

## Recognition of Prior Learning Policy (RPLP)

### Version control

| Version   | History of Amendments                  | Date          |
|-----------|--|---------------|
| Version 1 | Approved at AQSC                       | November 2020 |
|           |  |               |
| Version 2 | Revision of Version 1                  |               |
|           | Approved at AQSC                       |               |
|           | Version 2 approved at AC               |               |
|           | Final version ready to be disseminated |               |
|           |  |               |
| Version 3 | Revision of Version 2                  |               |
|           | Approved at AQSC                       |               |
|           | Version 3 ratified at AC               |               |
|           | Final version ready to be disseminated |               |
|           |  |               |
| Version 4 | Revision of Version 3                  |               |
|           | Approved at AQSC                       |               |
|           | Version 4 approved at AC               |               |
|           | Final version ready to be disseminated |               |
|           |  |               |
| Version 5 | Revision of Version 4                  |               |
|           | Approved at AQSC                       |               |
|           | Version 5 approved at AC               |               |
|           | Final version ready to be disseminated |               |
|           |  |               |

## **1. Introduction**

As an established Higher Education provider, Al-Maktoum College has agenda to promote lifelong learning, social inclusion, wider participation, employability and partnership working with business, community organisations and other HE providers, nationally and internationally. It, therefore, recognises the significant knowledge, skills and understanding which can be developed as a result of learning opportunities found at work, both paid and unpaid, and through individual activities and interests. This document provides a guidance for the College on how its students' prior learning that has taken place in a range of contexts may be assessed and formally recognised through accreditation. It encourages higher education, prevents repetition of studies and saves time, energy and budget for all parties involved. This Policy will be applied across the College. Any deviations from the expectations described in the Policy must be explicitly agreed by the chairs of two Boards of Studies and the SQA coordinator of the College.

## **2. Accreditation**

1. The process of identification, assessment and formal acknowledgement of prior learning and achievement is known as accreditation.
2. Accreditation takes place in order that students with recognised prior learning may access programmes, enter programmes at advanced level or gain exemption from parts of programmes.
3. It is the achievement of learning, or the outcomes of that learning, and not just the experience of the activities alone, that is being accredited.
4. Learning resulting from formal teaching, a work or community-based placement, group work or independent study designed as an integral part of the programme, are not accredited. Recognition of these forms of learning would be expected to occur in the usual formal assessment practices of a programme of learning.

## **3. Prior learning and credit transfer**

1. Prior learning relevant to this policy is learning which is at the same level as the programme being undertaken, as defined within the relevant national higher education qualifications framework.

2. Where a student has relevant prior learning which is at a level lower than the programme, that learning will be relevant in terms of whether it meets, or contributes to meeting, the entry requirements for the programme. Recognition in this case is part of the admissions process.
3. Where the credits or qualification have been awarded by a UK higher education degree-awarding body, such an award is addressed through the process of credit transfer. The college determines the status of that award (including consideration of its volume and level) the College programme on which the student is studying. Such a process does not therefore require assessment within the terms of this policy.

#### **4. Types of Prior Learning Recognition**

There are two types of RPLs

- Recognition of Prior Formal (Certified) Learning (RPFL)
- Recognition of Prior Informal Learning (RPIL)

#### **5. Recognition of Prior Formal (Certified) Learning (RPFL)**

1. The process by which assessed courses, part-qualifications and full qualifications obtained elsewhere are formally recognised by the College and will count towards one of our own awards.
2. Prior certificated learning relates to prior learning (such as professional development awards or employment-based awards) which is at higher education level but which has not led to the award of credits or qualifications positioned on the relevant higher education qualifications framework.
3. Recognition of prior certificated learning is done through a process of assessment that enables a decision to be made by the College about whether the learning is suitable for recognition.

#### **6. Recognition of Prior Informal Learning (RPIL)**

1. The process by which knowledge and skills gained through experience and/or non-certificated learning activities are credit-rated either to facilitate entry to a programme or to be counted as an element that contributes to credit for an award from the Al-Maktoum College.

2. Given that it is the learning obtained from experience rather than just the experience itself that undergoes recognition / accreditation, and that the claimed learning is informal, the College therefore must assess such learning based on evidence presented by the Applicant.

