



Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy

Version	Purpose/Changes	Author	Date
1.0	Initial Draft	Dr Farhad Keissarian	1/2/2018
2.0	Flowchart	Dr Farhad Keissarian	1/2/2020
3.0	Record Keeping, Criteria	Dr Farhad Keissarian	1/2/2022
4.0	Currency, Appeal	Dr Farhad Keissarian	1/10/2023

Date Approved:	19/10/2023
Approved By:	The OU
Document Owner:	Dr Farhad Keissarian
Date of Next Review:	1/10/2025

CONTENTS

1	Error! Bookmark not defined.	3
2	Error! Bookmark not defined.	3
3	Principles of RPL	4
4	RPL Process.....	5
5	Criteria	5
6	How is RPL recorded.....	6
7.	Appeals	7
Appendix One	Error! Bookmark not defined.	8
Appendix Two	RPL Application Form.....	9

1. Purpose

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is a process which facilitates entry with advanced standing to an Open University (The OU) validated programme at Ada College (Ada). This is normally achieved by the award of credit to the student, thus exempting them from studying a particular module or modules on the programme or allowing them entry into a higher level of the programme via credit transfer. It is a process based on academic judgement that supports students in using their prior learning towards a higher education qualification, avoids students having to repeat learning they have already successfully undertaken, and promotes student mobility by facilitating credit accumulation and transfer. In doing so it takes reference from the Quality Code expectation B6 :

“Higher education providers operate equitably, valid, and reliable processes of assessment, including for the recognition of prior learning, which enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought. B6”

Students may make RPL applications during the application process for admission to the college and during their studies. The guiding principle of RPL and credit transfer is that it adheres to the college’s regulatory framework and that decisions are made transparently, fairly and consistently across the college, ensuring equality of opportunity for all applicants and students.

2. Definitions

Prior experiential learning (RPEL)

This is where a student has gained experiential learning which is at the appropriate level to be recognised via the award of RPL credits. This will involve an assessment process by academic staff. The learning gained through the experience is being assessed, rather than the experience itself. If the learning is recognised as appropriate in relation to the specific Ada programme/module(s), a proportion of credit, at the appropriate level is awarded to the student.

Prior learning for which credit has been awarded (RPL)

This is where a student has undertaken prior learning which has led to the award of credits or qualifications by a UK higher education degree awarding body according to the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (FHEQ), October 2014. In such cases the college will determine at application stage the status of the award, including volume and level, in relation to the programme the student is applying for. This is a standard part of the admissions process and therefore does normally not require formal assessment of the student’s prior learning.

Students may be exempted from studying a module, or modules, based on the prior learning, but may also be admitted directly to a higher level of the award. For example, a student may be admitted directly into level 5 or level 6 of the BSc degree; credits will not be awarded in relation to specific modules but awarded against the level or levels.

3. Principles of RPL

Applications

- Responsibility rests with the applicant/student to make the RPL claim; however, it is the responsibility of the college, via programme teams, to promote the RPL process to applicants/students.
- RPL claims should be made prior to the start of the relevant learning in the programme.
- Applicants for RPL should receive supportive guidance during the process, including advice about the evidence that is considered appropriate, the criteria against which claims are judged, timescales and arrangements for providing feedback.
- Applicants may not normally re-use credit from a previous completed programme towards an equivalent or lower award.
- Assessment is made against the RPL criteria and the module learning outcomes. Ada does not set limits on the currency of previously earned credit; however, sector practice shows that five years is often used as an indicator of currency. In practice, decisions will depend on the subject area and will be delegated to Head of Apprenticeship Programmes and Head of degree Programmes. As a guideline, a 'fair match' would include 80% attainment of the module or module(s) outcomes the claim relates to

The award of RPL

- RPL may only be awarded in accordance with Ada's regulations.
- No marks are awarded for credit achieved via the RPL process, unless the RPL is awarded for credits previously earned at Ada.
- Award classification is based only on modules studied at Ada.

- Credits awarded via the RPL process must be clearly displayed on documentation provided to students on graduation, for example the student's transcript.

