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Assessment and Accrediting Prior Learning / Recognising Prior Learning (APL/RPL) Procedure

Policy Review					
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Sian Deasy	Head of Higher Education and Adult Learning	Corporation  Peter Thomas, Chair, YC Corporation	10 July 2025	November 2 Years	Y

Document Control – Revision History (Policies only)					
Author/Owner	**Summary of Changes**	**Date**	**Date last reviewed by SED**	**Version**	**Recommend to SED Y/N**
Derrick Goddard	Minor amendment to name of a document	05.09.16	-		Yes
Derrick Goddard	Minor amendments to wordings	14.11.18	02.11.16		No
Susie Peart, Sian Deasy	Amended to include HE rules, updated wording, removed information that unnecessarily duplicated other policies (e.g. Academic Misconduct).	23.09.20	02.11.16		No
Susie Peart	Minor amends	01.09.22		v1	
Sian Deasy Mark Bolton Scott Austin	Minor amends following OU scrutiny, including addition of Section 16, and numbering all paragraphs, adding table of contents, left aligning text, and applying 1.5 line spacing in line with Accessibility good practice guidance. Addition of late rules for HE courses including Open University and L5 DET. Minor amends as part of SMT sign-off.	16.06.23 13/7/23		V2 V2	
Sian Deasy/ Adam Everett	Requests from AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group to ensure the policy must state that achievement must be recognised before the learner starts the qualification. The policy also needs to include: clear timeline for RPL request. Process for requesting RPL with the Awarding Organisation. Learner Appeals.	26/3/24		V2.1	
Sian Pering	Update to include explicit reference to Exam Board quoracy requirements for the Open University, and updating late submission rules to include programmes 'not recognised for funding purposes'. Removed reference to Performance Impact Group.			V2.2	

Initial Equality Impact Screening
Has anyone else been consulted on this policy and/or procedure?
What evidence has been used for this impact screening (e.g. related policies, publications)?
Declaration (please tick one statement and indicate any negative impacts) ☐ I am satisfied that an initial screening has been carried out on this Policy and/or Procedure and a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required. There are no specific negative impacts on any of the Protected Characteristics groups. ☐ I recommend that an Equality Impact Assessment is required by the Equality and Diversity group, as possible negative impacts have been identified for one or more of the Protected Characteristics groups as follows: ☐ Age ☐ Disability ☐ Gender Reassignment ☐ Race ☐ Religion or belief ☐ Sex ☐ Sexual orientation ☐ Marriage & civil partnership ☐ Pregnancy & maternity

Completed by:		**Position:**		**Date:**	

Reviewed by Equality & Diversity Group: YES/NO If Yes: Date:

I confirm that any recommended amendments have been made

Summary of Comments including Recommendations from Equality & Diversity Group Review:

Amended by Author:		**Position:**		**Date:**	

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1. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

1.1. The purpose of this Policy is to promote learning and achievement by providing access to assessment and accreditation services within Yeovil College that ensure equality of opportunity for all learners within a clear framework of assessment, quality assurance, internal verification, moderation, and standardisation.

2. SCOPE

2.1. This policy applies to all assessment activities and procedures that are within the control of the College. It does not cover external examinations.

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1. Assessment is at the core of the student experience and acts as a focus for the planning of teaching and learning. Assessment is generally divided into Assessment for Learning (Formative Assessment) and Assessment of Learning (Summative Assessment). Formative assessment may be used to diagnose support requirements and establish a starting point for a learning pathway. Formative assessment of work is also a diagnostic tool, which can be used to establish whether or not learning objectives have been met, and to determine future teaching strategies and objectives. Summative assessment contributes to achievement of the overall qualification. It may be internally or externally set and marked. It allows students' learning to be assessed in a consistent way and ensure that the academic standards of qualifications are consistently upheld.

