



BIRMINGHAM CITY
University

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) AND TRANSFER OF INTERNAL BCU CREDITS AND AWARDS



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

This document explains what you need to know about Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and transfer of credits in the Faculty of Health, Education and Life Sciences (HELS). It covers the process of RPL towards both undergraduate and postgraduate courses. It will also explain how to transfer BCU credits you have gained from modules and interim awards during your time studying with us into a BCU award such as a Postgraduate Certificate / Diploma or Master's.

There are two mechanisms through which BCU can recognise your prior learning:

1. RPL process - for those who have studied and gained university credits at a different institution to BCU.
2. Transfer process is for those who have gained university credits studying courses at BCU.

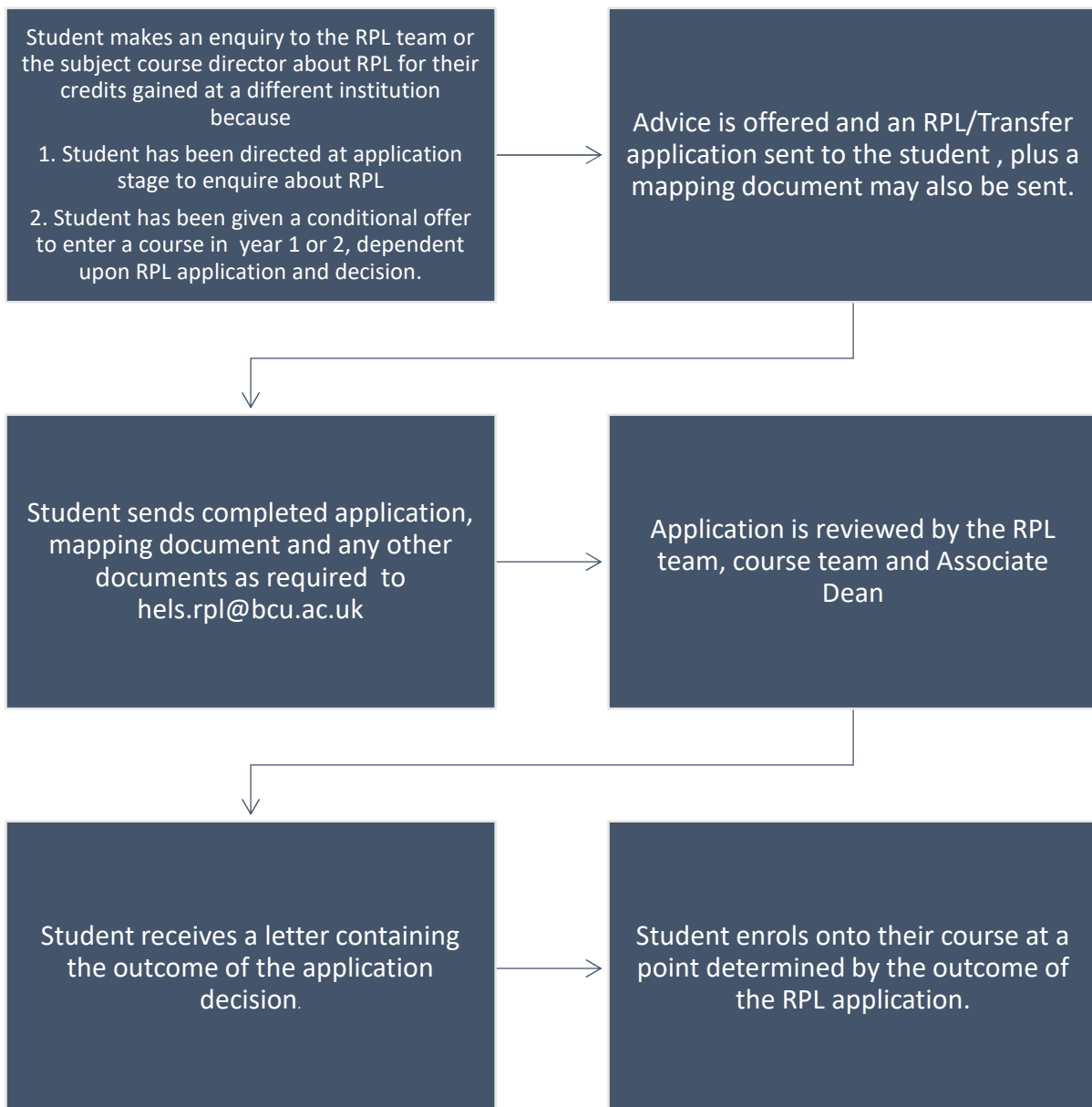


RPL:

The University understands that formal learning in higher education can be fluid and circumstances for students can change, which can ultimately alter the course of your study. In recognition of this, the University allows for previous study undertaken at a different institute to be reviewed, recognised, and, where deemed appropriate, used towards a BCU award.

The purpose of RPL therefore is the formal recognition of learning that has been undertaken elsewhere (i.e. outside of BCU) and the process by which this prior learning could be used to contribute towards the credit requirements of a Birmingham City University award. The University's Academic Regulations defines the 'Recognition of Prior Learning' as follows:

'The process through which students can be admitted with credit to a particular undergraduate or postgraduate course through the formal recognition of prior certificated learning (RPCL) or prior experiential learning (RPEL).'





The following case studies demonstrate the process of RPL for two students with different RPL circumstances, in order to help you understand how the RPL process may relate to the recognition of your previous study completed at a different institution.

CASE EXAMPLE 1:

John has successfully completed year 1 of a BSc in Mental Health Nursing at the University of Four Oaks. His family move and he wishes to be closer to them and so would like to come to BCU to finish his course. John applies to BCU to come into year 2 of our BSc Nursing in Mental Health. The course team ask John to fill in the RPL application to formally apply to have his previous study recognised and counted towards his subsequent degree at BCU. They also ask John to fill in a mapping document. John will need to prove that he has, through his previous course, gained the right amount of university credits and has completed modules that have at least an 80% match in content and learning outcomes to the BCU modules that he would have studied here in year 1. This application form and mapping document are received by the RPL team who process the application and pass it on to the course team to be reviewed. Once a decision has been made and communicated to the faculty RPL team, a confirmation of RPL will be sent to John with the course team's decision. If the RPL application has been successful John will enter his nursing course at the start of the second year and his prior learning will be recognised and will be counted towards his degree. If the RPL application is unsuccessful, there will be further discussions held with the course team about adding to the application where appropriate and a reassessment. If reassessment is not appropriate, at the course team's discretion, there may be the potential to enter the course in year 1 with some of the previous learning and credit recognised.



CASE EXAMPLE 2:

Ayesha is a qualified nurse working in a NHS trust and has undertaken one level 7 (Master's level) research module at the University of the West Midlands as a stand-alone module and has achieved 20 level 7 credits. She wishes to come onto a postgraduate certificate award at BCU and realises that the BCU award also has a 20-credit level 7 research module that is compulsory. Ayesha emails the Faculty RPL team for advice (she can also email the Professional Navigator) as she would like these 20 level 7 credits to be formally recognised towards the BCU award and so not have to undertake another research module.

The RPL advice team email Ayesha an RPL application so she can formally apply to have the 20 level 7 credits recognised towards the postgraduate certificate. In order for this to be possible, Ayesha will be required to provide her transcript and module documentation which will be passed to the course team, so the team can compare Ayesha's external research module against the BCU compulsory research module. If the course team is satisfied that there is a match of content and learning outcomes between the two research modules, this decision will be communicated to the RPL team and Ayesha will have the 20 level 7 credits counted towards the postgraduate certificate award and will be accredited with the compulsory research module. Once a decision has been made and communicated to the faculty RPL team, a confirmation of RPL will be sent to Ayesha with the course team's decision.

It is very important to note that RPL (credits from an external university) will not be approved or granted retrospectively or once a student has enrolled onto an award. RPL must be applied for and completed prior to enrolling on any BCU award.

When should an application form for RPL be submitted?

You can actually submit an RPL application at any point prior to enrolment onto your chosen course. However, as the RPL process can take time it is important to submit your RPL application well in advance of your enrolment date. RPL cannot occur after enrolment and your offer of a place on a course where there is potential for RPL will be a conditional offer based upon completion of the RPL application process and the RPL decision.