4. RPL Process

Enquiry

An applicant/student enquires about RPL and is provided with advice and the application form (appended to this document). Ada may use this, tailored to its needs, or develop its own proforma as long as it covers the information in the generic form.

Application

The applicant/student prepares their claim on the application form, submitting the appropriate evidence and a portfolio, if appropriate. Evidence may include outline module content from previous modules studied and copies of previous transcripts, award certificates or diploma supplements. In some subject areas a meeting with the applicant/student may be required to explore their claim

Decision

The claim is considered by the appropriate staff – Admissions staff for applicants and the Head of Degree Programmes. Authority to make decisions on RPL will not normally be devolved to the OU, the validating institution. Applicants/students should be informed of the decision in a timely manner.

Record keeping

The decision and the reason should be clearly recorded on the application form. If the decision is not to allow the claim, an applicant will be required to study the entire programme, and a current student must study in full the module(s) their claim related to. If the decision is to approve the application, the reason for making the decision should be clearly articulated. If the application involves accepting credit earned at another institution, the name of the institution and the level, volume and date of the credit achieved must be recorded. The flowchart in Annex. 1 shows the RPL process.

5. Criteria

Validity

The achievement must be comparable with the standard and content of the programme the claim relates to. The evidence should match the learning claimed, and the learning should be appropriate to the module(s) learning outcomes.

Sufficiency

There should be evidence to cover the outcomes for the learning against which the claim is being made 80%+ match between the student's prior learning and the module(s) outcomes.

Currency

The assessment should establish that the learning, whenever undertaken, is still current. In some modules, currency may be an issue. RPL regulations may specify that learning acquired more than five years ago may need supporting by a portfolio of more recent achievements.

Authenticity

The Admissions Officer and the Head of Degree Programme must be assured that the claim relates to the applicant's own work, for example experiential learning should be endorsed by direct evidence, including referees

Regulations

There are regulations governing the award of RPL which can be found in the Regulations of the OU Validated Awards. [Regulations for the validate awards of the Open University](#)

RPL credit limits

Only a certain proportion of RPL credits can be awarded. Students are expected to complete a significant part of their studies at Ada to gain an award. For example: BSc Honours Apprenticeship Degree: Students must study 120 level 6 credits at Ada. These limits don't apply to ex-Ada students re-entering their original programme of study.

The re-use of credit Relevant credit achieved can be re-used towards a higher award, subject to the RPL limits. It is important that the re-use of credit is accepted in relation to awards, for example where credits achieved from a foundation degree can count towards the achievement of an honours BSc degree.

6. How is RPL recorded?

Student record system

The credits awarded via RPL will be recorded on the student record system, against the level to which it applies, or against the individual module(s).

Boards of examiners

The credits awarded via RPL will be shown on the exam board reports so board members can see how a student's profile has been formed and that a student has sufficient credits to progress or be given an award.

