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This document is part of the Academic Regulations, Policies and Procedures which govern the University's academic provision. Each document has a unique document number to indicate which section of the series it belongs to.

3P – Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): Policy and Procedure

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1. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 This policy and procedure is for use by Bournemouth University (BU) staff.
- 1.2 This policy and procedure outlines the principles, definitions, credit allowances, and operational processes that should be followed in applications for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). RPL is the mechanism through which BU allows and supports credit transfer. The guidance includes the evidence students are required to submit and the academic and administrative responsibilities and processes involved.
- 1.3 This policy and procedure provides details on how the University supports transfers into BU. However, the University also facilitates transfers from BU to other institutions for students where they wish to do so. In line with the University's standard assessment regulations, programme boards award students with academic credit where they successfully complete a unit. Students who are considering a transfer to another institution are able to request an official transcript of their BU results. This provides a formal record for the purposes of allowing other institutions to assess an application for recognition of prior learning.
- 1.4 The University allows students who provide evidence of prior learning to be considered for exemptions from parts of their academic programme through the RPL process. This may involve the acknowledgement of existing credit from outside the University and/or the acknowledgement of prior learning undertaken outside of the system of formal education which can be evidenced for an academic purpose. Applications may also involve the acknowledgement of existing credit from

one BU programme towards another.

1.5 Prior learning is divided into two main categories which can be divided further into five distinct types of credit transactions that operate at the University. The first category includes one-off applications from individual students for exemptions from units/levels of study on any Bournemouth University programme. These are called '**Individual Unit Exemption**' and '**Direct Entry**'. The second category includes applications from whole cohorts of students who study on formally approved 'feeder' programmes at or outside the University and who wish to progress to the next level or stage of study leading to a Bournemouth University award. These are called '**Articulation with Advanced Standing**', '**Recognition with Advanced Standing**', and '**Internal Progression**'. For ease of reference, this document provides the detailed RPL process to be followed for each of these in the following sections:

- Section 8.1: Individual Unit Exemption
- Section 8.2: Direct Entry
- Section 8.3: Articulation/Recognition with Advanced Standing
- Section 8.4: Internal Progression

2. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 **Senate:** to approve new policies or amendments to existing policies relating to RPL.
- 2.2 **Education Committee:** to periodically review the effectiveness of the arrangements for RPL and recommend changes to current policy to Senate. To approve new and revised procedures by exception.
- 2.3 **Faculty Education Committee:** to establish and oversee the Faculty's arrangements for RPL.
- 2.4 **UK Admissions Team (UKAT)/International Admissions Team (IAT) and BU partner staff:** ensure applicants provide the required information and supporting documentation as part of their application. Complete the appropriate RPL exemption paperwork.
- 2.5 **Programme Leaders/RPL Coordinators:** to decide whether to accept or reject an application for RPL.

3. ACCESSING OTHER RELEVANT BU DOCUMENTS

- 3.1 All documents can be accessed [here](#)
- 3.2 Other documents with direct relevance to this are:
- *2B - Programme Structure and Curriculum Design Characteristics Policy*
 - *3K - Engagement Monitoring and Withdrawal: Procedure*
 - *3Q - Movement of Students between Programmes: Procedure*
 - *4D - Continuing Professional Development (CPD): Policy and Procedure*
 - *6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Undergraduate Programmes*
 - *6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Postgraduate Taught Programmes*
 - *6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Foundation Degree Programmes*
 - *6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Higher National Programmes*
 - *6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma Programmes*
 - *6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Integrated Masters Programmes*
 - *6F – Generic marking criteria*

Policy

4. TERMINOLOGY

4.1 **Recognition of prior learning**

4.1.1 Bournemouth University distinguishes between the recognition of prior certificated learning (RPCL) and the recognition of prior experiential learning (RPEL), acknowledging that paid or unpaid work and other life experiences can also provide appropriate learning opportunities. It is the identification and demonstration of this learning within an academic framework that leads to credit. All genuine learning, therefore, however acquired, is deserving of credit towards an award provided that:

- it can be clearly identified and described;
- its relevance and currency can be evidenced and assessed in relation to approved intended learning outcomes (ILOs);
- it is at the same level and is appropriate to the subject of the exemptions sought¹.

4.1.2 Students may seek RPL for a range of professional qualifications which do not carry academic credit. Where such certificated learning is documented and the course content can be mapped against the outcomes of the programme/level/unit(s) the student is seeking RPL for, the application may be considered for RPCL. Where no such documentation is available and the student needs to demonstrate their learning in alternative/additional ways, the application is likely to fall under RPEL and any professional certificates should form part of a broader portfolio of evidence.

5. PRINCIPLES

5.1 **Scrutiny of applications**

5.1.1 RPL involves academic judgement to confirm that the prior learning is equivalent to that which might otherwise have been achieved to date by following the validated curriculum on the programme for which credit is sought. Applications must therefore be approved in line with the procedure outlined in this document in order to establish equivalence of learning with the receiving programme level(s)/unit(s).

5.1.2 RPL decisions are ratified by a Programme Board. As decisions are based on a threshold judgement, no marks will normally contribute to the classification of the award² and the credits which are awarded through RPL will be recorded on the student's Diploma Supplement and Transcript on a pass-fail basis.

