

Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) Policy: Queen's Foundation

1. Remit

The remit of this policy extends to admissions on Durham University Common Awards programmes. It does not cover broader admissions matters and/or requirements for the Queen's Foundation in relation to partnerships with other universities. This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Queen's Admissions policy for Common Awards.

2. Who is eligible?

Applicants may wish to request to have recent prior learning that took place in a university validated context transferred into their Common Awards programme with the Queen's Foundation. This transfer or recent university credit is called Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL). As specified in the 'Principles for the Award of APL at Durham', APL is not a right¹, but all cases will be reviewed following the procedures outlined below.

For instance a student who commenced a course with X Theology College in Newcastle, 2 years ago validated by University Y, completed 40 credits but then was forced to withdraw due to a need to relocate to Birmingham could seek to transfer these credits into their Queen's Foundation programme.

This process should not be confused with evidence requested to demonstrate that a student meets entry criteria for a University programme including evaluation of prior experience and learning. A student's qualifications, work and life experience as tested at application and interview are assessed separately to confirm entry into a programme at Queen's Foundation. *See separate Admissions Policy.*

3. Time Limit

a. The credits obtained at the point of entry into the programme are normally less than 5 calendar years old. The five year rule is standard across the European Community and reflects the need to ensure that academic study is up to date.

Entry academic year	Earliest year APL would be valid
Applying to commence September 2015	An award obtained in September 2010 or later would be considered. An award obtained June 2010 would be 5 years and 3 months old and therefore would not be considered

The maximum number of credits that can be accepted and transferred under APCL is 1/3.

b. Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)

Candidates who have qualifications which could be considered but which are just over five years old may apply instead for Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL), and, in addition to their transcript and other programme and module details, will be asked to provide a portfolio of evidence demonstrating how they have kept their subject knowledge up to date in the intervening period. This could include evidence of attendance at other training events and relevant conferences, wider reading etc. Such students may be invited to an interview to discuss this evidence.

Entry academic year	Earliest year APL would be valid
Applying to commence September 2015	An award obtained June 2010 would be 5 years and 3 months old, not eligible for APCL, but may, with a portfolio, be eligible for APEL.

¹ <https://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/1/6/1/>

There is a different maximum applied regarding the number of credits of APEL that can accepted. A student may not APEL more than 1/3 of the value of the credits of the programme they are applying to join, but this is limited to a **maximum of 60 credits**.

4. Evidence

As a minimum, a student will be asked to provide evidence of the learning consisting of a final certificate (if applicable) and a University Transcript detailing modules taken and component results. Further evidence, such as programme and module learning outcomes of the course and pieces of work, will be requested as needed, see section 6 below.

5. There are two kinds of application for APL:

1. The application for the “APL” of a small number of individual modules that the student does not wish to duplicate.
2. The “APL” of one *stage* of an award, for instance if a student had completed the first year of a degree full time, they could apply to APL these credits and enter a BA programme at Queen’s directly into the second year.

6. Mapping of Learning Outcomes

All applications for transferring credit must demonstrate the mapping of the learning outcomes of the credit being transferred against the module or stage that the student would then omit from their studies in the transferring institution.

For type 1, the transfer of module credits, the individual module learning outcomes must be matched against specific modules which would in ordinary circumstances have been undertaken by the student in completing the award at Queen’s. For instance: A module called “Biblical Studies” may not match up with the learning outcomes of a module at Queen’s called “New Testament Studies” a mapping exercise would take place and the validating university could accept or turn down an application to transfer these credits based on the extent of the mapping.

For type 2 applications the mapping of learning outcomes would be against the overall stage, for instance someone who had completed a HE Certificate less than 5 years ago in Religious Studies may not have the same certificate level learning outcomes as the equivalent stage on the overall BA programme at Queen’s. Again, a mapping exercise would take place at Queen’s and the university would review the evidence and make a decision. Applicants may therefore be asked to provide copies of module or programme handbooks that detail their learning outcomes, and in some cases copies of assignments.

