Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):

Guide for applicants

The purpose of this guide to help you understand the RPL (*Recognition of Prior Learning)* Policy and the steps needed to complete your RPL application.

What is RPL?
RPL is defined as: "the process by which prior learning is given a value. It is a means by which prior learning is formally identified, assessed and acknowledged".
- ⊙ RPL encompasses all forms of prior learning, including learning acquired by following a course of study (i.e., formal learning), learning acquired outside of the formal education system which may not lead to certification (i.e., non-formal learning) and learning acquired through experience.

Please ensure you have read this guide and the *Recognition of Prior Learning Academic Policy* and confirm with your Programme/School Office that RPL applications to have prior learning recognised to count towards the credit requirements of your programme are accepted by the Board governing your programme.

If you would like to have prior learning recognised to count towards your UCD programme you should complete the RPL application form (http://www.ucd.ie/governance/resources/policypage-rplpolicy/) if:
   a.   You have applied for a place on a UCD programme, or
   b.   You have accepted a place on a UCD programme

Receiving **an offer of admission** to a programme is not a guarantee that you will be successful in any RPL application to have learning recognised

Please note:
This guide does not provide information on using RPL to meet the admissions requirements of a programme. If you are a prospective student seeking admission to UCD and you do not meet the required admissions criteria as set down for a particular programme of study in UCD, you may apply to be admitted based on prior learning, including experiential learning, or as a mature student.
- ⊙ For information on the mature entry process for undergraduate applicants please refer to www.ucd.ie/maturestudents and contact UCD Admissions (admissions@ucd.ie).
- ⊙ Applicants to graduate programmes should contact the relevant School Office for information in the first instance. Contact details for School Offices can be accessed via http://www.ucd.ie/colleges.htm.

This guide does not provide information about RPL and approved pathway programmes. Please refer to 'PDARF: Implementing the *Recognition of Prior Learning Policy*: Graduate taught pathway programmes @ UCD' in http://www.ucd.ie/governance/resources/policypage-rplpolicy/ for further information and contact your Programme/School Office to find out if it is relevant to your application.

When should I complete the RPL application form?
An application for RPL should be made **as early as possible** and preferably before you commence the relevant module/stage/programme.

An application for RPL **relating to a particular module** should be submitted before the third week of the semester in which it is offered. Applications made after this date will only be accepted at the discretion of the Board governing your programme.

If you submit an RPL application relating to a particular module(s) **after the module(s) has commenced** you should register for, attend and participate in the module(s) until you are informed of the decision of the Board governing your programme. If your application is not successful, you are responsible for all assessments associated with the module(s).

You may **expect to hear** of the outcome or status of your application typically within four weeks of submitting it.

Incomplete applications will not be accepted. It is your responsibility as an applicant to ensure you supply all necessary supporting evidence and documentation and sign the form as required.

The possible outcomes of an RPL application:

1. Prior learning recognised for the purposes of admission to a programme (please see above).
2. Prior learning recognised for the purposes of having credit transferred towards the requirements of the UCD programme of study.
   - In some cases your application may not be successful or you may not receive RPL for the amount of credit for which you applied. In such cases, you are responsible for all assessments associated with the modules on your programme and therefore should register for, attend and participate in the module(s) until you are informed of the outcome of your application.

Receipt of RPL credit for a UCD programme **may disqualify you from being eligible for medals or prizes** which are offered by the programme – for further information regarding this, check with the Programme Office.

The **amount of credit based on prior learning** that you may have recognised towards your UCD programme is determined by the Board governing your programme. The evidence of learning that you provide in your application will be compared to the published learning outcomes for the programme/modules for which you seek to have learning recognised. The Programme Board will determine whether you have achieved the learning outcomes that you would have achieved by fulfilling all requirements of the UCD programme of study. The module descriptor/programme search webpage can be accessed at http://www.ucd.ie/students/course_search.htm.

Completing the RPL application form

The form is organised according to three sections and you should only complete the sections relevant to your application. A short checklist is included at the back of the form.

Please note:
- The RPL application form may be submitted electronically
- When applying to transfer to UCD, the RPL application can be uploaded to your online transfer application
- UCD reserves the right to verify all information

Step 1: Personal Details (TO BE COMPLETED BY ALL)

In addition to your personal details, you must identify which section of the form you are completing and give a brief outline of your request.

