

Polisi Coleg Penybont

Bridgend College Policy



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This document is available in Welsh

Policy Name: Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Exemption Policy and Procedure

Department: Quality

Document Author: Claire Flay-Petty

Job Title: Head of Quality

Date of Approval: December 2025

Review Date: December 2028

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Policy Checklist:

Policy Inception Requirement	Yes / No / N/A	Supporting information
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been completed? See form below.	Yes	
Has a Welsh Language Impact Assessment been completed? See form below.	Yes	
Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been considered with regards to this policy? If yes, please contact the Information Services Manager in order to complete a Data Protection Impact Assessment.	N/A	
Has the review taken account of the latest Guidance/Legislation?	Yes	
Is legal advice required? If yes, please ensure you have taken the necessary steps to secure the appropriate legal advice before proceeding further.	No	
Is staff training required? If yes, please ensure that the necessary training is arranged through the Learning & Development Advisor.	No	
Are there HR related issues that need to be considered? If yes, please contact the HR Manager to discuss further.	No	
Are there financial issues? If yes, please contact the Finance Manager to discuss further.	No	
The latest Policy Positioning Statement has been added to the start of the policy	Yes	
<i>For SLT use only:</i>		
Is this a new policy? If yes, SLT to complete the College Policy Approval Delegation checklist at the time of approval.		
Approval level assigned:		

Policy Positioning Statement

Our mission is simple - **be all that you can be.**

Bridgend College is a special place to learn and work. We want to create an **inclusive** environment which enables people to be **innovative** and **passionate** about what they do. We want to create **inspirational** opportunities which transform lives and celebrate the successes of every individual. We are committed to making decisions which are ethical and **people-centred**, for every person and in every interaction.

We know that the standards we walk past are the standards we accept, so by being a **team player** who is committed to our organisational values, we can ensure that everyone is **ready** to learn and work in an environment where they are **respected** and feel **safe**, to **be all that they can be.**

We want Bridgend College to be a place of sanctuary, providing a sense of **belonging.**

We recognise the significant impact of trauma on individuals' lives and understand that a compassionate and understanding approach is essential to support our students and staff on their academic and personal journeys. We will do this by being **calm, consistent** and **caring** in our approach to communication and decision-making.

We want to be an anti-racist College. We are committed to fostering an inclusive culture where people are respectful and where this permeates all that we do. We want to develop a culture where people show up for one another with trust and integrity - a place of learning and work where people thrive.

As a place of education, we recognise our responsibility in developing the skills, knowledge and confidence of our students, staff and the communities we serve.

We know that we don't always get things right, but we are committed to listening, learning and educating ourselves on our journey to becoming an extraordinary organisation.

1. Purpose and Objectives:

Bridgend College recognises that the development of skills, knowledge and competence can take place both within and outside of a traditional teaching and learning environment. The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Exemption Policy and Procedure sets out the process for:

- formally assessing skills, knowledge and competence already achieved by learners against the learning outcomes and/or assessment criteria of a unit or programme of study;
- enabling exemption from certain prerequisites or achievement requirements of a programme of study for learners already in possession of eligible certificated achievement;
- facilitating credit transfer, where previously certificated credit can be applied towards a new qualification, in line with awarding organisation rules.

This policy is available for use by both learners and staff and applies to all Further Education provision, and to Higher Education provision directly awarded to Bridgend College. For Higher Education delivered under a franchise arrangement with a University partner, the relevant University's regulations and processes will apply. In this policy, RPL is used to collectively refer to APL (Accreditation of Prior Learning), APEL (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning), Accreditation of Prior Achievement (APA) and APCL (Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning).

Approaches to RPL, exemption and credit transfer, and the specific processes for applying them, differ by awarding organisation. Accordingly, this policy must be read and implemented in conjunction with the associated policies and regulations of the relevant awarding organisation.

2. Policy Details:

2.1 Definitions

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is an assessment process that measures evidence of a learner's previous achievement, skills or competence against the learning outcomes and/or assessment criteria of a unit or qualification, without the learner being required to undertake the associated formal teaching and learning. This may include learning acquired through previous education and training, work experience, voluntary or community activity, or through home and family life.

Exemption is a process that enables a learner to be exempted from specific prerequisites or achievement requirements of a programme of study where they can evidence certificated prior achievement of equivalent value. This may include cases where a learner has achieved a regulated qualification or units that map directly to part of a new qualification, or where certificated learning has been confirmed as equivalent to the relevant learning outcomes or assessment criteria. In the case of exemption, no further teaching or assessment is required for the exempted element.

