



## **Accreditation of Prior Certified Learning Scheme**

Preparing a claim for credit using prior certified learning

## 1. Introduction

**This booklet is a guide for students wishing to claim Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) using prior certificated learning.**

## 2. Background

The University has adopted a **Modular Course Structure and a Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme** (known as **MODCATS**) for the delivery of its courses.

All taught courses at the University of Central Lancashire operate under the MODCAT scheme. Student's progress towards a target award through the study of credit rated course modules. The scheme of accumulating credits to obtain an award provides for a great deal of flexibility in study patterns allowing students more mobility between programmes and modes of study within the University and greater opportunity of transfer between institutions without loss of credit already gained. A module is a component of a course with its own approved aims and objectives, learning outcomes and assessment methods.

A number of credits are allocated to each module at a level appropriate to its content and learning objectives. Students must complete the required number of modules at the required levels in order to complete their course.

For example, the minimum number of credit points required for these University awards is as follows:

<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor degree (Honours)	360 credits - 18 modules
<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor degree (non-Honours)	320 credits - 16 modules
<input type="checkbox"/> Dip HE	240 credits - 12 modules
<input type="checkbox"/> Foundation Degree	240 credits - 12 modules
<input type="checkbox"/> Cert HE	120 credits - 6 modules

## 3. What is APL?

A major benefit of the MODCAT scheme for students is that they can bring forward previous learning (academic, professional or experiential) for accreditation within their chosen programme of study thereby achieving recognition for what has already been learned. This is what is meant by the term **Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)**.

APL is a process which aims to recognise learning in whatever context it has taken place. It is based on the premise that learning can be identified, measured, assessed and accredited within academic programmes, regardless of the context in which it is acquired.

Within this overall definition, **two** forms of prior learning are recognised: **Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (AP(C)L)**

- Learning associated with a structured, formal course of study which has been assessed and accredited either in higher education or by a professional body.

### **Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)**

□ Learning acquired through personal development or work experiences and informal or training study not previously attested through formal education/certification.

To be given credit on a programme, prior certificated or experiential learning needs to be at an appropriate Higher Education level. If in doubt as to whether or not your prior learning is at an appropriate level to count for credit, consult the APL Coordinator, initially.

#### **4. What is Credit?**

Credit is an **educational currency** which provides a measure of learning achieved at a given level.

**Notionally, 10 hours of student effort equates to one credit.**

**120 credits** represent the normal workload for a full-time programme of study in the standard academic year (comprising the autumn and spring semesters). This amounts to some 36 to 42 hours of study per week (inclusive of class content, practicals, field work, private study etc.).

20 credits is the standard size of a module with 10 credits representing a half module and 40 credits a double module. Normally, 120 credits are taken in an academic year by full time undergraduate students but part-time students may complete their programme on a module by module basis, taking up to a maximum of 90 credits (4.5 modules) each year.

For postgraduate study, 60 credits are normally required for a Post Graduate Certificate, 120 for a Post Graduate Diploma and 180 for a Master's degree.

#### **5. Course Specific and Module Specific Credit**

The University makes a distinction between Course Specific and Module Specific Credit. Not all credit can count, even if it is at the right level, as there has to be relevance towards your programme of study. For example, credits gained in the subject of History will have limited, if any, relevance to a Physics programme.

##### **Example of Course Specific Credit**

A student has studied Shakespeare during year one of their English Literature course at another University. The student wishes to continue their study at UCLan and may be allowed to transfer these credits even though the UCLan based course has studied Renaissance Poetry in year one instead.

##### **Module Specific Credit**

This is where learning has been undertaken and shows an exact match with the learning outcomes of a specific module taught at UCLan. These modules can be core, optional or elective.

## Elective Credit

Elective components of a programme do not require subject relevancy for credit to count. If the amount and educational level of the previous learning is equivalent to the number and level of elective credits being claimed, there does not have to be a match in terms of a subject area. You will be able to use HE level credit towards your programme by counting them as APL electives.

### Example of Elective Credit

A student has credits in Zoology from another University and is currently studying an English and Education Studies Combined Honours programme at UCLan. This student would be eligible to claim credit (up to two elective modules), even though the Zoology credits do not specifically relate to either of the chosen subject areas or to any modules listed in the Electives Catalogue.

