

Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

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Introduction

The College has adopted a policy that allows prior learning, whether certified or experiential, to be used, where appropriate, as partial credit towards their Osteopathy and Physiotherapy courses.

MFHEA OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES FOR RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

- be learner centred, fair and respect the privacy of the individual;
- take account of Equality & Diversity issues;
- be accessible and flexible;
- be given for the learning and not the experience alone;
- involve the use of the MQF in determining the level, volume and depth of evidence;
- be reliable, transparent and consistent;
- involve formal assessment for summative claims;
- be recognised to be of the same value of learning gained in formal learning;
- be quality assured both internally and externally; and
- be in line with any Statutory Legislation.

Policy and Procedures for the Recognition of Prior Learning

Definitions

RPL: Recognition of Prior Learning

“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 as through life and work experiences” [SCQF definition 2010].

RPL enables individuals to have their learning and experiences assessed by the College and recognised to gain entry to an award or qualification taught at the College and/or for the award of ECTS points to gain exemption from parts of an existing programme of study at the College or to gain entry with advanced standing.

Relevant learning is either assessed on an individual basis or recognised as part of an approved exemption for those who hold a particular professional award that sit on the MQF or who have the requisite certified learning undertaken at another Higher Education Institution.

APCL: Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning

Prior certificated learning (PCL) involves prior learning (such as professional development awards or employment-based awards), at HE level that has not been previously recognised via the award of credits or qualification(s) on the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF).

Summative RPL (SRPL) is where formal ECTS credit is awarded and recognised as having the same value as credit gained in formal teaching institutions

Individual applicants may apply for exemptions from modules on taught courses at the College based on evidence of learning that has been formally assessed and certificated. This certificated learning should have occurred on programmes of study that sit on the MQF and includes both those programmes at HE level and those that lead to professional awards and qualifications. The College expects that such applications will only be granted following a satisfactory mapping of learning outcomes for the modules for which exemption is sought and course aims against such prior certificated learning. This might require an applicant to provide a portfolio of evidence.

APEL: Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning

Prior experiential learning (PEL) involves prior learning gained through experience which can be assessed by academic staff of the College and formally recognised with the award of credit (or exemption from modules) towards a programme of study.

Applicants may apply for exemptions from modules on taught courses at the College based on evidence of learning arising from professional experience and related study or training which may not be formally certificated. This might require an applicant to provide a portfolio of evidence.

Formative RPL is where the candidate is looking to have knowledge, skills and competencies assessed for personal or career development.

Credit Transfer

A system that allows credit awarded by one higher education body to be recognised and included towards the requirements for a programme at another higher education provider; or that allows credit gained on a particular programme to contribute towards the requirements of a different one. The learning outcomes of the first programme of study match the learning outcomes of the new programme of study.

Advanced Standing

An applicant may be granted permission to begin a course of study with credit granted for a full level of the course already achieved in recognition of previously completed studies and/or prior learning.

Exemption with RPL

A decision to exempt the applicant from one or more individual modules within the course of study, on the basis that the applicant has demonstrated achievement of the learning

Possible Outcomes from the RPL process

- Admission with RPL

- Advanced Standing
- Articulation
- Credit Transfer
- Exemption with RPL outcomes from the module.

Policy for Recognition of Prior Learning

This policy forms part of the Malta ICOM Educational Admissions Policy. The Policy covers the process of applying for admission and advanced standing using RPL as well exemption from individual modules. This policy identifies the principles for decisions to be made about prior learning. In order to maximise the use of subject expertise, RPL decisions support and assessment are made at programme level.

- a. There is no obligation for Malta ICOM Educational to consider individual requests for Accreditation of Prior Certified/Experiential Learning if it considers such requests inappropriate to the nature of provision offered.
- b. The Academic Director will accept individual applications for the accreditation of prior learning from candidates citing prior certificated learning from Malta ICOM Educational or other institutions. All applications should normally be submitted prior to admission or re-admission to a course of study; retrospective applications will not be considered²
- c.
 - (i) The Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (CATS) will be the primary means of calculating the extent of exemption to be permitted towards the relevant programme of study.

