



MORLEY COLLEGE LONDON

Higher Education: Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Recognition of Experiential Learning (REL) Policy

POLICY OWNER:	Vice-Principal (Higher Education)
FINAL APPROVAL BY:	Policy Committee
Policy Category:	Student
Approved by Policy Committee:	17 June 2025
Approved by Governing Body:	N/A
Review Date:	30 June 2030

1. **Introduction, Purpose and Scope of Policy:**

Morley College London is committed to providing an environment for students that actively provides equality of opportunity, freedom from discrimination and values the diversity of all students. The College seeks to broaden the pool of students by raising awareness and expectations in line with its commitment to widening participation, particularly but not exclusively to its local community.

The College is supportive of all applicants who can demonstrate their potential, and recognises and supports the ambitions of its applicants. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or Recognition of Experiential Learning (REL) may allow applicants further routes into Higher Education. Morley College London therefore has this policy to aid applicants and staff alike in understanding the function, purpose and practicalities of using RPL/REL.

2. **Equality and Diversity Analysis Screening:**

In accordance with the College's Equality and Diversity Policy, the development of this policy complies with the Equality Act 2010 in ensuring due regard to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations (see section 4 of the Equality and Diversity Policy).

An impact analysis was not required for this policy, owing to its applicability to all students.

3. **Applicability:**

This Policy is only applicable to prescribed, credit bearing HE courses including national certificates, diplomas, undergraduate degrees and postgraduate qualifications.

For non-prescribed HE and Access to HE Courses, please refer to the Student General Admissions Policy

4. **Definitions:**

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): an assessment process that involves assessment of an individual's relevant prior learning (including formal and informal learning) in order to give credit for learning outcomes a student has already achieved. RPL means applicants can start their course at the appropriate level, gaining part or full accreditation for specific unit/modules to reduce the amount of credits/units/modules or content they need to study to gain a qualification. In claiming recognition of prior learning it should be noted that course regulations must be followed.

Recognition of Experiential Learning (REL): a process by which relevant experiential learning is assessed and accredited. Experiential learning includes the knowledge and skills acquired through life experience, work experience and study which are not formally documented through a recognised qualification. In this document, unless made explicit, RPL and REL are used to mean any recognition of prior activity.

Higher Education (HE): courses in this context are prescribed, credit-bearing courses which are offered at level 4, 5, 6 or 7 at Morley College London. They are prescribed, credit bearing courses, meaning they are eligible for funding through Student Finance England.

Awarding body or validating partner: these are the institutions that award the final qualification that the College delivers.

QCF and RQF qualifications: The QCF (Qualifications and Credit Framework) and the RQF (Regulated Qualifications Framework) provide a measure of the length and level of a course. The RQF replaced the QCF in 2015 and so courses on the RQF are more current than courses on the QCF. For this reason an applicant wishing to use their QCF qualification as RPL/REL will enter a process of 'mapping' so the programme team can be assured that the knowledge from the older qualification being claimed can be enhanced so as to be deemed current. Qualifications on an older framework to the QCF or RQF will be deemed to be no longer current as they would be older than 5 years, however the programme team may wish to enter a discussion with the applicant around experiential learning to see if that can be used (please refer to the Appendix).

International qualifications: qualifications which were awarded outside of the UK qualification framework.

5. Statutory and regulatory requirements:

UK Quality Code:

Expectations for Quality: From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.

- Core Practices:
 - The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.
 - The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.

Expectations for Standards: The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards.

- Core practices:
 - The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications frameworks.

6. Policy Objectives:

This policy aims to provide a RPL/REL process that:

- Supports a student-focused approach to admissions, ensuring all applicants receive the appropriate information, advice and guidance;
- Ensures the admissions process for entry onto courses is clear to applicants, with staff able to confidently discuss how the RPL/REL process could support their entry to a programme;
- Is aligned with the requirements of the relevant awarding organisations or validating partner;
- Promotes equality, diversity and inclusion, and is consistent with other relevant College policies.

7. Policy statement:

7.1 The College values highly the diversity and range of experience that students contribute to college life. Recruitment and admissions processes aim to match the abilities, aptitude and aspirations of the prospective student to the programme of study.

7.2 There may be occasions whereby applicants present themselves – for example as mature students¹ – who may not meet the entry requirements of the HE course they are

¹ The Office for Students regards a mature student as 21 or over

applying to². In these instances, we may still consider the application based on previous employment or previous study. Morley College London appreciates that mature students may have extensive relevant experience gained through paid or unpaid work, or through other types of professional training or sector-related opportunities and this experience may be used to support an application.

7.3 **Policy Principles**

- It is at the discretion of the College whether an applicant may import credit. This decision will be guided by relevant awarding body policies and regulations.
- Decisions regarding the awarding of RPL or REL are matters of academic judgement. The decision-making process will be transparent, rigorous and fair.
- Any learning or assessment must have been completed in the five years prior to entry in order to be eligible for recognition.
- RPL/REL should neither advantage or disadvantage a student over other students on a course.
- In order for prior learning to be recognised the credit must map sufficiently to the curriculum of the programme of study
- An Applicant's performance in credit offered for transfer or in assessment of prior experiential learning is ordinarily sufficient evidence of achievement.

