

Guidelines for use of Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)

1. Definition of APL

- 1.1. Accreditation of prior learning relates to the learning of individuals and can be defined as learning from the past that is subsequently credited against a (new) qualification and thus gives exemption from taking part of the qualification in question. APL relates to credit and exemption from part of a (new) programme of study, not to meeting admission requirements for a programme of study.
- 1.2. APL is dependent on the level, content and achievement of previous learning, and the congruence of the learning outcomes of the previous learning to the learning outcomes of the programme of study for which credit or exemption is being sought.
- 1.3. Possession of prior learning does not confer right of entry to any programme of study. Where individual programme requirements allow, success in one of the College's Continuing Professional Development (CPD) module(s) or similar course(s) can help determine whether a student has the ability to successfully complete the award bearing programme.

2. Proportion of Prior Learning which may be accredited

2.1. Undergraduate degree programmes

- 2.1.1. The **maximum** APL which may be awarded for entry to a **Bachelors** degree in the Faculties of Engineering and Natural Sciences* is **60 ECTS** at first cycle or equivalent. In order to be eligible for an award of the College a student granted APL must also study for a minimum of two years, including the final year, under the direction of teachers in the College.
- 2.1.2. The **maximum** APL which may be awarded for entry to an **Integrated Master's** degree (i.e. MEng or MSci) is **120 ECTS** at first cycle or equivalent. In order to be eligible for an award of the College a student granted APL must also study for a minimum of two years, including the final year, under the direction of teachers in the College. (Departments must ensure that these students obtain the appropriate number of ECTS at second cycle or equivalent level in order to meet the requirements of an Imperial Integrated Master's level degree).

*APL is not normally granted to applicants for entry to undergraduate degrees in the Faculty of Medicine, except as specified by the Faculty in the conditions for graduate applicants and for the Oxbridge Advance Entry.

2.2. Master's level degree programmes

2.2.1. The **maximum** APL which may be awarded for entry to a **part-time Master's** level programme is **30 ECTS studied at Master's level** (i.e. second cycle) or equivalent (or pro-rata i.e. 10 ECTS for part-time Postgraduate Certificates and 20 ECTS for part-time Postgraduate Diplomas). In order to be eligible for an award of the College a student granted APL must also study for a minimum of two-thirds of the programme, under the direction of teachers in the College.

2.2.2. APL is not granted for entry to full-time Master's level degrees.

3. Evidence to be provided by applicant

3.1. APL will be based on consideration of the following evidence to be provided by the applicant:

- Full name and CID number
- The number of credits for which APL is being sought and the corresponding part of the Imperial degree (if this can be clearly indicated by means of a module or similar)
- The name of the prior qualification (or part qualification) and the awarding body
- A transcript of the modules /course taken, credits achieved and the marks awarded for the prior learning, certified by the appropriate officer or officers of the institution or institutions where the prior learning took place. The prior learning must have been undertaken **no more than five years** before the proposed date of entry to the programme of study for which exemption/credit is being sought;
- The learning outcomes for the prior learning, as defined in the programme specification, programme handbook or other official documentation from the institution where the prior learning took place;
- References from the institution where the prior learning took place.

3.2. Applications for APL should be made either in advance or by the end of the first month of the programme.

4. Consideration of evidence and approval process

4.1. The evaluation of APL claims is on the grounds of relevance of prior study in terms of range, quality, currency and coherence with the Imperial programme of study, to meet the wording of the relevant academic regulations.

4.2. Applications for APL for admittance to **undergraduate** programmes must be submitted from the Programme Director (or equivalent) for the proposed programme of study via the appropriate Registry Admissions or Records Officer to the Academic Registrar. Applications require the support of the

Director of Undergraduate Studies for the department. The Programme Director together with the Academic Registrar will then determine whether and how much APL can be granted.

- 4.3. Applications for APL for admittance to a **Master's level** programme must be submitted from the Programme Director for the proposed programme of study via the appropriate Registry Admissions or Records Officer to the Academic Registrar. Applications require the support of the Director of Postgraduate Studies for the department. The Programme Director together with the Academic Registrar and the Director of the Graduate School will then determine whether and how much APL can be granted. Where the APL application relates to credit from Imperial (for example awarded after successful completion of a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) module) and the individual programme requirements allow, only approval from the Academic Registrar is required.
- 4.4. The Registry Admissions or Records Officer will inform the Programme Director of the outcome of the application.

5. Marks credited for Prior Learning

- 5.1. With the exception of students admitted under the Direct Entry Regulations, a student admitted to a programme of study with APL will be credited with the marks which s/he obtained in the examinations which s/he passed for the previous learning, subject to any adjustments necessary to align them with the marking scheme of the College programme of study.
- 5.2. Prior learning accredited by the College will be clearly identified on students' transcripts.
- 5.3. When the departments returns the results of the various assessments to their Registry Records team at the end of the year, the results spreadsheet should include an entry stating that APL to the value of the relevant number of ECTS has been granted for the module in question.

6. Accreditation of Prior Experiential (Uncertificated) Learning

- 6.1. The College does not award accreditation for prior experiential or uncertificated learning, except in the following circumstances:
- 6.2. Undergraduate students applying to transfer from another HEI without having obtained credits for the learning undertaken (for example, students transferring during the Autumn term of their first year) may be permitted to transfer to the College provided that they will be able to achieve the required learning outcomes and credit for progression to the next year of the course of study.
- 6.3. Research degree students may be permitted to transfer their research degree registration from another university to Imperial College in accordance with conditions approved by the Senate. Students accepted under these arrangements are required to follow a programme of study at the College of

not less than 12 months full-time (or 24 months part-time). For further details see the **Research Degree Students: Transfer of Registration for Admission.**

Approved by Senate
October 2014

Document title:	Guidelines for Use of Accreditation for Prior Learning (APL)		
Version:	3	Date:	October 2014
Location and filename:	R:\7.Quality Assurance \3. Policy Framework\2. Admissions, Registration & Withdrawal\Guidelines for use of APL		
Approved:	Senate November 2006 v1 / Registry December 2009 v2 / Registry October 2014 v3		
Effective from:	2014-5		
Originator:	Registry Quality Assurance & Enhancement Team		
Contact for queries:	Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance & Enhancement)		
Cross References:	General Academic Regulations Academic Regulations for Master's Level Programmes Research Degree Students: Transfer of Registration for Admission Master's Level Modules offered as CPD Short Courses - A Guidance Note for Programme Directors		
Notes and latest changes:	Formatting changes made on 8 March 2016		