

**Recognising Prior Learning: A Guide to
APL Policy
STAFF HANDBOOK**

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1. Introduction

It is probably a good idea to start this handbook with some reference to what the University hopes to achieve through a revised APL policy. There are many claims made for APL nationally with regard to widening participation, enabling deeper learning, retention and attainment. However, many of these claims often refer to the 'potential' of APL to impact positively on these themes as opposed to any 'actual' benefits to students. The revised policy is an attempt to redress this imbalance between potential and actual and draws heavily on good practice already established within the University.

There are three key challenges to meet if an APL policy is going to benefit both the institution and students. These are:

- It needs to be clear, consistent, practical and quick
- It needs to minimise the administrative burden whilst maintaining appropriate rigour
- It needs to promote and encourage flexibility of study and widening participation

The new policy is an attempt to go at least some way to meeting these challenges. It should also be noted that the new policy represents a fundamental change in how the University views APL. While, the previous policy only allowed us to exempt students with APL from specific modules, the negotiated assessment route for APEL (outlined in detail below) enables us to formally assess prior experiential learning and award grades which (dependant on level) may be used in calculating end awards.

2. Definitions

The underlying principles of APL are quite straightforward although these can be obscured within the labyrinth of complex policy documentation. However, it is important not to lose sight of the general principles. These are, simply stated:

- The University recognises learning wherever it takes place
- The University will accredit this learning when a student demonstrates that prior learning corresponds with a specified University level and course/module learning outcomes.

With regard to the University APL policy, Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) refers to the judgement of a formal claim for modular recognition or accredited learning either before or after entry. There are ostensibly two types of APL. Firstly, there is Accreditation of Prior Certified Learning (APCL) which is the recognition that outcomes of specific modules have been met through certified learning. Secondly, and more problematic, there is Accreditation of Prior

Experiential Learning (APEL). This is a process through which learning achieved outside the education or training systems is assessed and as appropriate recognised for academic purposes.

Both APCL and APEL can be used for accreditation of undergraduate and postgraduate modules. However, first and foremost the decision to grant APL for the accreditation of modules is an academic judgement. There is a stipulation that prior learning must have occurred within the five years previous to any application made for APL. A maximum of 75% of an award can be gained through APL. It should be noted that this figure is a maximum figure.

Accreditation of Prior Learning here refers only to a formal process. Credit Transfer, 'Articulation'¹ and 'Advanced Standing'² do not require an individual applicant to make a formal application for Accreditation of Prior Learning. The current admissions policy with regard to mature learners negates, for the most part, any need for a formal application for APL by the student as part of the admissions process.

APL is a process of accrediting experiential and/or certificated learning against the learning outcomes of modules, at the appropriate level. Staffordshire University encourages such accreditation to acknowledge the expertise people bring to us, and to give confidence to learners about their potential and experience.

A cornerstone of APL policy is informed academic judgement of prior learning and obviously this cannot happen without staff engagement. This handbook has been produced to hopefully explain, facilitate and simplify the process. This is in addition to the policy document and student guide produced by the University.

3. Description of the activity

Staff members are matching the learning outcomes of modules against the certificated or course-work learning of outside courses at a similar level, or against experience.

This means staff must be familiar with the learning outcomes of the appropriate modules, and with the QAA descriptors for that level (C, I, H, M or Professional Doctorate)

¹ 'Articulation': This refers to the prior determination and recognition by the University of the credit structure of the qualification of a partner institution or awarding body. This is effectively a recognised entry route which should be established through academic planning and validation mechanisms prior to the consideration of any application.

² 'Advanced Standing' refers to the judgement of a claim at application to a defined point of entry within the structure of an award. This is an academic judgement made at the point of admission that an applicant has achieved the equivalent level outcomes for a recognised stage of an award and pre-requisites for future study through previous accredited and certified learning. Advanced Standing therefore is distinct from the APL framework outlined in this document, as it is essentially Credit Transfer as opposed to the Accreditation of Prior Learning.

The characteristics of the QAA descriptors should be applied to the level of work or course to see if the level is applicable.

The learning outcomes of the module should then be considered to see if the course or experience substantially covers them. There will never be an exact match, but each member of staff needs to ask the question "Will any value be added to the student's learning experience by studying this module, given their past experience?" in order to ascertain whether the outcomes are substantially covered.

'Substantial' achievement of learning outcomes of a module has to be assessed by academic judgement. This judgement would deem that the study of the module would be too repetitive for that student (i.e. repetitive of past study or past experience). This judgement also deems that the student would not be greatly disadvantaged in the rest of the programme or in the subsequent practice of the discipline by not studying this module, because of the attainment, experience or study they have already acquired.

