



STUDY WORLD
Global College Malta



**GLOBAL
COLLEGE MALTA**

THE ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING

**An outline guide for
students**

November 2022

GLOBAL COLLEGE MALTA

THE RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)

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Introduction

1. The aim of this guide is to provide outline guidance on how the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) works at Global College Malta, how it can help you receive credit for your prior learning, and how to apply for it. We hope it will help you to realise that you may already have evidence that will enable you to claim credits towards the course offered by the College that you would like to study.

What is the Recognition of Prior Learning?

2. The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) provides an opportunity for students to be credited for learning that they have done before they started at Global College Malta. It avoids the necessity of duplicating previous learning, whilst ensuring students have attained the learning outcomes appropriate to their award. Prior learning may be certificated or experiential:
 - Certificated learning is learning for which there is a formal qualification, for example a Diploma of Higher Education or a Foundation Degree, or individual modules/course units completed at another institution.
 - Experiential learning is learning achieved outside of a formal learning environment. It may include learning gained as part of work experience, volunteering or as part of a training course, but for which there is no formal qualification.

What prior learning can be recognised by the College?

3. Academic credit can be awarded for two types of prior learning:

Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL)

You can be awarded credit for learning for which you have done a recognised course, passed an assessment and have a certificate.

Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL)

You can be awarded credit for learning gained outside the classroom, whether that was at home, at work or in a community setting. For example, you may have owned or managed an organisation or led a team of people. This is where you will have learnt a vast amount but not sat an exam or written assignments.

How is the value of prior learning calculated?

4. By giving learning a value it is easier to work out how many credits your previous learning is worth and what level it was at.

5. The College's degree level courses are made up of a series of modules. Each module is worth academic credits under the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation Systems (ECTS). As well as having an ECTS credit value to indicate the amount of learning, modules also have a 'level' to show how difficult or advanced the learning is in order to get the ECTS credits. On an undergraduate degree study is at Levels 5 and 6 of the *Malta Qualifications Framework* (see: <https://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/resources/Documents/Publications/The%20Malta%20Qualifications%20Framework/The%20Malta%20Qualifications%20Framework.pdf>). A Master's degree is at Level 7 and a Doctorate is at Level 8 of the *Malta Qualifications Framework*.

How can I apply for RPL?

6. All applications for RPL should be made when you apply for admission to a course offered by Global College Malta. In the first instance you should contact the College's Admissions Team at enquiries@gcmalta.com in order to get further guidance on how to submit a claim for RPL. Having talked through with you the nature of the RPL process, the College will require you to complete an appropriate form setting out the details of your application. The College can assist you with this process but cannot write the relevant form on your behalf.

What evidence will I be required to submit to support my claim for Certificated Learning (RPCL)?

7. In assessing your claim for RPCL the College will want to see:
- A description of the content and learning outcomes of the programme and/or modules that you have completed (for example, extracts from a course or module handbook, programme specification, or links to relevant web pages); and,
 - An academic transcript of your previous programme of study. This certification could be from an institution that is operating under the Maltese Qualifications Framework or from another recognised international higher education system. The certification should normally include confirmation of the institution that you studied at and their validating authority; the course/programme title that you studied; your name; dates of study; and (where appropriate) modules passed, credit points achieved and any final award you were given.
8. If you have not yet received all your final results, please send us as much of the above information as you can, including a list of all the modules and credits that you have completed, and if appropriate intend to complete, at your prior institution, so that we can make a provisional assessment. You will then need to submit the final academic transcript as soon as you receive it, and no later than prior to enrolment on the course. The College will not accept web-based results as final verification. You should also note that if you submit a copy of your transcript, we reserve the right to contact the institution at which you have studied in order to verify the details that you have provided us with, or we may ask you to present an original transcript before any RPL can be confirmed. If you do not present a final academic transcript to confirm your prior learning by enrolment time at the College, you may be considered for a place at the College at the start of the course, without RPL.

What evidence will I be required to submit to support my claim for Experiential Learning (RPEL)

9. It is unusual to claim for, or be awarded, RPEL for more than one or two modules, although individual claims will be assessed on their own merit. Initially you should email the College's Admissions Team at enquiries@gcmalta.com with a brief summary explanation of why and what prior experiential learning you are claiming.
10. A portfolio of evidence will be required to support your claim for each module that you are seeking RPL for. This should normally include:
 - A personal reflection on your experiences relevant to each of the learning outcomes of the module;
 - Any relevant job descriptions; and,
 - Independent verification of the dates of your relevant employment.
11. Your portfolio of evidence might also include:
 - Character references;
 - Authenticated samples of work that you have produced such as reports or outputs, project work, presentations or other similar materials;
 - Blogs or video diaries; and,
 - Relevant certificates of non-credited courses of study that you have completed (together with a course syllabus or other explanatory information).
12. You will be assessed against each of the learning outcomes of the module(s) for which your claim for RPL is being made. You might wish to consider producing a grid, or provide an equivalent document, that clearly maps the materials you are submitting in your portfolio against the learning outcomes for one module. If you are making a large or complex claim you may also find it helpful to provide an overall synoptic commentary on your learning experiences.
13. You will be expected to demonstrate broad equivalence; therefore strong evidence against some learning outcomes might be sufficient to make up for weaker evidence against others. If the module is a prerequisite for another, or if it is a core or compulsory module within a programme, you must provide evidence to indicate adequate preparation for progression to the next module or level.
14. There are five key features which will be considered by the College as part of its assessment of your claim for RPEL:
 - **Content:** the evidence that you submit should clearly indicate that you have acquired the types of knowledge, understanding and skills developed in the module(s) for which you are seeking exemption.

