Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer Policy and Procedure

Introduction

1. Northeastern University London (the University) recognises that learning can take place in a variety of contexts and be achieved in many ways. The University will award credit to those students who can satisfactorily demonstrate, in terms of currency, depth, breadth and volume, that they have achieved the equivalent of the course/level/stage learning outcomes as defined by the named award they are enrolling on or have enrolled on as set out in this Policy.

2. The University is therefore committed to the principle of recognition of prior learning and credit transfer whereby appropriate learning, wherever it occurs, may be recognised for academic credit towards an award, provided that learning can be assessed and deemed equivalent to the stated learning outcomes.

3. This Policy outlines the processes involved with undergraduate and postgraduate students transferring to the University from other Higher Education Providers (HEP) outside of the Northeastern Network. It provides information on the transfer process and how to make a Recognised Prior Learning claim.

4. This Policy also outlines the process by which students on a University programme may participate in a semester abroad or other approved learning opportunities within the Northeastern Network, and have the academic credit achieved applied to their University degree awarded as Transfer Credits. This process includes students transferring from another Northeastern Network based programme into a Northeastern University London programme.

5. Students considering a transfer from the University to another Higher Education Provider should refer to the Change in Circumstances Policy and Guidance: Withdrawal.

6. Students considering a transfer to another course or programme within the University should refer to the Change in Circumstances Policy and Guidance: Transfer of Programme.

7. This Policy applies to:

   7.1. Applicants to London higher & degree apprenticeship programmes,

   7.2. Undergraduate degree programmes,

   7.3. Postgraduate taught programmes, and

   7.4. Degree apprenticeship programmes.

8. Students registered on other programmes being delivered by the University should refer to the relevant regulations and policies for their

programme on the website. For postgraduate research students, credit transfer on to the programme is not permitted.

Definitions

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	The process by which a student's previous learning is recognised and given a credit value at an appropriate level. Recognition of Prior Learning encompasses both the recognition of prior 'certificated' and prior 'experiential' learning in advance of a student starting study on a University programme.
Recognition of Prior Certified Learning	The process for assessing, recognising and awarding credit for learning that has been previously accredited, formally recognised or certificated through a higher education institution or other higher education/training provider outside of the Northeastern Network prior to entry to the University.
Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning	The process for assessing, recognising and/or awarding credit at an appropriate level for learning that has been achieved through experience and/or training that has not been formally assessed prior to entry to the University. Experience in itself is not experiential learning; students must be able to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes that are equivalent to those of the course/level/stage for which they are claiming Recognised Prior Learning. Only the credit value of courses approved for Recognised Prior Learning will count towards a University award (no marks/grades will be counted).
Advanced Standing	Where an applicant can demonstrate that they have achieved all the learning outcomes of an earlier stage/level of an award, they can be granted advanced standing to the next stage/level of the award, without the award of University credit. In such cases only the courses assessed at the University will count towards the final award classification. This route of entry will normally require a transfer or RPL of credits equivalent in credit value and level to the earlier stage/level.
Transfer Credits	Academic credits achieved by a student at a Northeastern Network campus (for example through the semester abroad), which is recognised by the University. The credits achieved at the appropriate level of study, but not marks/grades, will be applied towards the award of a University degree.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Principles

9.   In line with its mission, strategic plan and educational principles, the University's approach to Recognised Prior Learning is flexible, student-centered and based on learning outcomes.

10. Credit awarded for prior certified experiential learning is of equal credit value to that acquired through completion of University taught provision. This includes learning achieved in the workplaces as part of the University's commitment to employer engagement.

11. Credits may be given for prior learning where the level, standard, content, relevance and currency of that learning are appropriate to a particular programme of study. Credit may be awarded via Recognised Prior Learning for:

    11.1. Individual courses studied at an institution outside of the Northeastern Network (noting that Recognised Prior Learning can only be awarded for whole courses).

    11.2. Where the applicant can demonstrate that they meet the assessment requirements for the course through knowledge, understanding and/or skills that they already possess as a result of prior learning.

    11.3. For an entire level of study (i.e. 120 credits for undergraduates), where the applicant can demonstrate that they meet the assessment requirements for the relevant level of study through knowledge, understanding and/or skills that they already possess as a result of prior learning.

12. All applications for the award of credit through Recognised Prior Learning are subject to formal academic scrutiny and are the responsibility of the relevant Head of Discipline.

13. The University's approach for the award of Recognised Prior Learning is based on the achievement of equivalent, not identical, learning outcomes. This means that the learning achieved should be equivalent in terms of the level, breadth, depth, volume and currency.