NB the number of credits on which the profile regulation is based for classification purposes is fixed as outlined in the relevant Standard Assessment Regulations and cannot be adjusted in order to apply the '2/3rds credit rule' to the remaining units at the final level of the named award.

5.2 **Faculty/Partner oversight**

5.2.1 Students seeking exemptions on the basis of RPL should neither be advantaged nor disadvantaged compared with other students, and each Faculty/partner should assign one or more senior members of staff with overall responsibility for RPL. For partners this would normally be the HE Manager. In accordance with the University's process, Faculty Education Committee is required to review RPL arrangements on an annual basis to ensure that due processes are followed. In addition, external examiners have the right to request access to assessment documentation, including RPL decisions.

¹ Exceptionally study may have taken place above the level for which the exemption is being sought and can be used as evidence for exemption at the lower level.

² An exception to this rule is when Bournemouth University takes over another University's award and the existing students bring their full assessment profile with them. Such an arrangement would be formally approved through institutional approval processes and the students' full marks to-date would be recorded in the student record system

5.3 ***Fraudulent applications***

5.3.1 Where evidence comes to light following approval of an application that the student may have gained their exemption(s) by fraudulent means, the Programme Board will not ratify the underpinning credits and will not recommend that a BU award is made (including the award of credit) before a disciplinary process has taken place. If a student is found guilty of fraud, the student will not be granted any BU credits.

5.4 ***Degree Apprenticeships***

5.4.1 The latest Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) funding rules on Recognition of Prior Learning and Experience should be applied for all apprenticeship programmes. This will require the individual's prior learning and experience to be assessed and agreed with the employer, as part of the initial assessment, prior to starting the apprenticeship while taking into consideration exceptions to the RPL rules defined in the relevant apprenticeship standard.

5.5 ***Financial impact***

5.5.1 When a student is granted exemption from either a level or unit of study, the fee charged will be reduced proportionately. Where exemption is granted for a whole level of study, there is no fee for that level of study. Where exemption is granted for an individual unit of study, the fee is adjusted such that no payment is required for that unit. The Faculty should contact Finance at the earliest opportunity and no later than commencement of Student Online Registration to agree the pro-rate fee.

5.5.2 The latest ESFA funding rules on Recognition of Prior Learning and Experience should be applied for all apprenticeships programmes. This will require reducing the total negotiated price based on the assessment detailed in Section 5.4.1 while taking into consideration exceptions to the RPL rules defined in the relevant apprenticeship standard. When a student is granted exemption from either a level or unit of study, the fee charged will be reduced proportionately following the ESFA funding rules.

6. **BU DEFINITIONS**

6.1 Exemptions may be granted for individual unit(s) or whole levels(s) of a programme. When designing programmes at undergraduate level, a distinction is made between 'Top-up' and standard degree programmes. Students may seek exemptions to enter directly to Level 5 or Level 6 of a **'Top-up' programme** where there is no validated content at Level 4 / Levels 4 and 5. In this instance, all students who study on the programme will be exempt from the same level(s). Students may also seek exemptions from whole level(s) of a **standard degree programme** with validated content at Levels 4 and 5 (Foundation degree) or 4, 5 and 6 (Bachelor's degree). In this instance, some students are exempt from particular level(s), but most students study all levels which are relevant to the award together as a cohort.

6.2 The four BU definitions that may relate to RPL are defined as follows:

i Individual Unit Exemption relates to students who are exempt from a unit or collection of units based on prior learning undertaken outside of the receiving programme. Individual Unit Exemption may be based on RPCL or RPEL. Often, but not in all cases, these are external applicants from outside the University but may also be internal applicants. An example of Individual Unit Exemption would be when a student starts a unit and realises they have studied something similar previously and asks to be exempt from the unit.

The application for Individual Unit Exemption may usually be made as part of the admission process or shortly after the start of the unit for which credit is sought depending on the delivery pattern. In all cases the request for Individual Unit Exemption comes directly from the student. The Faculty/partner is required to maintain an audit trail of the decision on the student's file and complete an Exemption Form (provided in Appendix 2). Where programmes include unit(s) which are not credit bearing (e.g. a placement) students may be exempt from these on the basis of their prior experience. For

exemptions from placements the Faculty should complete an Exemption Form so the student record can be updated against the correct units. The audit trail should demonstrate how the student has met the requirements of the placement (e.g. ILOs, see 8.1.13 and 8.1.19 for further information).

- ii Direct Entry relates to students who are exempt from whole level(s) of an undergraduate degree on the basis of prior learning outside of the receiving programme. Direct Entry can be to a Level 5 or Level 6 'Top-up' programme or to Level 5, Level P or Level 6 of a standard degree programme. Direct Entry is often based wholly on RPCL but may also be on the basis of a combination RPCL and RPEL. Applications for Direct Entry come often from external candidates from outside the University but may also be from internal applicants where there is no predefined route for internal Progression.

The application for exemption based on Direct Entry is always made as part of the admissions process. In all cases, the Admissions Teams should complete the Exemption Form provided in Appendix 3 to clearly demonstrate how the student has met the requirements for entry with advanced standing. Where direct entry is to Level 6 of a sandwich degree, the form must show how the applicant has met the placement year requirements.