- **Level:** the evidence that you submit should clearly indicate that you have acquired the knowledge, understanding and skills that can be considered as appropriate to the MQF level of the module. As a minimum, you should provide evidence that your learning is equivalent to that of an undergraduate student (MQF Levels 5 and 6) or, if you are claiming against a MQF Level 7 module, of a postgraduate student.
 - **Volume:** the evidence you submit should indicate that you have sufficient experience. This is particularly important if you are seeking to make a claim against a module that includes some form of placement.
 - **Currency:** you should be able to demonstrate that your learning is relatively recent, in relation to the module learning outcomes. As a rule of thumb, five years is considered the maximum 'shelf life' over which the learning is considered current. However, this will depend on subject matter and the College will take this into account when making its academic judgment. By means of example, learning that has been gained in subjects where there has been rapid technological development, or where professional requirements are reviewed regularly, will necessarily have a briefer currency.
 - **Authenticity:** you will need to be able to provide the College with independent verification of each of your significant job roles or relevant experiences. This should be provided by your employer, normally via a signed letter or email that includes the registered address of the employment or voluntary activity. We reserve the right to contact the employer in the event of any queries about authenticity.
15. You will be given a deadline for submission of your claim. When your portfolio is complete, please submit it directly to the College's Academic Team at either j.coleiro@gcmlta.com or v.fardell@gcmlta.com. The College's Academic Team will confirm receipt of your claim and indicate likely timescales for determination. The College's Academic Team will then circulate the claim to the College's Academic Dean or the relevant programme lead. The final decision on your claim will be taken by the College's Academic Dean. Please ensure that you keep a copy of all documents submitted.

How do I know if I am eligible to apply for RPL?

16. The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is not applicable to every student. It is only available to those who wish to be exempted from a specific module or modules because they have already passed (or are very shortly to pass) a module/modules that may be deemed equivalent in terms of MQF level, ECTS (credit values) and content. Therefore, you might consider applying for RPL if you meet the following criteria:
- You have completed part or all of a Certificate of Higher Education or a Foundation Degree and are applying to study on a degree programme in a similar subject area (normally with entry at MQF Level 5 or Level 6);
 - You have completed part of a degree programme and are applying to transfer to a degree in a similar subject area at the College;
 - You have completed part or all of a postgraduate qualification (Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma) and wish to use some of or all of that credit to exempt you

from the postgraduate certificate or diploma stage of a Masters Degree in a similar subject area;

- You have completed significant work experience that covers the specific learning outcomes of a Global College Malta module, and that work experience was initiated by you, independently of the Global College Malta course, and normally prior to your Global College Malta course start date; and,
17. RPL is NOT applicable to a student whose highest qualification/module achieved is of a lower MQF level than the modules of the course to be studied at Global College Malta (such as an A-Level). Your existing qualifications may give you eligibility for entry to the course and the College's Admissions team will contact you separately about this. However, an entry qualification will not give you eligibility for RPL.
18. You should be aware of the following:
- It is your choice to apply for RPL. Even if you have already covered some prior learning, you or the College may consider it sensible and worthwhile for you to complete the College course in its entirety;
 - An application for RPL is no guarantee that RPL will be awarded. All RPL claims and recommendations are subject to assessment and approval by the College's Academic Dean. These decisions are, in turn, regularly reviewed by the College's Academic Board which has overall responsibility for the quality and standards of the College's academic programmes and awards. Unless you have made an application for RPL and your prior learning has been formally approved by the College's Academic Dean and transferred to your formal student record, you will not have enough ECTS credit on your Global College Malta programme to graduate;
 - RPL will not be awarded automatically simply because you have been accepted into a higher level, or because a member of staff at the College has verbally indicated that you will be given RPL; and,
 - RPL will only be awarded when your prior learning has been formally assessed against the learning outcomes of your chosen course; when that assessment has been approved by the College's Academic Dean; and when final evidence has been received to confirm that you have successfully completed that prior learning. You will receive confirmation when this process is complete and credit has been transferred to your student record.

How much credit can I be awarded?

