

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING PROCEDURE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to describe the process for application and assessment for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) 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 programmes offered at GBSB Global Business School. It enables candidates to gain entry to an award or qualification, exemptions from parts of an existing programme 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. Control and Distribution

- 3.1 The Head of Institution is the owner of this procedure.
- 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 Superseded versions of the procedure shall be retained for future reference.
- 3.3 Any updates or revisions to the procedure will be communicated through official channels and posted on the institution's website.
- 3.4 The procedure 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 **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.
- 4.5 **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 process, unless the experiences take place as part of a planned experiential or work-based learning program.

- 4.6 **Non-formal Learning** – learning that takes place alongside the mainstream systems of education and training. It is usually flexible, hands-on, learner-centred 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
- 4.7 **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).
- 4.8 **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 using learning outcomes.
- 4.9 **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.
- 4.10 **RPL Candidate** – an individual making a claim for RPL and/or credit transfer.
- 4.11 **RPL for Advanced Entry** – full acceptance of a claim for entry to a programme of study with exemptions from parts of the programme.
- 4.12 **RPL for Entry** – full acceptance of an RPL claim as entry requirements onto a programme of study.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1 The Head of Institution is responsible for overseeing this procedure.
- 5.2 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 and the outcome they expect.
 - Sending out the RPL 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 for evaluating the application.
 - Informing the candidates on the RPL result.

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

5.3 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 analyse 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.

6. Procedure

6.1 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 utilise the RPL process to achieve the following:

- **Entry/Admission to a Degree Programme:** 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 programme of study, RPL can enable a student to reduce their module load if they can demonstrate prior learning that was not previously used for programme entry but can be applied to their current studies.

6.2 The following steps – **Accessing RPL, Support for Candidates, Assessing RPL Claims, and Completing the RPL Process** – outline the evaluation process that enables candidates to recognise and validate the knowledge, skills, and competencies they have acquired outside formal learning situations, such as through life and work experience.

6.3 Accessing RPL

6.3.1 The GBSB Global 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.

6.3.2 Candidates interested in accessing a programme of study via the RPL route should notify the Admissions Office by email at admissions@global-business-school.org or indicate their intention in the RPL Application Form.

6.3.3 Candidates must provide evidence of prior achievements at a comparable or equivalent EQF/MQF level to demonstrate their eligibility for RPL. If appropriate evidence is provided, GBSB Global may grant exemptions from specific modules or courses or allow entry into a qualification programme.

6.3.4 GBSB Global Admissions staff are available to assist candidates with an initial evaluation of their portfolios, either online or through face-to-face interviews. Candidates will be asked to submit their CVs 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 programme 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.

6.3.5 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 process.

6.3.6 RPL claims should be submitted at least 5 weeks before the start of the programme. An RPL application can only be processed once the candidate has demonstrated that they are likely to meet the admissions criteria for the programme or module.

6.3.7 When submitting an RPL claim, the student should specify the desired outcome, such as:

- Fulfilling entry requirements for a programme of study.
- Claiming advanced entry (exemption) into a programme.
- Claiming exemption from specific modules within an existing programme.

6.3.8 GBSB Global 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, GBSB Global reserves the right to withdraw credit. No fees will be refunded in such cases.

6.3.9 The RPL candidate must submit the application and portfolio to the Admissions Department. The portfolio should include verifiable evidence that demonstrates equivalent learning in relation to the entry requirements or Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) for which credit is sought. The evidence may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Officially accredited qualifications.
- Transcripts.
- Unit outlines/syllabi.
- Certificates or transcripts of academic courses completed outside the credit system and related documentation.
- Completion certificates for language, technical, or vocational courses.
- Certificates from seminars, trainings, workshops, or professional development sessions.
- Evidence of protected intellectual property.
- Evidence of intellectual contributions such as published scientific papers, trade articles, conference presentations, etc.
- Evidence of work-related learning, including detailed work history, internal technical reports, recommendation letters from employers highlighting achievements and performance, witness testimonies, and work accomplishment reports detailing outputs like publications and products aligned with role descriptions.
- Evidence of experiential learning such as internships, field exercises, study abroad, work in an English-speaking environment, etc.
- Volunteering records.
- Skills tests.
- CV.

