**RPEL – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**What is RPEL?**

RPEL is the acronym for the Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning and is defined as the process by which appropriate experiential learning is assessed and accredited.

Experiential learning is the knowledge and skills you have acquired through life experience, work experience (whether paid or voluntary) and study which are not formally attested through any educational or professional certification.

The RPEL process allows you to have this learning assessed and can lead to you being awarded credit for modules on your chosen course of study. It is important to note that it is the *learning* derived from the experience that is accredited, rather than the experience itself.

**What are the benefits of RPEL?**

RPEL allows you to have your experiential learning count towards your study for a University of Westminster award. Where your claim is successful, you will be awarded credit for the module for which you claim, which means that you will not need to take that module. The main benefit is that you will not need to undertake study in areas where you are already sufficiently skilled, and hence will not be required to effectively repeat learning.

As a self-reflective exercise, the process will also help you to develop useful, transferable skills, and may help you to identify your particular areas of knowledge and experience. It may form an important part of your Personal Development Planning processes.

**Is there a maximum amount of credit I can claim RPEL for?**

Yes. The University’s framework stipulates the maximum amount of RPEL credit that can contribute to the various awards at undergraduate and postgraduate level. These are as follows:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Award** | **Maximum Number of RPCL or RPEL credits which may count towards the requirements of the award** | **Minimum number of credits to be achieved at the University of Westminster** |
| Foundation Certificate | 60 credits | 60 credits at L3 or above |
| CertHE | 60 credits | 60 credits at L4 or above |
| DipHE | 160 credits | 80 credits, including at least 60 credits at L5 or L6 |
| Non-honours Degree | 200 credits | 100 credits, including at least 80 credits at L5 and/or L6 |
| Honours Degree | 240 credits | 60 credits at L6 and 60 credits at L5 or L6 |
| Integrated Masters | 240 credits | 120 credits at L7, 60 credits at L6, and 60 credits at L5 or L6 |
| Foundation Degree | 120 credits | 120 credits, including at least 60 credits at L5 or above |
| Postgraduate  Certificate | 30 credits | 30 credits at credit level 7 |
| Postgraduate  Diploma | 60 credits | 60 credits at credit level 7 |
| Master’s Degree | 90 credits | 90 credits at credit level 7 |

**How will it affect my final degree classification?**

Credit awarded under RPEL does not carry with it a mark for the module. You will simply be awarded credit. As there are no marks, the modules for which you have been awarded RPEL credit will not contribute towards the classification of your award. The classification will therefore be based on the remaining modules.

**Is there a charge for RPEL?**

There is no specific fee for the RPEL process, but you will still pay all applicable course fees, including the modules for which you may subsequently receive RPEL credit.

**Should I register on the modules for which I am claiming RPEL?**

Yes. Unless you have already been awarded RPEL credit, you should still register for and participate in the required modules for your course of study. Once awarded RPEL for a module, you will be withdrawn from the module and can stop attending.

Where possible, you should apply for RPEL credits before you are due to study the modules for which you are claiming. In this instance you will not need to register for modules where you have already been awarded credit.

**What if I have already attempted the module and did not pass first time?**

You cannot claim RPEL credit against a module which you have already attempted. Therefore if you have sat for assessment and not passed a module at the first sitting, you will not be eligible for RPEL credit.

**When should I claim for RPEL?**

Ideally you should make your claim as early as possible on commencement of the course. Each College has a designated RPEL Tutor who will be able to advise you on what you may be able to claim for.

If your claim is for modules on which you are registered, there is a deadline for submission of claims in each semester. These deadlines are intended to ensure that all RPEL claims are considered *before* you are due to submit assessment for the module. If you intend to claim for modules that you will take in later years of your course, it is still advisable to submit the claim as far in advance as you are able.

Your claim will be considered by a meeting of the University RPEL Board. The Board meets three times a year and the dates of these meetings are published in the University Calendar.

**How do I prepare and submit a claim?**

The first thing you will need to do is download the claim form, mapping form and associated guidance from the University website.

As part of the process, you will need to reflect on your learning and map that learning to the learning outcomes for the modules that make up your claim. You will also need to collate and provide independent documentary evidence to support your claim.

**What support will I get?**

Each College has a member of staff with designated responsibility for RPEL. This person will ensure that you are allocated an appropriate member of staff to act as your RPEL Mentor, advising you on the preparation for your claim, suggesting alternative methods of presentation where appropriate, and advising on the nature of appropriate supporting evidence.

**Who decides whether my claim if accepted?**

Your claims will be considered by an RPEL Assessor, who will be an appropriately qualified member of academic staff from the relevant area of study (e.g. the Module Leader or Course Leader). The RPEL Assessor makes recommendation on your claim to the University RPEL Board, which meets three times a year.

**What if my claim was rejected?**

You are entitled to resubmit your claim to the Board on one further occasion only. If your claim is rejected, the letter you receive will outline the reasons for rejection. In certain circumstances the Board will reject the claim and advise the student that resubmission would not be capable of yielding a successful outcome. Where it is possible that a resubmitted claim will be successful, the Board will make clear what further information or evidence you will need to include.

**Can I appeal against the decision?**

You can only appeal on the grounds that there has been a material irregularity in the processing of your claim. All such appeals must be made in writing to the Deputy Registrar (Quality and Standards) within 10 working days of receipt of the letter informing you of the outcome.