

SWMTC: Procedures for the Accreditation of Prior Learning

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- I. Extracts from the University of Exeter guidelines

Procedure for the Accreditation of Prior Learning for Taught Programmes

1. Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) is the process whereby students can be exempt from some parts of their chosen programme of academic study by recognition of their learning from previous experiences and achievements.
2. Accredited Prior 'Certified' Learning (AP(C)L) is the achievement of learning that has been formally assessed and certificated from previous study with a higher education institution. Where groups, or cohorts, of students wish to apply this should usually be covered by the creation of a 'progression agreement'.
3. Accredited Prior 'Experiential' Learning (AP(E)L) is the non-certified acquisition of relevant skills and knowledge, gained through relevant experience, which is capable of being evaluated.
4. It is the achievement of learning, or outcomes of the learning, and not just the experience of the activities that is being accredited. In all cases evidence must be presented to the University that such learning has taken place.

AP(C)L

5. The College should assure itself that the prior certified study is equivalent to the standard of learning that would otherwise have been achieved from study in

the relevant module(s) at the University of Exeter. This is usually done by analysis of the intended learning outcomes of the module(s). This is particularly relevant to professional programmes where fitness to practice is pertinent.

6. Colleges should consider the learning which has been accredited at the other institution and decide, in the best interests of the student, how this can be taken into account. It is at the discretion of the College to decide if the subject content and therefore knowledge gained is sufficiently similar for a student to be exempt from module(s). Evidence for acceptance of APL should demonstrate that the learner has a reasonable expectation of satisfactorily completing the programme for which they are applying.
7. Prior credit obtained from another institution can be recognised, but given that the University could not have full confidence in marks awarded in all circumstances, the marks awarded from prior certified learning will not be used for the purpose of classification of the Exeter award.

AP(E)L

8. Colleges should consider the learning demonstrated through the student's experience in order to decide whether the ILOs for the module to be exempted have been demonstrated. Appropriate assessments may be set in order that the student may demonstrate achievement of these learning outcomes, including assessment of a portfolio of the student's work.
9. Acceptance of prior learning for credit purposes is at the discretion of the College, in consultation with the Dean of Taught or Research Programmes as necessary and appropriate. Colleges should ensure that the criteria by which they judge applications for APL are transparent and accessible.
10. Prior learning should not normally be accepted if five or more years have elapsed since it occurred unless the applicant can provide evidence that his/her learning has continued in a professional or similar context. In such cases the Colleges may choose to set an assessment to test an applicant's current knowledge.

For undergraduate programmes the final 120 credits of the programme must be taken as University of Exeter modules and the maximum amount of AP(C)L permitted is 180 credits in a 360 credit programme. Exceptionally this amount may be exceeded with the approval of the Dean.

11. All applications for APL should normally be made prior to the student's date of registration. All applications must include evidence of the prior learning, provided by the applicant.
12. Applications for APL should be considered by the relevant Programme Director. The Programme Director will need to consider whether the student's prior learning (certified and / or experiential) adequately demonstrates achievement of the learning outcomes for the module(s) from which exemption

is sought. For experiential learning the student may be required to complete a portfolio to demonstrate their learning, or to undertake some other form of assessment as appropriate. If a College is satisfied that the experiential learning is equivalent to the standard of a module(s) that the student is requesting exemption from, then assessment may not be required.

13. Applications may be rejected at any stage. Appeals against judgments on applications for APL will be treated in the same way as appeals on admissions applications.
14. APL should be recorded on the student record system and clearly identified on a student's transcript, including the amount and level of credit from which exemption has been granted.

II. SWMTC-specific guidelines

There are four types of instance in which accreditation of prior learning would normally be appropriate to be applied for:

- a) [all students] – APCL of accredited learning covering one or more whole stages, derived from credits obtained either at Exeter or another institution. Thus, a student applying for entry to the BTh(Min) employer co-funded degree may apply for APCL of up to 240 credits obtained either in the Foundation Degree in Christian Theology for Ministry at Exeter, or another similar Foundation Degree or Diploma of Theology at another training institution. A student applying for entry to Level 2 of the Foundation Degree may apply for APCL of the Certificate in Christian Theology for Ministry at Exeter, or a Certificate in Theology from another institution.
- b) [all students] – APCL of accredited learning in biblical or theological studies, not constituting the equivalent of a whole stage of study, or (for ministry students) in professional skills closely related to the skills of ministry. Normally this APCL would be limited to 60 credits at Level 1, assessed on the basis of the extent of the learning outcomes demonstrated.
- c) [all students] – APCL in respect of accredited learning in an area of study other than theology or professional skills closely related to the skills of ministry. Normally if an honours degree, or a professional qualification judged to be equivalent in standard to an honours degree, has been obtained in another discipline at another university, APCL can be awarded on the basis of the study skills and transferable skills acquired. Normally this APCL would be limited to 30 credits at Level 1.
- d) [ministry students] – APEL in respect of the work of reflection and study involved in the process of candidating for ministry. Evidence must be provided by the candidate and/or the sponsoring church to the effect that a significant amount of learning has taken place in relation to the type of discipline-specific and personal and key skills associated with the relevant ministerial formation modules at Level 1. Normally this APEL would be limited to 10 credits at Level 1. Because ministry students are admitted to a work-related award, it is expected that every student entering at level 1 would make such an application if not applying under a), b), or c).

e) [non-ministry students] – APEL in respect of previous experience may be applied for in the usual way, and its award would be subject to the guidelines given above, and the rules of the programme for which the student is registered. Normally such award would be limited to 30 credits at Level 1.

Usually it would be the case that if an award were made under a), no other APL would be awarded. If an award were made under b), no APL would be awarded under c) or d). If an award were made under c), no award would be made under d).