

## Section 4 Recognition of prior learning policy

### 4.1 Purpose

- 4.1.1 This policy sets out the position of the University on non-standard qualifications, credit transfer and the recognition of prior learning (RPL), certificated and experiential, for admissions purposes.

### 4.2 Principles

- 4.2.1 The University is committed to removing unnecessary barriers in its admissions selection processes to prospective students currently underrepresented in higher education.
- 4.2.2 The University recognises that some prospective students may not be able to evidence that they meet the University's entry requirements through the accepted qualifications detailed in university publications, but that they are able to provide substantial and relevant alternative evidence that they have the potential to succeed on their chosen programme.

### 4.3 Scope

- 4.3.1 This policy covers non-standard school leaving qualifications and the recognition of prior learning or experience and applies to undergraduate and postgraduate admissions.
- 4.3.2 This policy applies to students enrolled on programmes for assessments delivered in whole by the University, or in whole or part by a franchise partner institution (franchise provision).
- 4.3.3 The procedure to be followed in relation to programmes delivered by a validated partner organisation (validated provision) will be set out in the programme documentation provided by the validated partner.

### 4.4 Applications with non-standard school leaving qualifications

- 4.4.1 The University welcomes applications from applicants who do not offer standard school leaving qualifications. Such applicants will normally have been out of full time education for a period of at least 2 years.
- 4.4.2 The normal requirement that a candidate matriculates (i.e., holds passes at least 2 A levels or equivalent together with GCSE grade 4 (or C in the old marking scheme) English Language or equivalent) will not normally be waived for an applicant moving directly from post-16 school or college education.
- 4.4.3 The University will admit applicants without standard qualifications whom it identifies as being capable of benefiting from the chosen programme of study. To do so the admissions officer will seek to establish the applicant holds:
- Appropriate subject knowledge or skills where relevant.
  - Intellectual capacity.
  - Ability in written and oral communication.
  - Where appropriate, numeracy skills.
  - A match between the skills and experience of the applicant and the skills profile and desirable characteristics of the programme.
- 4.4.4 Evidence may be presented by:
- Previous professional experience and/or professional qualification.
  - University alternative entry system.
  - Previous study (e.g., Open University credits, other higher education module(s) taken on a freestanding basis).
  - A portfolio to demonstrate experiential learning.
  - Success in an Access to Higher Education course.

- f) Special university admissions tests as recommended by the relevant Head of School or nominated representative.

4.4.5 Other offerings will be considered on their merits.

4.4.6 The decision to admit an applicant to a programme without conventional qualifications will be made by the relevant Head of School or nominated representative, in consultation with the Admissions Office.

## 4.5 Applications for advanced standing

4.5.1 The University operates a curriculum which is specified in terms of programme learning outcomes specified within the relevant [programme specifications](#).

4.5.2 The University welcomes applications which include requests for advanced standing, and which can be accommodated within the parameters set out by the [University Regulations](#).

4.5.3 Applicants may be eligible for consideration under the University's policies and procedures for accreditation of prior experiential learning, and credit accumulation and transfer from study at York St John University or other approved educational establishments. For programmes of study leading to a research award, this is in respect of taught components only.

4.5.4 For admission to undergraduate programmes, exemption is not normally granted from those modules which comprise the final level of an undergraduate programme of study or from modules which comprise the statutory qualifying modules for professionally registrable awards.

4.5.5 For admission to postgraduate programmes, exemption is not normally granted from those modules which comprise the dissertation or major project of the programme of study or from modules which comprise the statutory qualifying modules for professionally registrable awards.

4.5.6 Students who hold credit for modules previously studied elsewhere that meet the learning outcomes for the equivalent credit at the University will normally be exempted from the equivalent modules at the University.

4.5.7 The maximum amount of prior credit which a student may claim towards a York St John University award is as follows:

Award	Maximum prior credit or accredited prior experiential learning	Credit that must be studied on a York St John University programme
<b>Professional Doctorate / Doctor of Education</b>	90 credits at Level 8	90 credits at Level 8 Stage 1, plus Stage 2 of the programme
<b>Doctorate of Counselling Psychology</b>	180 credits at Level 8	360 credits at Level 8
<b>Master of Fine Arts (School of Arts)</b>	160 credits at Level 7	80 credits at Level 7
<b>Master's Degree</b>	120 credits	60 credits at Level 7 or above
<b>Master's Degree Occupational Therapy (Pre-registration) *</b>	60 credits	120 credits at Level 7 or above
* Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT) requirement		
<b>Postgraduate Diploma</b>	80 credits	40 credits at Level 7 or above
<b>Postgraduate Certificate</b>	40 credits	20 credits at Level 7 or above
<b>Postgraduate Certificate in Education</b>	0 credits	Full programme
<b>Integrated Master's Degree</b>	240 credits	240 credits at Level 6 and above
<b>Bachelor's Degree with Honours</b>	240 credits	120 credits at Level 6 or above

