



Regulations for the Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) for Credit

September 2009



UNIVERSITY
of DERBY

FOREWORD

These Regulatory Procedures for the **Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) for Credit** apply to both the University's FE and HE provision. They supersede the September 2006 edition of the regulations as contained within the definitive document entitled *Regulations for Accreditation of Prior Learning for Credit*. These previous regulations are now rendered obsolete and should be withdrawn from circulation.

In revising the regulations, account has been taken of the QAA's *Guidelines on the Accreditation of Prior Learning (2004)* and the University's increased experience and maturity in applying its APL Regulatory Procedures. The revised regulations take account of the new structures within the University and this is particularly reflected in the section on administration and quality assurance. The regulations continue to seek to ensure that applicants are admitted to the highest level of award for which they are qualified and for which they wish to apply, and that they are awarded the maximum amount of relevant credit to which they are entitled by virtue of their learning achievements.

It is anticipated that these regulations will be the subject of periodic review and that this could result in amendments and/or revisions to the procedures as considered appropriate. Once they are in use, therefore, any comments and suggestions as to how they might usefully be amended would be welcomed. Feedback of this type can be submitted to Colin Fryer (c.fryer@derby.ac.uk), University Quality Manager, QED.

This revised Definitive Document entitled the **Regulations for the Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) for Credit** is divided into the following main sections:

- Part A: Introduction
- Part B: APL for Admission to the Beginning of a Programme
- Part C: APL Regulatory Procedures
- Part D: Administration
- Part E: Quality Assurance
- Part F: Glossary of Terms

The material contained within these sections REPLACES the equivalent regulations and procedures published in the **Regulations for the Recognition of Prior Learning for FE and HE Provision** (September 2006).

In brief, the significant changes are as follows:

September 2006

- APL claims for complete stage(s)/phase(s) now included within the APL process rather than being treated as admissions as in the previous regulations.
- The removal of **Credit Transfer (B)** whereby students transfer internally between University programmes which share common modules as this was not an APL process.
- Scope of the regulations strengthened to include:
 - More detailed information on entry with **advanced standing**.
 - An expanded section stating when the regulations do not apply with particular reference to **articulation agreements**.
 - Guidance on the re-use '**double counting**' of credit.
 - The removal of **block credit** to reinforce the link between module equivalence and specific credit.

- A statement that APL is not available for **Independent Studies**.
- Cessation of the role of **School APL Coordinator** to streamline the APL process.
- Revisions to the role of Programme Leader, Academic Assessor and APL Administrative Coordinator to strengthen administrative and quality assurance processes.
- Deletion of the procedure for **group approval** of direct entry using APL.
- Specific reference to **LTW** particularly with respect to the assessment of claims.
- An expanded section on determining **degree classifications** to include reference to Foundation degrees and Master's degrees.
- APL1 (a, b and c) forms superseded and replaced with a single APL Claim Form.
- Quality Assurance Section revised to reflect new University structures. APL Monitoring and Advisory Group (APL MAG) replaced by an APL Review Panel reporting annual to the University's Regulatory Frameworks Sub-Committee.

October 2009

- **Format and layout** of the definitive document has been revised so that it conforms to the 'house style' adopted for the *Quality Management Handbooks* published in September 2009.
- The role of the **Faculty/FPL APL Coordinator** (withdrawn in 2006) has been re-established to act as a focus for the procedures associated with claims for APL and act as a source of information and guidance to all aspects of APL.
- Scope of the regulations revised to include additional guidance on **articulation agreements, progression arrangements** and **direct entry** to clarify when APL is applicable **[paragraphs C2 to C4]**.
- Handbook provides greater clarity on the **level and amount of credit allowed** at each stage for the various UG and PG awards including new tables that clearly state the relationship between point of entry (prior to an APL claim) and the maximum amount of credit allowed **[paragraphs C15 to C18]**.
- Further guidance provided on the **double counting of credit** **[paragraph C8]**.
- All references to **Learning Through Work (LTW)** amended to *the Lifelong Learning Scheme*. Regulations that were specific to LTW have been deleted to accord with the recently revalidated scheme [October 2009]. This reflects the major change to the scheme in that the Lifelong Learning programme, and its modules, now have clearly defined learning outcomes as opposed to being individually negotiated as was the case in the previous scheme.
- Claims for **APEL** normally to be completed within 6 terms weeks from the point of registration (as is APCL), not 3 term weeks before the next Assessment Board as was the case previously. This revision takes account of the fact that the University now has only one assessment board **[paragraph C36]**.
- **Processing of outcomes** updated to accord with changes to University systems.
- **Payment of fees** in relation to APEL claims revised to accord with current practice i.e. a rebate on the module fee rather than an initial payment **[paragraphs D7 to D11]**.
- **Quality assurance** section revised to emphasise the importance of annual monitoring reports in evaluating the APL process. University level monitoring revised requiring an annual report to RFC prepared by the Faculty/FPL Coordinators **[Part E]**.

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Part A: Introduction

SECTION ONE: CONTEXT

- A1 **Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)** is a way of **recognising** and **valuing** the knowledge and skills that people bring with them when they embark on a programme of study. The University allows students who provide evidence of prior learning to be considered for exemptions for parts of their academic programme when they can demonstrate that their existing knowledge and skills meet some of the requirements of that programme.
- A2 APL claims may emanate from different types of learning: **formal**, **non-formal** or **informal**. These can be summarised as follows:
- **Formal learning** takes place with the context of programmes delivered by learning and training providers; is assessed and credit-rated; and leads to recognised qualifications;
 - **Non-formal learning** takes place alongside the mainstream systems of education and training. It may be assessed but does not typically lead to certification, for example, learning and training activities undertaken in the workplace, voluntary sector or trade union and through community-based learning;
 - **Informal learning** can be defined as experiential learning and takes place through life and work experience. It is often unintentional learning. The learner may not recognise 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 APL process, unless the experience takes place as part of a planned experiential or work-based learning, programme.
- A3 Whilst it is useful to differentiate between these different types of learning for the purposes of these regulations, it is likely that an individual's learning experience will have a **combination** of formal, non-formal and informal aspects. Whatever type of prior learning and experience an individual has, it is the **skills** and **knowledge** gained from that learning, and the extent to which the knowledge and skills can be applied, that is important, not the learning experience itself. The process of giving recognition is based on a comparison of these existing skills and knowledge against the requirements of the learning programme. Within this context, the University's *Regulations for the Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) for Credit* provides the opportunity for the recognition of all forms of learning.
- A4 Decisions about the type and amount of credit may be based on **certificates** the applicant has gained which demonstrate that learning has been assessed, or may take into account learning from **experience** that is considered worthy of credit. In all cases, credit is awarded for learning that can be demonstrated, not for the experience itself. The resulting credit is of **equal standing** to that awarded to students following a more traditional route to an award, for example, through taught, online or distributed learning modules.

- A5 In revising these regulations, account has been taken of the QAA's publication ***Guidelines on the Accreditation of Prior Learning (2004)*** and the University's considerable experience in applying its APL regulatory procedures. The revised regulations take account of the new structures within the University and this is particularly reflected in the section on administration and quality assurance. The regulations continue to seek to ensure that applicants are admitted to the highest level of award for which they are qualified and for which they wish to apply, and that they are awarded the maximum amount of relevant credit to which they are entitled by virtue of the learning achievement.

SECTION TWO: SCOPE

- A6 These regulatory procedures for the **Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)** apply to both the **University's FE and HE provision**. They supersede the September 2006 edition of the regulations as contained within the definitive document entitled *Regulations for the Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) for Credit*. These previous regulations are now rendered obsolete and should be withdrawn from circulation.
- A7 APL for credit can be undertaken by a wide range of individuals to assist them either to enter University or as a contribution towards their programme of study, including:
- Adults returning to education;
 - Students wishing to improve their existing qualifications;
 - Those wishing to retrain or change careers;
 - Employees who have undertaken learning or training in the workplace;
 - People who have gained a range of skills and knowledge elsewhere, for example through volunteering or activities within their community.

Further Education provision

- A8 Within the sphere of **Further Education**, students may use their prior learning for:
- Entry into vocational programmes;
 - Entry into the Modular Access Programme (MAP);
 - Entry with advanced standing to a specific point within a modularised programme;
 - Credit towards GNVQs, NVQs and other competence-based qualifications.
- A9 Whilst the procedures contained within these regulations are to be adopted as part of a **unified institutional approach** to the assessment, approval, administration and quality assurance of APL, it is recognised that awarding bodies such as OCR, City and Guilds, and Edexcel issue their own guidelines on APL in relation to their awards and quality systems. For example, the internal verification of programmes that incorporate National Standard Units (NVQs, GNVQs, Key Skills etc.), can only be assessed by suitably qualified staff acting in the capacity of Internal Verifiers/Assessors. In addition, APL Advisors are currently required to have successfully completed the D36 unit that allows them to advise applicants on how to identify prior achievements and present evidence for assessment.

- A10 These regulations apply to **all** FE qualifications offered by the University providing that they accord with the requirements of the particular awarding body. In those instances where the awarding body's requirements are different to those specified within these regulations, the requirements of the awarding body will take precedence. For example, a qualification with externally assessed modules cannot be accredited in its entirety using APL. Parts of some qualifications (for example outcomes/competences on health and safety or licence to practice) will not permit APL but will require traditional assessment. Any restrictions on APL must be explained to the claimant in the initial meetings held between staff and student.

Higher Education provision

- A11 Within **Higher Education**, prior learning may be assessed and used for:
- Claiming credit against **named modules** within a programme, and/or
 - Gaining academic credit for an **entire stage** within a programme, enabling students to enter their programme with 'advanced standing'.

SECTION THREE: AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

Aims

- A12 The aims of APL as embodied within these regulations are to:
- Widen **access** to University programmes;
 - Increase **participation** in University programmes;
 - Facilitate **flexibility** of progression routes and promote lifelong learning;
 - Recognise the **value** of prior **experiential** learning for the purpose of awarding credit;
 - Ensure **consistency** in the procedures applied to the accreditation of prior learning.

