Recognition of Prior (RPL) Learning Policy and Procedure

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Contents

1. Aims

1.1. London Churchill College (LCC) aims to:

    1.2.1. Enable applicants to receive credit towards part of their chosen course based on mapping of learning outcomes from previous institutions and on considering experience and achievements;

    1.2.2. Operate equitable, valid and reliable processes for the recognition of prior learning;

    1.2.3. Recognise the value of prior learning for the purpose of awarding credit;

    1.2.4. Reduce duplication of learning leading to a better overall student experience;

    1.2.5. Make all eligible students and applicants aware of these available processes.

1.2. This policy should be read and its use considered with reference to LCC's Handbook for the Recognition of Prior Learning.

2. Terminology

LCC differentiates between the two existing forms of RPL. This is explained as follows:

2.1. **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** is the generic term used for the recognition of certificated, non-certificated, work-based or experiential learning that occurs prior to admission to a particular course or stage of a course;

2.2. **Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL)** is the assessment and formal acknowledgement of previous learning, such as that gained through professional development or employer-based awards, which is at Higher Education level but which has not led to the award of credit or qualifications positioned on the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). A process of assessment enables a decision about whether the learning is suitable for recognition;

2.3. **Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL)** is the process of identification, assessment and formal acknowledgement of the learning gained through informal or non-formal experiences, not the assessment of the experience itself. The process of assessment on the part of academic staff leads to recognition through the award of credit at defined levels.

3. Policy

3.1. Applications for RPL should ideally be made before the start of the Programme, but can also be made during the Programme, as long as the student has not yet commenced the module for which s/he wishs to apply;

3.2. Personal Tutors are responsible for identifying prospective or existing students who might be eligible for RPL and informing them of opportunities available;

3.3. Programme Leaders are responsible for the assessment of an applicant's/student's RPL portfolio.

3.4. All Personal Tutors and Programme Leaders will be fully trained in RPL practices and have access to the RPL Handbook for guidance. Only qualified academics with RPL training can make determinations in respect of RPL at the College;

3.5. The College will support eligible prospective students to prepare them to reflect upon their experiences and describe and analyse their learning and evidence the learning gained from those experiences;

3.6. Checks are carried out to ensure that learning outcomes met in other Institutions are carefully mapped against the learning outcomes for those units for which RPL is applied in order to ensure the integrity of the process at LCC;

3.7. Grades are awarded for units that were completed through RPL. However, RPL units do count towards overall grades, and so will not hinder the student from receiving Merit or Distinction overall;

3.8. RPL is not applicable for external assessment and set assignments.

3.9. The maximum permissible credit value for an RPL claim is half of the total credit value of the relevant programme;

3.10. Assessment and internal verification records, along with any additional RPL records completed, will be retained for a three-year period following certification;

3.11. Applicants/students must meet all awarding body regulations for RPL;

3.12. The College will facilitate RPL for Pearson Higher National students wishing to transfer from the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) to the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF), with reference to the Mapping documents published by Pearson.

3.13. Individual units are not defined as award for Pearson programme. Therefore any RPCL claim on individual units are not accepted.

4. Procedure

4.1. Initial Enquiry

4.1.1. Applicants or students wishing to make an application for RPL or seeking additional information are advised to meet with their personal tutor;

4.1.2. Prospective students who have not yet been assigned a personal tutor, as they may not yet have joined the programme, should contact the admissions department and arrange to meet with a personal tutor of their chosen programme.

4.2. Information and Advice Session with Personal Tutor

4.2.1. LCC's Personal Tutors are familiar with the learning outcomes of the individual units offered on the programmes they represent;

4.2.2. The Personal Tutor works with prospective or current students to compare the past learning and experience against the learning outcomes of the programme. At this stage, this is only to help students to decide if they wish to pursue RPL;

4.2.3. Applicants should be aware that the process can be time consuming and, depending on their previous experience, could become more difficult and complex than it would be to complete the module through the normal means of attending the lectures and taking the assessment at the end of the term.

4.3. Assembly of Portfolio

4.3.1. Prospective and registered students wishing to claim RPL are required to demonstrate knowledge and learning and how that learning has taken place. This is completed through the creation of a portfolio;

4.3.2. The personal tutor will guide the applicant through the process of completing a portfolio, which will include evidence of their past experience and learning;

4.3.3. The applicant will be required to demonstrate how s/he has met each of the learning outcomes of the module(s) for which an application RPL is made. Using the Application for RPL Form, applicants must list all the relevant learning outcomes and provide statements for each outcome to explain how they believe their prior learning qualifies for RPL;

4.3.4. All applications need to be:

   a) **Descriptive**: clearly describe the context of the learning activities in terms of when, where, with whom, etc.;

   b) **Detailed**: regarding what was learned and how that learning was used. The application should be based on what was learned, not on the experience itself. It should only contain relevant details, without excessive amounts of writing (vast amounts of general information will make it harder for the assessor to see that the necessary learning has been covered);

   c) **Evidence-based**: include evidence of the learning referred to, including certificates, transcripts, reports, documentation from training courses, publications, multi-media sources, etc.

4.3.5. It is the applicant's responsibility to decide which evidence used, which must be valid, current and reliable. The learning should be from within the last 5 years. For some subjects, where little change occurs, e.g. history, maths, if the learning is less recent, it may still be relevant to the course;

4.3.6. Programme and Module specifications will be made available to anyone considering applications for RPL. The specifications will provide applicants with the Learning Outcomes to which they will be required to map their prior learning. Additionally, Pearson has published guidance on their website for students wishing to map QCF units to RQF.

4.4. Assessment of Portfolio

4.4.1. All RPL claims will be formally assessed by the Programme Leader for the course against which RPL is being claimed. The Programme Leader may delegate the assessment to the relevant Module Leader where specific subject expertise is required;

4.4.2. Checks are made to evaluate each item of evidence to ensure that the learning is appropriate to the learning objectives of the academic award being sought;

4.4.3. An assessment interview may be arranged to check claims to learning. Assessors might ask the claimant to undertake an assessment exercise to substantiate aspects of the learning claims. Where further evidence is required, the opportunity will normally be given to produce this.

4.4.4. Any instances of suspected academic malpractice shall be investigated by the College.

4.5. Consideration by the Board

4.5.1. RPL decisions are to be reported to LCC's Assessment and Progression Board by the Programme Leader. The Board is responsible for approving decisions proposed by the Programme Leader;

4.5.2. In cases where a decision is required before the next Board meets then confirmation will be sought from the appropriate External Examiner and, if s/he is in agreement, the decision may then be confirmed by Chair's Action.

4.6. External Examiners

4.6.1. Evidence used for RPL on Pearson Programmes will be subject to Pearson's standards verification as normal.

4.7. Academic Appeals

4.7.1. As with any assessment decision, if a learner wishes to appeal against a decision made in relation to assessment the guidance to follow is provided in LCC's Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure. This is accessible on the College website.

5. Monitoring

5.1. LCC will monitor its use of RPL through the Quality Enhancement Steering Committee, which is responsibile for developing and monitoring all College policies and procedures.