



The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Academic Policy by GEPEA EUROPE | GEPEA University

For more information and update please visit: www.gepea.eu Email: office@gepea.eu

1. PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Recognition or Accreditation procedure is to describe the process for application and assessment for the Recognition/Accreditation of Prior Learning (RPL or APL) based on prior formal, informal, and non-formal learning.

2. SCOPE:

This procedure covers the recognition and crediting of prior learning (knowledge, skills, and competencies) based on Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) and Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) for all program offered at GEPEA University. It enables candidates to gain entry to an award or qualification, exemptions from parts of an existing program of study, or entry with advanced standing. The recognition of Accredited Prior Learning (RAPL) is covered separately in the Admission of Transfer Students Policy.

3. DEFINITIONS OF RPL-APL-AEPL-CPL-EPL:

Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) – a process of reflection which identifies and accredits an individual's knowledge, skills, understanding and competencies that have been developed throughout their lives by means of participation in non-formal and informal learning.

Accreditation of Experiential Learning (APEL) – a process of reflection which identifies and accredits an individual's experience developed through exposure in life to a variety of experiences (at home, work, or volunteering). APEL is a framework that recognizes and validates prior learning and experience, allowing individuals to gain academic credit or access to higher education based on their work and life experiences.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) - is a structured assessment process that evaluates an individual's pre-existing skills, knowledge, and competencies acquired through various experiential learning pathways. This includes, but is not limited to, formal education, on-the-job training, self-directed learning, open-source contributions, volunteer work, and even personal projects. It's about acknowledging that expertise isn't solely derived from traditional academic curricula, but often forged in the crucible of real-world application and practical experience. RPL aims to formalize this recognition, leading to credentials, advanced placement in educational programs, or simply a documented validation of skillset for career advancement.

More specifically, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) – a process for recognizing learning that has come from experience and/or previous formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts. This includes knowledge and skills gained within school, college and university and outside formal

learning situations as through life and work experiences RPL is a concept that enables individuals to have their learning and experiences recognized for several purposes which can benefit the individual, employers and the economy which include:

- RPL for personal or career development.
- RPL for the award of ECTS points to gain exemption from parts of an existing program of study or to gain entry with advanced standing.
- RPL to gain entry to an award or qualification.

Certificated Prior Learning (CPL): Formal learning from recognized academic qualifications earned at an accredited institution.

Experiential Prior Learning (EPL): Informal learning from work experience, training, or other activities.

Prior Industry Experiential Learning (PIEL) - Prior Industry Experiential Learning (PIEL) is a process that allows individuals to earn college credit for skills gained through their professional careers. It is based on documented evidence that outlines the work done and the learning gained on the job. PIEL is subject to an assessment fee and is assessed according to guidelines established by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL). The credit awarded for the prior learning experience directly relates to the student's degree program and is applied in satisfaction of some of the degree requirements. PIEL credit is not awarded for non-degree programs.

4. DEFINITIONS OF FORMAL LEARNING, INFORMAL LEARNING, NON-FORMAL:

Formal Learning – learning achieved through formal education that occurs in organized and structured contexts and is explicitly designated as learning in terms of objectives, time or learning support. It is assessed and credit-rated and leads to recognized qualifications. It is usually valued in terms of credits which can be transferred between qualifications, institutions, and countries.

Informal Learning – experiential learning that takes place through life and work experiences. It is often unintentional learning. The learner may not recognize at the time of the experience that it contributed to the development of their skills and knowledge. This recognition may only happen retrospectively through the RPL -APL process, unless the experiences take place as part of a planned experiential or work-based learning program.

Non-formal Learning – learning that takes place alongside the mainstream systems of education and training. It is usually flexible, hands-on, learner-centered and it is led by a teacher or a leader. Unlike formal learning this form of learning does not result in a formal degree or certificate, for example, learning and training activities or programmed undertaken in the workplace, voluntary sector or trade union and through community-based learning.