Where the prior learning and/or experience was at **an institution other than Malta ICOM Educational**, the proportion of a course for which applications for RPL may be considered is as follows:

MALTA ICOM EDUCATIONAL RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) POLICY

Total credit value of course	Maximum proportion of credit required for programme for which RPL may be granted (credit limit)	Minimum proportion of credit component that can be considered programme for which RPL may be granted	Clinical practice hours
Less than or equal to 240 credits at undergraduate level (levels 5 or 6 on the MQF)	Half or a maximum of 120 ECTs	The smallest sized module within the course on which the student intends to study	Half of total clinical hours excluding level 6 hours
A Postgraduate course of less than or equal to 90 credits at level 7 on the MQF	One third or maximum of 30 ECTs		NA
A Master's course of over 90 credits at level 7	Half or maximum of 45 ECTs		NA

- ii. Where prior learning was **undertaken at Malta ICOM**, the proportion of a course for which applications for RPL may be considered is as follows:
 - Where the programme for which AP(C)L is being applied for is the same as (or a direct replacement for) the programme on which the prior learning was originally undertaken, an application for credit transfer may be considered for up to 100% of the credit value of the prior learning.
 - Where the prior learning was at ICOM on any other course or programme, the proportion of the course for which credit transfer may be considered will normally not exceed half of the total credits required for the qualification or award.
- iii. Where prior learning was undertaken at Malta ICOM, RPL should only be granted for a programme or module(s) that was completed and passed.
- iv. Where prior learning was undertaken at Malta ICOM, any approval granted for RPL should state clearly whether the prior learning will be recognised on a credit only basis or if marks previously awarded by the Malta ICOM for one or more modules will also be transferred towards the programme being applied for.

- d. Prior learning which is used to provide a case for exemption should normally have taken place within five years preceding commencement of the course to which the AP(C/E)L will be applied.
- e. Students registered for a Postgraduate qualification or Certificate should normally apply to transfer the credit they have obtained towards a Postgraduate Diploma or Master's degree before their performance is considered by a Board of Examiners. In such cases only the higher or highest award or Qualification will be conferred by the College.
- f. Where applicants wish to gain credit and exemption on the basis of a Malta ICOM programme of study for which they have received a college certificate, it is not expected that the certificate will be returned, but the student transcript will indicate that the highest award incorporates any other awards for which RPL has been granted.
- g. Malta ICOM will accept certain professional qualifications that sit on the MQF or approved prior learning with a named Higher Education Institution .
- h. Malta ICOM is aware of the need to be mindful of the implications of granting applications for AP(E)L where professional, statutory, or regulatory body requirements affect College provision and where the impact of granting requests for AP(E)L could thus be disproportionately significant. It is the College's view that the 5 year rule for prior certificated learning and the requirement to map previously certificated learning against intended future learning outcomes should provide adequate checks and balances.
 - i. Prior learning (other than covered by 2c(ii-iv) above) recognised in line with this policy will not be graded. Student transcripts will record 'pass' for any element of a course for which prior learning is accredited.
- i. The outcome of a claim for RPL for advanced entry or exemption of modules will be added to an academic transcript at the first exam board for that year.

Principles of Assessing RPL

Any decision on allowing RPL must be considered in accordance with the relevant course regulations.

Relevance: There should be an appropriate match between the evidence and the intended study presented, and the learning claimed.

Sufficiency: The evidence that is submitted should demonstrate the achievement of the learning claimed and be sufficient to cover the learning outcomes of the module(s) on the intended course of study. The evidence that is presented and the learning that is claimed must be at the appropriate level.

Authenticity: The evidence should clearly relate to the applicant's own efforts and achievements.

Currency: The evidence should relate to current learning. This would normally be judged as learning that has been completed within five years of the claim. Consideration may be given to learning that was completed more than five years ago but, in such cases, evidence will be

required that the learning has been kept up to date. For practice/competency based modules additional requirements may need to be applied.

Mechanisms for assessing prior learning should ensure that the learning which has taken place and is presented as RPL is equivalent to the learning that would have otherwise occurred had the student studied all elements of the module or course of study without RPL i.e., that equivalent learning outcomes have been met.

Consideration should be given to whether an applicant may be disadvantaged by not engaging with the development of learning skills that they will need to achieve learning outcomes later in the course

Possible Outcomes from the RPL process

- Admission with RPL
- Advanced Standing
- Articulation
- Credit Transfer
- Exemption with RPL outcomes from the module.

Procedure for Evaluation of RPL

This procedure should be used for applications not falling under point 2(g) of the Policy set out at 2. above.

A description of how the applicant's qualification or professional experience will need to relate to the learning outcomes MQF level and curriculum of the modules from which exemption is requested.

Applicants will need to demonstrate:

- I. knowledge base of a particular subject area
- II. an ability to communicate the results of their studies and other work accurately and reliably

As each student will present with differing life experiences, the most appropriate option for individual students will vary. The following process is therefore designed to enable potential students, to demonstrate the use of these characteristics during their professional or academic careers:

Initial interview by phone or digital channel by the RPL adviser to ascertain the validity of the claim. This is an informal interview asking general background questions, and some specific questions related to the level of knowledge for each module for which RPL is being sought.

