

European School of Osteopathy

Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL) Policy and Procedure

2017

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This policy is applicable from September 2017

If required this formal document is available in an alternative format e.g. Braille, tape, disc, email or a larger font size. Please contact the Admissions Team.

Background

Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL) is the term given to the assessment of previously acquired certificated learning and the award of academic credit within the context of the Osteopathy Programme. These regulations adhere to the indicators and expectations detailed for the recognition of prior learning in the QAA Quality Code Chapter B6.

Applicability and Scope

The RPCL process as defined in this document enables an individual to apply for exemption from study of module(s), and to be awarded credit for those module(s), based on recognition of their previous certificated study. It does not apply to the assessment of an individual's prior learning and/or experience for the purpose of entry into Year 1 to the Osteopathy Programme.

Definitions

Recognition: The term 'recognition' - which reflects the terminology in many European countries - is used to describe accurately the process in relation to prior learning applicable to two widely recognised forms: prior experiential (or informal) learning and prior certificated learning (QAA, 2017).

Prior learning: is learning which is at the same level as the programme being undertaken, as defined within the relevant national higher education qualifications framework (QAA, 2017).

Recognition of prior certificated learning (RPCL): relates to prior learning (such as professional development awards or employment-based awards) which is at higher education level but which has not led to the award of credits or qualifications positioned on the relevant higher education qualifications framework. A process of assessment enables a decision to be made about whether the learning is suitable for recognition (QAA, 2017) and the award of credit. Such recognition is a matter of academic judgement based on an assessment of the equivalence of learning.

Recognition of prior experiential learning (RPEL): involves an assessment process on the part of academic staff within the higher education provider that leads to recognition. Where the higher education provider uses credit, recognition is given through the award of credit. The

essential feature of this process is that it is the learning gained through experience which is being assessed, not the experience itself (QAA, 2017). The School does not award credits for non-certificated learning gained through experience and is not therefore part of this policy.

Credit: a means of quantifying and recognising learning awarded for the verified achievement of designated teaching and learning outcomes at a specified level. One credit represents 10 hours of notional learning time at a specified level.

Module: a discrete unit of learning at a specified level normally leading to the award of credit and/or which contributes to a qualification.

General Credit: a term given to the total credit that an individual may have as the result of prior learning, usually at another institution. In terms of credit transfer, all the general credits possessed by a student are eligible for consideration.

Specific Credit: a term given to the proportion of the total credit for which prior recognition is given when mapped against the learning outcomes for the ESO M.Ost. Osteopathy Programme. Where comparison of the module learning outcomes show little commonality, an individual may be given less specific credits than the total general credits they actually hold.

Exemption: a term given where a learner is awarded credits for a module without them having to undertake the module content or assessment.

Advanced Standing: where students are able to start at a later stage in the programme, if they have undertaken sufficient certificated learning elsewhere, that has been recognised by the School through RPCL. Students eligible for Advanced Standing can join the ESO programme either at the beginning of Year 2 or Year 3, depending on the outcome of their RPCL application. Direct entry into Year 4 is not possible.

RPCL Assessor: refers to those academics at the ESO who have been nominated by the Vice Principal and given responsibility for advising applicants about RPCL, for assessing applications and making recommendations to the RPCL Panel. They also have responsibility for confirming applicants with advanced standing against specified Osteopathy Programme entry requirements.

UK NARIC: UK NARIC is the designated United Kingdom national agency for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications and skills.

Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree Awarding Bodies (FHEQ): describe the achievement represented by higher education qualifications. They apply to degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic awards granted by a higher education provider with degree awarding powers.

Principles

These regulations are based on the key principle that decisions to grant RPCL are based on the achievement of certificated learning and the evidence used to demonstrate the equivalence of that learning.

In order for accreditation to be considered, the prior learning has to be:

- **Relevant** – there must be an appropriate match between the evidence presented and the learning claimed;
- **Sufficient** – there must be enough evidence to demonstrate achievement of the learning claimed;
- **Authentic** – the evidence must be the result of the applicant's own work and experience;
- **Current** – the currency of the prior learning will be determined by the RPCL Assessor.

Where applicants can demonstrate that equivalent learning has been achieved to the satisfaction of the RPCL Assessor and approved by the RPCL Panel, the School will allow exemption from agreed modules. The limits for the amount of entry with advanced standing /exemption, through RPCL that can be permitted for the M.Ost. programme are up to 240 credits at levels 4 and 5 (Years 1 and 2 respectively).

Applications for RPCL should normally be made prior to enrolment on the level/module(s) from which exemption is sought. Submission of an application for RPCL does not guarantee that exemption will be granted.

Exemption will be for a whole module or modules to the maximum permitted limits. Exemption is not allowed for part of a module.

Where credit is allocated to exempted modules or levels, this will be recorded on the student's academic profile.

Where RPCL has been approved, the classification of an award will be determined on the basis of the marks awarded for modules undertaken at the ESO for the M.Ost. Programme only, and excluding modules with exemption.