NB where students have already commenced their studies at BU and subsequently seek exemptions from Level P, the Individual Unit Exemption Form provided in Appendix 2 should be used as per 6.2. i above.

- iii Articulation with advanced standing³ is a formal inter-institutional arrangement which guarantees entry, on the basis of the successful completion of a specified programme and award of another institution, to a specified programme or programmes leading to Bournemouth University's award⁴. Often such Articulation arrangements relate to students seeking progression from a predefined lower qualification, such as a Foundation degree, to a higher qualification such as a Level 6 Top-up programme or Level 6 of a standard degree programme. Articulation may also be part-stage, i.e. between two awards which are specified at the same level.

The application for exemption based on Articulation is always made as part of the admissions process and the applicant will be automatically accepted onto the programme subject to the successful completion of the underpinning programme and, where stipulated, additional entry criteria such as Merit classification from the underpinning programme. All Articulation arrangements involving entry with advanced standing are based on RPCL and formally approved in accordance with the University's due approval processes. As the appropriateness of the prior learning on the underpinning programme has already been formally assessed and approved in relation to the receiving BU programme, the Faculty/partner does not need to complete an Exemption form.

- iv Recognition with advanced standings⁵ is an arrangement whereby the University identifies and formally recognises another institution or organisation's programme for the purposes of entry, with advanced standing, to a specified programme(s) and award(s) of the University⁶. Recognition arrangements do not guarantee entry, only eligibility to apply and may include additional entry criteria such as Merit classification from the underpinning programme. Often Recognition with advanced standing relates to students seeking progression from a predefined lower qualification, such as a Foundation degree to a higher qualification such as a Level 6 Top-up programme or Level 6 of a standard degree programme. Recognition may also be part-stage, i.e. between two awards which are specified at the same level.

The application for exemption based on Recognition with advanced standing is always made as part of the admissions process. All Recognition arrangements involving entry with advanced standing are based on RPCL and are formally approved in accordance with the University's due approval processes. As the appropriateness of the prior learning on the underpinning programme has already been formally assessed and approved in relation to the receiving BU programme, the Faculty/partner

³ Articulation arrangements may also provide entry from another institution or organisation's programme to a BU-programme without advanced standing. Such arrangements do not include exemptions and are excluded from this ARPP.

⁴ A list of approved Articulation, Recognition and Progression arrangements is available on the I drive/SharePoint.

⁵ See footnote 3

⁶ See footnote 4

does not need to complete an Exemption form.

6.3 The final fifth BU definition is defined as follows:

Internal Progression⁷ is an arrangement which allows progression with advanced standing from one Bournemouth University programme and/or award to another programme, or level of a programme, leading to a specified award of Bournemouth University⁸. Internal Progression arrangements do not guarantee entry, only eligibility to apply and may include additional entry criteria such as Merit classification from the underpinning programme. Often internal Progression relates to students seeking progression from a predefined lower qualification, such as a Foundation degree, to a higher qualification such as a Level 6 Top-up programme or Level 6 of a standard degree programme. Internal Progression may also be part-stage, i.e. between two awards which are specified at the same level.

The application for exemption based on internal Progression is always made as part of the admissions process. All internal Progression arrangements are always based on and are formally approved in accordance with the University's due approval processes. As the appropriateness of the prior learning on the underpinning BU programme has already been formally assessed and approved in relation to the receiving BU programme, the Faculty/partner does not need to complete an Exemption form.

Students who progress from one BU programme to another through a formally agreed internal Progression arrangement do not relinquish their lower award and do not therefore carry their marks forward. Instead, the classification will be based entirely on their performance on the receiving programme.

7. CREDIT ALLOWANCES

7.1 *Minimum volume of credit*

7.1.1 The minimum volume of credit that can be awarded on the basis of prior learning is a single unit so students should not be exempt from part units.

7.2 *Maximum volumes of credit*

7.2.1 Applications for RPL may be based on RPCL or RPEL, or a blend of these as outlined in 7.2.2-7.2.7 below. **This section includes the maximum credit allowances for integrated masters awards. It should be noted that these differ from other undergraduate and postgraduate awards as per 7.2.3 below.**

Undergraduate programmes

7.2.2 The maximum volumes of credit for all RPL transactions involving undergraduate programmes **other than integrated masters** are as follows.

- i. credit based on **RPCL** should not exceed two thirds of the credits for the award for which the student is registered.
- ii. credit based on **RPEL** should not exceed one third of the credits for the award for which a student is registered.
- iii. **A combination of credit based on RPCL and RPEL** must not exceed the stated limits for each individual category above and must total no more than the maximum limit stated for RPCL.

⁷ Progression arrangements may also lead to an award at another institution. These external Progression arrangements are not relevant to this Policy and Procedure as the admissions decision is made by the receiving institution.

⁸ See footnote 4

NB: A Level 6 Top-up consisting of 120 Level 6 credits requires exemptions from Levels 4 and 5. The final award is based on 360 credits so students are awarded the 240 credits from the lower levels through RPL. Where students progress from a Level 5 programme to a Level 6 Top-up programme, the full 120-credit Level 6 programme must be taken as if the student is registered for an Honours degree which is awarded on the basis on 360 credits (but please see 7.2.6 regarding Level 5 and 6 CPD provision).