The formalities of the process are described in the next sections, but briefly it involves subject specialists, an APL administrator and an option to call on the services of an APL advisor in making recommendations on the level and learning outcomes and a negotiated assessment where appropriate.

The onus for APL application rests with the student. There is a webpage dedicated to APL and students should be informed of the APL option and stages of the admission process.

Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL): The Process.

If a student wishes to proceed with a claim for APCL they will contact the faculty APL Administrator in the first instance. The Faculty administrator will inform the student about the APCL process. The administrator will then contact the course/module leader to discuss the proposed claim and forward the student information about the modules/programmes, the learning outcomes and level descriptors together with the APL Student handbook and APL application pro forma. If the student wishes to claim, an advisory interview will take place with the course/module tutor, an APL advisor (if requested) and the student. The student will then complete the APL pro forma and collate supporting certificated documentation and submit to the course/module leader. After further consultation with the course/module leader a decision is required as to whether the claim is being supported or not. Once a decision is reached the pro forma documents are signed and countersigned by another subject specialist and forwarded to the Faculty administrator to be forwarded to the APL committee (or equivalent)³. The course/module leader presents the claim at the committee and the claim is supported/not supported/referred. The committee will inform the award boards of its decision. (See section on systems and processes for further detail.)

³ From 04/03/08 Faculty Committees have had the power to appoint an individual member of staff to fulfil the role of the APL committee.

Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL): The Process.

The Negotiated Assessment Route.

Any student wishing to apply for an APEL route through a module or modules will need to demonstrate they have met the learning outcome for that module or modules.

If a student wishes to proceed with a claim for APEL they will contact the Faculty APL Administrator in the first instance. The Faculty Administrator will inform the student about the APEL process. The Administrator will then contact the course/module leader to discuss the proposed claim and forward the student information about the modules/programmes, the learning outcomes, level descriptors together with the APL Student Handbook and APL application pro forma. If the student wishes to claim, an advisory interview will take place with the course/module tutor, and the student. The student will then complete the APL pro forma.

The student in negotiation with the module or course leader will agree on an alternative form of assessment which demonstrates that the learning outcomes for the module have been met. The module/course leader will make a decision as to whether the claim is being supported or not. Once a decision is reached the pro forma documents are signed and countersigned by another subject specialist and forwarded to the Faculty APL committee (or equivalent). The course/module leader presents the claim at the committee and the claim is supported/not supported/ referred. The committee will inform the award boards of its decision. (See section on systems and processes for further detail.) Once the form in which assessment will take is approved the assessed work will be processed as any other assessed work.

The APL Module/Negotiated Assessment Route

This second approach should be seen as a supplement or complementary approach to negotiated assessment. The APL Module refers to a series of generic APL modules validated with reference to appropriate credit rating and level held within the Faculties. The APL Module can only be used for general credit and should be initiated by the student who in negotiation with the course leader outlines the area of study, additional learning outcomes and the mode of assessment. This approach has the added benefit of enabling a student to pursue an academic interest that although related to a course is not explicitly explored in the existing syllabus. The APL Module will enable a student to demonstrate through negotiated assessment that they have met learning outcomes that are relevant to a course or level, but are not explicitly assessed in an individual module.

4. Systems and Processes

- Applicant identifies the elements of the academic programme for which they wish to apply for accreditation.
- Applicant contacts Faculty APL Administrator⁴ and informs and discusses their academic profile for the Award with the Award Leader or Module Tutor.
- Applicant completes relevant sections of the documentation (see Appendix 1 - AP(E)L 1 and Appendix 2 – AP(E)L 2) and submits their application.
- The Award and Module Leader confirm that the application is right for the pathway
- In the case of APCL, the Module Leader and Award Leader with the applicant considers the request for APCL and checks that the application meets the module/s Learning Outcomes.
- In the case of APEL, the Module Leader and Award Leader with the applicant considers the request for APEL and proposes that a Negotiated Assessment be submitted. An APL Advisor⁵ based in the Faculty will be available to advise whether the Negotiated Assessment meets the Module/s Learning Outcomes.
- In addition a set of general credit generic Negotiated APL modules of different credits at all levels will be held by Faculties. These Negotiated APL modules should be initiated by the student who, in negotiation with the Award Leader, outlines the area of study, the specific learning outcomes and the mode of assessment. This approach has the added benefit of enabling a student to pursue an academic interest that although related to a course is not explicitly explored in the existing syllabus. Internal assessment will be undertaken by the appropriate staff within the faculty.
- Faculties will nominate one external examiner from each subject area/set of awards at each of undergraduate and postgraduate levels to have oversight of the APL modules. They will be asked to moderate assessments for any students who fall within their remit as and when necessary.
- All Negotiated APL modules from across the institution will be considered at one assessment board, managed by ADI and including representatives of all subject areas with students submitting modules

⁴ The Faculty APL Administrator is a nominated appropriate individual who will serve as first point of contact for students wishing to apply for APL within Faculties. The Administrator will act as liaison between students and academic staff in the first stages of a claim, oversee and monitor claim forms and APL committee paperwork and advise staff on APL procedural issues.

