



Policy Recognition and Accreditation of Prior Learning (RPL)

EIM - European Institute of Management

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1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of Recognition and Accreditation of Prior Learning (RPL) is to recognize and, where appropriate, accredit learning that has come from experience and/or previous formal, non-formal, and informal learning contexts of applicants who are interested in studying at the European Institute of Management (EIM).

1.2 This policy aims to guide EIM in managing the process of recognition and accreditation of prior learning by providing a set of core principles and key features intended to ensure consistency and transparency in the application of the principles of RPL throughout the institution.

1.3 By allowing candidates to demonstrate learning achieved through a range of learning experiences, including formal, non-formal, and informal education, RPL enables them to gain access to EIM's programmes and/or gain exemptions from parts of it. Learning experience includes knowledge and skills gained within school, college, and university, and outside formal learning situations, through life and work experiences

1.4 This policy covers the following RPL forms of Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL), Accreditation of Experiential Learning (APEL), and Recognition of Accredited Prior Learning (RAPL or RAPEL).

1.5 EIM's RPL Policy will be published on the institutional website to inform candidates about the availability of RPL. RPL is available for all EIM programmes except where a programme is subject to regulated practice-hour requirements, a professional warrant, or other regulatory conditions that preclude RPL; if such cases arise, they will be listed on EIM's website.

2. Glossary of terms

The following terminology (Table 1) is used when evaluating prior learning of candidates.

Term	Explanation
Accreditation of Experiential Learning (APEL)	A process of reflection that identifies and accredits an individual's experience developed through exposure in daily life to a variety of experiences. (at home, in formal education, work, or volunteering).
Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)	A process of reflection that 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.
Candidate	An individual making a claim for RPL and/or credit transfer.
Component	Smaller parts of a full programme of learning which can be assessed separately.
Credit Transfer	Takes place when an individual has gained a formal programme of study and has received formal credit, and is looking to gain entry at an advanced stage or exemption from components of another programme of study where the learning outcomes of the programme of study match the learning outcomes of the new programme of study. The

	credit can be either subject-specific or general if the learning is at the same MQF level.
Formal Learning	Formal learning takes place within the context of programmes delivered by learning and training providers; it is assessed and leads to a recognised qualification or award. <i>[SCQF Handbook Definition 2015]</i>
Formative RPL	This takes place where the individual seeks to have their knowledge, skills, and competences assessed for personal or career development.
Informal Learning	Informal learning can be defined as experiential learning and takes place through life and work experiences. It is often unintentional learning. <i>[SCQF Handbook Definition 2015]</i>
Learning Outcomes	Learning outcomes are statements that identify what the learner is expected to know and be able to do after having completed a study unit or programme. Candidates wishing to apply for RPL will be expected to demonstrate how their certified or experiential learning maps against the learning outcomes for the programme (or parts of it) for which they are seeking exemption.
Non-Formal Learning	Non-formal learning takes place alongside the mainstream systems of education and training, it may be assessed but does not typically lead to formal certification; for example, learning and training activities undertaken in the workplace, voluntary sector, or trade union, and through community-based learning. <i>[SCQF Handbook 2015]</i>
Non-Traditional Learners	Non-Traditional Learners, also referred to as Adult Learners or Life Long Learners, are students who decide to return to learning after the traditional post-secondary schooling years.
Portfolio	A collection of documents that, in the case of an RPL claim, is submitted by a candidate to demonstrate competence for learning outcomes. It could include a variety of documents such as prior formal education certificates, evidence such as witness testimonies, blogs, reports, examples of work, and reflective statements, etc. (not an exhaustive list).
Programme of Study	An award or qualification that sits on the MQF.
Recognition	Recognition is achieved when an individual's learning is formally assessed and quality assured, enabling successful admission to or exemption from components or parts of a formal programme of study, as measured by learning outcomes.
Recognition and Accreditation of Prior Learning (RPL)	"RPL is the process for recognising 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, through life and work experiences" <i>[SCQF definition 2010]</i>
Recognition of Accredited Prior Learning (RAPL or RAPEL)	Recognition of APL or APEL occurs when an individual, having had their prior learning accredited, undergoes a formal assessment of this learning process and is awarded MQF credit points toward an award or qualification, for which they are then offered exemptions or advanced entry.
RPL for Entry	Full acceptance of an RPL claim as entry requirements for a programme of study.
RPL for Advanced Entry	Full acceptance of a claim for entry to a programme of study with exemptions from parts of the programme.
RPL Advisors	RPL Advisors are identified by the deans or program directors, and are academic or administrative persons who are fully conversant with the requirements of the programmes offered by their department. Such persons shall further have the ability to determine the educational and

