



**Vice-Chancellor: Professor Simon Ofield-Kerr**

**Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)  
Policy and Procedures**

**Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic)**

**September 2023**

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**Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) Policy and Procedures**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Norwich University of the Arts (Norwich) operates its undergraduate and postgraduate courses and Continuing Professional Development within a credit-based, unitised framework, which offers students flexibility and learning choices within a defined study structure. The University offers students a degree of mobility in their entry and study points, by recognising learning they have completed elsewhere, prior to enrolling at Norwich University of the Arts. For the purposes of this document, this process is referred to as the **Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)**.
- 1.2 In its broadest sense, Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) refers to the recognition of previous certificated learning and/or experiential learning undertaken by a student or applicant. This recognised learning can also be accorded a 'credit value', which may permit a prospective student to commence a course of study at a later curriculum stage, or with some credits exempted. This is sometimes referred to as entry 'with advanced standing', which may enable a student direct entry into Level 5 or Level 6 of an undergraduate degree, or exemption from the 'Certificate' stage of a Level 7 postgraduate qualification.
- 1.3 The UK Quality Code for Higher Education *Advice and Guidance: Assessment (2018)* sets out the expectation that, *Higher education providers operate processes in relation to recognition of prior learning that are clear, explicit, and readily accessible to potential applicants. Based on the principles that assessment is reliable, fair and valid, and that assessment design is approached holistically.*

**2. Types of Accreditation of Prior Learning**

**2.1 Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL)**

The Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning is the formal recognition of learning that has been previously assessed in a formal learning environment, e.g. learning arising from academic and professional awards for example Higher National Diplomas, Foundation Degrees, Open University Courses, National Vocational Qualifications, and other courses at an appropriate level. There are two types of APCL:

- (i) Credit which is recognised as being accrued from qualifications that are aligned with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), e.g. credit that has been gained on a course from another UK higher education provider. This is credit that is awarded under the Credit Accumulation Transfer Scheme (CATS). This will normally apply to students who wish to transfer from another UK higher education course.
- (ii) Qualifications that are not awarded under the CATS used by most UK higher education providers. These can include National Vocational Qualifications or qualifications awarded by a non-UK higher education provider.

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

Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) is the formal recognition of prior learning i.e. learning derived from experience which is uncertificated and not previously

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assessed. For example, learning from unpaid work or paid work, community activities, leisure pursuits and other informal learning experiences.

**3. Policy**

3.1 The policy of Norwich is to operate a procedure for APL in all courses where it is acceptable within the award and any Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements. The policy and procedure for APL will be in line with the University’s Student Regulations and Procedures, the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and PSRB requirements.

3.2 We will establish the currency of the learning or experience being submitted through the admissions process. We would normally expect previous learning or experience to have taken place within the last 5 years. There may be exceptional circumstances where a longer period can be taken into account, for instance, if an applicant is applying without traditional entry qualifications and has relevant experience that has taken place over a longer period. This will be at the discretion of the University.

3.3 Each claim will be assessed on the basis of relevance of the learning or experience to the intended course of study and final award.

3.4 We will need to establish the authenticity of all claims made and will expect to see sufficient evidence to support all APL applications. For APCL see sections 4, 5 and 6, or APEL see section 7.

3.5 Credit will only be awarded for completed units or modules, i.e., where assessment has been successfully completed and credit awarded. Applications based on claims for partially completed units or modules will not be eligible for consideration for APL.

3.6 For BA (Hons) Architecture, in exceptional circumstances the University may consider an applicant without the traditional qualifications but with relevant experience. Admission will be based on the applicant making a successful APEL or APCL application.

3.7 The maximum amount of credit that can be awarded under these APL procedures is as follows:

<b>Qualification sought</b>	<b>Total credits for Award</b>	<b>Maximum transfer</b>	<b>Level of credits for maximum transfer</b>
BA Honours Degree	360 credits	240 credits	120 Year 1 (Level 4) 120 Year 2 (Level 5)
Postgraduate Certificate	60 credits	30 credits	Level 7
Master’s Degree	180 credits	60 credits	Level 7

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**4. APCL - undergraduate courses**

- 4.1 Advanced standing is direct entry into a year of study other than Year 0 or Year 1 and applies to undergraduate courses.
- 4.2 If you want to apply for direct entry into Year 2 or 3 of an undergraduate course, you will need to submit an application through UCAS, following which you will be invited to a portfolio interview where your application will be assessed by a member of academic staff in accordance with our normal admissions process. Your suitability for direct entry will be assessed on the outcome of this portfolio interview and, where applicable, we will make you an offer. We will also decide how much credit to award towards your qualification.
- 4.3 We may, in some circumstances, request that you complete one or more additional projects or other work and you will be advised if this is the case when we make you your offer.
- 4.4 Credit awarded through the APCL system will not be graded and is not used for classification of your degree.
- 4.5 If we are unable to offer you direct entry with advance standing to Year 2 or Year 3, we may make you an alternative offer of entry to a different year of study.
- 4.6 Advanced standing does not apply to postgraduate courses in the same way. Please see section 5.
- 4.7 Students wishing to gain admission to Year 1 of an undergraduate course after the start of the academic year may be accredited through the APCL process but can only enter at Week 10 and must have achieved 40 credits from their existing course.
- 4.8 Students wishing to gain admission to Year 2 of an undergraduate BA (Hons) course may be accredited through the APCL process but must enter at the start of the academic year.
- 4.9 For BA (Hons) Architecture, applicants seeking direct entry into Year 2 (Level 5) will only be considered if they are completing, or have completed, previous study on an Architecture course with ARB Part 1 prescription. The University will not consider direct entry to Year 3 (Level 6) of the BA (Hons) Architecture course.

