

## **Assessment of Prior (Experiential) Learning Policy**

### **Definitions**

Assessment of Prior (Experiential) Learning is the process whereby students can be given credit within their chosen programme of study for previous learning.

'Prior Learning' is previous study with an educational organisation which has been formally assessed and certified.

'Prior Experiential Learning' is non-certified acquisition of relevant skills and knowledge, gained through relevant experience.

### **Policy**

This document sets out the policy in relation to the transfer of credit or granting of exemption from credit towards a College award. It is not concerned with students wishing to join a course without exemption, this is dealt with via the College's Admissions Policy.

It also outlines the application process for an individual student who is seeking to transfer credit or be granted exemption from credit via:

- assessment of prior learning (APL)
- assessment of prior experiential learning (APEL)

A maximum of two-thirds of a programme (undergraduate or postgraduate) can be gained through APL or APEL.

All claims for APL or APEL must be made as a part of the admissions process and resolved prior to enrolment. Such claims cannot normally be made once a student has enrolled onto a course.

APL or APEL exemptions are not normally awarded for the College's Veterinary Medicine degrees. It is at the discretion of the College and relevant Course Director to determine if APL or APEL is accepted for individual courses.

### **APL – Assessment of Prior Learning**

Certificated credit obtained from another institution will be recognised by the RVC as exemption. Marks will not be transferred. Where a student is awarded exemption from modules which form part of a classification or overall outcome, the outcome will be calculated based solely upon those modules studied and completed at the RVC.

Where APL is sought, it is the responsibility of the applicant to provide any documentation required to support the application.

All claims for APL must be:

- Based on qualifications already obtained at a comparable level to the course for which exemption is being sought. This will be determined in accordance with the QCA National Qualifications Framework (NQF), the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and The National Recognition Information Centre for the United

- Kingdom (NARIC) or equivalent;
- Supported by an original results transcript and, where applicable, award certificate, issued by a recognised institution such as a University, College of Higher Education, or a Professional, Statutory and/or Regulatory Body, which demonstrates that the credit awarded is a result of formal learning and assessment. Where the institution is not based within the UK, NARIC will be used to determine whether the institution and award is recognised in the relevant country;
- Deemed a match to the learning outcomes, level and credit value of the module(s) within the RVC course for which exemption is being sought. This will be determined by the relevant Course Director (see below) and the College may require additional evidence such as module outlines or syllabi to demonstrate this;
- Timely in the context of the target award. The learning must have taken place recently enough for there to be reasonable expectation that the learning is relevant and that the student can apply the prior learning to their studies. This will be determined by the Course Director.

### **APL Application**

The assessment of APL applications is the responsibility of the Course Director for the course that the applicant tends to enrol onto. It is recognised that assessment of APL will be subject to their academic judgement. They may employ any reasonable procedure to arrive at a decision about the evidence submitted and the value and level of credit to be awarded. They may make use of both internal and external expertise as appropriate in making such judgements.

Applicants to all courses are normally expected to meet the standard entry requirements for the course, irrespective of any APL claims. Where a course would normally require an interview as a part of the standard application process, it is expected that applicants who are applying to join the course with APL would also attend and pass such an interview. For other courses, applicants may be called for interview as a part of the APL process at the discretion of the Course Director.

Applicants to the College who are making claims for APL must do so in writing (preferably email), to the Admissions Office. They should outline the exemption they are seeking and the basis they are seeking this exemption. Such applications should be accompanied by a copy of the results (transcript and, where applicable, award certificate) from the previous qualifications for which exemption are sought. Applicants applying via UCAS for direct entry to level 2 are also expected to follow this process.

### **APEL – Assessment of Prior Experiential Learning**

It is recognised that some of our students will join the College with an extensive range of skills and knowledge which have been gained outside of a formal education or training environment (for example, through work experience). Our Assessment of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) policy seeks to recognise such experience through the award of exemption from particular module(s) of a course.

**The APEL process does not apply to the assessment of an individual's prior experience for the purpose of entry to year one of a programme of study, only to the assessment of their eligibility for entry with credit.**

It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide sufficient supporting evidence as a part of their application. APEL applications will be assessed on an individual basis and the evidence base required will be determined by the Course Director. However, all APEL applications must:

- Sufficiently demonstrate the currency, level and validity of the applicant's subject knowledge;
- Demonstrate that the applicant has achieved the learning outcome(s) of the module(s) they are to be exempted from;

- Be supported by independent, third-party, evidence which supports the acquisition of such knowledge and skills (as an example; employer references or certificates of training course attendance). The nature and suitability of such evidence will be determined by the Course Director;
- Timely in the context of the target award. The learning must have taken place recently enough for there to be reasonable expectation that the learning is relevant and that the student can apply the prior learning to their studies. This will be determined by the Course Director.

### **APEL Application**

The assessment of APEL applications is the responsibility of the Course Director for the course that the applicant tends to enrol onto. It is recognised that assessment of APEL will be subject to their academic judgement. They may employ any reasonable procedure to arrive at a decision about the evidence submitted and the value and level of credit to be awarded. They may make use of both internal and external expertise as appropriate in making such judgements. The evidence required for such applications is assessed on an individual basis and at the discretion of the Course Director but it is expected that most applicants will be required to attend an interview.

Applicants to all courses will be expected to demonstrate that they meet the requirements to join the first year of the course, irrespective of any APEL claims. Where a course would normally require an interview as a part of the standard application process, it is expected that applicants who are applying to join the course with APEL would also attend and pass such an interview.

Applicants to the College who are making claims for APEL must do so in writing (preferably email), to the Admissions Office. In the first instance their application should consist of the following:

- a copy of their CV;
- details of module exemptions they are seeking;
- demonstration of how their experience meets the each of the learning outcomes of these modules;
- At least one reference which provides support to the acquisition of their skills and knowledge (preferably from their current line manager);
- Applicants may also find it useful to include a brief personal statement to cover any other information they would want the Course Director to be aware of.

Applications are assessed on a case by case basis and therefore the above list is not definitive. Further information or assessment may be required to determine whether exemption can be awarded.