Accreditation of Prior Experiential and Certificated Learning (APECL)
Guidance for Applicants/Students

The following guidance notes set provide an overview for applicants and students in relation to making a claim for the Accreditation of Prior Experiential and Certificated Learning (APECL). Before making such a claim you should consult with the academic School or Centre where you intend to or are studying.

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1. Introduction to APECL

1.1 What is APECL?

The Accreditation of Prior Experiential and Certificated Learning (known as APECL at Kent) offers existing and potential students the opportunity to gain recognition for qualifications they have already achieved at other institutions, or to gain recognition for learning from other experiences, for example in the work place.

- It enables prior learning to be given an academic credit value which can then be used to gain exemption from relevant modules, or stages, of a university level programme.\(^1\)

- It enables people to enter a university level programme at the point that best suits their experience and skills. It also helps ensure that learners do not have to repeat prior learning.

Benefits of APECL

APECL is of benefit if you wish to gain qualifications at university level, it:

- Makes university level education accessible to a wide variety of individuals.

- Allows individuals to enter university at the point which most suits their skills and knowledge, avoiding the need to repeat learning already carried out, saving time.

- Supports individuals who wish to gain credit for work in their field, turning professional practice into academic credit.

There are two types of APECL accreditation of prior certificated learning (APCL) and accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL).

1.2 APCL is the recognition of learning that has already been achieved and is where learning which has previously been assessed and certificated is considered and as appropriate recognised again.

A typical APCL claim might be from an applicant who has completed a programme such as a Foundation Degree who would like to use credit achieved on that degree towards a programme in a similar subject area.

Recognising this type of prior learning is straightforward, provided:

- It can be evidenced through a certificate or transcript.
- Is at the right level.
- Is relevant to the university programme to be taken.
- The content of the prior learning can be mapped with the content of the new programme to be undertaken.

1.3 APEL is the recognition of learning that has not previously been formally recognised, for example learning achieved outside education or training systems. This learning is then assessed and where appropriate given an academic credit value.

A typical APEL claim might be from an applicant with significant work based learning through their employment, who wishes to have that learning assessed and then given an academic credit value towards a degree.

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\(^1\) Academic credit, normally known as just ‘credit’, is awarded on completion of learning, and indicates the level of learning and the amount of learning that has been carried out. For example a typical degree is worth 360 academic credits.
So the academic credit value of such prior learning can be assessed applicants are normally asked complete and submit a portfolio of evidence (APEL Portfolio).

This portfolio would include reflections on prior learning from experience and how this is relevant to the university programme they want to take, along with an evidence base for this prior learning, i.e. references, CVs, examples of work.

APEL is a good way of making use of relevant experience, particularly from the workplace, to gain credit at university level; however the process is more involved than APCL and requires commitment from the applicant to produce their portfolio of evidence at the correct academic level and within required timeframes.

1.4 It should be noted that there is no guarantee that you will be able to be given credit for prior learning.

APEL approval is an academic decision based on the match between your prior learning/experience, the relevant learning outcomes of the new programme you wish study and the requirements of the programme you wish to join.

2. Terminology

2.1 There are a number of specific terms used in talking about APEL and making an APEL claim a full glossary of these can be found in part 10 of this guidance, however an outline of some of the key terms has been provided below:

2.2 Academic Credit

APEL relies on the use of academic credit (normally referred to as ‘credit’) and using that credit towards university programmes.

Academic credit is described by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), as:

‘… a means of quantifying and recognising learning whenever and wherever it is achieved.’

Academic credit is given a volume and level, the volume relates to how much learning has been completed, and the level to the type of learning completed – i.e. undergraduate or postgraduate.

- Volume: Typically 1 academic credit equates to 10 hours of learning.
- Level: The different levels for Credit are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University Descriptor</th>
<th>Also Described As</th>
<th>Typical HE Qualifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F – Foundation</td>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Pre-certificate level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C – Certificate</td>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>HNC Certificate of HE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I – Intermediate</td>
<td>Level 5</td>
<td>HND Foundation Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Diploma of HE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H – Honours</td>
<td>Level 6</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree with Hons</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate Diploma</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate Certificate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An example of how credit works at undergraduate level is a three year honours degree, i.e. a BA or BSc.