What counts as evidence?

Evidence required for RPL will normally be transcripts of achievement, module documents / descriptors and any placement documents where the student is required to prove practice/placement hours. **Transcripts alone are not enough for a successful RPL decision.**

RPL Regulation

The process of RPL is governed by the Policy and Procedure for the Recognition of Prior Learning and the University's Academic Regulations which determines how RPL is processed and also the amount of credit value that can be used as RPL towards the different awards at BCU.

Error! Hyperlink reference not valid. for information regarding RPL regulations and transferring from an undergraduate course at a different higher education institution.

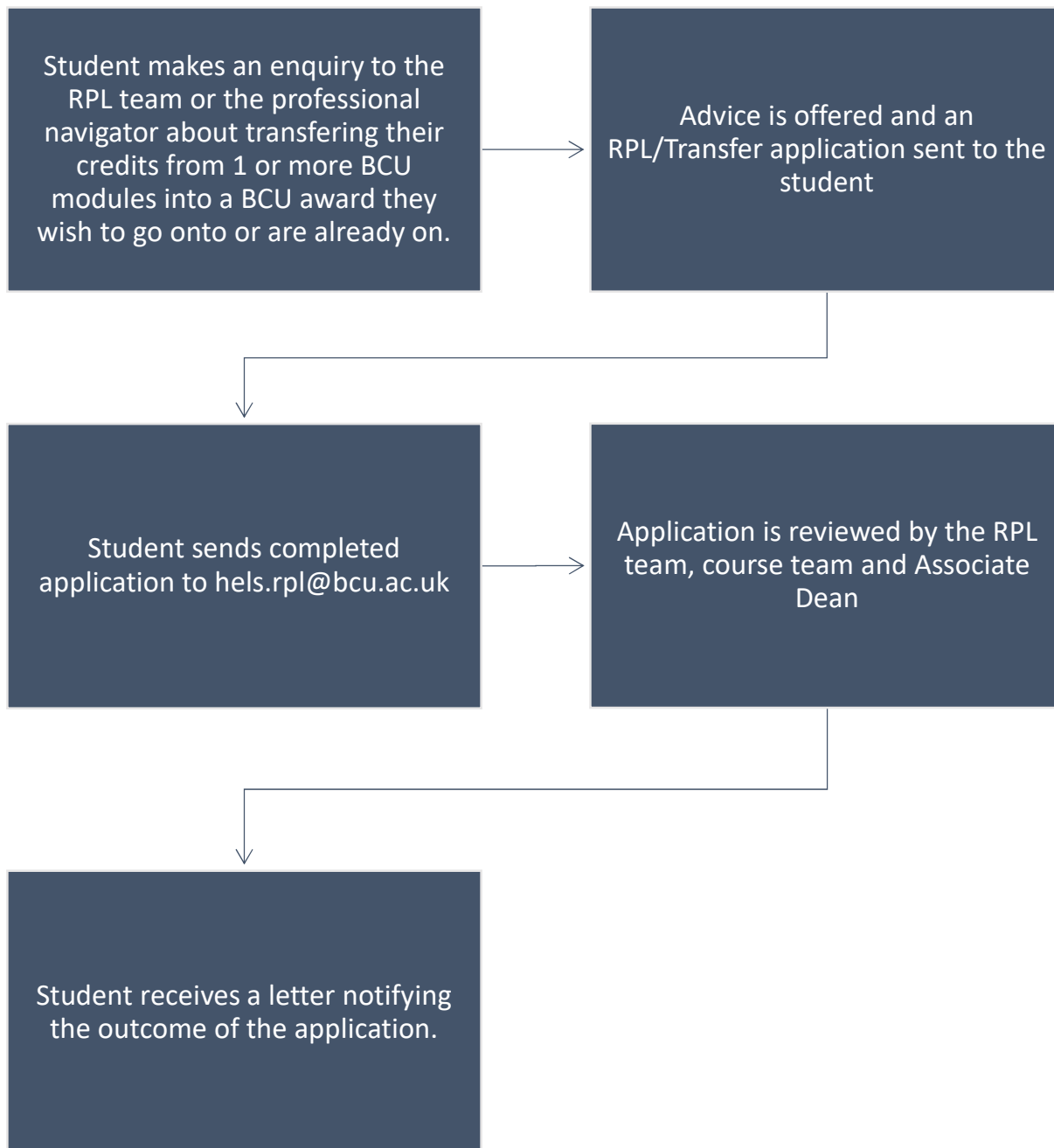


TRANSFER OF BCU CREDITS:

Transfer relates to the use of credits gained through undertaking BCU modules as stand-alone modules, or awards such as a Postgraduate Certificate / Postgraduate Diploma towards an interim or full BCU award such as a top up BSc, Postgraduate Certificate / Postgraduate Diploma or Master's.

HELS' post registration and postgraduate provision is designed to be flexible, recognising that many BCU students are working part / full time and wish to study at their own pace and according to their workplace needs.

The purpose of transfer is therefore to ensure that credits gained from BCU modules or a lower award can be used towards an appropriate BCU award. It is important to note that there are limitations on this and the course teams and professional navigator for HELS can advise.





The following case study demonstrates the transfer process.

CASE EXAMPLE:

Jane is a professional in full time employment and has undertaken two level 7 modules at BCU as stand-alone modules and has successfully achieved 40 level 7 credits. She wishes to put these credits towards a postgraduate certificate award (worth 60 credits). She emails the RPL Faculty advice team or the Professional Navigator who can offer Jane advice on an appropriate course that she can transfer these credits into. The Professional Navigator or the RPL advice team will email Jane an RPL application form so she can formally apply to transfer the 40 credits into the 60 credit Postgraduate certificate. Jane will be advised of the further module (or choice of modules) she will need to undertake and successfully pass in order to gain a postgraduate certificate in the appropriately chosen award.

FAQs

Can I undertake whatever modules I choose?

If you wish to have the module credits you have achieved counted towards an award, then the answer is NO. All courses have compulsory / core modules that have to be successfully completed as part of the award in order to achieve the learning outcomes. So it is important to gain advice from the appropriate course team or the Faculty's Professional Navigator about the combination of modules that are required for different courses and their awards and any further modules you will need to complete to achieve the award.

Do credits go out of date?

YES. Interim awards and credits all have a 'shelf-life' which is normally 5 years. If your modules are over 5 years old then the course team will need to review them to determine whether the module content remains up to date in the current climate, i.e. does it have currency? If the content of the module(s) is no longer considered valid and current it will not be possible for those credits to be recognised and transferred towards an award.

There is also a maximum period of registration for an award that also must be taken into account and course teams can advise on this matter. Maximum periods of registration are specified in the University's Academic Regulations.



Can transfer occur after enrolment?

YES. This is different from RPL and can occur after you have enrolled onto a course. However, transfer still needs to occur in a timely manner and **must occur at least two weeks prior to a progression assessment exam board (your course lead can advise on this)** as all credits have to be transferred before the relevant examination board takes place.

What is a Professional Navigator?

The Professional Navigator is a person who can help you to understand your post-registration study options, how to use existing credits, and what is the most appropriate course of continuing professional development (CPD) for you. The Professional Navigator helps prospective students negotiate their way around CPD. For advice on future study at BCU you can email: navigator@bcu.ac.uk

Where can I access advice and information on RPL and Transfer?

RPL, Transfer of internal BCU credits advice and information is offered by the HELS Academic Development Department. The Faculty RPL advisor, Dr Nicola Clarke, and RPL team members will be happy to advise on the process of transfer and RPL regulations. If you think you can apply for RPL or Transfer of BCU credits towards a particular course and wish to gain advice about this process please email: HELS.rpl@bcu.ac.uk

For advice on CPD, further study, module combinations and what BCU modules can be transferred into a BCU award please email: navigator@bcu.ac.uk

For advice on Advanced Standing and RPL regulations, please visit:

www.bcu.ac.uk/student-info/how-to-apply/advanced-entry

For information on Academic Regulations please visit:

www.bcu.ac.uk/student-info/student-contract

Where can I access the RPL and Transfer application?

For an RPL and Transfer application please email: HELS.rpl@bcu.ac.uk