

# LEARNER RELATED POLICY: ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING & TRANSFER FOR HE STUDENTS

This policy is biennially reviewed to ensure compliance with current regulations

<b>Approved/reviewed by</b>	
<b>Deputy Principal</b>	
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This policy and procedure is subject to The Equality Act 2010 which recognises the following categories of individual as Protected Characteristics: Age, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex (gender), Sexual orientation, Disability, Socio-Economic Disadvantage

## 1. Document Control

### 1.1. Document Details

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### 1.3. Distribution

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## 1. **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The College welcomes difference and diversity among its students and seeks to help each one to flourish academically and personally through its programmes. The College welcomes applicants with a wide range of qualifications and learning gained through experience.
- 1.2 Accreditation of prior learning and/or a student transfer, may be fulfilled either through the recognition of certificated learning, or through the recognition of learning derived through work or other life experience.

## 2. **DEFINITIONS**

- 2.1 Accreditation of prior learning can be applied to three types of claim: -
- Claims for entry with advanced standing (i.e. entering a programme of study at a higher than normal entry level).
  - Claims for mid-year entry on the basis of transfer from another institution.
  - Claims for exemption from specific units.

{Claims for entry level admission without the standard or minimum entry requirements are dealt with through the normal admissions process}.

- 2.2 All higher education programmes are expressed in terms of Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (CATS) points. One CATS point is roughly equivalent to 10 notional learning hours. CATS points allow comparability between the volume and learning level of different qualifications. However, similarity in volume and learning level between qualifications does not guarantee the award of credit. All claims for credit must demonstrate the equivalency of learning outcomes between qualifications held and credit applied for.
- 2.3 Every module validated for delivery by the College has its own clearly defined set of learning outcomes. The learning outcomes for any given Level of a programme are the combined learning outcomes for all units constituting that level.

## 3. **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of the student to determine whether they are potentially eligible for the award of credit and to initiate any claim.

- 3.2 In all cases, it is the responsibility of the student to demonstrate the equivalency of their claim, either to the minimum entry qualifications for the programme they are seeking admittance to or to the learning outcomes for those parts of a programme of study for which they are seeking exemption. In addition to any specific requirements, a claim for credit must seek to demonstrate that the applicant is adequately prepared for the level of study for which admission is sought.
- 3.3 It is a matter of academic judgement whether a claim is accepted or rejected and submission of an application for exemption does not constitute automatic entitlement to the credit being claimed.

#### **4. RESTRICTIONS ON CLAIMS FOR ACADEMIC CREDIT**

- 4.1 A student's entitlement to academic credit shall normally be established prior to admission to a programme and any credit granted shall normally be entered onto the individual learning record upon enrolment.
- 4.2 Where students are making a claim based on qualifications that are more than five years old, they would normally be expected to demonstrate that they have kept the learning derived from the qualification up to date through work or other life experience.
- 4.3 Some programmes of study have a mixture of compulsory and optional units, which may affect the amount of credit they would be able to claim. This would be discussed as part of the admissions process.
- 4.4 Specific credit can only be awarded for whole units.
- 4.5 For students entering an undergraduate programme with advanced standing the maximum volume of credit which can be recognised through Accreditation of Prior Learning is 240 credits at Levels 4 and 5.
- 4.6 Credits already awarded by the College and its validating institution as part of a College award, may not be used as APL credit against a second award which is at the same level and in a similar subject area.

#### **5. ADMISSION ON THE BASIS OF PREVIOUS CERTIFIED LEARNING**

- 5.1 The College accepts a range of qualifications as the basis for entry, including GCE / VCE qualifications (A levels), AS levels, BTEC Extended / National Diplomas and National Certificates, Scottish Highers / Advanced Highers, Irish Leaving Certificates, Access qualifications and key skills qualifications.

- 5.2 International qualifications may be accepted providing that their equivalence to the required UK qualifications can be confirmed.
- 5.3 The College also accepts the use of certificated learning to gain entry to programmes at a higher stage than the normal entry point. It is the responsibility of the student to provide sufficient certified evidence of their learning, and to demonstrate that such previous learning can take the place of the learning for which they are seeking credit. Students will normally be required to provide an outline syllabus of their previous studies or other evidence of how their previous studies match the learning for which they are seeking credit.

