

PROVIDER NAME: St. Nicholas Montessori College Ireland (SNMCI)

POLICY AREA:

Programmes of Education and Training



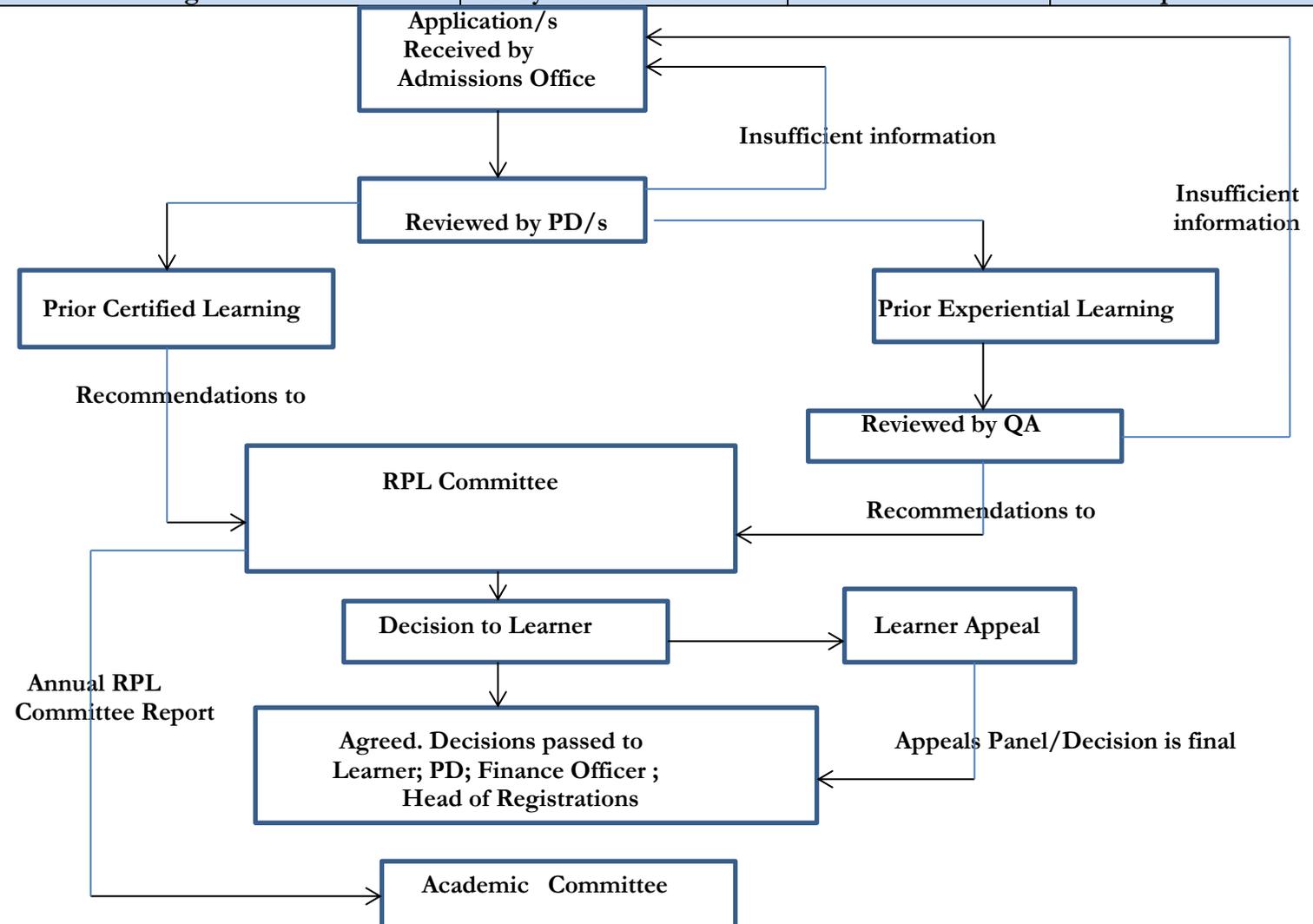
**ST. NICHOLAS
MONTESSORI**

Policy Title: Recognition of Prior Learning

Policy Number: C 3

Version: 3:0

Date: Sep 2018



Introduction and Context:-

The purpose of this document is to detail Saint Nicholas Montessori College Ireland (SNMCI)'s policy and procedures in accrediting Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL).

Definitions:-

Recognition of Prior Learning is a term used to denote the assessment processes conducted in the form of initial entry or advanced entry onto a programme of study, which awards credit/ exemptions to the applicant. The institution must be satisfied that the evidence presented demonstrates the learning has been achieved prior to admission onto its programme.

