

# Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy and Procedures

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# 1 Introduction

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- 1.1 The policies and procedures set out in this document underpin the regulations which all staff and students are expected to follow. They provide greater details of the principles behind the regulations and the rules and processes that Goldsmiths puts in place to positively impact on the student and staff experience and to ensure compliance with external regulatory frameworks.
  - 1.2 The relevant regulations appear in text boxes at the start of each section.
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## 2 Scope

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1.5.1. Goldsmiths may exempt students from some parts of their programme of study by recognition of their prior learning from previous experiences and achievements, either where credit has been awarded for learning at a higher education level or through demonstration of the achievement of equivalent learning outcomes through vocational or other experience (RPL).

- 2.1 Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is a process by which students may be exempted from some elements of their chosen programme of study at Goldsmiths through recognition of their learning from previous experiences and achievements.
- 2.2 This policy outlines the requirements for individual students in applying for RPL and providing evidence, instructions for departments in handling RPL claims, and restrictions and limitations for RPL claims.
- 2.3 At Goldsmiths, RPL is divided into two categories:

## **2.4 Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL)**

2.4.1 RPCL refers to learning through recognised study awarded at higher education (HE) level that did not lead to the award of an equivalent level qualification. RPCL does not have to be credit-based, but the learning must have been assessed and marked.

## **2.5 Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL)**

2.5.1 RPEL refers to non-certificated learning through experience, vocational or otherwise.

2.5.2 Credit can only be awarded through RPEL where there is clear and demonstrable evidence of achievement of the learning outcomes from which exemption is requested. Implied or implicit learning from any relevant experience cannot be considered.

2.5.3 The principles which inform this policy also apply to articulation arrangements through which a qualification or credit awarded by an approved Partner Institution is formally recognised as granting direct entry to an advanced point in a Goldsmiths programme. Details on the process for approval of Collaborative Provision Policy are located in the Collaborative Provision Handbook.

2.5.4 The award of RPL is entirely at the discretion of Goldsmiths.

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## **3 Responsibilities**

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### **3.1 Applicants**

3.1.1 The applicant is responsible for applying for RPL, following instructions throughout the application procedure, and providing all necessary evidence, as set out in the criteria in section 4 of this policy.

### **3.2 Academic Departments**

3.2.1 The admitting Academic Department is responsible for providing information on the application for RPL, supporting applicants for RPL, and ensuring that all applicants are treated equitably throughout the process.

### **3.3 Student Administration**

- 3.3.1 The Assessment Team in Student Administration are responsible for approving the application and recording the amount and level of credit on the student record system and student transcript.

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## **4 Applications for RPL**

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1.5.2. Applicants / students must make a formal application to be considered for exemption from any part of a programme Goldsmiths maintains a policy which provides guidance to applicants for RPL and to departments in processing RPL applications.

- 4.1 Applications should be made before the applicant has registered as a Goldsmiths student.
- 4.2 Applicants must satisfy the following minimum evidence requirements in their applications in order to be considered for RPL:

### **4.3 For all applications:**

- 4.3.1 The specific module(s) and total number of credits for which RPL is being sought.
- 4.3.2 The stage in the programme of study the RPL will be applied to.

### **4.4 For RPCL:**

- 4.4.1 The title and location of the institution at which the learning occurred.
- 4.4.2 The dates of attendance at the institution, and the dates that any qualifications were awarded.
- 4.4.3 Curriculum details of subjects studied at the institution.
- 4.4.4 An authorised transcript (and authorised certificate, if available) of marks gained at the institution.
- 4.4.5 A copy of the marking scheme used by the institution.

## **4.5 For RPEL**

- 4.5.1 The dates and duration of activities undertaken, including a description of the activities themselves.
- 4.5.2 A detailed statement of what was learned through these activities.
- 4.5.3 Confirmation from an employer (or equivalent authority figure) of these activities being completed by the applicant.
- 4.6 Academic Departments may specify additional application procedures for the consideration of applications for RPL, such as requiring additional evidence or an interview.
- 4.7 Goldsmiths does not currently charge a fee for considering an RPL application.

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## **5 Criteria for the Award of Credit Through RPL**

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- 5.1 In order to be granted, the learning evidenced in any RPL application must meet the following criteria;

### **5.2 Validity**

- 5.2.1 It must be at least at the same level and of the same volume as the modules from which the exemption is being sought.