1: Submit a portfolio of evidence based on previous relevant knowledge, skills and competences which must be assessed against the assessment criteria of the unit(s) for which RPL is being sought to ensure that all learning outcomes have been achieved:

- reflective portfolio of evidence (submitted electronically) which could include (but is not limited to):
 - video and/or audio material
 - analytical evaluations of practice
 - analysis of issues underlying practice and the learning associated with that
 - an assessor's observation of practice
 - detailed curriculum vitae to support a context for the claim
- The portfolio should include an essay or annotated grid to allow the applicant to explain the assessor what MQF or professional levels they have achieved

Route 2: Undertake the same assessments as learners following a formal course of learning and assessment that lead to award of the unit of learning. The assessments may be undertaken without attending teaching sessions.

Route 3: Assessment through a summative assessment against a unit of learning.

The assessment of evidence is covered by the ICOM Assessment policy. The assessment of the evidence is based on academic judgement of the assessor from the relevant academic department. Students who apply for Individual Module Exemption(s) will be assessed in relation to the ILOs of the specific module(s) for which they require exemption. Evidence of learning will be assessed based on a threshold judgment, that is, whether the applicant has met (or not met) the ILOs of the specified module(s) or level(s).

Admission: RPL as (part of) required entrance qualifications

It is possible to admit candidates to a degree programme where a candidate can demonstrate that their previous learning experiences have resulted in relevant learning that is broadly equivalent (in terms of content, volume, and level) to the learning achieved at the level(s) normally required for entry to the relevant programme and are mapped within MQF according to the level of the outcomes of learning and the volume of learning.

For admissions purposes the qualification(s) presented is taken as an alternative to a specified qualification within the admissions regulations.

Where experiential learning is offered to meet admission requirements, the experience for which recognition is being sought must be demonstrably relevant to some or all the skills normally required for admission to the particular programme as well as being of an appropriate quantity and level.

Students with 60 ECTS at MQF level 5 or 6 may be exempted from all Year 1 modules where sufficient evidenced mapping is demonstrated.

Students with 60 ECTS at MQF level 5 or 6 and 60 ECTS at MQF level 6 may be exempted from all Year 1 and 2 modules where sufficient evidenced mapping is demonstrated.

Admission into other than Year One: RPL as contributory degree credits

It is possible to exempt candidates where a candidate can demonstrate that their previous learning experiences have resulted in relevant learning that is broadly equivalent (in terms of

content, volume and level) to the learning achieved at the level(s) for which the credit will be given. This learning must have been subject to valid and reliable methods of assessment.

Procedure

All application for RPL must be done using the MALTA ICOM EDUCATIONAL RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING FORM (appendix 1)

- a. Prior to admission to the course, unless certificated learning in the context of HE covered by 2(b) above, the applicant should submit to the Academic Director information on the prior learning concerned. The information submitted should normally include:
 - i. Confirmation from the awarding institution of the level of the course in accordance with the Malta Qualifications Framework; the date of completion and the modules taken (e.g., a transcript).
 - ii. Information from the awarding institution on the learning outcomes achieved, (for example, by means of a course/module specification) and details of the curriculum based on which accreditation of prior learning is proposed.
 - iii. If the application is for AP(E)L, information on the applicant's relevant professional background, including employment and any relevant training courses or other study undertaken.
 - iv. A description of how the applicant's qualification or professional experience relates to the learning outcomes and curriculum of the modules from which exemption is requested, including extracts from the module documentation of the department concerned.
 - v. Where other certified evidence of the level and number of credits achieved is necessary applicants should obtain a MQRIC statement from the MFHEA.
- b. The following step will be followed:
 - I. After receipt of RPL application and informal telephone interview with the RPL assessor to ascertain the validity of the application
 - II. Once validity is determined confirmation of the RPL application is made and the relevant charge is made, the applicant is then required to produce the required evidence
 - III. Gaps may be identified which require further information
 - IV. Successful recognition is made
- c. At least two members of the department concerned should be involved in the consideration of the APEL application, including those staff working in the capacity of Admissions Officers. The departmental recommendation should clearly specify the modules for which exemptions are recommended and the total credit volume concerned.