These are worth 360 credits at different levels:

- 120 credits at Certificate level/ level 4 (typically the first year of a degree)
- 120 credits at Intermediate level/ level 5 (typically the second year of the degree)
- 120 credits at Honours level/ level 6 (typically the third year of the degree)

An example at postgraduate level is a one year Master’s Degree, i.e. an MA or MSc.

These are worth 180 credits at just one level, Masters level:

- 180 credits at M level/ level 7

Full information on the range of different qualifications that can be studied in the UK and the levels at which each qualification sits can be found at [http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Academic-Credit-Framework.pdf](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Academic-Credit-Framework.pdf)

Credit works with APECL in that you are able to apply to use credit gained through your prior learning towards a new programme of study at university.

### 2.3 Modules

Modules are the units of learning that make up an academic programme (i.e. a BA/ BSc). A module is in a specific subject area, has a specific credit value attached to it (determined by the amount of learning involved in completing it) and has a level assigned to it (dependent on the difficulty of the content).

For example the below might represent a module on a History degree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module Title</th>
<th>Amount of Credit worth</th>
<th>Level of Module</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to History</td>
<td>15 credits</td>
<td>level C/ level 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Modules are made up of learning outcomes. These learning outcomes are achieved when you take the module, and pass the assessment for it (i.e. essays, exams). Once you have achieved the learning outcomes for the module you gain the credit for it towards your final qualification.

### 2.4 Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements of what you as a learner are expected to know, understand and demonstrate following study of a particular module or academic programme of study.

In terms of APECL it is key that your prior learning matches the relevant learning outcomes within a module or academic programme of study you want to claim credit towards. This demonstrates that through your prior learning you already have the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to be given some credit towards your new programme of study.

To identify whether you can meet learning outcomes on your new programme a mapping exercise is carried out.
2.5 Mapping

Mapping is comparing your prior learning with the relevant learning outcomes of the module(s) at Kent that you want to claim credit towards.

This process is carried out by identifying learning outcomes from your prior learning and laying them side by side with the relevant learning outcomes that you want to claim credit for.

There should be a close match between the two sets of learning outcomes showing that you have already achieved the learning required to be awarded credit towards your new programme of study.

The mapping process differs depending on the type of APECL being claimed:

For APCL you will identify the learning outcomes of prior certificated learning that you have already achieved and map these against the relevant learning outcomes of modules on your new programme of study.

For APEL you will map the learning from your prior experience and the relevant learning outcomes of the modules for your new programme of study. This will be carried out as part of your APEL portfolio with references to evidence in the portfolio that supports your claim for credit.

3. Case Studies

3.1 The following are case studies designed to provide guidance on how APECL works in practice.

Please note that these examples are used for illustrative purposes only.*

Student A has an Accountancy Diploma, worth 120 credits at level C/ level 4, achieved when studying with a UK professional body. They would like to complete a BA/ BSc in Accountancy and believe that it may be possible to use credit from their Accountancy Diploma towards the programme.

On looking at the modules for the BA/ BSc Accountancy they see that there is a clear fit between the learning outcomes of their prior learning and two 15 credit modules on the first year of the BA/ BSc.

This is considered as part of their application and following a mapping carried out between the two sets of learning outcomes their claim for APCL is considered and approved and they are awarded 30 credits of APCL.

Student A is now able to complete their degree without repeating learning already achieved on another award.
### 4. Determining if you have a claim for APECL

#### 4.1 To support you in determining whether to make a claim it is recommended that you first ensure that your prior learning meets University requirements.

