

Recognised Prior Learning (RPL)

Policy and Procedure



Document Overview

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V1	Sept24	Initial document creation

Continuous Improvement

Policies, procedures and processes are meant to be 'living' documents that need to be followed, implemented and maintained. If the procedure does not reflect the current, correct work practice please contact us on quality@cmbs.edu.mt

Ensure you are reading the latest version available on the CMBS LMS.

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1. Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) Policy

1.1 Scope and Applicability

This policy encompasses all CMBS programmes, including those delivered at CMBS approved learning centres, targeting both prospective and current students who aim to have their diverse forms of prior learning, recognised and accredited towards their chosen programme of study. It applies to all learning experiences, whether obtained within or outside of formal education systems.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear, consistent, and transparent guidelines for the recognition of diverse forms of prior learning, supporting the academic progression and lifelong learning goals of our students. This policy is integral to our admissions procedure and outlines the principles and procedures applicable to RPL through which prior learning can be assessed and credited, ensuring equity, transparency, and consistency. Consequently, supporting the academic and career advancement of our students.

1.3 Guiding Principles

CMBS values the diverse pathways through which individuals gain knowledge and skills, including workplace and informal learning experiences. Our RPL policy is committed to formally recognising this spectrum of learning. It acknowledges certified learning, as well as non-formal and informal experiential learning, facilitating standard admissions and potential exemptions based on demonstrated competencies and experiences. This approach ensures that all learning, regardless of how it is acquired, is valued and contributes to the educational journey of our students.

2. Definitions and Acronyms

ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System):	ECTS is the common credit system in place in Europe to assign credits to a programme or module based on the workload a learner typically needs to achieve expected learning outcomes. Each ECTS point corresponds to 25 'learning hours' (not all learning hours are hours spent in class sessions).
ECVET (European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training):	ECVET is the credit transfer system for qualifications MQF 4 and below. Each ECVET credit corresponds to 25 learning hours.
Experiential Learning:	Learning acquired through experiences outside traditional academic environments, including work and life experiences.
Formal Certified Learning:	Structured learning that takes place through education institutions, leading to formally recognised qualifications.
Informal Learning:	Learning that results from daily activities related to work, family, or leisure, not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time, or learning support.
Non-formal Learning:	Education that is structured and organised but does not lead to formal qualifications, often occurring in community-based settings, workplaces, and through activities not explicitly labelled as learning.
MQF Level:	Malta Qualifications Framework level, indicating the level of complexity, knowledge, and skills associated with a particular qualification.

Recognised Prior Learning (RPL):	"RPL is the process of recognising learning that has come from experience and/or formal and informal learning contexts. This includes knowledge and skills gained within school and outside formal learning situations as through life and work experiences" (SCQF definition 2010).
Recognised Prior Certified Learning (RPCL):	RPCL is the process through which we recognise and credit learning that has been previously certified by accredited or recognised institutions. This recognition can lead to exemptions from certain components of a CMBS study programme.
Recognised Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL):	RPEL involves acknowledging informal and non-formal experiential learning gained in various settings, like workplaces, volunteer activities, life experiences, or through uncertified educational contexts. This recognition can facilitate admission and potentially exempt parts of a CMBS study programme, considering both experiential and formal educational achievements.

3. ¹Different Types of RPL

3.1.1 Expanded Definition of RPL

RPL can be defined as the process of recognising learning that has its source in 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 such as through life and work experiences.

It is a method of assessment that considers whether students can demonstrate that they meet the entry requirements to a programme of study through prior proven learning. In addition, it is also a method of assessing whether students can be exempt from certain modules since the assessment criteria for said module or modules are met through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess. CMBS recognises the value of recognising prior experience and learning as a source of evidence for MQF qualifications.

CMBS recognises two forms of RPL.

- Recognised Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) and/or Recognised Prior Certified Learning (RPCL) to gain entry to a programme of study at CMBS.
- Recognised Prior Certified Learning (RPCL) for the award of ECTS points to gain exemption from parts of an existing programme of study at CMBS.

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

3.1.3 Summative RPL is where formal ECTS credit is awarded and recognised as having the same value as credit gained in formal teaching institutions.

^{1 1} Definitions for the different types of RPL in section 3. are taken from [Recognition of Prior Learning \(RPL\) - Definitions, Principles and Guidelines](#) prepared by SCQF Partnership in collaboration with MFHEA - May 2021).