Principles

- A13 The principles underlying these regulations arise out of and are consistent with the Mission Statement and the University Admissions Policy. These principles are that:
- All **learning achievement** should be recognised, irrespective of the context in which it has taken place;
 - The University's approach to the recognition of prior learning should be **fair** and **equitable**;
 - The University should respond **positively** and **flexibly** to the learning needs of individuals;
 - All students should be given the **opportunity to achieve** to the maximum of their abilities.
 - The Faculty Quality Enhancement Committee (FQEC) or the School of Flexible and Partnership Learning (FPL) Quality Committee as appropriate, should **oversee** Faculty/FPL APL **arrangements** within the framework set out by the University. Each Faculty and FPL should

assign one or more senior members of staff with overall responsibility for APL matters.

- Where credit is being awarded, APL transactions must be endorsed by the appropriate **assessment board**. Credits awarded through APL will be recorded on the student's **transcript**.

SECTION FOUR: DEFINITIONS

A14 Over the last few years an increasing number of FE and HE institutions have engaged in various forms of APL activity. However, definitions and understanding of what constitutes APL have been localised and particularised. It is important that we establish some **shared understandings** in order to promote consistency, efficiency, effectiveness and reliability in the application of the University's APL procedures.

A15 The definition adopted in these regulations is as follows:

"The accreditation of prior learning is an all-encompassing term referring to the formal recognition, assessment and award of credit for all prior learning."

A16 This means that when an applicant can produce **evidence** of prior learning achievement that is relevant in terms of a particular programme of study, **credit** can be awarded in part fulfilment of that programme's requirements. The term 'accreditation of prior learning' is used to encapsulate the range of activity and approaches used formally to acknowledge and establish publicly that some reasonably substantial and significant element of learning has taken place.

A17 Learning may be based on either qualifications or awards that have been gained through a formal programme of assessed study, for which **certification (APCL)** has been awarded by an educational provider (HE or FE), training provider or by a professional body, or it may have been achieved by reflecting upon **experiences (APEL)** outside the formal education and training systems.

A18 **Accreditation of prior certificated learning (APCL)** is giving recognition to learning which has been formally **assessed**, and for which a **certificate** has been awarded. Such learning can be relatively straightforward to identify and recognise.

A19 **Accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL)** recognises that knowledge and skills can be developed through many types of experience, such as work and voluntary activities. APEL gives recognition for learning that has been gained from **experience**, rather than from a certificated programme of study or training. Learning from experience is generally more difficult to identify and assess. APEL is of particular value to **mature students** wishing to re-enter education or training, or to reduce the overall time of a programme of study. Its significance is growing in the institution particularly in those areas that have a work-based learning ethos, for example Foundation degrees and the Lifelong Learning Scheme. The vocational nature of these awards provides increased opportunity for students to claim credit for their experiential learning as well as learning which has already been certificated. The types of experiences through which students can demonstrate prior informal learning include:

- A particular piece of work, task or project undertaken at work, or through community or voluntary work, or through independent learning;

- The experience of doing a particular job (paid or voluntary), or performing a particular role, over a period of time;
- 'On-the-job' training, or being mentored;
- A non-credit rated educational or training course, undertaken in a community or workplace setting;
- The experience of training, teaching or mentoring others, either formally or informally.

SECTION FIVE: COMMON TERMINOLOGY

A20 To simplify references to **terminology** that has identical or similar definitions, for example, module or unit, this document adopts a **single set** of terms to represent alternative equivalent terminology in common use within the institution as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Term	Alternative Equivalent Terms
Academic Assessor	Internal Verifier
External Examiner	External Verifier
Module	Unit or Component
Module Leader	Unit Leader
Programme	Course
Programme Leader	Course Coordinator or JHS Subject Leader

A21 For example, the term programme is equivalent to course. Likewise, programme leader is equivalent to the terms course coordinator or Joint Honours subject leader. Whilst it is recognised that the individual roles listed in the table above are subtly different, reflecting their particular features and requirements, their core responsibilities are so closely aligned that for the purposes of these regulations they are deemed to have equivalence.

Part B: APL for Admission to the Beginning of a Programme

SECTION ONE: APL FOR ADMISSIONS PURPOSES

- B1 The assessment of prior learning for the purposes of **entry** to the **commencement** of a programme of study is an admissions issue, and so does not fall within the scope of these regulations. Admission requirements are set for each programme by the Faculty responsible for delivery, and the **programme specification**, approved at validation, must state the basis on which an applicant without the formal entry qualifications may demonstrate their suitability for entry to the beginning of the programme.
- B2 The assessment of prior learning is integral to admissions practice enabling candidates who do not satisfy the specified **entry requirements** to demonstrate they are capable of entering and benefiting from an HE programme. Normally, applicants seeking entry to University programmes are assessed in terms of their **prior certificated learning (APCL)** achievements as expressed in nationally recognised examinations and awards. The University also seeks to promote the assessment of **prior experiential learning (APEL)** achievement as an additional means of recognising the abilities and qualities of individuals. Such learning achievement, perhaps gained by way of paid employment, community activity or general life experience, provides a legitimate source of evidence upon which to base decisions regarding entry to University programmes of study.

SECTION TWO: EVIDENCING PRIOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING FOR ADMISSIONS

- B3 Prior experiential learning can be evidenced in many different ways. These might include an interview, the submission of a discrete piece of written work to demonstrate identifiable outcomes, or the production of documents and other evidentiary materials relating to a particular experiential activity. Non-graduate applicants seeking **entry to postgraduate** programmes might be able to draw upon evidence of **substantial experiential learning** achievement in fulfilment of admissions criteria.
- B4 In some cases experiential learning may be used to support certificated learning achievement and will be quite limited; in others it may be substantial, involving the construction of an extensive **portfolio of evidence**. This latter situation might pertain, for example, to programmes where there are stringent professional requirements for the demonstration of learning equivalence to specified levels of University study.
- B5 Programme Teams should adopt a **systematic approach** to the processes of advising applicants and assessing their prior learning for admissions, perhaps drawing upon elements of the model presented in these regulations in Part C.

- B6 Whatever the nature of an applicant's prior experiential learning achievement, it is essential that **admissions criteria** for individual programmes contain broad specifications detailing how applicants without the formal entry qualifications might demonstrate achievement, abilities, knowledge and motivation.

SECTION THREE: DECISION MAKING

- B7 The decision to make an offer to a prospective student should rest with the programme leader. Where appropriate, the programme leader may wish to consult with other programme team members and/or the Faculty/FPL APL Coordinator.
- B8 Whilst the assessment of prior learning as a basis for **admission** to the first year of a programme does not involve the APL Regulatory Procedures, in some cases what begins as the assessment of an applicant's prior learning for admissions purposes may produce evidence suggesting eligibility for **advanced standing** within a given programme. Where this occurs, the APL Regulatory Procedures should be applied in respect of the evidence, which might merit the award of credit for admission with advanced standing as covered in Part C.

Part C: APL Regulatory Procedures

SECTION ONE: SCOPE OF THE REGULATIONS

- C1 The regulations are designed to facilitate APL and to provide a University-wide system that will ensure **cross-institutional consistency** in the **award of credit**. The procedures herein focus on the identification and evidencing of prior learning for accreditation purposes. They define the processes for recognising, assessing and awarding academic credit for prior learning (**certificated** and/or **experiential**) toward identified programmes offered by the University. Admission requirements are set for each programme by the Faculty responsible for delivery, and the **programme specification**, approved at validation, must state the APL procedures to be used for those intending to enter the programme with credit (**advanced standing**).
- C2 Applicants may be admitted with credit for specific modules or stages within the programme that they wish to study having demonstrated that the relevant **module learning outcomes** have been met. Where credit is sought for an entire stage of a programme, then the applicant should demonstrate that the interim **stage learning outcomes** have also been reasonably met. The procedures apply to the accreditation of prior certificated learning (**APCL**), prior experiential learning (**APEL**), or a combination of the two, when used, in the following situations:
- **Advanced Standing** is the term used to identify individual students who enter a programme with specific credit. The credit assigned may or may not be equivalent to an entire stage(s) of a programme, and therefore advanced standing may be based on a whole stage(s) or with sufficient credit to enter a stage with some 'trailing credit'. For example, a student's approved APL claim for 120 credits at Level 4 and 30 credits at Level 5 of an honours degree provides advanced standing (with some trailing credit) to Stage 2 (Level 5) of the programme.
 - **Post-Entry** to a programme of study, with credit awarded in **partial fulfilment** of that programme's requirements. For example, a first year student realises that the learning outcomes specified in one of the Level 4 modules to be studied in the spring semester have been attained through their work-experience, and so makes a **post entry** APEL claim.
- C3 The APL regulations **do not** apply to:
- **Achievement of learning** that occurred as an intended or planned outcome of the validated programme the student is enrolled on.
 - **Admissions** for the purposes of **entry** to the commencement of a programme of study.
 - **Articulation Agreements** whereby a formal agreement is reached with another organisation to enable successful students from an identified programme to gain automatic entry with advanced standing to a University of Derby identified programme. Such **collaborative arrangements** are

with organisations whose awards **do not fall within the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)**.

If applicants with a particular qualification are to be admitted regularly with a standard amount of credit that has not been gained from a nationally recognised awarding body that falls within the FHEQ, these arrangements may be defined as articulation and as such should conform to the requirements detailed in the Quality Management Handbooks 3 and 4 published on the QED website.