	professional development of each candidate. RPL Advisors will assist candidates in preparing their application for assessment and then channel it to the appropriate Assessor.
RPL Assessors	RPL Assessors are academic experts in a given area who can assess applications for the recognition and accreditation of prior learning through the evaluation of portfolios compiled by candidates. RPL Assessors should not be involved in the compilation of the documentary evidence that needs to be submitted by candidates in support of their application for RPL.
Summative RPL	Takes place where formal credit is awarded and recognised as having the same value as credit gained in formal teaching institutions.

Table 1: Glossary (source: MFHEA (June 2025). Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) – Definitions, Principles and Guidelines, p. 13-25).

3. Key principles

3.1 Learning that takes place outside formal educational institutions may be enriching and may contribute to the acquisition of foundational skills and knowledge. Recognition of prior informal, formal, and (non-) formal learning makes this type of learning more visible and more valuable to society at large, as it allows non-traditional learners to complete formal education by not having to repeat content that they have already mastered.

3.2 Through the recognition of informal, formal, and (non-) formal learning which has occurred before admission to a programme or to the relevant stage of a programme, EIM aims to valorise the relevant learning, irrespective of mode or place of learning. EIM will ensure that academic standards expected of traditional learners are maintained and applied throughout the RPL process.

3.3 The decision on whether to allow candidates to gain access to a programme through RPL rests with the Faculty after consultation with the Head of Institution. Where RPL is deemed appropriate, the RPL practices for specific programmes must be framed to suit differing contexts.

3.4 Candidates seeking admission and/or exemption through RPL must provide evidence in writing, through the submission of a portfolio, that they have achieved the specific learning outcomes at the required levels. The candidate should compile the evidence of learning achieved following advice/discussions with the RPL Advisor and should provide a comprehensive demonstration of achievement. The candidate leads the portfolio building process but will be supported by the RPL Advisor.

3.5 The evaluation of prior learning is an academic task and, like other forms of assessment, is done by academic experts in a given field, drawing on other experts as needed.

3.6 The minimum amount of credit that can be claimed and granted through RPL at an institutional level is the smallest component (here: one module) within the programme of study. The maximum amount of credit is 50% of the total credit of the exit programme of study.

3.7 EIM maintains arrangements for staff development and capacity building for RPL. *RPL Advisors* guide candidates and map evidence; *RPL Assessors* are subject specialists who assess claims against MQF levels and programme learning outcomes. Advisors and Assessors must meet role requirements for experience/qualifications and complete induction training before undertaking duties. Induction covers MFHEA principles, acceptable evidence criteria, use of MQF level descriptors in assessment, matching to learning outcomes, and recording of decisions. EIM operates moderation/verification to ensure consistency of decisions and keeps a brief record of checks. EIM maintains sufficient staff capacity to meet RPL timelines and reviews capacity within institutional QA. The QA Office maintains a simple log of induction/CPD (continuing professional development) completion for staff in RPL roles.

3.8 EIM's RPL is learner-centred, fair, and respects the privacy of candidates. EIM takes account of equality and diversity, and ensures access and flexibility. RPL at EIM is conducted in line with applicable Maltese and EU legislation. Personal data in RPL claims is processed under EIM's privacy policy and retained in line with the institutional retention schedule.

4. The RPL procedure

EIM will strive to provide support and guidance to non-traditional learners wishing to access programmes through RPL. The service is provided to all candidates through EIM's RPL Advisors, who will help ensure non-traditional learners receive adequate support to enable them to identify and collect all the evidence required for the validation of their prior informal and/or non-formal learning.