⁵ The APL advisor is a member of Faculty academic staff who will act as a resource for module and award leaders. Advisor should have some expertise in matching assessment to learning outcomes. The use of an APL Advisor is at the discretion of Module and Award Leaders.

for assessment. ADI will appoint a chief external examiner to have oversight of APL across the institution who will attend this board. Through this Board ADI will monitor the uptake of Negotiated APL modules and the performance of students enrolled on them.

- Once the applicant is enrolled on the course the fee may be incorporated into the course fee. There will be no reduction in fees for full-time students, however, the fees for part-time students are as follows. APCL will be charged at 10% of the standard module fee and APEL at 40% of the normal module fee. A negotiated APL module will incur the full module fee. These charges also apply to SURF students.
- Students are advised to declare an interest in submitting an Application for either APCL or APEL within three weeks following enrolment on a module.
- The fee is processed by a designated APL Administrator and the candidate contacts the Module or Award Leader.
- The Award and Module Leader complete relevant sections of the documentation, and it is signed by both, the documentation is then forwarded to the Faculty APL committee via the APL Administrator. Faculties will undertake to inform students of APL decision within 10 working days of receiving completed APL forms.
 - i Application supported for consideration
 - ii Application not supported for consideration
 - iii Application deferred to seek further information
- The APL Administrator forwards APL form(s) to the APLS Committee a minimum of 5 working days prior to the APLS Committee meeting.
- The Award or Module Leader who dealt with the claim presents the APL claim at the meeting. In the case of APEL the Negotiated Assessment agreed with the candidate is outlined. Claims not supported must also be presented.
- APLS Committee considers the evidence:
 - i Accepted - Applicant informed in writing.
 - ii Rejected - Applicant informed in writing and offered guidance.
 - iii Application deferred - the APLS Committee Administrator will confer with the presenting Module or Award Leader who will normally contact the student for further information or clarification.
- In the case of APCL the APLS Committee reports to the Award Boards or equivalent.
- In the case of APEL through negotiated assessment the required assessment is completed, assessed and graded. The awarded grade is presented at the Award Boards.

- In the case of APEL through negotiated assessment within a Negotiated APL module the required assessment is completed, assessed and graded. The awarded grade is presented at the Award Board.
- The Chair of the APLS Committee will ensure that the Faculty Office is informed in order that they can put all accepted claims on TheSIS.
- APCL and APEL will be entered on TheSIS using distinct and separate suffixes to denote whether it is APCL or APEL. (See Section 10)

5. Learning Outcomes and Negotiated Assessment

APL rests firmly within the constructivist interpretation of learning:

The *constructivist model* assumes that knowledge is built up by the student in the form of connected schemas, and that *what is taught* is only one, and not necessarily the most important one, of many factors which influence this process.

In this case the *purpose of assessment* is to represent as closely as possible the current state of a student's conceptual development in a subject.

Constructivists see students as agents in their own learning. What they have come to know arises through active construction of concepts in making sense of their experiences.

The challenge for APL is to ensure that a student's prior learning is consistent with the aims of a course and matches module learning outcomes, and in the case of APEL that an appropriate form of assessment is used to measure that the learning outcomes have been met.

Q. What are learning outcomes?

A. Learning outcomes are concerned with the achievements of the learner, and a way of communicating what we expect our learners to achieve.

Learning outcomes should then be:

- Consistent with the requirement of different academic levels of study
- Together with the assessment criteria, specify the minimum requirements for the award of credit. Grading of assignments is based on attainment above or below the minimum requirements for the award of credit.

Learning outcomes are to learning what bread is to baking

Baking is what you do to get bread but it is not the same as bread

Bread is the **outcome** and **assessable**

Baking is the **process** – just as **learning** is the process of achieving learning outcomes

There needs to be a link between learning outcomes and assessment:

Q. Do we expect that all outcomes are explicitly and individually assessed?

A. We do not have to opt for a model in which each learning outcome in every module is assessed by a particular task. Here lies a very real danger that students will be over-assessed. Instead learning outcomes can act as a framework for estimating student progression and achievement throughout a course. Within each module successfully completed students move closer to achieving course outcomes. In the context of APEL and negotiated assessment it is advisable to design assessment tasks that assess a cluster of the module learning outcomes.