6.3.10 The Admissions Department will support candidates in compiling their forms. Staff will be available for one-on-one interviews to assist candidates as needed.

6.3.11 RPL is pursued on a credit basis, so costs cannot be expressed for individual modules. The student will be fully informed of the cost of the degree or certificate, and the RPL, applied after admission, will represent a percentage of the overall programme or module costs. Detailed pricing information will be provided in the respective Directive.

6.4 Support for Candidates

6.4.1 Admissions staff will guide candidates in making an RPL claim, providing advice on the necessary evidence, its preparation, and submission. It is the responsibility of the staff to ensure that candidates receive a copy of the relevant policies and to assist them throughout the process. During the initial interview, staff will use a checklist to ensure that all procedures are followed, and that the candidate fully understands the RPL process. This checklist will cover:

- The nature of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).
- The credit requirements of the programme/module, including specific learning outcomes for modules/units.
- Relevant procedures, including the fee structure, limits on the amount of credit that can be claimed, and the process of making an RPL claim.
- How to formulate a claim by reflecting on and demonstrating prior learning, and understanding the assessment process.
- The evidence required for submission.
- How applicants will be notified of the assessment decision.

6.4.2 The Admissions Office will process the RPL application, verifying that all required details submitted by the candidate are accurate and valid. Once validated, staff will assist the candidate in preparing their learning portfolio, helping them identify the skills and competencies acquired through prior certified and/or experiential learning that demonstrate achievement of specific learning outcomes.

6.4.3 Admissions staff will provide feedback on the completeness of the portfolio and advise the candidate on the next steps. If there are deficiencies in the portfolio, the candidate will be given one week to address them.

6.4.4 Admissions staff will verify the RPL candidate's eligibility and forward the application to the Academic Committee for further review.

6.4.5 The Academic Committee will assess and validate the candidate's portfolio.

6.5 Assessing RPL Claims

6.5.1 The Academic Committee is responsible for the equitable and transparent assessment and validation of the RPL candidate's portfolio.

6.5.2 The initial evaluation by the Academic Committee aims to analyse the application and the evidence provided by the candidate. The evidence submitted in support of an application will be assessed against the programme's requirements and learning outcomes, with consideration given to:

- **Validity:** the prior learning must be at the appropriate academic level and match the learning outcomes required by the programme.
- **Sufficiency:** candidates must provide sufficient documentation, including a completed form, learning portfolio, and any other evidence requested by the Admissions Department.

- **Currency:** the learning must be current and relevant to the programme, demonstrating up-to-date knowledge and practice.
 - **Authenticity:** candidates are responsible for the accuracy and authenticity of the documentation provided.
 - **Relevance:** the prior learning must be directly relevant to the programme of study the candidate intends to pursue.
- 6.5.3 The Academic Committee and/or designated experts with expertise in the discipline and in awarding credits based on RPL assessment are responsible for conducting the assessment.
- 6.5.4 Claims for exemption from specific modules are assessed by comparing each module's content and CLOs to the evidence in the candidate's portfolio. The evidenced content and learning objectives must be at least 75% equivalent to the module in question.
- 6.5.5 Claims for entry or advanced entry (exemption) into a programme are assessed by comparing the candidate's portfolio to a benchmark programme currently offered by GBSB Global. The portfolio content and learning objectives must be at least 75% equivalent to the benchmark programme to meet the entry requirements of the desired programme. For example, a candidate applying for admission to the Master of Science in Management (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 and Digital Innovation (180 ECTS, EQF/MQF Level 6).
- 6.5.6 After validating the claim and evidence presented, the Academic Committee may request an online or face-to-face interview with the candidate to ensure the validity of the initial evaluation and to verify specific competencies claimed by the applicant. If the interview results are insufficient, candidates may be subjected to competency-based tests.
- 6.5.7 The Academic Committee will ensure that:
- There is sufficient evidence to grant the candidate entry to a qualification or credit for the course(s), based on the Matrix of CLOs, which shows the target skills/competencies for each CLO.
 - The candidate is notified at least 5 days before any skills assessment.
 - A challenge assessment may be part of the review, requiring the candidate to demonstrate meeting the required CLOs or entry requirements through various methods, such as:
 - Examinations or tests, including oral or written questions and structured assessment activities typically required in a course.
 - Direct observation of skills or competencies demonstrations.
 - Reflective papers, journal articles, or similar documents relating past learning to CLOs/competencies.
 - Reviews of courses/units taken from another institution to demonstrate CLO achievement.
 - Combinations of the above methods.
 - All evidence will be evaluated based on entry requirements or the CLOs and assessment criteria. The candidate must meet the standards for all CLOs and assessment criteria.

