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UG Recognition of Prior Practice Policy & Procedure

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Section A: Introduction & Terminology

Introduction

BIMM University recognises the value of learning wherever it occurs, either to meet course entry requirements (Recognition of Prior Practice) or to achieve credit towards named awards (Recognition of Prior Learning). Recognition of Prior Practice is an alternative entry route onto Level 4 of a BIMM University undergraduate course for mature applicants who do not hold the minimum qualifications required to gain entry onto a course. A mature applicant must be 19 years of age by course start date for their RPP application to be considered.

The University shall seek to operate its RPP 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 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.

Publicity

Details about RPP, including information on where prospective students can obtain advice and guidance on submitting an application, any fees payable and time limits shall be published to applicants via the University's prospectus and website.

Terminology

- ***Recognition*** - Refers to the process whereby applicants of all ages and backgrounds are eligible to receive recognition and/or formal credit for learning acquired in the past through work and other life experiences.

- ***Recognition of Prior Practice (RPP)*** - Refers to the recognition of prior practice and experience gained outside the University through practice which is uncertified and not previously assessed. For example, learning from paid or unpaid work, community activities, leisure pursuits and other informal learning experiences related to the subject of study in the course of interest.

  Where 'recognised' prior practice meets the criteria above but there is no formal credit allocated, the University shall follow the procedures detailed in this policy to gauge the equivalent qualification level required for entry onto the undergraduate course applied for.

Section B: Application Process

Criteria, Conditions & Restrictions for RPP

This procedure will ensure that the learning gained through practice presented as RPP demonstrates a satisfactory level of academic ability and aptitude (via the essay submission) required for Level 4 study (first year of a BIMM University undergraduate course), as well as related experience to the subject of study being at a level that may be equivalent to time spent, or learning outcomes similar to, the qualifications required to enter an undergraduate course.

Applicants for RPP shall provide the following evidence that learning through practice has been gained to demonstrate equivalence. All evidence of learning shall be:

- ***Written in English***
- ***Sufficient*** - Keep in mind that evidence presented (e.g. a portfolio or syllabus) should be concise and contain sufficient evidence for the purpose intended.
- ***Recent*** - How recent the experience is can determine its value. Certain skills and knowledge, for example, can quickly become redundant.
- ***Authentic*** - For certain evidence to be accepted it may require endorsement or a reference from relevant sources, e.g. employers or recognised professional bodies.
- ***Relevant*** - The specifications of a job will determine the relevance of the evidence.

Criteria

When considering evidence for learning through practice, the RPP Assessor shall:

- Assess the evidence submitted against the requirements of the relevant level of qualification needed to gain entry onto a BIMM University undergraduate course. Specific course entry requirements can be found in the University's prospectus or on the website.
- Confirm that the learning has been in a subject area relevant to the course of study.
- Assess equivalences of competence between learning at work (for example) and having gained a specific qualification.

'Shelf Life' of Prior Practice/Experiential Learning

Recognition shall normally be considered for learning attained through practice within five years prior to the enrolment date for the intended course at the University.

Prior practice or work completed more than five years prior to the enrolment date for the intended course may be recognised and subject to the following conditions:

- The Course Leader or Assessor confirms that the learning is still relevant and meets the required entry requirements; and/or
- The applicant can demonstrate evidence of continuous application, updating and relevance to their practice.

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 RPP application or to have falsified or misrepresented any part of their application

Application Requirements

Applications for RPP shall consist of a written request, stating the BIMM University award in respect of which the student seeks RPP and submit:

- Applicants are required to submit an RPP Portfolio, the content of which shall vary in accordance with the nature of the experiences and of the learning that has resulted from that experience but shall normally include the following elements:

  - **Statement of Claim** (approx. 100 words)

  - **Reflective Evaluation** (2000 words max): A reflective essay which provides an account of the key previous learning and personal experiences that are relevant to your intended area of study. Evaluate how these experiences have influenced your professional and personal development as well as enabling you to develop new ideas and approaches. Your essay should refer to the relevant evidence contained in your appendices as well as any recent academic resources that you have utilised (e.g. books, websites, media sources, periodicals etc).