Some believe that outcomes based learning leads to the restriction of creative ability within the curriculum. However, it is possible within a learning outcome at any academic level, for a student to be creative within the parameters of the constituent outcomes. With regard to APL what we are asking students to do is recognise their own learning and experience and relate this to specific module learning outcomes. What we need to do is obviously support them in recognising this prior learning but also to ascertain whether this prior learning matches the level, course aims and module learning outcomes. This is important not only in the context of maintaining academic standards for our awards but also for the individual student. It is important that students are not disadvantaged in terms of progression and the ability to deal with course content at higher levels if they seek an APL route. In short, we need to assess the student's prior learning with reference to module learning outcomes.

Q. What kind of assessment is appropriate?

A. You know best. However, in some institutions there is a tendency to possibly over assess APL students (there is an example of a 15,000 word portfolio for one module at one institution.) Given that you have the details of the student's prior experience and learning it may be appropriate to approach negotiated assessment with a light touch. You may find that an interview, presentation or portfolio will be adequate for purpose. The following checklist may be useful.

Ask:

Does the negotiated assessment have:

- Validity – measures achievement of objectives
- Utility – convenient, flexible and cost effective
- Reliability – similar results for similar students in similar situations

Will it:

- Reflect and support module/subject/programme learning objectives
- Clearly communicate assessment tasks and marking criteria to students and other members of the module/course team
- Communicate achievements, assessment feedback and results to students
- Balance knowledge, key and transferable skills objectives
- Act as a guide for future action for both students and module/course team

Aligning assessment with objectives

- Is your assessment clearly aligned with objectives?

Selecting methods of assessment

- Consider broadly the knowledge, skills and attitudes that can be developed through assessment.
- Aim for diversity in methods that encourage the broadest range of vocational and disciplinary skills.
- Choose methods that are appropriate to desired outcomes.

How much assessment?

- More is not necessarily better. Over-assessment prompts anxiety and surface learning – the reverse of what is intended
- Keep word limits for written assignments as short as is reasonably possible.

Spacing assessment

- Maximise formative feedback.

Are your assessments practical?

- From the learner's perspective: is the assessment achievable?
 - Are any special resources or activities required?
 - Will anyone be disadvantaged?
 - Do special provisions need to be put in place?
- From the teacher's perspective: is the assessment serviceable?
 - Do not set items that you do not have adequate time or abilities to support

Is the assessment valid and reliable?

- Do your assignments provide the truest picture possible
- Can your assessment items be marked with a relatively high degree of consistency and objectivity – particularly if other markers are involved?

Are your assessments valid and reliable?

- Do your assessments have a lifelike or 'real world' quality?
- Are you adequately preparing learners to enter their vocational domains, or to develop their existing professional expertise?

Are your assessments open and inclusive?

- How well do you understand the complex dynamics of your learners' world?
- What support and flexibility can you offer learners to overcome barriers relating to gender, socio-economic status, education backgrounds, age, and so forth?
- Are your assessments designed to engage students who have varied motivations, prior experiences and knowledge, interests and work contexts?

6. Summary of QAA Descriptors: Levels

- **Certificate Level** (*Currently Level 1 of the UMF*)

The holder of a Certificate in Higher Education will have a sound knowledge of the basic concepts of a subject, and will have learned how to take different approaches to solving problems.

He or she will be able to communicate accurately, and will have the qualities needed for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility.

- **Intermediate Level** (*Currently Level 2 of the UMF*)

Holders of qualifications at this level will have developed a sound understanding of the principles in their field of study, and will have learned to apply those principles more widely. Through this, they will have learned to evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems. Their studies may well have had a vocational orientation, enabling them to perform effectively in their chosen field.

They will have the qualities necessary for employment in situations requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making.

- **Honours Level** (*Currently Level 3 of the UMF*)

An Honours graduate will have developed an understanding of a complex body of knowledge, some of it at the current boundaries of an academic discipline. Through this the graduate will have developed analytical techniques and problem-solving that can be applied in many types of employment. The graduate will be able to evaluate evidence, arguments and assumptions, to reach sound judgements, and to communicate effectively.

An Honours graduate should have the qualities needed for employment in situations requiring the exercise of personal responsibility, and decision-making in complex and unpredictable circumstances.

- **Masters Level**

Much of the study undertaken at Masters level will have been at, or informed by, the forefront of an academic or professional discipline. Students will have shown originality in the application of knowledge, and they will understand how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research. They will be able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, and they will show originality in tackling and solving problems.

