

**University College Birmingham**  
**Policy for the Recognition of Prior Learning**  
**for Academic Year of entry 2026/27**

Owner: Director of Marketing and Admissions

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\*(NMC 2018, 1.5, pg 8) - Mapping must comply with Article 31(3) of Directive 2005/36/EC.

\*\*Article 31(3) of Directive 2005/36/EC.

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## 1. Purpose

- 1.1. This policy sets out the process for presenting appropriate evidence of prior learning in fulfilment of the requirements for entry to a programme or for exemption from part of it at University College Birmingham (UCB).
- 1.2. This policy is for applicants applying to study a Full-time, Part-time or online course provided at UCB for the following aims; college, sixth form, English, undergraduate, postgraduate, where the course is due to start in the 2026/27 academic year.
  - 1.2.1 RPL relating to Apprenticeships is outlined in the Apprenticeship Admissions Policy (6.1-6.5) Please refer to this for further information and guidance.
- 1.3. The admissions policy and procedures at UCB adhere to the standards of the QAA Quality Code Chapter B2. UCB is committed to providing an admission service that is transparent, consistent, based on merit, reliable, valid and minimises barriers for applicants.
- 1.4. The term Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the process followed to establish that a meaningful and measurable amount of learning has taken place outside of UCB, either through an individual's experience or through another awarding body, and can be evidenced and has been assessed. As with other methods used to assess applicants, the outcomes of this process will be transparent, rigorous and fair.
- 1.5. The generic term RPL is used to denote both;
  - Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL) - the process through which the University awards specific credit to students for learning that has been recognised and certificated by another awarding body
  - Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) - the process through which the University awards specific credit to students for learning that has been gained through work or other life experiences

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that are relevant to the student's intended university programme of study.

- 1.6. An accreditation claim can only be considered prior to a course commencing or at the beginning of an academic year. If a recognition request has not been made prior to enrolment on a course at UCB, authorisation and approval from the Head of department in consultation with Exams and Registry will be required for this policy to be implemented.
- 1.7. The applicant must demonstrate the following, with respect to their prior learning:
  - **Relevance** – The student should be able to demonstrate that the learning for which they make a claim, is appropriate to the programme of study.
  - **Authenticity** – The evidence should be clearly related to the student's own efforts and can be verified as such.
  - **Sufficiency** – The applicant must provide enough evidence to demonstrate fully the achievement of the credit being claimed.
- 1.8. UCB will ensure that applications for RPL in Nursing and Midwifery council (NMC), Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and British Psychological Society (BPS) approved programmes are conducted in line with the requirements of the regulatory body with quality oversight from the academic regulations committee and quality assurance department at UCB. All applications for RPL on HCPC and BPS approved programmes will undertake a clear mapping exercise to ensure the Standards of Proficiencies (SOPs) are met.
- 1.9. This Policy will use “applicants” to refer to all undergraduate, taught postgraduate and Block students (for example, Hong Kong Block students) and HE apprentices who are enrolled and registered at UCB.
- 1.1. Other policies relevant to this policy are:

[Admissions Policy](#)

[General Data Protection Regulations](#)

[Equality of Opportunity Policy](#)

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## 2. Pre-awarded credit limit

- 2.1. The use of pre-awarded credit towards a University of Warwick or UCB award is subject to a maximum of two-thirds of the total credits required for the award. Successful completion of the award depends on achievement of the remaining credits at the same level as, or at a more advanced academic level than, the pre-awarded credits. These credits must include the compulsory dissertation element stated in the programme requirements.

| <i>Qualification Aim</i>        | <i>Max. RPL permitted</i> | <i>NMC. RPL permitted</i> | <i>Total Credits</i> |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Foundation Degree               | 160                       | 0                         | 240                  |
| Bachelor's Degrees with honours | 240                       | 180                       | 360                  |
| Postgraduate Certificate        | 40                        | 0                         | 60                   |
| Postgraduate Diploma            | 80                        | 0                         | 120                  |
| Taught Postgraduate Degree      | 120                       | 0                         | 180                  |

- 2.2. The time limits on learning will vary according to the subject area. Learning must have been gained sufficiently recently to still be of value and will need to have been utilised by applicants for a significant period of time within a relevant job role. Assessment of these applications will be made by the Head of Admissions.
- 2.3. Experienced registered nurse associates who meet the entry requirements will be considered after this 5-year period but will be required to present both a certificated (RPCL) and experiential claim (RPEL).

- 2.4. In \*NMC approved courses, UCB will permit exemptions of up to 50% of the full award.
- 2.5. In accordance with the University's regulations it will only possible to gain credit against the outcomes of a complete module, partial exemption of a module is not possible.

### **3. Admissions Process**

#### **Further Education**

- 3.1. For further education students that wish to apply for RPL, they must provide evidence of any prior attainment before starting the course to the Head of Department who will assess their eligibility. Any RPL which is agreed will be applied for from the relevant awarding body at the time of registration.