### **5.3 Sufficiency**

- 5.3.1 It must adequately match the learning outcomes of the modules from which exemption is being sought.

### **5.4 Currency**

- 5.4.1 It must represent the applicant's current knowledge and abilities, and be within the currency of learning limit of 5 years (outlined in section 6).

### **5.5 Authenticity**

- 5.5.1 It must be genuine and the applicant's own. For RPCL, pass marks must have been awarded for the modules or units being evidenced.

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## 6 Scope for RPL Claims

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- 6.1 The minimum amount of credit that can be claimed for RPL is one module (the smallest modules at Goldsmiths are currently 15 credits). RPL can only be claimed and granted for whole modules. It cannot be claimed for elements of modules, such as single assessments.
- 6.2 The maximum amount of credit that can be claimed for RPL varies according to the level of study. These amounts are shown below in table 1. The maximum amounts refer to total RPL credits claimed, meaning if using a combination of RPCL and RPEL is used this cannot exceed the maximum total.
- 6.3 Undergraduate students must have studied for a minimum of one year, including the final year, under the direction of Goldsmiths teaching staff.
- 6.4 Postgraduate taught students must have studied for a minimum of one third of the normal full-time or part-time period of study for the programme of study, including the final stage and assessment (i.e. the dissertation / major project or equivalent).
- 6.5 Postgraduate research students may apply for RPL if they have begun a postgraduate research programme at another institution and wish to transfer to complete it at Goldsmiths. The Graduate School must be contacted directly for enquiries of this nature. However, these claims are not guaranteed to be approved.

<b>Qualification towards which RPL being granted</b>	<b>Maximum number of credits for RPL-based exemption</b>
Certificate in Higher Education	60
Diploma in Higher Education	120
Honours Degree	240
Graduate Diploma	60
Integrated Masters	240
Postgraduate Certificate	30
Postgraduate Diploma	60
Masters	120

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## 7 Restrictions on RPL Claims

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- 7.1 RPL can only be granted if the evidence meets the criteria in section 4 of this policy. Academic Departments should carefully review the evidence in the claim to decide whether it sufficiently demonstrates achievement of the learning outcomes of the module being claimed against.
- 7.2 Academic Departments may decide that some modules are unsuitable for exemption and require all students to take and pass them to achieve the award.
- 7.3 Some programmes of study that are accredited by professional bodies may be unable to offer any form of RPL-based exemption.
- 7.4 RPL can only be claimed and granted if the prior learning concluded no more than 5 years before the start date of the programme of study, unless the applicant can present acceptable evidence that the learning has continued in a professional or academic setting.
- 7.5 RPL can only be granted if it does not result in 'double counting'. This means that credited learning that has already contributed to the award of one qualification cannot be used to gain RPL-based exemption in another qualification at the same level or lower (e.g. credited modules that had been part of a programme of study that led to the award of an MA could not subsequently be used to gain exemption from modules on another MA). However, in the case of interim exit awards, this would be permitted (e.g. modules that had led to the award of a PGCert could be used to gain exemption from modules on an MA). If an applicant is unclear whether their claim would result in double counting, they should consult with the admitting Academic Department of their programme of study for advice.

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## 8 Outcomes of RPL Claims

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- 8.1 If an RPL claim is rejected, applicants can appeal this decision through the normal Goldsmiths admissions appeals process. Appeals can be made on the basis of material or procedural irregularity but cannot be made on the basis of academic judgment of whether the evidence meets the criteria.
- 8.2 If an RPL claim is approved, students will be exempted from the modules agreed and will not be required to register for or attend them.
- 8.3 Exemption from modules may affect student status (e.g. full-time) due to a reduction in the amount of credits being taken. This may, in turn, affect student loan entitlement. If an applicant is unclear whether their claim would affect their student status or loan entitlement, they should consult with the host department of their programme of study and the Student Loans Company for advice.
- 8.4 Credit awarded through RPL will not be assigned a mark and will not count towards the student's final degree classification.
- 8.5 Credit awarded through RPL will be clearly recorded and shown on the student record system and student transcript, including the module(s), level, and amount of exempted credit.
- 8.6 Where a student is exempted from part of their programme of study at Goldsmiths, the programme fee may be reduced pro-rata relative to the amount of credit being studied.