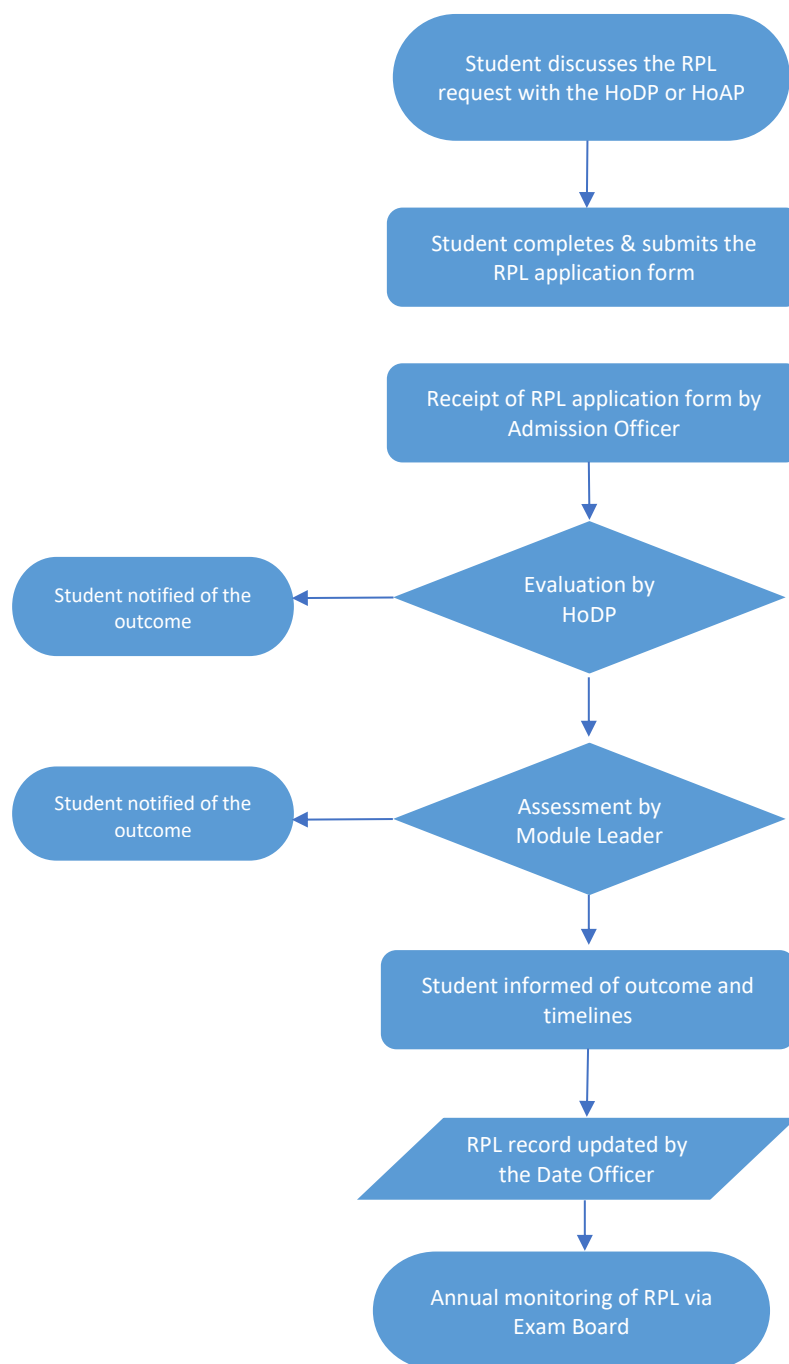
Transcript

Students achieving an OU validated award at Ada will receive a Transcript Report that will include details of the credits undertaken by the student, clearly identifying where and when RPL credits were awarded.

7. Appeals

Appeals against decisions in respect of applications for RPL will only be considered where there is clear evidence of a significant administrative or regulatory error; there is no provision for appeal against the academic judgement. Any appeal must be made in writing and submitted within 14 days from the date of issue of the decision, citing the grounds and basis of the appeal, with evidence as appropriate.

Appendix One: Process Flowchart



Appendix Two: RPL Application Form

How we can contact you:

Name:	Daytime Tel:
Date of Birth:	Home Address:
Email address, or other contact notes:	

Your proposed or current study details at Ada:

Title of Ada programme:

Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning

Please complete the table below with your certificated learning.

Qualification Title & the Awarding Body	Level of Award	Unit or Module	Date of Completion

Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning

Please complete the table below with your experimental learning (if applicable)

Details of learning	Evidence Provided

Your conclusion:

Having read the RPL Guidance, I believe my RPL profile best matches (please tick):	
RPL (credited learning)	<input type="radio"/>
RPEL (experiential learning)	<input type="radio"/>
Combination of RPL/RPEL	<input type="radio"/>

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge, all the information given here and on any accompanying documentation is correct. I enclose my CV.

Signed: Date:

This should be completed by the Head of Degree Programmes

RPL Decision		
RPL Credit to be assigned	Level 4	Level 5
Notes for Applicant		

Details of RPL		
Modules	Level	Credit

Official use

Form received on: (date)

Decision made on: (date)

Applicant/student informed on: (date)

Entered onto student record system (if applicable) on: (date)

Outcome:

The student will:

- ☐ not claim any module exemption
- ☐ claim RPL for module(s)
- ☐ claim RPEL for module(s)

Brief rationale for approval/non-approval

(if credit is being accepted which has been awarded at another institution, please include the name of the institution and the date and details of the credit awarded)