- d. A letter will be sent by the admissions team to the applicant informing them of the result of their application within 3 weeks of application. A confirmation email will also be sent to the email used for the submission of application.
- e. The course fees and the period of study will be adjusted to take account of the credit transfer approved. The total course credits will be divided by the course fee, and the credit fee reduction will be calculated in this manner.
- f. The fee for the application of RPL is set out on the Malta ICOM website and will be on the application form.
- g. **Notification Process** - following both successful and unsuccessful RPL applications, the Academic director (or nominee) should ensure the applicant is contacted and provisional feedback/feed-forward provided.
 - I. Required timescales relating to pieces of assessed work will not normally exceed 3 weeks
 - II. Where the applicant requires further clarification of the decision, or support and appeals information, this should be provided by the Academic Director (or nominee).
 - III. Following approval by the Module/Progression/Award/Assessment Board all RPL decisions will be recorded and will be clearly identified on the applicant's Record of Progress/Transcripts.
- h. The grade for any credits gained via RPL will not count towards ICOM award or qualifications These will be calculated using only the grades achieved from study at Malta ICOM Educational. Academic transcripts will state RPL with Pass as a grade.

Student advice and support

Malta ICOM Educational will provide advice and support for students seeking RPL, including information on the types of evidence considered acceptable and the extent of evidence required. Malta ICOM has a frequently asked questions document sent out with the RPL forms and available to download from their website. The mechanisms for supporting and assessing RPL claims must be fully documented and readily available to appropriate staff within Malta ICOM, as well as to potential candidates.

Malta ICOM make it clear in documentation that any views of an advisor on a draft claim does not guarantee the outcome of the claim when the request is formally assessed.

The extent of support available will be specified in advance to RPL applicants, including where there may be limits on that support (e.g., a specified number of hours tutorial guidance).

Assessors will be aware that it may be necessary to provide additional advice for students for who do not have the language of tuition as their first language – for example about responsibilities for any translation required. It is however the student's responsibility to prepare and submit their application in line with required procedures and deadlines.

Malta ICOM is aware that it may be necessary to vary arrangements, for example for vivas, where students have particular communication needs or other special requirements

Unsuccessful Applications for Admissions

Unsuccessful applications for Admissions through RPL must be recorded and an annual report presented by each programme leader. If an RPL application for admission with advanced standing is not successful, the applicant may be offered partial exemption on a module-by-module basis if appropriate.

Unsuccessful RPL submissions for exemptions from modules or part of a course of study may be resubmitted once prior to consideration by the Assessment Board if, in the opinion of the Academic Director (or nominee), there is an opportunity to provide additional information to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes.

Appeals Process

To safeguard the interests of applicants, Malta ICOM has established a process for use when an applicant believes that their application has not been dealt with in accordance with Malta ICOM's policies, principles, and procedures. This process is inclusive of all admissions. Appeals against decisions relating to admission to a course of study should be made as detailed in the Admissions Policy (Appendix 3).

Monitoring

RPL procedures is clearly described and in line with the requirements of the Programme's Monitoring Process, all RPL data is included in Annual Programme Analysis.

RPL constitutes an academic procedure which follows the institutional assessment procedures and general quality assurance procedures for the programme.

RPL data is audited and is part of QA processes. Monitoring the use and impact of the RPL process includes:

- recording the number of learners undertaking RPL
- monitoring the progression of RPL
- monitoring the success rate of RPL claims
- student experience
- staff experience
- Data is captured coherently and used for data/learner analytics and quality assurance.
- The policy, procedures, and process of RPL are subject to periodic review and evaluation, informed by quantitative and qualitative evidence, to enhance practice.
- Programme teams ensure data is collected in line with institutional/departmental data collection, monitoring and evaluation procedures.
- Malta ICOM engages in continual RPL innovation, change and research, including the use of technologies to support RPL, such as e-portfolios.
- Assessing RPL claims and making recommendations.
- Identifying and mitigating risks that might affect the quality of assessment.

Staffing

RPL Coordinator

Each programme has an RPL Coordinator who oversees RPL assessments. The RPL Coordinator who will explain the RPL assessment processes to students (see appendix 3).

RPL Adviser

The RPL Coordinator can identify an RPL Adviser (e.g., a module leader) who is a subject expert in the area where student wishes make a claim. The RPL Adviser will help the student prepare their claim for assessment leading to the award of credit.

RPL Assessor

RPL Assessor is a subject specialist who will not normally be involved in the preparation of the student's RPL claim. The RPL Assessor will assess the student's claim whether this is through written work, practical or oral presentation etc.

To carry out their roles effectively, staff involved are appropriately trained and supported and have access to adequate resourced. This will be by providing RPL staff with induction programmes, training and continuing professional development (CPD), including:

- Inter department workshops, web-conferencing, technical aspects of use of technology and effective practice in use of e-portfolios to support of the RPL process.
- CPD and staff development for staff involved in RPL process will be built into staff workload models.