Students are therefore not normally able to seek RPL for any Level 6 units (e.g. to 'top up' an Advanced Diploma) and their application should be treated within the credit allowances outlined above unless their application is received through a formally agreed Articulation, Recognition or internal Progression arrangement.

Integrated masters programmes

7.2.3 The maximum volume of credit for all RPL transactions involving integrated masters programmes are as follows.

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- i credit based on **RPCL** should not exceed 240 credits for the award.
 - ii credit based on **RPEL** should not exceed 120 credits for the award for which a student is registered.
 - iii **A combination of credit based on RPCL and RPEL** must not exceed the stated limits for each individual category above and must total no more than the maximum limit stated for RPCL.

NB: The above limits reflect the standard assessment regulations for integrated masters programmes whereby Direct Entry is not normally allowed beyond commencement of Level 6.

Postgraduate taught programmes

7.2.4 The maximum volumes of credit for all RPL transactions involving postgraduate taught programmes are as follows.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">i credit based on RPCL should not exceed two thirds of the credits for the award for which the student is registered. Credit will be given only for taught units.ii credit based on RPEL should not exceed one third of the credits for the award for which a student is registered. Credit will be given only for taught units.iii A combination of credit based on RPCL and RPEL must not exceed the stated limits for each individual category above and must total no more than the maximum limit stated for RPCL. Credit will be given only for taught units. |
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Postgraduate research programmes

7.2.5 Although the University's postgraduate research awards are not based on credit, taught doctorates normally include a credit-bearing Level 7 element. Where exemptions are sought from these units, the principles outlined above apply.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

7.2.6 The University allows exemptions only against named awards. Therefore, RPL cannot be awarded towards CPD credit frameworks/individual CPD units but may be considered when CPD students transfer to a named award.

7.2.7 CPD students do not need to demonstrate that they have the required volume of underpinning

study (e.g. 120 Level 4 to study a Level 5 unit or programme) for the purposes of CPD although they must demonstrate the capacity to study at the chosen level. This creates two different sets of students in relation to Level 5 and/or Level 6 CPD provision; those who will be eligible for the award of credit but not a named award and those who may be eligible to transfer to a named award during their studies because they have achieved the full underpinning credits at the lower level(s). To ensure that student expectations are managed appropriately, eligibility for entry with advanced standing should be considered prior to admission and care should be taken to ensure that CPD students are made aware of any implications before they commence their studies at the University. Eligibility is then confirmed during the transfer process as outlined in 3Q – *Movement of Students between Programmes: Procedure*. Also see 4D – *Continuing Professional Development (CPD): Policy and Procedure* for further details.

Professional Body requirements and contractual arrangements

7.2.8 A programme's maximum credit allocated based on RPCL may be exceptionally influenced by the requirements of a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) or contractual arrangements and it may be that no exemptions are allowed or the above limits can be exceeded. Where PSRB requirements or contractual arrangements apply, these will be reflected in the University's formally approved exceptions to the standard assessment regulations and are fully recorded in the relevant Programme Specification.

7.3 **Eligibility for a named intermediate award (Undergraduate and Postgraduate)**

7.3.1 To be eligible for a named intermediate award, a student must normally have completed 1/3 of the credits which make up the award at BU. In the absence of eligibility for a named intermediate award, students will be awarded credits for successfully completed BU units.

7.4 **Award classification and the Profile regulation**

7.4.1 As noted in 5.1.2 above, because RPL is awarded on a pass-fail basis, it does not contribute to the classification of the award. Where the profile regulation is applied, the number of credits on which it is based is fixed as outlined in the relevant Standard Assessment Regulations and cannot be adjusted in order to apply the '2/3rds credit rule' to the remaining units at the final level of the named award.

7.5 **Returning BU students**

7.5.1 Students who have left the University and are no longer registered as BU students but are still within their registration period and wish to complete the final level(s) or stage(s) of their degree should be allowed to re-enrol on their original programme as long as their assessment profile is deemed appropriate. Those who have been given an intermediate BU award such as a PGDip or DipHE should relinquish this award on successful completion of the terminal award and their final classification should be calculated on the full number of credits in accordance with the relevant assessment regulations. No credit transaction will take place as the students will be re-enrolled on their original programme. If a student is unsuccessful at their further studies, the intermediate award will stand.

7.5.2 Students who have left the University and subsequently wish to rejoin their original programme to complete the final level(s) or stage(s) of their degree after their registration period has lapsed may be allowed to re-enrol on the programme under the principles outlined in 7.5.1 above as long as their prior learning is deemed current and appropriate. Where only some of the prior learning is deemed equivalent, the Programme Leader will assess the application and make a judgement about which level(s)/stage(s)/unit(s) may be carried forward. Where returning students are required to undertake additional learning and assessments, they may be expected to complete these successfully before they enrol on the programme. In all cases, the Programme Leader must inform the student of the timescales involved. Depending on the scale of additional learning required, the Programme Leader should make an academic judgement as to whether it will be more appropriate to treat such cases as RPL.

