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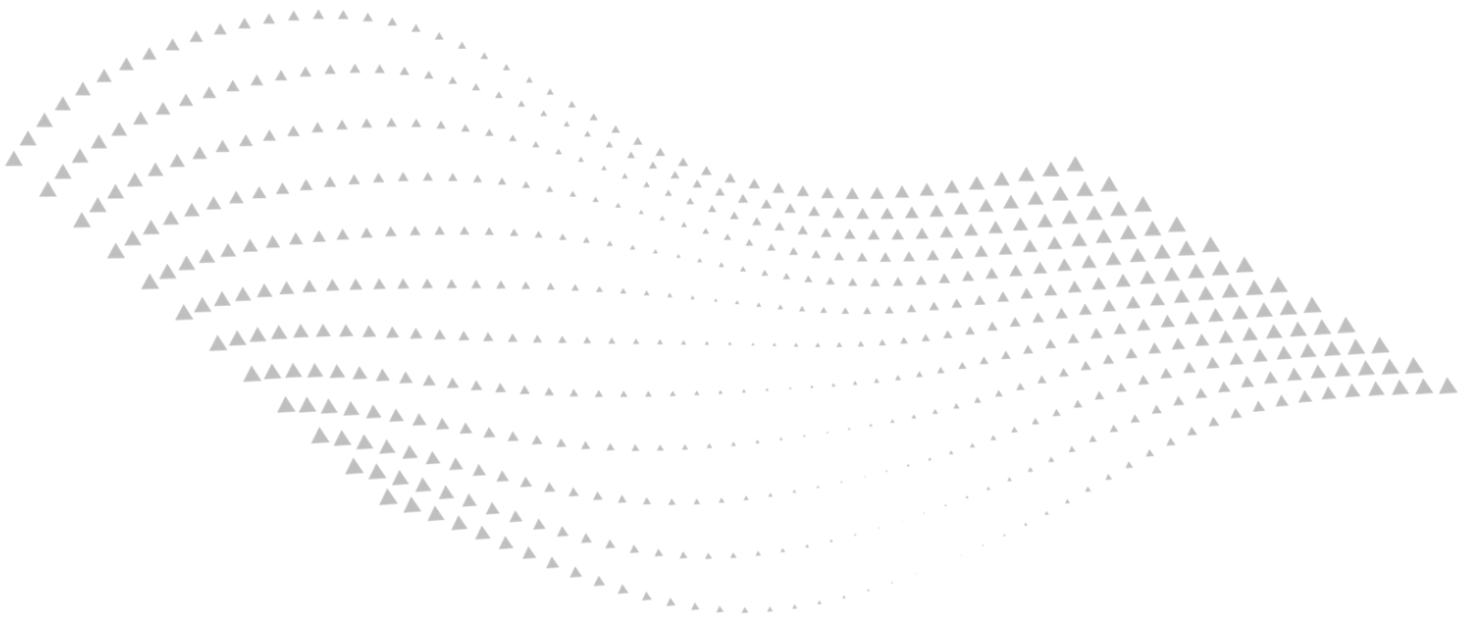


PERFORMERS  
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# Recognition of Prior Learning Policy & Procedure



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## Section A: Introduction & Terminology

### Introduction

BIMM Institute 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). 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 of a 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 Institute's Recognition of Prior Practice Policy & Procedure.

The Institute shall seek to operate its RPL Policy & Procedure in a way that is fair and in accordance with legal requirements and the Institute's regulations at all times. This includes specific compliance with the Equality Act and the Institute's Equal Opportunities & Diversity Policy, as well as a commitment that the Institute 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 RPL, including information on where prospective students can obtain advice and guidance on submitting an application and time limits shall be published to applicants via the Institute's 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 formal study.
- **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** - Refers to the formal recognition of prior learning gained outside the Institute through formally assessed and certified courses.
- **Accreditation of Prior Learning (including credit transfer)** - It is the Institute's responsibility to decide how many specific credits to award an individual student 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 Institute. Where 'recognised' learning meets the criteria above and has been allocated credit, the Institute 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 Institute, in accordance with the European Credit Transfer & Accumulation System ([ECTS](#)). Where appropriate, credit will be 'transferred' at an equivalent level and volume.
- **'Advanced Standing' or 'Direct Entry'** - Refers to the process whereby a student who has been granted sufficient RPL to be permitted to enter a course later than the normal start point (i.e., directly into the second or subsequent year of study and/or second or subsequent level of a



course). In these cases, the normal period of registration shall be shortened by the equivalent period, and the student shall be required to complete their course within this shortened period.

### **Outgoing Students**

All students who exit the Institute, either upon completion of their intended award or part way through a course, are issued with an academic transcript which details the modules taken, their credit values, the marks achieved, and the award attained (including exit awards).

