



Procedure for Non Standard Entrants and Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL).

Principles

While there are normally defined academic entry requirements for University programmes, it is appropriate that the University has mechanisms to allow entry to applicants who do not meet the normal requirements, but who are, for other reasons, deserving of admission. In making decisions on these cases, the University needs to balance a number of factors, including

- (i) the need to have flexibility to admit deserving applicants,
- (ii) the need to protect standards and
- (iii) The desire to avoid admitting students to courses for which they are poorly prepared.

There are two processes in use:

Non standard applicants: This process is used where the case is being made that the applicant's academic qualifications should be considered as the basis for admission. This is a long established procedure.

Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning: This is used where the applicant's professional experience is being used as the basis for admission. This process was introduced on a pilot basis for a defined period which is expiring in later 2013.

Non standard applicants

For non-standard applicants, the process is as follows:

- a) The department reviews the application using its own process
- b) Head of Department endorses the recommendation and sends it to the Registrar with (i) a summary of the case and (ii) a brief rationale for acceptance.
- c) The Registrar reviews the case and endorses the recommendation.
- d) This is brought to the next Faculty meeting for approval.
- e) Where decisions are needed outside of the normal process (between Faculty meetings), the Registrar and a Dean can approve, and bring the case to Faculty for note at the subsequent meeting.

In deciding to recommend acceptance, the core question is whether the applicant has educational qualifications which demonstrate a level close in equivalence to the expected requirements, and which indicate a reasonable probability of success in the programme. In making this decision a number of factors are taken into consideration, including the level of qualifications, the time elapsed since the qualification (recognising that the proportion receiving honours awards was much lower in the past), and the relevance of the qualification.

Recognition of Prior Learning (accredited learning).

This process is used if an applicant is seeking exemptions from parts of a programme on the basis of prior accredited learning.

- a) The department reviews the application and assesses its merits. The core criterion is whether the applicant has taken a course of study at equivalent level, which involves the same learning outcomes, as the proposed exemptions. The department should also consider the time elapsed since the original study. If the department considers that an exemption is merited and is in the best interest of the student, it makes a written recommendation to that effect.
- b) Head of Department endorses the recommendation and sends it to the Registrar with (i) a summary of the case and (ii) a brief rationale for acceptance.
- c) The Registrar reviews the case and endorses the recommendation.
- d) This is brought to the next Faculty meeting for approval.
- e) Where decisions are needed outside of the normal process (between Faculty meetings), the Registrar and a Dean can approve, and bring the case to Faculty for note at the subsequent meeting.

Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL).

This process is used if the case for admission is based on the applicants experience or other non-accredited learning. In this case, the process involves preparation of a portfolio.

1. Enquiries are made directly to Department and forwarded to Head of Department.
2. Initial meeting takes place with Department to provide information and guidance about the claim process. If the applicant wishes to proceed she/he will be invited to write to the Registrar formally requesting permission to enter the RPL process. An extended CV will be required to accompany the letter.
3. The Registrar, in consultation with a representative from the relevant department, will decide whether the applicant is invited to proceed with the RPL claim or not.
4. The applicant will be informed of the decision by the Registrar.
5. Assessment of the claim will be the responsibility of the relevant academic department. One of a combination of the following assessment methods is suggested: learning portfolio, examination, competency test, interview or other appropriate methodology as determined by relevant academic department.

6. Decision – academic department
7. A short report outlining the department’s decision submitted to the Registrar by the assessor and signed by the Head of Department.
8. Result issued to the applicant from the Registrar’s Office
9. Applicant may receive feedback on request.

Decision making criteria for assessors:

- Is the learning relevant to the programme?
- Is there evidence that the volume of learning completed is sufficient?
- Is there evidence of satisfactory range, depth and breadth of learning?
- Has the learner provided authentic supporting documentation?
- Is there evidence that that learner has the capacity to complete the programme?

Decision options: Admittance to and/ or exemptions in a programme of study; admittance conditional on completing other prerequisites; unsuccessful.