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UG Recognition of Prior Learning Policy & Procedure



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Section A: Introduction & Terminology

Introduction

BIMM University recognises the value of learning wherever it occurs, either to meet undergraduate course entry requirements (Recognition of Prior Practice) or to achieve credit towards named undergraduate awards (Recognition of Prior Learning). However, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) will only be possible where learning, appropriate to the relevant course learning outcomes, can be assured to be academically valid. RPL applications are subject to the same quality assurance processes as learning derived from taught courses.

This Policy defines the procedures and guidance for submitting and considering requests for direct entry to the second or subsequent year[1] of an undergraduate course on the basis of prior certified learning. Where the learning is deemed equivalent (i.e., 'recognised'), the level and volume of credit shall be accredited to the intended course.

Procedures relating to the admission of students who do not meet the usual entry requirements specified for an undergraduate course of study are not included in this policy. Applicants for non-standard entry should refer to the University's Recognition of Prior Practice Policy & Procedure.

The University shall seek to operate its RPL Policy & Procedure in a way that is fair and in accordance with legal requirements and the University's regulations at all times. This includes specific compliance with the Equality Act and the University's Student Equal Opportunities & Diversity Policy, as well as a commitment that the University will foster stronger recruitment from groups currently under-represented in higher education, by working to raise aspirations and break down barriers to participation such as those created by culture, geography, social and economic factors.

Terminology

- ***Credit Transfer*** - It is the University's responsibility to decide how many credits to award an applicant via RPL, based on the level, extent, and perceived relevance of the learning (both knowledge and skills-based) compared to their intended course of study at the University. Where recognised learning meets the criteria above and has been allocated credit, the University is responsible for determining whether the credit awarded by the body which approved the course/qualification is equivalent to the credit system used by the University, in accordance with the European Credit Transfer & Accumulation System (ECTS). Where appropriate, credit will be transferred at an equivalent level and volume.

- ***Direct Entry*** – This refers to the process whereby an applicant who has been approved via RPL to enter a course later than the normal start point (e.g., directly into the second level of a course). In these cases, the normal period of registration shall be shortened by double the equivalent period, and the student shall be required to complete their course within this shortened period.

- ***Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)*** - Refers to the formal recognition of academic credit gained outside the University through formally assessed and certified courses. RPL shall only be considered for whole levels of study, not elements therein. If an applicant does not provide a copy of an appropriate award from their previous institution (e.g., a Certificate of Higher Education) prior to enrolling at the University, an RPL application will not be approved.

[1] Direct entry to Level 6 is only available to applicants who previously studied at least Level 5 on another course at BIMM University or a franchise partner.

Outgoing Students

All students who exit the University, either upon completion of their intended award or with an exit award, are issued with an academic transcript which details the modules taken, their credit values, the marks achieved, and the award attained.

Students who wish to transfer credit to another institution will require electronic copies of course documentation to support their application. These documents are available to current students via the VLE and can be requested by former students, along with digital copies of academic records, via email to AcademicRegistry@bimm.ac.uk. The decision to recognise credit achieved at the University is at the discretion of the receiving institution.

Section B: Application Procedure

Criteria, Conditions & Restrictions for RPL

Applicants for RPL shall provide the following evidence that learning has taken place to demonstrate equivalence. All evidence of learning shall be:

- ***Written in English***
- ***Sufficient*** - Keep in mind that evidence presented should be concise and contain sufficient evidence for the purpose intended.
- ***Recent*** - How recent the learning is can determine its value, as subject-specific skills and knowledge can quickly become redundant (see section on 'Shelf Life' of Certified Learning below).
- ***Authentic*** - For some evidence to be accepted, it may require endorsement or a reference from relevant sources, such as an awarding body.
- ***Relevant*** - The learning outcomes of a previous qualification will determine the relevance of the evidence.

The procedure for recognising prior learning shall ensure that the learning which has taken place and is presented is equivalent to the learning that would have otherwise occurred had the student studied all elements of the course without RPL, i.e., that the relevant course learning outcomes have been met.