6.5.8 The Academic Committee will verify the appropriateness and adequacy of the assessment used. Possible outcomes of the RPL claim include:

- Full acceptance of the claim for entry into a programme, with the applicant being informed of the next available intake.
- Full acceptance of the claim for advanced entry.
- Full acceptance of the claim for exemption from specific modules.
- A request for resubmission of the claim with additional evidence.
- Rejection of the claim with recommendations for alternative paths.
- Rejection of the claim.

6.5.9 RPL applications will typically be assessed within 20 working days, provided all necessary documents have been submitted.

6.6 Completing RPL Process

6.6.1 The Academic Committee will recommend an RPL decision to the Head of Institution for approval within 1 week of the assessment. The recommendation will include sufficient justification, such as:

- The candidate is awarded credit for the module (course) if they have provided sufficient evidence to meet the CLOs, produced a tangible output demonstrating course competence, and/or passed the competency exam.
- The candidate demonstrated at least 75% attainment of the CLOs.
- The candidate is eligible for admission to a degree programme 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.

6.6.2 The Registrar will record the RPL decision and inform the candidate in writing within 1 week of receiving the RPL result.

6.6.3 If a candidate is dissatisfied with the RPL decision, they may request a review by the Chair of the Academic Committee within 5 working days of receiving the decision.

6.6.4 A review will be conducted within 5 working days of receiving the request, involving the Chair of the Academic Committee, the Academic Coordinator, and a Nominated Expert.

7. Related Documents

- 7.1 Admission of Transfer Students Policy.
- 7.2 Recognition of Prior Learning Policy.
- 7.3 Recognition of Prior Learning Application Form Template (attached).

8. Indicative Evidence/Records

- 8.1 Candidate's portfolio of evidence.
- 8.2 RPL Application Form records.

9. Version Control and Change History		
Version	Amendment Details	Review and Approval Details
1.0	Initial document release.	▪ Procedure owner: Head of Institution ▪ Approved by: Executive Committee ▪ Date approved: September 10, 2024 ▪ Due for review: September 10, 2025 ▪ Most recent review: September 30, 2025 ▪ Due for review: September 30, 2026

Attachment 1: Recognition of Prior Learning Application Form Template

Recognition of Prior Learning Application Form

This form should be used to apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in accordance with the RPL Policy and Procedure of GBSB Global. Both documents are accessible via the GBSB Global website.

It is strongly recommended that you discuss any potential RPL application with the Admissions staff, including the evidence required to support your application. Candidates interested in accessing a programme of study via the RPL route should notify the Admissions Office by email at admissions@global-business-school.org.

RPL candidates who meet the eligibility criteria may 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 process.

About yourself

You should only apply for RPL after you have submitted a complete application to study at GBSB Global. This form allows you to provide information necessary for the assessment of your prior learning by the academic team. Please note that this is an academic process distinct from the general admissions process. It may be beneficial to reiterate some of the information from your initial application to assist the team in conducting a thorough academic evaluation of your RPL application.