- **Formal Direct Entry Admissions Arrangements** whereby applicants with a particular prior qualification are to be **admitted regularly** with a standard amount of credit to a given stage on a programme. In effect the prior certificated learning has already been awarded a notional specific credit value for advanced standing purposes in respect of the named programme. The process for determining this practice would normally be based on decisions made in validation or subsequent modification/review and will be stated in the programme specification. Students who are admitted to one of the later stages, having already completed the equivalent of the earlier stage(s) will be recorded as "exempt" from the earlier stage(s). Direct entry applies to applicants:
 - With a **University of Derby award** where the programme team have undertaken a mapping exercise to determine an appropriate match between the two programmes.
 - From **another institution** holding a **recognised national award** (e.g. Edexcel Higher Nationals) **with broadly standard curricula** (either UK based or overseas), that falls within the **FHEQ**. Programme teams are expected to have undertaken a mapping exercise to determine an appropriate match between the national award and the University of Derby programme.
 - From an **institution** which has a formal **progression agreement** with the University of Derby, which allows advanced standing from a programme which falls within the **FHEQ**, but which **do not have standardised national curricula**, for example Foundation degrees. The programme team should undertake a mapping exercise to confirm equivalence in level credit and content between the established national qualification and the relevant stages of the University awards to which advance standing will be granted. Progression agreements are discussed in more detail in the *Quality Management Handbook 3: Validation and Approval of Taught Programmes*.
- **Learning** resulting from, for example, formal teaching, a work or community-based (work or community-related) placement, group work or independent study designed as an integral part of the programme.

- C4 The use of APL for advanced standing should not be confused with the admissions regulations as set out in the **programme specification** for a named award that may allow **direct entry** to a particular stage of the award as detailed in paragraph C3. This is on the basis of a well specified qualification or suite of qualifications that are deemed to be equivalent to the outcomes of the stage either by the process of programme approval or subsequent modification/review. In this case the specified qualification(s) can be directly articulated with the UoD curriculum and the University APL procedure will **not** be applicable.

SECTION TWO: EXCEPTIONS TO THE REGULATIONS

- C5 The regulations apply to all students who are registered for an award of the University and are pursuing their programme of study, either at the University or wholly or in part, at a collaborating institution within the United Kingdom or overseas. However, there may be occasions when the regulations have to be adapted, for example, to accord with the requirements of a professional or statutory body, or the regional variations in the case of an overseas collaboration. In such circumstances, the *Programme Specification* and *Operational Manual*, if appropriate, should set out the precise nature of the APL arrangements, detailing the exceptions to the regulations and how they will be operated.

SECTION THREE: DOUBLE COUNTING OF CREDIT

- C6 **Double counting** of credit should be **avoided**. Credit is a currency for learning achievements and may be accumulated towards qualifications. There is a clear analogy with monetary currency. The certification of a qualification is analogous to purchasing a product. Just as one cannot spend the same money on two different products, a student should not be permitted to spend the same money on two different qualifications.
- C7 There are situations where **one qualification subsumes another** in which case the second qualification may be considered to incorporate the earlier qualification. It is common practice within the sector for an HNC/D or Foundation degree to count towards an honours degree to facilitate entry with advanced standing. **Articulation arrangements** or **progression agreements** may also be in place to provide automatic entry with advanced standing (see paragraph C3). These situations are normally an admissions issue.
- C8 Once credit has been granted for specific learning, the same learning cannot normally be used to gain credit towards any other University award, except for an award at a higher level and even then on one occasion only. Therefore credits may contribute towards a **higher award** but not normally for another award at the same level, unless there is a robust argument to support the application. *For example, a student may have obtained a BSc (Hons) in Construction Management but within a few years, for career purposes, wishes to obtain a BSc (Hons) in Civil Engineering for which there is no suitable graduate conversion course. In these and similar circumstances, it may be appropriate for the student to be granted APCL for the second award (subject to the maximum APL credit allowed – see Table 3) on the basis of relevant modules taken on the initial BSc (Hons) Construction Management programme. However, programme teams must guard against students collecting awards on the basis of substantially the same learning and therefore using the credit on more than one occasion.*
- C9 The risk of double counting can also occur when APL for a particular learning outcomes or competences is used to gain entry to a programme, and where the same learning outcomes are then used as the basis of a claim for credit within the new programme. Qualifications or awards used to gain direct entry (admissions) to a stage should not be used for further APL claims within the same programme, as this would constitute the double counting of credit.

SECTION FOUR: TYPE OF CREDIT

- C10 **General credit is defined** as the total amount of credit attributed to an applicant's prior learning achievement. General credit is given for evidenced learning that may or may not be within the subject area of the chosen award programme.
- C11 The regulations do not include the assessment of prior learning for general credit; it is concerned with assigning **specific credit** towards University of Derby approved awards. Thus the regulations and the procedures do not provide a mechanism for credit rating the training carried out by an external organisation if it is not possible to identify some broad equivalence at a stage or module level with existing University awards. This is justifiable as general credit rating is of questionable benefit to students undergoing higher level but non-accredited training courses because there are no guarantees about eligibility for progression onto a named award.
- C12 What this means is that not all credit may count, even if it is at the right level, because there has to be relevance towards the programme for which the claim is being made. For example, credits gained in the subject of history will have limited, if any, relevance to a physics programme.
- C13 Students may not always wish to take up or claim the maximum amount of APL that might be available to them. There is no requirement for them to do so, although it is incumbent on the APL Advisor to ensure that the student is well aware of their actions.
- C14 **Specific credit is defined** as the number of credits at specified levels that a receiving institution is prepared to accept for recognition of prior learning on a **specific programme**. Depending on the nature of the APL claim, specific credit is given when the outcomes achieved in the prior learning match either the learning outcomes of specific modules in the programme, or the level/interim stage learning outcomes as stated in the programme specification in the case of a claim for an entire stage(s). The process is illustrated in Figure 1.

PRIOR LEARNING FLOW DIAGRAM

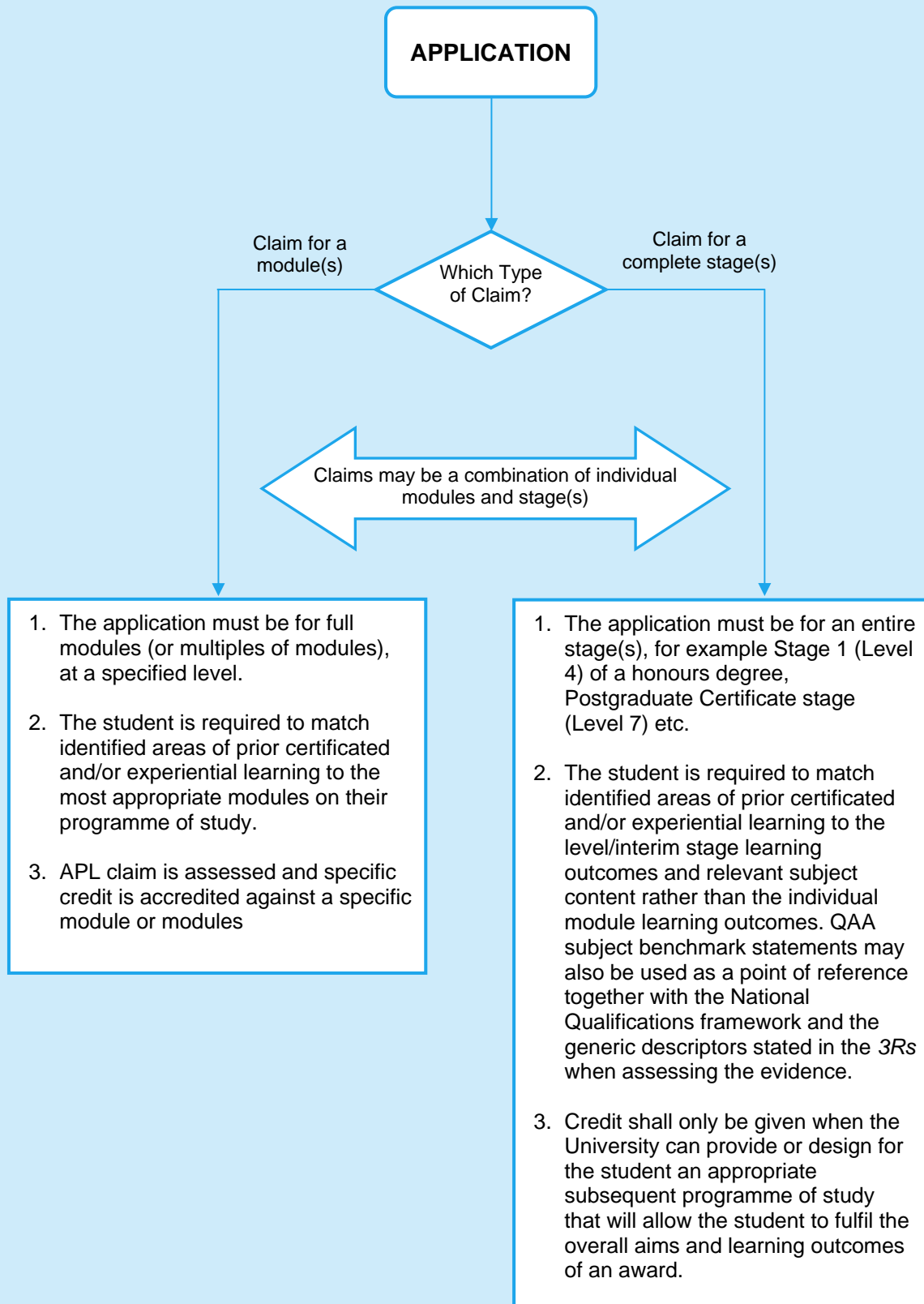


Figure 1: APL claims for modules and a complete stage(s)

SECTION FIVE: CREDIT LIMITS

- C15 Applications can be made as set out in the regulations for any level of University of Derby award subject to any limitations stated by the national awarding body (FE) or detailed in the programme specification in the case of HE programmes.
- C16 Formal **certificated** and **experiential** learning that has occurred **up to five years prior** to the start date of the award **will normally** be considered. However, when assessing the prior learning what must be borne in mind is whether that learning is still current in the context of the programme elements against which exemption is sought and this may override the five year rule. If there is any doubt a viva voce examination can help establish currency.
- C17 The smallest unit of accreditation will be a **module**. An applicant for admission with **advanced standing** on the basis of prior certificated and/or experiential learning may be admitted to any point on a programme consistent with the credit awarded for prior learning.
- C18 For a student to be eligible for a University of Derby award, the normal **maximum credit limit** that may be approved through an APL claim is as follows:

POSTGRADUATE

- **Doctor of Professional Practice** (generic DPr, DBA, EdD, DPharm, etc) – **45 credits** in respect of the **Theory for Practice** modules.
 - APL is only available for the Theory for Practice modules
 - APL is not available in respect of Work Base Professional Practice or for Independent Research into Practice
- **Master of Professional Practice** (PG Cert, PG Dip, MPr) - **45 credits** in respect of the **Research Skills** modules.
 - APL is only available for the Research Skills modules
 - APL is not available in respect of Work Based Professional Practice or for Independent Research into Practice
- Other **postgraduate awards** (PG Cert, PG Dip, MA, MEd, MSc, MBA, MRes, LLM) - **50%** [one-half] of the total credit required for successful completion of the **award for which the student is registered**.
 - APL is only available for the taught modules
 - APL is not available in respect of **Work Based Professional Practice** or for **Independent Scholarship**
 - No APL is permitted at Master's level where the whole of the final stage must be studied with the University of Derby.
 - For students entering stage 1 of a programme, the normal maximum credit limit is 30 level 7 credits if the student is registered for a PgCert, 60 level 7 credits if registered for a PgDip and 90 level 7 credits if registered for a Master's degree. Students who are admitted with a certificated PgDip from another University are required to take the final master's stage at Derby (60 level 7 credits).
 - Table 2 indicates the **normal maximum credit limit** that may be approved through an APL claim for the various combinations of point of entry (via admissions) and the award for which the student is registered. For example, a student is registered for a Master's degree and is granted direct entry to stage 2 (PgDip) of the programme based on admission criteria. From the table below, the maximum credit limit that may be approved through an APL claim is therefore 60 level 7 credits i.e. 50% of the total credits for stages 2 and 3,

whilst taking into account that no APL is permitted at the Master's level, in which case the 60 credits could only be allocated from the PgDip stage.

		Maximum credit permitted through APL		
Final and interim awards	Master's	90 credits	60 credits	No APL permitted
	PG Dip	60 credits	30 credits	Admission to the programme with formal direct entry
	PG Cert	30 credits		
		Stage 1 PgCert	Stage 2 PgDip	Stage 3 Master's
		Initial point of entry (admissions) <i>prior to an APL claim</i>		

Table 2: Maximum Credit Limits (Postgraduate)

- Where a student is admitted to a programme with advanced standing for previous certificated (APCL) or experiential learning (APEL), and the credit approved exceeds the maximum permitted for an interim award, as opposed to the award for which the student is registered, then that student will not be eligible for an interim award. For example, a student registered for an MSc makes an APL claim for 75 credits at level 7 for four standard modules delivered at the PgCert stage and one standard module on the PgDip. The claim is approved with the proviso that the student will not be eligible for the interim PgCert or PgDip awards should they fail to complete the Master's degree, as the maximum credit limit (see Table 2) for the two stage awards has been exceeded.

UNDERGRADUATE

- Undergraduate awards** (e.g. BA, BSc, BEd, BEng, FdA, FdSc, HND, Cert HE, Dip HE) – **50%** [one-half] of the total credit required (commencing from the point of entry) for successful completion of the interim or final award.
 - APL is not available in respect of **Independent Studies** when it is a **core module**.
 - For students entering stage 1 of a programme, the **normal maximum credit limit** permitted through APL for a student to be eligible for an interim or final award is:
 - CertHE - 60 credits at level 4.
 - DipHE, Fd or HND – 120 credits in total at levels 4 and 5, with a maximum of 60 level 5 credits.
 - BA, BSc, BEd or BEng – 180 credits in total at levels 4, 5 and 6, with a maximum of 60 level 6 credits.
 - Table 3 indicates the **normal maximum credit limit** that may be approved through an APL claim for the various combinations of point of entry (via admissions) and exit award. For example, a student wishes to join a BA programme with advanced standing and makes an APL claim for the maximum 50% of the award (180 credits). Having examined the applicant's prior certificated learning, the APL assessor approves the claim for 120 credits at level 4 and 60 credits at level 5 so that the applicant enters stage two of the programme with advanced standing. N.B. Should the student fail to achieve

the honours award, they would not be eligible for the interim DipHE award as approved APL credit exceeds the maximum permitted for that award.

		Maximum credit permitted through APL		
Final and interim awards	BA, BSc, BEd or BEng	180 total credits at L4, L5 and L6 and not exceeding 60 credits at L6	120 total credits at L5 and L6 and not exceeding 60 credits at L6	60 credits at level 6
	DipHE, FdA, FdSc, HND	120 total credits at L4 and L5 and not exceeding 60 credits at L5	60 credits at level 5	Admission to the programme with formal direct entry
	CertHE	60 credits at level 4		
		Stage 1 CertHE	Stage 2 DipHE, Fd, HND	Stage 3 BA, BSc, BEd
		Initial point of entry (admissions) prior to an APL claim		

Table 3: Maximum Credit Limits (Undergraduate)

- If after the approval of an APL claim, the balance of study for an existing **full-time** student is less than 90 credits, their mode of study will, temporarily, be re-classified as part-time until they progress to the next stage of the programme and register for 90 credits or more. The only exception to this is where a full-time student is on the final stage of a programme whereby their mode of study will be permanently part-time. In such instances, the University will notify the funding body of any changes to the student's mode of study whether this is part-time or full-time. For more information please contact the *Student Records and Fees Unit* at the Kedleston Road campus.
- In exceptional cases APL claims exceeding the maximum credit limits in Table 3 may be permitted. For example, an applicant holds an HND in a cognate subject to that of their intended programme of study (e.g. BSc) and makes an APL claim for entry with advanced standing. The HND does not permit direct entry to the programme at the final stage as it does not form part of the admissions criteria as detailed in the programme specification. Having undertaken a mapping exercise, the APL assessor decides that the programme learning outcomes of the HND are so closely aligned with the first two stage of the honours degree as to approve the APL claim and allow the applicant to enter the final stage of the programme with advanced standing.
- Where a student is admitted to a programme with advanced standing for previous certificated (APCL) or experiential learning (APEL), and the credit approved exceeds the maximum permitted for an interim award, as opposed to the award for which the student is registered, then that student will not be eligible for an interim award. For example, a student registered for an honours degree makes an APL claim for 150 credits (i.e. 120 credits at level 4 and 30 credits at level 5). The claim is approved with student entering stage 2 of the programme with advanced standing. However, the student will not be eligible for either the interim CertHE or DipHE awards should they fail to complete the honours degree, as the maximum credit limit (see Table 3) for each interim award has been exceeded.

PROGRAMMES WITH NO STAGE AWARDS

- For example, OCN, NVQ, GNVQ, Key Skills Awards, HNC) - **50%** [one-half] (or less if specified by the National Awarding Body), of the total credit required for successful completion of the programme as a whole.

SECTION SIX: CLAIMS FOR APCL OR APEL

Introduction

- C19 An individual APL claim has five distinct stages. To ensure consistency, and to enable ongoing tracking of claims, it is essential that all APL claims progress through each of the five stages. However, the process has been organised so that straightforward cases will be able to progress fairly rapidly between stages. The five stages (see Figure 2) are:
- Stage 1 - Dealing with initial enquiries
 - Stage 2 - Giving detailed advice
 - Stage 3 - Making a formal application
 - Stage 4 - Assessing the claim
 - Stage 5 - Processing outcomes
- C20 For Stages 1, 3 and 5 the details of what happens, how it happens and who holds what responsibilities are identical for both APCL and APEL claims. There are some differences between APCL and APEL claims at Stages 2 and 4. This reflects the fact that claims involving APEL are likely to be more complex, requiring
- more detailed consideration of how best to evidence experiential learning;
 - more detailed consideration of how best to assess experiential learning;
 - more in-depth advice, specifically on portfolio construction;
 - involvement of a second assessor in making a decision about the claim.

Stage 1 - Dealing with initial enquiries for APCL or APEL

- C21 The applicant makes the initial APL enquiry, seeking general background information about APCL or APEL from one or more of the following appropriately trained and experienced members of staff eligible to deal with APL claims:
- Programme Leader
 - Module Leader
 - Faculty/FPL APL Coordinator
 - Admissions Tutor
 - JHS Academic Counsellor
- C22 If the applicant expresses a desire to progress the APL claim, the member of staff informs the applicant that APL information can be obtained from the University's Web site (www.derby.ac.uk/apl). This information includes guidance documentation about completing an APL claim and information on fees.

