

# Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning

## Guidance Notes of Applicants



**Before you work through this handbook, please check that you have gained support for your potential claim for credit from your Course/Module leader by having completed with them an APEL Specific Module Claim Form.**



**Your Adviser will discuss with you the requirements for a portfolio of evidence in respect of your experiential learning and the learning outcomes of the modules to be claimed.**



**You will also be given a deadline for the submission of this portfolio of evidence.**



# CONTENTS

|  | <b>Page</b> |
|--|-------------|
| <b>Section 1: Introduction and overview</b>  | <b>2</b>    |
| A) An overview of the application and decision process   | 2           |
| B) Flow chart of the complete APEL process   | 3           |
| <br>   |             |
| <b>Section 2: Guidance through the APEL Process</b>  | <b>4</b>    |
| A) Decide whether or not to continue with your application for credit                                  | 4           |
| B) Review the learning outcomes of the specific module   | 4           |
| C) Register the specific module claim and pay the assessment fee<br>(where relevant)                   | 4           |
| D) Meeting the submission deadline   | 5           |
| E) Access an APEL advisor to support you through the process   | 5           |
| F) Prepare a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate that the module learning<br>outcomes have been met : | 6           |
| Step 1 – review the module learning outcomes   | 6           |
| Step 2 – decide on how you want to present your claim  | 6           |
| Step 3 – Assemble the completed portfolio  | 7           |
| Step 4 – select relevant supporting evidence and link it to your<br>reflective account                 | 7           |
| <br>   |             |
| <b>Section 3: Quality Assurance</b>  | <b>7</b>    |
| <br>   |             |
| <b>Section 4: Additional Information</b>   |             |
| Anonymity & Confidentiality guidelines   | 8           |
| Plagiarism   | 8           |
| Late Submissions   | 9           |
| Extenuating Circumstances  | 10          |
| Unauthorised Late Submissions  | 10          |

## **Section 1: Introduction and Overview**

The University has a commitment to help you to use your previous learning to gain credit towards your University award. We may be able to recognise learning you have gained through many different types of experiences and professional development which have not previously been linked to achieving a qualification or certificated award.

The accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) is based on the identification, assessment and formal acknowledgement of prior learning and achievement, where learning is achieved outside education or training systems is recognised for academic purposes. The UCLan regulations for Accreditation of Prior Learning can be found in the Academic Regulations and explained at the following UCLan web address:

[http://www.uclan.ac.uk/information/services/sas/quality/regulations/aca\\_regs.php](http://www.uclan.ac.uk/information/services/sas/quality/regulations/aca_regs.php)

Making a claim for APEL is based on you developing a portfolio to demonstrate that you have learned (and continue to learn) from your experience and how this learning meets the outcomes required for the specific module you wish to claim. We will guide you in how to do this by supplying you with some 'learning outcomes' – these will help you to document your learning in a logical way.

### **An Overview of the Application and Decision Process**

It is important that you let us know your intention to complete a module using APEL as early as possible following enrolment. Ideally, this should be indicated at the time as completion of your module registration form during enrolment but we do recognise that the value of your previous experience may not be apparent until later following discussions with Tutors.

#### **Full time students:**

At enrolment you must register to study 6 modules, - including any module you consider may be achieved via APL.

