

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Information and Guidelines for Prospective Applicants

For in-service teachers with at least seven years' professional experience • Up to 30 ECTS at MQF Level 7

1. What Is Recognition of Prior Learning?

Recognition of Prior Learning allows eligible in-service teachers to obtain academic credit for advanced learning developed through professional practice outside a formal programme of study. Successful applicants may receive up to 30 ECTS at MQF Level 7 towards the relevant postgraduate qualification.

RPL does not award credit simply because you have worked for a certain number of years, attended training or held a particular position. You must demonstrate the learning that resulted from your experience, how you applied that learning, the professional judgement and autonomy you exercised, and the impact of your practice.

The central question is not only "What have you done?" but "What advanced professional learning have you gained, how have you used it and what difference has it made?"

2. Who May Apply?

To be considered for RPL, you must normally:

- have at least seven years' full-time teaching experience, or an accepted equivalent;
- hold a recognised teaching qualification;
- hold a teaching warrant issued by the Council for the Teaching Profession, where required;
- be able to demonstrate advanced professional competence, autonomy and responsibility at MQF Level 7;
- submit a complete portfolio and reflective professional narrative with appropriate verification; and
- attend an RPL interview and substantiate the claims made in your application.

3. What Types of Learning May Be Recognised?

Relevant learning may have developed through activities such as:

- classroom teaching, curriculum development and programme design;
- leadership, mentoring, coaching, induction and school improvement;
- inclusive education, safeguarding, learner wellbeing and sustainable practice;
- assessment design, moderation, feedback and use of learner data;
- practitioner inquiry, action research and evaluation;
- digital and artificial intelligence-integrated pedagogy;
- partnerships with families, communities, employers or external organisations; and
- continuing professional development that was applied and evaluated in practice.

4. The Seven Professional Domains

Your application will be evaluated entirely through the seven professional domains below. Your portfolio, reflective narrative, interview questions, scoring and ECTS recommendation will all be organised around these domains.

Professional domain	Marks	What the domain covers	Examples of relevant evidence
Professional Identity and Lifelong Learning	15	Your professional values, identity and development as an educator. This includes critical self-evaluation, purposeful continuing professional development, adaptability, autonomy, responsibility and sustained professional growth.	Reflective professional development records, evidence of applied CPD, professional learning plans, role development, professional contributions and examples showing how your practice changed.
Ethical, Inclusive and Sustainable Practice	15	Ethical and responsible professional practice, including safeguarding, equity, diversity, accessibility, learner wellbeing, confidentiality, data protection and environmentally and socially sustainable practice.	Inclusive planning, adaptations, safeguarding or wellbeing initiatives, accessibility measures, ethical decision-making, sustainability projects and evidence of impact.
Communication, Collaboration and Leadership	15	Professional communication and collaborative practice with learners, colleagues, families and external partners. This includes mentoring, coaching, conflict management, leadership and contribution to organisational improvement.	Leadership of initiatives, mentoring records, team projects, stakeholder communication, partnership work, meeting outputs and verified evidence of organisational or community impact.
Pedagogical and Subject Expertise	20	Advanced subject, curriculum and pedagogical knowledge. This includes curriculum design, learner-centred teaching, differentiation, innovation, evidence-informed decision-making and evaluation of learner outcomes.	Curriculum plans, schemes of work, teaching resources, differentiated approaches, programme evaluations, learner outcomes and evidence of innovation or improvement.
Assessment Literacy	10	The design and use of valid, reliable, fair and inclusive assessment. This includes constructive alignment, feedback, moderation, standardisation, use of assessment data and improvement of assessment practice.	Assessment briefs, rubrics, feedback samples, moderation or standardisation records, data analysis and evidence of changes made to improve assessment.
Research Literacy	10	Critical engagement with research, theory, policy and professional literature. This includes practitioner inquiry, action research, data interpretation and evidence-informed evaluation of practice.	Action research, inquiry projects, literature-informed developments, data analysis, evaluation reports and evidence showing how research or theory informed professional decisions.
Digital and Artificial Intelligence Competence	15	Critical, purposeful and inclusive use of digital technologies and artificial intelligence. This includes digital pedagogy, accessibility, data protection, academic integrity, digital citizenship and evaluation of impact.	Digital or AI-integrated teaching, resources, digital assessment, accessibility features, staff development, guidance or policies, evaluations and evidence of ethical risk management.

Critical reflection, research and theory, evidence quality, authenticity, communication, ethics, professional judgement and impact are assessed within each relevant domain. They are not treated as separate, unrelated criteria.

5. How the RPL Assessment Works

Stage	What happens
1. Portfolio submission	You submit a single portfolio organised by the seven professional domains.
2. Reflective professional narrative	You provide a 1,500–2,000-word critical narrative explaining your learning, application, judgement and impact across the domains claimed.
3. Verification and endorsements	Relevant claims and experience are verified by appropriate persons and supporting documentation.
4. Board review	Board members independently review and provisionally score your evidence by domain.

Stage	What happens
5. Structured interview	The Board asks questions linked to the domains, evidence gaps, authenticity, reflection, theory and impact. A short presentation may also be requested.
6. Final scoring and ECTS recommendation	The Board agrees a score for each domain, applies the score and breadth rules, and records the final outcome and feedback.