Credit transfer is the formal recognition by an awarding organisation of credit or units that a learner has already achieved through another regulated qualification, either with the same or a different

awarding organisation. It allows the learner to transfer those credits towards a new qualification, provided the learning outcomes, level, and assessment requirements are equivalent. Credit transfer does not require further assessment, as the learner's prior certificated achievement is accepted as meeting the relevant requirements.

The RPL, Exemption and Credit Transfer process may allow the learner to:

- demonstrate that the learning outcomes/assessment criteria of a unit(s) within a programme of study have already been met;
- (in relation to RPL only) undertake the same assessments as those required within the formal programme of teaching, learning and assessment, but without attending the associated taught sessions, where this is permitted by the awarding organisation. In such cases, evidence of authenticity (for example, a learner declaration and assessor verification, or other awarding organisation requirements) must be provided;
- (in relation to Exemption only) gain direct entry to, or advanced standing within, a programme of learning. For example, where a learner progresses to an Extended Diploma after having achieved a Diploma qualification that constitutes the first stage of the extended award with another institution or awarding organisation.

Some awarding organisations stipulate that previously certificated learning cannot be recognised through RPL, and must instead be applied through Exemption or Credit Transfer. Each awarding organisation has its own RPL and Exemption policies and procedures, which must be read alongside and adhered to in conjunction with this College policy.

2.3 Principles and limitations of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Credit Transfer and Exemption

In order to apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), a learner is required to submit a portfolio of evidence, or other appropriate evidence, demonstrating how previously acquired skills, knowledge and/or competence meet the learning outcomes and/or assessment criteria of the unit(s) or programme of study. An assessor will review whether the evidence is sufficient to demonstrate that the learner has met the assessment requirements of the qualification currently being pursued.

For Exemption, learners are required to provide certificated evidence (such as a certificate or transcript) of prior achievement deemed equivalent to the relevant unit(s).

The evidence provided from both RPL or Exemption must meet VCRAS principles:

Valid – genuinely demonstrates that the demands of the learning outcomes/criteria have been met.

Current – reflects up-to-date practice and has taken place within an appropriate timeframe.

Reliable – would allow consistent assessment decisions to be made if repeated.

Authentic – must genuinely be the learner's own original work or achievement.

Sufficient – enough evidence must be provided to fully cover the required outcomes/criteria.

If evidence is incomplete or insufficient, the learner will be required to undertake appropriate further learning and/or assessment to demonstrate any outstanding outcomes or criteria.

- Assessment methods applied to RPL evidence must be fit for purpose and of equal rigour to the methods used within the programme of study.
- RPL, Exemption or Credit Transfer may not be permitted where qualifications include a Licence to Practise, mandatory Health and Safety components, required work placements, or where the qualification relates to a regulated profession. In most cases, RPL cannot be used to bypass externally set, externally assessed or mandatory components of a qualification.
- Any process for informing/applying to the awarding organisation, or associated External Examiner, must be completed by the deadline specified by the awarding organisation.
- All applications for/of RPL and Exemption must be confirmed with the Quality Team before submission to ensure a central record of RPL and Exemption applications is maintained.
- Any use of artificial intelligence (AI) as part of the RPL process must only take place in line with guidance provided by the teaching team, the awarding organisation, and any other related college policies (for example the Malpractice, Maladministration and Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedure).

STAGE 1: INFORMATION PROVISION AND PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

- Learners will be made aware of the RPL and Exemption Policy and Procedure through prospectuses, web-based information, the learner portal, enrolment and induction materials, and/or tutorials.
- The learner is responsible for making their lecturer/tutor aware that they would like to apply for RPL or Exemption. If a learner expresses an interest in applying for RPL or Exemption, an initial discussion covering the following elements must take place:



- The process of applying for RPL or Exemption, including the support and guidance available, and the process of compiling the portfolio of evidence;
 - Any awarding organisation requirements or limitations, including deadlines for applying for RPL and Exemption, any restrictions to the proportion of a qualification that can be achieved by RPL or Exemption and any caps or maximum grades that will apply to assessments/units/qualifications that are in receipt of RPL or Exemption;
 - How long the process will take, and any associated costs;
 - The process for appealing any decisions relating to RPL and Exemption.
- At this point, the lecturer/tutor must check that the evidence to be provided by the learner for RPL or Exemption has been achieved before the start of their programme of study and that the evidence meets the principles of validity, currency, reliability, authenticity, and sufficiency as outlined in section 2.3 above.
 - Where a learner wishes to apply for Exemption or Credit Transfer on the basis of previously certificated learning or achievement, the lecturer/tutor must be satisfied that the qualification that has previously been achieved by the learner covers substantially similar learning outcomes/assessment criteria, is at an equivalent or higher level, and that assessment methods are sufficiently rigorous, **before the process progresses to the Curriculum Manager and Quality Team.**
 - Once a learner has confirmed that they would like to proceed with the RPL or Exemption process, the relevant lecturer/tutor must complete and submit the [RPL and Exemption Notification Form](https://forms.gle/fctZRshA36yoK7M67) (<https://forms.gle/fctZRshA36yoK7M67>). This form must be submitted **before** any applications for or notification of RPL or Exemption is made to the awarding organisation. This form will be supplied to the relevant Curriculum Manager and the Quality Team.
 - On receipt of the RPL and Exemption Notification Form, the Curriculum Manager will appoint a member of staff who is competent in and has prior experience of RPL and Exemption to lead the process.
 - All requests for RPL and/or Exemption must be made at the start of the academic year during which the unit will be completed, unless stated otherwise by the awarding organisation.

STAGE 2: COMPILING THE PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE

For Stages 2 and 3, please note: all awarding organisations have different processes of the awarding of RPL, Exemption and Credit Transfer. While the process below has been devised to meet the requirements of the majority of awarding organisations, some elements of the process may differ. Please consult the guidelines for the relevant awarding organisation and contact the Quality Team if you have any questions.

- In order to claim credit under the RPL and Exemption process, the learner may need to produce a portfolio of evidence mapped against the learning objectives/assessment criteria for all units for which RPL or Exemption is being sought. This must include any mapping exercises as required by the awarding organisation. The staff member leading the process may consider compiling an assessment plan to guide the learner in compiling the portfolio of evidence.
- Where prior learning is experiential, the portfolio must evidence the prior learning, skills and/or competence achieved. Evidence of experiential learning could include, but is not limited to: home or family life, previous education and training, work activities, and community/voluntary work.
- Where prior learning has been certificated, the portfolio must include a copy of the original certificate. This copy must be signed and dated by the staff member leading the RPL or Exemption process to confirm sight of the original document, and an electronic copy of the certificate must be stored centrally.
- The portfolio of evidence must include an authenticity statement signed and dated by the learner and the member of staff leading the process.

STAGE 3: ASSESSMENT OF THE PORTFOLIO/MAPPING EXERCISE

- The portfolio of evidence must be assessed against the learning outcomes/assessment criteria of the unit(s) for which RPL/Exemption is being sought. For Exemption, the assessor must make sure that the components of the certificated qualification are sufficient to meet the requirements of all of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the unit/s for which it is being sought.
- The assessor must be satisfied that the evidence from the learner meets all of the learning outcomes/assessment criteria. If gaps are found in the evidence provided,



further assessment methods must be used to provide enough evidence to be able to award credit for the whole unit.

- Evidence collected through the RPL and Exemption process needs to be assessed and verified through the same quality assurance procedures used for any other internal assessment methods, and records of assessment must be maintained in the usual way. Where a unit/s has been achieved through RPL, this must be indicated on the relevant learner tracking.
- The outcome of the portfolio, and the decision to award or withhold RPL or Exemption, including any support and guidance on subsequent learning options, must be discussed with the learner.
- A learner may appeal the outcome of their RPL and Exemption claim by following the College's Appeals Policy and Procedure.

STAGE 4: QUALITY ASSURANCE AND CLAIMS

- Any assessment decision to award credit as a result of the RPL and Exemption procedure must undergo internal verification and must form part of the sample for internal quality assurance.
- Any individual appointed by the awarding organisation to conduct external quality assurance checks, for example a Standards Verifier or External Examiner, must be informed of any applications for RPL or Exemption as part of any monitoring activity that takes place. awarding organisations may also specify that any assessment decisions resulting from the RPL and Exemption procedure are sampled as part of the external quality assurance process.
- The Curriculum Manager and the Quality Team must be informed of the assessment decision before any claim for credit is made.
- Any award of credit under the RPL, Exemption and Credit Transfer process must be recorded and, where appropriate ratified, at the relevant curriculum forum, including in Course Team Meetings, Standardisation sessions, and Assessment/Qualification Boards.