#### **Part-time students:**

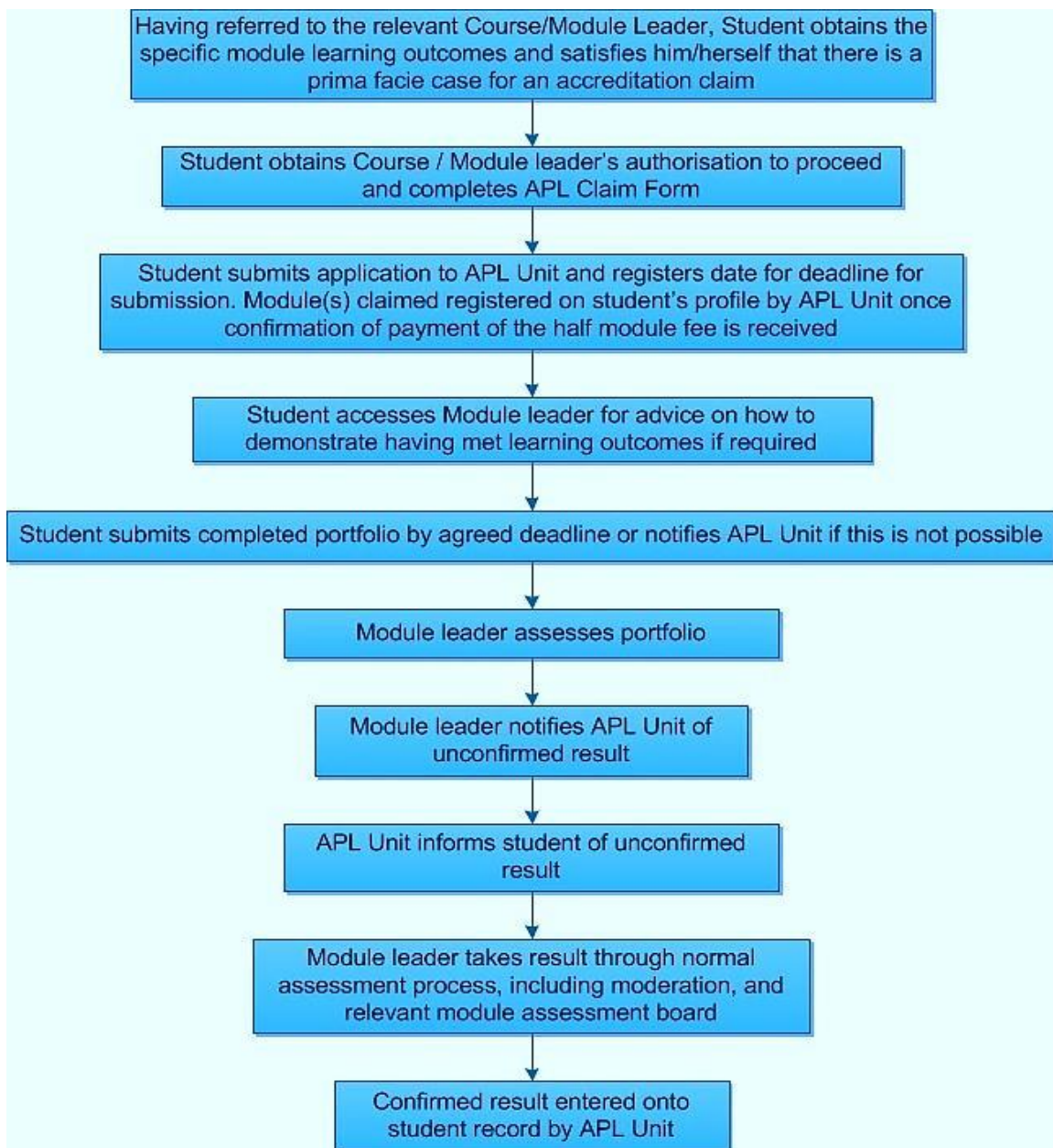
Enrol for the modules you expect to achieve through study at UCLan during this semester or over the academic year - each module will incur a fee. Once you have consulted with staff (APL Unit/ admissions / course tutor) for advice and are clear that you wish to pursue an APEL claim, this can be added to your module profile – as a part time student you may wish to opt to do this in the following semester or academic year. APEL modules do not count as registered modules for the purpose of determining your mode of study i.e. part-time or full time, nor do they count for the purpose of claiming a non-repayable grant for tuition fees.

#### **How to Proceed:**

- Arrange for the relevant section of APL Claim form to be completed by your course/module leader.
- Send the form APL Claim form to the APL Unit detailing how and when you intend to provide the evidence required for the award of credit
- Begin preparing a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate that the relevant module learning outcomes have been met.
- Before making a formal submission of your portfolio, you may wish to access your advisor to review a draft of portfolio for formative feedback.
- The completed portfolio should be submitted to the APL Unit by the agreed deadline.