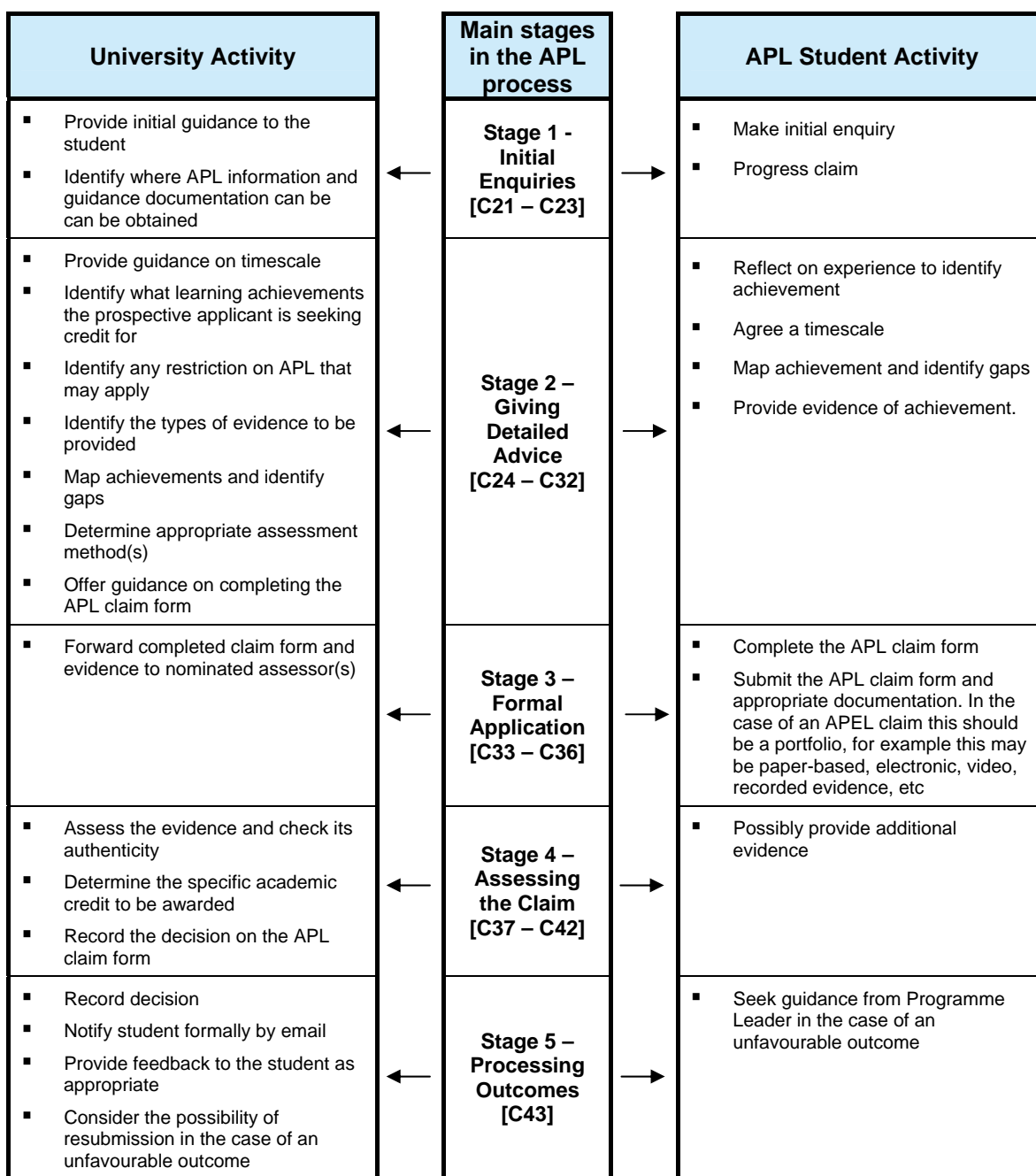


Figure 2: The Main Stages in the APL Process

C23 APL applications based on either certificated or experiential learning are submitted on the University wide standard APL claim form (see Appendix I). The standard claim form has a range of purposes:

- It provides the formal record of the decision made and will be held on record in the Student Records and Fees Unit.
- It initiates a letter informing students of the decision made following approval of the claim.
- Is used to update the Student Records System (Peoplesoft).
- Forms part of the relevant evidence which is retained for a sufficient time to allow scrutiny by external examiner(s).
- Provides evidence of good practice on a sample basis to external auditors and/or assessors.

Stage 2 - Giving Detailed Advice

- C24 The degree of advice and guidance required by APL applicants will vary from case to case. As a general guide, it is anticipated that the support needs of applicants for APCL only could be met in a single tutorial session with an appropriate academic member of staff, though in more complex cases a second session may be necessary. For claims involving APEL, a maximum of three tutorials between applicant and advisor would be a reasonable expectation.

APCL Claims

- C25 Giving detailed advice can be undertaken by any appropriately trained and experienced member of academic staff* eligible to deal with initial enquiries for APCL, though in more complex cases it may need to be the responsibility of the relevant Programme Leader* and/or the Faculty/FPL APL Coordinator*. The designated advisor:
- Identifies what certificated learning achievements the prospective applicant is seeking credit for, and within which named programme.
 - Discusses with the applicant the types of evidence that will need to be provided, e.g. certificates, transcripts, references
 - Offers guidance on completing and submitting the formal application for APCL.

APEL Claims

- C26 Giving detailed advice will be the responsibility of the relevant Programme Leader* or their nominated representative*, consulting as appropriate with the Faculty/FPL APL Coordinator and, where necessary, other academic colleagues.
- C27 The designated advisor:
- Identifies what learning achievements the prospective applicant is seeking credit for, and within which named programme.
 - Discusses with the applicant how experiential learning might most appropriately be evidenced and where applicable the types of evidence needed to substantiate the learning acquired.
 - Encourages the applicant to **reflect and self-evaluate** on the prior experience.
 - In consultation with the Faculty/FPL APL Coordinator determines the appropriate method(s) to be utilised to assess the applicant's experiential learning.
 - Offers guidance on completing and submitting the formal application for APEL, or where applicable a combination of APEL and APCL.
- C28 The applicant:
- Writes a **reflective and analytical account of their learning** in order to identify knowledge gained and skills and competencies acquired in accordance with the stated module learning outcomes and/or level/stage learning outcomes.
 - Presents corroborating evidence to substantiate their claim.
 - Revises their **portfolio**, as required, on advice of the Programme Leader.
 - Informs the Programme Leader of any difficulties in meeting deadlines as soon as possible.

*In the case of programmes incorporating National Standard Units (NVQs, GNVQs, Key Skills, etc), the APL Advisor and Assessor must be suitably qualified.

- C29 Evidence of prior experiential learning achievement is frequently drawn from a combination of direct evidence (reports, drawings, presentations etc.) and indirect evidence (testimonials, witness statements etc.) Indirect evidence is important for verification purposes, but cannot on its own be enough. Similarly, a verbal or written list of activities undertaken by the applicant will not suffice. The applicant must provide concrete evidence of learning achievements which is demonstrably their own.
- C30 Applicants need to carefully consider how to present their evidence of prior learning achievements. While there is no set format for this, it is suggested that the completed **portfolio** includes the following elements:
- A **contents** list.
 - A completed **APL claim form**
 - A statement of **authenticity**.
 - A statement such as a brief *Curriculum vitae* or **autobiography** to put the claim in context.
 - A **reflective report** demonstrating how, through their analytical/reflective commentary, their prior experiences have resulted in learning, and how this maps to the appropriate learning outcomes of the proposed programme modules/levels/stages as appropriate.
 - An **appendix** comprising appropriate documentary evidence to support the learning claimed.
- C31 In identifying appropriate evidence, the applicant should be advised to bear the following points in mind:
- Evidence will largely consist of the reflective report itself. For example, if the reflective report centres on some activity in the work place, the ability to reflect on and evaluate learning from these experiences will be evidenced by the text itself, with documentary evidence being confined to, say, confirmation that the activity took place and the part the applicant played in it.
 - A single piece of evidence may be relevant to more than one learning outcome. A comprehensive report, for example, may provide a major source of evidence for their claim and be relevant to a number of learning outcomes.
 - They should be selective about their documentary evidence selecting concise clear examples.
 - Not to include huge amounts of evidence which the assessors will have to sift through to find relevance to the learning.
 - Examples of documentary evidence might include; witness statements from employers/customers/colleagues, supporting letters from managers, job performance reviews, examples of their own work.
 - Whenever possible the submission should include some third party evidence to corroborate their learning.
- C32 The APL advisory tutorial process is important in allowing for discussion of the most appropriate means of presenting evidence in each individual case. APL Advisors may wish to guide applicants to consider using level indicators, for example, those published by the QAA and the Ufl, when collating and mapping their evidence, so as to provide an indication of the relative academic demand of a stage in terms of the development of understanding and generic skills.

Stage 3 - Making a Formal Application for APCL or APEL

- C33 The applicant is responsible for completing the APL claim form and submitting it together with evidence to the relevant Programme Leader. In the case of APEL the claim form should be accompanied with a **portfolio**.
- C34 Credit for prior learning can only be awarded in respect of **whole modules**, entire stage(s) of a programme or a combination of the two. The latter allows the student to enter a stage with some 'trailing credit'.
- C35 For claims made for **APCL only** it is expected that applications should be made at the time a student is registered on a programme. This is particularly likely to be so in the case of full-time HEFCE funded programmes. For claims made after the student has registered, it is expected that the applicant should normally submit the claim within **6 term weeks** from the point of registration.
- C36 For claims made for **APEL only** or in combination with APCL it is expected that the lead in time will be longer to allow the applicant to prepare the portfolio of evidence. In such cases, the applicant may be advised to enrol on those modules for which an APL claim is being made whilst awaiting the outcome of the assessment of evidence. For claims made after the student has registered, it is expected that the applicant should normally submit the claim within **6 term weeks** from the point of registration.

Stage 4 - Assessing the Claim

- C37 Assessing APL claims is the sole prerogative of academic members of staff^{*}. These assessor(s) will have subject expertise relevant to the specific credit claimed and in the case of HE will be eligible to be members of the Assessment Board involved.
- C38 The process of assessing prior learning is subject to the same principles of academic judgement as govern all University assessments. Evidence presented in support of an APL claim must satisfy the criteria of:
- **Validity** - it must be appropriate in terms of level and relevance for the purpose of the particular claim
 - **sufficiency** - it must be enough to satisfy the learning outcomes of the module(s) claimed
 - **currency** - it must represent the applicant's present knowledge and abilities
 - **authenticity** - it must be indicative of the applicant's own learning achievements
- C39 When assessing a claim for advanced standing based upon **module equivalences**, the claimant's previous certificated and experiential learning should be mapped directly to the learning outcomes of individual modules that comprise the programme. The extent to which APL applicants must evidence all the learning outcomes of a module is a matter for academic judgement. It would be inequitable to expect significantly higher levels of achievement for APL claimants than the threshold for students enrolled upon the equivalent taught programme. However, in some subject areas particularly where issues of competence arise, it may be justifiable to expect evidence of achievement of all the learning outcomes.

^{*}In the case of programmes incorporating National Standard Units (NVQs, GNVQs, Key Skills, etc), the APL Advisor and Assessor must be suitably qualified.

- C40 When assessing a claim for advanced standing based on a **whole stage(s)** of a programme, the claimant's previous certificated and experiential learning should be mapped directly to the interim stage learning outcomes as stated in the programme handbook/specification. QAA subject benchmark statements may also be used as a point of reference together with the National Qualifications framework and the generic level descriptors stated in the *3Rs* when assessing the evidence.