Criteria

When considering evidence for prior certified learning, the RPL Assessor shall:

- Confirm (against a transcript of credit or award certificate) that credit has been awarded by an agency, such as a University, recognised by BIMM University;
- Confirm (against a transcript of credit or award certificate) that the learning activity has been given a credit rating (e.g., 60 CATS credits at level 4), or judge the level and amount of credit on the basis of the year and volume of study at another UK institution, or confirm the level and volume of study successfully undertaken in an overseas University or similar institution;
- Assess the evidence submitted against the requirements and learning outcomes of the relevant degree course;
- Confirm that the learning has been in a subject area relevant to the course of study.

The award of specific credit via RPL towards an intended course at the University is not guaranteed and may not necessarily directly reflect the value/level of the general credit assigned to the current/previous qualification by the awarding body. Exemptions may not be granted where a student has previously registered for and failed part of an award and wishes to seek readmission to the same or similar award.

'Shelf Life' of Certified Learning

For applicants seeking direct entry to Level 5 of a course at the University, recognition and accreditation may only be awarded for credit achieved within five years of the enrolment date for the intended course at the University.

For applicants seeking direct entry to Level 6[2], the credit must have been achieved within four years of the enrolment date for the intended course at the University.

This approach ensures alignment with the maximum period of registration as set out in the University's Academic Framework.

[2] Direct entry to Level 6 is only available to applicants who previously studied at least Level 5 on another course at BIMM University or a franchise partner.

Limits to the Volume of RPL

Specific limits on the amount of RPL that may be transferred to a course at the University are defined in the Appendix.

Credit Transfers

Subject to relevance, recognised certified learning will normally be transferred at the same or equivalent level as that awarded by the previous awarding body, in accordance with the European Credit Transfer & Accumulation System (ECTS). Students shall not normally receive more than one allocation of credit on the basis of a single learning activity.

Transfer of Marks/Grades

RPL enables an applicant to transfer credit gained for a whole level of one course to another course at the same or a different institution. The credit may come from an exit or full award and may be used as a foundation for a higher award. Credit which can be transferred into courses at BIMM University must be at the same level of study.

Module marks attached to such credit shall only be recognised and transferred to the new course if the prior certified learning was undertaken at the University.

Module marks from a course undertaken at another institution shall not be transferred unless approved via an Institutional Agreement or Exemption, the latter of which would require approval by Academic Board.

Calculation of Final Awards & Transcripts

On completion of a course at the University, a student's academic transcript shall clearly show where credit has been awarded based on RPL, rather than through study of the modules that comprise the level(s) of the course for which prior learning has been recognised.

Students who transfer credit and module marks within the University or one its franchise partners shall normally have their final award calculated and, where appropriate, classified according to the relevant award rules (See Appendix: Volume of RPL in BIMM University awards).

Where such students join a course at Level 6, their final award will be calculated and, where appropriate, classified according to the following award rules:

- The Level 5 average mark, weighted at 40%, plus
- The best 105 credits at Level 6, weighted at 60%.

Falsification or Misrepresentation of Evidence

The University reserves the right to terminate an application for or registration on a course if the applicant/student is found to have omitted relevant facts or information in connection with their RPL application, or to have falsified or misrepresented any part of their application.

Application Requirements

Applications for RPL shall consist of a written request, stating the BIMM University award in respect of which the applicant seeks RPL and details of which level(s) of the course for which they wish their

application to be considered [3]. In addition, applicants must submit documentation from their previous/current course of study that includes details of all modules studied, credit values, course and module learning outcomes and attainment. Typically, this requirement can be met by providing:

- An official copy of an Academic Transcript/Diploma Supplement;
- A Course Specification/Course Handbook.
- Module Guides/Module Handbooks for all modules completed/being studied.

Applicants are responsible for sourcing and providing copies of all documentation required, and incomplete applications will be rejected by the RPL Assessor.

In addition to submitting the materials outlined above, applicants may be invited to attend an interview/audition, which will be arranged after the documentation submitted has been assessed.

Timescale for Submission

Applicants wishing to be awarded credit for RPL will be advised in the first instance to discuss the matter with the Admissions Team, who will ensure that the applicant is informed of this Policy & Procedure.

Applications for RPL should be made no later than ten weeks in advance of enrolling on the intended course for which they are seeking to transfer prior certified learning, unless specific course requirements have set an earlier deadline. Where such earlier deadlines are required, applicants shall be notified as appropriate.

