



## **UCD School of Nursing, Midwifery & Health Systems**

### **RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (EXPERIENTIAL) Admission to Taught Graduate Programmes**

#### **SECTION A**

Candidates seeking entry to any of the UCD School of Nursing, Midwifery & Health Systems Level 9 taught graduate programmes are required to meet the entry requirements for University College Dublin and the specific programme related pre-requisites. The academic entry requirements for the graduate programmes include holding a National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) Level 8 qualification (Honours Degree or Higher Diploma). However, third level institutions are committed to widening access to academic programmes. Students who do not meet the NQAI Level 8 requirements may be considered for entry to the programme through the process of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

RPL takes into account "all forms of prior learning, including learning acquired by following a course of study (i.e. formal learning), learning outside of the formal education system which may not lead to certification (i.e. non-formal learning) and learning acquired through experience" (UCD Academic Policy 2012:2).

The purpose of the RPL policy is to enable Programme Boards to support candidates/prospective students who apply to have prior learning recognised, or transfer into or between different programmes. At graduate level, the responsibility for making all offers of admission and deciding the most appropriate course of action for an applicant/student lies with the Programme Board and the Programme Director. Recommendations may be made by the Head of School, Principal Supervisor, Programme Director and/or Module Co-Ordinator.

RPL is used to gain:

- Admission to programmes where a person may not have obtained the standard admissions requirements (for example, a bachelor's degree in nursing); and
- Credit towards a programme of study so that an individual does not duplicate learning outcomes already acquired.

#### **Decision-making in relation to recognition of prior learning**

All recognition of prior learning decisions are made by a member of the UCD academic staff (generally the Programme Director) on the basis of academic judgement and with reference to the programme outcomes for the programme which the RPL application relates to. Decisions are based on evidence of the following principles and informed answers to the questions listed below:

1. Learning outcomes rather than the learning experience is evaluated – there must be evidence of learning at the appropriate level.
2. Relevance of learning outcomes – how relevant is the learning to the particular programme and at what level was the learning achieved?
3. Equivalence of learning – is the learning equivalent to the UCD credit to be granted?

4. Learning outcomes related to contemporary knowledge – how long has it been since the learning was achieved? What developments have taken place in the interim period that might mean the learning is no longer current and therefore credit towards the UCD programme should not be granted?
5. Professional accreditation concerns – the school should advise both the applicant and the Programme Board if there are concerns or issues pertaining to the accreditation that will effect either the application for prior learning or an applicant's ability to subsequently achieve compliance with professional requirements of relevant accrediting bodies.

All the required guidelines are available online. Candidates applying for consideration for entry using RPL are required to submit relevant evidence in accordance with UCD policy available at:

<https://www.ucd.ie/registry/prospectivestudents/admissions/policiesandgeneralregulations/recognitionofpriorlearning/>

The UCD School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems RPL application is made online:

<https://www.ucd.ie/registry/prospectivestudents/admissions/policiesandgeneralregulations/recognitionofpriorlearning/rplpilot/>

Information on Academic Integrity and Plagiarism are available at:

<https://libguides.ucd.ie/academicintegrity>

### **Application for admission based on Prior Experiential Learning**

The candidate who is seeking admission using recognition of prior experiential learning is required to submit evidence to demonstrate his/her suitability for the programme **in addition** to completion of the online RPL application form.

*Applicants should complete the online application which is structured as follows:*

- **Personal Details**
- **Academic Record**
- **Employment History** (*only required for those applying on the basis of Experiential Learning*)
- **General Questions** (*this is divided into three sections: UCD Accredited Prior Learning, Non UCD Accredited Prior Learning and Experiential Learning*)

### **Portfolio of Evidence**

The application should demonstrate how the candidate's clinical experience to date has prepared him/her to engage with the programme of choice. Candidates must reflect critically on the competences that demonstrate their suitability for the programme. Details regarding individual programmes is available at: <https://www.nmhs.ucd.ie/study-with-us/graduate-programmes>

The candidate is required to describe in **essay style** his/her relevant professional history highlighting and discussing his/her achievements in the following areas.

Introductory page to include the following:

- General education
- Professional education
- Current employment
- Continuing professional development

### **Demonstration of suitability for programme**

Within this section you are required to write not more than 200 words on each of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) Domains of Competence (2016). The domains of competence are:

- Domain 1: Professional values and conduct of the nurse competences
- Domain 2: Nursing practice and clinical decision-making competences
- Domain 3: Knowledge and cognitive competences
- Domain 4: Communication and interpersonal competences
- Domain 5: Management and team competences
- Domain 6: Leadership and professional scholarship competences

This section should contain no more than 1200 words. This allows the candidate an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge, understanding, critical thinking, reflection, and application of continuous professional development to nursing practice.

The candidate should critically discuss each domain of competence and refer to recent relevant achievements (within 5 years). The candidate must use a different learning experience for each domain (i.e. a course, conference, study day, or research article).