3.2. Effective assessment should promote a dialogue between staff, students, parents and employers. It should give learners clarity as to what needs to be done in order to improve or progress. It should also be designed to provide equality of opportunity regardless of ethnicity, gender, physical or learning disability or any other protected characteristic.

3.3. All assessments will be devised to ensure that they are:

3.3.1. Valid- the assessment process is appropriate to the subject or qualification, the evidence produced meets the assessment criteria

3.3.2. Authentic – the work has been produced by the learner only and is relevant to their course and career aspirations

3.3.3. Current - the evidence is produced in a timely manner, and is consistent with current practices and legislation

3.3.4. Sufficient – there is enough evidence produced to address all of the assessment criteria and learning outcomes

3.3.5. Reliable - the work is consistent across all learners, over time and at the required level.

4. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

4.1. Courses need to follow the requirements of the appropriate awarding organisation but as a minimum all courses will provide the following:

4.2. **Assessment Strategy.** In most cases, the assessment strategy will be evidenced through schemes of work, learning plans and the specific study programme assessment planner. An assessment strategy needs to address the following:

4.2.1. Why, in the context of the programmes aims and outcomes, that range of assessment methods was selected.

4.2.2. How the pattern of assessment supports the development of learners and of learning.

4.2.3. The relationship of the assessment methods to the objectives/outcomes of the course.

4.2.4. The teaching and learning strategy prepares learners to cope with assessment.

4.3. **Assessment Planner.** An assessment planner must be prepared for the start of a course and learners must have a copy of the plan. The plan should show:

4.3.1. How many assessments are in each unit/module?

4.3.2. Where appropriate, the weighting of each assessment

4.3.3. Release, submission and return of marks dates

4.3.4. A manageable workload for students

4.4. Every programme will have a robust initial assessment to establish all learners starting point

4.5. Note: The assessment strategy and planner should be discussed, agreed and complied with by the course team members involved. Assessment practice must be consistent across a subject or unit and not vary according to who is delivering it. In modular courses the strategy and schedule must be considered for the course as a whole and agreed by the whole team.

5. ASSESSMENT/ASSIGNMENT BRIEFS

5.1. The assessment/assignment brief must contain or make appropriate reference to all the

information required by a learner to understand what they are required to do and how they will be assessed.

5.2. As a minimum, briefs must include the following:

5.2.1. Course, Unit and Assignment titles

5.2.2. Clearly defined tasks using appropriate language for the learners concerned

5.2.3. Where appropriate, identify the learning outcomes covered by each task

5.2.4. Contextualised assessment/grading/marking criteria. Generic criteria should not be used

5.2.5. Start and submission dates

5.3. In addition, briefs must include any additional information specified by the Awarding Organisation for inclusion in assignment briefs.

5.4. Note: All assessment briefs must be internally moderated or verified as being appropriate for the outcomes/objectives involved before they are issued to learners. Evidence of moderation must be recorded on college or awarding organisation standard documentation. Assignments should be presented to the internal verifier at least two weeks prior to the planned issue date to allow sufficient time to approve/amend as required.

6. ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK

6.1. Marking and where applicable, second marking must be completed and returned promptly in order to give timely feedback to students. A maximum turnaround time of 3 weeks (15 working days) should not be exceeded, unless a different turnaround time is specified by the awarding organisation.

6.2. Feedback must be developmental and encouraging, including written comments/annotation of student work where applicable, in order to inform the student how to improve. Grades/assessment outcomes must be recorded for all courses; for many courses, the feedback will be recorded/ summarised on pro-forma feedback sheets with copies going to the student and tutor/course manager. Feedback should be returned in line with agreed processes. In most cases, this involves uploading the feedback to Moodle.

6.3. Written work should be checked and clearly corrected for spelling, grammar and clarity. For weaker students, close marking of all errors may be limited to the first or a designated page, provided this is made clear within the feedback. Separate feedback rather than annotation of the student work itself may be more appropriate in some instances.

