

AP(E)L Policy

Assessment and Accreditation of Prior Certificated and Experiential Learning

1 Principles

- 1.1 The University recognises that learning takes place throughout life. It may result from a certificated programme of study or it may result from Experience and study which are not formally attested. This is in accordance with the Mission Statement of the University, to offer high quality provision that meets the needs of "individuals and of the communities and enterprises in our region".
- 1.2 All forms of learning are recognised by the University as having equal status. Providing that an applicant can demonstrate that they have appropriate knowledge, skills and personal qualities they will be considered for admission to a programme of study and will be granted advanced standing if eligible.
- 1.3 Where appropriate, the University will provide a service for the formal assessment and accreditation of prior learning which will assist applicants to demonstrate their potential.

2 Rationale For AP(E)L Policy

- 2.1 The assessment and accreditation of prior learning is likely to become of increased importance within the University for the following reasons:
 - (a) AP(E)L is at the forefront of the institutional expression of CATS within the University and nationally.
 - (b) The calculation for credit has been written into the regulations for the total modularisation of the University. AP(E)L is already an established focus for credit within the CATS system.
 - (c) A number of schools are developing their mechanisms of AP(E)L in relation to demand from commercial companies, local education and health authorities.
 - (d) There is an increasing demand for linking educational provision with the assessment of work based learning for academic credit.

- (e) AP(E)L is of increasing significance in the new universities. It is important that our institution can compete with neighbouring Universities in AP(E)L developments, especially with regard to coherent mechanisms for delivery.
- (f) Alongside advice, AP(E)L is a mechanism for widening access in accordance with the University's Strategic Plan.
- (g) A number of professional bodies are developing AP(E)L as a means of assessing learning, these include the Management Charter Initiative, English Nursing Board, Institute of Personnel Management, Engineering and Social Work .Many others have conducted pilot surveys with favourable outcomes.
- (h) As increasing numbers of pre-registration courses use the above approach for initiatives within access, the culture and demand for AP(E)L is likely to grow. Institutional Bodies within the National Vocational Qualification framework, EDEXEL in particular, have developed a number of AP(E)L initiatives.
- (i) Those who have participated in the AP(E)L process all comment on the benefits of the educational experience. This applies to both staff and students.
- (j) Governors have accepted an AP(E)L fees with advice schedule for implementation from September 1992.

3 AP(E)L Policy - Terms Of Reference

- 3.1 To establish procedures and criteria for assessing credit in respect of certificated and uncertificated learning.
- 3.2 To establish procedures for granting certificated and uncertificated learning.
- 3.3 To review the above terms of reference and to recommend to Academic Board any amendments which would be considered necessary for the satisfactory operation of institution-wide AP(E)L policy.

4 AP(E)L Policy Implementation

- 4.1 To establish criteria and procedures with regard to the process of assessing and awarding academic credit in recognition of certificated and uncertificated prior learning.
 - (a) Admission Tutors should, when they feel able to do so, continue to make decisions about entry to a programme on the basis of certificated or uncertificated learning.

- (b) Admissions Tutors should not grant advanced standing to a programme beyond year one on an undergraduate programme on the basis of uncertificated learning - without referring the applicant to the AP(E)L Advisor.
 - (c) If the Admissions Tutor is unclear about the certificated learning of the applicant, (i.e., the certificated learning is not formally recognised by the University) they should not grant advanced standing without referring the applicant to the AP(E)L advisor for further guidance as necessary.
 - (d) Each year, the course/subject area team must submit, for consideration by the relevant assessment board, a list of all students admitted on the basis of uncertificated learning with advanced standing .
- 4.2 In instances where the Admissions Tutor feels unable to assess advanced standing up to the end of level one, or grant access on the information provided, the student would be referred to the AP(E)L Advisor, who would thereafter carry out an assessment of the applicant's prior learning and make recommendation for the credit to be awarded to the appropriate Admissions Tutor. It is anticipated that initially most AP(E)L work would be treated in this way.
- 4.3 In relation to the assessment of uncertificated learning at levels two and three, the AP(E)L Advisor, following directions from subject staff, would advise on the award of credit for prior learning for the subsequent academic session.
- 4.4 In relation to the assessment of certificated and uncertificated learning at Masters level the convention normally applied is that no more than 50% of the award may be obtained by imported credit. In exceptional circumstances students presenting both certificated claims in addition to uncertificated learning may claim upto two thirds of the award.
- 4.5 In relation to the assessment of certificated and uncertificated learning at Professional Doctorate level, the programme specification may provide for admission with advanced standing but such provision should not normally permit exemption from more than one third of the Professional Doctorate programme.
- 4.6 The co-ordinator /subject area team would make arrangements for evidence of student learning, together with the recommendation of the AP(E)L Advisor, to be considered by the relevant assessment board. On that basis formal accreditation of student learning would be granted.
- 4.7 The AP(E)L Advisor would produce, maintain and disseminate to Admissions Tutors an institutional 'tariff' of credit awarded for identified certificated learning. This would provide broad guidance as to how credit might be

awarded but would not be definite. This would help to establish parity across the University.

- 4.8 The granting of academic credit for certificated and uncertificated learning would be monitored institutionally to ensure consistency in practice.
- 4.9 The AP(E)L Advisor would provide training sessions on AP(E)L for Admissions Tutors within a staff development framework.
- 4.10 An AP(E)L Handbook which supports the implementation of this policy is available from the AP(E)L Advisor at the Centre for Access, Advice and Continuing Education.

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