



LONDON
COLLEGE OF
INTERNATIONAL
BUSINESS
STUDIES



Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy

<u>Date Created</u>	01/01/2017
<u>Amendment Date</u>	01/04/2019
<u>Review Date</u>	01/04/2020
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<u>Approved By</u>	Academic Board
<u>Version Control</u>	2.0

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Introduction

1. The London College of International Business Studies (LCIBS) is committed to recruiting talented students from the widest range of backgrounds. To that end, it invites applications to its programmes of study from all those who possess the ability, knowledge and experience required to benefit from them.

Background

2. Accreditation for Prior Learning (APL) is the term given to the assessment of the previously-acquired learning and the award of academic credit within the context of the programme which the individual intends to study. Such learning may be certificated (APCL) or experiential (APEL).
3. These regulations adhere to the indicators and expectations detailed for the recognition of prior learning in the QAA Quality Code.

Applicability and Scope

4. The APL 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 upon recognition of their previous study and/or experiential learning.
5. The APL process is not required to be followed by an individual where an Articulation Agreement is in place and where details are written in programme specifications. Articulation Agreements are used where the programme team considers that the learning outcomes, content and levelness of designated external award from another learning institution are considered sufficient to permit the holder of that award to have automatic entry with advanced standing to a LCIBS programme of study.

Definitions

6. **Credit:** a means of quantifying and recognising learning awarded for the verified achievement of designated learning outcomes at a specified level. One credit equals 10 hours or notional learning time at a specified level
7. **Module:** a discrete unit of learning at a specified level normally leading to the award of credit and/or which contributes to a qualification
8. **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):** the method of assessment (leading to the award of credit) that considers whether a learner possesses the knowledge, understanding and/or skills which demonstrate that the learning outcomes for one or more modules have been met.
9. **Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL):** process by which academic credit and exemption from study may be given for module(s) by the official recognition of prior learning. Such exemption is a matter of academic judgement based on an assessment of the equivalence of learning. It also includes APCL and APEL. Applications for APL can include both APCL and APEL
10. **Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL):** the recognition of prior learning which has taken place within a Higher Education provider, including LCIBS, and has resulted in a certificated award of credit.
11. **Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL):** the evaluation and recognition of non-certificated learning which demonstrates the acquisition of knowledge and skills gained via life or work experience.
12. **Advanced standing:** where students are admitted onto a programme at a stage later than the normal entry point for admission, sometimes referred to stage exemption or direct entry. Stage exemption is either as a result of successful APCL and/or APEL applications
13. **Exemption:** a term used where a learner is awarded credits for a module without them having to undertake the module content or assessment
14. **APL Assessor:** refers to the academic(s) from LCIBS who have been nominated by the Academic Board and given responsibility for advising applicants about APL, for assessing the applications and making recommendations to the APL panel.
15. **UK NARIC:** UK NARIC is the national agency used in the UK for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications and skills.

Principles

16. These regulations are based on the key principles that decisions to grant APL are based on the achievement of learning and the evidence used to demonstrate the equivalence of learning.

17. 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 APL Assessor as appropriate for the programme.

18. Where applicants can demonstrate that equivalent learning has been achieved to the satisfaction of the APL assessor and approved by the APL Panel, LCIBS will allow exemption from the agreed modules. The limit for the amount of entry with advanced standing/exemption, through APL that can be permitted at undergraduate and post graduate level are shown below:

Approved Course	APL limit
Certificate of Higher Education (120 credits)	Up to 60 Credits out of 120 credits
HNC (150 credits)	Up to 75 Credits out of 150 credits
HND/DipHE Foundation Degree (240 Credits)	Up to 120 Credits out of 240 Credits
Ordinary Degree (300 Credits)	Up to 150 Credits out of 300 Credits (to undertake 60 level 6 credits)
Honours Degree (360 Credits)	Up to 240 Credits out of 360 credits APL is not permitted within level 6
PG certificate (60 credits)	Up to 30 credits out of 60 Credits
PG Diploma (120 Credits)	UP to 60 credits out of 120 Credits
Masters 180 credits and including 60 Credit “top-up” Programmes	Up to 120 taught credits Transferring more than 60 Credits from another Institute excludes consideration for a distinction or merit of a Master Award

19. These limits may be reviewed in light of any validated programmes offered by our partners such as the Open University. This will be highlighted in the programme specification related to the specific validated programmes.

20. Applications for APL should normally be made prior to enrolment on the level/Module(s) from which exemption is sought. Submission of an application for APL does not guarantee that exemption will be granted.
21. Exemption will be only granted for whole modules or modules to the maximum permitted limits. Exemption for part modules is not allowed. The minimum credit that can be sought is 15 credits i.e. one module at any level. No APL is allowed within level 6.
22. Where APL has been approved it will be recorded on the student transcript that a module(s) or stage exemption has been awarded, the credits that have been exempt/ transferred will not be transferred to OU validated awards. The classification of an award will be determined on the basis of the marks awarded for modules undertaken at LCIBS for specific programme of study only.
23. When exemption is granted, credits must not be “double-counted” in the award of any further qualification. Whether gained at LCIBS or another institution, credit can only be accumulated towards one single award.
24. When students complete their studies with LCIBS the college and/or validating partner will provide a transcript showing the modules undertaken, level, and total credits achieved whilst studying. Where the student has been awarded credits through APL this will be indicated on the transcript.