3.1.4 Credit Transfer is when a candidate has gained a formal award or qualification and has received formal ECTS credit and is looking to gain entry at an advanced stage or exemption from a component of another programme of study, where the learning outcomes of the first programme of study match the learning outcomes of the new programme of study. The credit can either be subject specific or general credit if the learning is at the same MQF level.

4. Conditions

The CMBS RPL policy applies to all qualifications offered by CMBS and is subject to the conditions listed below:

- ✓ **Scope of Recognition:** RPL applies to competences from formal programmes recognised by the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA) or through an MQRIC statement (for foreign qualifications), or alternatively through evidence of relevant workplace learning.
- ✓ **Application Eligibility:** Only candidates with relevant non-formal, informal, or formal learning experiences can apply.
- ✓ **Documentary Evidence:** Candidates must submit verifiable evidence of their prior learning or certified qualifications, or may be required to submit verifiable proof of declared work experience. Candidates may be subject to undergo competency-based tests/evaluations.
- ✓ **Credit Cap:** The maximum credits from RPL will **not** exceed 50% of the chosen programme of study.
- ✓ **Awarding of Credits:** Credits from RPL are awarded upon programme completion.
- ✓ **Module Exemptions:** Exemptions are granted for complete modules, not for individual assessment elements within a module.
- ✓ **Transcript Notations:** Exemptions granted through RPL will be noted on the student's transcript, with an average mark calculated from mapped modules.
- ✓ **Discretionary Considerations:** The Admissions and Scholarships Board may consider exemptions beyond standard limitations in special cases.
- ✓ **Assessment Standards:** Applications will be evaluated based on relevance, authenticity, and the level of prior learning in relation to the programme standards.

- ✓ **Confidentiality:** Candidates information and learning evidence will be treated with strict confidentiality. Please refer to the **Data Privacy and Information Management Policy**.

5. Procedure

The RPL process at CMBS is administered by the Student Recruitment Team in consultation with the Admissions and Scholarships Board.

5.1 Responsibilities

Student Recruitment Team is responsible to:

- Handle the processing of applications/appeals and supports students during the process.
- Conduct a thorough assessment and run quality checks on the submitted documentation.
- Provide feedback to applicants.

Applicants are responsible for:

- Understanding and acknowledging the requirements of their chosen programme
- Providing necessary documentation.
- Ensuring all application information, including personal and academic details, is accurate and truthful.
- Consenting to the processing and storage of personal data as per CMBS's Data Privacy and Information Management policy.
- Promptly informing CMBS of any changes in personal information or significant circumstances affecting their application.
- Submit appeals, when and if required.

The **Admissions and Scholarships Board** is made up of the School Principal, Director of Quality, Student Recruitment Manager and Academic Manager.

Admissions and Scholarships Board responsibilities include:

- Conducting a thorough evaluation of applications referred by the Student Recruitment Team.
- Making final decisions on applications and ensuring that each decision aligns with CMBS's commitment to diversity and educational excellence.

Academic Affairs Team responsibilities include:

- Setting up official student records for each admitted student whereby their academic progress, enrolments, grades, and other critical academic information throughout their time on the programme are tracked.
- Providing guidance on academic policies and other regulations that students must navigate as they begin their studies.

5.2 RPL Application

The RPL application is initiated by the Student Recruitment Team as an alternative route to recognition of existing learning and achievements for prospective students to gain entry to a CMBS qualification when they do not meet the standard entry requirements. In addition, it may also be initiated in cases where students may be eligible for exemptions based on existing prior certified learning demonstrating that assessment criteria and learning outcome requirements for specific module or modules are met without having to repeat learning.

Candidates undergoing the RPL process of CMBS are sent a link to complete an online RPL form after consultation with the Student Recruitment Team. All applications and relevant documentation are saved in the student's folder on the CMBS SharePoint. This is done to ensure the centralisation of information and recording of all requests.

A checklist as per below is discussed with and sent to the applicant who are asked to upload the documentation required as a portfolio of evidence of their existing learning and work experience.

Check List:

- a brief explanation of their work experience;
- any endorsement letters by previous employers and/or reference letters;
- past projects undertaken;
- a copy of any formal qualifications;
- MQRIC statement (for foreign qualifications);
- possible links to electronic information and data the candidate previously worked on that is publicly available;
- any other supporting documentation.

Students requiring any support during the process are guided and supported by the Student Recruitment Team.

Once the online RPL application has been duly filled and all documentation attached. The Student Recruitment Team shall review the documentation to ensure that all required information and documents have been duly submitted by the applicant. The Student Recruitment team will conduct a thorough assessment and run quality checks on the submitted documentation to ensure the authenticity and alignment of the evidence with the submitted form.