Publicity

Where Programmes accept students based on RPL, this must be made clear in publicity materials, including information as to where prospective students can obtain advice and guidance about pursuing a claim, any fees payable, and time limits for submitting a claim.

Monitoring and Enhancement

RPL claims must be available for scrutiny by external examiners in accordance with normal Malta ICOM procedures for assessed work. Programme leaders are encouraged to share good practice in RPL developments both within their courses, where appropriate, and across the institution. Programme Leaders are encouraged to monitor RPL activities by seeking feedback from RPL applicants about their experience of the process and by monitoring specifically the progress of students admitted using these procedures.

Commitment

Malta ICOM will at all times seek to operate its RPL procedures in ways that are fair and are in accordance with the law of Malta and the MFHEA guidelines This includes specific compliance with legislation relating to discrimination (e.g., the relevant sections of The Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act 2000, Employment and Industrial Relations Act 2002, The Equality for Men and Women Act 2003, Equal Treatment of Persons Order 2007 and all other Maltese legislation for the time being in force relating to Equality) and the Malta ICOM's Equality and Diversity Policy. This includes a commitment that ICOM will actively assist groups that experience disadvantage in education and employment and actively seek to widen participation to enable students that do not traditionally participate in Higher Education to do so.

Appendix 1 Recognition Prior Learning Form

Please complete this form to request Malta ICOM Recognition of Prior Learning.

Modulo da completare per il riconoscimento da parte di Malta ICOM dei Crediti acquisiti precedentemente.

Name:	
E-mail address:	
Programme of study you have offer to:	
Level of study you have offer to:	
Date you are due to start:	

Level of Prior Learning

Prior Awarded /Qualified Learning (e.g., bachelor’s degree level 6, master’s degree level 7, ect)
(Attestazione di laurea di I o II livello, magistrale a ciclo unico, etc)

Prior Certificated Learning (e.g., credited assessments level 5, 6 or 7 of Bachelor or master’s degree)
(Attestazione di Esami conseguiti a livello 5, 6 o 7 in corsi di laurea di I, II livello o a ciclo unico)

Prior Experiential Learning (e.g., Postgraduate professionalism courses)
(Attestazione di corsi professionalizzanti come Master, DO, ect)

Formal qualifications or partly completed qualifications (if any): <i>This is classed as Recognition of prior <u>Certificated</u> learning (RPCL)</i>				
<u>Qualification</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Subject Area</u>	<u>Place undertaken</u>	<u>Date (partly) achieved</u>

Name and code of module(s) from your programme of study you are looking to claim RPL credit towards:	
Module Code	Module Name

<p>Applicable learning gained through life/work experiences (if any): <i>If you choose to submit a claim of this type, an Assessor will be in touch with you as further information and supporting evidence may be required.</i></p>

To complete this request, I have attached below documents

A completamento della richiesta si allegano in formato digitale i seguenti documenti

Original Transcript or Diploma Supplement
(copia della trascrizione originale dall'università/istituto del percorso di studi)
 File/s Name/s *(si richiede di riportare di seguito il/i nome del/i file allegati al form):*

Learning Outcomes and Course Specifications

(obiettivi e programmi di studio ufficiali dell'università/istituto del percorso di studi)
 File/s Name/s *(si richiede di riportare di seguito il/i nome del/i file allegati al form):*

Curriculum vitae (in case of Experiential Learning)
 File/s Name/s *(si richiede di riportare di seguito il/i nome del/i file allegati al form):*

Completed Mapping document

Applications for exemption must set out clearly how prior learning and achievement through experience meets the specified learning outcomes at the appropriate level of those modules for which credit transfer is proposed.
La richiesta di riconoscimento deve indicare chiaramente, tramite gli allegati, come l'apprendimento e il conseguimento dell'esperienza soddisfino l'appropriato livello dei moduli per cui è proposto il trasferimento dei crediti.

 MQRIC statement from the MFHEA (in case of international qualification)

(a) Prior to admission to the course, unless certificated learning in the context of HE covered by Malta ICOM Policy, the applicant should submit to the Academic Director information on the prior learning concerned. The information submitted should normally include:

Prima dell'ammissione al corso, il richiedente deve sottomettere al Preside le informazioni necessarie, che includono:

- (i) Confirmation from the awarding institution of the level of the course in accordance with the Qualifications Framework; the date of completion and the modules taken (e.g. a transcript).