- Once internal and external verification of the assessment decision relating to RPL or Exemption has been completed and confirmed, claims for credit should be made as specified by the relevant awarding organisation.
- All evidence relating to RPL and Exemption, including the learner portfolio, records of any communication with awarding organisations or their representatives, applications for and confirmation of RPL and Exemption, and any mapping exercises, must be stored centrally and made available to the relevant course team, the Curriculum Manager, and the Quality Team. These records must be available for verification if requested by an awarding organisation.

3. Responsibilities (if applicable):

Teaching staff will familiarise themselves with the detail of, and apply, this policy and procedure in the appropriate circumstances, and will ensure that the Quality Team is informed of all cases of RPL, Exemption and Credit Transfer.

The Curriculum Management Team will:

- Familiarise themselves with the detail of, and apply, this policy and procedure in the appropriate circumstances;
- Appoint a member of staff who is competent in and has prior experience of RPL and Exemption to lead the process;
- Ensure that any successful applications for RPL and Exemption are recorded and reported in the manner specified above, including informing the Quality Team before an assessment for RPL or Exemption is conducted.

The Quality Team will support the application process for RPL, Exemption and Credit transfer where required, and will maintain a central record of all notified applications for RPL, Exemption and Credit Transfer.

4. Related Documents (if applicable):

The **Recognition of Prior Learning Policy** for the awarding organisation through which the qualification is awarded must be consulted in conjunction with this policy.

Bridgend College Appeals Policy and Procedure

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5. Document review:

Last Review: 00.00.00

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Policy name:

Reviewed by:

Version: xx

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EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

Name of Policy / Procedure	Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Exemption Policy and Procedure
Policy Owner (to complete this EIA)	Claire Flay-Petty
Aim(s) and Purpose of Policy	To detail the policy and procedure for formally assessing skills, knowledge and competence already achieved by learners against the learning outcomes and/or assessment criteria of a unit(s) on a programme of study, and enabling concession or exemption from certain prerequisites or achievement requirements of a programme of study for learners already in possession of eligible certificated achievement.
Who does the policy affect?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learners x <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff x <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General Public

Equality characteristic	Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Reason/comment
Age	x			Mature learners will be more likely to have developed skills, knowledge and competence, within or outside of a traditional teaching and learning environment, that can be considered for RPL and Exemption
Disability		x		
Gender reassignment		x		
Marriage and civil partnership		x		
Pregnancy and maternity		x		
Race		x		
Religion or belief		x		
Sex		x		

Last Review: 00.00.00

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Policy name:

Reviewed by:

Version: xx

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Sexual Orientation		x		
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Date completed: 05.10.2025

Signed by Manager completing the assessment: Claire Flay-Petty

Last Review: 00.00.00

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Policy name:

Reviewed by:

Version: xx

Welsh Language Impact Assessment

Name of Policy / Procedure	Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Exemption Policy and Procedure		
Policy Owner (to complete this EIA)	Claire Flay-Petty		
Aim(s) and Purpose of Policy	To detail the policy and procedure for formally assessing skills, knowledge and competence already achieved by learners against the learning outcomes and/or assessment criteria of a unit(s) on a programme of study, and enabling concession or exemption from certain prerequisites or achievement requirements of a programme of study for learners already in possession of eligible certificated achievement.		
Who does the policy affect?	Learners x	Staff x	General Public

Welsh Language Standards

No.	Type	Standard	Positive (could benefit)	Negative (could impact)	No Impact
94	Policy Making standards	When you formulate a new policy, or review or revise an existing policy, you must consider what effects, if any (whether positive or adverse), the policy decision would have on – (a) opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, and (b) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.			x

Action Plan

Actions should demonstrate steps to be taken to reduce or where possible, eliminate any negative impact on the Welsh Language.

Action	Who	By When	Success Measure (how will we know we have achieved the action)
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Ensure that learners have the opportunity to submit their RPL assessment through the medium of Welsh where permitted by the awarding organisation.	Curriculum Teams	Ongoing	When learners have the opportunity to submit their RPL assessment through the medium of Welsh where permitted by the awarding organisation.

Assessment Completion Date: 05.10.2025