- Your portfolio will be forwarded to the relevant Academic for a recommendation as to whether or not the learning outcomes have been met and credit awarded.
- You will be notified of the recommendation of the Academic, via the APL Unit, and given written feedback on your portfolio. This will be an unconfirmed result and will either be satisfactory or unsatisfactory.
- The recommendation of the Academic is subject to internal moderation and final ratification of the result by an assessment board.
- If you are required to resubmit an unsatisfactory portfolio, you will have the opportunity to discuss what improvements need to be made with your advisor and will be expected to meet the deadline date set for resubmission.

### Specific module APEL claims: Flowchart of the Process



## Section 2: Guidance through the APEL Process

### Decide whether or not to continue with your application of accreditation

In deciding whether or not to undertake the APEL portfolio option you will need to consider the fact that it is a highly individual process which will require the use of skills such as self-motivation, reflection, time management and organisation to demonstrate the agreed learning outcomes within the required timescale.

Whilst submission of an APEL claim should not be viewed as an easy option, nevertheless there are major benefits to be reaped from this undertaking.

By identifying your own learning from experience and the skills you have developed you are demonstrating and refining your participation in the lifelong learning process, supporting your own personal development and enhancing your employability.

There are two important considerations to bear in mind when deciding if your prior experiential learning is likely to attract academic credit:

- It is the level and depth of the experiential learning measured against the learning outcomes for the module that attracts the credit: not simply having the experience.
- In submitting your portfolio you will need to be able to demonstrate clearly that you have met the learning outcomes for which you are claiming credit through your reflective report, supported by appropriate evidence.

### Review the learning outcomes of the specific module and consider how you could show that you have achieved them

You should only continue if you feel confident of matching **all** of the specified learning outcomes for a particular module. Partial matching up of **some** of the learning outcomes will not lead to the award of credit.

The Course/Module Leader will be able to support you in the process of identifying situations and/or evidence that have led to learning and skills which match up to the learning outcomes. This is described in more detail later in this handbook.

### Register the specific module and pay the assessment service charge (where relevant)

Once you have decided to continue with this undertaking, you must register the module on your student profile. The APL Unit will ensure that you complete the process successfully.

As you know, registration is often associated with the need to pay course/module fees. If you are a part time student or a full time student negotiating a substantial award of credit then you must pay half the standard tuition fee for each APEL module registered.

#### **IMPORTANT:**

***Registration of APEL modules may, in some instances, lead to you having to change your enrolment status from full time to part time. This can have a major impact on how your studies are funded.***

***It is the student's responsibility to inform Student Finance England of any change to their full time status. Failure to do so can have serious repercussions in terms of repayment of tuition fee loans erroneously claimed.***

**Generally speaking, a student on an undergraduate programme needs to be registered to study at least 5 modules in any one academic year in order to qualify as a full time student.**

**If you are unclear about whether you should be enrolled as a full or part time student, consult the Tuition Fee Team (01772 892440 or e-mail [tuitionfeeteam@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:tuitionfeeteam@uclan.ac.uk))**

## **Meeting the submission deadline**

Submission of your portfolio must arrive with the APL Unit by mid-day on the deadline for submission. Please contact your APEL advisor or the APL Unit if you have reason to believe that you may not be able to meet your agreed deadline.

Failure to submit your portfolio on the due date will result in a refer being recorded on your student record unless you have request and gained approval for an extension to the deadline or extenuating circumstances as per UCLan regulations:(see Appendix 6)

**You are advised to keep a copy of your portfolio for your own records.**

The APEL assessment process will award you a 'satisfactory' or 'unsatisfactory' result with feedback that specifically relates to how you met each of the learning outcomes. If you are referred at the first attempt, you will be allowed one further attempt to succeed. This will normally be at the next available submission opportunity.