Students who intend to transfer credit to another institution will require electronic copies of the 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 transcripts, via email to [AcademicRegistry@bimm.ac.uk](mailto:AcademicRegistry@bimm.ac.uk). The decision to accept credit achieved at the Institute 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. 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, such as validating institutions.
- **Relevant** - The learning outcomes of a particular qualification will determine the relevance of the evidence.

The procedures for recognising prior learning shall ensure that the learning which has taken place and is presented as RPL 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 Institute;
- 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 Institute is not guaranteed and may not necessarily directly reflect the value/level of the general credit assigned to the current/previous qualification by the validating body, i.e., it may be less. 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 Institute, recognition and accreditation may only be awarded for credit achieved within five years prior to the enrolment date for the intended course at the Institute.

For applicants seeking direct entry to Level 6, the credit must have been achieved within four years. This ensures alignment with the maximum period of registration as set out in the Institute's [Academic Framework](#).

### Limits to the Volume of RPL



Specific limits on the amount of RPL that may be transferred to a course at the Institute are defined in Appendix 1.

### **RPL for Whole Levels of Study**

RPL shall only be considered for whole levels of study, not elements therein. If a student does not have full credit for a whole level of study, an RPL application will not be accepted.

### **Credit Transfers**

Subject to relevance, certified learning will normally be transferred at the same or equivalent level as that awarded by the other institution, in accordance with the [European Credit Transfer & Accumulation System](#) (ECTS). Credit achieved at a higher level may exempt a student from modules at a lower level (i.e., downgraded credit). However, it is not normally permissible to offset credit achieved at a lower level from modules at a higher level (i.e., upgraded credit). 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 on one course to another course at the same or a different institution. The credit may come from an incomplete or completed award and may be used as a foundation for a higher award. Credit which can be transferred into courses at BIMM Institute must be at the same level of study or higher.

Marks and/or grades attached to such credit shall only be recognised and transferred to the new course if the prior certified learning was undertaken at the Institute.

Marks and/or grades 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**

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

Students who transfer credit and marks/grades within the Institute or one its partners shall normally have their final award calculated and, where appropriate, classified according to the relevant award rules (See Appendix 1 'Volume of RPL in BIMM Awards').

Students who join a course at Level 6 and are only permitted to transfer credit without marks/grades may be unable to meet the standard requirements for award classification. In such cases, the method used will normally be a weighted average of all module marks achieved by the student at Level 6.

### **Falsification or Misrepresentation of Evidence**

The Institute 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 award in respect of which the student seeks RPL and details of which level(s) of the course for which they wish their application to be considered. In addition, applicants must submit documentation from their previous/current course of study that include details of all modules studied, credit values, 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.

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 ten-week deadline above, they should inform the Institute and request an extension at the earliest opportunity. Such requests will need to be approved by the Academic Registrar (or designate).

Applicants must not assume RPL credits to have been granted 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 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 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 (or designate) to see if other options are available or if the applicant needs to re-apply the following academic year.

All RPL applications accepted by the Admissions Team will be referred to an RPL Assessor, who will consider the application. Should they require additional information, they will refer the application back to the Admissions Team, and 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, taking into account the exemption/accreditation applied for and any other relevant factors. When the RPL Assessor is satisfied that they have all the necessary details to assess the application, they will make a recommendation to the Academic Registrar (or designate).

It is the responsibility of the RPL Assessor to meet the marking deadlines and to ensure the assessed RPL applications and accompanying recommendations are submitted to the Academic Registrar (or designate), who will consider them for final approval. RPL applications for direct entry at Level 6 may



also require External Examiner approval, which may be sought by the Academic Registrar (or designate). The decision of the Academic Registrar (or designate) will be communicated to the Admissions Team within ten working days of meeting.

The RPL 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 RPL application is partially or fully 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 Institute 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 Institute prior to the consideration process;
- There is evidence of a procedural irregularity connected directly with the consideration process undertaken by the Institute;
- The decision of the Institute 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 Institute notifying the applicant of the decision. Further details may be found in the Institute's Appeals Procedure, which can be found online.

## **Complaints**

The Institute 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 Institute 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 Institute's Complaints Procedure.



**Appendix 1: Volume of RPL in BIMM Awards**

It is important to note that the acceptance of RPL towards BIMM awards is a decision based on each individual case.

**Limits for Certified Learning**

To receive an undergraduate honours degree from BIMM, a student will be required to undertake at least one full-time academic year of study, or part-time equivalent, on a BIMM approved course and achieve 120 credits. The maximum volume of RPL outlined below applies to RPL achieved by certified learning and is provided for the guidance of applicants and staff but does not constitute an entitlement.

<b>Award</b>	<b>Maximum credits which may be accredited</b>	<b>Minimum credits to be passed on BIMM Institute courses</b>	<b>Total credits required for award</b>
Bachelor’s Degree with Honours	240 (120 at level 4 and 120 at level 5)	120 (level 6)	360
Diploma of Higher Education	120 (level 4)	120 (level 5)	240
Certificate of Higher Education	none	120 (level 4)	120