In permitting exemption, credits must not be "double-counted" in the award of any further qualification. Whether gained at the ESO or another institution, credit can only be accumulated towards one single award.

Students exiting the ESO will be provided with a transcript showing the modules undertaken, level, percentage mark awarded and total credits achieved whilst studying for the M.Ost. at the ESO. Where the student has been awarded credits through RPCL this will be indicated on the transcript from the ESO.

RPCL applications

Individuals wishing to apply for RPCL must submit an application through UCAS as described on the ESO website: <https://www.eso.ac.uk/applying-to-eso/>. Upon receipt of an RPCL application from UCAS the ESO Admissions Team will assign an RPCL Assessor to the applicant.

The Admissions Team will then set up an interview with the RPCL Assessor, the applicant and the Admissions Officer. During the interview the RPCL Assessor will make a decision as to whether an applicant is eligible to proceed with the RPCL process. If so, the Assessor will provide guidance to the applicant on the RPCL procedure, and confirm the nature of evidence required. The relevant RPCL mapping form will be sent to successful applicants within 7 days of the interview.

It is then the responsibility of the individual to complete and return the mapping form and to supply the supporting evidence.

The evidence supplied by the applicant is then used in a mapping exercise to establish the equivalence of learning for RPCL. Based on the outcome of the mapping, the RPCL Assessor will make a recommendation to the RPCL Panel: the decision to approve or reject the recommendation rests with the RPCL Panel.

Applications for RPCL should be submitted to and considered by the RPCL Panel prior to the commencement of the programme/module(s) from which the individual is seeking exemption. This may be at a pre-entry point to the programme, or during the programme prior to the start of the module from which exemption is sought.

All evidence should be submitted by the applicant to the Admissions Team no later than 6 weeks after receipt of the mapping documents.

It is the responsibility of the Admissions Team to notify individuals of the outcome of their application - the decision will be conveyed via UCAS. Where the decision is to reject the application, clear reasons for the rejection will be provided upon request.

RPCL decisions are recorded on the ESO Record System for reporting to Assessment Boards.

Appeals from applicants against the decision made by the RPCL Panel should follow the procedure for Appeals against Admissions Decisions in the ESO Admissions Policy.

RPCL Applications for Module Exemption (Form 1)

In cases of RPCL, academic judgement must be used to ascertain whether the academic content and learning outcomes of the certificated award used as evidence are equivalent to the standard of learning that would otherwise have been achieved from satisfactory completion of the modules from which the applicant seeks exemption.

The applicant is required to complete the RPCL mapping form (Form 1) and provide original supporting evidence.

Applications for exemption from a module/level of the ESO M.Ost. programme based on RPCL credits awarded by another institution will first be considered by the RPCL Assessor.

A learner's prior studies submitted for RPCL will only be considered if they closely match the content of the module(s) from which exemption is being sought. Where equivalency between the previous study and the M.Ost. module(s) cannot be established, no credit will be awarded under RPCL.

Percentage marks from modules for which RPCL is claimed will not be brought into the calculation of the M.Ost. programme.

Applications for Advanced Standing (Form 2)

Individuals who wish to apply for advanced standing should complete Form 2. Those who successfully apply for exemption from a level or levels of a programme, through RPCL, are considered as being on the programme with advanced standing.

Appendix 1: RPCL Panel

Reports to	Programme Committee
Standing Committees	None
Non-Standing Committees	None
Minutes	Not published
Executive summary required	Yes
Frequency of meetings	As required
Updated/reviewed	December 2016

Membership:

Chair	Vice Principal
Secretary	Admissions Officer
Minute Secretary	Student Recruitment & Admissions Assistant
Ex-officio Members	1 Clinic Session Head; 1 Lecturer
Other Members	4 Heads of Department, Programme Manager
Co-opted Members	None

Terms of reference:

1. Based on the recommendation of RPCL Assessors, and the mapping and other documentation presented, to consider for approval exemption from specific modules, and entry points with advanced standing beyond those approved at validation or subsequently defined in Programme Specifications.
2. To approve or reject applications for RPCL for an individual and in the case of approval, to award credits to that student.
3. Where applications are rejected, to ensure that feedback is provided to the applicant giving the reasons why their application was not successful upon request.
4. To endorse nominations of those academics authorised as RPCL Assessors to:
 - a) Advise applicants and make recommendations based on the evidence supplied;
 - b) Confirm the requirements set out in the Programme Specification.
5. To arrange training and offer advice to staff responsible for advising students in relation to RPCL applications.
6. To review and assess the effectiveness of the operation of the RPCL Panel, to share good practice, and to address issues requiring improvement.

Notes:

1. The Chair may invite academic representatives to the Panel to contribute to the discussion surrounding specific subject areas or programmes of study as appropriate.
2. The Secretary will ensure all RPCL Assessors are informed of the dates of the RPCL Panel meetings and the deadlines for applications to be considered.