Certificazione da parte dell'università/istituto del livello di corso conseguito, data e trascrizione degli esami

- (ii) Information from the awarding institution on the learning outcomes achieved, (for example, by means of a course/module specification) and details of the curriculum on the basis of which accreditation of prior learning is proposed.

Informazioni complete sui programma e dettagli del curriculum studi certificati dall'univeristà/istituto

- (iii) If the application is for Experiential Learning, information on the applicant's relevant professional background, including employment and any relevant training courses or other study undertaken.

Se la richiesta è per crediti di formazione esperienziale (master, DO, postgraduate), devono essere forniti curriculum professionale, certificazione dei corsi di formazione e degli studi intrapresi.

- (iv) A description of how the applicant's qualification or professional experience relates to the learning outcomes and curriculum of the modules from which exemption is requested, including extracts from the module documentation of the department concerned.

La richiesta deve essere accompagnata dai programmi di studio dei corsi professionali, completi delle informazioni relative allo staff di docenza.

All applications should normally be submitted prior to admission or re-admission to a course of study; retrospective applications will not be considered.

Tutte le richieste devono essere sottoposte prima dell'ammissione o entro l'inizio del corso di studi; richieste tardive verranno vagliate perché non ammissibili.

- (b) The Academic Director may also ask the applicant to complete a piece of written work or to follow an RPL module where this has been developed by the relevant department.

Il Preside può chiedere di completare la richiesta sia per documenti mancanti, sia con specifiche, sia con prove scritte o pratiche ad integrazione degli obiettivi dei moduli.

- (c) At least two members of the department concerned should be involved in the consideration of the APEL application, including those staff working in the capacity of Admissions Officer and the module leader. The departmental recommendation should clearly specify the modules for which exemptions are recommended and the total credit volume concerned. This will be clearly stated and returned to the admission department who will notify the student of the decision.

La richiesta verrà vagliata da almeno 2 membri dello staff dell'Ufficio Ammissioni, in particolare se su base esperienziale potranno essere coinvolti i docenti dei moduli competenti.

- (d) A letter will be sent by the admissions team to the applicant informing them of the result of their application.

Il richiedente verrà informato circa l'ammissione e il riconoscimento dei crediti presentati con apposita comunicazione.

Signature	
Date	

Appendix 2

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) at ICOM Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What does RPL mean?

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) refers to learning you have already gained before starting your programme at ICOM.

Recognition of your prior learning means that it can be counted towards the entry requirements for a programme, or can allow you to be awarded credit within your chosen programme.

Full information on RPL at Malta ICOM can be found in the Malta ICOM Recognition of Prior Learning Policy.

How do I apply for entry to a programme based on RPL?

If you think that your prior learning is equivalent to the advertised formal entry requirements for a programme of study, please contact the Admissions and Enquiry Service who will be able to advise you on how you can make an application. Your prior learning will be considered and, if successful, an offer for entry to an appropriate level of the programme will be made.

How do I apply for credit within a programme of study?

Your application needs to be submitted prior to admission or re-admission to a course of study; retrospective applications will not be considered.

You should complete and submit the RPL claim form with full details of your prior learning and the module(s) you are applying for credit against. You will be asked to evidence your prior learning and so any evidence of prior learning that you already have should also be submitted with your claim. As part of the consideration of your claim, you may also be asked to provide further information or evidence if required.

The RPL Claim Form and full Malta ICOM Recognition of Prior Learning Policy is available to download from the Malta ICOM website here:

Completed RPL claim forms should be submitted to the Admission Team.

Is my Prior Learning too old to be given Credit or to use for Credit Transfer?

To be awarded credit within your programme the learning needs to be up to date, relevant and appropriate to your programme of study. Your RPL Advisor will be able to provide guidance on this, qualifications achieved more than 5 years ago will not be considered up for credit transfer.

How much credit within a programme of study can I claim through RPL?

There are limits to the amount of credit you can claim through RPL to ensure that enough study for your qualification is undertaken with Malta ICOM. A full list of the maximum amounts of credit you can claim through RPL is provided in the Malta ICOM Recognition of Prior Learning Policy, and you should consider this before you submit a claim.

What about awards with Merit or Distinction?

All RPL credit, both certificated and informal, is ungraded. This means that no marks will be available from RPL credit to count towards awards with Merit or Distinction. At Malta ICOM, awards with

Merit or Distinction are considered solely on the basis of achieving all credit points required for consideration of the award with Merit/Distinction through completion of Malta ICOM modules.

What happens to my RPL claim form?

