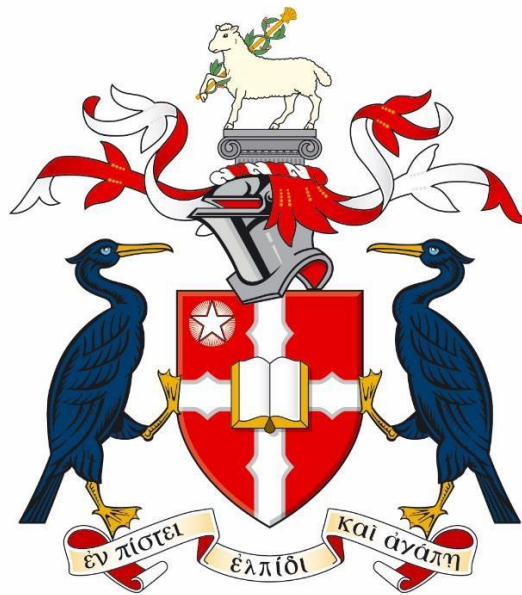


# Liverpool Hope University



**Academic Quality Handbook (QH11):**

**Policy on Recognition of Prior Learning  
including admission by Advanced Standing and Credit Transfer.**

## Document Control

Responsibility for Policy:	Registrar
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## Introduction and Definitions

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the generic term used for the award of credits on the basis of demonstrated learning which has taken place in the past. RPL allows students who are enrolling on award bearing taught programmes of study at the University to claim “credit” for previous learning. The previous learning must be relevant to the programme for which they are applying, and if their application is successful, the credit will count towards their chosen programme of study.

As set out in relevant national guidance<sup>1</sup>, there are two main categories within the recognition of prior learning: -

- a. Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning – RPCL is a term which refers specifically to the recognition of certificated learning through the assignment of credit. This is learning which has been formally assessed by a recognised educational provider and for which an academic transcript or equivalent formal documentation is available.
- b. Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning – RPEL the formal recognition of prior learning gained through other experience, including paid or unpaid work, self-directed study, study for which no credit has been awarded or through leisure pursuits.

Liverpool Hope will consider applications for RPCL. Furthermore, all applicants for RPCL must be treated equitably regardless of the sources of the prior learning that is being considered or the age, gender, marital status, ethnicity, disability, religious belief or sexual orientation of the applicant.

The University does not normally grant exemption of credit for prior experiential learning RPEL, although it will take experience into account in determining suitability for admission to a degree. This may be particularly appropriate in the case of mature students.

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<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/scotland/development-projects/recognition-of-prior-learning>

Advanced Standing, is a form of RPCL which recognizes former students of the University who wish to transfer credit to the same course they have already partially completed and have these credits accepted in order to complete that award. In this case the student's previous record while at the University will be considered. Applications for Credit Transfer enable credits from an alternative course at Hope to be accepted as part of a new course at Hope. Students wishing to apply for Credit Transfer should complete the appropriate form.

PhD degrees are outside the scope of policy because they are awarded solely on the basis of assessment of the thesis and there are no credit values attached to such programmes. Entry to Postdoctoral Research Degrees is considered in the Liverpool Hope Postdoctoral Research Regulations and Code of Practice.

## 1. Policy Statements

1.1 All applications for RPCL must be made and approved prior to entry to the programme in question, unless the School/Department concerned has agreed that exceptional circumstances apply. In all cases, RPCL must be approved prior to starting the relevant unit / module(s) from which exemption is sought.

1.2 No RPCL award may be given which implies partial completion of a course unit at the previous provider. Credit can only be given for whole units/modules.

1.3 The University will award standard credit exemptions against the [National Professional Qualifications](#) (NPQs)<sup>2</sup> for entry onto a full Masters programme. NPQ qualifications will not be considered for entry to a PGcert or PGDip<sup>3</sup>. Please see Appendix 1 for the credit value for each NPQ certificate.

1.4 The Assessment Criteria for judging RPCL claims are:

- **Authenticity** – is the evidence genuine, and is the achievement clearly the applicant's own?
- **Relevance and Validity** – is the learning demonstrated by the evidence relevant to the target programme of study at the University? This means it must be at the same level, meet similar learning outcomes, and cover a similar knowledge and skills base. The level, learning outcomes and knowledge base need not be identical but must be close to those in the target programme.