If the applicant has a problem obtaining appropriate evidence in time to meet the final deadline (which normally falls in mid-July for September starts), they should inform the University and request an extension at the earliest opportunity. Such requests will require approval by the Academic Registrar.

Applicants must not assume credits to have been granted via RPL until they have received an official statement to that effect.

Approval Process & Confirmation of Decision

The Admissions Team will advise RPL applicants on deadlines for submission of their application and arrange appropriate support, where applicable, to ensure the applicant understands what is required of them.

If the agreed submission deadline is missed by an applicant, the Admissions Team will advise on the next available date by which their application should be received to ensure it makes the next RPL approval date. If the applicant has missed the final RPL approval date for the relevant year of entry, Admissions will discuss the application with the Academic Registrar to see if other options are available or if the applicant needs to defer their application until the following academic year.

All RPL applications accepted by the Admissions Team will be referred to the Academic Registrar, who will check the submitted documentation for completeness. Should they identify a requirement for additional information, they will refer the application back to the Admissions Team, and the applicant will be set a new deadline for the new information to be submitted. When the Academic Registrar is satisfied that all the necessary details to assess the application have been provided, they will assign the application to the RPL Assessor for the relevant course.

[3] Direct entry to Level 6 is only available to applicants who have previously studied at least Level 5 on another course at BIMM University.

To ensure fairness and consistency in the RPL application process, each BIMM University course is assigned a dedicated RPL Assessor at the start of each application cycle. It is the responsibility of the RPL Assessor to mark all RPL applications to the course(s) for which they are responsible by the agreed deadlines and to ensure completed documentation, with accompanying recommendations are submitted to the Academic Registrar, who will consider them for final approval.

The decision of the Academic Registrar will be communicated to the Admissions Team within ten working days. The RPL applicant will be notified of the decision in writing by the Admissions Team, who will update their record as appropriate. Where the RPL application is rejected, the letter confirming the decision shall include details of any shortcomings and how they might be rectified should the applicant wish to re-apply.

Appeals

Applicants may not appeal against the academic or professional judgement of those making the decision on an application. However, the University shall consider a request from an applicant that the decision to reject their application be reviewed on the grounds that:

- There exists new evidence, which can be corroborated, and could not have been brought to the attention of the University prior to the consideration process;
- There is evidence of a procedural irregularity connected directly with the consideration process undertaken by the University;
- The decision of the University is, on the basis of the information available, unreasonable;
- There is evidence of prejudice or bias on the part of those involved in the consideration process.

Appeals must be made in writing within twenty-eight calendar days of the date of the letter from the University notifying the applicant of the decision. Further details may be found in the University's HE Appeals Procedure.

Complaints

The University is committed to delivering a high quality, efficient and fair admissions service, and it is encouraged that applicants notify the institution of any causes for concern, and areas for improvement. Complaints may be made regarding the services or facilities offered by the University or the actions or behaviour of a member of staff during the process. The outcome of a complaint that is upheld could include an apology or an undertaking to revise procedures. However, it will not usually result in reconsideration of the candidate's application. Applicants who wish to complain may do so in accordance with the University's Complaints Procedure.

Appendix: Volume of RPL in BIMM University Awards

It is important to note that decisions to recognise credit through RPL towards BIMM University awards are taken on an individual case level.

Limits for Certified Learning

To receive an undergraduate honours degree from BIMM University, a student will be required to undertake at least two academic levels of study on a BIMM course and achieve 240 credits. The maximum volume of RPL outlined below applies to credit achieved by certified learning and is provided for guidance but does not constitute an entitlement.

Award	**Maximum credit transfer permitted from external awarding body**	**Maximum credit transfer permitted from another course at BIMM University** (or franchise partner)	**Minimum credits to be passed on courses at BIMM University** (or franchise partner)	**Total credits required for award**
Bachelor's Degree with Honours	120 (120 at level 4)	240 (120 at level 4 and 120 at level 5)	240 (120 at level 5 and 120 at level 6)	360
Diploma of Higher Education	120 (level 4)	120 (level 4)	120 (level 5)	240
Certificate of Higher Education	none	none	120 (level 4)	120