<b>Bachelor's Degree with Honours (Pre-registration Nursing) *</b>	180 credits (if not a currently registered nurse)	180 credits, including at least 60 credits at Level 5 and 120 credits at Level 6
* Nursing Midwifery Council (NMC) requirement - only registered nurses can RPL more than 50% of the programme	240 credits (if currently a registered nurse)	120 credits at Level 6 or above
<b>Ordinary Bachelor's Degree</b>	200 credits	100 credits, including at least 60 at Level 6 and 40 at Level 5
<b>Graduate Diploma</b>	60 credits	60 credits at Level 6 or above
<b>Graduate Certificate</b>	30 credits	30 credits at Level 6 or above
<b>Professional Graduate Certificate in Education</b>	0 credits	Full programme for exit award
<b>Foundation Degree</b>	120 credits	120 credits at Level 5
<b>Diploma of Higher Education</b>	120 credits	120 credits at Level 5
<b>Certificate of Higher Education</b>	60 credits	60 credits at Level 4
<b>University Diploma</b>	0 credits	Full programme
<b>University Certificate</b>	0 credits	Full programme
<b>Foundation Certificate – International</b>	0 credits	Full programme
<b>Foundation Certificate</b>	0 credits	Full programme

\* This table is provided as a guide, and some programmes with professional body requirements may have limits on the amount of credit that can be transferred into the programme. Please check the programme specification for details

- 4.5.8 The University welcomes applications based on prior certified learning or prior experiential learning.
- 4.5.9 All applications will be required to demonstrate the equivalence of experience or credit offered against which the credit will be offset. This will be in terms of satisfying the learning outcomes and the skills profile specified by the University.

## 4.6 Applications based on transfer of credit

- 4.6.1 Normally, credit imported towards the award of a qualification will have been obtained **no more than 5 years previously** at the time at which the application is made. Consideration will be given to credit which is older than 5 years if a case can be made that the subject matter of the module is still current, and the study skills associated with it are viable.
- 4.6.2 To facilitate the transfer, it may be possible to specify entry to an ad hoc variant of the programme or to specify some additional experience to ensure that learning outcomes are met.
- 4.6.3 Where a York St John University module has been taken on a freestanding basis for the purposes of demonstrating ability to study at the appropriate level, consideration will be given to the transfer of that credit towards an award at the University.
- 4.6.4 Students will need to undertake some study in all the semesters that they are enrolled for in order to satisfy programme registration and attendance requirements. Students should seek advice as to any implications for financial support they receive or for immigration visa compliance if they use credit transfer or prior learning in place of modules on the programme of study and this results in a significantly reduced workload.
- 4.6.5 Application for the transfer of credit will normally be made at the time of application to the University. The University will not normally enter into negotiation for further transfer of credit once students have started their programme of study.

## 4.7 Implications for assessment of credit transfer

- 4.7.1 While recognising imported credit, it is not the University's policy to include marks attached to such credit in degree classification. Only results obtained from York St John University will be used to calculate degree classifications. In certain cases, it may be necessary to propose variations on normal degree classification arrangements, e.g., classification on the final year of results only.
- 4.7.2 **Scheme B students only:** The imported credits can contribute credits towards progression but should not be used to offset failure in any other module. For example, if a student is permitted to import 20 credits into Level 4 of a programme of study and 20 credits can normally be condoned within the regulations, the remaining 100 credits must be passed in the case of terms specified for entry with imported credit.

## 4.8 Implications for exit awards of credit transfer

- 4.8.1 Whilst at admission, students are allowed to transfer external credit towards an award at the University, if they subsequently have their enrolment terminated or withdraw without reaching the full credit required for the intended award, they must meet the next award threshold from that which their imported credit may entitle them to receive.
- For example, if a student were to bring 60 credits towards a Master's qualification at admission from an external institution, but subsequently have their enrolment terminated or withdraw without reaching the full credit required for the intended award, they would not be eligible to receive a Postgraduate Certificate using the transferred credit, but must have studied sufficient credit at the University to receive a Postgraduate Diploma as an exit award (refer to [section 4.5.7](#) for credit limits).

## 4.9 Procedures for transfer of credit

- 4.9.1 An applicant who wishes to apply to the University for entry with advanced standing on the basis of transferring credit should contact the Admissions Office or will be referred by the Head of School or nominated representative concerned.
- 4.9.2 The applicant will be asked to supply details of the credit gained or about to be completed. This will typically be in the form of module or programme specifications and details of assessment requirements (including marking scales used at the institution at which the credit has been or will be obtained). The applicant will also be asked to provide a short explanation as to why they wish to transfer to York St John University as part of the application process, this should include detail of any past or ongoing disciplinary proceedings at their current or former institution.
- 4.9.3 The Head of School or nominated representative in consultation with admissions staff will decide whether there is sufficient match between the credit proposed for transfer and the programme element(s) from which exemption is sought.
- 4.9.4 If a sufficient match is identified, the application will go forward. For it to go forward, the following conditions must be met:
- An official transcript of results must be supplied to confirm the award of credit. For international students, a certified translation into English must also be supplied.
  - An academic reference may be required in order to support the application in some circumstances. Details of a referee will be requested at the point of application.
- 4.9.5 The 'Application for Admission with Advanced Standing via Accredited or Certificated Learning' form will be completed. This will include the following details:
- Details of the programme for which the candidate is applying.
  - Details of the programme elements from which the exemption is requested.
  - Details of the credit proposed for import together with attached evidence.
  - Details of how the learning outcomes for the University modules being exempted have been met by the imported credit.
  - Details of conditions specified for the transfer of credit.
  - Details of any ad hoc variation of the programme.
- 4.9.6 The application will be authorised by the Admissions Manager, unless a general admissions arrangement for a programme has already been approved by the Quality and Standards Committee.
- 4.9.7 If an articulation agreement has been reached with an external partner and the general admissions arrangement approved by the Quality and Standards Committee, for students to enter with advanced standing from an approved pathway at an approved partner institution, authorisation from the Admissions Manager is not required.