14. Recognised prior learning is awarded against the achievement of learning outcomes. However, credit can only be awarded for whole courses/levels/stages.

15. The University only considers Recognised Prior Learning applications for complete courses. The University is not normally able to provide RPL for courses still being undertaken at the time of application.

Credit Transfer

16. The University is a member of the Northeastern Network and wishes to support the movement of its students to study between campuses and those at other sites to transfer onto degree programmes offered by the University in London where appropriate.

16.1. In some cases, the University will have already established equivalencies between similar courses offered at the University and other Northeastern Network Campuses. Where this is the case, further review by faculty is unnecessary.

16.2. In other cases, there will not be an equivalency already established for the course(s) undertaken at a network campus. In these cases, discipline faculty will be required to evaluate learning outcomes before approving any transfer of credits for individual courses or levels.

17. Transfer credit is awarded against the achievement of learning outcomes. However, credit can only be awarded for whole courses/levels/stages.

18. The University only considers Transfer Credit applications for complete courses. The University is not normally able to provide Transfer Credit for courses still being undertaken at the time of application.

Recognised Prior Learning and Credit Transfer Limits

19. The University believes that it provides a distinctive student learning experience, characterized by its educational principles and practices and the ethos and value of its awards. As such, it has set minimum limits on the proportion of study that a student must undertake at the University in order to be eligible for a degree awarded by the University:

19.1. For undergraduate double degrees, a student must study at least 60 credits at Level 5, and 120 credits at Level 6 at the University.

19.2. For postgraduate taught degrees, students can apply for RPL/Transfer Credit for up to a maximum of one half of credits points (90 credits) and would be required to study the remaining half of the credits at the University, which must include their dissertation.

Transferring to the University From Another Higher Education Provider

20. If a student from another Northeastern Network programme is considering transferring to the University, they should:

20.1. Review the entry criteria for the programme they wish to transfer to.

20.2. Contact the University Admissions Team to express their interest in transferring and ascertain if there are spaces on the programme they wish to join. Alternatively, students can apply

> directly through UCAS as there is the option to apply for second-year entry.

> 20.3. As per the Admissions Policy, the University considers all applications on a case-by-case basis. It will consider past and predicted academic achievements, as well as evidence of an applicant's ability, skills, interests, motivation and potential.

21. If a student from another HEP is considering transferring to the University, they should:

    21.1. Review that they meet the entry criteria for the programme they wish to transfer to.

    21.2. Contact the University Admissions Team to express their interest in transferring and ascertain if there are spaces on the programme they wish to join. Alternatively, students can apply directly through UCAS as there is the option to apply for second-year entry.

Applying for Recognised Prior Learning or to Transfer Credits

22. Applicants from a Northeastern Network campus or other HEP should normally apply for Recognised Prior Learning as part of the admissions process. Potential applicants who may be eligible for Recognised Prior Learning/Transfer Credit should be made aware of the opportunities available, and associated timescales, as part of the recruitment and admissions process.

23. Recognised prior learning may exceptionally be awarded at other points during a student's period of study at the discretion of the Head of Discipline in agreement with the Academic Registrar (for example where an enrolled student is studying part-time and gains relevant learning experience through employment in parallel to their academic studies). Such applications must be made and approved prior to the start of the course for which the RPL credit is sought..

24. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Application Forms must be fully completed and evidence attached in the form of a portfolio. The portfolio, which must be in English, will vary depending on the nature of the RPL request, but the evidence supplied must be mapped against specific course or level learning outcomes. For instance, evidence of prior certificated learning might include relevant certificates, course documentation and results. In the case of experiential learning, experience per se is not grounds for awarding credit; the experience must be converted to the learning achieved and documented and mapped against the course or level learning outcomes. Evidence might include a

systemic personal reflection, details of specialist training, or a record of achievements.

25. Northeastern Network Transfer Credit Application Forms must be fully completed and a full transcript from the relevant Northeastern Network Campus attached.

26. In the case of both RPL and Transfer Credit applications, it is the responsibility of the person making the application to ensure that the Application Form is correctly completed, and all necessary evidence is attached at the time of submission.

27. Undergraduate degree students who participate in the semester abroad opportunity with the Northeastern Network are not required to submit an application for Transfer Credits. The transfer of credits will be undertaken automatically by the University in cooperation with the Northeastern Network campus attended. Students can obtain advice and guidance on the semester abroad from their Academic Advisor.

Assessing a Recognition of Prior Learning Application

28. Determining whether a student has demonstrated achievement of the learning outcomes is an academic judgment. The overall level of achievement should be equivalent to that required to pass a course/level.