Your claim will be assessed by two academic members of staff: the Assessor and the Moderator. You will be supported throughout the process, advised if any additional information is required and given an indication of the length of time that the assessment of your claim will take. Generally, this will be within three working weeks of submission of your claim form, however, it may take longer if a claim for recognition of informal learning needs additional supporting evidence. Advice on this can be obtained from the RPL Advisor supporting your claim.

What happens next?

Step 1

Once the RPL form is processed you will be contacted by the RPL assessor for those units of competency will contact you to arrange a phone or online interview to conduct an initial discussion about your application. The goal of the initial discussion is to ascertain whether there will be sufficient available evidence that will support the Recognition of Prior Learning application. No matter how a unit of competency is awarded, it must only be done so after the assessor has ascertained that the evidence is sufficient, valid, authentic, and current i.e., up to date.

The initial interview is an informal one. The Assessor will simply be asking questions to get a better understanding of your relevant background and experience related to the units of competency you are seeking recognition for.

They will ask you general questions about relevant employment and training. This will include the tasks you undertook and how regularly you did them. You will also be asked about the results of any workplace performance reviews i.e., what did your employers think about your skill level.

They will also ask specific questions that will help them (and you) gauge your level of current knowledge and skills for each specific unit. Remember, they are not deliberately trying to trip you up – they simply are using questions that a person who is sufficiently skilled in that area should be able to answer.

If you and they determine that you are unlikely to achieve RPL – you will then be assisted with how to progress your study. Fees are only charged if your application progresses beyond this point.

Step 2

Your Assessor will have advised you whether it is realistic to proceed with the Application for RPL to this stage (at which point in time fees are charged). The objective of this stage is to gather the evidence that can be used to support your RPL. This may be done in several ways with the most common being a Portfolio of Documents; and/or Demonstration/ Observation of Practical skills.

Some points to be aware of about this:

- supporting evidence needs to be able to be proven as authentic
- the portfolio needs to be properly presented – with it being clear how each provided evidence items supports your application (i.e., don't just send us every document you have)
- if the evidence is not recent evidence – consideration needs to occur about whether this work skill or task has since changed i.e., are your skills and knowledge still up to date

- there needs to be sufficient evidence to show that you can demonstrate all the required skills and knowledge reliably

The Assessor will formally consider all evidence provided and compare them to the requirements of the unit(s) of competence. From this stage they will identify what documents and conversations are required for the next step. They may have already identified gaps i.e., aspects of the unit(s) of competency that you do not meet. They may advise you that you can address this gap by undertaking a component of the training.

Step 3

The purpose of this stage is to assist with the authenticity aspect and to address any gaps identified in the evidence provided. It also supports proving workplace competence vs. theoretical knowledge of the subject. You will be advised of the activities needed in this stage. They may include:

- Requests for written “references” from past workplace supervisors
- Phone “reference checking” by contact past employers and verifying information provided in your portfolio

In some instances, the Trainer/Assessor may simply ask you to explain again certain information. For example, they may ask you in depth about a provided item of evidence as a way of testing that you were the author of that document as claimed.

After this stage is completed successfully the recognition results will be made. It is normal that the final decision be confirmed after a College Director has reviewed the RPL application and evidence and agrees that they support the Assessors judgment and decision. What Result Will I Be Awarded?

Examples of the types of evidence which may be required for formal learning: -

When considering applications for the credit transfer of prior certificated learning ICOM will need to see evidence of your prior certificated learning, the detail of what you learned, when this was learned, who awarded you the credit, and at what level of study the credit was awarded.

Examples of the evidence you will be asked to provide may include module and syllabus descriptors or handbooks, transcripts, and confirmation of the marks you achieved for this learning. Once this information is received the Assessor will review the evidence to identify if the learning you have already achieved is comparable to the learning you would achieve by studying the module(s) at Malta ICOM.

Applications for the award of credit based on informal learning

When you make a claim based on informal learning, it is expected that you will reflect on experiences, identify the learning within these experiences, and provide evidence of the learning achieved. Evidence of informal learning will therefore come in a variety of types and forms.

Examples of how this type of learning can be evidenced may:

Reflective portfolio of evidence (submitted electronically) which could include (but is not limited to):

- video and/or audio material
- analytical evaluations of practice
- analysis of issues underlying practice and the learning associated with that
- an assessor’s observation of practice

- detailed curriculum vitae to support a context for the claim

The portfolio should include an essay or annotated grid to allow the applicant to explain the assessor what MQF or professional levels they have achieved

Once all the evidence of learning has been received, the Assessor will review the evidence and undertake a process of assessment for credit rating the learning.

