



**Policy Recognition and Accreditation
of Prior Learning (RPL)
European Institute Management
2022-2023**

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Policy Recognition and Accreditation of Prior Learning

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of Recognition and Accreditation of Prior Learning (RPL) is to recognize and, where appropriate, accredit learning that has come from experience and/or previous formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts of applicants who are interested to study at the European Institute of Management (EIM).

1.2 This policy aims to guide EIM in managing the process of recognition and accreditation of prior learning by providing a set of core principles and key features intended to ensure consistency and transparency in the application of the principles of RPL throughout the institution.

1.3 By allowing candidates to demonstrate learning achieved through a range of learning experiences, including formal, non-formal and informal education, RPL enables them to gain access to EIM's programmes and/or gain exemptions from parts of it. Learning experience includes knowledge and skills gained within school, college and university and outside formal learning situations as through life and work experiences

1.4 This policy covers the following RPL forms of Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL), Accreditation of Experiential Learning (APEL), and Recognition of Accredited Prior Learning (RAPL or RAPEL).

1.5 EIM's RPL Policy will be published on the institutional website to inform candidates about the availability of RPL. RPL is available for all EIM programmes.

2. Glossary of terms

The following terminology (table 1) is used when evaluating prior learning of candidates.

Term	Explanation
Accreditation of Experiential Learning (APEL)	A process of reflection which identifies and accredits an individual's experience developed through exposure in life to a variety of experiences. (at home, in formal education, work or volunteering).
Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)	A process of reflection which identifies and accredits an individual's knowledge, skills, understanding and competencies that have been developed throughout their lives by means of participation in non-formal and informal learning.
Candidate	An individual making a claim for RPL and/or credit transfer.
Component	Smaller parts of a full programme of learning which can be assessed separately.
Credit Transfer	Takes place when an individual has gained a formal programme of study and has received formal credit and is looking to gain entry at an advanced stage or exemption from components of another programme of study where the learning outcomes of the programme of study match the learning outcomes of the new programme of study. The credit can either be subject specific or general credit if the learning is at the same MQF level.
Formal Learning	Formal learning takes place within the context of programmes delivered by learning and training providers; it is assessed and leads to a recognised qualification or award. <i>[SCQF Handbook Definition 2015]</i>
Formative RPL	Takes place where the individual is looking to have knowledge, skills and competences assessed for personal or career development.
Informal Learning	Informal learning can be defined as experiential learning and takes place through life and work experiences. It is often unintentional learning. <i>[SCQF Handbook Definition 2015]</i>
Learning Outcomes	Learning outcomes are statements that identify what the learner is expected to know and be able to do after having completed a study-unit or programme. Candidates wishing to apply for RPL will be expected to demonstrate how their certified or experiential learning maps against the learning outcomes for the programme (or parts of it) for which they are seeking exemption.
Non-Formal Learning	Non-Formal learning takes place alongside the mainstream systems of education and training, it may be assessed but does not typically lead to formal certification; for example, learning and training activities undertaken in the workplace, voluntary sector or trade union and through community based learning. <i>[SCQF Handbook 2015]</i>
Non-Traditional Learners	Non-Traditional Learners, also referred to as Adult Learners or Life Long Learners, are students who decide to return to learning after the traditional post-secondary schooling years.
Portfolio	A collection of documents which, in the case of an RPL claim, is submitted by a candidate to demonstrate competence for learning outcomes. It could include a variety of documents such as prior formal education certificates, evidence such as witness testimonies, blogs, reports, examples of work and reflective statements etc (not an exhaustive list).

Programme of Study	An award or qualification that sits on the MQF.
Recognition	Recognition is achieved when an individual can have their learning formally assessed and quality assured to successfully be admitted to or gain exemptions to components or parts of a formal programme of study through the use of learning outcomes.
Recognition and Accreditation of Prior Learning (RPL)	“RPL is the process for recognising learning that has come from experience and/or previous formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts. This includes knowledge and skills gained within school, college and university and outside formal learning situations as through life and work experiences” [SCQF definition 2010]
Recognition of Accredited Prior Learning (RAPL or RAPEL)	Recognition of APL or APEL is when an individual who has had their prior learning accredited then has this learning process formally assessed and is awarded MQF credit points toward an award or qualification that they are then offered exemptions or advanced entry to.
RPL for Entry	Full acceptance of an RPL claim as entry requirements onto a programme of study.
RPL for Advanced Entry	Full acceptance of a claim for entry to a programme of study with exemptions from parts of the programme.
RPL Advisors	RPL Advisors are identified by the deans or program directors, and are academic or administrative persons who are fully conversant with the requirements of the programmes offered by their department. Such persons shall further have the ability to determine the educational and professional development of each candidate. RPL Advisors will assist candidates in the preparation of their application for assessment and then channel the application to the appropriate Assessor.
RPL Assessors	RPL Assessors are academic experts in a given area who can assess applications for the recognition and accreditation of prior learning through the evaluation of portfolios compiled by candidates. RPL Assessors should not be involved in the compilation of the documentary evidence which needs to be submitted by candidates in support of their application for RPL.
Summative RPL	Takes place where formal credit is awarded and recognised as having the same value as credit gained in formal teaching institutions.