They will have the qualities needed for employment in circumstances requiring sound judgement, personal responsibility and initiative, in complex and unpredictable professional environments.

- **Doctoral Level** (for Professional Doctorate applicants only)

Doctorates are awarded for the creation and interpretation of knowledge, which extends the forefront of a discipline, usually through original research. Holders of doctorates will be able to conceptualise, design and implement projects for the generation of significant new knowledge and/or understanding. Holders of doctorates will have the qualities needed for employment requiring the ability to make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, and innovation in tackling and solving problems. It should be noted that some Professional Doctorates are often accredited by professional bodies, in some instances this accreditation denies students the opportunity to APL parts of these courses.

7. Glossary

Accreditation: is a term frequently used as a synonym for the recognition of learning. However, it is perhaps more properly used to signify the most formalised and widely practised forms of recognition.

Accreditation of prior learning (APL): a process for assessing and, as appropriate, recognising prior learning or prior certificated learning for academic purposes. This recognition may give the learning a credit-value in a credit-based structure and allow it to be counted towards the completion of a programme of study and the award(s) or qualifications associated with it.

Accreditation of prior certificated learning (APCL): a process through which previously assessed and certificated learning is considered and, as appropriate, recognised for academic purposes.

Accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL): a process through which learning achieved outside education or training systems is assessed and, as appropriate, recognised for academic purposes.

Acknowledgement: is another term sometimes used to describe the recognition of learning, but is usually used in a more broad and non-specific sense and does not necessarily involve the use of standardised mechanisms.

Advanced Standing: is an agreement with another institution whereby an individual student who has undertaken part of a course of study at the institution may apply to transfer to an appropriate programme of study at the University. Applications are dealt with on an individual basis and follow normal admissions procedures.

Articulation: Articulation is a formal process leading to the recognition of the credit rating of a named qualification of a partner institution of the University, and the creation of opportunities to transfer with advanced standing and specific credit to a named qualification of the University.

Credit Transfer: A mechanism whereby students who have successfully completed a level or stage of a higher education award at another institution may apply to transfer to an appropriate programme of study at the University. Applications are dealt with on an individual basis.

Dual awards: A dual award describes collaborative arrangements under which two or more awarding institutions together provide programmes leading to separate awards being granted by both, or all of them.

Franchise: Franchising is a formal process by which the University, as an awarding institution, agrees to authorise the provision of the whole or part of one or more of its own approved programmes by a partner organisation. The University retains overall responsibility for the programme's content, delivery, assessment and quality assurance arrangements.

Joint awards: A joint award describes collaborative arrangements under which two or more awarding institutions together provide programmes leading to a single award made jointly by both, or all participants.

Recognition (of learning): any process that acknowledges and establishes publicly that some reasonably substantial and significant element of learning has taken place and can be assessed to have done so.

8. THE PAPERWORK

ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING SCHEME (TO ACCESS THIS FORM IN ALTERNATIVE FORMATS PLEASE CONTACT YOUR FACULTY APL ADMINISTRATOR)

APPLICATION AND APPROVAL FORM

*** ALL SECTIONS TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE APLS COMMITTEE ***

Applicant **MUST** complete **RELEVANT SECTIONS IN FULL**:

SECTION 1

1.1	
Name (in full):	
Student Registration Number:	
Address (for correspondence):	
<input type="text"/>	
Post Code:	E-mail Address:
Tel. No (home):	Tel. No (work):
Place of Work (where applicable):	
Professional Qualifications:	
1.2	
Current Award/Course Title (in full):	
Name of Award/Course Leader:	
Number of credits applied for:	
Level of credits applied for:	
Module Title:	
Name of Module Leader:	

Office Use Only	Award Code: <input type="text"/>
	Module Code: <input type="text"/>

Please indicate the number of modules for which you have submitted APL applications

Applicants MUST complete a separate form for each module for which they are seeking accreditation

Photocopies of Section 1.1 can be submitted with multiple module applications, and candidates are advised to take photocopies before completing other sections if they know other modules will be submitted

FAILURE TO COMPLETE ALL RELEVANT SECTIONS OF THIS FORM WILL RESULT IN A DELAY IN YOUR CLAIM BEING PROCESSED

APLS CLAIM

For APCL

Evidence should be provided in the form of learning outcomes. Module descriptors, which include the aims, content and outcomes are available from the Faculty Office, APL Advisor, Course Leader or Module Tutor.

Hours of theoretical study, course content, assignments and assessments with results must also be included as appropriate.

For APEL

In the case of prior experiential learning evidence must be submitted to support the case for eligibility for Negotiated Assessment. This should be in the form of learning outcomes. Module descriptors, which include the aims, content and outcomes are available from the Faculty Office, APL Administrator, Course Leader or Module Tutor.

