

6.3 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): For Advanced Entry or Exemptions

As ICD has begun to grow and expand its provision, so too has it begun to receive a larger number of applications from international, and more particularly mature, students. This has led to a situation in which ICD must evaluate and recognise qualifications that are currently outside of the scope of the National Framework of Qualifications, and indeed of the 'Bologna Process' as it pertains to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) as well as a variety of forms of formal, non-formal, and experiential learning.

Consequently, the college will ensure that

- i. It integrates a continuously enhancing set of RPL and APEL policies and procedures into its admissions process.
- ii. "A learner may claim exemption from a module whose grade would otherwise contribute to the award classification, provided that he or she can demonstrate the attainment of the relevant knowledge, skill and competence." (QQI 2013b *Assessment and Standards* guidelines, Sectoral Convention 3 on Determination of Award Classification)
- iii. All applicants and enrolled learners at ICD are provided with a summary of arrangements available with respect to RPL for entry to - or exemption from certain requirements of – respective programmes.
- iv. Programme-specific RPL criteria and arrangements for exemptions from modules and advanced entry are specified in the college's programme manuals.

The process for applicants with a prior formal, non-formal, or experiential learning portfolio is as follows:

1. All applicants are provided with a statement of RPL/APEL arrangements for their respective programme (prospective learners can also find this information published on the college's website).
2. Evidence* of RPL/APEL is provided voluntarily by the applicant during the application process. This must include a completed ICD RPL Application Form (see Appendix 6.3 for a copy of this application form).

3. This evidence – including the authenticity of any associated documentation – is evaluated by ICD (typically by the Registrar and administrative staff).
4. A recommendation is made with respect to the applicant's RPL/APEL request.
5. Successful applicants enter their respective programmes with or without exemptions from specific programme requirements.
6. Unsuccessful applications for RPL/APEL exemptions can be formally appealed.

* Evidence for RPL/APEL will typically take the form of a Learning Assessment Portfolio (LAP) made up of documentation such as certificates and course-completion documents, alongside references provided by employers. It must also include a completed ICD RPL Application Form (see appendix 6.3 for a copy of this form). In assessing the value of the prospective learner's educational and employment experience, ICD will decide as to the equivalence of the knowledge, skills and competencies they have acquired in these contexts on a case-by-case basis. For an application to be successful, ICD must be satisfied that the learning derived from students' experiences meets or exceeds the learning outcomes at the appropriate level where credit is being sought. Typically, equivalence will be judged on the basis of a comparison between the learning outcomes for the areas where credit is sought and the description of prior learning offered by the student's LAP.

ICD also reserves the right to assess any documentation provided, firstly, in relation to its authenticity. Only after the contents of the applicants LAP have been judged to be genuine will ICD proceed to the next step of mapping their qualifications in terms of their equivalence to the respective programme's learning outcomes, and to the qualification levels outlined in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). Documentary evidence for all forms of experiential learning will also be requested from applicants.

RPL/APEL Appeals

The decision to recommend credit for RPL/APEL rests with ICD's Registrar, who reports to Academic Council, and the External Examiner, as appropriate, of any respective validating body. However, ICD

has put in place an appeals procedure which is contained in the student handbook, and explained to all applicants.

This process is as follows:

- 1) If a learner's application for RPL/APEL has been unsuccessful, they will be made aware of their right to appeal and of the formal process required.
- 2) Learners/Applicants will formally email or write to the college Registrar informing them of their intent to appeal. They will also be expected to explain *why* they are appealing the decision, and provide any relevant documentation.
- 3) An *ad-hoc* board, typically comprising *two* academic staff members, will be appointed to review RPL/APEL appeals.
- 4) The board will make a decision on each case based on the merits of the written appeal and the provided documentation and report this to the Registrar. Learners/applicants are entitled to an oral hearing, if requested, and may also be accompanied by a student representative.
- 5) This decision will be formally communicated to the learner by ICD's administrative staff. The board's decision will generally be treated as final, though learners/applicants may be permitted a further appeal under certain circumstances.

Ongoing Monitoring with respect to RPL/APEL

The criteria provided by QQI in the 'Guidelines and Criteria for Quality Assurance Procedures in Higher Education and Training' require a provider to monitor the ongoing success and development of their programme. ICD will monitor progress students who have been credited with RPL tracking their success or failure in relation to other students on the programme to ensure RPL policy and procedure is fair *and* effective. ICD will conduct periodic reviews to ascertain the progress of students who have been granted RPL/APEL exemptions for its programmes. This review is the responsibility of programme directors and the college Registrar, with findings being presented annually to ICD's Academic Council.

Appendix 6.3: ICD RPL Application Form



APPLICATION FORM FOR RPL

APPLICATION FORM

This form should be completed by applicants who are applying for Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL) on the basis of previous qualifications that are NOT recognised/positioned within the National Framework of Qualification (NFQ)

and/or

by applicants who are applying for Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) achieved through professional experience/independent study.

