

# Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Q: What exactly is meant by 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. UCLAN has adopted a modular structure and credit accumulation and transfer framework (known as MODCATS) for the delivery of its courses.

A Module is a component of a course with its own approved aims & objectives and assessment methods. It carries a number of credits at a given level, so a standard module equates to 20 credits, a double module to 40 credits and a half module to 10 credits. The normal workload for a full-time undergraduate programme of study, within the standard academic year, would be 120 credits. This amounts to 36 to 42 hours of study a week (including class content, practical, field work, private study, etc.). Part time students can complete their programme on a module by module basis.

An example of credits required for an honours degree:-

An honours degree requires 360 credits in total. Students normally complete 120 credits at each level (ie 120 credits at level 4, 120 credits at level 5 and 120 credits at level 6). Although the overall credit requirement will always be the same, some honours degrees vary the minimum credit required at each level of the degree. If in doubt, check with your Course Leader.

### Q: How do I know if my learning could be accredited?

If in doubt, ask!

Bear in mind that prior learning must:

- be at an appropriate level - the learning must be at a **higher education level** ( ie higher than A level) and it must be of an **equivalent level** to the learning achieved by students on taught modules on the course even though you have not acquired it in the same way;

**and**

- be able to be evidenced.

For certificated learning you must provide transcripts/certificates and if the qualification is over 5 years old you may also need to complete a Statement of Currency to evidence how you have kept the learning and skills up to date.

For experiential learning you must be able to demonstrate that you do actually have the learning for which you are claiming credit. This will be achieved by the submission of a portfolio of evidence for assessment.

It is important to emphasise that it is **the learning** and not the experience itself which results in the award of credit. Experience is only significant as a source of the learning. Different

people may learn different things from the same experience: it is the ability to identify learning, and the learning itself, which will be assessed for the award of credit.

### **Q: How can I claim credit using prior certificated learning : AP(C)L?**

If you believe that you have **certificated** learning equivalent to that required for relevant modules within the programme you can complete and submit an application form with copies of transcripts and certificates attached as proof of the awards obtained.

Certificated learning could be: study at another Higher Education Institution; distance learning; in-house company training; professional or vocational qualifications or any other formal training which **has already been assessed** in some way. It follows, therefore, that you cannot claim for training where only attendance was required.

Your application will be considered by an academic member of staff and credit awarded for your learning, if appropriate, subject to ratification by an Assessment Board.

You can match the learning to

- specific module(s) on your programme **and / or**
- elective module(s) which are in the electives catalogue, providing your course allows for the registration of free choice elective(s)

#### **and / or**

- elective accreditation (where the subject matter does not have to correspond with a course or subject offered by the University), but the level and volume of study has been verified by UCLAN or another Higher Education Institution

You cannot claim for part of a module.

### **Q: How can I claim credit using learning from experience: AP(E)L?**

You can claim credit by submitting a portfolio of evidence as negotiated with the Course Leader for your UCLAN programme.

This involves you working independently (but with some support and guidance from the academic) towards identifying, and providing evidence for, learning which is broadly the same as that required for specific module(s) or to named electives / generic or APEL electives -providing you have a free choice elective(s) element in your course)

Once the learning has been identified, you compile evidence of that learning in the form of a portfolio which will include a reflective account of learning. A reflective account of learning directs attention to the academic nature of your experiential learning.

This is assessed in relation to the learning outcomes required for each module claimed and credit awarded if appropriate.

### **Q: How can I register on the APEL Reflective Practice elective modules - APEL1001 & APEL2001?**

You will need to meet with your Course Leader to ensure that there is a free choice elective element to your course. You must then read the Module Handbook for the APEL module - APEL1001 or APEL2001 and confirm that you are able to satisfy the learning outcomes for the modules.

Once you are happy to proceed you should make contact with the APL Unit - contact details below - and they will guide you through the rest of the process, link you with an Adviser and an Assessor and register you for the module.

### **Q: How much credit can I claim?**

Whether you are claiming credit for certificated learning or experiential learning or a combination of both, the maximum credit you can be awarded is two thirds of the total credit requirement of your course. However, if you are using a prior qualification which is at the **same** or at a **higher level** than the one you are studying with UCLAN, in these cases the maximum credit you can be awarded is reduced to one third.

These limits apply to both undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

You cannot gain a University qualification through APL alone.

Both full time and part-time students can apply for APL but full time students should bear in mind that they must be actually studying for **at least 5 modules** during an academic year to retain their full time status.

**Q: What does it cost?**

For certificated claims there is **no charge**.

If your claim is based wholly or partly on learning from **experience**, AND you are a Part Time Student then you must pay **half** the standard tuition fee for each module claimed via APEL.

For the APEL reflective practice elective modules there is a charge of half the standard undergraduate module fee.

Substantial awards of credit based on experiential learning towards an advanced entry point - Year 2 or Year 3 entry - will also be charged at half of the standard tuition fee for each module claimed.

**Q: If I want to go ahead, what do I do next?**

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