6.4. It is acceptable, on occasions, for students to mark their own or other students' work in order

to provide instant feedback, although the balance should be carefully managed to ensure that:

6.4.1. curriculum delivery time is not lost

6.4.2. the lecturer verifies/confirms any marks or grades awarded

7. INITIAL ASSESSMENT

7.1. All learners will receive knowledge and/or skills initial assessments at the outset of their learner journey. For study programmes this will ordinarily be within the first 2 weeks of study, for Apprenticeships this will be before the first date in learning. For all other study awarding organisation or best practice guidelines should be followed. The initial assessment should inform right learner right course and support the completion of the individual learning plan in Markbook.

8. MONITORING AND RECORDING OF MARKS

8.1. All grades must be recorded using an appropriate platform, as agreed by the College Senior Management Team (SMT). In most cases, this will be ProMonitor Markbook or SmartAssessor. It is the responsibility of the staff member conducting the assessment to ensure marks are appropriately moderated and accurately recorded.

9. FREQUENCY OF ASSESSMENT

9.1. This will vary according to the programme but must be in accordance with the published schedule. As a general principle, a minimum of one substantial piece of work per half term should be formally assessed/graded, with written feedback to the student.

9.2. For programmes assessed via coursework and assignments, students should be given the opportunity early in their programme/before first formal assessment, to have feedback on the standards achieved against criteria/standards expected. For example, induction or formative assessments may be used, the results of which may not contribute towards a student's formal grade profile.

9.3. Deadlines should be staggered in order to support students in their efforts to produce work punctually.

10. LATE SUBMISSION OF WORK

10.1. Students must be made aware of assessment deadlines at the start of the course or module and of the penalties for late/non submission.

10.2. For FE students, any penalties for late/non submission should be applied in line with those specified by the awarding organisation.

10.3. For students on Higher National courses from Pearson, work submitted up to and including 7 calendar days late will be marked but capped at a Pass. Work submitted more than 7 calendar days late will not be marked and treated as Not Achieved. These rules do not apply to 'reworks' which must be submitted on time. Students on University of Gloucestershire programmes should follow the published guidance in their Academic Regulations for Taught Provision[1]. Students on courses validated by the Open University, will have penalties for late work applied in line with section 13.3 of the Regulations for Validated Awards of the Open University[2]. Students on other Yeovil College University Centre (YCUC) programmes are able to access one 'deadline grace period' per academic year. In this instance, a student can submit one piece of work up to and including 7 calendar days late without incurring a penalty. A student must notify HE Administration (via university.centre@yeovil.ac.uk) if they wish to invoke this grace period, and this provision can be used only once per learner per academic year. Other University Centre students should follow the published guidance of their awarding organisation, typically this is that work submitted late will not be marked.

10.4. Students with valid extenuating circumstances may be granted extensions to their deadlines, in line with Awarding Organisation rules. For University Centre students, the published HE Assessment, Extensions, and Extenuating Circumstances Policy must be followed – extensions cannot be negotiated ad-hoc with subject tutors.

11. RESUBMISSION OF WORK

11.1. Should a learner's work not reach the minimum criteria for a Pass on first submission, one resubmission opportunity may be offered in line with the regulations specified by the awarding organisation. Further resubmission opportunities should only be permitted if the awarding organisation's regulations expressly permit this.

[1] https://www.glos.ac.uk/information/article-categories/academic-regulations/
[2] https://www.yeovil.ac.uk/policies-reports/

12. REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS FOR ASSESSMENT

12.1. The HE Disability Support for Students Policy (for higher education students) and the Learner Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy (for all other students) outline the processes to be followed where a learner requires reasonable adjustments to be made to their assessment experience as a result of a disability, learning difficulty, or long-term health condition. Reasonable adjustments should always be made in line with the regulations of the relevant awarding body, including applying via the correct channels and in a timely way for Exam Access Arrangements to be made, where appropriate.

13. ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

13.1. Staff are expected to ensure students have been informed about relevant assessment regulations, both in terms of college procedure, and any additional requirements of their awarding organisation. Students are expected to abide by these regulations. More information can be found in the College Academic Misconduct Procedure.

14. ASSESSMENT APPEALS

14.1. If a learner is dissatisfied with an assessment decision, they may appeal using the Academic Appeals Procedure (see separate procedure).

15. INTERNAL VERIFICATION AND MODERATION

15.1. For details see the Internal Verification Procedure.

16. ASSESSMENT/EXAM BOARDS

16.1. In all programmes, the requirements of Awarding Organisations in relation to Exam Boards and Assessment Boards will be followed.

16.2. Higher Education Exam Boards take place in line with awarding organisation guidance. If they differ, requirements of awarding organisations will take precedence over the guidance below.

16.3. Exam Boards will take place at the end of the summer term to confirm student achievement for the previous academic year, and eligibility for award or progression to the next year of the course. If required, a Reassessment Board will be scheduled for the very start of the Autumn term to consider any students not available for consideration at the main Board due to

extension or reassessment. As required, Exam Boards can be scheduled in-year if progression between levels of study happens at a different point. Higher National programmes have an Interim Exam Board after the completion of Semester One to verify assessments and monitor the programme up until this point.

16.4. Boards will be chaired by a member of the Senior Management Team, and where possible, not the Assistant Principal (AP) for the subject under consideration. Exam Boards must be quorate. To achieve quoracy, Boards must include a Chair, two out of three of the Programme Leader, Curriculum Area Manager and Assistant Principal, an Independent Member (often the Quality Manager, or another member of CMT or experienced HE Programme Leader with Higher Education experience but no relationship to the programme), and an administrator to take minutes[3]. In addition, the Head of Higher Education and Adult Learning, External Examiner, Link Tutor (where appropriate) and other members of SMT will be invited to the Board. For Higher Nationals, module tutors will also be invited to the Board. For programmes validated by the Open University, a representative of the University's Partnerships team must be invited.

16.5. If an External Examiner cannot attend, they can send comments to be read and minuted in their absence, where this is permitted by the awarding body.

16.6. The Exam Board will follow a set agenda, including:

- 16.6.1. Declarations of interest and reminder of the confidentiality of proceedings
- 16.6.2. Review of Chair's Actions from previous meetings
- 16.6.3. Consideration of cases of proven academic misconduct, in line with college procedures
- 16.6.4. Consideration of cases of corroborated extenuating circumstances, in line with college procedures
- 16.6.5. Presentation and confirmation of student marks
- 16.6.6. Confirmation of eligibility for progression to next year of programme / completion of award
- 16.6.7. Confirmation of grade (where appropriate)
- 16.6.8. Decisions around reassessments or repeating units (where appropriate)
- 16.6.9. Comments from the External Examiner
- 16.6.10. Comments from the Independent Member
- 16.6.11. Confirmation of publication of results

16.7. Where appropriate, and with the agreement of the Board, Chair's Actions may be carried

[3] NOTE: For programmes validated by the Open University, both the External Examiner and a representative from the University's partnerships team must be in attendance for the Board to be quorate.

forwards. These will be reviewed at the next Exam Board. Where there are many Chair's Actions, it may be deemed more appropriate to call an additional exceptional Board meeting to review these outstanding actions.

17. ACCREDITATION OR RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (APL/RPL)

17.1. The purpose of accreditation of prior experience and learning is to enable students to make best use of prior experience and learning in undertaking study at college, where it is permitted by the awarding organisation. This could take the form of previous certified learning, or prior experiential learning.