**5. APCL - postgraduate courses**

- 5.1 Students applying to a postgraduate course who have postgraduate credit or qualifications from study elsewhere may apply for exemption from specific units.
- 5.2 If you want to apply for exemption from any of the postgraduate units, you will need to submit an application through our normal application process, following which you will be invited to an interview where your application will be assessed by a member of academic staff. You should discuss your previous study and potential exemptions at this interview. Your suitability for exemption will be assessed on the outcome of this interview and, where applicable, we will make you an offer specifying any exemptions we agree to. We will also

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decide how much credit to award for these unit exemptions which will count towards your qualification.

- 5.3 We may, in some circumstances, request that you complete some additional project or work and you will be advised if this is the case when we make you your offer.
- 5.4 If we are unable to offer you an exemption you will be advised of this when we make your offer.
- 5.5 For MArch in Architecture, applicants seeking direct entry into Year 2 Full-Time (Level 7) will only be considered if they are completing, or have completed, 120 credits of previous study on an Architecture course with ARB Part 2 prescription. Applicants seeking direct entry into Year 2 Part-Time (Level 7) will only be considered if they are completing, or have completed, 60 credits of previous study on an Architecture course with ARB Part 2 prescription. The University will not consider direct entry to Year 3 (Level 7) of the MArch in Architecture Part-Time course.

**6. Readmission to a Norwich course using APCL**

- 6.1 If you have previously been a Norwich student and have received an exit award from the University, and you want to return and use the credit already achieved as the basis for claiming direct entry onto a University course, then you may be considered for readmission through APCL.
- 6.2 Readmission will not normally be considered unless at least one year has elapsed since the date of your withdrawal.
- 6.3 Admission will be subject to the University's normal admissions procedures including a successful portfolio/interview.

**7. Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)**

- 7.1 The University does not award academic credit for experience alone, but for relevant learning which you can demonstrate that you have achieved through that experience. You will be required to submit relevant evidence of the learning gained through your experience, which is normally submitted as a portfolio in which your claim is supported in detail.
- 7.2 Your portfolio must be relevant to the course that you have applied for and will need to demonstrate that your learning through experience is equivalent to the level of study for which you are requesting credit. Further guidance is available on the APEL application form.
- 7.3 Assessment of APEL portfolios is undertaken in line with the University's existing assessment procedures. For the purposes of awarding credit, portfolios/evidence will be assessed against the learning outcomes of the relevant level of study or units. The APEL assessor(s) will advise the Dean of Creative Education or a Pro Vice-Chancellor of an appropriate credit value for the portfolio submission.

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7.4 Applications must be made no less than 30 working days prior to the commencement of the proposed course of study.

**8. Assessment of Applications**

8.1 The APEL assessor(s) will assess the evidence against the requirements and learning outcomes of the relevant course and units. Consideration will be given to:

- i) Subject content and knowledge
- ii) Volume of learning
- iii) Evidence of achievement
- iv) Currency of your knowledge in relation to the requirements of the course
- v) Restrictions imposed by PSRBs, if applicable.

8.2 The APEL assessor(s) will advise the Dean of Creative Education or a Pro Vice-Chancellor of the deliberations of the assessment team and this will inform the final decision.

8.3 APEL applications for the award of credit are considered by the University on the basis of evaluated evidence that demonstrates the applicant's eligibility for the awarding of credit.

8.4 We aim to complete the process of assessment within 28 working days of the application and completed portfolio of evidence being received. If there are circumstances which necessitate a longer period you will be informed of an expected completion date.

8.5 You will be informed of the outcome in writing. Feedback on the decision will be available on request.

8.6 Awarding of credit will be at the discretion of the University through their consideration of claims. Unsubstantiated claims or claims judged to be unrelated to the proposed course of study will not be considered.

**9. Recording of APL Credit**

9.1 APL (APCL and APEL) will be recorded on the Student Record System and will be reported through the documentation received at the relevant assessment board.

9.2 APL will be clearly identified on student transcripts.

**10. Appeal**

10.1 You may appeal against the decision of the University on the following grounds:

- (i) Where you have reason to believe that the University has not followed its admissions procedures;
- (ii) Where you have further pertinent information that was not provided during the original application process and you have valid reasons for not previously supplying such information.

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Please refer to the applicant appeals procedure which is published on the following page of the University's website:

<https://www.nua.ac.uk/study/>

**11. Monitoring and review of the APL Policy and Procedure**

11.1 The University's APL policy and procedure are monitored and reviewed by the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee.

**STRATEGY & POLICY REVISION HISTORY**

1.	<b>Name of Document:</b>	Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) Policies and Procedures
2.	<b>Originator:</b>	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
3.	<b>Date of Origination: Version 1</b>	November 2008
4.	<b>Senate Ratification:</b>	November 2008
5.	<b>Assigned Ref Number:</b>	SD/P/026
6.	<b>Revision History</b>	
	<b>Revision 1</b>	New Principal updates
	<b>Senate Ratification:</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> January 2009
	<b>Assigned Ref Number:</b>	SD/P/026
	<b>Revision 2</b>	University Title updates
	<b>Senate Ratification:</b>	Chair's Action 29 January 2013
	<b>Assigned Ref Number:</b>	SD/P/026-U1
	<b>Revision 3</b>	Update to APL policy and procedures to align with current good practice and to clarify approval routes for APCL and APEL.
	<b>Senate Ratification:</b>	28 February 2018
	<b>Assigned Ref Number:</b>	SD/P/026-U2
	<b>Revision 4</b>	Update to APL policy to reflect addition of MArch course
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**Revision 5**

Update to APL policy regarding APEL  
decisions

**Academic Board Ratification:**

19 September 2023

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SD/P026-U3