Figure 1: EIM RPL procedure

EIM will assign an academic or administrative RPL Advisor who will assist non-traditional learners with the application process. The RPL Advisor will give the RPL policy as a guiding document to the candidate. The RPL Advisor is part of the academic staff and will receive RPL policy training to ensure that non-traditional learners are properly guided through the application process.

EIM's Executive Board regularly monitors and reviews the operation of the RPL procedure and credit transfer processes. This is a formal process that records the outcomes of the monitoring and review, any changes required to the process, the rationale for any changes, and ensures that any recommendations are acted upon. EIM will continuously build and improve checklists and a bank of anonymized RPL claims, as well as the final awards of level and credit volumes for RPL Assessors within their IQA processes, to ensure consistency.

To ensure transparency, fairness, and equity throughout, all involved parties should consistently follow and apply the procedures outlined hereunder:

4.1 Contacting EIM: Identifying areas of learning

4.1.1 EIM informs all candidates about EIM's RPL policy, including the possibility to make an RPL claim and the involved processes, timelines, and costs on its website.

4.1.2 Candidates are advised to contact EIM Admissions and start this process at least three months ahead of the deadline for submission of applications. Though EIM will do its utmost to process all RPL applications in time, it cannot guarantee that applications that are submitted later than this deadline can be processed in time for the preferred start date.

4.1.3 RPL application windows open and close in line with EIM's standard admissions calendar. Dates are published on the website. Following a successful claim, the decision letter specifies the next intake the candidate can join.

4.1.4 The RPL Advisor will support candidates in compiling the learning portfolio by helping them to identify the skills and competences achieved through prior certified and/or experiential learning, which demonstrate achievement of specific learning outcomes. The identification of learning outcomes achieved through prior learning is an essential part of the RPL process as it enables EIM to guide candidates in finding appropriate programmes of study relevant to their field of interest.

4.1.5 EIM provides an RPL candidate package (reflection pro-forma and outcome-mapping template). Each candidate may book one advisory session before submission; further support is at the Advisor's discretion.

4.1.6 Following the preliminary mapping of learning outcomes against appropriate programmes of study, candidates are referred to the RPL Advisor/s within specific departments.

4.1.7 A candidate whose current formal and experiential learning is not considered sufficient for entry to a programme at EIM, the prospect will be advised on possible Access Programmes instead of proceeding with the standard RPL procedure. EIM will advise the Access Programme in consultation with the relevant faculty, depending on the programme of study the candidate wishes to join.

4.2 Contacting the RPL Advisor: Identifying Programmes of Study

4.2.1 Once a candidate identifies the programme of study that is of interest to him/her, s/he will receive support from an RPL Advisor to demonstrate how outcomes obtained as a result of prior learning are consistent with the educational requirements or aims of the programme to which the candidate is seeking acceptance and/or exemption.

4.2.2 The RPL Advisor will contact the RPL Assessor, who determines what form of evidence needs to be submitted with the formal application. In some cases, candidates may only be required to submit a portfolio containing a set of documents. In contrast, in other cases, the RPL Assessor may request a presentation of particular skills, a written assignment, or the taking of an oral or written exam, as

would be appropriate to the nature of learning outcomes to which the achievements are related.

The types of evidence that may be acceptable depend on the subject area. The list below indicates some examples that may be appropriate. Please note this is not exhaustive and will depend on the programme of study and the candidate's experiences.

- EQF, MQF, and other foreign certified learning or open badges (documented with official transcripts);
- References;
- Authenticated reports or outputs;
- Project work;
- Blogs or video diaries;
- Witness testimony;
- Volunteering records;
- Observation of practice or simulation;
- Assessment on demand;
- Structured interview;
- Authenticated presentations.

4.3 Preparing an application for RPL

4.3.1 Non-traditional learners wishing to access a programme through the RPL route shall be responsible for demonstrating how the learning outcomes obtained through prior certified and/or experiential learning are relevant to the programmes of study on offer that are appropriate and of interest to them.