8. **Implementation of Policy:**

- 8.1 Appropriate references to the option to recognise prior or experiential should be included in the prospectus, on the College website and in accompanying promotional material.
- 8.2 Applicants are encouraged to apply for RPL/REL as early as possible during the application process. The RPL/REL process must be completed prior to the start of the course of study. A fee will not be charged to anyone requesting RPL/REL.
- 8.3 RPL cannot be used as an extenuating circumstance for underachievement during subsequent course of study.
- 8.4 In normal circumstances, the following limit shall apply to the amount of credit that can be imported:
- For L4-L6 Courses, a maximum of two thirds of the total credits for the relevant award, subject to an upper limit of 240 credits.
 - For L7 courses a maximum of one third of the total credits for the relevant award, subject to an upper limit of 60 credits.
 - For all taught courses a minimum of 30 credits may be imported
- 8.5 Certified credit from another institution can be recognized in two different ways:
- Transfer of credit and marks in substitution for specific modules within a programme
 - Credit transfer without marks in individual modules, which is normally permissible only in respect of L4 of an undergraduate courses. It is not permissible where the module contributes to the classification of a qualification.
- 8.6 **Application Process**
- 8.6.1 All applications for RPL/REL should be on the appropriate form and submitted to the Central Admissions Team.

² Please refer to the course listings on UCAS: [Morley College London | UCAS](#)

- 8.6.2 The Central Admissions Team will notify the relevant curriculum team of the application.
- 8.6.2 Initial consideration of an application will be made by the Course Leader, who will take one of the following actions:
- Ask the applicant for more details where there is an absence of information
 - Proceed with the Curriculum Mapping where an application meets basic criteria
 - Recommend rejection
- 8.6.3 If the application proceeds, the Course Leader will conduct a Curriculum Mapping Exercise for the imported credit and add their comments to the form.
- 8.6.4 On completion of the mapping exercise, the Course Leader may:
- Recommend approval
 - Recommend rejection on the grounds that the credits proposed do not map sufficiently on to the curriculum
- 8.6.5 A signed copy of the form should be submitted to the Head of Enhancement (Higher Education) who will either accept or reject the recommendation. In the event that the recommendation is rejected, the application should be referred on to the Head of Higher Education for a final decision.
- 8.6.6 The Central Admissions team will inform the applicant of the final decision.

8.7 **Curriculum Mapping**

8.7.1 Curriculum mapping should consider:

- Learning outcomes achieved
- How well the learning maps on to:
 - Specific Morley Modules
 - Course Learning Aims and Objectives
 - Level of the learning in relation to the overall programme specification
 - Credit weighting

8.7.2 Each applicant should be interviewed prior to the completion of the mapping exercise.

8.7.3 *For Prior Experiential Learning:*

- The College must assure itself of an applicant's ability to meet the required learning outcomes. Course Leaders are advised to create an appropriate assessment task linked to the programme learning outcomes to gauge the applicant's abilities.
- An applicant should be interviewed prior to being asked to produce assessed work and the completion of the mapping exercise.
- Any completed assessment must be marked by two members of staff.
 - Where an applicant passes the assigned task this shall be indicated in the documentation
 - Where an applicant fails the task, feedback will be provided and the applicant may be granted a chance to resubmit within a given period.
 - Where an assessment of PEL is undertaken and an applicant successfully meets the criteria, a numerical mark will not be assigned to the module. The applicant will be assigned a pass grade for the module and the module will not be included in the calculation of progression or the degree classification

8.8 **International Qualifications:**

The College is not a member of [Ecctis](#) and cannot check the equivalency of individual

overseas qualifications. Should an applicant wish to use an international qualification:

- the College reserves the right to request a certified translation of any/all international qualification(s) prior to enrolment, this will be at the applicants own cost,
- the interviewing tutor will conduct a professional discussion with the applicant to establish core knowledge; if a portfolio of work to support the original international qualification is available, that should be reviewed as part of the discussion,
- As the College cannot make informed choices based on another country's academic syllabus, a claim for potential experiential learning would be the only possibility as no mapping from qualification to qualification would be possible,
- Curriculum teams are advised to speak to Head of Quality Enhancement (HE) should they require further advice.

8.9 **Appeal**

If an applicant is not satisfied with the RPL/REL decision they may appeal in writing to the Head of Quality Enhancement (HE) if they believe that this policy has not been applied correctly in the processing of their application. Applicants will receive a reply within 15 working days of the original appeal date; if there is likely to be a delay in the process applicants will be informed of this.

The applicant does not have the right to appeal the College's decision but may refer to the College's Complaints Policy and Procedure, available on the College website, if they believe the process leading to this decision was not implemented appropriately.