29. Claims are submitted to the Admissions Team. The claim is then shared with the relevant Head of Discipline/Programme Director.

30. The evidence provided for claims will be judged on:

    30.1. Acceptability: Is the learning evidenced equivalent to the course/level/stage learning outcomes and is the evidence valid and reliable?

    30.2. Sufficiency: Is there sufficient evidence that the learning is at the right level, volume and breadth to meet the learning outcomes claims?

    30.3. Authenticity: Is the evidence clearly related to the claimant's own efforts and achievements?

    30.4. Currency: Does the evidence relate to current learning? Does it meet course validation and/or professional, statutory and regulatory bodies time limits in terms of currency of prior learning? Learning/experience occurring more than three years prior to the application for RPL will not normally be considered sufficiently current.

31. The portfolio will be reviewed to determine whether to:

    31.1. Award all credit/level as requested.

31.2. Award some credit as requested.

31.3. Reject the claim.

31.4. Exceptionally, request further information from the applicant.

32. The Head of Discipline/Programme Director will confirm to the Admissions Team the outcome of the application. In turn, the Admissions Team will inform the applicant of the outcome.

33. The Admissions Team will provide the completed RPL Form and final decision of credit to be awarded to the Records Team of Registry at the point at which the applicant accepts their offer of admission in order to enable the Records Team to ensure that the central student record is appropriately set up to reflect the credit awards and any advanced standing.

Assessing a Transfer Credit Application

34. Determining whether a student has demonstrated achievement of the learning outcomes is an academic judgment. The overall level of achievement should be equivalent to that required to pass a course/level.

35. Claims for Transfer Credit are submitted to the Academic Advising Team.

36. The Academic Adviser for the student's/applicant's programme of study will check the current programme pathway map(s) to identify where course equivalents have already been established and will indicate the acceptance of Transfer Credit for these equivalents.

37. Where no existing course equivalency exists, the Academic Adviser will consult relevant discipline faculty to establish what credits are able to be transferred. The provided transcript will be reviewed to determine whether to:

37.1. Award all the credit/level as requested.

37.2. Award some credit as requested.

37.3. Reject the claim.

38. When the review of the application has been completed the Academic Adviser will confirm to the student/applicant the outcome.

39. The Academic Adviser will also provide the completed TC Form and final decision of credit to be awarded to the Records Team of Registry prior to the start of the next semester or academic year in order to enable the Records Team to ensure that the central student record is appropriately set up to reflect the credit awards and any advanced standing.

Appeal Against a Recognised Prior Learning/Transfer Credit Decision

40. An applicant/student has the right to appeal the decision and should put their appeal, including any relevant new information, in writing to the Academic Registrar, no later than 14 calendar days from the date of when the decision was communicated to the applicant.

41. Where students provide new information, they should explain why this was not provided with their original application.

42. The appeal and any new information will be reviewed by the Academic Registrar and Head of Discipline and a decision will be reached and communicated to the applicant/student within 14 calendar days of receiving the appeal letter. This decision will be final.

Recording Recognised Prior Learning on a Transcript

43. Credits awarded by means of Recognised Prior Learning will be recorded on the student's academic record in the student information system and included on the student's transcript.

Further Advice

44. For general queries about recognition of prior learning, please contact the Admissions Team for more information. For queries about credit transfer please contact the Academic Advice team.

Version History

Title: Recognised Prior Learning and Credit Transfer Policy				
Approved by: Academic Board				
Location: Academic Handbook/ Policies and Procedures/ Academic Policies and Procedures				
Version number	**Date approved**	**Date published**	**Owner**	**Proposed next review date**
24.5.0	July 2024	August 2024	Head of Quality Assurance	March 2026
23.4.1	December 2023	December 2023	Head of Quality Assurance	March 2025
23.4.0	February 2023	March 2023	Head of Quality Assurance	March 2025
Version numbering system revised March 2023				
3.2	January 2023	January 2023	Head of Quality Assurance	March 2024
3.1	November 2021	November 2021	Head of Quality Assurance	March 2024
3.0	September 2021	September 2021	Head of Quality Assurance	March 2024
2.0	March 2021	September 2021	Head of Quality Assurance	March 2024
1.0	October 2020	October 2020	Head of Quality Assurance	July 2022
Referenced documents	Academic Appeals Policy; Admissions Policy; Terms and Conditions; Cancellation, Withdrawal, Refund and Compensation Policy.			
External Reference Point(s)	UK Visas and Immigration.			