7.5.3 Students who have left the University and subsequently wish to rejoin a different programme should

be treated as Individual Unit Exemption or Direct Entry as appropriate whether or not their registration period has lapsed. However, students who have left the University and their programme has closed by the time they want to return to complete their original Bournemouth University programme may be treated as returning students if a cognate programme is identified for this purpose and the student has the appropriate underpinning and learning. The student would need to relinquish their previous award and could be required to undertake additional learning as described in 7.5.2 above.

- 7.5.4 Students who have failed and have been withdrawn from their original programme at Bournemouth University, and subsequently wish to return to the University cannot rejoin the same programme. Students who have failed and chosen to leave their original programme may be permitted to rejoin the same programme as long as they have not exhausted all their reassessment attempts and understand that they will carry forward their full assessment profile to date. Returning students who have failed their original programme may also be enrolled on a different programme in accordance with the admissions requirements for that programme. In such circumstances any application for credit should be treated as Individual Unit Exemption or Direct Entry.
- 7.5.5 Accredited learning that has been previously assessed for an award of the University should not be accepted as a basis of another award beyond the credit allowances prescribed above. Credit from one BU programme or unit(s) may normally be used towards another programme leading to the University's award on one occasion only. Where exceptions to this have been necessitated by PSRB or contractual requirements, these will have been formally approved by the University⁹. Exceptions may also be made at programme level if the programme structure is deemed to disadvantage the student's application.

Procedure

8. THE EXEMPTION PROCESS

8.1 *Individual Unit Exemption*

Advice to students

- 8.1.1 Enquiries regarding Individual Unit Exemption(s) may be received during the admissions process, but more commonly after the student has already commenced their studies. Applications for individual unit exemptions are dealt with by the Admissions Teams. Where this is the case, Admissions will liaise with the prospective student and the Faculty to progress the application. Sometimes enquiries come via the Future Students enquiry service and are directed to the relevant Admissions team for processing.
- 8.1.2 Potential applicants should be advised by the relevant Admissions team on the character of the evidence required to assess certificated and experiential learning, the time required to produce and/or provide the appropriate evidence and the process of assessing credit-worthiness. The responsibilities of the applicant to assemble the evidence should be made clear at an early stage in discussion. Advice and guidance should be given on methods of presenting evidence to meet the specified unit ILOs. This advice may be independent of the assessment of the evidence of their prior learning. No fee will be charged for applications.
- 8.1.3 The relevant Programme Leader or Faculty RPL Coordinator (or partner equivalent) will be able to provide initial advice about the unit(s) and possible level(s) for which exemptions might be considered, and are possible, within the credit allowances outlined in Section 7 of this document. In some cases, nominated administrative staff may also provide advice.

⁹ Where an HNC exists as a stand-alone programme to comply with Pearson's requirements, students may exceptionally use Level 4 credit for progression to Level 5 of an appropriate Foundation Degree and then once more if they progress to a Level 6 Top-Up or Level 6 of a full undergraduate degree.

- 8.1.4 Where relevant, applicants should be made aware that because RPL credits are awarded on a pass-fail basis, they will not contribute to the classification of the award (and where the profile regulation is applied, the number of credits on which it is based cannot be adjusted in order to apply the '2/3rds credit rule' to the remaining units at the final level of the named award). See section 5.1.2 above for details.

Application process

- 8.1.5 Applications for Individual Unit Exemption(s) should be made in writing to the Faculty/partner during the admissions process or within one month of the start of the unit for which credit is sought. This period may be considerably shorter depending on the delivery pattern. The appropriate evidence of any certificated or experiential learning must be attached to the application or provided subsequently at the request of the Faculty/partner.

Evidence provided by the student

- 8.1.6 Applications for Individual Unit Exemptions should be accompanied by supporting evidence to enable assessment. The collation and presentation of evidence is always the responsibility of the student. All submitted evidence from the student and a full record of the assessment decision-making process, should be held within the Faculty/partner on the student file.
- 8.1.7 The primary evidence for **RPCL applications** will take the form of an original certificate or transcript and appropriate supporting documentation. Sufficiently detailed documentation of the certified award must be obtained so the range and level of learning and attainment can be analysed, assessed and mapped against the exemptions sought. This may include programme handbooks and/or programme/unit specifications, to indicate the scope and level of the qualification for which credit is sought.
- 8.1.8 In most instances, evidence for **RPEL applications** will take the form of a portfolio of evidence. The evidence must clearly identify where the ILOs of unit(s) or level(s) have been met and demonstrated in order to claim credit. In addition, evidence must be presented to demonstrate the learning that has taken place, and not simply the experience that has been acquired by the applicant.
- 8.1.9 Where exemptions from the work experience component of a programme are sought, acceptable evidence may include:
- a logbook maintained as part of a programme, company training scheme or for a professional body;
 - job descriptions;
 - supervisors' or employers' reports;
 - a portfolio of work done in a training position including the learning from this work.
- 8.1.10 **All evidence must be provided in English.** If translation from another language is required, the accuracy and completeness of the translation must be independently verified.
- 8.1.11 The evidence submitted by the student may need to be augmented by, or substituted by, other forms of assessment such as a formally sat examination, viva voce examination, project, performance, written assignment, artefact or interview.
No decision can be made before appropriate supporting evidence has been received.
- 8.1.12 Students who apply for Individual Unit Exemption(s) will be assessed in relation to the ILOs of the specific unit(s) for which they require exemption. The Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) qualification descriptors are a key point of reference. Where possible, exemptions from non-credit bearing units (e.g. placements) should also be considered in relation to the specified intended learning outcomes.
- 8.1.13 Evidence of learning will be assessed on the basis of a threshold judgment, that is, whether the

applicant has met (or not met) the ILOs of the specified unit(s) or level(s). The assessment will therefore be made on a pass/fail basis and will not contribute to the classification of the award. In common with all other assessments, evidence of learning should be assessed in accordance with the University's generic assessment criteria and assessors should ensure that evidence is acceptable, sufficient, authentic and current. [NARIC](#) should be consulted to help benchmark overseas awards.

