

Briefing Paper

Review Of Under Graduate Access to Degree Level Study Accredited Prior Learning (APL) Information Sheet

1. Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to set out the background, context, aim and approach for a regional project to review and refresh the APL Fact Sheet published in 2013 for Under Graduate Access to Degree Level Study Accredited Prior Learning (APL) (Appendix 1)

2. Rationale and Background

2.1. An APL Fact Sheet information sheet was published by NIPEC in December 2013 to provide generic guidance for registrants who did not hold the academic credits at the relevant level to access degree level modules, and who wished to do so. This guidance applies to nursing and midwifery registrants who are on the Nursing and Midwifery Council Register (NMC) and hold academic award described as Certificate Level Award. These registrants may have considerable experience and/or have undertaken a range of learning activities throughout their career, which may or may not have been accredited.

2.2. The fact sheet was developed in 2013 primarily to support registrants who had undertaken the pre-registration training prior to Project 2000 as there was recognition that a number of nursing and midwifery registrants who were clinically competent and working in a variety of clinical practice settings across Northern Ireland (NI).

2.3. The demographics of the nursing and midwifery workforce in Northern Ireland has changed as result of NHS nursing vacancies and an increased reliance on international recruitment of nurses. It is therefore timely to review the APL Fact Sheet to ensure it is fit for purpose and to help signpost international nurses to academic courses .

3. What is Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)

3.1. The accreditation of prior learning is an all-encompassing term referring to the formal recognition, assessment and award of credit for all prior learning APL can be:

- **Certificated:** To give recognition of learning which has been formally assessed, and for which a certificate has been awarded
- **Experiential:** To recognise that knowledge and skills can be developed through many types of work experience.

3.2. In applying for APL, a registrant's 'prior learning' may be translated into a number of credits to contribute directly to a university qualification. Credits could in certain cases be mapped directly to specific modules.

4. Approach

4.1. The overarching aim is to review and refresh the Information Fact Sheet published in 2013 for Under Graduate Access to Degree Level Study Accredited Prior Learning (APL) to support the nursing and midwifery workforce in the provision of high quality evidence based care

4.2. The objectives are:

- To determine the current applicability of the information contained within the fact sheet
- To revise references and hyperlinks ensuring accuracy
- To confirm efficacy of approach outlined within the fact sheet

4.3. Establish a Task and Finish Group to meet on January 9th 2017 at 1330 to 1630, Meeting room, NIPEC. Prior to the meeting, each Higher Education Institute (HEI) to report on the current in house APL arrangements and any issues arising from the current fact sheet information.

4.4. Membership of the Task and finish Group to be drawn from across HEI in NI and to be Chaired by an Assistant Director for Nursing and Midwifery Education

- Chair: Assistant Director for Nursing and Midwifery for Education
 - Queens University Belfast
 - Open University
 - University of Ulster
 - Union Representatives
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Accredited Prior Learning (APL) – Information Fact Sheet

The purpose of this information fact sheet is to provide high level guidance for registrants who do not currently hold the academic credits at the relevant levels to access degree level modules. This information applies primarily to Nursing and Midwifery registrants who hold a Certificate Level Award, for example their professional registration qualification, and those registrants who have obtained their Nursing / Midwifery registration award overseas. Both of these groups may have considerable experience and/or have undertaken a range of learning activities throughout their career.

The accreditation of prior learning is an all-encompassing term referring to the formal recognition, assessment and award of credit for all prior learning.

APL can be:

- **Certificated:-** To give recognition of learning which has been formally assessed, and for which a certificate has been awarded
- **Experiential:-** To recognise that knowledge and skills can be developed through many types of experience, such as work and voluntary activities

The guidance has been developed in three stages as follows:

Stage 1 - Individual preparation – To access degree level modules / programmes at Queens University Belfast, registrants must hold 120 academic credits at certificate level and 120 academic credits at diploma level.

Ulster University provides access to a number of degree level programmes for registrants who do not have 120 credits at diploma level, which may negate the need to undertake diploma level modules these include Stand alone modules and short courses.

Using a Preparation Template (click here) (appendix 1) a registrant may wish consider what their current professional registration award and prior learning may be worth in terms of academic credits. It will therefore be necessary to bring together all prior learning undertaken including certificate of awards.

The recognition / value of certificated prior learning can be established by contacting National Recognition Information Centre (NRIC) at <https://www.naric.org.uk/naric/default.aspx> . This is a

National Agency, working on behalf of the UK Government, to provide a range of services comparing international qualifications. Please note that there is a charge for this service of £55 plus postage for a response within 10 - 15 days and it is the responsibility of the individual to meet this cost.

Registrants are advised to contact the Universities or University of choice directly to discuss APL processes in relation to experiential APL

Stage 2 - Preparation with manager - Using the Preparation template (click here) (appendix 1) as a guide/agenda the registrant should have dialogue with their manager to consider the next steps in light of the following:

- In Northern Ireland each Higher Education Institution (HEI) provider recognises academic learning through an APL process.
- The number of academic credits required by the registrants to achieve 120 credits at diploma level after APL process.
- Ulster University provides access to a number of degree level programmes for registrants who do not have 120 credits at diploma level, which may negate the need to undertake diploma level modules. For further information click here - <http://www.ulster.ac.uk>
- Queens University provide a number of diploma level modules. For further information click here – www.qub.ac.uk
- The Open University provide a range of diploma level modules. Diploma level modules available from the Open University can **only** be accessed by an individual fee paying process. For further information click here – www.open.ac.uk
- Academic programmes are available from Ulster University and Queens either through the Education Commissioning process or an individual fee paying process. For more information about the Education Commissioning process. For further information click here – <https://nipec.hscni.net/>

Stage 3 – Registrant undertakes a range of modules available from the HEIs or accesses degree level stand alone modules or a short course at Ulster University. Registrants should be aware that to exit with an award some modules are compulsory and one third of academic study must be undertaken in the awarding HEI.

PREPARATION TEMPLATE

NAME: _____

CURRENT POST: _____

Current Academic Award: (i.e. 120 credits at Level 1):

Course completed: with academic credit

<i>Name of course completed</i>	<i>Academic Credit? YES / NO</i>	<p align="center">Link with NRIC www.ecctis.co.uk/naric/Individuals/Default.aspx To ascertain value of academic credit Please note that there is a charge for this service of £55 plus postage for a response within 10 - 15 days and it is the responsibility of the individual to meet this cost.</p>

Outcome: _____ (insert number of credits accrued as a result of APL process)

Total Academic credits: _____

(include credits from initial registration & consider advice guidance from HEI)

Action Plan:

Use this information to inform dialogue with professional line manager