See section on 'evidence' on page 16 of the APL policy.

APPLICANT MUST ENTER RELEVANT INFORMATION BELOW:

EXPERIENCE

(Certificated course or evidenced life experience)

WHAT I HAVE LEARNT

(Learning Outcomes)

Example 1 - APL for certificated course

2 years ago I completed an Institute of Management Certificate in Management. My certificate and a copy of the syllabus are attached.

I have covered the learning outcomes for the modules People Management 1 and Budgeting & Cost Management on my current course.

Example 2 – Prior Experiential Learning

As an experienced Personnel Officer of fifteen years standing (see CV) I believe I have fulfilled the learning outcomes of the module in Conflict Management. I have detailed experience and evidence below which corresponds to the Learning outcomes.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) I have trained senior managers in the company to understand the employment relationship and I attach a programme of a training course showing that I am the presenter.b) I enclose (confidential material) a strategic plan I put forward to avert a strike a year ago and some minutes from regular meetings with the Union that I facilitate. I also attach some minutes from Personnel meetings specifically related to conflict situations.c) I believe that document 'iii' submitted as above and the minutes of 4th November 1999 show that I can employ negotiation techniques. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Ability to provide good advice regarding rights, duties and obligations of the employment relationship.b) Understand the nature of conflict in employing organisations and the strategies available to manage the manifestations.c) How to employ negotiation techniques as a method of conflict resolution. |
|--|---|

Signature:

Date:

Section 2 Course/Module Leader MUST complete this section:

NOTE: DO NOT SUBMIT ANY ASSIGNMENTS/COURSE WORK WITH THIS FORM

Name of Student:

Student Registration Number:

2.1 List documents checked: <i>(Use an attached sheet if necessary)</i>
2.2 Number of Credits:
2.3 Level of Credits:
2.4 Award/Course Title: Module Title: Module Code:
2.5 * SUPPORTED/NOT SUPPORTED (<i>* Delete as applicable</i>) <i>(Provide rationale for decision below)</i> This application fits the pathway described. Award/Course Leader's signature: _____ Date: _____
2.6 For APEL only: Are there any negotiated forms of assessment that need to be completed: * YES/NO (<i>* Delete as applicable</i>) IF YES, complete the following: NATURE OF ASSESSMENT(s): SUBMISSION DATE: Overall grade/mark awarded (For APEL only)

2.7 Signatures of two Tutors with subject expertise or one tutor with subject expertise and a Faculty APL Advisor:-

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Section 3 The APLS Committee Chair MUST complete this section:

Course/Award/Module (Code and Title)	Number of	Level of Credits

***ACCEPTED/REJECTED/DEFERRED (* Delete as applicable)**

CONDITIONS:

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Chair:

Signature:

Date:

9. GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETION OF THE APPLICATION AND APPROVAL FORM

This MUST be read in conjunction with Section 6 entitled “Systems and Processes” of the APL Policy document.

Section 1 - Applicant Completes

1.1 It is important that applicants complete the personal details section in as much detail as possible.

1.2 The completion of this section requires the applicant to state such details as Award/Course Title, Award/Course Leader, number of credits applied for, level of credits applied for, Module Title and Module Leader.

FOR APCL

1.3 The completion of this box will identify applicant’s previous study and provide written evidence to support his/her claim

Previous Study

Please enter here the actual study that you are presenting for your claim.

Clearly identify the actual course and if any credits were awarded when you did the course. Please note you will be required to produce the original course certificate and formal written evidence from the educational institution where you studied detailing the number and level of credits.

Evidence

You will need to have discussed in your initial contact with academic staff the types of evidence required. This will ensure that you are able to collect the necessary evidence prior to the interview for the claim. As well as documentary evidence, as above, you will probably need to produce evidence of course content, assignments and assessments with results. Space is provided for you to enter your evidence (taught courses). When you meet the person who will deal with the actual claim they may wish to see previous work e.g. assignments and possibly the content of a portfolio.

The relevant tutors and possibly a Faculty APL Advisor will help you establish the level of your claim by reference to national standards.

FOR APEL

You will need to have discussed in your initial contact with staff the types of experience you have acquired, how this relates to the learning outcomes of the modules/course you are claiming for and of the evidence they will require. This will ensure that you are able to collect the necessary evidence prior to the interview. Space is provided for you to enter your evidence.

During your meetings with the Module leader you will discuss an appropriate form of negotiated assessment which will enable you to demonstrate that you have met the required learning outcomes at the appropriate level.