  - **Appendices:** The appendices section should include relevant evidence to support your reflective account of previous learning and personal experiences and should consist of:

(i) Curriculum Vitae (CV): An up-to-date CV which briefly summarises the following:

- Education and training – indicate the skills, knowledge and understanding which you have acquired through various aspects of your education
- Work experience – indicate the skills, knowledge and understanding you have acquired through any formal or informal employment (including any voluntary or community work)
- Other relevant learning experiences / prior practice - for example: live performances, organising events, tutoring/mentoring others, giving talks/ presentations, previous achievements and positions of responsibility etc
- List of relevant competencies and skills. For example: personal and communication skills; teamwork; ability to assimilate ideas and keep up-to-date with your subject etc.
- Hobbies and interests
- Any other relevant information

(ii) Supporting Evidence: Examples of relevant evidence to support your RPP claim as outlined in your reflective essay and CV. Types of evidence may include:

- **Direct Evidence (your own work). For example:**

- Articles/Reports/Essays/Poems etc as relevant to subject area
- A/V materials or artefacts demonstrating areas of practice
- Further analysis and description of training and practice activities
- Certificates / Awards etc

- **Indirect Evidence (what someone else says about you). For example:**

- Statements from people that know you and have worked with and/or who can give feedback about your prior practice e.g. Employers; Colleagues; Clients; Business/Creative project partners; Teachers/Educators etc.

Please note that any evidence containing personal information apart from that of the applicant (names, addresses, contact numbers etc) should be suitably redacted to ensure confidentiality.

Please also see **Appendix 1 - Portfolio Submission Requirements** (below) for details of the format requirements for your work.

In preparing the RPP Portfolio, upon request, an applicant may be allocated a mentor by the University who may be subsequently involved in the assessment of the evidence but shall not be the sole assessor. The mentor shall advise the applicant of any additional course-specific criteria and what evidence shall be required for this.

The procedure for considering requests for the accreditation of prior experiential learning shall include the following stages:

- Agreement of work to be submitted (e.g. essay submission, portfolio, presentation, submission of artefacts);
- Agreement of submission date;
- Agreement of any tutorial arrangements (including monitoring progress towards submission, reviewing drafts, etc.);
- Clarification of arrangements for assessment

Timescale for Submission

Applicants wishing to apply via the RPP application route will be advised in the first instance to discuss the matter with the Admissions Team, who will ensure that the applicant is informed of the University's RPP Policy & Procedure.

Applications for RPP should normally be made no later than ten weeks in advance of enrolling on the intended undergraduate course.

Students who apply after the start of their course may be disadvantaged by missing the enrolment and induction events which provide essential information and missing lessons in the first few weeks may also add strain on the student in terms of assessments taking place in the first semester.

If the applicant has a problem obtaining appropriate evidence in time to meet the ten-week deadline above, they should inform the University and request an extension at the earliest opportunity.

Approval Process & Confirmation of Decision

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

If the agreed submission deadline is missed by the applicant, the Admissions Team will advise on the next available date by which their application should be received to ensure it makes the next RPP Panel date. If the applicant has missed the final RPP Panel date for the relevant year of entry, Admissions will discuss the application with the RPP Panel Chair to see if other options are available or if the applicant needs to re-apply the following academic year.

All RPP applications accepted by the Admissions Team will be referred to an RPP College Lead (normally the Head of Education or Head of Learning & Teaching), who will assign an RPP Assessor (normally the relevant Course Leader or Deputy Course Leader).

The RPP Assessor will consider the application and, should they require additional information, the applicant will be advised within fifteen working days of the original submission, with an appropriate deadline agreed for the new information to be submitted. When the RPP Assessor is satisfied that they have all the necessary details to assess the application, they will make a recommendation to the RPP Panel via the RPP College Lead.