4.3.2 To ensure that assessment of prior learning can be carried out effectively, any documented evidence that is attached to the application must be carefully sorted and numbered. The responsibility for preparing, completing, and submitting an application for RPL always rests with the candidate. Candidates should be aware that the evidence they submit in support of their application shall be assessed against the requirements and learning outcomes of the relevant programme, and that consideration will be given to:

- **Validity:** The prior learning presented, which should be at the appropriate academic level, would need to match the learning outcomes required by the relevant programme.
- **Sufficiency:** Candidates must provide sufficient documentation as evidence, including a completed form, the learning portfolio, and any other evidence requested by the relevant department.
- **Authenticity:** Candidates must be responsible for the veracity of the documentation provided.
- **Currency:** The prior learning achieved and submitted for accreditation should be up-to-date with current knowledge and practice.
- **Relevance:** The prior learning gained should be relevant to the programme of study that the candidate intends to follow.

4.4 Assessment of the Application

4.4.1 The RPL Assessor identified by the respective Faculty should be an Academic who is familiar with the programme of study to which the application relates. The Assessor should understand the level of knowledge and understanding, as well as the kind of skills that are required of candidates admitted to the programme through the conventional route.

4.4.2 To ensure impartiality, the RPL Advisors and Assessor shall work separately in the implementation of procedures for the recognition and accreditation of prior learning, except where required otherwise by this Policy.

4.4.3 The evaluation of a single application typically requires two RPL Assessors; however, if an application relates to more major areas of study, more RPL Assessors may be involved. An RPL Assessor is autonomous and may also ask candidates to provide additional evidence to support their claims, e.g., ask candidates to take part in an oral or written exam. In such instances, candidates should receive support in preparing for the exam (e.g., by providing them with a list of required readings). Oral examinations/interviews, when held, shall be conducted by at least two assessors.

4.4.4 Participation in the RPL procedure should give candidates an opportunity for learning and personal development: the entire assessment process should be formative in nature, and RPL Assessors should therefore provide candidates with feedback at each stage of the assessment process within ten business days. If further evidence is needed, candidates are expected to submit it within twenty business days.

4.4.5 Assessors must reference the MQF level descriptors when judging the level, volume, and depth of the evidenced learning, and record this explicitly in the assessor report alongside the match to programme learning outcomes.

4.5 Evaluation Methods

Applications for RPL must be accompanied by a Learning Portfolio, which must include a collection of materials compiled by the candidate to demonstrate the learning achieved through prior certified or experiential learning. The evidence that could be included in the portfolio would typically include (see also 4.2.2):

- A detailed curriculum vitae
- Certificates confirming participation in training
- EQF, MQF, or other (foreign) certificated learning or open badges (official transcript)
- A report from an internship/apprenticeship agreement
- Professional certification
- Articles or other works written by the candidate
- Opinion issued by the employer, manager, or leader of an organisation
- Evidence of participation in a project and the scope of duties involved
- Evidence of participation in foreign exchange periods
- Examples of work performed (e.g., prepared reports, budget sheets, plans, etc.)

In addition to the submission of a learning portfolio, the evaluation of a candidate's request for RPL may also include one or a combination of the following:

- **The undertaking of a project:** this would allow candidates to demonstrate the learning outcomes acquired outside their formal educational experience.
- **An Interview/Oral Examination:** This would allow candidates to submit additional information in person regarding the nature of learning outcomes resulting from prior learning, and would further enable candidates to discuss their goals and aspirations for future education and development.
- **Simulation/Practice observation:** where appropriate, the direct observation of candidates' competencies can be carried out in an appropriate setting, such as their workplace. If candidates are not able to demonstrate specific skills at the workplace, a simulation or role play may be carried out.
- **The Undertaking of a Proficiency Test in English:** Candidates not in possession of a Secondary Education Certificate pass at Grade 5 or higher in English Language, or a pass at the same standard in a comparable qualification, shall be required to sit for a proficiency test in English as approved by the Institution.

4.6 Decision regarding the RPL application

4.6.1 Once an application has been assessed, the RPL Assessor shall submit a detailed report to the Head of Institution for a final decision.