19. You can only be awarded credit for prior learning that matches the learning outcomes of the programme that you are hoping to study. This could be done on the basis of individual modules or, in certain circumstances, for an entire MQF level.
20. You can be awarded up to 50% of the total credit of the exit programme of study. The maximum credit awarded following successful applications for RPL is set out in the table below. This information is provided for the guidance of applicants for RPL and the maximum credit volumes specified below do not constitute an entitlement.

Award	MQF Level	Minimum ECTS credit given through RPL	Maximum ECTS credit given through RPL	Minimum ECTS credits to be taken at Global College Malta	Total credits for the award
Postgraduate Masters	7	8	40	50	90
Postgraduate Diploma	7	8	32	32	64
Postgraduate Certificate	7	8	16	16	32
Undergraduate degree	6	15	90	90	180
Undergraduate Higher Diploma	5	15	30	30	60
Undergraduate Diploma	5	15	15	15	30

21. Although you can be awarded credit, which is recorded on your final transcript, you will not receive a grade for any modules/levels credited via RPL.

Will I be charged for making a claim for RPL?

22. Assessing a claim for RPL is necessarily a detailed and time consuming process. Accordingly, the College will charge a fee to undertake this assessment, the current fee being €100 for each module for which RPL is being claimed. Please note that you will be charged for any additional modules that you are required to take as part of your Global College Malta programme. For example, if you apply for RPL for MQF Level 5 of your degree programme (60 ECTS), but find that you have not met all the learning outcomes and are awarded only 45 ECTS, you will be charged a fee for the additional module that you must take to meet the requirements of the degree. If you have any queries about fees, please contact enquiries@gcmalta.com.

How long will it take to process my claim for RPL?

23. The assessment of any claim for RPL normally occurs concurrently with the assessment of your course application, but the time this process takes will depend on the amount of detail that you are able to provide the College with on your prior learning. The College will need sufficient detail to make an accurate assessment of equivalence and level with the modules being taught at the College. If there is insufficient detail, we may need to make further enquiries, either with you, or with the institution/employer concerned. The RPL claim will be assessed as soon as possible; however, you should note that the College's academic staff are busy people, particularly at the start of the academic year and at examinations and marking time. The College's Admissions Team will endeavour to keep you informed if there are likely to be any significant delays.

Who will assess my claim for RPL?

24. Your claim will formally signed off by the College's Academic Dean. The College's Academic Dean will be guided by the College's Academic Registry and teaching staff, as appropriate. In exceptional circumstances, a RPL claim may also be referred to a full meeting of the College's Academic Board.
25. The College will at all times seek to review applications for RPL in as timely a fashion as is practicable. This will normally be completed within a period of two weeks. Where claims are particularly complex and require detailed investigation and possibly the gathering of supplementary information, the scrutiny process may take slightly longer.

What happens after my claim for RPL has been assessed?

26. Following assessment, you will be notified of the outcome. If the decision taken by the College's Academic Dean is not to award credit then you will be given advice which should help you judge whether to make another application.
27. Once you have sent us final evidence of any prior learning results outstanding, and enrolled on the College course, the RPL credit will be transferred to your College academic record. It is very important to send any outstanding results as soon as you have them and prior to your course start, or you will not be able to enrol and access teaching and learning resources.

What are the possible outcomes of my claim for RPL?

28. There are a number of possible outcomes arising from the consideration of your claim for RPL. These include:
- full acceptance of your RPL claim as entry requirements onto a programme of study at the College;
 - full acceptance of a claim for advanced entry (exemption) to a programme of study at the College;
 - partial acceptance of your claim for exemption;
 - a request for resubmission of your claim typically including a request to provide further evidence substantiating your claim;
 - failure of your RPL claim with College recommendations for alternative courses of action
 - failure of your RPL claim.

What happens if I'm not happy with the outcome of my claim for RPL?

29. Applicants who are not satisfied with the outcome of the assessment of an application for RPL are advised to contact the College's Academic Dean for further guidance at: chaslam@gcmlta.com. As noted above, decisions on whether or not to grant RPL are based on academic judgement. As such, therefore, appeals are only permitted if a procedural error has occurred or due process has not been followed.

30. Information in respect of claims for RPL will be maintained by the College in accordance with its policy on data and document retention. The College's policy on information retention operate in accordance with prevailing GDPR legislation.

And finally...

31. Obtaining credit for prior learning has benefited a great many people and enabled them to progress into and through higher education more quickly than they would have done otherwise. The College is keen to encourage individuals to study in higher education so that they can develop and broaden their skills base, thereby enhancing their future employment prospects, and also for personal fulfilment. The College will accordingly work closely and supportively with applicants to advise and support them with any claims they might make for RPL.
32. The College has a formal policy on the Recognition of Prior Learning and this is available upon request by contacting the College Academic Team at: enquiries@gcmalta.com or on +356 2180 1252.