

## The London Institute of Banking & Finance Code of Practice for Quality Assurance (Higher Education)

### Chapter 3: Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)

#### 3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1. This chapter of The London Institute of Banking & Finance's (LIBF) Code of Practice is concerned with the provision of academic credit to students who have previously undertaken appropriate certificated and / or experiential learning and are eligible for credits towards our awards.
- 3.1.2. Accreditation is the process of external quality review used to analyse institutions and / or programmes or modules of study. It is often applied to the accreditation of prior learning, either as part of a formal, independently assessed course of study (certificated learning) or through previous experience and practice (experiential learning).
- 3.1.3. The minimum entry requirements for each LIBF award are published in the relevant programme specification. It is recognised, however, that, in addition to meeting these entry requirements, students may also have demonstrated academic achievement of certain elements of a programme prior to starting it. Through such prior learning, and where appropriate evidence can be provided, we may grant the student credits against parts of the programme in line with our [General and Academic Regulations](#).

#### 3.2 Definitions

- 3.2.1. Such prior learning by a student may have been achieved either:
- i. as part of a formal course of education which has been independently certificated and is recognised by LIBF. The award of credit on this basis is known as Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL);
- or
- ii. through a process of experience and practice which is recognised by LIBF. The award of credit on this basis is known as Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL);
- or
- iii. by successfully completing an employer's in-house learning programme that has been formally recognised for the provision of credits by LIBF under an accreditation agreement. The award of credits on this basis is known as the accreditation of in-house corporate education programmes.

#### 3.3 Policy parameters

- 3.3.1. APL claims for academic credit will only be considered from students who are able to satisfy the general admission criteria of LIBF.

- 3.3.2. In assessing whether a student's APCL and / or APEL claim is appropriate for the award of credits, LIBF has in place procedures to establish whether the prior learning and achievement match the benchmarks set by us at a specified level, e.g. as established by our academic framework and defined by such factors as programme learning outcomes, syllabus content, notional study hours and assessment.
- 3.3.3. The act of accreditation applies only in the context of the designated LIBF award, i.e. accreditation only covers the grant of credit and does not imply, and should not be positioned or interpreted as providing, any additional form of recognition by us of the external programme concerned.
- 3.3.4. Credits gained via APL into LIBF awards may mean that students may not get certain exemptions from other institutions' higher education or professional awards that recognise our programmes.
- 3.3.5. Academic credit may be granted either in the form of specific credits against a specified module(s) and / or notional credits where learning is evidenced at the appropriate level consistent with the programme learning outcomes.

### **3.4 Policy guidelines**

- 3.4.1. The amount, level and nature of any credit that may be gained either through APCL or APEL depends upon both the nature of the programme against which the credits are being claimed, and the prior learning achievements being used as the basis of the claim, in particular their relevance and currency.
- 3.4.2. APCL and APEL claims are considered on an individual basis against established criteria but, in the interest of consistency, decisions are also informed by precedents.
- 3.4.3. When determining the award of credits, LIBF considers the following:
1. the academic level at which the prior learning took place, as informed by the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ);
  2. the degree of alignment with a module in terms of its syllabus content and learning outcomes – a minimum of 80% is normally required for the award of specific credits;
  3. the currency of the prior learning – any claim based upon technical learning completed more than seven years previously will normally need to be supported with evidence of ongoing competence;
  4. the extent to which the award of credits will impact upon the student's learning experience on our programme, to ensure completeness of content coverage and fulfilment of the programme learning outcomes;
  5. that the study hours should have equivalence to our programme, i.e. represent 10 notional hours of study per unit of academic credit.
- 3.4.4. *Exceptions:* we can, in certain circumstances, consider claims where the student's prior learning does not meet the above criteria. Examples might be where the student holds a relevant postgraduate qualification; or where the award was made more than seven years ago, or the syllabus content match is incomplete, but the student has comprehensive evidence of continuing experiential learning.

#### Specific credits

- 3.4.5. LIBF may award specific credits against individual, specified module(s) where there is appropriate and sufficient evidence that, through relevant prior learning, the student has achieved the learning outcomes of the specified module(s).

- 3.4.6. Specific credits cannot be awarded against core modules, but may be awarded against either compulsory or option modules (see also 3.1.3). Credits can only be awarded against entire modules and not against parts or fractions of modules.

#### Notional credits

- 3.4.7. LIBF may award notional credits where there is appropriate and sufficient evidence that, through relevant prior learning at an appropriate level, the student has successfully completed a course of study consistent with the overall programme learning outcomes, generic skills-based module learning outcomes and / or a significant number of the subject-related learning outcomes from various modules.
- 3.4.8. Students granted notional credits will be required to complete any specified compulsory elements of the relevant programme where accreditation of prior learning cannot be applied. Students may be restricted in their module choices to avoid content overlap.

#### Advanced standing

- 3.4.9. Where students have already achieved certain qualifications that are recognised by LIBF as being equivalent to one or more complete level(s) (specifically FHEQ Levels 4 – 5) or complete stage(s) (specifically certificates, diplomas at Level 7) of our own programme(s), we are able to allow advanced standing, whereby a student enters the programme at the next highest level (see Chapter 14: Collaborative Provision).