APL Applications (Form A)

25. Individuals who are wishing to apply for APL should have an initial discussion with the APL Assessor before progressing their application. APL assessors will provide guidance for APCL applications, and will confirm the requirements for the portfolio for APEL applications. Details of application requirements and the associated forms can be found on the colleges’ website.
26. It is the responsibility of the individual to make the application using form A and to supply the supporting evidence and/or portfolio requirements
27. The evidence supplied by the applicant is used in a mapping exercise to establish the equivalence of learning for APCL and/or APEL. Based on the outcome of the mapping, the assessor will make a recommendation to the APL Panel: the decision to approve or decline the recommendation rests with the APL panel.
28. Applications for APL should be submitted to and considered by the APL panel before the commencement of the course/module(s) from which the individual

is seeking exemption. This can either be at pre-entry of the programme or the start of the module(s) from which exemption is sought.

29. All applications should be submitted to the APL secretary of the APL panel to allow sufficient time for checking and distribution of the papers.
30. It is the responsibility of the APL secretary to notify individuals in writing of the outcome of their application. Where the decision is to reject the application clear reasons for the rejection will be given.
31. APL decisions are recorded on the Student Information System (SIS) for reporting to assessments boards
32. Appeals from applicants against the decision made by the APL Panel should follow the procedure for appeals against Admission decisions. These can be found on the college's website under admission policies.

APCL Applications (Form B)

33. For applications that are related to APCL academic judgement must be used to decide 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 study modules from which the applicant seeks exemption.
34. The applicant is required to complete the APCL mapping form (form B) and provide original supporting evidence
35. Applications for exemption from a module/Level of LCIBS programme based on APCL credits awarded by another institution will first be considered by the APL assessor.
36. A learner's prior studies submitted for APCL 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 LCIBS module(s) cannot be established, no credit will be awarded under APL
37. For APCL to be considered the previous programme (certification) of study which is being assessed for exemption or direct entry must not be older than 16 years from that start date of the new programme with LCIBS

APEL Applications (Form C)

38. In cases related to APEL, academic judgement must be applied to the evidence supplied by the applicant to ensure equivalent learning outcomes are demonstrated.
39. Applicants must demonstrate that they have mapped the relevance and equivalency of their prior experiential learning against the learning outcomes of the module(s) for which exemption is sought.
40. Applicants must also demonstrate that they have reflected on the experiential learning and just described examples of their previous experience.
41. APL assessors are encouraged to make an initial assessment of the individuals who are planning to make an APEL application through an interview, to discuss their prior experience and establish whether they have the potential to make a full application through a portfolio.
42. The evidence for APEL applications is required in the form of a portfolio, the structure of which is determined by the department responsible for the programme in question. The portfolio supplement by one or a combination of other forms of assessment if required, such as a presentation, an interview, an extended CV giving details of prior experience, or the requirements to produce a piece of academic work or sit an examination at the appropriate academic level.
43. Full applications for APEL are considered by APL assessors and their recommendations are presented to the APL Panel for ratification.
44. APEL may be used to accept students onto a programme who do not meet the academic entry criteria. This will be exercised without allowing module exemption. The Dean will approve APEL acceptance onto a programme.

Advanced Standing (Form D)

45. Individuals who successfully apply for exemption from a level or levels of a programme, usually through APCL, are considered as being on the programme with advanced standing.
46. Certified awards which have been recognised as providing entry to a programme through an Articulation agreement will allow exemption through advanced standing. In these cases, applications are not required to be considered by the APL panel, but are confirmed by the APL assessors.

47. Students who hold a LCIBS award which is recognised in programme Specifications as being the equivalent learning to sections of a higher award, may apply for internal progression. Completion of Internal Progressing application Form and an accompanying reference from the student's course leader will be sufficient for entry with advanced standing, providing the award is successfully completed at the profile required by the receiving programme. For example, internal progression from a LCIBS short course to an Honours degree at the College may require a Merit or Distinction profile.

Individual Programmes of study (Forms E and F)

48. Applications for individual programmes of study are required to be approved by the APL panel. Such individual programmes of study may be required where a student's require exceptions to be made to the programme delivery mode due to extenuating circumstances (Form E), or where students are applying to convert a LCIBS (Open University) Ordinary degree to an Honours Degree (Form F).

Appendix 1: Accreditation of Prior Learning Panel

Reports to	Academic Board
Meetings held	When required
Updated/ reviewed	Annually

Membership	
Chair	Senior Academic as appointed by Academic Board
Secretary	Registrar
Ex-Officio Members	Programme leads, plus 2 x lecturers
Other members	Head of Quality and Programme Enhancement

Purpose:

The panel will review each individual application for APL based on the criteria outlined within this policy.

The panel will also be responsible for the annual review of the policy and its effectiveness as part of annual monitoring by

- monitoring student progression and outcomes with APL
- reviewing APL process with admissions including
 - number of applications via APL routes
 - number of successful/non successful applications
 - timescales offers made
 - Review of required documentation
 - feedback given to applicants
 - reviewing any RPL appeals

Terms of reference:

- Based upon the recommendation of the APL assessor, 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 or in articulation Agreements.
- To approve or reject applications for APL for an individual or cohort of students, and in the case of approval, to award credits to those students
- To agree individual programmes of study
- To recommend approval of proposals for Articulation Agreements to the Academic Board
- Where applications are rejected, to ensure that feedback is provided to the applicant giving the reasons why their application was not successful
- To convene a panel to manage any RPL appeals
- To endorse nominations of those academics authorised as APL assessors:

- Advise applicants and make recommendations based on the evidence supplied
 - Confirm the requirements set out in the Programmes Specifications
 - Confirm the requirements of the portfolio in the case of APEL applications
- To arrange training and offer advice to staff responsible for advising students in relation to APL applications.
- To review and assess the effectiveness of the operation of the APL Panel, to share good practice, and to address issues requiring improvement.