Upon completion of the review process, notification of the submitted application and accompanying documentation, will be relayed to the Admissions and Scholarships Board via a dedicated online channel.

5.3 Vetting Process - Joining a Programme of Study

When all documentation has been uploaded onto the Admissions and Scholarships Board online channel by the Student Recruitment Team, each member of the Admissions and Scholarships Board is asked to review the submitted documentation and give their professional input regarding the eligibility or otherwise of the candidate.

Following initial individual vetting the Admissions and Scholarships Board discuss the RPL case. Should there not be an agreement on the outcome of the vetting process, then the Admissions and Scholarship Board may ask for further documentation, choose to bring in the student for an interview or ask for the opinion of an external third-party expert or both.

Once an agreement has been reached, the School Principal, as Chair of the Admissions and Scholarships Board will sign an official letter indicating the outcome of the RPL application. The Student Recruitment Team, will inform the student via email, of the decision of the Admissions and Scholarships Board providing the reason for said decision. The Customer relations management system will also be updated accordingly.

The CMBS team follows the **Admissions and Enrolment Policy and Procedure** to advise applicant on the outcome of the vetting process.

In cases where a student has submitted RPL documentation for the purpose of credit transfer or exemptions, the maturity clause (as per section 5.3.1) **does not apply** and all such applications must be sent to the Admissions and Scholarships Board for mapping and subsequent approval/rejection.

Throughout the process applicant is kept notified about the status of application via automated notifications from the customer relations management system (CRM).

5.3.1 Maturity Clause

A student is considered to be a Mature Student based on the below criteria:

Undergraduate Qualifications

A student may be admitted to an undergraduate programme of studies under the maturity clause if he/she is over 21 years of age and can demonstrate 2 years of work experience that relates to the area of study being applied for.

Postgraduate Qualifications

A student may be admitted to a postgraduate programme of studies under the maturity clause if he/she is over 25 years of age or in possession of a Level 5 qualification and can demonstrate 5 years of supervisory or managerial work experience that relates to the area of study being applied for.

5.4 Vetting Process - Credit Transfer / Exemptions

In cases where students submit an RPL application for the purpose of obtaining exemptions from or credit transfers in relation to a programme of study they are eligible for, then at least two members of the Admissions and Scholarships Board map the documentation of credited programmes of study to the learning outcomes of the sought programme of studies. Mapping is uploaded on the Admissions and Scholarships board channel for audit trail purposes.

This assessment phase of the RPL process is required to design and develop a learning plan for the students. This plan would need to be followed for students to achieve an accredited qualification with CMBS.

The learning plan will be composed of information relating to the following:

- Modules of study that need to be undertaken (identifying gaps in learning);
- Schedule of modules of study to be undertaken;
- Modules of study that candidate has been exempted from (indicating mapping of existing credited knowledge demonstrated to learning outcomes of said modules);

In the case that the Admissions and Scholarships Board requires further clarifications by the student or needs to conduct further quality checks on the submitted documentation, the Admissions and Scholarships Board reserves the right to summon the student for an interview and/or to ask for the opinion of a third-party expert, or both. This is done to ascertain that mapping and evaluation are done efficiently.

Once an agreement has been reached, the School Principal, as Chair of the Admissions and Scholarships Board will sign an official letter indicating the outcome of the RPL application. The Student Recruitment Team, will inform the student via email, of the decision of the Admissions and Scholarships Board providing the reason for said decision. The CRM will also be updated accordingly.

5.5 RPL Appeals Process

Upon concluding the RPL process and communicating the outcome to the student, the student retains the right to appeal the result. The appeal must be submitted within 5 business days of receiving the official RPL outcome. The appeal is submitted to the Student Recruitment Team, who forwards it to the School Principal in the capacity as Chair of the Admissions and Scholarships Board.

Details of this can be found in **Grievances and Appeals Policy and Procedure**.

5.6 RPL Process Duration

The RPL process takes a minimum of 10days from the start to the finalisation of said process (excluding any appeals). Students are asked to submit the required information as soon as possible to ensure a smooth process.

5.7 RPL Fees

CMBS is providing RPL process free of charge to its esteemed students.

6. Associated Policies

- CMBS Ethos
- CMBS Code of Conduct
- Code of Ethics
- Equality and Inclusivity Policy
- Admissions and Enrolment Policy and Procedure
- Grievances and Appeals Policy
- Data Privacy and Information Management Policy