Table 1: Glossary (source: MFHEA (May 2021). Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) – Definitions, Principles and Guidelines, p. 23-24).

3. Key principles

3.1 Learning that takes place outside formal educational institutions may be enriching and may contribute to acquisition of foundational skills and knowledge. Recognition of prior informal, formal, and (non-) formal learning makes this type of learning more visible and more valuable to society at large as it allows non-traditional learners to complete formal education by not having to repeat content which they have already mastered.

3.2 Through the recognition of informal, formal, and (non-) formal learning which has occurred before admission to a programme or to the relevant stage of a programme, EIM aims to valorise the relevant learning, irrespective of mode or place of learning. EIM will ensure that academic standards expected of traditional learners are maintained and applied throughout the RPL process.

3.3 The decision on whether to allow candidates to gain access to a programme through RPL rests with the Faculty after consultation with the Head of Institution. Where RPL is deemed appropriate, the RPL practises for specific programmes must be framed to suit differing contexts.

3.4 Candidates seeking admission and/or exemption through RPL must provide evidence in writing, through the submission of a portfolio, that they have achieved the specific learning outcomes at the required levels. The evidence of learning achieved should be compiled by the candidate following advice/discussions with the RPL Advisor and should provide a comprehensive demonstration of achievement. The portfolio building process is led by the candidate but will be supported by the RPL Advisor.

3.5 The evaluation of prior learning is an academic task and, like other forms of assessment, is done by academic experts in a given field, drawing on other experts as needed.

3.6 The minimum amount of credit that can be claimed and granted through RPL at an institutional level is the smallest component (here: one module) within the programme of study. The maximum amount of credit is 50% of the total credit of the exit programme of study.

4. The RPL procedure

EIM will strive to provide support and guidance to non-traditional learners wishing to access programmes through RPL. The service is provided to all candidates through EIM's RPL Advisors that will help ensure non-traditional learners receive adequate support to enable them to identify and collect all the evidence required for the validation of their prior informal and/or non-formal learning.



Figure 1: EIM RPL procedure

EIM will assign an academic or administrative RPL Advisor who will assist non-traditional learners with the application process. The RPL Advisor will give the RPL policy as a guiding document to the candidate. The RPL Advisor is part of the academic staff and will receive RPL policy training to ensure that non-traditional learners are properly guided through the application process.

EIM's Executive Board regularly monitors and reviews the operation of the RPL procedure and credit transfer processes. This is a formal process which records the outcomes of the monitoring and review, any changes required to the process, the rationale for any changes and ensures that any recommendations are acted upon. EIM will continuously build and improve checklists, and a bank of anonymized RPL claims and the final awards of level and credit volumes for RPL Assessors within their IQA processes to ensure consistency.

In order to ensure transparency, fairness and equity throughout, all involved parties should consistently follow and apply the procedures outlined hereunder:

4.1 Contacting EIM: Identifying areas of learning

4.1.1 EIM informs all candidates about EIM's RPL policy including the possibility to make a RPL claim and the involved processes, timelines, and cost on its website.

4.1.2 Candidates are advised to contact EIM Admissions and start this process at least three months ahead of the deadline for submission of applications. Though EIM will do its utmost to process all RPL applications in time, it cannot guarantee that applications which are submitted later than this deadline can be processed in time for the preferred start date.

4.1.3 The RPL Advisor will support candidates in compiling the learning portfolio by helping them to identify the skills and competences achieved through prior certified and/or experiential learning which demonstrate achievement of specific learning outcomes. The identification of learning outcomes achieved through prior learning is an essential part of the RPL process as it enables EIM to guide candidates in finding appropriate programmes of study relevant to their field of interest.

4.1.4 Following the preliminary mapping of learning outcomes against appropriate programmes of study, candidates are referred to the RPL Advisor/s within specific departments.

4.1.5 A candidate whose current formal and experiential learning is not considered sufficient for entry to a programme at EIM the prospect will be advised on possible Access Programmes instead of proceeding with the normal RPL procedure. The Access Programme will be advised by EIM in consultation with the relevant faculty depending on the programme of study the candidate wishes to join.