You should ensure that:

- Learning is current – normally the University require that prior learning has been achieved within the last five years, however if your prior learning is older than this and you have remained up to date in your subject area you may still be able to make a claim.
- Learning is within a relevant subject area to the programme you wish to join and the modules you wish to claim against.
- Learning can be evidenced - for APCL this may be through the transcript or certificate for your prior learning, for APEL this will be through production of an APEL portfolio.
- Learning is at the required level i.e. the same level or higher than the modules you wish to claim against.
- Learning is of the required volume i.e. the same volume or higher than the modules you wish to claim against.

For APEL claims, to support you in determining whether your learning meets the University's requirements an initial consultation will normally be carried out with you, this could be by the Programme Leader or Admissions Officer for the programme you wish to join.

#### 4.2 If you believe you have prior learning that could be used towards a programme at Kent the School/Centre at the University where you wish to study will be able to provide further guidance in respect of your potential claim and relevance of your learning either prior to, or at the point of application to Kent.

The contact details for all Kent Schools/Centres can be found on the University website at [http://www.kent.ac.uk/departments/academic/](http://www.kent.ac.uk/departments/academic/)

#### 4.3 If you are an existing student at Kent and you believe that you would have grounds for an APECL claim on future a part of your programme then you should contact your Programme Leader directly for advice on whether you are able to make a claim.
5. Making an APECL Claim

5.1 Your prospective School or Centre will be able to provide guidance to you in making your claim for APECL however the below provides an overview of the requirements of the process.

5.2 To make an APECL claim you will need to indicate when you apply to the University that you have prior learning you wish to be considered. For students applying via UCAS this should be indicated on your UCAS form.

For those applying directly to the University this should be indicated on your application form. you will need to make sure that you clearly state on your application that you wish to have APCL considered.

5.3 For APCL once you have indicated your interest in claiming APCL this will be referred to the relevant Admissions Officer for the programme you wish to join.

A form will need to be completed in co-operation with the relevant Admissions Officer which will indicate the details of your claim, i.e. the basis of your claim, mapping of learning outcomes, volume and level of credit being claimed.

This form along with any supporting evidence will then be used to make an Academic Judgement on whether your claim can be recommended for approval.

In support this you will need to be able to:
- Evidence your prior learning through a certificate and/or transcript.
- Evidence the currency of your subject knowledge if your prior learning was obtained over five years ago.
- Obtain and provide the syllabus and detail of your prior learning (i.e. through module or programme specifications) to allow the Admissions Officer to map the prior learning.

Once the form is complete and the Admissions Officer has all the information they require they will make a recommendation on whether your claim should be approved which will then be considered by the relevant Faculty Committee (Faculty Learning and Teaching Committees for undergraduate programmes, Faculty Graduate Studies Committee for postgraduate programmes).

5.4 For APEL once you have indicated your interest in claiming APEL this will be referred to the relevant Admissions Officer for the programme you wish to join.

Due to the nature of APEL and the requirement that an APEL portfolio is developed, once you have indicated your interest in claiming APEL you will normally have an initial discussion with an appropriate member of staff from the relevant School/ Centre which runs the programme on which you wish to study. This will identify whether it is possible for you to make a claim based on your prior learning from experience.

If it is possible for a claim to be made then you will be referred to an appropriate APEL Portfolio Supervisor.

They will be able to support you in putting together an APEL portfolio containing evidence of your prior learning and reflective statements demonstrating how that learning meets the requirements of the modules you are claiming credit for.

The format of APEL portfolios varies depending on the nature and requirements of a particular programme. It will be the responsibility of the APEL Portfolio Supervisor to determine with you the format of your APEL portfolio.
Once completed your APEL Portfolio Supervisor will complete a form in support of your portfolio which will indicate their recommendation as to whether your claim should be approved and the details of your claim i.e. the basis of your claim, mapping of learning outcomes, volume and level of credit being claimed.

This along with the APEL portfolio will then be considered for approval the relevant Faculty Committee (Faculty Learning and Teaching Committees for undergraduate programmes, Faculty Graduate Studies Committee for postgraduate programmes).

Further detail on the development of an APEL portfolio can be found in Appendix A.

