a case study of a specific diabetes related consultation, demonstrating her understanding of the different types of diabetes, screening and diagnosis practices, and treatment options and lifestyle changes for patients
- observations of her practice by a registered practitioner
- a critical review and analysis of the quality of service provided for people with diabetes within her workplace
- a reflective summary of how developing her portfolio had enabled her to consolidate her knowledge on diabetes.

Her portfolio was marked and she was awarded 20 general credits towards her degree.

Preceptorship

If you have completed a preceptorship programme within your organisation, you can enrol onto our preceptorship AP(E)L module and achieve 20 credits at degree or masters level.

For your AP(E)L assignment, you'll undertake an academic reflection on your personal and professional development through preceptorship, exploring how preceptorship can influence change in patient care and organisational development.

Mentorship

You can gain academic credit for your mentorship experience. We offer two AP(E)L mentorship modules, one for mentors and another for sign-off mentors. To enrol on both modules you must have a relevant mentorship qualification.

Case study 11

Mentorship experience

You can enrol onto our AP(E)L mentorship module up to one year after completion of a relevant mentorship qualification.

As an example, a nurse had achieved the 'ENB998 teaching and assessing in clinical practice qualification' within the last year and now wanted to gain academic credit. So he enrolled onto our AP(E)L mentorship module and after successful completion of the assessment, was awarded 20 credits at degree level.

Case study 12

Sign-off mentor experience

To enrol onto our AP(E)L module for sign-off mentors, you must have a mentorship qualification approved by the Nursing and Midwifery Council, and evidence demonstrating your sign-off mentor activities.

As an example, a student on our MSc Advanced Professional Practice (Nursing and Midwifery Professions) used her sign-off mentorship experience to gain 20 masters-level credits towards her MSc.

**PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
WITH
PLYMOUTH
UNIVERSITY**

How to apply

To apply for APL or for any enquiries, please contact

Professional Development Unit

Email: pdu@plymouth.ac.uk

Tel: +44 (0)1752 586951

Write: Professional Development Unit, Level 4, Rolle Building, Plymouth University,
Drake Circus, Plymouth, PL4 8AA, United Kingdom

Discover more

Visit: www.plymouth.ac.uk/APL

The University is committed to the promotion of equality and diversity. If you require this publication in an alternative format, please contact us on the number above.