It is the responsibility of the RPP College Lead to ensure all RPP Assessors meet the marking deadline to ensure the RPP submissions are considered at the panel date as agreed with the applicant. The RPP Assessor will mark the work as either a pass or fail and submit the work and mark for panel consideration.

The RPP College Lead will be responsible for consistency of marking and the submitting of assessed RPP applications and accompanying recommendations to the RPP Panel, which will consider them for final approval. The RPP Panel will be comprised of all RPP College Leads and chaired by the Director of Recruitment & Admissions. The decision of the RPP Panel will be communicated to the Admissions Team within ten working days of meeting.

The RPP applicant will be notified of the decision in writing by the Admissions Team, who will update the applicant's record as appropriate and store the documentation on file. Where the RPP 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 appellant 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 selection process;
- There is evidence of a procedural irregularity connected directly with the selection 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 selection 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 Appeals Procedure, which can be found online.

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. Students who wish to complain may do so in accordance with the University's Complaints Procedure.

Appendix 1: Portfolio Submission Requirements:

A portfolio is an organised folder of information compiled by an applicant with support from University staff if required or requested by the applicant. It will contain details of past experiences and accomplishments. It may also contain evidence that the individual has reliably demonstrated the skills, knowledge and understanding to be given recognition to gain exemption, or to gain equivalency to the minimum entry requirements of their chosen course of study.

A Portfolio can be used to gain accreditation and/or exemption, or to decide what continuing education is appropriate. It needs to be concise, well presented and relevant.

Your Portfolio should contain details of your skills, knowledge, understanding and achievement, and these features can come from:

- Paid employment
- Voluntary work
- Self-directed or managed project work/practice
- Self-employed/freelance work related to the intended subject of study
- Education and training
- Hobbies and interests
- Any other relevant sources

Please ensure that your work meets the following submission requirements:

1. **Cover Sheet:**
   This should contain your name, date, submission title (RPP Portfolio) and the centre/course for which you are applying.

2. **Text:**
   Your submission needs to be written in English and clearly expressed using sound grammar and correct spelling. Your work should be double-spaced using 11 or 12point type (in a clear font such as Arial or Calibri) and including your name in the header and a page number in the footer of each page.

3. **Submission Formats:**

   - **Written work** needs to be presented in PDF format. Please ensure that any links in the document are hyperlinked
   - **Audio/Media content:** This can be uploaded to Dropbox, but we will accept embedded links. You may also use Google Drive to upload content and share an accessible link.
   - **Other types of evidence:** flyers, posters, PowerPoint presentations, scanned documents etc – please upload these items and place within a folder that you can share via an accessible link such as Google Drive or Dropbox. Please title the folder with your name and the acronyms "BIMM University RPP", e.g. "John Smith BIMM University RPP".
   - **Uploading Portfolio link/s:** These can be sent to: admissions@bimm.ac.uk. Please use the following as the subject of the email: **RPP Portfolio Submission**.

The University's Commitment to Applicants

The Admissions Team and College Academic teams will be able to provide applicants with a marking criteria guide for their portfolio submission and essay. This will help demonstrate what is required for a

pass mark. The work being marked as part of the RPP application will be marked as a pass or fail only. If the submission does not meet the criteria required for a pass, the marker will provide feedback for the applicant.

When requested, the University can help applicants compile a portfolio of evidence by offering the relevant resources, information, advice and one-to-one guidance on how to collect evidence and lay out the portfolio. We will also offer a one-hour tutorial to check the completed portfolio and to make recommendations if further evidence or descriptions are needed. If any additional support is required, this should be requested by the applicant in advance of the tutorial.

Appendix 2: Supporting Staff Assessing RPP

College Principals will nominate an RPP College Lead (normally the Head of Education, Head of Higher Education or Head of Learning & Teaching) to support academics dealing with RPP applications. This person shall be experienced in RPP processes and will be allocated time to fulfil their responsibilities. The RPP College Lead will be responsible for ensuring consistency within their own college.

The RPP Panel is responsible for final approval of all RPP applications, and all paperwork should be available for internal or external scrutiny, as required.