

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy is to acknowledge and formally validate the knowledge, skills and competencies that individuals have acquired within school, college and university and outside formal learning situations as through life and work experience.

2. Scope

This policy covers the recognition and crediting of prior learning (knowledge, skills, and competencies) for all programmes offered at GBSB Global Business School. The policy applies the process of RPL for entry into a programme of study or for exemption from parts of a programme prior to admission.

3. Control and Distribution

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 Superseded versions of the policy shall be retained for future reference.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

4. Definitions

- 4.1 **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).
- 4.2 **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.
- 4.3 **Component** – smaller parts of a full programme of learning which can be assessed separately.
- 4.4 **Credit Transfer** – takes place when an individual has completed a formal programme of study, has received formal credit and is looking to enter at an advanced stage or gain exemption from components of another programme of study, provided that the learning outcomes of the previous programme match those of the new one. The credit can either be subject-specific or general if the learning is at the same European Qualifications Framework/Malta Qualifications Framework (EQF/MQF) level.
- 4.5 **Portfolio** – a collection of documents which, 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).

- 4.6 **Recognition** – a process by which an individual's learning is formally assessed and quality assured, allowing them to be admitted to or gain exemptions from components or parts of a formal programme of study through the use of learning outcomes.
- 4.7 **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** – a 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 experiences¹. RPL is a concept that enables individuals to have their learning and experiences recognised 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 programme of study or to gain entry with advanced standing.
 - RPL to gain entry to an award or qualification.
- 4.8 **Recognition of Accredited Prior Learning (RAPL)** – a process of assessing formally accredited prior learning, aligning it with an MQF level, and awarding ECTS credit points toward a programme of study. This allows the candidate to receive exemptions or advanced entry into the programme.
- 4.9 **RPL Candidate** – an individual making a claim for RPL and/or credit transfer.
- 4.10 **RPL for Advanced Entry** – full acceptance of a claim for entry to a programme of study with exemptions from parts of the programme.
- 4.11 **RPL for Entry** – full acceptance of an RPL claim as entry requirements onto a programme of study.
- 4.12 **Summative RPL** – takes place where formal credit is awarded and recognised as having the same value as credit gained in formal teaching institutions.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1 The Head of Institution is responsible for implementing this policy.
- 5.2 The Academic Committee is responsible for reviewing candidate applications and making recommendations related to RPL claims to the Head of Institution, who makes the final decisions in this regard².
- 5.3 The Registrar Office is responsible for processing RPL applications and evaluating candidates' documentation and portfolios in accordance with institutional policies and procedures.

6. Policy Statements

- 6.1 GBSB Global Business School acknowledges that learning is continuous and should be used to recognise achievements resulting from this ongoing process. Essentially, RPL is an evaluative process that enables candidates to receive recognition for their achievements from a range of activities they have already undertaken.

¹ Definition by Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), 2010.

² In complex cases, an ad hoc committee is established to review RPL candidate applications and provide recommendations.

- 6.2 This policy complies with the “Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) – Definitions, Principles and Guidelines” document issued by Malta Further and Higher Education Authority³.
- 6.3 Recognition of Accredited Prior Learning (RAPL) is regulated by the Admission of Transfer Students Policy.
- 6.4 GBSB Global's system of RPL is featured by the following characteristics:
- Learner-centred, fair, and respectful of the individual's privacy
 - Considers equality and diversity issues
 - Accessible and flexible
 - Given for the learning and not the experience alone
 - Reliable, transparent, and consistent
 - Involves the use of the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) in determining the level, volume, and depth of evidence
 - Involves formal assessment for summative claims
 - Recognised as having the same value as learning gained in formal education
 - Quality assured both internally and externally
 - In line with any statutory legislation.
- 6.5 The types of RPL at GBSB Global include:
- Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL, see Section 4)
 - Accreditation of Experiential Prior Learning (APEL, see Section 4)
 - Recognition of Accredited Prior Learning (RAPL, see Section 4 and Admissions of Transfer Students Policy).
- 6.6 RPL applications must be submitted to the Admissions Department no later than five weeks before the start of the next term.
- 6.7 GBSB Global's RPL policy as it applies to APL and APEL will be implemented through the processes outlined in the Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure.
- 6.8 The learning outcomes of the programme of study where the claim for RPL is being assessed against will be used to determine the match of evidence in alignment with the MQF, Malta Referencing Report 2024, and subsequent updates.
- 6.9 RPL can be used to admit candidates who lack a required qualification (e.g., mature students without a formal school leaving certificate but with significant relevant professional experience), as well as to grant credit for specific modules within the study programme.
- 6.10 If RPL is used to grant credits within a study programme the following principles apply:
- The minimum number of credits that is achievable through RPL is defined as the number of credits of the smallest component within the programme
 - The maximum number of credits that is achievable through RPL shall not exceed 50% of the total ECTS credits of the programme⁴.
 - A full qualification cannot be awarded solely through RPL.
- 6.11 Applicable fees will be charged for RPL applications.
- 6.12 Any appeals regarding the outcomes of the equivalency and transfer decisions must be submitted to the Head of Studies and Academic Operations no later than two weeks (10

³ <https://mfhea.mt>

⁴ For the PhD programme, contact hours will be internally converted into ECTS credits.

calendar days) after the assessment results have been communicated to the applicant. GBSB Global will review the appeal within three weeks (15 calendar days).

7. Related Documents

- 7.1 Admissions Policy Guide.
- 7.2 Admission of Undergraduate Students Policy.
- 7.3 Admission of Graduate Students Policy.
- 7.4 Admission of PhD Students Policy.
- 7.5 Admission of Transfer Students Policy.
- 7.6 Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure.

8. Version Control and Change History

Version	Amendment Details	Review and Approval Details
1.0	Initial document release.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Policy owner: Head of Institution ▪ Approved by: Executive Committee ▪ Date approved: July 12, 2024 ▪ Due for review: July 12, 2025 ▪ Most recent review: September 9, 2025 ▪ Due for review: September 9, 2026