APCL Claims

- C41 The relevant Programme Leader* either acts as the assessor, or if it is considered more appropriate, nominates an academic colleague* (e.g. module leader) to undertake the assessment. The assessor will:
- Determine the specific academic credit to be approved in respect of a named programme within **3 term weeks** of the submission being made;
 - Record the decision on the APL claim form, signing and dating it;
 - Return the application form to the Programme Leader (if not the assessor) for authorisation and submission to the APL Administrative Coordinator (in the case of HE awards).
 - For FE awards, APL claims must also be internally verified in accordance with the University's procedures.

APEL Claims

- C42 The relevant Programme Leader* **together** with a nominated academic assessor*, not previously involved in the application, and in consultation with the Faculty/FPL APL Coordinator will:
- Annotate the portfolio, particularly where the evidence is rather weak or perhaps missing, being very careful to clearly show any shortfall and suggest ways in which it might be remedied;
 - Determine the specific academic credit to be awarded in respect of a named programme within **3 term weeks** of the submission being made;
 - Record this decision on the APL claim form, signing and dating it;
 - Complete the assessment section stating both the decision reached and the basis of that decision;
 - Sign the APL claim form and forward it to the APL Administrative Coordinator (in the case of HE awards);
 - Retain the evidence so that it is made available to the External Examiner prior to the next available Assessment Board (in the case of HE awards).
 - For FE awards, APL claims must also be internally verified in accordance with the University's procedures.

Stage 5 - Processing Outcomes

- C43 The APL Administrative Coordinator will (for **all** HE awards):
- Verify that the decision has been recorded appropriately, and is consistent with the APL Regulatory Procedures, referring the claim back, in the first instance, to the Programme Leader or Faculty/FPL APL Coordinator in the case of any discrepancies;

*In the case of programmes incorporating National Standard Units (NVQs, GNVQs, Key Skills, etc), the APL Advisor and Assessor must be suitably qualified.

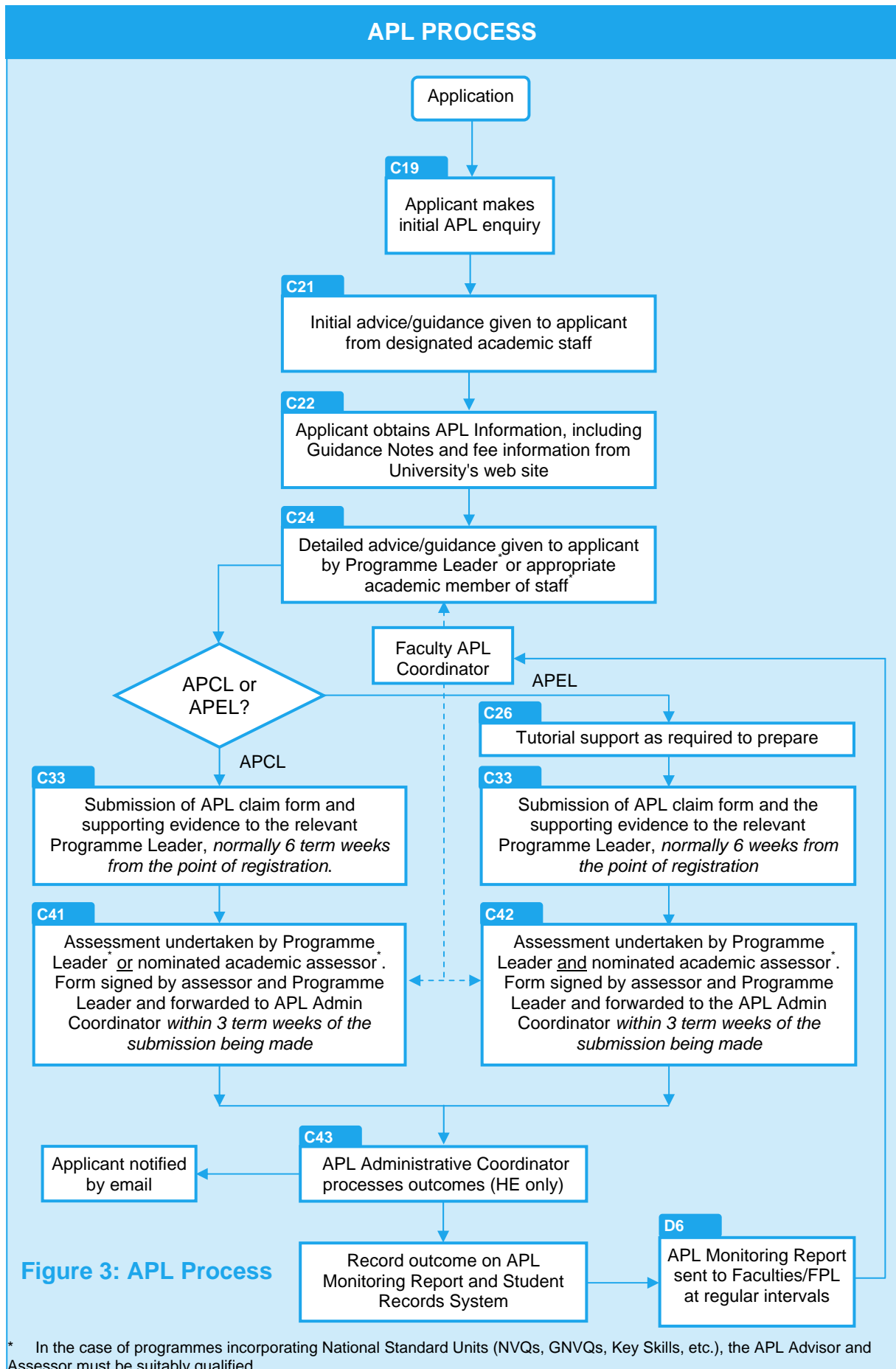
- Advise the applicant formally by email setting out the outcomes of their APL claim within two working weeks of the decision being taken.;
- Record the decision in the APL Monitoring Report;
- Input all successful claims for APL on the University Student Records System (Peoplesoft). Credit assigned upon the basis of module equivalences will be represented by the appropriate module(s) together with an indication that credit has been assigned through APL. This manner of recording will enable APL claims to be reported to Assessment Boards.

SECTION SEVEN: RULES FOR DETERMINING DEGREE CLASSIFICATIONS

- C44 **Foundation degrees** may be awarded with distinction, merit or pass. The classification of the award is based on the average of all graded credits (up to a maximum of 120) achieved at Level 5. Where APL applies to modules at Level 5, reference should be made to the rules for determining the classification detailed in the *3Rs*.
- C45 **Honours classification** following entry with advanced standing is determined using the rules detailed in the *3Rs*.
- C46 **Master's degrees** may be awarded with distinction or merit. In the case of students who joined the programme with APL reference should be made to the rules for determining the classification detailed in the *3Rs*.

SECTION EIGHT: POST APL GUIDANCE

- C49 It is anticipated that the ready availability of guidance notes, combined with appropriate levels of staff support, will ensure that most applicants who proceed to make a formal claim for APL do so with some reasonable expectation of a successful outcome. Nevertheless, there will inevitably be a small number of cases where the assessment decision is unfavourable to the applicant. In these circumstances, post APL guidance will be available, on request, from the relevant Programme Leader or Faculty/FPL APL Coordinator, who will
- Explain to the applicant the reason(s) for the assessment decision;
 - Review the applicant's claim in terms of the evidentiary requirements for validity, currency, sufficiency and authenticity;
 - Consider with the applicant the possibility of resubmission and, where appropriate, offer advice and guidance on improving the claim;
 - Offer the applicant referral for more general academic guidance where resubmission seems advisable;
 - In situations where the applicant is still not satisfied with the outcome, advise on the Appeals Procedure as detailed in the University's academic regulations (*3Rs*).



Part D: Administration

SECTION ONE: SCOPE

- D1 **The following processes apply to the HE provision only.** For **FE awards**, completed claims together with supporting evidence are to be retained by the Programme Leader. The University's internal verification/standardisation processes apply to ensure that successful claims are recorded, are externally verified, and form a part of the evidence base that is used to apply for certificates from the awarding body. It is essential to treat evidence of successful APL claims in the same way as traditional evidence for the purposes of assessment and student achievement.

SECTION TWO: APL CLAIM FORM AND APL MONITORING REPORT

- D2 A copy of the APL claim form is included in this Handbook as Appendix I. The APL claim form may be obtained from the University's web site (www.derby.ac.uk/apl). The APL Monitoring Report is produced by the APL Administrative Coordinator and is generated electronically from student data stored on the Student Records System (Peoplesoft). The APL Monitoring Report is used to regularly update Faculties/FPL on APL activity in HE provision by providing them with an electronic copy of the report at regular intervals.

SECTION THREE: RECORDING

Student Records and Transcripts

- D3 When an APL claim has been assessed and approved, and the applicant notified by email of the decision, the APL Administrative Coordinator will ensure that the finalised APL claim form are placed on file. Where credit has been awarded, this will be entered on the Student Records System (Peoplesoft) in one of two ways by being:
- Attached to one or more specific modules within a named programme;
 - Attached to a designated APL module code in the case of credit awarded for a complete stage(s).
- D4 Entry onto the Student Records System (Epsom) ensures that credits gained through APL, as well as those achieved through University study, are presented to Assessment Boards to enable the processing and ratification of results to take place.
- D5 Transcripts are provided on completion for all students that will include all credit awarded through APL for both individual modules and complete stage(s).

Recording for Monitoring Purposes

- D6 The APL Monitoring Report is the starting point for data collection for monitoring purposes. The APL Administrative Coordinator is responsible for updating the APL Monitoring Report and ensuring that Faculties/FPL receive copies of the report on a regular basis. Faculties/FPL will ensure that the report is circulated to key staff with responsibility for monitoring APL activity.