6. What Your Portfolio Must Include

Required portfolio section	What to include
Professional CV	Summarise your teaching experience, roles, responsibilities, professional learning, leadership, projects and professional contributions.
Reflective professional narrative	Provide a critical 1,500–2,000-word account organised around the seven domains and the learning claimed.
Seven domain sections	Include a clearly labelled section for every domain. You may state that a domain is not being claimed, but all seven headings must appear.
Domain mapping matrix	Link each major claim to the relevant narrative section, evidence reference, verifier and impact.
Evidence of practice	Provide selected evidence that demonstrates learning, judgement, application and impact. Avoid submitting documents without explanation.
Verification of experience	Include confirmation from the Head of School or Senior Management Team, or an official employment history report, confirming the required professional experience.
Endorsements	Include mandatory senior management verification and any relevant statements from mentors, colleagues or external partners.

7. Writing Your Reflective Professional Narrative

Within each domain claimed, your narrative should explain:

- the professional context, challenge, responsibility or opportunity;
- the advanced knowledge, understanding or competence you developed;
- what you did and why you selected that approach;
- the autonomy, responsibility, leadership or professional judgement you exercised;
- how research, theory, policy, standards or professional data informed your decisions;
- the impact on learners, colleagues, the school, the profession or the wider community;
- how you evaluated that impact; and
- the limitations, alternatives considered, lessons learned and subsequent changes to your practice.

8. What Counts as Strong Evidence?

Evidence quality	Meaning
Valid	It directly demonstrates the learning claimed within the relevant domain at MQF Level 7.
Sufficient	There is enough evidence to support the depth and volume of credit being sought.
Authentic	It is your own work, or your contribution to collaborative work is clearly identified.
Current	It demonstrates current or continuing professional competence.
Relevant	It is clearly connected to the domain and professional learning being claimed.
Verified	Important claims are confirmed through appropriate documentation, endorsements or other sources.
Triangulated	Significant claims are supported by more than one type of evidence or assessment method.
Impact-focused	It shows a credible and measurable difference resulting from your practice.

Certificates of attendance, job descriptions and role titles may support your application, but they are not sufficient on their own. You must show what you learned, how you applied it and what impact resulted.

9. Preparing for the RPL Interview

The interview is an assessment and verification stage. You should be ready to:

- discuss each domain you have claimed and locate the supporting evidence quickly;
- explain your individual contribution to collaborative work;
- justify professional decisions and discuss alternative approaches;
- connect your practice to research, theory, policy, professional standards or data;
- critically discuss limitations, challenges and learning;
- substantiate claims about impact; and
- respond clearly, professionally and analytically.

The Board may request a short presentation where this would help to verify or more fully demonstrate learning within one or more domains.

10. Scoring Framework

Professional domain	Maximum marks	Satisfactory threshold
Professional Identity and Lifelong Learning	15	8
Ethical, Inclusive and Sustainable Practice	15	8
Communication, Collaboration and Leadership	15	8
Pedagogical and Subject Expertise	20	10
Assessment Literacy	10	5
Research Literacy	10	5
Digital and Artificial Intelligence Competence	15	8
Total	100	50 overall

You must achieve at least 50 marks overall. A domain counts towards the ECTS breadth requirement only when it reaches the Satisfactory threshold shown above. A score below 40% means that the domain is not demonstrated and cannot support credit. It does not automatically prevent an award based on other domains.

11. Indicative ECTS Allocation

Overall score	Indicative maximum award	Required domain breadth
85–100	Up to 30 ECTS	All seven domains at Satisfactory or above, with an advanced and integrated profile across the domains.
75–84	Up to 25 ECTS	At least six domains at Satisfactory or above, with strong evidence across the majority of those domains.
65–74	Up to 20 ECTS	At least five domains at Satisfactory or above.
55–64	Up to 15 ECTS	At least four domains at Satisfactory or above.
50–54	Up to 10 ECTS	At least three domains at Satisfactory or above.
Below 50	No award	The required overall standard has not been achieved.

The score band sets the maximum possible award but does not guarantee that amount of credit. The Board also considers the breadth, level, volume, authenticity, currency and integration of the learning demonstrated. Where the score band and domain breadth lead to different outcomes, the lower award applies.

12. Possible Outcomes

Outcome	Meaning
RPL awarded	You receive an award of 10, 15, 20, 25 or 30 ECTS, depending on the score and breadth of domains demonstrated.
Referral	The Board requests specified clarification, verification or fuller demonstration where the learning appears to have been achieved but is not yet sufficiently evidenced.
RPL not awarded	The overall standard, domain breadth, level, authenticity or sufficiency of evidence does not meet the requirements.

A referral may not be used to create new professional experience after submission. Any additional material must clarify, verify or more fully demonstrate learning already claimed.

13. Confidentiality, Data Protection and Professional Conduct

- All portfolio evidence must be appropriately anonymised.
- You must protect the identity and personal data of learners, colleagues, families and other persons.
- You must have permission to use confidential or organisational documents where required.
- The Board may reject evidence that breaches confidentiality, data-protection, safeguarding or ethical requirements.
- Submitted evidence and assessment records will be handled in accordance with applicable University procedures.

14. Submission Information

Applications are submitted as a single PDF through this [Google Form](#). The relevant submission dates, application form and any programme-specific instructions should be checked before preparing the final portfolio.

15. Before You Submit Checklist

- ☐ I meet the eligibility requirements.
- ☐ My portfolio is organised under the exact seven professional domain headings.
- ☐ I have explained the learning arising from my experience rather than listing duties or achievements.
- ☐ My reflective narrative is critical, analytical and linked to evidence.
- ☐ I have identified my individual contribution to collaborative work.
- ☐ I have linked professional decisions to research, theory, policy, standards or data.
- ☐ Every major claim is cross-referenced to relevant evidence.
- ☐ I have included credible evidence of impact.
- ☐ Required verification and endorsements are included.
- ☐ I am ready to substantiate every claim during the interview.