## **7. Assessment criteria / method**

1. In common with good practice in assessment, the College ensures that processes and procedures for the assessment of both formal and informal learning is objective, clear and consistently applied.
2. The basic criteria to be satisfied for RPFL are as follows:
  - a. The claimed PFL should be relevant to the award to which it will contribute
  - b. The claimed PFL should mirror the appropriate level of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)
  - c. The learning outcomes of the claimed PFL are equivalent to those elements of the College award for which credit is claimed
  - d. The claimed PFL should be recent and current. A learning credit acquired within more than the past five years is assumed not to be recent/current, unless its currency is proved through other ways / means.
    - The maximum currency period of PFL in languages is 2 years unless applicant has been in constant use of the language for which learning credit is claimed.
3. The assessment of informal learning (derived from experience) is subject to the same institutional internal and external quality assurance procedures as assessment of formal learning.
4. Assessment of the experiential (informal) learning should focus on the following:
  - a. Acceptability of evidence - is there an appropriate match between the evidence presented and the learning being demonstrated? Is the evidence valid and reliable?
  - b. Sufficiency - is there sufficient evidence to demonstrate fully the achievement of the learning claimed?
  - c. Authenticity - is the evidence clearly related to the applicants' own efforts and achievements?
  - d. Currency - does the evidence relate to current learning?
5. Assessment tools used in the accreditation of experiential (informal) learning include:
  - a. focused interview or viva;

- b. practice-based reflective portfolios;
  - c. structured interviews;
  - d. completion of a piece of work or a project;
  - e. tests and examinations;
  - f. submission of assignments on appropriate topics to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes;
  - g. a reflective account/diary of the learning achieved;
  - h. completion of the usual assessment used to demonstrate learning in the module/course/programme for which equivalence is being claimed.
6. Assessment methods must be appropriate and relevant to the evidence provided. In respect of the experiential (informal) learning, it is within the discretion of assessors to choose the assessment tools that are appropriate and relevant to the evidence provided.

#### **8. Assessment body**

1. Decisions about the equivalence of learning is academic and informed by reference to the criteria contained within programme specifications and statements of learning outcomes.
2. The college makes an academic judgement about the equivalence of the learning derived from experience and the learning that might otherwise have been assessed through a formal course or programme or evidenced by a qualification or other form of certificated learning recognised in the institution's entry requirements.
3. The authority and responsibilities for making decision about the accreditation of prior learning or credit transfer rests commonly on the relevant module co-ordinators and programme leader who make a joint decision within 10 days of receiving application from the RPL Officer.
4. An accreditation decision should be sent immediately to the relevant body for verification.
5. In respect of unsuccessful or partially successful claims, an accreditation decision should also contain feedback to applicants.

#### **9. Verification body**

1. Any assessment decision made in respect to a claim of prior learning is subject to internal verification.

2. The authority and responsibilities for verifying decisions about the accreditation of prior learning rests on the relevant Board of Studies within the college.
3. The relevant Board of Study should make decision within 10 days from the day the initial joint decision of the unit coordinator and the programme leader is referred to it for verification. The chair of the Board may call a BoS meeting extraordinarily to make a verification decision.
4. The relevant verification body's decision can be
  - a. either to verify as referred;
  - b. or, to verify subject to certain refinements to be made by the assessors
5. In relation to paragraph 4 (b), the relevant verification body may identify errors within an assessment decision, the process or the methods used to reach such decision based on this policy and require the assessors to rectify the errors within 5 days.
6. A RPL decision is effective only after it is internally verified.
7. Verified decisions will be sent to the RPL Officer who would communicate them to applicants immediately.
8. In respect of unsuccessful or partially successful claims, an accreditation decision which has been verified may not be appealed by the applicant.

## **10. Evidence**

1. It is the applicant's responsibility, at the point of application, to provide the evidence including the detailed information required from a previous institution or organisation for the purposes of accreditation by the College.
2. Where informal prior Learning (RPIfL) is to be recognised, applicant must provide evidence that demonstrates learning achieved by experience. Whenever and wherever the experience occurred, evidence must be presented to demonstrate that learning has taken place.
3. Applicant may provide a range of evidence to prove learning including:
  - a. a certificate / qualification awarded by another academic institution detailing the unit and the level completed, duration, year of completion, number of hours, unit/module descriptors.
  - b. a request to undertake one or more of the assessment tools listed in paragraph 7 (4) above.

## **11. Applicants and applications**

1. Any prospective or current College student with a prior learning claim may apply to the College that their prior learning to be recognised so that they may access programmes, enter programmes at advanced level or gain exemption from parts of programmes.
2. A RPL application must be submitted either along with and as part of the student's application for entry to a programme or separately after the applicant has entered the programme, seeking only exemption from parts of a programme. In the latter case, any such application must be made no later than 14 days after the start of the programme.
3. The consideration of claims for the accreditation of prior learning is subject to a non-refundable fee of £50 which is paid at the point of application.
4. A RPL application and any enclosed evidence must be in written English.