4.6.2 Outcomes of an RPL claim could be:

- full acceptance of the claim as entry requirements for a programme of study;
- full acceptance of a claim for advanced entry (exemption) to a programme of study;
- partial acceptance of the claim for exemption;
- a request for resubmission of a claim, including further evidence;
- failure of claim with recommendations for alternative paths;
- failure of the claim.

4.6.3 After the RPL assessment, the candidate shall receive an official letter about the outcome of the RPL process.

This letter includes as a minimum information about: the level and amount of credit awarded; exemption from and entry requirement or a module; the grounds for resubmissions and appeals; the process for resubmissions and appeals (including timescales); the guidance and support that will be provided if a candidate needs to resubmit a claim; the next steps in the process following a successful claim including arrangements for entry to the programme of study and timescales.

Such a letter and any conditions imposed shall be issued and stored in EIM's student administration system. Candidates are notified of the result of their RPL claim in the same manner and timeframe as all other students are notified of acceptance/entry. The decision letter indicates the next eligible intake and any conditions to secure a place.

4.6.4 Where credit transfer is used as a form of RPL for entry, this is recorded on the candidate's transcript/record and details the exact title, institution, level, and volume of credit and the date of the original award. This will assist in 'preventing' double-counting credit that has already been used towards another qualification.

4.6.5 EIM shall inform candidates who (partially) fail to complete the RPL assessment successfully of the knowledge, skills, and competences they still need to achieve, and will be given the possibility to either

(i) re-take the RPL assessment when they think they have achieved the missing elements; or

(ii) follow an Access Programme (or parts of it) to enable them to make up for the identified shortfalls

4.6.6 Candidates who (partially) fail the RPL assessment and feel they were unfairly judged shall have the right to request a revision of the assessment process with EIM Admissions via email. This revision will be carried out by an RPL Assessor who was not involved in the initial assessment. The same procedure outlined in 4.6.1 is to be adopted by the RPL Assessor appointed to conduct the review process.

4.7 Applicable Fees

4.7.1 Applications for the Recognition and Accreditation of Prior Learning (RPL) are subject to a processing fee of €200.

4.7.2 Applications for a revision of the RPL assessment process are subject to an additional fee of €200.

4.7.3 Programmes of study costs are adjusted to ensure that successful RPL candidates gaining exemption do not pay more than a learner undertaking the full programme of study.

Appendix 1:

Application Form for Recognition of Prior Learning

Please submit this application form to EIM per email rpl@eim.education

1. Candidate / Applicant

Name	
Student Number	
Email	
Telephone Number	
Address	

2. Course

Course Name	
Course Start Date	

3. Recognition of Prior Learning

Number of RPL and/or Transfer Credits sought	
Module(s) against to which the credit should count	
Learning outcomes of the module	

4. Checklist for Supporting Documentation (cp. to chapter 4.2.3. and 4.5.)

Documents (examples)	Attached (yes/no)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EQF Certificated learning (official transcript); • MQF Certificated learning (official transcript); • Other foreign certified learning or open badges (official transcript); • References; • Authenticated reports or outputs; • Project work; • Blogs or video diaries; • Witness testimony; • Volunteering records; • Observation of practice or simulation; • Assessment on demand; • Structured interview; • Authenticated presentations. 	

5. Comments of the Candidate / Applicant

The candidate confirms the reception of the RPL policy and acknowledges the responsibility for ensuring that all evidence and supporting material is submitted in English. Translations into English must be certified with original documents available on request.

Place / Date	Signature Candidate
Date RPL application received	Signature RPL Advisor

Report of the RPL Assessor

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Outcome / Decision (according to 4.6.) (filled out by the Head of Institution)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● full acceptance of the claim as entry requirements for a programme of study; ● full acceptance of a claim for advanced entry (exemption) to a programme of study; ● partial acceptance of the claim for exemption; ● a request for resubmission of a claim, including further evidence; ● failure of claim with recommendations for alternative paths; ● failure of the claim. 	
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Additional Comment (filled out by the Head of Institution)

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Place / Date	Signature Head of Institution
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