8.10 **Fees**

Applicants who are awarded recognition of prior or experiential learning will pay fees on the balance of units/modules needed to complete the course of study.

9. **Communication and training:**

The policy will be made available via the College's website and internal policy library. Staff involved in HE delivery and the professional service departments should be aware of the policy and inducted on it when they start work at the College or on the Higher Education provision.

10. **Monitoring and Reporting:**

- 10.1 The Head of Quality Enhancement (HE) will maintain all records relating to RPL/REL.
- 10.2 Students who have been approved RPL/REL will be recorded formally in the minutes of the Assessment Board for the respective HE course
- 10.3 External Examiners for the HE provision will be informed where any students have made use of RPL/REL, allowing them to review the work and/or mapping to ensure that:
 - due process has been followed by the College and
 - that the student's work is of a commensurate level to the level of the programme.
- 10.4 The HE Sub-Committee will monitor the progress and retention of students where RPL/REL was applied to reflect the efficacy of the process.
- 10.5 The Vice Principal (Higher Education) is responsible for this policy, reviewing every five years or sooner if there is a notable change to awarding organisation or validating partner requirements and implementation.
- 10.6 Any appeals will be reported to the College Complaints Coordinator for inclusion within the College Feedback Register.

11. Related References, Policies, Procedures, Forms and other Appendices:

- [HE Complaints Policy](#)
- [Fees and Refunds Policy](#)
- [HE Admissions Policy](#)
- [Student Protection Plan \(HE\)](#)
- [Access and Participation Plan](#)

Appendix 1:

**APPLICATION FOR THE RECOGNITION OF
PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)**



FOR COMPLETION BY APPLICANT:	
First Name (s):	
Surname:	
Email address:	
Course applying to:	
Previous Institution:	
Previous course of study:	
Dates of attendance:	
Qualifications gained (if appropriate):	
Reason for application:	
Details of modules/units for which recognition of prior learning is sought:	
<i>Please list the modules undertaken at another HEI and give equivalent Morley modules in full</i>	
Declaration	<input type="checkbox"/> I enclose original or authenticated copies of all material supporting my application, including any relevant assessment(s) and, where available, the grade(s) achieved.
Signature of applicant:	
Date:	

FOR COMPLETION BY COURSE LEADERS:

Details of any compulsory modules/units to be studied at Morley and when, to address any gaps in previous studies:

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Total number of exempted modules *(for non-modular programmes - please confirm the proportion of the academic year):*

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Total amount of credit required, following adjustment for RPL, to qualify for the qualification sought:

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Recommendation:	<input type="checkbox"/> Approve RPL <input type="checkbox"/> Reject RPL
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Signature:	
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Date:	
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FOR COMPLETION BY HEAD OF SCHOOL:

Comments or Conditions:

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Signature:	
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Date:	
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FOR COMPLETION BY HEAD OF QUALITY ENHANCEMENT (HE):

Recommendation:	<input type="checkbox"/> Accept <input type="checkbox"/> Reject
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Comments and conditions which **MUST** be included within the offer letter:

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Total Value of Credits:	
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Total Value of Exempted Modules/units:	
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Signature:	
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Date:	
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Appendix 2:

APPLICATION FOR THE RECOGNITION OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING (EPL)



FOR COMPLETION BY APPLICANT:		
First Name (s):		
Surname:		
Email address:		
Course applying to:		
Mode of Study:	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Time <input type="checkbox"/> Part Time	
Qualifications gained (if appropriate):		
Reason for application:		
<p><i>This should evidence your learning on which the application is based, including skills that relate to the programme and experience gained through non-formal qualifications.</i></p>		
Work Experience/Employment History:		
Job Title, Company/Organisation	Dates	Brief summary
Details of modules/units for which recognition of experiential learning is sought:		
<p><i>Please list the modules undertaken at another HEI and give equivalent Morley modules in full</i></p>		
Declaration	<input type="checkbox"/> I enclose original or authenticated copies of all material supporting my application, including any relevant assessment(s) and, where available, the grade(s) achieved.	
Signature of applicant:		
Date:		

FOR COMPLETION BY COURSE LEADERS:

Details of any compulsory modules/units to be studied at Morley and when, to address any gaps in previous studies:

--

Total number of exempted modules *(for non-modular programmes - please confirm the proportion of the academic year):*

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Total amount of credit required, following adjustment for REL, to qualify for the qualification sought:

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Recommendation:	<input type="checkbox"/> Approve RPL
	<input type="checkbox"/> Reject RPL

Signature:	
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Date:	
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FOR COMPLETION BY HEAD OF SCHOOL:

Comments or Conditions:

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Signature:	
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Date:	
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FOR COMPLETION BY HEAD OF QUALITY ENHANCEMENT (HE):

Recommendation:	<input type="checkbox"/> Accept
	<input type="checkbox"/> Reject

Comments and conditions which **MUST** be included within the offer letter:

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Total Value of Credits:	
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Total Value of Exempted Modules/units:	
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Signature:	
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Date:	
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