#### **NMC Approved Courses**

- 3.2. Applicants who have successfully completed certificate level studies gaining 120 credits at HE Level 4 on a pre-registration graduate nursing programme in another NMC Approved Education Institution (AEI) or who have previously successfully studied a foundation degree Nurse Associate programme, may apply for entry onto the BSc (Hons) Nursing (Adult) programme at Level 5. Applicants with prior partial study at Level 4 will be required to apply to the programme as a new applicant and will not be suitable for RPL.
- 3.3. Applicants must also meet all level 2 GCSE or equivalents requirements for entry onto a NMC approved course. Candidates will only be considered for interview once the RPL process has been completed.
- 3.4. If an individual is already a Registered Nurse on the NMC register in a different field of practice than adult (Learning Disability, Mental Health, Child), then a check is required to ensure that they are active on the NMC register for that field, as a mechanism of checking their suitability to get RPL onto second registration programmes. We will use application data to carry out this check -

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<https://www.nmc.org.uk/registration/search-the-register/>.

- 3.5. If an applicant is not on the register in the one field of practice, they would need to do a 'Return to Practice' programme first, then apply for RPL to gain a second field registration.
- 3.6. Applicants who match programme learning outcomes, but have outstanding EU directive clinical experience or exposure to the four fields of practice, may be admitted but allocated to an appropriate practice experience in order to ensure that this is completed as part of Level 5 studies.
- 3.7. Enquiries for exemptions from modules or for entry to a UCB programme with advanced standing, through RPL, are made at the time of application.
- 3.8. Enquiries for exemptions will only be considered during the Admissions cycle in which the applicant's intake takes place.
- 3.9. An external examiner will be invited to moderate Nursing applications with evidence portfolios to confirm reliability in the RPL assessment process.
- 3.10. For further information about the NMC matching principles please see Appendix A.

### **HPCPC Approved Courses**

- 3.11. Our processes for assessing previous learning take into consideration the relevance and level of the previous learning and how it links to current practice. All RPL applications will be assessed by the Programme Leader and mapped to the SOPs to ensure that these are met by all learners at the end of the programme.

### **RPCL - Process**

- 3.12. The Admissions Unit will request that the applicant supplies the following evidence:

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- Duration of Study
- Mode of Study
- Content of Study
- Credit Values predicted/achieved

For adult nursing students, this will include experience which contributes to their achievement of the general nurse requirements\*\*.

- 3.13. The above information will be used to provide advice and guidance to applicants in relation to admissions and funding still available to them.
- 3.14. The Head of Department or nominated academic member of staff will carry out and complete a matching exercise to ensure that learning derived from the previous programme is equivalent to that of the identified programme learning outcomes using the RPCL – matching pro forma (Appendix B).
- 3.15. Applicants applying for a course accredited with placement will be assessed by the HIRED team on programme as to whether they can receive an exemption from placement. For further information please contact [hired@ucb.ac.uk](mailto:hired@ucb.ac.uk).
- 3.16. The [RPCL – matching pro forma](#) will be returned to the admissions and is used as the basis on which to make an offer to the applicant.
- 3.17. The [RPCL – matching pro forma](#) will also be used at the time of registration, and to prepare an individual timetable for the applicant if one is required.
- 3.18. Pre agreed course progression agreements exist internally. In addition to this we also have agreements with certain franchise partners, whereby applicants who have successfully completed specific programmes at their partner institution, are allowed entry with advanced standing to named UCB programmes. These agreements therefore mean that no in-depth matching exercise is required.

## **RPEL – Process**

- 3.19. Evidence submitted in support of an RPEL enquiry must demonstrate that the proposal meets the following criteria;

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- 3.20. Enquiries for exemptions from modules or for entry to a UCB programme with advanced standing, through RPL, are made at the time of application.
- 3.21. Admissions will request that the applicant supplies or completes one of the following for each module for exemption:
- A portfolio of evidence
  - A structured interview may be requested
  - Completion of a piece of suitable work accompanied by a reflective account of the learning achieved
  - A performance-based assessment
  - Completion of the assessment used to demonstrate learning within the current module
- 3.22. The Head of department or a nominated academic member of staff will complete the RPEL – matching pro forma (Appendix C) for each module that the applicants has requested exemption from.
- 3.23. The [RPEL – matching pro forma](#) will be returned to the Admissions and will be used as the basis on which to make an offer to the applicant.
- 3.24. The [RPEL – matching pro forma](#) will also be used at the time of registration, and to prepare an individual timetable for the applicant, if one is required.

#### **4. Confirmation Process**

- 4.1. Upon completion of a successful RPL process, Admissions will verify and store an applicant's academic transcript and completed matching pro forma. This information will be stored on an applicant's student record.
- 4.2. Approved RPL information will be shared with Programme Leaders, finance, examinations and timetabling departments, to ensure a smooth transition to UCB.
- 4.3. Approved RPL will also be represented on the UCB academic

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transcripts for those students that achieve a higher education award at UCB.

- 4.4. Requests for a review of an APL decision may only be made on the basis of additional evidence that was unavailable at the time of the application.
- 4.5. This claim must include evidence as listed above and must normally be received by the Head of Department of the relevant academic school prior to the commencement of teaching (week 1). A nominated member of the academic department will complete the Appendix B or C as detailed above and on the successful completion of the RPL process will liaise with the Programme Leader, finance, timetabling and examinations, to ensure a smooth transition for the applicant.
- 4.6. Details of the way in which RPL is used to calculate progress and award decisions, can be found in Academic Regulations Part 1 (2.1.8)

## **Appendices**

**[Appendix A](#) – NMC matching principles for BSc Nursing**

**[Appendix B](#) – RPCL matching proforma**

**[Appendix C](#) – RPEL matching proforma**

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