5.5 There are some key things to consider when making a claim:

5.5.1 Credit Limits

There are limits for the amount of APECL that can be claimed onto a programme.

This is to ensure that there is a sufficient amount of new learning carried out at the University, before a qualification is awarded. For example:

- On a three year BSc/ BA (Hons) the maximum amount of credit that can be claimed using the APECL process is 240 credits. This is because a minimum of 120 credits of ‘new learning’ must be taken and passed on a three year BSc/ BA (Hons) programme with at least 90 credits of this being at level H or above.

- On a taught MA/MSc the maximum amount of credit that can be claimed using the APECL process is 90 credits. This is because a minimum of 90 credits of ‘new learning’ must be carried out and passed on a taught MA/MSc with all of this learning being at level M.

As well as a maximum number of credits that can be claimed as APECL there is also a minimum number which is five credits.

The full list of APECL limits can be found at http://www.kent.ac.uk/uelt/quality/credit/creditinfoannex3.html.

5.5.2 Currency of Credit

The University requires that credit is current this is because it is important that your knowledge and skills are up to date and because over time academic programmes develop and change.

The University therefore recommends prior learning is no more than five years old.

If your learning is more than five years old it does not mean it cannot be used, but you may be required to provide evidence to show how you have stayed up-to-date with your subject area, for example, through a CV, evidence of CPD, information on training or other courses you have attended.

Some Schools/ Centres may have different time limits on currency, especially in subjects which change at a fast rate so it is always best to check with regard to the programme you are joining.

5.5.3 Spent Credit

The University has regulations relating to the re-use of credit.

This is where credit previously obtained through prior learning cannot be re-used more than once.
If you believe that your credit for prior learning may already have been ‘spent’ on a Kent programme, for example through a previous claim for credit, then you may not be able to use it again.

5.5.4 Language of Study

Where the evidence relating to your claim is submitted in a language other than English, the individual assessing your claim must possess sufficient competence in the language in question. If this is not the case then you may be requested to provide a translation into English of any prior assessed work submitted in support of the application.

5.5.5 Plagiarism

As with any academic work, any work submitted in support of an APECL submission that is found to contain elements of plagiarised work will be discounted. Where plagiarism is suspected in a submission from an existing student the work in question will be referred to the relevant School Disciplinary Committee for consideration under the Academic Discipline procedures.

6. Process of Approval

6.1 The APECL approval process involves consideration of your claim by the Admissions Officer for the programme you wish to join, followed by approval by the relevant Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee/Graduate Studies Committee.

6.2 For an APCL claim:

- The Admissions Officer will assess your claim for APCL and, if considered appropriate, will make a recommendation for the award of credit based on the available evidence.

- The recommendation of the Admissions Officer for the award of credit will be forwarded to the appropriate Faculty Committee for approval.

- Once approved you will be informed via an Admissions Offer letter.

- If your claim is rejected or put on hold you will also be informed in writing as to the reasons why and what the next actions should be.

- If a claim is rejected then there will be an opportunity for resubmission of the APCL claim. This resubmission must be made before the commencement of the module(s) for which credit is sought.

- Once awarded credit for APCL will be recorded as such on your Student Transcript

- If your claim is rejected then feedback on the decision of the Faculty Committee is available on request.

- Existing Students:
  - Claims submitted by existing students will follow the above process but will be forwarded by the Programme Leader to the appropriate Faculty Committee for approval.
  - The Programme Leader will inform existing students in writing if a claim is approved.
The Programme Leader will also inform existing students if a claim is rejected or put on hold, including details on the reasons why and what the next actions should be.

6.3 For an APEL claim:

- You will develop your APEL portfolio over an agreed period of time. When the portfolio is complete this should be submitted to the Portfolio Supervisor.

- Your Portfolio Supervisor will then complete an APEL Portfolio Supervisor Form recommending whether the APEL portfolio has met the learning outcomes for the credit applied for.

- The Portfolio Supervisor will submit the completed Portfolio Supervisor Form to the relevant Faculty Committee along with the portfolio.