7. Number of Credits that may be transferred APCL (see 3.b above for APEL).

Durham University Regulations do not permit applications for the transfer of more than 1/3 of the credits in any programme, see the table below:

Programme	Academic Level	Number of credits in programme	Maximum number of credits which can be APL’d.
Cert HE	4	120	40
Dip HE	4,5	240 (120 at level 4, and 120 at level 5)	80
BA	4,5,6	360 (120 at level 4,120 at level 5 and 120 at level 6)	120 or level 4 Cert HE
PGCert	7	60	20
PGDip	7	120	40
MA	7	180	60 or PG Cert

It is important to understand these limits. If a student transfers 120 credits into a BA, but leaves after only completing 120 more credits with Durham, they will not normally leave with a Diploma in HE as more than 1/3 of the credits will be counted as APL. The student must be sure that they will complete the planned programme of study if applying for APL for a large number of credits.

8. University Validation

If a candidate has studied at a theological college like Queen's, they should look to the transcripts issued to locate information on the academic level their work, and whether any credits or award were validated by a partner university. Not all programmes in theological colleges are validated by universities. If the course is listed as "self-accredited" and does not mention a university then this will likely not be university validated and will not be eligible for APCL. Applicants are advised to contact their original college to confirm this information and provide evidence of this - for instance if transcripts were produced by the college and not directly by the validating university. In reviewing evidence submitted for an APCL claim, Queen's will further review whether the College attended is reviewed by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) or other equivalent body.

9. APEL

There is a second form of APL which credits Prior Experiential Learning. The experiences would need to be documented and mapped against learning outcomes as above and require substantial evidence of the depth and strength of the learning involved. At this time there are no defined pathways for obtaining APEL at Queen's *other than where university credits are beyond the five year limit as defined in 3.b above*. Students should contact Queen's via the details below and we will advise as to whether it is worth pursuing this route.

10. Contact person

The contact person for APL queries is the Academic Registrar
admissions@queens.ac.uk Tel: 0121 452 2666 Postal address given below

11. Dates

Applications for entry to Queen's close on 31 July each year. Later applications may be accepted, and prospective students should contact Queen's. APL claims can be complex and must be completed before a detailed offer of a place on a particular programme can be confirmed (even if an overall offer of a place at Queen's can be made because the student meets normal entry criteria for an academic programme). Requests for an APL claim must therefore be submitted by 30 June, via an email or letter containing the relevant evidence addressed to the Academic Registrar. Later APL claims may in certain circumstances be accepted, and prospective students should contact the College to enquire.

12. Assistance

Applicants may seek assistance in whether to complete this process, or in the gathering of the documentation from the Academic Registrar.

12. Decisions

The APCL applications will be referred to the Queen's Admissions Panel which meets as and when cases require decisions. An applicant would normally expect to hear within four weeks of having submitted the relevant information and documents. Complex or borderline decisions may be referred to the Common Awards team at Durham University for further deliberation. If more evidence is required at any stage the applicant will be contacted to request this.

13. Feedback

Feedback will be provided if a claim is rejected, by request to the Academic Registrar.

Definitions

An Academic “Stage” is defined as follows:

Year 1 of a full time BA. This Stage is at academic level “4”. It may be studied part time over 2 to 3 years. If you have a “Certificate in Higher Education” this is an award which comprises all of this Stage.
Year 2 of a full time BA. This Stage is at academic level “5”. It may be studied part time over 2 to 3 years. If you have a Foundation Degree or a Diploma in Higher Education this is an award which is achieved by completing both Stages at level 4 and level 5.
Year 3 of a full time BA This Stage is at academic level “6”. It may be studied part time over 2 to 3 years. The BA award is made upon successful completion of all 3 Stages.
60 credits of a Master’s level programme (Level 7). These could exist as open credits or have been awarded to you as a “Post Graduate Certificate”.
120 credits of a Master’s level programme (Level 7). These could exist as open credits or have been awarded to you as a “Post Graduate Diploma”.
180 credits of a Master’s Programme (Level 7). This is a full Master’s Degree

Academic Levels:

Level 1	GCSE Grades D-F CSEs NVQ 1 or other qualifications that say “Level 1”
Level 2	GCSEs Grades A*-C O Levels NVQ 2 or other qualifications that say “Level 2”
Level 3	AS / A2 levels NVQ 3 or other qualifications that say “Level 3”
Level 4	Certificate of HE First year of BA Degree NVQ 4 or other qualifications that say “Level 4”
Level 5	Diploma of HE Foundation Degree First two years of BA degree
Level 6	BA
Level 7	Master’s level
Level 8	PhD