

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for Post-Graduate Advanced Practice Programmes: Guidance for Applicants to UHI July 2017

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning is the process by which applicants to University courses or programmes can gain academic credit for previous learning. This may be used to gain access to a programme or to replace modules in a programme. To protect the integrity of programmes, the process of making an RPL claim is rigorous, but not onerous. Once you have read this document, if you think you might qualify to apply for RPL, please contact the Programme Lead for advice (contact details at end of document). If the decision is made that you are in a position to apply you will be directed to the relevant documentation for completion (but see the advice on timing, below). Once completed, the Programme Lead will assess your claim and present a recommendation to the RPL Panel. If successful, the University will inform you of the award of admission or credit.

A detailed description of RPL is available from UHI online at <https://www.uhi.ac.uk/en/studying-at-uhi/first-steps/recognition-of-prior-learning-and-credit-transfer/>.

For convenience, a brief overview of key points have been provided. The rest of the document describes how RPL applies to PG Advanced Practice Programmes in the Department of Nursing at University of the Highlands & Islands (UHI).

SCQF General and Specific Credit

Credit is counted in the Scottish Credit Qualification Framework (SCQF). This is divided into academic levels and credit amounts for each level.

General Credit is gained when Recognition of Prior Learning allows exemption from some part of a *programme* of study. For example, it may apply to previous certification and experience of non-medical prescribing.

Specific Credit is gained by Recognition of Prior Learning when previous certification and/or experience is matched to particular programme *modules*. For example, previous certification and experience of advanced clinical assessment may be matched to the module, "Clinical Assessment for Advanced Practitioners".

The Quality of a Claim

The quality of a claim depends upon its:

- **Acceptability**, i.e. the match between evidence you provide and learning outcomes of the modules of the course you are applying to.

- **Sufficiency**, i.e. is the evidence presented sufficient to demonstrate the achievements claimed? This may require an academic transcript and certificate, an assessment exercise, or both.
- **Authenticity**, i.e. can you demonstrate that the evidence is clearly related to your own efforts?
- **Currency**, i.e. is the learning of current relevance? Have you kept up to date? For some modules for the Advanced Practice Programme, have you made further progress since certification?

Timing and unsuccessful claims

An applicant should confirm with the Programme Lead on application that an RPL claim would be possible. However, it might not be possible to complete the claim before commencing a credit-bearing module on the programme, especially for those modules for which work in addition to prior certification is required (see below).

We have built in maximum flexibility to the programme, so that the RPL claim can be undertaken later in the programme. For example, for a September start, RPL can be undertaken in the spring semester of the following year (commencing in February).

What happens if the RPL claim is unsuccessful? Our experience suggests this is highly unlikely, but it is still possible. For most modules, the student would have the option of undertaking the module the RPL process would have replaced (note that the module fee would need to be paid). This is not possible for the SCQF level 9 Non-Medical Prescribing module (see below). If the student is still on the Register of Prescribers, modules of equivalent credit would need to be undertaken as an alternative, with module fee payment.

Programme-Specific Regulation

A programme-specific regulation concerning Recognition of Prior learning applies to the Post Graduate Advanced Practice programmes in the Department of Nursing in the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI). Specifically and exceptionally, the maximum credit that may be awarded by Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) will be limited to 80 credits for the PGDip awards and 80 credits of the 'taught' component for the Masters awards. The RPL limit for PGCert remains at 20 credits.

The exception will only apply where the student is including relevant certificated credit as part of their RPL claim. For SCQF Level 11 modules this requires recognition of prior certification for modules which are a close match to UHI modules.

Unusually, two modules will allow RPL claims from SCQF Level 9 or 10 to SCQF 11, as these modules cannot be repeated at Level 11. These will require prior certification, a period of verified practice following certification, and additional specific evidence.

University Modules

The processes for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for Post-Graduate Advanced Practice Programmes for relevant modules is outlined below. The RPL processes build on the existing UHI RPL processes, requiring use of the UHI “Recognition of Prior Learning Student Claim Form”. Also, utilising the Department of Nursing “Post-Graduate Advanced Practice Programmes RPL Guide”. Both documents are available from the Programme Lead.

An Example:

| RPL: SCQF Level 9 to SCQF Level 11 for designated modules | |
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| <p>Two 40-credit modules obtained from another university relevant to UHI postgraduate programmes are, for historic reasons, at SCQF Level 9. These maybe “Acute Clinical Assessment” and “Non-Medical Prescribing” (NMP). Repeating these modules at a higher academic level is not usually possible.</p> <p>Both of these modules are practice-based, and many practitioners have progressed to senior clinical roles associated with SCQF Level 11 practice. It is reasonable to offer these potential students an option of undergoing a Recognition of Prior Learning process. This combines certification of the previous module/modules with evidence of progress to SCQF Level 11 in these subject areas, to facilitate practitioners to both access and exit with post graduate named awards:</p> | |
| Previous University Module | UHI Module |
| Advanced Clinical Assessment (40 Credits SCQF Level 9) or equivalent | UB711002: Clinical Assessment for Advanced Practitioners (40 Credits SCQF Level 11) |
| Non-Medical Prescribing (NMP) (40 Credits SCQF Level 9) | Accreditation to Advanced Practice Programmes (40 Credits SCQF Level 11) |

There are three elements to the RPL evidence that must be submitted for RPL for **SCQF level 9** modules: in addition to prior certification:

1. **At least one year in practice** utilising the knowledge and skills from the relevant module. This will be verified by the practitioner’s line manager, or a senior practitioner nominated by the line manager. A verification form and instructions will be provided.
2. **Critical Reflective Account** (1000 words) on the development of practice progressing from SCQF level 9 to SCQF Level 11. This may include supporting appendices (not included in the word count), utilising portfolio evidence forms and other sources. There is one compulsory appendix – the Reflective Account that must be completed.
3. **Case Study** (1500 words). This may include supporting appendices (not included in the word count), utilising portfolio evidence forms and other sources.

RPL evidence for existing **SCQF level 11** modules must include evidence of certification and information about the specific module learning outcomes achieved.

For all RPL enquiries please contact the Programme Lead: Joanna Smith – Joanna.smith@uhi.ac.uk