- The Faculty Committee will then reach a decision on the recommendation for the award of credit for the portfolio submission.

- Once approved you will be informed via an Admissions Offer letter.

- If your claim is rejected or put on hold you will be informed in writing as to why and what the next action should be.

- If a claim is rejected then there will be an opportunity for resubmission of the APEL claim. This resubmission must be made before the commencement of the module(s) for which credit is sought.

- Once awarded credit for APEL will be recorded on your Student Transcript

- If your claim is rejected then feedback on the decision of the Faculty Committee is available on request.

- Claims submitted by existing students will follow the above process but will be forwarded by the Programme Leader to the appropriate Faculty Committee for approval.

- Existing students:

  - Claims submitted by existing students will follow the above process but the Programme Leader will inform existing students in writing if a claim is approved.

  - The Programme Leader will also inform existing students if a claim is rejected or put on hold, including details on the reasons why and what the next actions should be.
Appendix A

Further Guidance on APEL Claims

People often develop skills and knowledge which are applicable to university level programmes without realising it. This can be through the work place, short courses which are not assessed, volunteering and other activities. Through APEL you are able to turn this experience into learning that can be measured and used to claim credit towards a qualification.

How is prior experience assessed?

Because there has normally been no assessment of what you have learnt from your experience, this learning has to be captured in some way. Normally this is achieved through an APEL portfolio.

In an APEL portfolio you collect evidence of your knowledge and skills gained from experience and you also reflect on what you have learnt from it, such as what works well, what you may do differently in the future and why. This allows you to demonstrate your knowledge, understanding and skills, in a similar way to how you would demonstrate them through formal learning.

Which prior learning from experience is relevant?

By thinking back and considering your previous experiences, you are able to reflect on them and identify if you have any significant work related, or other past experiences that have allowed you to gain knowledge and skills.

You need to identify learning gained by undertaking work, leisure activities, etc which has potential to be at higher education level. The process of reflection, and of writing about the learning you have gained from experience, will also help raise this to higher education level as you can show that you can analyse your experience and gain new knowledge from this analysis. The learning also needs to reflect the learning outcomes of the module(s) you are claiming against.

Reflection is an important stage of the APEL process; it allows you to assess your experiences in relation to the programme(s) you are interested in. Once you have done this you are able to map your experience to the contents of the programme you wish to claim credit towards, giving you a better idea of whether you may have an APEL claim.

What counts, learning or experience?

It is the learning you have from your experiences that needs to be measured in an APEL claim. Once you have identified the experiences that are relevant to the programme you wish to join, it is important to identify which modules on that programme you may be able to claim against.

An APEL Portfolio Supervisor will be assigned to you if you have grounds for an APEL claim and they will be able to help guide you in the modules most relevant to the learning you have gained from your experiences.

What evidence is needed for an APEL claim?

As with learning in a classroom, which is evidenced through assessments such as essays, presentations or examinations, to make an APEL claim you must evidence that you possess the knowledge and skills that you claim to have.

The evidence you provide in your portfolio will of course depend on the programme you wish to join and the knowledge and skills that you are trying to demonstrate. For example, evidence may be reports you have written, presentations you have given, a project plan you have developed; or
references from relevant colleagues, certificates from attending workshops which have not been assessed. However it will depend on your individual claim as to what exactly is included.

You should only include the most relevant evidence to demonstrate the skills that you have learnt and developed and evidence should always have a direct link to the credit you are trying to claim.

What is involved in putting together an APEL portfolio?

Once it has been agreed you can make an APEL claim, and you have discussed your claim with someone in the School/Centre responsible for the programme you wish to join, the next stage is to develop your APEL portfolio.

The School/ Centre responsible for the programme you wish to join will identify someone who can act as your Portfolio Supervisor, and guide you through the compilation of your portfolio of evidence and reflection.