SECTION FOUR: FEES

- D7 The fee (if any) that may be charged for an APL claim will depend upon the circumstances in which the claim is being made.
- D8 Fees **will not** be charged where:
- The APEL process has been used for admissions purposes. Charging a fee for APEL in this circumstance could be regarded as providing a barrier to entry and contrary to the University's participation strategy;
 - All applications for APCL, even when in combination with APEL claims;
 - Applications involving APEL from:
 - **Full-time** home and EU undergraduate students undertaking HND or degree programmes, or the PGCE.
 - **Part-time** and **full-time** students in Further Education
- D9 Fees **will be** charged in the case of applications involving APEL from self-funding and employer sponsored:
- **Full-time** undergraduate international students;
 - **Part-time** undergraduate students;
 - Students on **postgraduate** (including research) and professional programmes.
- D10 Where fees are incurred:
- The applicant will **initially enrol** on each module for which an APEL claim is being made and will be charged the appropriate module fee as identified in the University Fee Booklet.
 - For each module, where the specific credit attached to that module **is approved** through an APEL claim, the applicant will be refunded **70%** of the fee applicable to that module; the remaining 30% of the module fee covers the administration costs associated with the APEL claim.
 - For each module, where the specific credit attached to that module **is not approved** through an APEL claim, the applicant will be deemed to be enrolled on that module. Should the student request a transfer to another module and this is permitted by the University, the student will be refunded **70%** of the fee applicable to that module for which the APEL claim was not approved; the remaining 30% of the module fee covers the administration costs associated with the APEL claim. In those instances where a student transfers to another module, the cost of that module will be that stipulated in the University Fee Booklet.
- D11 Fee waivers may be available as identified in the University Fee Booklet.

Part E: Quality Assurance

SECTION ONE: PRINCIPLES AND AIMS

- E1 The quality assurance mechanisms underpinning the APL Regulatory Procedures are grounded in the institutional quality control and assurance procedures detailed in the *Rights, Responsibilities and Regulations* document and the *Quality Management Handbooks*.
- E2 A number of underlying principles are delineated, suggesting that the University's quality assurance arrangements involve
- All staff holding professional responsibility for the quality of academic work, with some also holding managerial accountability.
 - Significant devolution of authority to Faculties/FPL on the question of academic quality assurance, but with central audit and oversight.
 - Concern with both outcomes (as evidenced by the standard of academic activity and student attainment) and the processes (meaning the quality of the processes which produce outcomes).
- E3 Building on these principles, the quality assurance mechanisms attached to the APL Regulatory Procedures seek to
- Promote a culture of continuous improvement.
 - Interface with programme, Faculty/FPL and University systems.
 - Ensure that quality assurance is a common endeavour involving those with professional responsibilities and those with managerial accountability.
 - Ensure that the roles of various key personnel in the quality assurance process are clear and complementary.
 - Address issues of process (how the regulatory procedures are operating) as well as outcome (the experiences of applicants and maintenance of academic standards).

SECTION TWO: PROGRAMME LEVEL

- E4 The operational functions of the APL Regulatory Procedures are the particular responsibility of Programme Leaders. Programme teams hold a more general professional responsibility for the maintenance of academic standards.
- E5 **Programme Leaders** will:
- For HE awards receive copies of their respective Faculty's/FPL's APL Monitoring Report at least once per semester.
 - Be responsible for monitoring APL activity routinely and discuss any programme specific issues at Programme Committee/Student Council meetings.
 - Inform the Faculty/FPL APL Coordinator and Faculty/FPL Quality Manager of any APL related issues or concerns which may need to be raised and addressed on a Faculty/FPL or University wide basis

- Comment on the volume and nature of APL activity in **Annual Monitoring Programme Reports/Course Reviews** taking into account issues raised in Collaborative Reports as appropriate and any comments made by the External Examiner(s). As well as evaluating staff reflections on the APL process, the programme team is expected to collect, consider and act upon feedback from applicants who have made a claim for advanced standing. The comments from external examiners (if any) should be evaluated within the annual monitoring report.
- E6 Prior to the relevant Assessment Board or External Verification Visit, the nominated **External Examiner(s)** should have access to:
- The most recent APL Monitoring Report for the relevant programme.
 - A representative sample of APEL decisions together with the evidentiary material for those applicants on the named programme.
- E7 The External Examiner(s) will not have the authority to change individual decisions regarding APL claims, but may wish to comment on matters of policy or procedure, or raise particular issues of concern, in the Examiner's report. Procedures for responding to issues identified in this way will be those normally applied to any concerns highlighted in External Examiner reports.
- E8 Formally, the decision to admit a student with advanced standing would not be ratified until the meeting of the Assessment Board but provide that approved procedures have been followed, the Board should not overturn the provisional decision.

SECTION THREE: SCHOOL/FPL LEVEL

- E9 School/FPL Quality Committees are responsible for monitoring the quality of work within the Faculty/FPL, and for promoting the continuous process of quality enhancement. The annual monitoring **School/Scheme Reports** are expected to comment on:
- The level and nature of APL activity with the School/Scheme (including that associated with collaborative arrangements and distributed learning modes of delivery as appropriate).
 - Any operational issues that have arisen.
 - Common themes which occur across several programme reports.
 - Issues or concerns with cross-institutional implications
 - Future development needs.

SECTION FOUR: UNIVERSITY LEVEL

- E10 Although decisions about specific credit reside properly within academic subject areas, there is the potential for substantial differences in the way similar qualifications are rated in different parts of the University. Hence there is the potential for a lack of equity for students across the University. Thus in addition to programme and School/Scheme based mechanisms for review the University's Regulatory Frameworks Committee shall commission an annual '**APL Monitoring Report**' prepared by the Faculty/FPL APL Coordinators that will endeavour to

interrogate the process identifying good practice and areas for improvement. Any issues that may have an impact on academic standards or quality of learning opportunities should be referred to the Quality Enhancement Committee for further consideration.

- E11 The APL Monitoring Report will focus on:
- The level and nature of APL activity across the University (including that associated with collaborative arrangements and distributed learning modes of delivery as appropriate).
 - Operational aspects of the Regulatory Procedures.
 - Resource issues arising from the Regulatory Procedures.
 - Recommendations for amendments to the Regulatory Procedures.
 - Issues of academic standards or quality of learning opportunities vis-à-vis APL.
 - Other University-wide issues arising from or related to the Regulatory Procedures
- E12 The APL monitoring process is shown diagrammatically in Figure 4 overleaf.

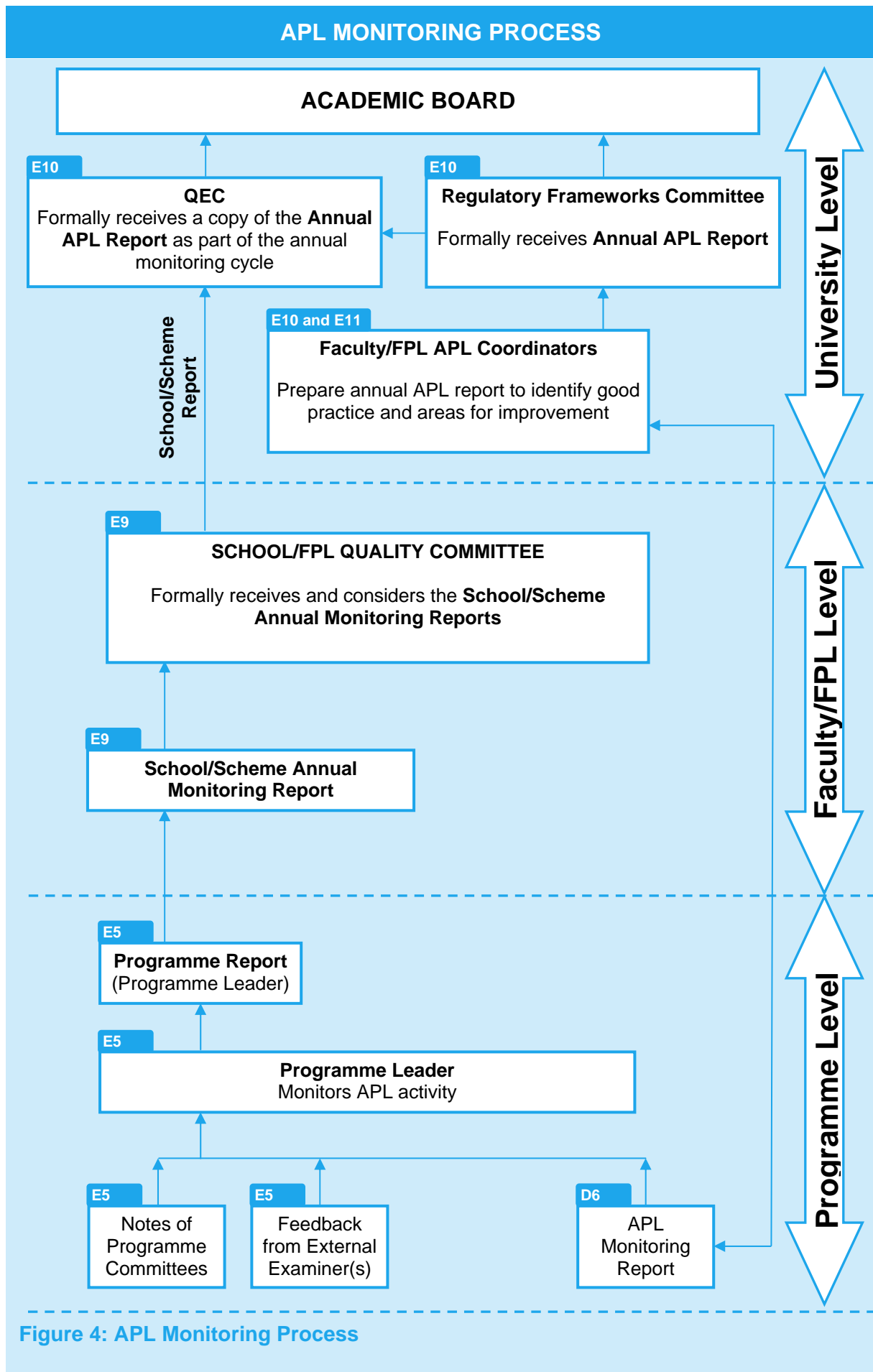


Figure 4: APL Monitoring Process

Part F: Roles and Responsibilities

SECTION ONE: APPLICANT

An Applicant	Paragraph
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ makes the initial enquiry 	C21 to C23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ writes a reflective and analytical account of their learning (in the case of APEL claims) 	C26 to C32
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ completes the APL claim form and submits it to the relevant Programme Leader, together with supporting documentation 	C33 to C36
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ can, in the event of an unsuccessful claim, request post-APL guidance from the relevant Programme Leader 	C49

SECTION TWO: FACULTY/FPL APL COORDINATOR

- F1 Each Faculty and FPL will have a member of academic staff nominated as Faculty/FPL APL Coordinator. The Faculty/FPL APL Coordinator will act as a focus for the procedures associated with claims for accreditation of prior learning and will act as a source of information relating to all aspects of APL.