Section 2 – Member of Staff Completes

This section is completed by the person who is carrying out the actual claim, i.e. conducting the interview.

Although the applicant has completed Section 1, please check that the details are accurate.

List documents checked

You **MUST** see original documents e.g. award certificate, formal written evidence of credits. Then photocopy and submit signed photocopies with the form.

Number of credits

Enter here the number of credits you are supporting. It is envisaged that APEL will normally be claimed against specific modules, however, APEL can also be claimed against course learning outcomes.

Level of credits

Enter here the level of credits you are supporting. The student is not asked to provide specific evidence of level. Staff will look at QAA descriptors and make a judgement which may require further evidence from the student and inform the nature of the negotiated assessment.

Award/Course and Module Details

Enter here the applicant's Award/Course Title and the Module Title and Code when supporting the claim against a specific module which is currently provided by Staffordshire University. This includes generic APL modules

Supported/Not Supported

Delete as applicable and provide a short written rationale for supporting the claim or not.

Award Leader to sign and date the application supporting that the application fits the pathway described.

Negotiated Assessment

This box should contain a brief outline of the form of negotiated assessment agreed between the applicant, and the Module Leader. This should also contain details of how the assessment demonstrates that learning outcomes have been met.

Signatures required of 2 tutors with subject expertise.

The Faculty APL administrator needs to establish the total number of APL applications (and module titles of such) that the student is making, in order to gain a full overview of the particular student's application.

Sections 3 and 4 – APLS Chairperson must complete this section

- Course/Award/Module details and number and level of credits applied for to be recorded in this section.
- Accepted/Rejected/Deferred – to be deleted as applicable.
- Conditions – Please specify any conditions attached to the application
- APLS Chairperson to sign and date this section.

10. Guidelines for exemption codes on Thesis

The following codes have now been set up on TheSIS for recording APL of various kinds. These are:

- E1 Credit transfer
- E2 APCL
- E3 APEL (negotiated assessment)
- E4 General credit exemption (to be used only with the General Credit Exemption modules)

All the above will be 'ungraded' - i.e. recorded as GP4 or 7 depending on level.

When enrolling a student on one of the existing general credit exemption modules, TheSIS will default to E4, but for all other kinds of exemption the person doing the enrolment on modules will need to select the appropriate code. It is therefore important that when APL applications are assessed and approved it is made explicit what type of APL is being applied.

Where a student has undertaken negotiated assessment for a module and this is to be graded, the grade awarded should be entered and the 'user suffix' N should be added to flag that the grade came from negotiated assessment.

These codes will be used to help monitor the volume and type of APL that is being undertaken within the University.

11. Guidelines for Negotiated APL Modules

The Negotiated APL modules a mechanism which enable students to claim credit for learning that, although at the requisite level does not satisfactorily match on to the learning outcomes of existing modules. It is envisaged that these modules will be used when a cohort of students have similar learning experiences that do not map onto existing provision. However, the process can be used for individual students.

The process is relatively straightforward. Once the decision to use the negotiated module framework has been made students in negotiation with academic staff (usually a module tutor or Award Leader) are required to complete the following student contract.

The Negotiated Accreditation of Prior Learning Module Student Contract.

You should complete a separate form for each Negotiated Accreditation of Prior Learning Module you undertake. This form must be completed in negotiation with your tutor.

Name:

Title of Award:

Student ID Number:

Title of Negotiated Accreditation of Prior Learning Module:

Number of Credits:

Level:

Learning Outcomes:

These need to be negotiated with your tutor and will reflect your prior learning and the level and credit rating of the module. You will find 'Staffordshire University Award Outcomes: Interpreting the National Qualifications Framework' invaluable for this. It can be accessed at <http://www.staffs.ac.uk/services/qis/forms/intnqf.pdf>

1.
2
3.
4.
5.
6.

Indicative Content:

In negotiation with your tutor you will list the topics for which you will demonstrate that prior learning at the appropriate level has taken place.

The Form of Assessment:

In negotiation with your tutor you will provide a description of the format of assessment which you will use to demonstrate that you have achieved ALL of the learning outcomes of the module.

Assessment Criteria:

Working with your tutor please express briefly and clearly, the qualities which you have both agreed should be demonstrated in your assessed work for the purpose of grading. Once again you will find Staffordshire University Award Outcomes: Interpreting the National Qualifications Framework' invaluable for this.

Learning Strategies:

Working with your tutor please outline concisely, the learning strategies you have employed within relevant prior learning. You should also provide a brief description of relevant texts you have used or will use in order to complete the negotiated assessment at the required level. Also indicate any access to resources required for successful completion of this module.