The format and content of an APEL portfolio will always depend on your individual experience, and the programme you wish to join. However you should ensure that an APEL portfolio demonstrates you have met the relevant learning outcomes against which you wish to claim credit and that your learning is at the right academic level (your Portfolio Supervisor should be able to provide guidance on this).

It is also important to make sure that you clearly label, and organise your APEL portfolio so that it is easy for your Portfolio Supervisor, and then the University’s approval Committee to assess.

An example portfolio is available at http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/guidance/index.html.

APEL word counts

When developing an APEL portfolio it is important to ensure that you demonstrate not only that you have experience in a certain area but also the learning you have achieved through that experience.

When applying for credit using APEL it is not the amount of evidence you include that matters, but ensuring that the evidence you do use shows how you meet the relevant learning outcomes that you wish to claim against.

APEL portfolios should aim to strike a balance between reflective statements and evidence in order to show sufficiently that learning outcomes have been met. As a guideline for the size of your portfolio you may want to consider the length of the assessment for the module(s) that you are claiming credit for.

However the final total word count for your portfolio may be less/ more than this dependent on your individual experience and the programme you are seeking credit onto.

APEL is a learning experience

APEL is not right for everyone as your experience and learning from it needs to fit the programme that you wish to join. It can also be time consuming and involves a lot of work to bring together a portfolio.

However it can also be a very rewarding experience that can help you develop new skills and gain credit for experience you already have.

The process of putting together an APEL portfolio is not just about showing that you have experience, but also about learning about your own experiences and the skills and knowledge that they have allowed you to develop.
APEL also allows you, as with formal learning, to develop new skills in areas such as reflection, writing, and analysis.
Appendix B

Timescales for Accreditation of Prior Experiential and Certificated Learning

The following are recommended timescales to guide staff and applicants when an APECL claim is made, however, each APECL claim is different and the exact length of time that it will take to develop, submit and approve an APECL claim will depend on the individual case.

Any claim for APECL must adhere to individual programme deadlines and be approved prior to the commencement of the specific module(s) for which credit is being sought.

Further information on APECL and how to claim APECL is available in the guidance at [http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/guidance/index.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/guidance/index.html).

**APCL: Recommended timescales**

It is recommended that any claim for APCL is made as soon as possible, and must be made and approved prior to the commencement of the module(s) for which credit is sought. Intention to request APCL is notified via the UCAS form or notified on the University of Kent application form for direct entry applicants.

Applicants should be contacted by the School/Centre to progress any claim for APCL and it is recommended that these claims are made at least six weeks before the commencement of the module(s) for which credit is being sought.

This is to allow time for a decision to be made, for any follow up work to be carried out if a claim is rejected and subsequently resubmitted, and for an applicant to be registered on the upcoming module(s) if their claim is finally rejected.

APCL claims are straightforward; provided that required information or evidence is supplied and that there is sufficient time to make an assessment of the prior learning.

No claims for APCL can be made after the commencement of the module(s) for which credit is sought.

**Existing Students**

Existing students should contact their Programme Leader if they believe they have grounds for an APCL claim. Again it is recommended that any claim is made at least six weeks prior to the commencement of the module(s) for which credit is sought. It is the existing student’s responsibility to contact the Programme Leader within a suitable period of time.

No claims for APCL can be made after the commencement of the module(s) for which credit is sought.

**APEL: Recommended timescales**

APEL is a good way of making use of relevant experience, particularly from the workplace, to gain credit at university level; however, APEL portfolio development can take a long period of time and requires commitment to produce the portfolio of evidence at the correct academic level and within the required time frame.

It is therefore essential that claims for APEL are made as soon as possible and they must be made and approved prior to the commencement of the module(s) for which credit is sought. Intention to request APEL is notified via the UCAS form or notified on the University of Kent application form for direct entry applicants.
It is recommended that before a claim for APEL is made applicants consult the guidance available at http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/guidance/index.html.