## 6. Restrictions to the Award of Credit

- If a qualification is a general requirement for admission to a programme, it may not be used to claim credit.
- Some professional and statutory bodies will not allow APL in any circumstances or may restrict it.
- The award of credit will be reviewed if a student changes his/her target award and may be withdrawn.
- An individual module may not be simultaneously associated with two or more awards. E.g. there can be no "double counting" of modules.
- A student who is awarded credit may be excluded from certain course modules containing a substantial element of commonality with the accredited modules this is to prevent repetition of the same learning.
- Students who are repeating a year, in full, on the same programme cannot use credits from the failed year to satisfy any part of the repeat year programme - this does **not**, however, apply to students who **change their programme of study**.
- Full time students who wish to retain their full time status must be registered **to study at least 5 modules** in any academic year.
- The maximum amount of credit which can be awarded for prior learning is generally set at two-thirds of the credit required to complete the course. However, where an equal or higher level qualification already awarded is presented for accreditation towards a lower level or equal level programme of study, the maximum APCL is set at one-third of the overall credit requirement for the new award.

## 7. How to apply for credit using Prior Certificated Learning (AP(C)L) see figure 1

### Application procedure and deadlines for submission

If you wish to receive accreditation for prior certificated learning you should apply as soon as possible after enrolment and no later than 6 weeks after the start of teaching.

Do not assume that a conversation or E-mail exchange with your course team or APL Unit will result in APL being awarded.

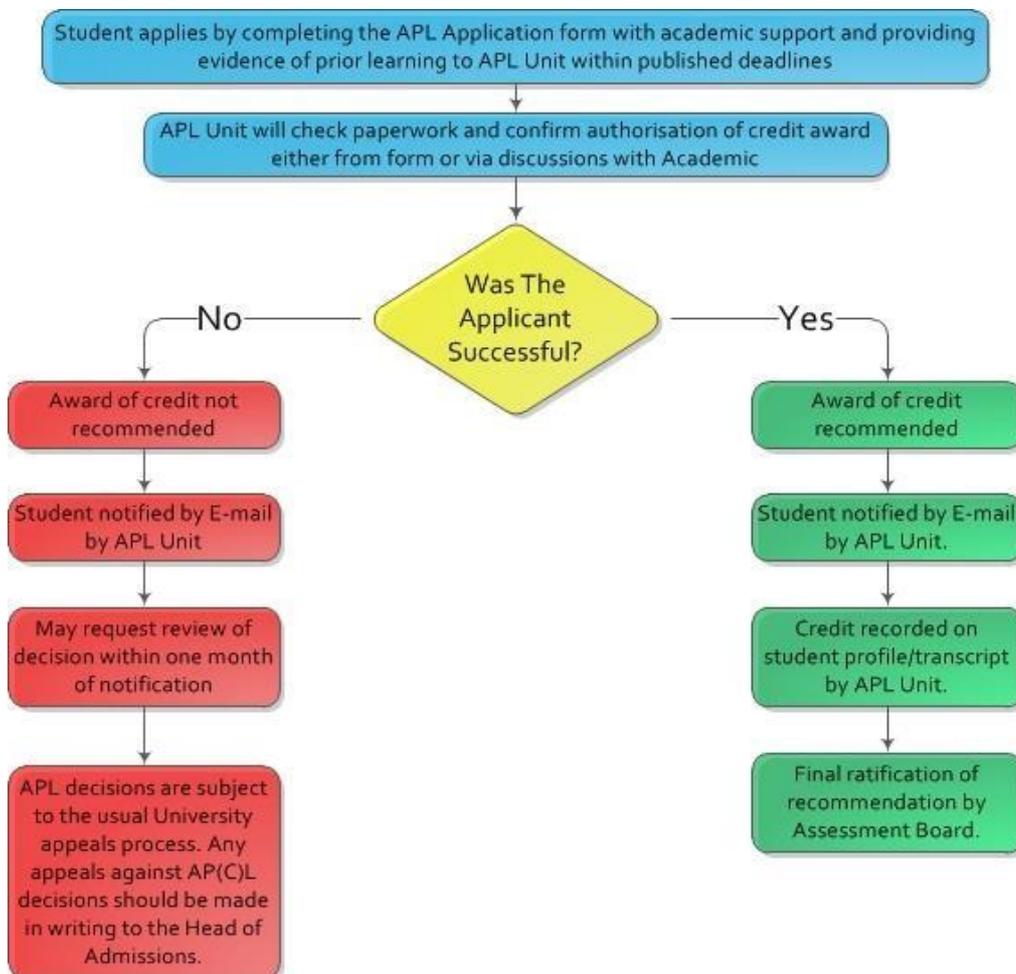
You must follow the procedures and complete the necessary paperwork.