Date of Submission of Assessment:

Signed by

Student:

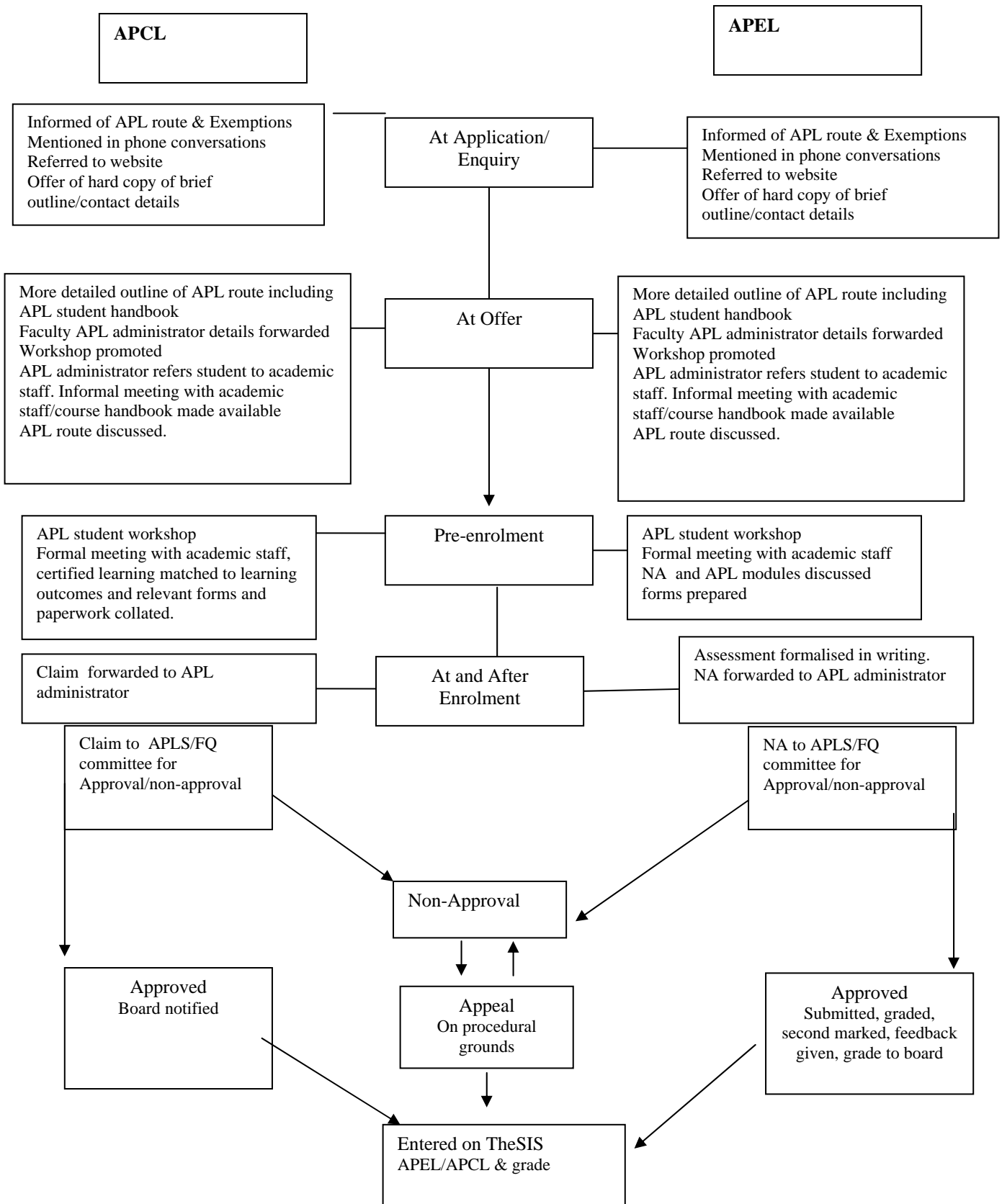
Module Tutor:

Award Leader:

Date:

Once the contract is completed to the satisfaction of both student and academic it is then forwarded to the relevant APL committee (usually a Faculty Quality Committee.) once approved the information on the student contract is transferred to a module descriptor on Thesis. A series of example modules developed by ADI are available on Thesis and can be simply copied or adapted by Faculties and Schools to create their own module. Once the module is created the student follows the standard APEL route.

12. APL Procedure



13. Contacts

Accreditation of Prior Learning Administrators.

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AMD also have a nominated Academic APL Advisor for staff: Helen Chapman
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CPD also have a nominated Academic APL Advisor for staff: Chris Wakeman:
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General queries about the policy

Pete Jones

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