4.2 Contacting the RPL Advisor: Identifying Programmes of Study

4.2.1 Once a candidate identifies the programme of study which is of interest to him/her, s/he will receive support from an RPL Advisor in order to demonstrate how outcomes obtained as a result of prior learning are consistent with the educational requirements or aims of the programme to which the candidate is seeking acceptance and/or exemption.

4.2.2 The RPL Advisor will contact the RPL Assessor who determines what form of evidence needs to be submitted with the formal application. In some cases, candidates may only be required to submit a portfolio containing a set of documents, while in other cases the RPL Assessor may request a presentation of particular skills, a written assignment, or the taking of an oral or written exam, as would be appropriate to the nature of learning outcomes to which the achievements are related.

The types of evidence that may be acceptable will very much depend on the subject area. The list below indicates some examples which may be appropriate, please note this is not exhaustive and will depend on the programme of study and the candidate's experiences.

- EQF, MQF, and other foreign certificated learning or open badges (documented with official transcripts);
- References;
- Authenticated reports or outputs;
- Project work;
- Blogs or video diaries;
- Witness testimony;
- Volunteering records;
- Observation of practice or simulation;
- Assessment on demand;
- Structured interview;
- Authenticated presentations.

4.3 Preparing an application for RPL

4.3.1 Non-traditional learners wishing to access a programme through the RPL route shall be responsible for demonstrating how the learning outcomes obtained through prior certified and/or experiential learning are relevant to the programmes of study on offer that are appropriate and of interest to them.

4.3.2 In order to ensure that assessment of prior learning can be carried out effectively, any documented evidence which is attached to the application must be carefully sorted and numbered. The responsibility for preparing, completing and submitting an application for RPL always rests with the candidate. Candidates should be aware that the evidence they submit in support of their application shall be assessed against the requirements and learning outcomes of the relevant programme, and that consideration will be given to:

- **Validity:** The prior learning presented, which should be at the appropriate academic level, would need to match the learning outcomes required by the relevant programme.
- **Sufficiency:** Candidates must provide sufficient documentation as evidence, including a completed form, the learning portfolio and any other evidence requested by the relevant department.
- **Authenticity:** Candidates must be responsible for the veracity of documentation provided.
- **Currency:** The prior learning achieved and submitted for accreditation should be up-to-date with current knowledge and practice.
- **Relevance:** The prior learning gained should be relevant to the programme of study that the candidate intends to follow.

4.4 Assessment of the Application

4.4.1 The RPL Assessor identified by the respective Faculty should be an Academic who is familiar with the programme of study to which the application relates. The Assessor should understand the level of knowledge and understanding as well as the kind of skills that are required of candidates admitted to the programme through the conventional route.

4.4.2 To ensure impartiality, the RPL Advisors and Assessor shall work separately in the implementation of procedures for the recognition and accreditation of prior learning, except where required otherwise by this Policy.

4.4.3 The evaluation of a single application typically requires two RPL Assessor; however, if an application relates to more major areas of study, more RPL Assessors may be involved. An RPL Assessor is autonomous and may also ask candidates to provide additional evidence to support their claims, e.g. ask candidates to take part in an oral or written exam. In such instances, candidates should receive support in preparing for the exam (e.g. by providing them with a list of required readings). Oral examinations/interviews, when held, shall be conducted by at least two assessors.

4.4.4 Participation in the RPL procedure should give candidates an opportunity for learning and personal development: the entire assessment process should be formative in nature and RPL Assessors should therefore provide candidates with feedback at each stage of the assessment process within ten business days. If further evidence is needed, candidates are expected to submit it within twenty business days.

4.5 Evaluation Methods

Applications for RPL must be accompanied by a Learning Portfolio which must include a collection of materials compiled by the candidate in order to demonstrate the learning achieved through prior certified or experiential learning. The evidence that could be included in the portfolio would typically include (see also 4.2.2):

- A detailed curriculum vitae
- Certificates confirming participation in training
- EQF, MQF, or other (foreign) certificated learning or open badges (official transcript)
- A report from an internship/apprenticeship agreement
- Professional certification
- Articles or other works written by the candidate
- Opinion issued by the employer or manager or leader of an organisation
- Evidence of participation in a project and the scope of duties involved
- Evidence of participation in foreign exchange periods
- Examples of work performed (e.g. prepared reports, budget sheets, plans, etc.)

