

## Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy

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This policy and procedure is subject to The Equality Act 2010 which recognises the following categories of individual as Protected Characteristics: Age, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex (gender), Sexual orientation, Disability.

### Alternative Format

This policy is available in alternative formats, to request this, please email [marketingcampaigns@mkcollege.ac.uk](mailto:marketingcampaigns@mkcollege.ac.uk)

## Version Control

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1	Group Director HE, Adult & IoT	Group Leadership Team	03/12/25	Nov 26

## Change log

Version Number	Summary of changes
1	New policy

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## 1. Purpose

This policy aims to support students in leveraging their previous learning and experiences—whether formally certified or informally gained—to enhance their academic journey at the college, where permitted by the relevant awarding body.

RPL involves formally evaluating and acknowledging learning that a student has acquired either through accredited education or through practical, real-world experiences.

## 2. Categories of Prior Learning Recognition

- 2.1 Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL): This applies to learning achieved through formal qualifications such as degrees, diplomas, certificates, or individual credit-bearing modules from other institutions or awarding bodies.
- 2.2 Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL): This refers to learning gained through hands-on experience, including employment, volunteering, professional development, or personal life experiences.
- 2.3 The assessment of RPL will be based on the specific criteria relevant to each case. In some situations, experiential learning may be evaluated through the demonstration of competencies and achievement of learning outcomes.

## 3. Timing of RPL Decisions

- 3.1 RPL may be granted at different stages of a student's academic journey—before admission, during enrolment, or after completing certain modules or qualifications. The timing depends on the necessary assessment and verification procedures, which vary by

awarding or validating body. Students should be aware that this process may require additional time and should plan accordingly.

## **4. Recognition of Study from External Institutions**

- 4.1 Learning completed at other institutions may be eligible for RPL, subject to verification and alignment with Milton Keynes College's curriculum and assessment standards. Factors such as relevance, recency, and validity of the prior study will be considered. For further guidance or advice, students can contact the Quality team via email at [quality@mkcollege.ac.uk](mailto:quality@mkcollege.ac.uk).
- 4.2 The "currency" of learning typically refers to study completed within the last 10 years, although some programmes may require more recent learning. Students are encouraged to seek advice before submitting an application to understand the likelihood of RPL approval in their specific circumstances.

## **5. Recording RPL on Academic Transcripts**

- 5.1 Any RPL awarded will be clearly documented as a PASS on the student's official transcript, indicating the module or unit for which credit was granted and whether it was recognised through RPCL or RPEL. This ensures transparency and accurately reflects the student's academic achievements. The unit(s) will not count towards the overall grading for the student.
- 5.2 Grades will not be awarded for any learning recognised through the RPL process.

## **6. RPL from Higher-Level Qualifications**

- 6.1 Learning from a higher-level qualification may be considered for RPL if it is relevant to the lower-level modules or qualifications being pursued. The evaluation will focus on how well the learning

outcomes align with the requirements of the lower-level programme.

- 6.2 Students may claim RPL for up to two-thirds of a full undergraduate degree or up to 50% of a foundation degree, HNC/D, or other higher education qualifications.
- 6.3 RPL is available for modules at levels 4 and 5. However, it is not permitted for level 6 modules of a Bachelor's degree or for the dissertation/thesis component, where students must complete 120 credits to earn the award.

## 7. Applying for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

### 7.1 Initial Notification

Students who wish to apply for RPL should inform the College during the course application process. This can be done during initial guidance or at the interview stage, where applicants will be asked if they plan to use previous qualifications or experience as part of their RPL evidence. Written notification of intention to apply for RPL should be submitted before admission or enrolment, or as early as possible, by contacting the Quality Team via email at [quality@mkcollege.ac.uk](mailto:quality@mkcollege.ac.uk)

### 7.2 Submitting an Application

Students must prepare and submit a detailed RPL application to the Quality team for evaluation. The application should include supporting documents such as certificates, academic transcripts, work samples, job descriptions, or any other proof of prior learning. The learner must provide an accompanying document which demonstrates how this evidence maps/aligns to the module or programme learning outcomes (as appropriate). All documents must be scanned copies of the originals.

### 7.3 Evaluation Process

The Quality Team, along with the relevant Course Team Leader, will assess the application based on criteria set by the awarding body or validating partner. This includes checking the relevance,

authenticity, and alignment of the evidence with the required learning outcomes, as submitted by the learner (listed in 7.2). Additional assessments, such as interviews or tests, may be required. Students can seek advice before submitting their application to better understand their chances of approval by contacting the Quality Team.

#### **7.4 Outcome Notification**

The College will inform the student of the decision within one calendar month. If the application is successful, the student will be told which credits and modules have been recognised. If unsuccessful, the student will receive feedback and guidance on how to proceed, including how to appeal the decision (see academic appeals policy).

#### **7.5 Recording Credits**

Once approved, the recognised credits and modules will be officially recorded on the student's transcript, ensuring transparency in the documentation of their RPL outcome, along with being noted at the Exam Board.

#### **7.6 Appeals Process**

If an RPL application is declined, students may appeal by following the College's Academic Appeals Policy, available on the website.

## **8. Progression and Qualification Awards**

#### **8.1 Progression**

Students with approved RPL credits can continue with their studies as normal, provided they complete all remaining modules and credits required for progression.

#### **8.2 Final Award Calculation**

Credits awarded through RPL are not included in the calculation of the final classification of the qualification.

## 9. Fraud Prevention

### 9.1 Verification Measures

Milton Keynes College is committed to upholding academic standards. All RPL applications undergo thorough checks to verify the authenticity of submitted evidence, including cross-referencing and internal reviews.

### 9.2 Handling Misconduct

Any fraudulent applications will be dealt with under the College's academic misconduct or disciplinary procedures. Consequences may include withdrawal of RPL credits, academic sanctions, or further investigation depending on the severity of the case.

## 10. Data Protection

### 10.1 Confidentiality

All RPL-related information is stored securely and managed in accordance with the College's Data Protection Policy.

## 11. Related Policies

Refer to the following documentation in conjunction with this policy:

- HE Admissions Policy
- OU Academic Regulations for Validated Awards
- Data Protection Policy
- Compliments and Complaints Policy
- Academic Misconduct Policy
- Student Behaviour Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually. During the review process the efficacy and impact of the RPL processes set out in the policy will be evaluated, and any changes to practice will be set out in the revised policy.