APEL portfolios are **not** percentage marked. Whilst the credit awarded will count towards the overall credit requirement of your course, it will not contribute to award classifications. In the case of undergraduate degree classifications, this means that there is no beneficial or detrimental effect on the Average Percentage Mark (APM) for classification purposes

APEL assessment decisions are subject to the same appeal procedures as taught modules. Refer to "The Student Guide to Regulations" for further information or go to:

[http://www.uclan.ac.uk/information/services/sas/quality/regulations/aca\\_reqs.php](http://www.uclan.ac.uk/information/services/sas/quality/regulations/aca_reqs.php)

## **Have access to an advisor to support you through the process**

The APEL process is designed to enable you to achieve the learning outcomes independently. **They are not taught modules.**

Initial support is available from the Course Leader and APL Unit who will need to confirm that the claim is valid. You are advised to use the meeting to identify how you will start to develop your portfolio to meet the relevant learning outcomes.

Up to one hour of tutorial support is available from the Course/Module leader, in collaboration with the APL Unit. It is important that you book some time with the academic members of staff before your portfolio needs to be submitted. This will allow time for you to take the advice you receive at that appointment and convert it into a successful submission. You may ask for feedback on a draft submission but this should be with your Advisor no later than 4 weeks before the submission deadline. This will allow time for you to take the advice you receive at that appointment and convert it into a successful submission.

**NB Ensure that your draft submission is clearly annotated on each page "Draft copy only".**

The portfolio, and the techniques you have used in compiling it, could be advantageous in the future, particularly when you are in making applications and being interviewed and selected for employment.

### **Students with Disabilities**

If you have a disability that may affect your studies, please either contact the Disability Service - [disability@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:disability@uclan.ac.uk) - or let the APL Unit and advisor know as soon as possible. With your agreement, information will be passed on to the Disability Advisory Service. The University will endeavour to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate your needs and to provide appropriate support for you to complete your study successfully. Where necessary, you will be asked for evidence to help identify appropriate adjustments.

### **Prepare a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate that the module learning outcomes have been met.**

#### **Step 1 – Review the module learning outcomes**

These will constitute the framework to which you will match your own learning, it is important that you can show that you have achieved all the requirements.

#### **Step 2 - Decide on how you will present your claim**

You need to present your claim in the form of a portfolio of evidence for assessment based on experiences which have stimulated your learning. We recommend that you think about and plan for the final submission at this stage so that you can picture the end result – it gives you a goal / framework on which to evaluate your progress. You may change this plan as you progress or following advice from your advisor – using your skills of adaptability and flexibility are helpful when you are preparing your portfolio.

- A reflective account of 3,000 words (maximum) may be required and this will demonstrate that each of the learning outcomes are met (see step 3 to find out more about writing a reflective account)
- Alternatively you may prefer to submit a structured report subdivided into sections to match the learning outcomes – this will support you in making your learning explicit and support the assessment and feedback process that we have designed for you.
- A good way to show the links between your experience and your learning is to place links / cross references to any evidence that you have to verify that your experience is something that actually involved you personally. NB although this will prompt the assessor to review that material at that point, it is not a substitute for explaining the learning from that evidence within the text.
- You must avoid any cheating or plagiarism (see appendix 4). Sources of information must be identified within your work and referenced in such a way that the assessor could find it. This is further explained in the university regulations regarding Unfair Means to Enhance Performance:  
([http://www.uclan.ac.uk/information/services/sas/quality/regulations/aca\\_regs.php](http://www.uclan.ac.uk/information/services/sas/quality/regulations/aca_regs.php))
- The Harvard System of referencing is recommended.
- Protect the confidentiality of anyone / any organisation you may refer to in your portfolio – this is further explained at appendix 3.

### Step 3 – Assemble the complete portfolio

While there is no set format for this, it is suggested that your complete portfolio includes the following elements:

- A contents page inserted at the front helps to guide a reader through your work – it demonstrates some useful skills of planning, organisation, presentation as well providing evidence of good time management.
- Your reflective report demonstrating how, through your evaluative commentary, your experiences have resulted in meeting the learning outcomes.
- Evidence which is relevant to your report and is cross referenced from the text to support the learning outcomes being claimed.
- Electronic submissions (via e-mail) are required to [aplunit@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:aplunit@uclan.ac.uk) unless evidence requirements mean that this is impractical.
- If submitting a hard copy, ensure all items are attached firmly together but do not put the individual sheets of your reflective account into plastic wallets so that the assessors may easily annotate in the margins of your report.
- Keep a copy for your own records.
- Send the complete port-folio to:

**APL Unit**  
[aplunit@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:aplunit@uclan.ac.uk)  
**Admissions Office**  
**Foster 110a**  
**University of Central Lancashire**  
**Preston**  
**PR1 2HE**

### Step 4 – Select relevant supporting evidence and link it to your reflective account

In identifying appropriate evidence, you should bear the following points in mind:

- Your evidence should largely consist of the **report** itself.
- A single piece of evidence may be relevant to more than one learning outcome. **Good cross referencing** is therefore important at appropriate point(s) in your portfolio.
- Be selective about your documentary evidence – choose concise clear examples which have **direct relevance** to your learning – the assessor will not give you credit for irrelevant evidence.
- Respect the confidentiality of others

## Section 3: Quality Assurance

We may ask you to complete a questionnaire about your experience of claiming APL and review your response alongside other students' comments.

Any feedback that you provide could influence the way in which we develop and enhance the modules / process for the future. If it is at all possible, changes will be made to improve your own experience of undertaking the APL process – if you have feedback for us feel free to tell us what you think through any informal opportunities.

The current APL regulations were updated and approved by the University Academic Standards and Quality Committee and Academic Board in 2011 and operational from September 2011.



## Section 4: Additional Information

### Anonymity and Confidentiality Guidelines

When you are engaged in courses that involve doing practice placements, documenting research and producing written work, you may be using very sensitive information. As a result you are required to always respect **confidentiality**, and to maintain the **anonymity** of individuals and organisations. There are both ethical and legal reasons for maintaining anonymity and confidentiality. Where your course leads to a professional award it is all the more important to pay attention to this issue. In professional courses you will be developing your professional role and responsibilities which you will require in practice settings in relation to anonymity and confidentiality of the patient/client group. These guidelines are intended to support you in this development.

The policy of maintaining anonymity and confidentiality applies to you whether you are an undergraduate or post graduate student. Remember, anonymity and confidentiality are not the same thing!

**“Confidentiality:** The principle of keeping secure and secret from others, information given by or about an individual in the course of a professional relationship.”

**“Anonymous** information: Information which does not, directly or indirectly identify the person to whom it relates.”

**If there is a breach of Anonymity and or Confidentiality you will receive feedback from the module leader/marker and support to prevent errors in your future work.**

Further information can be found in the BMA guidelines on confidentiality at:  
<http://www.bma.org.uk>

Guidance issued by the Information Commissioner on Confidential Information and Freedom of Information Act can be viewed at: <http://www.ico.gov.uk>

### Plagiarism

**Material submitted for assessment must be your own effort and must be your own work.**

On the cover sheet for written assessment, you are required to sign a declaration indicating that the work submitted for assessment is your own. If it is not your own work then you may be guilty of plagiarism.

The University regulations regarding plagiarism and the penalties for plagiarism can be found in Appendix 9 of the [Academic Regulations](#) ‘Using unfair means to enhance performance’ on the university web pages or in ‘*The Student Guide to Regulations*’

**Plagiarism is copying from the work of another person. It is defined as:**

**‘The act of passing off someone else’s ideas as your own’**

**‘It is not acknowledging the source of anything you have copied or quoted from, in an assignment.’**

Plagiarism includes **unacknowledged** quotations, close paraphrasing or copying from, or substitution of, the works of another person or persons, whether a fellow student or a published author. It certainly includes copying extensive passages from books or web sources and passing this off as your own thinking and writing. It also includes making no distinction, (by the use of quotation marks), between quoted material and your own views.

Tutors have a great deal of experience in marking work and are able to identify plagiarism within a piece of work. In addition, the University uses specific plagiarism software which can identify a piece of work as plagiarised, and point staff to the source. Brief quotations from the work of another person, suitably acknowledged by **quotation marks**, and accompanied by a reference, are fully acceptable. Indeed, they are an integral part of academic discourse and are a good way of illustrating different viewpoints on a controversial topic.