Title: _____

Candidate's name: _____

Email: _____

Programme applied for: _____

Your intended starting date: _____

Which type of RPL are you applying for?

You can apply for one of three types of RPL. Clicking on the boxes below will add questions to this form that you need to complete.

- ☐ **Entry/Admission to a Degree Programme:** 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 programme of study, RPL can enable a student to reduce their module load if they can demonstrate prior learning that was not previously used for programme entry but can be applied to their current studies.
- ☐ **Both (RPL for Advanced Entry):** full acceptance of a claim for entry to a programme of study with exemptions from parts of the programme.

On what basis are you applying for RPL?

- ☐ **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.
- ☐ **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).

RPL for Exemption from Specific Module(s) (Course(s))

Programme modules for which exemption is requested	Number of credits	Learning outcomes you are claiming exemption against	Describe how provided evidence supports the RPL claim against each of the learning outcomes and identify the corresponding evidence in your application
Module 1		CLO 1	
		CLO 2	
		CLO 3	
		Etc.	

RPL for Entry/Admission to a Degree Programme

Benchmark Programme/ Module	Number of credits	Learning outcomes you are referring to	Describe how provided evidence supports the RPL claim against each of the learning outcomes and identify the corresponding evidence in your application
Bachelor of Business Administration and Digital Innovation		LO 1	
		LO 2	
		Etc.	

Submission of Evidence

You must submit evidence regardless of the type of RPL you are applying for and the basis of your application. Your evidence should include a document titled 'Explanation of Evidence,' which introduces

and explains each item of evidence. If the evidence includes any previous qualifications, this explanation should clearly detail the organisation that delivered the studies, the quantity and level of the learning, and whether it was formally accredited. The evidence may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Officially accredited qualifications.
- Transcripts.
- Unit outlines/syllabi.
- Certificates or transcripts of academic courses completed outside the credit system and related documentation.
- Completion certificates for language, technical, or vocational courses.
- Certificates from seminars, trainings, workshops, or professional development sessions.
- Evidence of protected intellectual property.
- Evidence of intellectual contributions such as published scientific papers, trade articles, conference presentations, etc.
- Evidence of work-related learning, including detailed work history, internal technical reports, recommendation letters from employers highlighting achievements and performance, witness testimonies, and work accomplishment reports detailing outputs like publications and products aligned with role descriptions.
- Evidence of experiential learning such as internships, field exercises, study abroad, work in an English-speaking environment, etc.
- Volunteering records.
- Skills tests
- CV

Date of Completion: _____

Once you have completed the sections above, please send this form along with electronic copies of the relevant evidence to admissions@global-business-school.org.

Assessment of RPL claims

Decision regarding the RPL claim:

- Full acceptance of the claim for entry into a program, with the applicant being informed of the next available intake

Entry to a Programme (title)	
Entry to a Programme (level)	
Benchmark programme against which the claim was successful	
Benchmark module titles and credits against which the claim was made successfully	

- Full acceptance of the claim for advanced entry

Entry to a Programme (title)	
Entry to a Programme (level)	
Benchmark programme against which the claim was successful	
Benchmark module titles and credits against which the claim was made successfully	

Qualification title	
Qualification level	
Total number of credit exemption awarded	
Module titles and credits against which the exemption claim was made successfully	

- Full acceptance of the claim for exemption from specific modules

Qualification title	
Qualification level	
Total number of credit exemption awarded	
Module titles and credits against which the exemption claim was made successfully	

- A request for resubmission of the claim with additional evidence

Please note what additional type of evidence is required

- Rejection of the claim with recommendations for alternative paths

Please provide recommendations

- Rejection of the claim

Please provide reasons

Signatures

Chair of Academic Committee	Signature	Date when RPL decision was made
Head of Institution	Signature	Date