5. **EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING:** The following types of experiential learning provide valuable opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills in real-world contexts. Types of experiential learning are:

Apprenticeships: Students gain practical experience through hands-on work with professionals in their field.

Clinical Experiences: Hands-on experiences directly tied to a specific area of study, such as nursing or child development.

Field Work: Exploration and application of classroom content in a specified field experience away from the classroom.

Internships: Opportunities to gain work experience in a career field, which can be for credit or not.

Outdoor Education: Participants engage in wilderness trips to learn survival skills and environmental stewardship.

Service Learning: Students participate in community service projects to teach civic responsibility and empathy.

Cultural Immersion: Living and studying in a foreign country to experience culture firsthand.

Project-Based Learning: Engaging in hands-on projects to solve complex problems and produce value-added products.

6. OTHER RELATED DEFINITIONS:

RPL Candidate – an individual making a claim for RPL and/or credit transfer.

RPL for Entry – full acceptance of an RPL claim as entry requirements onto a program of study.

RPL for Advanced Entry – full acceptance of a claim for entry to a program of study with exemptions from parts of the program.

7. CONTROL, RULES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Principal/Head of Institution is the owner of this procedure. All requests for revisions shall be addressed to the Principal/Head of Institution. Amendments shall be made, if any are required, and approved by the Executive Committee. Superseded versions of the procedure shall be retained for future reference. Any updates or revisions to the procedure will be communicated through official channels and posted on the institution's website. The procedure is reviewed annually.

The Principal/Head of Institution is responsible for overseeing this procedure. The Admissions Office is responsible for processing RPL applications in accordance with institutional policies and procedures, specifically:

- Guiding the potential candidate through the process for RPL-APL and the outcome they expect.
- Sending out the RPL-APL Application Form to the candidate to provide and declare details of formal qualifications/awards, non-formal or informal competences.
- Checking all the required details submitted by the candidate. Once the application has been validated, the candidate is requested to provide relevant evidence.
- Passing all the documents and applications to the Academic Committee/ To the Quality Officer of GEPEA EUROPE | GEPEA UNIVERSITY for evaluating the application.
- Informing the candidates on the RPL-APL result via GEPEA EUROPE | GEPEA UNIVERSITY official Email.

The Academic Committee is responsible for following the steps outlined below to make recommendations on RPL claims (APL and APEL) to the Head of Institution, who makes the final decisions. Specifically:

- Conducting the initial evaluation of candidates' RPL requests to analyze the evidence provided.
- Interviewing the candidate, if necessary, to validate the initial evaluation and verify specific competencies claimed by the candidate.
- Requiring the candidate to take skills and/or competency-based tests if the interview results are insufficient to ensure validity.
- Mapping the competencies acquired by the candidate (through formal, non-formal, and informal learning) against the intended learning outcomes of the specific program.

8. PROCEDURE:

Candidates who have previously engaged in learning, whether through formal education (resulting in a certificate) or through non-formal or informal means (e.g., work or community based learning without a formal certificate), can utilize the RPL process to achieve the following:

- Entry/Admission to a Degree Program: RPL can be used as an alternative to standard entry requirements if the candidate can demonstrate knowledge and skills equivalent to those specified for admission.
- Exemption from Specific Modules (Courses): during a program of study, RPL can enable a student to reduce their module load if they can demonstrate prior learning that was not previously used for program entry but can be applied to their current studies.