How much will my RPL claim cost?

Some applications for RPL are free and some incur a charge. Please see below.

There is a standard fee to apply for entry to a programme based on prior learning.

There is a standard for making a claim for the transfer of credit already achieved at another institution.

There is a fee charged for claims for credit within a programme based on informal learning.

This is because the informal learning must be assessed and credited rated for it to be applied. However, if credit is applied to your programme, you will also receive a tuition fee reduction as you will not be studying as many modules as originally anticipated. Please contact the Admissions Team for information on the current schedule of fees.

For further information:

Application (RPL for entry) - Admissions and Enquiry Service

RPL Policy – Recognition of Prior Learning at Malta ICOM

Appendix 3 Admissions Appeals

(page 6-7 of Admission Policy)

An applicant may request a review if they wish for the decision on their application to be reconsidered. The use of this process should not adversely affect any later dealings with the applicant.

An applicant who is considering making an appeal should:

- In the first instance, if it has not already been supplied, request feedback from the Admissions Office, within 7 days of the publication of the unsuccessful decision.
- If, after considering this feedback, the applicant still wishes for the decision to be reviewed, they should submit, in writing, to the Programme Leader, the reasons why they believe the decision should be reconsidered. This request should be made within 10 days of receipt of the feedback, or in cases where the applicant has not requested feedback, within 10 days of the publication of the unsuccessful decision. A representative nominated by the Programme Leader will consider the request and inform the applicant of the outcome, in writing, within 10 days of its receipt.
- If the situation is not resolved, then the applicant, within 7 days of notification of the decision from Malta ICOM's representative, may submit an appeal on an Admissions Appeal Application Form with evidence to support their case.

- The appeal can be made on one or more of the following grounds:
 - That there was a material and/or procedural irregularity in the decision-making process.
 - That there is evidence of unjustified discrimination or bias against the applicant.
 - That additional evidence has come to light since the decision of the School's representative, which could not reasonably have been expected to have been produced at the time of case.
- The Admissions Appeal Application Form is available on the Malta ICOM website, and should be submitted via email to:
- Annalisa Fanni - annalisa.fanni@icomedicine.com for undergraduate entry
Jorge Esteves - jorge.esteves@icomedicine.com for postgraduate entry
- It is strongly advised that the applicant keeps a copy of their Application Form and any supporting documentation submitted to Malta ICOM, as documents will not normally be returned and may be destroyed unless the return of documentation is requested at the point of submission.
- Appeals will not be accepted by a third party unless written consent is received from the applicant allowing an individual to act on their behalf. Any information provided as part of the appeals process will be handled in confidence, and only released to those members of staff who need it.
- Please note that incomplete Admissions Appeal Application Forms, applications that do not meet the criteria, late submissions, frivolous or vexatious applications, or applications not supported by evidence will normally be rejected.
- Where an appeal is accepted for consideration, it will be sent to the relevant Programme Leader who will be asked to supply all information relevant to the case. The case will then be passed to a Academic Director who will consider the appeal by way of a review of the relevant evidence and, the applicant or Programme Leader may be asked to provide further information on, or clarification of, any points in their submission. After consideration of the case, the Academic Director may act as follows:
 - Reject the appeal.
 - Uphold the appeal and impose an alternative outcome.
- Malta ICOM will inform the applicant of their decision within 15 days of receiving the appeal. The decision is final, and no further appeal is permitted.
- All outcomes of appeal are recorded and monitored

Appendix 4

MALTA ICOM RPL ASSESSOR CRITERIA TEMPLATE

Authenticity: (It is the students/applicants/practitioners own work, it is their learning)

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Relevant: (Evidence and learning outcomes relevant to current practice)

- FOCUS, CLARITY OF EVIDENCE:(presentation of evidence, is logical, style of writing is clear and comprehensible)
- BREADTH: (Research findings/supportive literature included)
- QUALITY (LEVEL): (Standard of work appropriate to level claimed e.g., Level 4, Level 5, Level 6, Level 7)

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Reliable: (such that an assessor would arrive at the same assessment decision, were the assessment to be repeated.)

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Sufficient: (Enough evidence to support learning outcomes)

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Validity: (The learning outcomes relate to the evidence presented)

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Verifiable

Assessor Name	
Signature of Assessor	

Date	
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Programme Leader Result of assessment:

Evidence accepted as representative of learning in current role
Reason:

Further evidence required
Reason:

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Evidence rejected
Reason:

Programme Lead Name	
Programme Lead Signature	

Date	
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Please attach the following to this document:

- Student Assessment Profile
- Evidence submitted