RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY

1   The University of Law's Recognition of Prior Learning Policy has been informed by the Office for Students Sector-Recognized Standards and the General Ongoing Conditions of Registration and has regard to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. These definitive reference points for all English higher education institutions set out how academic standards are established and maintained and how excellence in the quality of learning opportunities is assured.

This policy sits within The University of Law's Quality and Standards Code, which provides a suite of policies designed to safeguard the academic standards of The University of Law and to assure the quality of learning opportunities offered; this policy should therefore be read in conjunction with other relevant policies within the code.

Introduction

2   This policy sets out the expectations, key aims and principles, and procedural approach in relation to recognition of prior learning by the University of Law (the University). The University recognises that central to this policy is the University's responsibility for the academic standards of all awards granted in its name and the quality of learning opportunities for students.

Responsibility for this policy

3   Ultimate responsibility for the development of clear and effective processes and procedures associated with the maintenance of standards and quality assurance of academic provision and overseeing their application lies with the Academic Board.

Expectation

4   The University has in place equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment, including for the recognition of prior learning, which enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or other form of recognition being sought.

Key aims and principles

5   Degree awarding bodies are ultimately responsible for the academic standards of their awards. University of Law awards are made on completion of the requirements of a module or programme, expressed in terms of learning outcomes, level and credit.

6   In addition to meeting the specified entry requirements, students may already have demonstrated academic achievement of certain elements of a programme at the equivalent level. In such cases, and where appropriate evidence can be provided, the University may grant the student credits on the basis of demonstrated prior learning.

7   Such prior learning may have been achieved either:

7.1   as credit awarded by a UK Higher education degree-awarding body in accordance with the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (FHEQ). The award of credit on this basis is sometimes referred to as credit transfer; or

7.2   as learning through experience and practice outside a formal learning environment, including the workplace. The University assesses the learning gained through the experience, not the experience itself, and may award credit in recognition of that learning; or

7.3   as learning at higher education level but which has not led to the award of credit or qualification within the FHEQ.

8   In all cases, credit may be awarded only for learning that can be demonstrated; experience alone is not sufficient.

9   The amount, level and nature of any credit gained through recognition of prior learning depends on both the nature of the programme against which credits are being claimed, and the prior learning achievement used as the basis of the claim, in particular its relevance and currency.

10   The overall programme against which credits are being claimed must retain its coherence and integrity. This is particularly important where a programme may lead to a recognised qualification.

11   The University of Law makes academic awards; it is up to the student to ensure that, following any recognition of prior learning (including credit transfer) that they will be appropriately qualified.

12   Claims are considered on an individual basis through a careful process of scrutiny and mapping of the learning outcomes achieved against those of the programme against which credit is claimed; in the interests of consistency, decisions are also informed by precedent. Any claim for learning must be supported by sufficient, relevant authentic evidence.

Procedural approach

13   When determining the award of credit, the University takes into account the following criteria:

13.1   the academic level at which the prior learning took place, which must be at least equivalent, as defined within, the FHEQ;

13.2   the degree of alignment with a matched University module in terms of its syllabus content and learning outcomes – a significant match is normally required for the award of specific credits;

13.3   the currency of the prior learning – any claim based upon technical learning completed more than five years previously is discounted unless supported by evidence of ongoing competence/continuing professional development;

13.4   any expectations or requirements of the sector PSRBs;

13.5   the extent to which the award of credits impact upon the student's learning experience on the University programme concerned – here the main considerations are to ensure completeness of content coverage and thus fulfilment of the programme learning outcomes;

13.6   an expectation that the learner, if granted credits, goes on to complete the programme.

14   The University may be constrained in the prior learning it recognises for any programme by the requirements of a PSRB or where the recognition of that prior learning might jeopardise the qualification or award the University is able to make on completion of the programme.

15   It is, however, the responsibility of the student to ensure that any qualification meets PSRB or other regulatory requirements.

16   The University may award *specific* credits against individual, specified programme module(s) where there is appropriate and sufficient evidence that, through

relevant prior learning, the student has achieved the learning outcomes of the module(s).

17   Specific credits can only be mapped against entire modules and not against parts or fractions of modules.

18   The University may award *notional* credits where there is appropriate and sufficient evidence that, through relevant prior learning at an appropriate level, the student has successfully completed a course of study consistent with the overall programme learning outcomes, skills-based module learning outcomes and/or a significant number of the subject-related learning outcomes from various programme modules.

19   Students granted notional credits are required to complete any specified core elements of the relevant programme and may be restricted in their module choices to avoid content overlap.

20   For all of its programme awards, the University requires students to achieve at least 50% of the available credits through the standard programme learning and assessment arrangements; no more than 50% of a programme's credits may be gained through the recognition of prior learning unless specified otherwise in the programme regulations.

21   Where allowed by a PSRB, students may apply for exemption from study and assessment of programme modules. This process is different from recognition of prior learning. Any student obtaining exemption from study and assessment is not eligible for the programme award; to be eligible, a student must apply for and obtain recognition of prior learning.

22   Credits cannot be claimed against modules that a student has already registered for, and failed, previously. Additionally, modules where credits have been awarded through the recognition of prior learning process cannot subsequently be attempted in order to seek to improve the overall grade/classification.

23   Modules for which credits have been awarded on the basis of recognition of prior learning are recognised simply as qualifying modules for the award and do not contribute to the award grade or classification for that student. No grade is given to credits awarded for recognised prior learning.

24   Fraudulent claims for recognition of prior learning are regarded as malpractice and are followed through in accordance with the University's procedures thereon. The University reserves the right to withdraw any award made, or credits gained, as a result of such malpractice.

25   The operation and impact of the recognition of prior learning policies are monitored and reviewed at regular intervals by the Academic Board and its sub-committees with an annual report made on any credits awarded and linked student progression.

26   Similarly, the criteria by which applications for recognition of prior learning are determined are reviewed regularly to ensure that they remain transparent and accessible.

27   Students may appeal against decisions regarding the award of credit for recognition of prior learning using the standard academic appeals process.

Responsibility for the provision

28   Responsibility for the effective implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning Policy lies with the Academic Board, operating through the Admissions sub-committee.

Monitoring and evaluation of the provision

29   Responsibility for reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of Recognition of Prior Learning Policy lies initially with the Academic Registrar. Formal responsibility for monitoring and evaluation of this provision lies with the Academic Board.

Version history

Version	Amended by	Revision summary	Date
V1.0	Academic Registrar	First Draft	22/02/13
V1.1	Director of Quality and Education	QA	20/03/13
V1.2	AGQS	Coherence activity	05/08/13
V1.3	External Consultant	External review	06/09/13
V1.4	Academic Registrar	Review	26/09/13
V1.5	Student Officer	Review	01/11/13
V1.6	AGQS	Re-draft	30/01/15
V1.7	Academic Board	Approval	05/02/15
V1.8	Registry	Final amends	10/02/15
V1.9	Director of Validations	Review – no amends	27/03/17
V2.0	Senior Quality Officer	Change to the document coding convention	30/03/20
V2.0	Registry Assistant	Extension approved for 4 years	October 2021