9. ACCESSING RPL-APL-APEL:

The GEPEA EUROPE | GEPEA UNIVERSITY College website will provide comprehensive guidance on the RPL process, including how to submit a claim and the associated fees. Relevant policies will be available for download, outlining various scenarios and potential outcomes. This will assist applicants in identifying where their prior learning has occurred and how to effectively demonstrate it. Candidates interested in accessing a program of study via the RPL-APL-APEL

route should notify the Admissions Office by email at office@gepea.eu or gepea.official@gmail.com or indicate their intention in the RPL Application Form. Candidates must provide evidence of prior achievements at a comparable or equivalent ECTS/EQF/MQF level to demonstrate their eligibility for RPL/APL. If appropriate evidence is provided, GEPEA EUROPE | GEPEA UNIVERSITY College may grant exemptions from specific modules or courses or allow entry into a qualification program. GEPEA EUROPE | GEPEA UNIVERSITY College Admissions staff are available to assist candidates with an initial evaluation of their portfolios through online interviews. Candidates will be asked to submit their CVs/Profile and any relevant documents, which will be pre-evaluated by the Academic Committee. At this stage, candidates will receive information on the type of recognition they may require, the potential outcomes, and how the resulting credits can be used for program entry or exemptions. This pre-evaluation process helps candidates identify and gather all necessary evidence to validate their prior formal, informal, and/or non-formal learning before submitting their application. Candidates who meet the eligibility criteria must submit an RPL Application Form for evaluation. The eligibility conditions include:

- At least **3 years of work experience** in a related field. ▪ Willingness to undergo additional skills and/or competency-based tests or evaluations as part of the RPL-APL-APEL process.
- RPL will be offered for admission to a formal qualification or award but not for exemption to components of the qualification in the case of:
 - I. a regulated professional accreditation that the program of study may offer, or;
 - II. Programs that require a minimum number of practice hours to deem candidates “fit to practice” (and where this is the case it should be made clear in the policy document), or;
 - III. **10 (ten) years** have elapsed since the said certified learning has taken place.

10. AUTHENCITY & REFUND:

GEPEA EUROPE | GEPEA UNIVERSITY College assumes that all applications are made in good faith and that all documents and information provided are authentic. If an error is made in assessing an application or if the documentation provided is incomplete, misleading, false, or invalid, GEPEA EUROPE | GEPEA UNIVERSITY College reserves the right to withdraw credit. No Application fees or fees deposited will be refunded in such cases.

11. EXEMPTION FOR ENTRY TO THE RPL-APL ROUTE:

For entry or advanced entry (exemption) into a program are assessed by comparing the candidate’s portfolio to a benchmark program currently offered by GEPEA EUROPE | GEPEA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE. The portfolio content and learning objectives must be at least 75% equivalent to the benchmark program to meet the entry requirements of the desired program. For an instance, a candidate applying for admission to the Master of Business Administration (90 ECTS, EQF/MQF Level 7) must demonstrate that their portfolio content is at least 75% equivalent to the learning outcomes of the Bachelor of Business Administration (180 ECTS, EQF/MQF Level 6).

- In this exemption, their previously studied partial or full transcripts or Certificates or CPD trainings should be well matched with the syllabus or course outline offered by the GEPEA EUROPE | GEPEA UNIVERSITY.
- Any credits gained through the RPL-APL process can only be Awarded/given to learners once all the program of study is completed.

12. COMPLETING RPL-APL PROCESS:

The GEPEA EUROPE | GEPEA UNIVERSITY Academic Committee will recommend an RPL decision to the Principal/Head of Institution for approval within 1 (ONE) week of the assessment. The recommendation will include sufficient justification.

- The candidate demonstrated at least 75% attainment.
- The candidate is eligible for admission to a degree program/ Undergraduate or Post Graduate as an alternative to standard entry requirements if they can demonstrate attainment of the learning outcomes equivalent to the specified entrance requirements.
- If a candidate is awarded credit for the course, a “Pass” grade will be given.

The GEPEA EUROPE | GEPEA UNIVERSITY Secretariat/Registrar will record the RPL decision and inform the candidate in writing within 1 (ONE) week of receiving the RPL result.

If a candidate is dissatisfied with the RPL decision, they may request a review by the Chair of the Academic Committee within 7 (Seven) working days of receiving the decision. A review will be conducted within 7 (Seven) working days of receiving the request, involving the Chair of the Academic Committee, the Academic Coordinator, and a Nominated Expert.

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