## 4.10 Applications based on recognised prior certificated learning

- 4.10.1 The University recognises that applicants may wish to present certificated learning and training (such as professional development awards or employment-based awards) that has not led to the award of UK Higher Education credit, but which might have been on a comparable level to a university programme of study.
- 4.10.2 The certificated learning or training must have been obtained **no more than 5 years previously** at the time at which the application is made.
- 4.10.3 Applicants seeking to enter the University offering evidence of prior certificated learning should submit all evidence and supporting material to be checked for equivalence on the [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#).
- 4.10.4 The Head of School or nominated representative will consider whether the learning evidenced and not the completion of the activity alone demonstrates sufficiently that the applicant has the knowledge, skills and experience to meet the learning outcomes of the modules to be replaced and to enable the student to successfully undertake the remaining programme of study at the University.
- 4.10.5 If this is evidenced sufficiently, the application will go forward, and the 'Application for Admission with Advanced Standing via Accredited or Certificated Learning' form will be completed.
- 4.10.6 Once completed the form requires approval from the Head of School or nominated representative.
- 4.10.7 The application will be authorised by the Admissions Manager.

## 4.11 Applications based on recognised prior experiential learning

- 4.11.1 An applicant may wish to gain credit as part of their university programme of study by recognising relevant prior learning obtained through work experience or non-certificated learning or training.
- 4.11.2 Applicants seeking to enter the University offering evidence of prior experiential learning may be directed to an appropriate portfolio development module.
- 4.11.3 The evidence should be submitted as part of a portfolio detailing non-certificated learning and experiences. All material should be submitted in English and translations must be certified, with original documents available on request. The portfolio must be matched against the learning outcomes for the modules or part of programme for which they are seeking exemption. This will be done by the Head of School or nominated representative, and the recommendation approved by the relevant School Quality Panel.
- 4.11.4 If the credit for exemption is at Level 5 for undergraduate programmes, or for postgraduate programmes, the external examiner for the programme should be consulted by the relevant Head of School or nominated representative.
- 4.11.5 The evidence produced should be comparable in scope with the assessment requirements of the module from which remission is sought, and should:
  - a) Demonstrate the match between the experience and the learning outcomes and reflect upon the experience.
  - b) Set the learning in the appropriate academic and theoretical context and demonstrate understanding.
- 4.11.6 If a sufficient match is identified, the application will go forward, and the 'Application for Admissions with Advanced Standing via Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning' form will be completed.
- 4.11.7 The application will be authorised by the Admissions Manager.
- 4.11.8 The applicant will also be required to complete the normal application process either directly to the University or through UCAS, as appropriate.
- 4.11.9 A fee is not normally charged to assess a portfolio submitted by an applicant requesting recognition for prior experiential learning.

### Degree Apprenticeships

- 4.11.10 In the case of York St John University Degree Apprenticeships and the recognition of prior experience which is to be considered as fulfilling entry criteria. The admissions processing officer, Initial Needs Assessment (INA) processing team and or the Head of School, should fully ensure that the Education and Skills Funding Agency Provider Rules are observed, specifically P24:
  - a) Identification and recognition of the individual's prior learning and experience, in the form of a skills-scan, which enables the individual to be assessed against the knowledge, skills and behaviour requirements of the relevant apprenticeship standard.

- b) If considered relevant by the admissions processing officer, INA processing team and or the Head of School, or required by the apprenticeship standard, the skills scan or INA should be supplemented with additional diagnostic testing of previous experience or the applicants' stated competences and should be collaborated by the employer of the apprentice where possible.

4.11.11 In any evaluation of prior experience and or education, it must clearly identify and document any knowledge, skills and behaviours previously gained from either:

- a) Prior education, training, or associated qualifications in a related subject sector area, including any previous apprenticeship undertaken; *or*
- b) Learning or competence gained from prior work experience, particularly where the apprentice is an existing employee, or is beginning their apprenticeship after completing another programme with a relevant work placement.

4.11.12 The results of the skills scan and any supplemental diagnostic testing must evidence that the individual requires significant new knowledge, skills and behaviours in order to be occupationally competent in their job role, and that the training required meets the funding rules relating to the minimum duration of an apprenticeship.