Informing the student

- 8.1.14 Students applying for exemptions on entry to a programme should be informed of the decision by the Admissions team by confirmation, or otherwise, of an offer of a place on the specified programme. However, Admissions do not require copies of the exemption form.
- 8.1.15 Students applying for exemptions during a programme should be informed in writing of the decision at the earliest opportunity.
- 8.1.16 For current students, the Faculty should keep copies of an unsuccessful application on the student's file. If a student is not satisfied with an unsuccessful application, they should address this through the Admissions Complaints Procedure or through the Faculty's complaints process as appropriate.

Completing an Exemption Form

- 8.1.17 The Faculty/partner must complete an Individual Unit Exemption Form (provided in Appendix 2) for all successful applications from current BU students. The Admissions Team will complete an Exemption Form for prospective students. The Exemption Form, which includes student information and the details of the exemption(s) permitted, must be signed by the receiving Programme Leader and the second (and third) assessor as outlined in section 8.1.11 above before an offer of a place. The original Exemption Form must be kept on file by the Faculty/partner.
- 8.1.18 In all cases, a completed Individual Unit Exemption Form must be sent, at the earliest opportunity, to studentlifecycle@bournemouth.ac.uk so the student assessment record can be amended. Alternatively, a hard copy of the original Exemption Form may be sent. An audit trail of the decision must be kept on the student's file in the Faculty. Note: Faculties and Student Lifecycle should ensure that the Finance team is advised of individual unit exemptions.

Ratification of the decision by the Programme Board

- 8.1.19 Details of the decision, and the credits awarded, will be reflected on the relevant Board report at the next scheduled meeting of the Programme Board for ratification.

8.2 <i>Direct Entry</i>

Advice to students

- 8.2.1 Enquiries regarding Direct Entry are always received during the admissions process. Applications for Direct Entry are dealt with by the relevant Admissions Team. Where this is the case, Admissions will liaise with the prospective student and the Faculty to progress the application. Sometimes enquiries come via the Future Students enquiry service and are directed to the relevant Admissions team for processing.
- 8.2.2 Potential applicants should be advised by the relevant Admissions team on the character of the evidence required to assess certificated and experiential learning, the time required to produce and/or provide the appropriate evidence and the process of assessing credit-worthiness. The responsibilities of the applicant to assemble the evidence should be made clear at an early stage in discussion. Advice and guidance should be given on methods of presenting evidence to meet the specified level outcomes/entry requirements for Direct Entry. This advice may be independent of the assessment of the evidence of their prior learning.

- 8.2.3 The relevant Programme Leader or Faculty RPL Coordinator (or partner equivalent) will be able to provide initial advice about the level(s) for which exemptions might be considered, and are possible, within the credit allowances outlined in Section 7 of this document. In some cases, nominated administrative staff may also provide advice.
- 8.2.4 Where relevant, applicants should be made aware that because RPL credits are awarded on a pass-fail basis, they will not contribute to the classification of the award (and where the profile regulation is applied, the number of credits on which it is based cannot be adjusted in order to apply the '2/3rds credit rule' to the remaining units at the final level of the named award). See section 5.1.2 above for details.

Application process

- 8.2.5 Applications for Direct Entry are made using the normal UCAS application form (full-time applicants) or Direct Application Form (part-time applicants) submitted by students through the admissions process and accompanied by supporting evidence where required. Applications are processed by the relevant Admissions team in liaison with the relevant Faculty. Due to the complex nature of the admissions process, applications cannot be accepted through Clearing, therefore applications received after the 30th June should be made through the Direct Application Form.