It is essential however that you ensure that all material taken from sources is clearly indicated and **referenced**. All the sources that you have used should also be included in your **bibliography**. Your advisor will be able to assist you with referencing in your assignment, but if you are unsure about referencing and concerned about plagiarism, please do ask.

### **How is plagiarism dealt with?**

The University takes plagiarism very seriously and considers it as a means of gaining unfair advantage, or cheating.

If plagiarism is suspected, you will be asked to attend a panel which will consist of the relevant module tutor/s and the chair of the panel. You may bring an advocate. The panel is your opportunity to answer the concerns of your module tutor/s, and therefore it is crucial that you attend. The decision regarding your work will only be made after your response to tutors' concerns has been heard.

If the panel decides plagiarism in your case, the following penalties will apply:

**First offence** – You will receive a mark of 0R and will be asked to re-submit the work (0 = 0% and R = referral at the first attempt)

A plagiarism 'marker' is entered on your electronic student record which will be available for assessment boards to identify any subsequent instance of plagiarism as second offence.

**Second offence** – You will receive 0% for the module and you will not be permitted to re-submit the work for your module.

### **Late submissions/Extensions**

Further details on Extensions can be found under Section 3 of the Academic Regulations, detailed in [this link](#).

**Authorisation of the late submission** of work requires written permission from the Module Leader.

Extensions will not be granted to individuals except in genuine cases of difficulty and written / or medical evidence may be required. If you feel you require a short extension for a genuine reason then please contact either your Personal Tutor or the Module Leader via the APL Coordinator in the first instance.

We aim to inform you of a decision about granting an extension within 2 days of the receipt of the request. If you are given written approval for an extension, the official form must be attached to your submitted work when submitting on the new deadline date.

### **Extenuating Circumstances**

If you are unable to submit work within 10 working days after the submission date due to verifiable extenuating circumstances, you may submit a case for consideration in accordance with the University's [Extenuating Circumstances Procedure](#) (Academic Regulations: Section 4).

"Extenuating Circumstances" is a phrase which refers to exceptional factors outside of your control which have adversely affected your performance within your course. These factors may cause you to miss assessment submission dates. Examples are illness, accidents or serious family problems.

Normally extenuating circumstances will relate to a change in your circumstances since you commenced your course, which have had a significant, adverse effect on your studies. Everyday occurrences will not qualify unless the effects are unusually severe and this is corroborated by a medical note. The University does not look sympathetically on absences or delays caused by holiday commitments or by work commitments in the case of full-time students. The normal work commitments of part-time students would not constitute an extenuating circumstance. A disability or learning difficulty does not constitute an extenuating circumstance (Academic Regulations: G8.1 - G8.3).

You can apply for extenuating circumstances through the use of a paper based system – information is available from the 'i' website. You will need to complete the documentation, explaining what your circumstances have been, how they affected your studies and include some evidence e.g. a doctor's note, evidence of hospital appointments etc. All information regarding extenuating circumstances is treated with the strictest of confidence. You will be expected to re-submit claims for extenuating circumstances for each assessment period.

In determining assessment recommendations, Assessment Boards will consider properly submitted claims from students who believe their performance has been adversely affected by extenuating circumstances. N.B. Assessment Boards are not permitted to alter individual assessment marks to take account of extenuating circumstances (Academic Regulations: G12 and Appendix 8).

### **Unauthorised Late Submissions**

If you submit work late and unauthorised, a universal penalty will be applied in relation to your work:

- Work submitted later than 5 working days after the published submission date will be awarded 'unsatisfactory'.
- Unauthorised late submission at resubmission will automatically be awarded a mark of fail.

---

This Student Handbook was first published in September 2008 and revised in March 2015 by Ashley James Bates.

© University of Central Lancashire

If you have any comments or suggestions as to how this handbook may be improved, please contact:

The APL Unit  
Admissions Office  
Foster Building 110a  
University of Central Lancashire  
Preston  
PR1 2HE  
E-mail [APLUnit@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:APLUnit@uclan.ac.uk)  
Tel: 01772 895008  
Fax: 01772 894954