## **12. Limitations**

1. The maximum amount of credit that can be claimed, recognised or transferred as a result of Prior Learning Recognition is 50% at the final level of the award unless, certain programmes that are accredited by professional regulatory bodies allow transfer of lower credits.
2. The minimum amount of credit that can be claimed is equivalent to a whole module within the relevant programme.

## **13. RPL Officer**

1. A member of staff is appointed as the Recognition of Prior Learning officer who will act as the starting point in respect to all applications and will coordinate all the claims of Prior Learning to relevant assessment and verification bodies.
2. All member of staff who receive RPL applications must send such applications and their enclosed evidence to the RPL Officer who will then distribute them to relevant assessment body without delay.
3. RPL Officer will keep a register of all RPL applications and decisions made over such applications. Decisions include both assessment and verification decisions.
4. RPL officer is responsible to ensure deadlines as specified in this policy are observed. Any deviation from deadlines must be reasonably justified and notified to the RPL officer.

5. RPL officer reports to the AQSC of the College annually and is accountable to the Head of the College as Chair of the Academic Council.

#### 14. Training

The College ensures that all staff, including those of partner organisations and external examiners, involved in the process(es) of accreditation of prior learning are adequately informed, appropriately trained and supported to undertake their role(s).

#### 15. Glossary of terms

**Accreditation:** is a term frequently used as a synonym for the recognition of learning as defined below. However, it is perhaps more properly used to signify the most formalised and widely practised forms of recognition.

**Acknowledgement:** is another term sometimes used to describe the recognition of learning, but is usually used in a more broad and non-specific sense and does not necessarily involve the use of standardised mechanisms.

**Accreditation of prior learning (APL):** a process for accessing and, as appropriate, recognising prior experiential learning or prior certificated learning for academic purposes. This recognition may give the learning a credit-value in a credit-based structure and allow it to be counted towards the completion of a programme of study and the award(s) or qualifications associated with it.

The term 'accreditation of prior learning' is used in these Guidelines to encapsulate the range of activity and approaches used formally to acknowledge and establish publicly that some reasonably substantial and significant element of learning has taken place. Such learning may have been recognised previously by an education provider; described as 'prior certificated learning' or it may have been achieved by reflecting upon experiences outside the formal education and training systems; described as 'prior experiential learning'.

**Accreditation of prior certificated learning (APCL):** a process, through which previously assessed and certificated learning is considered and, as appropriate, recognised for academic purposes.

**Accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL):** a process through which learning achieved outside education or training systems is assessed and, as appropriate, recognised for academic purposes.

**Recognition (of learning):** any process that acknowledges and establishes publicly that some reasonably substantial and significant element of learning has taken place and can be assessed to have done so.

## 16. Resources

1. Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, “Guidelines on the accreditation of prior learning”, September 2004, available on online at the following address: [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk).
2. Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, “UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Part B, Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning, 2014.
3. University of Dundee, “Policy and Guidance on Recognition of Prior Learning”, October 2017 available online at the following address:  
<https://www.dundee.ac.uk/qf/documents/details/policy-and-guidance-on-recognition-of-prior-learning.php>
4. QAA Benchmark and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

## 17. Appendix

1. Appendix 1: Recognition of Prior Learning Mapping Template, See, next page.



**Appendix 1**

**Recognition of Prior Learning Mapping Template**

**Professional Diploma in Islamic Banking & Finance**

Tick the module against which Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is awarded – evidence must be attached with this form. The mapping should consider both prior experience and qualifications of the candidates

| Course: Professional Diploma in Islamic Banking & Finance | Name of Student:           |  |                           |             |
|---|----------------------------|--|---------------------------|-------------|
| <u>Core Modules</u>                                       | Learning Outcomes          | Qualification Evidence of Prior Learning Equivalent Module | Experience Based Evidence | APL Awarded |
|   | (to add learning outcomes) |  |                           |             |
|   |                            |  |                           |             |
|   |                            |  |                           |             |
| <u>Optional Modules</u>                                   |                            |  |                           |             |
|   |                            |  |                           |             |
|   |                            |  |                           |             |
|   |                            |  |                           |             |
|   |                            |  |                           |             |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p><b>Signed by Course Leader:</b></p> <p><b>Date:</b></p> <p><b>Signed by Chair of RPL Approval Committee:</b></p> <p><b>Date:</b></p> |
|--|---|