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<sup>2</sup> Full mapping of the NPQ qualifications has been completed by the School of Teacher Education and approved by the Chair of Academic Committee

<sup>3</sup>This does not affect exit routes from the specific Masters programmes - please refer to [PGT Academic Regulations](#)

Does the evidence support the claim? Is it relevant to the learning outcomes for the area(s) and are the learning, knowledge, skills and achievements demonstrated through the evidence at an acceptable level?

- **Sufficiency** – is there sufficient evidence to support the claim?
- **Currency** – is the learning current (i.e., the date of the qualification is still current; normally five years is considered the maximum at which learning is still relevant. It should be noted that the decision in relation to currency is subject-specific and some learning may not be current much earlier than this. Conversely, in some cases older certified learning may be approved subject to the candidate being able to demonstrate continued engagement in the field, for example via relevant publications in the field, CPD or wider engagement with the relevant profession).
- **Regulatory** – the applicant meets any wider regulatory / PSRB requirements.

## 1.5 Maximum total RPCL

Application can be made for **exemption** up to the following limits:

### Undergraduate

- 1.5.1 The maximum credits which can normally be awarded under RPCL is normally **120** credits against a 360 credit (three-year, full time) undergraduate programme.
- 1.5.2 In exceptional circumstances, and with specific approval, exemption of 120 credits may be sought against a 240 credit Foundation Degree. In such cases evidence of both academic credit and placement-based learning or experiential learning will be required.
- 1.5.3 RPCL may be sought for exemption of credits against provision offered at Level C/4 (Year One) and Level I/5 (Year 2) dependent upon the Level and programme of study already completed (and in line with 1.4).
- 1.5.4 RPCL claims are most appropriate against entry into Level I(5). However, RPCL applications into Level H(6) will be considered on a case by case basis by either a Special Cases Panel or, where appropriate, by the Associate Dean International, the Subject nominated representative and the Head of School/Department [or nominee] (where the applicant is from a recognised international partner and an extensive mapping exercise has taken place).

### Postgraduate

- 1.5.5 The maximum credits which can be awarded under RPCL is **60 or 50%**
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**of the award's credit rating, whichever is the lower.** Exemptions from this maximum credit rule may be agreed in the most exceptional circumstances. Such exceptions must be approved by the Chair of Academic Committee [or nominee].

1.5.6 Within postgraduate programmes RPCL claims **may not** be made against the dissertation or consultancy project reports.

1.5.7 Notwithstanding 2.6.5 RPCL is not normally permitted into the MA Social Work because of the professional requirements of the Award. Individual requests may be considered on a case by case basis.

## 2. Principles

2.1 Decisions regarding the accreditation of prior learning are a matter of academic judgment, with the main consideration being whether the prior learning is broadly equivalent to the learning that would otherwise have been assessed during the course unit.

2.2 Overseas applicants may apply for RPCL in the same way as UK and EU applicants. All qualifications and institutions will be checked by the University along with all other relevant requirements (such as visa and immigration conditions). It is the responsibility of the applicant to make sure that all evidence and supporting application material is submitted in English. Translations into English must be certified, with original documents available on request.

2.3 Students can receive an exit award if they have RPCL credit in their profile, providing their performance at the University also satisfies the award requirements of the Undergraduate or Postgraduate Degree Regulations. However, special consideration needs to be given to students who have been granted the full amount of RPCL on their entry programme but fail the minimum number of credits for the programme and have to be considered to receive an exit award. Departments/Schools will need to check that students have completed sufficient credits to leave the University with the relevant exit award; this means that at least half the taught credits of the exit award have been completed at the University (in line with the University's Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Degree Regulations). If the student has not completed enough credits, they may only be eligible to receive a transcript of their results. The criteria against which RPCL requests are judged are set out in Clause 1.4 so as to ensure that any student admitted is equipped and prepared to cope with the demands of their learning at Hope.

2.4 There are no fees charged for the consideration of RPL applications. However, if RPCL is approved, the following fees will apply:

- Credit from an approved Institute of Higher Education – no fee
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- Credit awarded from all other Education / Training Providers is calculated at 1 credit = £10<sup>4</sup>
    - 30 credits = £300.00
    - 60 credits = £600.00
- 2.5 Applications for Advanced Standing from students who did not leave the University in good standing will not be automatically rejected, but a measured case needs to be made to the Dean [or nominee] as to why such a student should be readmitted, and the Dean's [or nominee's] as decision in such a case will be ratified by the Chair of Academic Committee to ensure cross-faculty consistency and transparency (Further Guidance is found in Appendix 2 of this policy).
- 2.6 Students applying for Advanced Standing will be required to transfer all blocks of study that have previously been attempted and passed. Students will not normally be permitted to retake blocks of study already passed unless the subject judge that they do not fulfil the requirements detailed in 1.5 of this policy. Students who have previously unsuccessfully attempted the Level of study to which they are applying to be re admitted will only be granted one further attempt at that Level. This excludes previous attempts linked to interruption of studies. Any capping applied to the retake before the initial withdrawal from studies will be applied on re-entry.
- 2.7 Applications for RPCL are considered on academic grounds and, as such, no formal rights of appeal exist against the final decision of the University, as appeals cannot be made against decisions of academic judgment. Appeals may, however, be made in line with the University's Appeals and Complaints Procedure on the grounds of procedural irregularity, the emergence of new material information or evidence of bias or prejudice.

### **3. The Application Process – for prospective students**

- 3.1 Applications for RPCL, Advanced Standing and Credit Transfer should be made prior to entry and applications are not normally expected to be made on-course unless in exceptional circumstances. There is no deadline for applications prior to the start of the academic year, although all applicants are encouraged to apply as early as possible to allow sufficient time for the consideration of their request.
- 3.2 Applications for entry at undergraduate level should normally be made via

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<sup>4</sup> In some cases, for example, CPD programmes, the fee may be reduced at the discretion of the Dean.

UCAS. Other applications should consist of a written request, along with documentary evidence of the prior learning. This can be in the form of transcripts, certificates or other suitable evidence. There must be sufficient evidence such that the programme team can be confident in granting approval. Standard templates and forms are available to support applicants (further guidance and application forms can be found [here](#)).

## 4. Consideration of Applications

- 4.1 In all cases it is for the relevant Head of School/Department [or nominee] to authorise the award of credit via any of the processes covered in this policy.
- 4.2 Consideration of the applications should include a detailed/documented discussion of how the Intended Learning Outcomes of each unit, where RPCL is to be applied, have been met through prior learning or equivalent experience.

## 5. Assessment of Applications

- 5.1 A decision regarding whether an application can be approved will depend on the requirements and specific learning outcomes of the particular programme as well as the details of the individual application.
  - 5.2 If the School/Department assessor decides that further evidence is required in addition to the applicant's initial submission, they should inform the applicant as soon as possible regarding the particular evidence required.
  - 5.3 If the assessor decides that they wish to see the applicant to ascertain additional information in support of the application, arrangements for an interview should be made as soon as possible.
  - 5.4 When assessing the evidence against the requirements of the intended learning outcomes of the programme and particular course unit, the assessor should consider the following:
    - Subject content and knowledge
    - Volume of learning
    - Level of learning
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- Evidence of achievement
  - Any particular restrictions imposed by Professional or Statutory Bodies, if applicable.
- 5.5 The assessor should refer to the characteristics of the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) [qualification descriptors](#) to the level of work or course unit to assess whether it is acceptable.
- 5.6 The University reserves the right to terminate an application for study if the applicant is found to have omitted relevant facts or information in connection with their application or who has falsified or plagiarised any part of their application.
- 5.7 Exceptionally, individual applications may be received where the level RPCL sought falls outside the norms established by this policy. Such applications, together with the supporting evidence, should be submitted using the standard templates. These should then be considered on a case by case basis. Initial consideration will be by the Head of Department or School.

## 6. Outcome of Applications

- 6.1 A successful application under the remit of this policy does not guarantee an offer of a place on a programme. Meeting entry criteria does not guarantee an offer and admissions tutors choose from a pool of eligible applicants in any given year.
- 6.2 Decisions about applications should be relayed to the School/Programme Administrator, applicants should be informed and the normal processes for an application to study should be followed.
- 6.3 Records of decisions relating to applications should be maintained by the relevant Department/School (and details of numbers of applications received, granted and refused, etc. retained for information). Monitoring should take place, normally at Department/School level and within Student Enrolment and Administration, to ensure that the criteria for RPCL remain objective and are being fairly and consistently applied. It is important that the progress of students admitted with RPCL is monitored, so that information is built up on the suitability of particular qualifications for the granting of credit exemption. This could be covered in Department/School annual reviews of programmes or via a separate report.
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- 6.4 Student Enrolment and Administration should record successful applications as a credit on the student's record on the Student Information System (SITs). Unsuccessful applicants should be advised of the reasons for the decision and, where appropriate, given an indication of any further evidence which might be required to come to a final decision.
- 6.5 In the case of credit bearing CPD programmes, the nominated CPD administrator should record successful applications through this policy as a credit on the student's record on SITs.