When assessing suitability of an APEL claim, or making an APEL claim it is recommended:

- That a minimum of six weeks is allowed to develop the APEL portfolio. The actual amount of time required to develop the APEL portfolio is dependent on the programme and individual’s experience; it can take more than six weeks.
- That a further six weeks is allowed for assessment of the APEL portfolio by the University.
- That time is allowed so any changes can be made to the APEL portfolio if it is not successful at the first submission.

Existing students should contact their Programme Leader if they believe they have grounds for an APEL claim. It is recommended that 12 weeks/1 term is allowed prior to the commencement of the module(s) for which credit is sought for the development and approval of the portfolio.

In the case of existing students it is their responsibility to contact the Programme Leader within a suitable period of time.

No claims for APEL can be made after the commencement of the module(s) for which credit is sought.
## Appendix C

### APECL Glossary

| **Admissions Officers** | In relation to APCL Admissions Officers:  
- Make recommendations on claims for prior certificated learning, based on evidence provided and ensure that the prior learning can be mapped to the relevant learning outcomes.  
- Ensure that claims for prior certificated learning are processed within the University’s Code of Practice.  

In relation to APEL Admissions Officers:  
- Act as the liaison point for School/ Centre on the development of claims for APEL, identifying where appropriate a suitable Portfolio Supervisor for an applicant.  
- Provide when required appropriate subject specific advice on APEL claims.  
- Help ensure that APEL portfolios and claims are within the University’s Code of Practice and Credit Framework. |
| **APCL** | This stands for Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning. This is the process, through which previously assessed and certificated learning is considered and, as appropriate, recognised for academic purposes. |
| **APECL** | This stands for Accreditation of Prior Experiential and Certificated Learning. This is the umbrella term used by the University of Kent to describe recognition of formally completed prior learning, and learning from experience which can be used to gain academic credit. |
| **APEL** | This stands for Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning. This is the process through which learning achieved outside education or training systems is assessed and, as appropriate, recognised for academic purposes. |
| **Code of Practice for Quality Assurance for Taught Programmes of Study** | The University of Kent’s Code of Practice for Quality Assurance of Taught Programmes. Annex R of which details the rules and processes for APECL at Kent. |
| **Credit (Academic Credit)** | Academic credit is awarded to students on achievement of learning. Through APEL it can also be awarded for prior learning from experience. Academic credit indicates the level of learning and the amount of learning carried out. |
| **Credit Transfer** | This relates to when an applicant wishes to transfer whole stages of a programme into a Kent programme, from another university where they currently study. This is not subject to the APECL procedures, where the transfer is made via UCAS. |
| **Currency** | Currency refers to when learning was completed. To be considered current, learning must normally have been completed within the last five years. |
| **External Adviser for APECL** | The External Advisor is a member of the APECL Board and supports monitoring and review of APEL claims, sampling some prior to the APECL Board. They are able to offer advice on difficult claims, or changes to University APECL policy. |
| **General Credit** | General credit refers to the amount of academic credit that a programme is worth once it has been completed. i.e. a BA/ BSc Honours Degree is worth 360 general credits.  
It is important when assessing and advising on an applicant/ student’s claim to take into account the difference between their general and specific credit.  
General credit represents the whole of the learning achieved on an accredited
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Outcome</td>
<td>A learning outcome is a statement of what a learner is expected to know, understand and demonstrate following completion of a particular module/programme of study. Learning outcomes are key in APECL as prior learning needs to be mapped to the learning outcomes of the new programme of study to determine if credit can be awarded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Refers to the level of learning carried out. Different higher education institutions refer to level in different ways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level C (also known at Kent as Level 4)</td>
<td>Stands for Certificate level. This is normally the first level of an honours degree, and the first level taken on the way towards higher level qualifications. Certificates of Higher Education can be awarded at this level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level I (also known at Kent as Level 5)</td>
<td>Stands for Intermediate level. This is normally the second level of an honours degree, other programmes at Intermediate level are ordinary (non-Honours) degrees, Foundation degrees and Diplomas of Higher Education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level H (also known at Kent as Level 6)</td>
<td>Stands for Honours level. This is normally the third level of an honours degree, leading to a BSc or BA Honours Degree. Other programmes at this level are Graduate Certificates or Graduate Diplomas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level M (also known at Kent as Level 7)</td>
<td>Stands for Masters level. This is the level normally taken by students who already have an undergraduate honours degree or equivalent. Other programmes at this level include Masters degrees in science and engineering that have been awarded after extended undergraduate programmes. Other programmes at this level also include Postgraduate Certificates and Postgraduate Diplomas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mapping</td>
<td>Mapping is comparing the prior learning of an applicant/student, to the learning outcomes of their chosen Kent programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module</td>
<td>A module is unit of education on a specific subject area. A module is made up of a number of learning outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Assurance Agency</td>
<td>The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) ensures universities maintain their own academic standards and quality. They review and report on how Universities meet their responsibilities, identify good practice and make recommendations for improvement. They publish guidelines to help institutions develop effective systems to ensure students have the best learning experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio</td>
<td>In the context of APECL a portfolio is a collection of work designed to demonstrate an applicant/student’s learning from experience and how this learning relates to the programme for which they are seeking credit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio Supervisor</td>
<td>Acts as the liaison point for APEL applicants/students on the development of their APEL Portfolio, guides applicants/students through production of their APEL Portfolio and makes recommendations on whether credit should be awarded for an APEL portfolio completed under their supervision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programmes</td>
<td>Programmes are the courses of academic study that the University offers. For example a BA (Hons) is a degree programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Writing</td>
<td>Reflective writing in the context of APEL is looking back on your experience, analysing what you have learnt from it, assessing how that will affect you in the future, in work or as a student, and linking it to the modules for which you are seeking credit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Credit</td>
<td>Specific credit is the amount of credit that can be specifically mapped to the learning outcomes of the Kent programme for which you are claiming APECL. (Please see General Credit above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage</td>
<td>This refers to the stage of the programme onto which you are seeking APECL. For a full-time BA/ BSc (Hons) for example you would normally have Stages 1,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table</strong></td>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Credit Framework for Taught Programmes</strong></td>
<td>This is Kent’s Credit Framework which details the limits and rules on the use of academic credit at Kent. Annex 3 relates specifically to the limits on the amount of credit that can be used for APECL.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