Evidence provided by the student

- 8.2.6 Applications for Direct Entry should be accompanied by supporting evidence to enable assessment. The collation and presentation of evidence is the responsibility of the student. The Admissions team retains the exemption form and proof of qualifications. All other submitted evidence from the student and a full record of the assessment decision-making process, should be held within the Faculty/partner on the student file. External examiners have the right to request access to assessment documentation, including decisions on RPL .
- 8.2.7 The primary evidence for **RPCL applications** will take the form of an original certificate or transcript and appropriate supporting documentation. Sufficiently detailed documentation of the certified award must be obtained so the range and level of learning and attainment can be analysed, assessed and mapped against the exemptions sought. This may include programme handbooks and/or programme/unit specifications, to indicate the scope and level of the qualification for which credit is sought. This is required at the point of enrolment and should not delay an offer being made. If a number of Direct Entry applicants apply from the same institution, or hold the same qualification (e.g. Pearsons HND), then this information may be obtained once, held on file within the Faculty/partner and referred to in all future identical cases. The file must be updated as appropriate to ensure currency of the information.
- 8.2.8 In most instances, evidence for **RPEL applications** will take the form of a portfolio of evidence. The evidence must clearly identify where the ILOs of unit(s) or level(s) have been met and demonstrated in order to claim credit. In addition, evidence must be presented to demonstrate the learning that has taken place, and not simply the experience that has been acquired by the applicant.
- 8.2.9 Where exemptions from the work experience component of a programme are sought, acceptable evidence may include:
- a logbook maintained as part of a programme, company training scheme or for a professional body;
 - job descriptions;
 - supervisors' or employers' reports;
 - a portfolio of work done in a training position including the learning from this work.
- 8.2.10 **All evidence must be provided in English.** If translation from another language is required, the accuracy and completeness of the translation must be independently verified.
- 8.2.11 The evidence submitted by the student may need to be augmented by, or substituted by, other forms of assessment such as a formally sat examination, viva voce examination, project,

performance, written assignment, artefact or interview. As the minimum volume of credit awarded through exemptions is a single unit, any additional assessments must be carried out successfully before the student can be exempt from the unit(s). Assessment methods must be valid for the nature of the evidence and where possible, should follow the same process as that of assessment for the units for which exemption is sought.

Assessment of the application

- 8.2.12 The Faculty/partner's assessment of the evidence for exemptions is based on academic judgement and will normally be made by the Programme Leader in liaison with the Unit Leader or Admissions Team. **All successful applications for Direct Entry must be approved by the Faculty RPL Coordinator. For partnership programmes the Link Tutor must be informed of all applications and decisions.** Where the two assessors cannot agree on a decision, a third assessor must be appointed (*compare to BU Independent Marking Policy in ARPP 6D – Marking, Independent Marking and Moderation: Policy and Procedure*). No decision can be made before appropriate supporting evidence has been received.
- 8.2.13 Students who apply for Direct Entry will be assessed in relation to the ILOs of the specified level(s) for which they require exemption. The QAA's qualification descriptors are a key point of reference. Where available and appropriate, the ILOs of a closely cognate programme may be used as a useful point of reference for assessing entry to a Top-up programme. Using this information and assessment, the Faculty/partner must decide whether the certified learning or evidence of experiential learning is equivalent to the units and/or level for which exemption is sought. Exemptions from non-credit bearing units (e.g. placements) may also be considered in relation to intended learning outcomes where these have been specified or the placement requirements as outlined in the programme (or unit) specification.
- 8.2.14 Evidence of learning will be assessed on the basis of a threshold judgment, that is, whether the applicant has met (or not met) the ILOs of the specified unit(s) or level(s). The assessment will therefore be made on a pass/fail basis and will not contribute to the classification of the award. In common with all other assessments, evidence of learning should be assessed in accordance with the University's generic assessment criteria and assessors should ensure that evidence is acceptable, sufficient, authentic and current. [NARIC](#) should be consulted to help benchmark overseas awards.

Informing the student

- 8.2.15 Students applying for Direct Entry to a programme should be informed of the decision by the Admissions team by confirmation, or otherwise, of an offer of a place on the specified programme. However, Admissions do not require copies of the exemption form.
- 8.2.16 The Faculty should keep copies of an unsuccessful application on the applicant or student file. If an applicant or student is not satisfied with an unsuccessful application, they should address this through the Admissions Complaints Procedure or through the Faculty's complaints process as appropriate.

Completing an Exemption Form

- 8.2.17 The relevant Admissions Team will complete a Direct Entry Exemption Form (provided in Appendix 3) for all successful applications from prospective students. The Exemption Form, which includes student information and the details of the exemption(s) permitted, must be signed by the receiving Programme Leader and the second (and third) assessor as outlined in 8.2.12 above before an offer of a place on a BU programme. The original Exemption Form must be uploaded to SITS. **An offer will not be made until the Admissions Team have received a signed RPL exemption form.**
- 8.2.18 Student Lifecycle will not require a copy of the Exemption Form as the application is picked up through the admissions process.

Ratification of the decision by the Programme Board

- 8.2.19 The standard Board agenda includes confirmation of all decisions by the relevant Programme Leader at the next scheduled meeting of the Programme Board and the credits awarded are ratified by virtue of approving the students' results.

8.3 *Articulation/Recognition with advanced standing*

Advice and application process

- 8.3.1 Enquiries regarding admissions through a formally approved inter-institutional Articulation/Recognition agreement are always received during the admissions process. Applications from potential UK students will be dealt with by the UK Admissions Team and non-UK students will be dealt with by the International Admissions Team.
- 8.3.2 Applications for **Recognition** from UK and international applicants come via UCAS whilst part-time applicants complete a Direct Application Form through the admissions process. The application must be accompanied by supporting evidence of appropriate attainment.
- 8.3.3 For Articulation arrangements, Partners must provide information about students wishing to progress by a given date agreed annually. Partners must provide evidence of student attainment in accordance with the Articulation Agreement to facilitate progression to specified BU programmes.