## **7. Awarded Credit**

- 7.1 Any credit awarded through this policy is treated in the same way as credit awarded through the normal taught route. Credits brought in from an external provider do not contribute to the calculation of the final award. The credits are represented as 'Prior Learning' on the student's academic transcript but marks and grades are not included in the final award calculation. However, for transfer of internally awarded credit via Advanced Standing and Credit transfer both the credit value and the marks/grades awarded will be considered when calculating the students final award.
- 7.2 Particular consideration will need to be given to the case of students who have been granted the full amount of RPCL on their entry programme but fail the minimum number of Liverpool Hope credits for the award and are consequently considered for an exit award.

## **8. Entry**

Students entering directly into Level I or Level H of an Undergraduate degree or partway through a Postgraduate degree, will not have had the induction that students normally receive at the beginning of their studies. The University has established a process by which all students entering at Level I or H of an Undergraduate degree, or partway through a PGT degree, are invited to a specially designed full induction session with the Gateway team, which covers all the information normally given in the Level C sessions and more. Each School/Department receiving a student with RPCL must further ensure that the student receives all appropriate advice relating to subject-specific matters. In

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particular, Departments should consider carefully whether there are any health and safety implications of allowing students to be exempted from particular units/modules on the basis of RPCL. The decision on whether evidence of previous knowledge/experience satisfies departmental safety requirements should be made by the Programme Lead and relevant Health and Safety Officer.

## **9. Exemptions from elements of programmes for students registered at Liverpool Hope**

- 9.1 Students registered on a programme of study at Liverpool Hope may, with the permission of the Head of Department/School and subject to the arrangements for student exchange, be exempted from part of their approved programme of study and be permitted to study abroad or at another university provided that:
- the courses proposed to be taken are relevant and that their outcomes coincide with those of the Liverpool Hope programme and are of at least equivalent credit value and level
  - that the requirements for minimum amounts of credit to be undertaken at Liverpool Hope are satisfied
  - that the requirement for 50% of the assessment for the award to be conducted by Liverpool Hope is satisfied and that the marks achieved whilst undertaking an exchange are imported for the purposes of the award and formally ratified by the relevant Progression and Award Board.
- 10.2 Such exemptions should normally be granted in the second year of an undergraduate programme provided that any prerequisites for the programme are satisfied. The approval of the exam board is also required for study abroad for part of the second year where marks from assessments contribute to the classification.
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## APPENDIX 1: Credit Exemption for National Professional Qualifications

Title of National Professional Qualification	Number and level of credits
National Professional Qualification for Middle Leadership (NPQML)	30 credits at Level 7
National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership (NPQSL)	30 credits at Level 7
National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)	60 credits at level 7
National Professional Qualification for Executive Leadership (NPQEL)	60 credits at level 7

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## **APPENDIX 2 - Additional Guidance**

### **I. Visiting Students**

Applications from Visiting Students who request transfer to a Liverpool Hope University programme of study following completion of or during their visiting placement may be considered through the RPCL process. In such cases, previous study at their original home institution (based on an academic transcript) and/or other evidence, as well as study undertaken as a visiting student at Hope, may be taken into account in making the RPCL assessment. Note: the assessment regime for visiting students may vary from those of full-time Liverpool Hope students. Any variation approved for a particular student while under the visiting student regime must be considered when assessing work undertaken at Hope as part of the RPCL application

### **II. Double Counting**

RPCL can be granted for all learning from other educational institutions, even if that learning has already resulted in the award of a qualification similar to, or the same as, the qualification which the student is seeking to be awarded by the University. Similarly, the University places no restrictions on other institutions awarding qualifications on the basis of credits or qualifications gained at Liverpool Hope.

RPCL from a Liverpool Hope qualification may however not be used to count towards a second Liverpool Hope qualification which is both at the same level and in a similar subject to the first e.g. a student who has left with a BA Honours in Music (as an example) would not be able to count RPCL from this course towards a second BA Honours in Ancient Music.

### **III. Articulation agreements**

Articulation describes a formal relationship between two linked programmes, provided by two institutions. The successful completion of a named programme (or part of a programme) in one institution is recognised as providing the basis for entry with advanced standing to a named programme in the second institution (i.e. one awarding institution recognises the credit awarded by another). Articulation agreements are dealt with under the procedures for collaborative provision and are recorded in the Register of Collaborative Provision. They sit outside this policy.

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