The procedure is as follows:

1. Make an appointment with Course Leader or Personal Tutor to discuss whether APL is available and appropriate for you.
2. Complete the APL Application form indicating which modules you wish to claim for. If you are unsure, ask the academic supporting your claim for advice.
3. When you return the application forms you must attach a copy/copies of transcripts or certificates as proof of the awards obtained: original(s) must be made available if requested.
4. Return the application form and copy certificate(s) etc. to the APL Unit in the first instance.

This process is summarised in Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1. Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (AP(C)L) Process**



In cases where it is not possible establish the equivalency of learning from the certificate alone, the APL Unit may request further information such as course outline, syllabus information, assessment details etc.

**It will be the claimant's responsibility to provide this.**

## 8. Assessment of claims

1. The member of staff responsible for assessing APL will:

- Scrutinise your application form.
- Recommend whether credit should be awarded and if the total and level is appropriate to the course.
- If the award of credit is based on previous UCLan study, it will retain its grade unless the applicant is entering at Final year stage. If it is credit from outside UCLan, it will be recorded as non-graded (NG) credit. This means that it will not be assigned a percentage mark and will not, therefore, be included in any classification calculations.

**Please discuss the potential impact of ungraded APL on your final classification calculations with your academic advisor.**

2. A notification of the assessor's decision will be sent to you and your student record will be updated, if appropriate.

3. If the application for credit is not approved, you may request that the Academic Assessor(s) review their recommendation, but only on the basis of additional evidence which was not available at the time of application.

This request must be put in writing to the APL Co-Ordinator within 21 days of notification of the decision not to award credit.

However, the **appeals** procedure for both APCL and APEL recommendations follows the same principles as for taught modules. An appeal cannot therefore be made against the academic judgment of the assessors, properly exercised. The procedure for appealing can be found within section I of the Academic regulations at:

[Academic Regulations](#)

In determining the credit which can be awarded in individual cases, assessors will pay regard to:

4. **Level rating:** is the level of the prior learning submitted equivalent to the level of the credit claimed?

**Amount:** is the amount of prior learning submitted equivalent to the volume of study hours i.e. credits being claimed?

**Content / Learning outcomes:** has the applicant matched his/her prior learning to the specific learning outcomes of the module(s) claimed? Or demonstrated the same level and volume of learning in the case of unnamed elective credit

**Shelf-life:** how recent is the prior learning that is being presented? Is it still current / relevant to the subject now? There are no fixed rules about how recent the prior learning has to be, and questions of currency will be individually assessed.

**Quality of application:** is it coherently presented with all the relevant information (including documentary evidence where appropriate)?

It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide the necessary evidence to support their claim.

**9. Charges**

The University does not charge a fee for the assessment of claims made on the basis of **certificated** learning.

**10. What next?**

If you decide, after reading this information, to proceed with your claim for AP(C)L, please follow the instructions above and return your APL claim and evidence to:

University of Central Lancashire  
 The Admissions Office  
 Harris 120  
 Preston  
 PR1 2HE

Tel:           01772 892444  
 Email:       [uadmissions@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:uadmissions@uclan.ac.uk)

**11 Examples of Credit Equivalencies of Qualifications**

*This is not a complete listing and is for guidance only - claims will be assessed on an individual basis.*

<u>Qualification</u>	<u>Equivalency</u>
NVQ Level 2	GCSE Level (no credit)
NVQ Level 3	NVQ Level 3
NVQ Level 4	'A' Level (no credit)
CACHE Advanced Diploma in Childcare	Degree Level 4/5 Credit varies.
OU Support Teacher's Assistant	Degree levels 4/5 (120 credits)
Certificate in Education	Degree Level 4 (60 credits)
Edexcel (BTEC) National Certificate/Diploma	Degree Levels 4/5 (180 credits)
Edexcel (BTEC) Higher National Certificate	'A' Level (no credit)
Edexcel (BTEC) Higher National Diploma	Degree Levels 4/5 (160 credits)*
	Degree Levels 4/5 (240 credits)*

Note: 120 credits is equivalent to one year of full time study.

\* Some HNC/HND programmes attain credits gained at level 3 - pre HE level. Therefore AP(C)L claims using these qualifications will not necessarily award the full amount of credit detailed above.