Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Framework

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Further information:	

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1. Background

1.1. This framework outlines how formal recognition of learning gained elsewhere, where appropriate, can lead to the award of credit by Northern School of Contemporary Dance by recognizing the prior learning.

1.2. Within a credit-based system, credit transfer and the recognition of prior learning provide greater flexibility in admitting students to our institution and it links prior learning experiences to current programmes of study so that the student gains maximum benefit from their studies.

2. Definitions related to Recognition of Prior Learning

Credit transfer	Where credit or (a) qualification(s) has/have been awarded by a UK higher education degree-awarding body in accordance with the relevant framework for higher education qualifications, the FHEQ.
Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL)	Learning that has been certificated. Prior certificated learning relates to prior learning, such as professional development awards or employment-based awards, which is at higher education level but which has not led to the award of UK credits or UK qualifications positioned on the relevant higher education qualifications framework. It may include credit or awards made by non-UK HEIs.
Recognition of prior experiential learning (RPEL)	Informal uncertificated learning through experience or learning through professional development where no certification is offered, whether gained through work, voluntary activity or at home.

3. Principles

3.1 This policy aligns with the expectations and core practices of the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*[1], ensuring that the assessment of claims for credit by the recognition of prior learning are reliable, fair and transparent.

3.2 Decisions about the recognition of prior learning take account of The *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies* (FHEQ)[2]

3.3 The decisions about the recognition of prior learning are assessment decisions, and whilst part of the admissions process are not merely admission decisions.

3.4 NSCD recognises the validity of studies undertaken at other Higher Education Institutions, therefore, it will normally recognise the credit value of qualifications obtained from these institutions.

3.5 It cannot be assumed that the credit value can automatically be fully recognised as credit into an NSCD award. A mapping process must be carried out to determine the level and volume of credit that can be used for a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) claim.

3.6 Decisions taken in respect of claims for credit transfer and prior learning are informed by the following criteria:

[1] https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code
[2] https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/qualifications-frameworks

3.6.1 The credit must be for learning that is up to date, usually within 5 years of the start of the student beginning study on the programme to which the applicant is applying.

3.6.2 The credit must be for learning that is relevant to the programme being applied for and which can be demonstrated as equivalent to the learning outcomes of the module, group of modules or level that it replaces.

3.6.3 The credit involved must match the level and volume of the learning that it replaces.

3.6.4 The principle of progression in award should underpin the re-use of credit, in which new learning should usually be at a higher level than any credit gained from prior learning.

3.7 NSCD recognises that good practice in the management of assessment applies equally to processes for the RPL: transparency, fairness, consistency, reliability, and validity.

3.8 The principles of internal and external moderation apply for all claims for the Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL).

4. Use of Recognition of Prior Learning

4.1 Recognition for Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit transfer may be used by individuals as:

4.1.1 A means of gaining entry to programmes part way through the programme, thus shortening the time required to complete a programme of study (Advanced Standing).

4.1.2 It enables prior learning to be given an academic credit value which can then be used to gain exemption from relevant modules, or stages, of a university level course.

4.1.3 It enables people to enter a university level course at the point that best suits their experience and skills. It also helps ensure that learners do not have to repeat prior learning.

5. Learning Outcomes

5.2 Learning outcomes are statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and demonstrate following study of a particular module or academic course of study.

5.3 In terms of RPL it is key that prior learning matches the relevant learning outcomes within a module or academic course of study a student wants to claim credit towards. This demonstrates that through prior learning a student already has the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to be awarded the credit towards the new course of study.

5.4 To identify whether the student can meet learning outcomes on the new course a mapping exercise is carried out.

6. Mapping

6.1 The mapping exercise is to compare prior learning with the relevant learning outcomes of the module(s) at NSCD a student is claiming credit towards. *See Appendices A.5a and A.5b*

6.2 There should be a close match between these showing a student has already achieved the learning required to be awarded credit towards the new course of study.

6.3 The mapping process differs depending on the type of RPL being claimed. Mapping for **Credit Transfer/ RPCL** claims will normally be carried out by the Quality Office for the course, based on information provided by the student on prior learning, i.e. a course syllabus.

6.4 **RPEL** mapping can be completed, with the support of NSCD staff, to prepare a portfolio. The portfolio maps the learning from prior experience to the relevant learning outcomes of the modules for the new course of study. This will then form part of an RPEL portfolio. This mapping will normally reference evidence in the portfolio that supports the claim for credit.

7. Student requesting transfer between programmes

7.1. Where an articulated progression route has been agreed, for example, when a NSCD student is a direct entrant to year 2 of the BA having completed an NSCD Cert HE programme, it is not necessary for the student to apply for credit transfer/RPL on the NSCD programme. A record of such students and their credit transfer must be kept and reported to the LTQAC.

8. Credit Limits

8.1. There are limits for the amount of RPL that can be claimed onto a course. This is to ensure that there is a sufficient amount of new learning carried out at NSCD or partners, before a qualification is awarded. For example:

Programme	**Maximum Credit from RPL or Credit Transfer**
BA (Hons)	240 - from level 4 and 5
Postgraduate Certificate	30
Postgraduate Diploma	60
MA	120 - credit transfer/RPL may not contribute towards the final Masters stage of the Award

8.2. A student who can provide evidence of previous relevant successful learning, at a UK based HEI, may, within specified limits, have this prior learning recognised and be exempted from part of a programme of study. Where the prior learning has taken place at a UK HEI it will be regarded as Credit Transfer and may be processed as below:

8.2.1. The Quality Office, in consultation with the Admissions Office, are authorised to approve requests for credit transfer within the limits specified above which are supported by official transcripts or equivalent, provided they are satisfied that the applicant has achieved learning outcomes equivalent to those of the stage(s) or

module(s) from which exemption is to be granted.

8.2.2. The level and volume of credits from which the applicant is granted exemption may be less than those on which the application is based.

9. Marks

9.1. Credit awarded for learning from outside of the University is not graded, with the exception of credit obtained from validated placement modules.

9.2. Where a student is a direct entrant into the final stage (i.e. RPL to level 6) the classification mark is based upon 100% of Level 6.

9.3. All RPL credit awarded, is reported to the Learning, Teaching & Quality Assurance Committee and the Board of Examiners.

10. Reporting & Timescales

10.1. A record of all decisions relating to Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer and a copy of the evidence on which they were based will be kept by the Quality Office. These records will be reported annually in the Autumn Term by the Quality Office to the Learning, Teaching & Quality Assurance Committee for sampling and monitoring purposes.

10.2. **The assessment of all RPL claims must be completed in time to enroll the applicant on the correct level of the programme concerned**, usually by the start of teaching. The Chair of LTQAC is able to take chair's actions if this is required.

11. Appendices

Appendix A.5a RPCL Credit Transfer Template

Appendix A.5b RPEL Portfolio Template