Futureworks

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Futureworks

Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) Policy

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1 Introduction

1.1 Futureworks aligns with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in its definition of Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) as:

The identification, assessment and formal acknowledgement of learning and achievement that occurred at some time in the past (perhaps as the result of a previous course, self-directed study, or active experience), which is taken into account when admitting a student to a course of study.

1.2 The QAA provides two main categories within the accreditation of prior learning, both of which are recognised by Futureworks:

1.2.1 Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL) - The identification, assessment and formal acknowledgement of learning and achievement that occurred at some time in the past prior to entry to a course of study, and for which the learner was awarded some form of official recognition.

1.2.2 Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) - The identification, assessment and formal acknowledgement of learning and achievement that occurred at some time in the past prior to entry to a course of study, but not in the context of formal education or training.

1.3 The term 'APL' encompasses both definitions in this document.

2 Background and Purpose

2.1 APL can benefit professionals who have years of experience but lack formal certifications to validate their expertise. They can upgrade their qualifications quickly, switch careers, or meet industry standards without having to study on a lengthy programme. Equally, it can allow former students to return to higher education and build on prior learning.

2.2 This policy provides guidance on the application of the accreditation of prior learning in relation to the academic regulations for 2026-27 applications and enrolment. APL may be applied to any of Futureworks' programmes.

2.3 An applicant's skills and knowledge, achieved through work, community or voluntary experience, and/or prior study, is considered through a formal process against descriptors to assess the level achieved across the relevant learning outcomes. This assures the provider of the relevance and currency of the experience. The Admissions Officer, together with the relevant Programme Leader, are responsible for assessing APL. An APL form is sent to relevant applicants by email as part of the admissions process.

3 Principles

3.1 Credits may be given for prior learning where the level, standard, content and relevance of that learning is appropriate to the programme of study.

3.2 Credits awarded both by Futureworks and by other UK institutions can be considered as prior learning subject to the maximum amounts set out below.

3.3 APL takes place within the context of the FHEQ, SCQF, CQFW and equivalent frameworks.

3.4 An application for APCL where the date of prior learning is not within the past 5 years will not usually be accepted and will be subject to further consideration via interview.

3.5 PSRB restrictions on entry criteria take precedence over APL.

3.6 APL may only be applied prior to registration for the programme of study.

3.7 APL from different institutions will be permitted.

3.8 Transfers between Futureworks programmes are dealt with separately to APL, unless students have left with an exit award and are requesting the use of credits from their exit award to be accepted to a different Futureworks programme.

3.9 If students currently enrolled in a programme of study at Futureworks are considering changing programmes within Futureworks this will be considered under an internal transfer normally no later than the latest date of enrolment on the new programme (usually Day 1 of Week 7 of teaching). If the request is approved by the receiving Programme Leader, the transfer would be processed by the Academic Registry. If, however, the student is considering changing between internal programmes after the latest date of enrolment, they would then normally need to

apply for the next entry point for the new programme and this would constitute a new application via the Online Application Form.

3.10 Students wishing to start a new programme at the same academic level as their current programme and wishing to APL credit from their current to their new programme will be required to withdraw from the current programme and make an application for the new programme. Students should ensure they have achieved enough credits to meet the award criteria and request it is awarded before withdrawing.

3.11 Mainstream undergraduate applicants can either receive 240 credits (two thirds) of an undergraduate qualification at FHEQ Levels 4 & 5 or 120 credits (one third) of an undergraduate qualification at FHEQ Level 4.

3.12 APL may be awarded for 20 credit modules in the case of Single Registerable Module (SRM) applicants who are applying for 2 x 20 credit modules. Part-module credit may not be awarded.

3.13 Degree apprenticeship students may only be accredited at FHEQ Level 4 and must join the programme at this level. In the case of a prospective apprentice meeting all Level 4 requirements following initial assessment of prior learning Futureworks would provide guidance or signposting to an alternative course.

3.14 Futureworks does not permit credits to be "counted down" from a higher level to facilitate entry onto a qualification.

3.15 APL credits will be recorded on a student's transcript as 'Pass', not graded and not used to calculate the student's final degree classification.

3.16 All applicants for APL must be treated equitably regardless of the sources of the prior learning that is being considered or the age, gender, marital status, ethnicity, disability, religious belief or sexual orientation of the applicant.

4 Appealing a Decision

4.1 As appeals cannot be made against decisions of academic judgement there are no formal rights of appeal against the final decision of Futureworks. If, however, the appeal is made on grounds of procedural irregularity, the emergence of new material information or evidence of bias or prejudice, an appeal can be submitted in accordance with the Complaints and Appeals

Procedure for Applicants, which can be found in the Student Recruitment & Admissions Policy. Similarly, for current students whose applications for APL are declined, they would be permitted to make an appeal on the grounds of procedural irregularity, the emergence of new material information or evidence of bias or prejudice, in line with Futureworks' Student Complaints Process. The Vice Principal has responsibility for decisions relating to formal applicant appeals and the Principal is responsible for the review stage.

5 Fraudulent Applications

5.1 Students will be asked to sign an APL form stating that all the information they have provided on their application for APL is accurate, to the best of their knowledge. Futureworks reserves the right to terminate an application for study if the applicant is found to have omitted relevant information or if they are found to have falsified any part of their application.

6 Governance & Review

6.1 The Academic Board is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the APL policy and process. Evaluation will be led by the Academic Registrar on an annual basis and recommendations will be added to the Recommendations Tracker, which is monitored by the Academic Board.

7 Relevant Policies

7.1 Student Recruitment & Admissions Policy

8 Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) Procedure