A Faculty/FPL APL Coordinator	Paragraph
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ is eligible to deal with all initial enquiries from applicants 	C21
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ can give detailed advice* to applicants for APCL 	C25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ may be consulted by the Programme Leader or nominated representative responsible for giving detailed advice to applicants for APEL 	C26
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ follows up any discrepancies in the application of the APL Regulatory Procedures as reported by the site APL Administrative Coordinator 	C43
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ offers post-APL guidance, on request, to applicants whose claims have been unsuccessful 	C49
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ contributes to the preparation of an annual APL Monitoring Report presented to the Regulatory Frameworks Committee, that highlights any good practice or issues with cross-institutional implications 	E10

*In the case of programmes incorporating National Standard Units (NVQs, GNVQs, Key Skills, etc), the APL Advisor and Assessor must be suitably qualified.

SECTION THREE: PROGRAMME LEADER

A Programme Leader	Paragraph
▪ is eligible to deal with all initial enquiries from applicants	C21
▪ can give detailed advice* to applicants for APCL, and is likely to do so in more complex cases	C25
▪ is responsible for giving detailed advice* to applicants for APEL, or for nominating a representative to do so	C26
▪ assesses* APCL claims or nominates a representative to do so	C41
▪ assesses* APEL claims in conjunction with a nominated academic assessor not previously involved in the application	C42
▪ is responsible for monitoring APL activity routinely and discussing any programme specific issues at Programme Committee/Student Council meetings	E5
▪ informs the Faculty/FPL Quality Manager of any APL issues or concerns which may need to be raised and addressed on a Faculty/FPL or University wide basis	E5
▪ ensures that the nominated External Examiner has access to the most recent records of APL activity and a representative sample of APEL evidentiary material	E6
▪ comments on the volume and nature of APL activity in annual Monitoring Programme Report/Course Reviews	E5

SECTION FOUR: APL ACADEMIC ASSESSOR

- F2 In the case of APCL, Programme Leaders may nominate an APL Academic Assessor if this is considered more appropriate. For an APEL claim, assessment is undertaken by both the Programme Leader and a nominated APL Academic Assessor. In nominating the APL Academic Assessor, Programme Leaders will draw upon expertise from within the Faculties/FPL as appropriate.

An APL Academic Assessor	Section
▪ is eligible to deal with all initial enquiries from applicants	C21
▪ can give detailed advice* to applicants for APCL, although in more complex cases this will more likely be the relevant Programme Leader	C25
▪ can give detailed advice* to applicants for APEL	C27
▪ can assess* APCL claims	C41
▪ assesses* APEL claims in conjunction the relevant Programme Leader	C42

*In the case of programmes incorporating National Standard Units (NVQs, GNVQs, Key Skills, etc), the APL Advisor and Assessor must be suitably qualified.

SECTION FIVE: APL ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR (HE CLAIMS ONLY)

APL Administrative Coordinator	Section
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> verifies that the decision has been recorded appropriately, referring the claim back, in the first instance, to the Programme Leader in the case of any discrepancies 	C43
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> advises the applicant formally by email of the decision 	C43
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> records the decision in the APL Monitoring Report 	C43
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> inputs successful claims on to the Student Records System (Peoplesoft) 	C43
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> updates the APL Monitoring Report on a regular basis and forwards it to the Faculties/FPL 	D6

* In the case of programmes incorporating National Standard Units (NVQs, GNVQs, Key Skills, etc.), the APL Advisor and Assessor must be suitably qualified.

Part G: Glossary of Terms

Accreditation	A term to signify the most formalised and widely practised forms of recognition of learning.
Advanced Standing	<p>Advanced standing gives admission onto a programme at a point beyond the normal start, for example Stage 2 (Diploma of Higher Education) of an honours degree programme. An APL claim may lead to a student gaining academic credit for an entire stage(s) of a programme (or with sufficient credit to enter a stage with 'trailing credit') enabling them to enter the programme with 'advanced standing'.</p> <p>This APL process should not be confused with the more established formal arrangements whereby nationally recognised qualifications may be deemed to be equivalent to the outcomes of the stage either by the process of programme approval or subsequent programme modifications, and should be clearly stated in the programme validation documentation.</p>
APL	The Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) is an all-encompassing term referring to the formal recognition, assessment and award of credit for all prior learning. It embraces both certificated and experiential learning.
APCL	<p>The Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL) refers to the formal recognition, assessment and award of credit for certificated learning.</p> <p>Certificated learning refers to qualifications or awards gained prior to the current programme of study, from a recognised body and based on a validated process of assessment.</p>
APEL	<p>The Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) refers to the formal recognition, assessment and award of credit for experiential learning, that is, uncertificated learning.</p> <p>Experiential learning may have been gained in specific contexts, including employment and voluntary work, or through general life experience. It refers to learning, derived from experience, which has not been assessed or certificated.</p>
APL Assessor	An academic member of staff eligible to deal with enquiries, provide detailed advice and assess APL claims
APL Administrator	An administrative member of staff who inputs APL decisions on the Student Records System (Peoplesoft) and maintains up to date records of APL activity.
Articulation	A term used to described a formal agreement between UoD and another institution to enable successful students from an identified

programme to gain automatic entry with advanced standing to a University of Derby identified programme

CATS

CATS is an acronym for the **Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme** to which Derby University subscribes. This scheme represents a system of points or credit rating for undergraduate and postgraduate awards which is recognised by all Higher Education institutions that subscribe to the scheme.

Credit

Points credited to a student when the learning outcomes for a module have been successfully achieved. Each module will be worth a specified number of credits, normally associated with the total learning time required for successful completion of that module.

Credit may be defined as either **GENERAL** or **SPECIFIC**:

General Credit refers to the total credit value of an applicant's prior learning achievements.

Specific Credit refers to that proportion of an applicant's general credit deemed by the University to be relevant for the purpose of gaining credit towards an identified University award.

Direct Entry

The term used to refer to students who enter a programme with advanced standing and enter directly into a stage of a programme other than the first.

Level

A formal indication of the relative academic/professional demand of a module in terms of the development of understanding and skills in the subject area concerned. Currently these are:

FE	– Levels 1, 2 and 3
HE (undergraduate)	– Levels 4, 5 and 6
HE (postgraduate)	– Levels 7 and 8

Learning Outcomes

These are descriptors of the knowledge, understanding and skills a student should be able to demonstrate following the study of a module or programme. They are accessible in module specifications (FE and HE), published documents from awarding bodies (FE) or programme specifications (HE).

Module

A module is a unit of study attracting a given number of credits at a particular level in direct proportion to the learning time.

Module Leader

An academic member of staff who is responsible for a named module within one or more programmes.

Named Award

A named award is either a FE award of a nationally recognised awarding body e.g. Edexcel or a HE validated award ratified by the University's Academic Board.

Point of Entry

The stage to which a student is admitted to a programme through formal entry requirements that may include an articulation arrangement or a progression agreement.

Programme Leader	An academic member of staff who is responsible for a named programme.
Stage	Normally a combination of modules embracing a time period as well as level requirements, successful completion of which enables progression through to the next stage and modules at a higher level, for example, Postgraduate Certificate stage.
Subject Leader	An academic member of staff who is responsible for the named subject within the Joint Honours Scheme (JHS).
QAA	QAA is the acronym for the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

APPENDIX I

APL Claim Form

APPLICATION FOR ACADEMIC CREDIT (FE and HE) – APL Claim Form

(Please consult the Guidance Notes for Applicants before completing this form)



PART A (Personal Details) - to be completed by the applicant (please complete in block capitals)

Student Code: _____ Surname: _____ Date of Birth: ____/____/____
 Programme Title: _____ Forename(s): _____ Post Code: _____
 Programme Code: _____ Address: _____ Tel No: _____

PART B (APL Claim for Individual Modules) - to be completed by the applicant (please complete in block capitals)

Modules and specific credit being claimed

Module Title	Module Code	Specific Credit Claimed		APCL Evidence (Qualification and Year Awarded)	APEL Evidence	Specific Credit Approved (for academic use only)	
		Level	Number of Credits			Yes (initial)	No (initial)

PART C (APL Claim for an Entire Stage) - to be completed by the applicant (please complete in block capitals)

Stage(s) and specific credit being claimed

Stage	Specific Credit Claimed		APCL Evidence (Qualification and Year Awarded)	APEL Evidence	Specific Credit Approved (for academic use only)	
	Level	Number of Credits			Yes (initial)	No (initial)

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE PROGRAMME LEADER

PART D (Assessment) - to be completed by the academic assessor(s)

Academic comments i.e. reason for approval/rejection

Academic Assessor's Name (Print) Faculty

Academic Assessor's Signature Date

Please return this form to the relevant Programme Leader

PART E (Authorisation/Assessment in the case of APEL claims) - to be completed by the relevant Programme Leader

Programme Leader's Name (Print) Faculty

Programme Leader's Signature Date

Please return this form to the APL Administrative Coordinator at Kedleston Road who will notify the applicant of the outcome and record any credits on the Student Records System (Peoplesoft).

PART F - to be completed by the APL Administrative Coordinator

Date received Signature

Date recorded on logging form Signature

Approved credit entered on to SRS by

Quality Enhancement Department
Floor 4, South Tower
Kedleston Road
Derby, DE22 1GB