## **6. ADMISSION ON THE BASIS OF PREVIOUS LEARNING GAINED THROUGH EXPERIENCE**

- 6.1 The College may be able to admit students on the basis of previous learning through experience, provided that this is identifiable, relevant to the programme applied for, and provides sufficient evidence of the applicant's ability to benefit from the programme, and is approved by the College's awarding partners (University of Derby or Pearson).
- 6.2 Each student is responsible for making the claim of knowledge and skills achieved through experience, and for providing adequate supporting evidence. If a student without formal qualifications is applying for the entry level of a programme, the claim must be supported by sufficient evidence of relevant experience, commitment to the subject, and ability to undertake an academic qualification. The admissions tutors will advise students individually of what is necessary, but the claim would be handled through the normal admissions procedures for that programme.

## **7. ADMISSION WITH ADVANCED STANDING**

- 7.1 Students may be admitted to a programme at a higher stage than the normal entry point if they can demonstrate either sufficient accredited learning (for example, from previous qualifications or part-qualifications) or sufficient and appropriate experience or training. The point at which they enter the programme will depend upon the level and range of their previous attainment.
- 7.2 In all cases, any entitlement to advanced standing admission must normally be established through the College's APL process before enrolment.

## **8. ASSESSMENT OF A CLAIM FOR ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING (APL)**

- 8.1 A number of assessment tools may be used in making a decision regarding accreditation of prior learning, and the student may be required to submit supplementary evidence or undertake some form of assessment to support the claim.
- 8.2 The most common evidence required is that related to prior certificated learning, usually in the form of a certificate, supported by a transcript and details of the content of the syllabus, such as module descriptors.
- 8.3 Other assessment tools employed can include a portfolio of evidence (often required in the assessment of a claim for prior experiential learning), an interview, completion of a piece of work, or completion of the usual assessment for a module for which equivalence is being claimed.
- 8.4 Whichever form of assessment of credit is used, the match between the evidence offered and the learning outcomes of the award must be clearly recorded, and final approval is met by the College's awarding partner (University of Derby or Pearson).

## **9. ROLE OF THE CREDIT ASSESSORS AND HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE**

- 9.1 The responsibility for the assessment of claims for academic credit lies with the Higher Education Quality Assurance Committee (HE QAC). An appointed member of the committee with relevant subject expertise should be involved in the assessment of each application.
- 9.2 The Chair of the HE QAC may also refer the claim to the external examiner for the relevant subject.
- 9.3 Decisions on approved claims are reported to the HE QAC.
- 9.4 Where credit is awarded this is identified on the individual student record.

## **10. REVIEW OF ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING DECISIONS**

- 10.1 The College always seeks to process claims carefully, and to assess each claim fairly and equally, but it recognises that some students may be dissatisfied with the manner in which their claim was processed.

- 10.2 Students are entitled to obtain feedback on their claim from the HE QAC through the relevant admissions tutor, who will provide further information on why the decision was made.
- 10.3 There can be no appeal process for APL decisions.

**11. MONITORING OF ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING AND TRANSFER PROCESS**

- 11.1 The College will keep a record of all claims for academic credit made and all academic credit awarded.
- 11.2 Upon completion of the APL process a record will be placed on the individual student record.
- 11.3 It is recommended as good practice that APL activities across college are reported to the Standards Committee on an annual basis.

**12. TRANSFER OF A STUDENT FROM BOSTON COLLEGE TO ANOTHER PROVIDER**

- 12.1 In the instance of a student requiring to transfer from a Boston College HE programme of study to that at an alternative provider, in either a mid-year, or a mid-programme basis, the following actions will be adopted. The staff member with responsibility for co-ordination of the HE programme will liaise with the HE Manager, and the Careers Team, to provide the student appropriate advice and guidance to enable a student transfer to be explored with other suitable providers. The staff at the College will support the student, as required, to construct a claim that evidences their prior learning, knowledge and skills, which can then be used to inform admission requirements by the other provider.

Note: This policy applies to students undertaking HE qualifications at Boston College except where the regulations of the awarding body or validating Institution take precedence.