#### Articulation

- 3.4.10. Where students have already achieved certain qualifications that are formally recognised by LIBF as being equivalent to one of our own programme(s) (specifically FHEQ Levels 4 – 5), we may allow advanced standing by way of a formal articulation agreement with another education provider (see Chapter 14: Collaborative Provision).
- 3.4.11. The programme for which advanced standing / articulation is under consideration should provide a match of at least 75% to the relevant LIBF programme, bearing in mind that our and other institutions learning outcomes at programme level can often be of a generic nature. It is for this reason that the programme should also be appropriately mapped by its provider to relevant QAA subject benchmark statements, i.e. for Finance and / or General Business and Management, at the appropriate FHEQ level.

### **3.5 Procedures**

- 3.5.1. All claims and their supporting evidence must be provided to LIBF in English. Students are responsible for arranging any translation and supporting verification required by us.
- 3.5.2. Fraudulent claims for APL are considered as malpractice (see Chapter 9: Malpractice) and LIBF reserves the right to withdraw any award made, or credits gained, as a result of such malpractice.
- 3.5.3. The operation and impact of APEL and APCL are monitored and reviewed at regular intervals by the Learning and Teaching Committee. The Committee is annually provided with information regarding students awarded credits via APCL and / or APEL.
- 3.5.4. The operation and impact of accreditation of in-house corporate education programmes are monitored and reviewed at regular intervals by the Collaborative Provision Committee (CPC), a sub-committee of the Academic Standards and Quality Committee (ASQC). The CPC

is also responsible for reviewing proposals for new accreditation agreements with employer organisations and making recommendations, as appropriate, for approval by ASQC.

- 3.5.5. Students should contact the HE Programmes Team for guidance and information on matters relating to APL.

### **3.6 Claiming credits**

#### Claiming credits: APCL and / or APEL (including Advanced Standing)

- 3.6.1. All requests for APCL and / or APEL must be made in writing to the HE Programmes Team using the appropriate documentation and accompanied by the relevant analysis fee.
- 3.6.2. Students are required to submit a defined claim for credits, supported by a self-assessment rationale, along with a portfolio of supporting evidence.
- 3.6.3. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all required materials and supporting evidence are provided with the submitted claim. LIBF is not responsible for the absence of evidence to support any claim. Resubmission of a claim with additional supporting evidence will be considered as a new claim. Students are allowed one re-submission of their claim.
- 3.6.4. For claims based upon APCL, the portfolio of evidence will normally contain: a description of the content of the learning in the academic programme followed, a transcript of the subjects studied and a certified copy of the certificate that confirms the student's successful completion of the programme.
- 3.6.5. For claims based upon APEL, the portfolio of evidence will normally contain: a description of the content of the learning achieved, where and when it took place; a reflective piece of self-assessment by the student; and independent verification to support the student's claim.
- 3.6.6. The student's self-assessment of their claim will provide a rationale for why, how and where the supporting evidence justifies the award of the claimed credits. It is the student's responsibility to demonstrate the relevance of the claim and to provide sufficient supporting evidence.
- 3.6.7. The evidence will be considered by the designated Head of Programme or the Student Enquiries & Admissions Manager.
- 3.6.8. Decisions relating to the award of credits are not delegated beyond the Higher Education team of LIBF, although advice may be sought externally.
- 3.6.9. Decisions regarding claims for APCL and / or APEL are communicated to students in writing by the HE Programmes Team. In the case of unsuccessful claims, brief feedback is provided on why credits were not awarded.
- 3.6.10. Any offers of credit to a student on the basis of APCL and / or APEL remains valid for a period of six months. Any credits granted remain valid for the duration of the student's study period on the programme, subject to any specified time limits.
- 3.6.11. Offers must be accepted in writing by the student and confirmed by payment of the appropriate credit fee. Acceptance will be confirmed by the HE Programmes Team, and formally noted on the student's record, showing details of the nature, level and amount of credit awarded.

#### Claiming credits: Accreditation of in-house corporate education programmes

- 3.6.12. All claims for credits in this category must be made in writing to the HE Programmes Team.

- 3.6.13. These claims must be submitted in accordance with the procedures and format set down in the formal agreement between LIBF and the relevant employer organisation, together with the relevant fee.
- 3.6.14. It is the employer's and / or student's responsibility to ensure that all required materials and supporting evidence are provided for each claim. LIBF is not responsible for the absence of evidence to support any claim. Resubmission of a claim without additional supporting evidence is considered as a new claim.
- 3.6.15. Claims will be considered by Academic Assurance & Enhancement, who will be responsible for making a recommendation regarding the award of credits to the relevant Module Assessment Board.
- 3.6.16. Decisions regarding claims are communicated to students in writing by the HE Programmes Team, in the same manner as module results. In the case of unsuccessful claims, brief feedback is provided on why credits were not awarded. Students are allowed one re-submission of their claim, for which an additional fee must be paid.
- 3.6.17. Any offers of credits to a student remain valid for a period of six months. Any credits granted remain valid for the duration of the student's study period on the programme subject to any specified time limits.
- 3.6.18. Upon a successful claim, the credits will be formally noted on the student's record showing details of the nature, level and amount of credits awarded.

Updated: October 2018