17.2. In all cases, the requirements and guidance of the awarding organisation will be followed in the first instance. In the absence of awarding organisation guidance, the principles below should be followed:

- 17.2.1. APL and RPL are voluntary processes, and students must notify the College in writing of their request to apply for APL/RPL prior to admission.
- 17.2.2. Assessment methods for APL/RPL must be of equal rigour to other assessment methods, be fit for purpose and relate to the evidence of learning.
- 17.2.3. A mapping exercise will be undertaken to identify whether a student can evidence they have already met all of the Learning Outcomes for a module, or modules, at the same level, or higher. This may also involve Framework of Higher Education (FHEQ) and / or QAA Subject Benchmark Statement mapping in the case of HE students.
- 17.2.4. Students for APL should present an array of evidence, including certificates and more detailed course documentation such as programme specifications or course handbooks. Students for RPL may provide evidence such as job descriptions, supervisors' reports, or a portfolio of evidence from a training scheme.
- 17.2.5. Prior learning must be current in order to be used by the learner. Subject staff should show due diligence when assessing the currency of prior learning.
- 17.2.6. Evidence may need to be augmented by additional measures such as a written assessment or viva voce examination.
- 17.2.7. Staff should show due diligence that the awarding organisation of the prior qualification have delivered and assessed the qualification in a rigorous and compliant way, or that the professional assessing the applicant's competencies is appropriately qualified and impartial.
- 17.2.8. Only if a student has met all Learning Outcomes will they be considered eligible to APL/RPL that unit.
- 17.2.9. Students cannot claim APL/RPL for partial units.

17.2.10. The assessment of the evidence is based on academic judgement and will normally be made by the Programme Leader in liaison with another appropriate staff member (e.g. Quality Manager/Head of Higher Education and Adult Learning).

17.3. Where APL/RPL requires specialist advice and/or involves specialist collection of evidence, testing, interviewing, assessing, action planning etc., an economic fee may be agreed and charged on an individual basis.

17.4. It is important to note that APL/RPL is an alternative route to achievement and not an easy option or shortcut.

18. STAFF ASSESSMENT MALPRACTICE

18.1. The following are examples of potential staff assessment malpractice. The list is not exhaustive and other instances of malpractice may be considered by the College at its discretion:

18.1.1. unauthorised alteration of mark schemes

18.1.2. unauthorised alteration of awarding organisation assessment and grading criteria

18.1.3. assisting learners in the production of work for assessment, where the support has the potential to influence the outcomes of assessment, for example where the assistance involves centre staff producing work for the learner

18.1.4. producing falsified witness statements, for example for evidence the learner has not generated

18.1.5. allowing evidence, which is known by the staff member not to be the learner's own, to be included in a learner's assignment/task/portfolio/coursework

18.1.6. facilitating and allowing impersonation

18.1.7. misusing the conditions for special learner requirements, for example where learners are permitted support, such as a scribe, this is permissible up to the point where the support has the potential to influence the outcome of the assessment

18.1.8. falsifying records/certificates, for example by alteration, substitution, or by fraud

18.1.9. fraudulent certificate claims, that is claiming for a certificate prior to the learner completing all the requirements of assessment

18.1.10. failing to keep assessment/examination/test papers secure prior to the assessment/examination/test

18.1.11. obtaining unauthorised access to assessment/examination/test material prior to an assessment/ examination/test

18.1.12. failing to report a conflict of interest to their line manager (e.g. assessing work of a family member or close friend)

18.1.13. failure to record and track student marks in the required format in an accurate and

timely manner**.**

18.2. Staff assessment malpractice will be recorded and treated as misconduct/gross misconduct under the terms of the College Disciplinary Procedure. Any malpractice or attempted acts of malpractice, which have influenced the assessment outcomes, must be reported by the College to the awarding organisation in accordance with their requirements.

19. RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES, DOCUMENTS, DEFINITIONS

- Academic Misconduct Procedure
- Academic Appeals Policy & Procedure
- Internal Verification Procedure
- Disciplinary and Grievance Policy (staff)
- Examinations Assessment and Invigilation Policy & Procedure
- HE Assessment, Extensions and Extenuating Circumstances Regulations
- HE Disability Support for Students Policy
- Learner Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy
- Office for Students Condition of Registration B4 (and also B1, B2 & B5)