

## The Presbyterian Theological Faculty, Ireland

### Recognition of Prior Learning

1.1 The Presbyterian Theological Faculty, Ireland (PTFI) invites applications to its degree and diploma programmes from all prospective students who possess the ability, knowledge and experience required to benefit from them. PTFI demonstrates its commitment to this aspiration through its arrangements for credit accumulation and transfer, and the recognition of prior learning. PTFI operates a RPL scheme which recognises relevant prior learning for admission and/or credit purposes.

1.2 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the generic term used for demonstrated learning that has occurred at some time in the past. It encompasses:

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

The process through which previously formally assessed academic learning for which credit has been awarded is considered and, as appropriate, recognised for academic purposes. This is also known as credit transfer where the credits were awarded by another Higher Education provider.

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

The process through which an applicant reflects on experiences of learning achieved outside education or training systems, which is assessed and, as appropriate, recognised for academic purposes.

1.3 PTFI recognises that some prospective students may not be able to provide evidence that they meet its entry requirements through the accepted qualifications detailed in College publications, but they are able to provide substantial and relevant alternative evidence that they have the potential to succeed on their chosen programme. This relates particularly to prospective students applying for ministry training courses.

2. Key Principles of the College's Scheme

2.1 RPCL may enable an applicant to:

- gain admission to a programme and
- be awarded credit for a proportion of an undergraduate or postgraduate programme and therefore gain exemption from specified taught modules of the programme.

2.2 In terms of preparation for ministry, RPEL is used to enable an applicant to be awarded credit for a proportion of a programme and therefore gain exemption from specified taught modules of the programme.

At postgraduate level, it is also used for this purpose and more commonly, for admission.

- 2.3 Credits are only awarded on the basis of evidence which is typically:
- sufficient to determine that learning outcomes have been met.
  - authentic to the work of the applicant.
  - recent enough to imply current knowledge or capability, i.e. no more than 10 years old.
  - appropriate to the level and volume of credit being claimed.
- 2.4 When awarding credit for prior learning, where appropriate, PTFI will consider the requirements of ecclesiastical bodies for licensing, ordination, and ministerial recognition.
3. General Guidelines
- 3.1 It is the applicant's responsibility to prepare an application and to submit adequate documentary evidence, including, as appropriate, certificates.
- 3.2 Those responsible for the admissions process will administer RPCL claims for admission with award of credit, made at the time of application.
4. The Award of Credit
- 4.1 Specific credit may be awarded where prior learning matches level, volume, content and the learning outcomes of a given module(s).
- 4.2 General credit may be awarded where prior learning is recognised to be of sufficient depth and quality as to be assigned a specific level and amount (i.e. a semester or year of a programme), but which cannot be matched to the subject content of specified module(s).
- 4.3 RPL credit is always ungraded and will not count towards final degree classification.
- 4.4 Credit will not normally be granted for any modules that have already contributed towards an award.
5. Limitations to the Award of Credit
- 5.1 The minimum claim allowable under the RPL Scheme is equal to the relevant whole module (with the specified number of credit points) within any given programme.
- 5.2 The maximum credit that can be claimed for postgraduate programmes is normally one-third of the total required for the programme. Normally this will be:
- 20 credit points towards a Postgraduate Certificate.
  - 40 credit points towards a Postgraduate Diploma.
  - 60 credit points towards a Master's degree.
6. Instances where RPL credit cannot be awarded
- 6.1 RPL credit cannot be awarded for any module which comprises a major project or dissertation.

6.2 RPL credit cannot be awarded where ecclesiastical body requirements are not met.

## 7. Applications for Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL)

7.1 Evidence of prior certificated learning should normally be presented in the form of a portfolio. The portfolio should contain written material which clearly demonstrates how the applicant's prior learning is evidence of his/her achievement of the requisite module and/or programme learning outcomes.

7.2 The applicant must demonstrate through their certificated prior learning how they have achieved each of the learning outcomes of the required module(s), or level of the programme for which they are applying for exemption.

A typical portfolio should normally contain:

- The title of the programme for which they are applying, or on which they are registered.
- The relevant programme specification, transcripts, certificates and module descriptors for the certificated prior learning.
- The module(s) or elements of the programme from which exemption is being sought, with a clear indication of how the learning outcomes have been achieved through the certificated prior learning being claimed in (ii).

7.3 Once the RPL process is complete, any accompanying original documentation will be returned to the applicant. Applicants may be required to submit original documents on request or at registration.

## 8. Applications for Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL)

8.1 The applicant must demonstrate the coherence, balance and progression of their learning through critical reflection. Appropriate sources of experiential learning may include: work experience, voluntary work, short course, or other relevant experiences.

8.2 Evidence of prior experiential learning should normally be presented in the form of a portfolio. The portfolio should contain written material which clearly demonstrates how the student's prior experience is evidence of his/her achievement of the requisite module(s) and/or programme learning outcomes.

A typical RPEL portfolio should contain:

- Cover sheet with the applicant's name, the title of the programme they have applied to and the date of submission of the portfolio.
- Table of contents.
- Personal profile or full Curriculum Vitae.
- Employment History.
- Education and Training History.
- Training and Professional Qualifications.

9. Appeals

9.1 There is no right of appeal except on grounds of procedural irregularity