Evidence provided by the student

- 8.3.4 For students progressing from another institution to a Bournemouth University programme and award through an Articulation/Recognition arrangement, the evidence required in support of the application is the name of the underpinning programme or unit(s) from which they are progressing and certified evidence of successful completion and attainment.

Assessment of the application

- 8.3.5 Admissions/partner assessment of the appropriateness of the evidence is not required for applications through a predefined Articulation/Recognition arrangement as the suitability of the exemption has already been formally approved in accordance with the University's due approval processes.

Approval of the application

- 8.3.6 The application is considered through the admissions process in accordance with the receiving programme's admissions requirements. **Recognition does not guarantee entry but provides eligibility to apply to progress** to a BU programme, possibly on the basis of additional entry criteria. No decision can be made before appropriate supporting evidence has been received. **Articulation guarantees entry** from another institution's programme to a BU programme and may be on the basis of additional entry criteria such as Merit classification from the underpinning programme. Evidence of student attainment is submitted to BU by the associated Partner.
- 8.3.7 No Exemption Form is required as the appropriateness of the Articulation/Recognition arrangement has been previously tested and approved by the University.

Informing the student

- 8.3.8 Students should be informed of the decision by the Admissions team by confirmation, or otherwise, of an offer of a place on the specified programme.
- 8.3.9 If a student is not satisfied with an unsuccessful application, they should address this through the Admissions Complaints Procedure.

Ratification of the decision by the Programme Board

- 8.3.10 The standard Programme Board agenda includes confirmation of all decisions by the relevant Programme Leader at the next scheduled meeting of the Programme Board and the credits awarded

are ratified by virtue of approving the students' results.

8.4 **Internal Progression**

Advice and application process

- 8.4.1 Enquiries regarding admissions through a formally approved internal Progression route from one BU programme to another are always received during the admissions process. Applications from potential UK students will be dealt with by the UK Admissions Team and non-UK students will be dealt with by the International Admissions Team.
- 8.4.2 Students should be made aware of any requirements that pertain to their programme during the early stages of their study on the underpinning programme so they can make informed choices about progression. This includes awareness of any additional admissions hurdles such as Merit classification from the underpinning programme. This information should be included in the programme specification of both the underpinning and receiving programmes. Additional enquiries regarding admissions through an internal progression route should be directed to the relevant Programme Leader.
- 8.4.3 Applications for internal Progression from UK and international BU students come via UCAS whilst part-time students complete a Direct Application Form through the admissions process.

Assessment of the application

- 8.4.4 Admissions/partner assessment of the evidence for applications through a predefined internal Progression arrangement is not required as the suitability of the exemption has already been formally approved in accordance with the University's due approval processes.

Evidence provided by the student

- 8.4.5 For students progressing from one Bournemouth University programme to another through a formally approved internal Progression arrangement, the evidence required in support of the application is the name of the underpinning programme or unit(s) from which they are progressing. No further documentary or certificated evidence is required as the University will have confirmation of successful completion and attainment (for programmes with an additional admissions hurdle) of the stated programme or unit(s) through the central Student Record System.

Approval of the application

- 8.4.6 The application is considered through the admissions process in accordance with the receiving programme's admissions requirements. No Exemption Form is required as the appropriateness of the internal Progression arrangement has been previously tested and approved by the University.

Informing the student

- 8.4.7 Students should be informed of the decision by the Admissions team by confirmation, or otherwise, of an offer of a place on the specified programme.
- 8.4.8 For current students, the Faculty should keep copies of an unsuccessful application on the student's file. If a student is not satisfied with an unsuccessful application, they should address this through the Admissions Complaints Procedure or through the Faculty's complaints process as appropriate.

Ratification of the decision by the Programme Board

- 8.4.9 The standard Programme Board agenda includes confirmation of all decisions by the relevant Programme Leader at the next scheduled meeting of the Programme Board and the credits awarded are ratified by virtue of approving the students' results.

General

9. REFERENCES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

9.1 *Internal references and further information*

- 9.1.1 *3Q - Movement of students between programmes: Procedure* outlines the principles, definitions and operational processes that should be followed when students move from one programme of study to another or make subject stream and pathway choices. It also includes guidance for Faculties/partners on the implementation of transitional arrangements which facilitate the transfer of students from old to new curricula, and withdrawal and re- enrolment of students who wish to change their area of study completely.
- 9.1.2 *4D – Continuing Professional Development (CPD): Policy and Procedure* outlines the principles and processes for CPD.

9.2 *External references and further information*

- 9.2.1 The [QAA's UK Quality Code for Higher Education \(2018\)](#)
- 9.2.2 The [UK Quality Code, Advice and Guidance: Assessment \(November 2018\)](#) outlines the nationally agreed key principles relating to RPL.
- 9.2.3 Qualifications and Credit Frameworks including the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications for UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (2014)
- 9.2.4 United Kingdom Credit Forum jointly run by NUCCAT and SEEC
- 9.2.5 Education & Skills Funding Agency - Apprenticeship Funding rules for training providers

This policy was reviewed according to the University's Equality Analysis Procedure in July 2019.

10. APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 [Summary of the exemption process](#)
Appendix 2 [Exemption Form – Individual Unit Exemption](#)
Appendix 3 [Exemption Form – Direct Entry](#)