Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer Policy

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.

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). It provides information on the transfer process and how to make a recognised prior learning claim.

4. Students considering a transfer from the University to another Higher Education Provider should refer to the Change in Circumstances Guidance: Transferring to Another Institution.

5. Students considering a transfer to another course or programme within the University should refer to the Change in Circumstances Guidance: Transferring Programmes.

6. This Policy applies to all registered students on the following programmes:

    6.1. Mobility courses

    6.2. Undergraduate double degrees programmes

    6.3. Postgraduate taught programmes (from 2023-24)

    6.4. Degree apprenticeship programmes (from 2023-24).

7. For students registered on other programmes being delivered by the University, please refer to the policy on Canvas.

8. For Postgraduate research students credit transfer on to the programme is not permitted.

Definitions

Recognition of Prior Learning	The process by which a student's previous learning is recognised and given a credit value. Recognition of prior learning encompasses both the recognition of prior 'certificated' and prior 'experiential' learning.

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.
Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning	The process for assessing, recognising and/or awarding credit for learning that has been achieved through experience and/or training that has not been formally assessed. 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 does not involve the award of credit and is therefore an admission rather than an recognised prior learning process.

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 (noting that recognised prior learning can only be awarded for whole courses).

   11.2. Where the applicant or student 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), where the applicant or student 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.

11.4. Double Degree Programmes with Northeastern University (i.e. 240 credits), where the applicant or student 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, including those arising from internal transfers, are subject to formal academic scrutiny and are the responsibility of the relevant Progression Award Boards.

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. In cases where a student can demonstrate partial achievement of the learning outcomes for a course/level/stage, an agreed assessment strategy for how they will make good the missing learning outcomes must be determined.

15. The University only considers recognised prior learning applications for complete courses.

Recognised Prior Learning and Credit Transfer Limits

16. 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:

16.1. For undergraduate double degrees, a student must study at least 120 credits at Level 6 the University.

16.2. For postgraduate taught degrees, students can apply for recognised prior learning 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 (including their dissertation).

16.3. For PhD's students a Master of Research (MRes) will not be accepted as prior learning, and no deduction to the length of the programme will be made, as per University of Kent's policy. Existing PhD students who wish to transfer onto the programme must have at least 12 months left on their programme of study.

Transferring to the University From Another Higher Education Provider

17. Applicants have the opportunity to transfer to the University after their first year of undergraduate study.

18. If a student from Northeastern University is considering transferring to the University, they should:

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

    18.2. Contact the University Admissions Team to express their interest in transferring and find out 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.

    18.3. 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.

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

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

    19.2. Contact the University Admissions Team to express their interest in transferring and find out 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

20. Applicants should normally apply for recognised prior learning as part of the admissions process. Potential applicants who may be eligible for recognised prior learning should be made aware of the opportunities available, and associated timescales, as part of the recruitment and

admissions process. Recognised prior learning may be awarded at other points during a student's period of study at the discretion of the Head of Faculty/Programme Director (for example where an enrolled student is studying part-time and gains relevant learning experience through employment in parallel to their academic studies).

21. Applicants and students should be encouraged to submit recognised prior learning applications in a timely manner, to enable recognised prior learning decisions to be made prior to the commencement of the element(s) of the course for which they are seeking exemption.

22. Claims must be in the form of a portfolio. The portfolio, which must be in English, will vary depending on the nature of the claim, but the evidence supplied must be mapped against specific course or level learning outcomes. For instance, evidence of prior certificated learning might include relevant certificated, 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.

Assessing a Recognised Prior Learning Claim

23. 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.

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

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

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

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

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

    25.4. 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?

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

26.1. Award the credit/level as claimed.

26.2. Accept the claim and the strategy for making good the missing learning outcomes.

26.3. Reject the claim.

26.4. Exceptionally, refer the claim for further information.

27. When the decision whether to accept the recognised prior learning claim, the Head of Faculty/Programme Director will confirm with the Admissions Team. In turn, the Admissions Team will inform the applicant of the outcome.

Appeal Against a Recognised Prior Learning Decision

28. An applicant has the right to appeal the decision and should put their appeal, including 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.

29. The new information will be reviewed by the Academic Registrar and Head of Faculty/Programme Director and a decision will be reached and communicated to the applicant within 14 calendar days of receiving the appeal letter. This decision will be final.

Recording Recognised Prior Learning on a Transcript

30. Credits awarded by means of recognised prior learning will be assigned against the equivalent courses and will be recorded as 'Pass' and included on the student's transcript.

Further Advice

31. For general queries about student transfer and recognised prior learning, please contact the Admissions Team for more information.

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