Each learning experience may only be referred to once for the purpose of providing evidence. Evidence of attendance at courses, conferences, or study days must be included also. Each section must cite recent relevant literature pertaining to the candidate's learning experience.

### **STRUCTURE AND PRESENTATION OF PORTFOLIO**

- **Cover page** with the following details
  - Name
  - Address
  - Date of Birth
  - Email address
  - Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) PIN (or equivalent professional registration if applicable)
  - Signed Declaration

### **Referencing and General Layout of Portfolios**

- Pages should be numbered at the bottom centre, a minimum of 2.5 cm margin should be allowed on the left-hand side of each page and at the top and bottom of the text.
- Line spacing used should be 1.5 and fonts used Times New Roman 12. Word limit must be adhered to.
- A full Reference list alphabetically arranged, separately numbered by page and distinct from the main text should be included at the end of the text. Referencing format must follow the UCD Guidelines.
- <http://libguides.ucd.ie/academicintegrity/harvardstyle>
- Applicants complete the online application as directed
- The RPL portfolio (Essay & Documentation) should be uploaded to the online application system

#### **Declaration**

Please include this declaration statement in the portfolio cover page and ensure that you sign and date it:

*I Hereby declare that this work is entirely my own and that I have acknowledged the writings, ideas, and work of others. Furthermore, I have not knowingly allowed another to copy my work.*

Signed ..... DATE

## **REFERENCES**

NMBI (2016) Nurse Registration Programmes Standards and Recommitments (Fourth Edition) Available at: <https://www.nmbi.ie/nmbi/media/NMBI/Publications/nurse-registration-education-programme.pdf?ext=.pdf>

## **ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

In addition to presenting evidence of meeting the aforementioned points outlined above in relation to basis for decision-making, the portfolio will also be assessed based on the UCD marking criteria (see Appendix 1).

- Presentation and adherence to guidelines.
- Focus - Demonstrating the applicant's suitability for the programme.
- Comprehensive- Demonstrating an understanding of the area of practice.
- Well-structured and organised- Using the guidelines set out above and drawing on guidelines for portfolio development.
- Original - Demonstrating uniqueness of thought and application.
- Clarity - Demonstrating the applicant's ability to use the written medium appropriately.
- Use of supporting literature and correct referencing.

**Appendix 1**

**Assessment Criteria**  
**Candidate must pass each criteria**  
**Pass/Fail System 50% Pass 50% Fail**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Presentation &amp; Adherence to Guidelines</b>	<b>Exposition of knowledge and comprehension. Analysis and critical thinking.</b>	<b>Interpretation, integration and application to practice.</b>	<b>Use of supporting literature</b>	<b>Reflection</b>
Grade /Fail 0-50%	Work is illegible.  Poor use of English.  Presentation does not meet criteria required	Contents lack relevance.  Professional focus is not understood or explained.  Theoretical concepts and frameworks inappropriately selected.  Theories and facts do not support propositions.  Work is descriptive in nature	Wrong interpretation of brief/questions.  Restricted ability to draw on professional experience and link theory to practice.	Limited evidence of supporting reading without using argument and discussion.  Some inaccuracies in citation of research/literature.	Limited evidence of reflection on experience.  Limited evidence of evaluation of practice.
Grade Pass 50%	Work is clearly presented with good use of English demonstrated  Presentation meets the criteria.  Appropriate presentation of illustrated material.	Content demonstrates relevant and adequate understanding/explanation of professional focus.  Correct use of facts and theories to support arguments avoiding generalisations.  Some evidence of creativity.  Good evidence of analysis.	Interprets brief correctly.  Irrelevant material is discriminated.  Adequate evidence of being able to evaluate a situation in a logical way identifying aspects of problem solving relevant to nursing.  Able to set own experiences within a wider context and take an objective stance	Adequate evidence of supportive reading with use of argument and discussion.  Evidence of wider reading.  Accurate citation of relevant research/literature	Work shows evidence of reflective analysis of experience.  Evidence of evaluation of own practice.  Able to defend and justify own stance

**SECTION B: Recommendations: (for Office use only)**

This section is for the programme co-ordinator to record the outcome of RPL for admission to a programme. All recommendation for RPL credit and for admission to a programme of study should be forwarded for approval to the Taught Graduate Standing committee.

<p><b>Applicant Name:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Accept/Reject:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Programme Name &amp; Code:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Programme Director:</b> _____</p>
<p><i>Rationale for Module/Programme Co-Ordinator's recommendation:</i></p>
<p><i>Recommendation for further Action (particularly if there is no current basis to support a positive recommendation)</i></p>
<p><i>A final decision from the Programme Board will be forwarded to the student. Any further communication may be recorded below</i></p>
<p><b>Signature of Programme Director:</b></p> <p><b>Date:</b></p>