Sample

Please tick which section you are completing.
[X] Learning previously accredited at UCD: please complete Section 1.
[ ] Learning accredited at another Higher Education Institute: please complete Section 2.
[ ] Experiential learning: please complete section 3.
Please give a brief outline of what you are requesting:
Request to have credit recognised against two Spanish modules – SPAN104AC and SPAN103BD

Step 2: Prior UCD learning, prior non-UCD learning, experiential learning
 RPL request based on prior UCD learning – sample (for the purposes of the sample, both (i) and (ii) are completed)

<table>
<tr><td colspan="6">Section 1 – application for credit to be transferred to my programme based on learning previously accredited at UCD.
Complete (i) or (ii).</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">(i)   Modular credit (normally learning previously accredited at UCD since 2006). Please insert additional rows as necessary.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Module Code</td><td>Module Title</td><td>Credit value of module</td><td>Grade</td><td>Academic session in which the module was passed (e.g. 2008/09)</td><td>Stage to apply module to</td><td>If applying to substitute this module for one of the new programme, please give name and/or code</td></tr>
<tr><td>NMHS 40540</td><td>Theoretical Basis of Nursing</td><td>15</td><td>A+</td><td>2009/10</td><td>1</td><td>NMHS 43260 Nursing Knowledge</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4">(ii)   Pre-modular learning (normally learning previously accredited at UCD before 2006). Please provide the result that you gained in each subject for every year that you completed in UCD and for which you are applying for recognition of prior learning.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Academic session e.g. 2003/2004</td><td>Subject/course and result</td><td>Subject/course and result</td><td>Subject/course and result</td></tr>
<tr><td>2004/2005</td><td>French, 74%</td><td>English, 67%</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Please include any additional information regarding your application.

</td></tr>
</table>

RPL request based on prior non-UCD learning – sample

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5">Section 2 – application for credit exemption based on learning accredited at another Higher Education Institute (HEI) i.e. not UCD.

2.1 Please state clearly the relevant prior learning you wish to have recognised for exemption and attach required supporting documents e.g. official transcript of results (refer to Checklist).</td></tr>
<tr><td>Name of institution and student number</td><td>Dates of attendance e.g. 2007/2008 – 2009/2010</td><td>Course or programme title</td><td>NFQ level of course/ programme (see www.nqai.ie) and final award (e.g. 2nd class honours, distinction)</td><td>Relevant UCD modules for which you are applying to have your prior learning recognised</td></tr>
<tr><td>TCD</td><td>2006/07 – 2007/08</td><td>MSc Child Health</td><td>Level 9
2.1
honours</td><td>NMHS 42730 Care of Injured Child</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">2.2 Please list the supporting documents you have attached to this form.
    Transcript
    Syllabus and module descriptors</td></tr>
</table>

RPL request based on experiential learning

Experiential learning is learning that was not accredited by a Higher Education Institute and can include training courses, work-related professional development courses, as well as experience gained through volunteerism.

> For information on RPL applications based on prior experiential learning, please contact the relevant Programme Office/School Office in the first instance.

There are a number of approaches to mapping and assessing prior experiential learning in order to demonstrate learning outcomes and, as with all applications for the recognition of prior learning, decisions are based on the evidence you provide in your application. You will need to provide evidence that your prior learning is equivalent to the learning outcomes of the module(s) for which you are seeking RPL. In addition to completing the RPL application form and providing relevant supporting documentation (e.g. references), you may be required to do one or more of the following:

- (i) Complete a portfolio of evidence,
- (ii) Attend at an interview,
- (iii) Undertake a simulation/practical exercise,
- (iv) Undertake a diagnostic test(s),
- (v) Complete a piece of work or special assignment,
- (vi) Produce an artefact.

You should also attach any additional information that you feel does not fall within the areas requested on the application form, and attach all relevant supporting documentation. This would include a CV, references, an official syllabus or outline of education/training courses undertaken, etc.

Please note: The University does not normally offer professional advice/counselling in preparation of evidence/ documentation except as agreed within individual programmes or within specified modules operated by the University. In such cases, it is the responsibility of the relevant Programme to provide written guidance notes to applicants.

Step 3: Applicant Declaration

By signing your application form you are confirming that you have read the *Recognition of Prior Learning Academic Policy* and this guide and understand the information provided. You are also confirming that the information you provided on the form is true and correct and that you understand that:

- The information you provide will only be disclosed, where necessary, to staff involved in determining and implementing your request.
- UCD reserves the right to verify the information you have provided, e.g. by contacting an institution or referee included as part of your application.
- Your application may not be successful or you may not receive RPL for the amount of credit you applied for. In such cases, you are responsible for all assessments associated with the modules on your programme and therefore should register for, attend and participate in the module(s) until you are informed of the outcome of your application.

If you would like to submit your application electronically and do not have an electronic signature, you should type your name in the signature section and this will be taken as your signature for the purposes of this application. If you do not sign/type your name here, your application will be deemed incomplete and will not be accepted.

Step 4: Checklist

A short checklist is included at the back of the form for your reference when you are ready to submit your application.