- Please refer to the ICD's RPL Policy and APEL Procedure when completing this application form, available via Admission Office
- The volume and level of credit assigned following a successful RPL application will be recorded on the student transcript. Any marks and grades associated with this credit will not count in final classification calculations.
- It is the applicant's responsibility to provide certified copies of original documentation, such as official transcripts of results, and appropriate evidence to demonstrate equivalent certificated and/or experiential learning outcomes. All evidence has to be in English.
- This application must be made by the applicable deadline outlined in the RPL Procedure and it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that they allow plenty of time to gather and upload the evidence, tasks or information required by that deadline. Normally, late applications will not be considered.
- All requested evidence, including this form, must be submitted to the Admission Office.
- If you have any questions regarding the RPL process or the fee for the RPL process, please contact a member of the Admissions team at admin@icd.ie or on 01 6333222.

Section A1
ALL APPLICANTS – PERSONAL DETAILS

Please fill in your details in the table below. Do not leave any rows blank.

| | |
|--|--|
| ICD student number: | |
| Forename(s): | |
| Surname: | |
| Date of birth: | |
| Email: | |
| Telephone: | |
| Full award/course title you are applying to: | |
| Month and year that you intend to commence your studies at ICD e.g. Sept 2016: | |

Section A2
ALL APPLICANTS – APPLICATION TYPE

Please put an 'x' in the box next to the application type that you wish to make.

| | |
|--|---|
| | I am applying for Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL) (Go to PART B) |
| | I am applying for Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) (Go straight to PART C) |
| | I am applying for a combination of Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL) AND Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) (Go to PART B) |

Go to PART B

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| PART B | | |
| Section B1 | | |
| APCL APPLICANTS ONLY | | |
| <p>Please complete the table below using one row per qualification. Only list qualifications that you intend to use as evidence for your RPL application.</p> <p>Add a new row if you need to add another qualification.</p> <p>You must submit copies of the original certificates and/or transcripts (must be in English) of each listed below.</p> | | |
| Full title of qualification | Name and address of awarding institution/training centre | Month and year qualification awarded (e.g. June 2010) |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| <p>Please note that your application may be rejected or delayed if you do not submit these documents with this form.</p> <p>Go to PART C</p> | | |

| | |
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| PART C | |
| Section C1 | |
| ALL APPLICANTS – POINT OF ENTRY | |
| <p>Please put an 'x' in the box next to the point of entry that you wish to apply for.</p> | |
| | I am seeking direct entry into second year of an undergraduate degree (go to Part D) |
| | I am seeking direct entry into final year of an undergraduate degree (go to Part D) |
| | I am seeking exemption from certain modules of an undergraduate or postgraduate taught degree (go to Section C2) |

Section C2
APPLICANTS SEEKING EXEMPTION FROM CERTAIN MODULES OF AN AWARD

Please complete the table below. You must complete a row for EACH module for which you are seeking exemption addressing ALL learning outcomes for each module; add more rows if you needed. You must:

- a) use the ICD course module information provided to you by ICD Admission Office and
- b) cross-reference your own prior learning with the evidence that you have submitted

Please contact ICD Admission Office if you require help with completing this section.

| ICD Module Code/Title | Credit value | Learning Outcomes | Evidence |
|----------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>e.g. ICD AT01/ Accounting</i> | <i>e.g. 10</i> | | <i>e.g. See Appendix A</i> |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Go to PART D

PART D

Section D1

ALL APPLICANTS – REFLECTIVE STATEMENT

Please provide a written statement (500 – 750 words) of that reflects on your prior learning achievements. In your statement, you should include the following:

- how the learning you achieved is **relevant** to the module area you are applying for; and
- how you have kept your learning **current/up-to-date** since you completed that independent learning or gained that experience.

Continue to Section D2

Section D2

ALL APPLICANTS – SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Please put an 'x' in the box next to ALL relevant pieces of evidence that you have submitted as part of your application to the Admission Office.

If you are unsure about what work is required of you, please contact our Admission Office.

| | |
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| | Previous course(s)' syllabi/descriptors (to be included by all RPL applicants) |
| | Attested / original certificates and transcripts (must be in English) |
| | Portfolio of previous work |
| | Reference from your previous/current employer |
| | Assessment(s) set by the Admissions Office (if applicable) |
| | A recorded performance |
| | Other (please specify): |

Continue to PART E

PART E

**Section E1
ALL APPLICANTS – APPLICANT DECLARATION**

ALL APPLICANTS

“By signing below, I certify that the information given above is accurate and I understand that giving false information may constitute a disciplinary offence within the regulations of ICD Business School. I understand that ICD Business School can approach the awarding body (such as a training centre or college) or employer, if it chooses, for verification of the submitted qualifications and/or experience. I also understand that submission of an RPL application does not constitute the guarantee of an offer to study at ICD Business School.”

Signed:

Dated:

REFERENCES

QQI (2013b) Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013. Quality and Qualifications Ireland, Dublin.

Available from:

https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Assessment_and_Standards%20Revised%202013.pdf