FAQ's

What is the difference between General and Specific Credit?

General credit is the amount of credit that prior learning is worth in total. Specific credit is the amount of general credit that can be specifically mapped against the learning outcomes of the modules for which credit is being claimed.

i.e. an applicant/ student has 240 credits from a previous award but only 120 of these are relevant to the modules for which they are seeking credit, the general credit value would be 240 credits, the specific credit value 120 credits.

What limits are there on the amount of credit that can be claimed?

There are certain limits on the amount of credit that can be used as APECL towards a new Kent programme. This is to ensure that there is a sufficient amount of new learning carried out at the University of Kent before a student can be awarded a Kent qualification.

The exact limits are detailed in the University's Credit Framework - http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/credit-framework/creditinfoannex3.html.

What grade will an applicant/ student receive for APECL?

Credit approved via the APECL process does not carry a numerical mark or contribute to the classification of the programme for which credit is claimed. In other words the prior learning submitted towards an APECL claim provides credit towards the overall programme, but cannot be used towards the final grade for the programme.

What are the deadlines for APECL claims?

It is important APECL claims are made prior to the commencement of any modules for which credit is claimed. This allows assessment of the claim, and if a claim is unsuccessful allows students to register for the modules that they were claiming credit for.

When making an APECL claim applicants/ students should always be made aware of the specific admission deadlines of the programme they are applying to join.

What would happen if an APECL claim is not successful?

There is no guarantee that an APECL claim will be successful. If you are for any reason unable to claim credit against modules in your chosen programme you would be required to take those modules as normal.

Depending on the reasons for your claim being unsuccessful you are normally entitled to one re-submission.

Where can I find more information on the regulations and process of APECL at Kent?


Kent Credit Framework - http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/credit-framework/index.html