In addition to submission of a learning portfolio, the evaluation of an candidate's request for RPL may also include one or a combination of the following:

- **The undertaking of a project:** this would allow candidates to demonstrate the learning outcomes acquired outside their formal educational experience.
- **An Interview/Oral Examination:** this would give candidates an opportunity to submit additional information in person as to the nature of learning outcomes resulting from prior learning, and will further enable candidates to discuss their goals and aspirations for future education and development.
- **Simulation/Practice observation:** where appropriate, the direct observation of candidates' competences can be carried out in an appropriate setting, such as their workplace. If candidates are not able to demonstrate specific skills at the workplace, a simulation or role play may be carried out.
- **The Undertaking of a Proficiency Test in English:** Candidates not in possession of a Secondary Education Certificate pass at Grade 5 or higher in English Language, or a pass at the same standard in a comparable qualification, shall be required to sit for a proficiency test in English as approved by the Institution.

4.6 Decision regarding the RPL application

4.6.1 Once an application has been assessed, the RPL Assessor shall submit a detailed report to the Head of Institution for a final decision.

4.6.2 Outcomes of an RPL claim could be:

- full acceptance of the claim as entry requirements onto a programme of study;
- full acceptance of a claim for advanced entry (exemption) to a programme of study;
- partial acceptance of the claim for exemption;
- a request for resubmission of a claim including further evidence;
- failure of claim with recommendations for alternative paths;
- failure of the claim.

4.6.3 After the RPL assessment, the candidate shall receive an official letter about the outcome of the RPL process.

This letter includes as a minimum information about: the level and amount of credit awarded; exemption from and entry requirement or a module; the grounds for resubmissions and appeals; the process for resubmissions and appeals (including timescales); the guidance and support that will be provided if a candidate needs to resubmit a claim; the next steps in the process following a successful claim including arrangements for entry to the programme of study and timescales.

Such a letter and any conditions imposed shall be issued and stored in EIM's student administration system. Candidates are notified of the result of their RPL claim in the same manner and timeframe as all other students are notified of acceptance/entry.

4.6.4 Where credit transfer is used as a form of RPL for entry this is clearly recorded on the candidate's transcript/record and details the exact title, institution, level and volume of credit and the date of the original award. This will assist in 'preventing' double counting' credit that has already been used towards another qualification.

4.6.5 Candidates who (partially) fail to complete the RPL assessment successfully shall be informed by EIM of the knowledge, skills and competences they still need to achieve, and will be given the possibility to either

(i) re-take the RPL assessment when they think they have achieved the missing elements; or

(ii) follow an Access Programme (or parts of it) to enable them to make up for the identified shortfalls

4.6.6 Candidates who (partially) fail the RPL assessment and feel they were unfairly judged shall have the right to request a revision of the assessment process with EIM Admissions via email. This revision will be carried out by an RPL Assessor who was not involved in the initial assessment. The same procedure outlined in 4.6.1 is to be adopted by the RPL Assessor appointed to conduct the review process.

4.7 Applicable Fees

4.7.1 Applications for the Recognition and Accreditation of Prior Learning (RPL) are subject to a processing fee of €200.

4.7.2 Applications for a revision of the RPL assessment process are subject to an additional fee of €200.

4.7.3 Programmes of study cost are adjusted to ensure that successful RPL candidates gaining exemption do not pay more than a learner undertaking the full programme of study.

Appendix 1:

Application Form for Recognition of Prior Learning

Please submit this application form to EIM per email rpl@eim.education

1. Candidate / Applicant

Name	
Student Number	
Email	
Telephone Number	
Address	

2. Course

Course Name	
Course Start Date	

3. Recognition of Prior Learning

Number of RPL and/or Transfer Credits sought	
Module(s) against to which the credit should count	
Learning outcomes of the module	

4. Checklist for Supporting Documentation (cp. to chapter 4.2.3. and 4.5.)

Documents (examples)	Attached (yes/no)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EQF Certificated learning (official transcript); • MQF Certificated learning (official transcript); • Other foreign certificated learning or open badges (official transcript); • References; • Authenticated reports or outputs; • Project work; • Blogs or video diaries; • Witness testimony; • Volunteering records; • Observation of practice or simulation; • Assessment on demand; • Structured interview; • Authenticated presentations. 	

5. Comments of the Candidate / Applicant

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The candidate confirms the reception of the RPL policy and acknowledges the responsible for ensuring that all evidence and supporting material is submitted in English. Translations into English must be certified with original documents available on request.

Place / Date	Signature Candidate
Date RPL application received	Signature RPL Advisor

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Report of the RPL Assessor

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Outcome / Decision (according to 4.6.) (filled out by the Head of Institution)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● full acceptance of the claim as entry requirements onto a programme of study; ● full acceptance of a claim for advanced entry (exemption) to a programme of study; ● partial acceptance of the claim for exemption; ● a request for resubmission of a claim including further evidence; ● failure of claim with recommendations for alternative paths; ● failure of the claim. 	
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Additional Comment (filled out by the Head of Institution)

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Place / Date	Signature Head of Institution
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