Prior Certified Learning is learning that has already been accredited by an awarding body such as Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), Universities, Institutes of Technology etc. It can also be applied to international awards. This may entitle the applicant to:

- (a) Admission to a programme or course of study.
- (b) The award of advanced academic standing.
- (c) The award of exemptions from modules on a programme.

Where PCL is the basis for RPL, the applicant is required to produce evidence of the certified learning which may include the following:

- (a) Transcript of results;
- (b) Syllabus of previous modules/ subjects, and
- (c) Past exam papers where appropriate

Prior Experiential Learning denotes knowledge or skills acquired through life, work experience and study, not attested through formal certification.

Academic Credit can only be awarded on the basis of the demonstrable achievement of the learning outcomes (not the experience).

Principles:-

SNMCI applies the following principles in the application of its RPL procedures;

- (a) RPL will give value to all learning, both certified and experiential;
- (b) Participation in RPL is a voluntary matter for the learner;
- (c) RPL will provide opportunities for access, transfer and progression in education and training;
- (d) RPL should be fully embedded within the quality assurance procedures of SNMCI;
- (e) As RPL must maintain the standards of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and its awards, applications must be made in context of a programme offered by SNMCI;
- (f) Processes and practices for the RPL should be clearly documented;
- (g) Processes and practices for the RPL should be communicated openly and clearly to all participants in the process *i.e. applicants, Programme Directors, lecturers, admissions staff, assessors etc;*
- (h) Assessment criteria for RPL should be published, made explicit to applicants, and applied consistently and fairly;
- (i) Assessment criteria should be based on learning outcomes of awards or standards of knowledge, skill and competence as set out by QQI;
- (j) Assessment and verification mechanisms for the RPL should be appropriate and fit for purpose;
- (k) Guidance and support should be available for applicants and all those involved in the RPL process;

- (l) RPL processes should be easy to understand, fair and transparent and be conducted in a reasonable time frame;
- (m) The RPL processes should be organised in such a way that they do not create barriers for the applicant;
- (n) Appropriate resources to support the processes for the RPL should be in place;
- (o) An appropriate appeals mechanism should be in place;

GUIDING POLICY DOCUMENTS

Principles and Operational Guidelines for the Recognition of Prior Learning in Further and Higher Education and Training (NQAI, 2005)
Assessment and Standards (QQI 2016)
Recognition of Prior Learning – A Focus on Practice (EIE Project, 2009)

Staff Involved:-

Admissions
Learner/Applicant
PD
QA
RPL Committee

Roles and Responsibilities:-

Admissions Officer

- (a) Ensures each applicant is aware of RPL guidelines, including the need to apply in good time;
- (b) Refers applications for RPL to the Programme Director/s as applicable;

Applicant

- (a) Provide appropriate evidence, including portfolio to support RPL application;
- (b) Responds in a timely manner to requests for additional information/ clarifications;
- (c) May invoke appeals procedure against decision of RPL Committee;

Programme Director

- (a) Reverts to applicant if there are gaps in the application documentation;
- (b) Makes recommendations to the Director of Quality on initial evaluation of applications for RPL;
- (c) Acts as member of RPL Committee;

Director of Quality

- (a) Notes the recommendations of the Programme Director on applications for Prior Certified Learning;
- (b) Notes the recommendations of the Programme Director on applications for Prior Experiential Learning;
- (c) Acts as member of RPL Committee;
- (d) Makes recommendations to RPL Committee particularly as they relate to Prior Experiential Learning;

<p>outcomes of the module(s)/programme for which the applicant is seeking the exemption(s). Where there is sufficient similarity, then an exemption may be awarded. It is at the discretion of the Programme Director to decide what is sufficiently similar.</p> <p>(c) Currency of Prior Certified Learning. The PCL must have been achieved in a comparatively appropriate time frame. While it is difficult to be definitive with regard to that time-scale, the Programme Director must take account of the nature of the curriculum content. For example, the regulatory framework in ECEC has changed dramatically in recent times, while e.g. the core elements of sociology/psychology outcomes remain valid across a longer span.</p> <p>Foreign Qualifications Applicants seeking RPCL on the basis of foreign qualifications should contact Qualifications Recognition (www.qualificationsrecognition.ie) to have their qualifications aligned with the appropriate Irish qualification. If any of the evidence submitted as part of this process is not available in English, then it must be translated and stamped by a translation service. The onus is on each applicant to ensure that the information submitted is accurate.</p> <p>Guidelines for Prior Certified Learning when dealing with exemptions It is the applicant's responsibility to apply for the RPCL in advance of the programme commencement. If a decision has not been received before the commencement of the programme, applicants must continue to attend class until a decision has been made (and written confirmation received) on whether the exemption is granted or not.</p> <p>PCL may entitle the candidate to exemptions on a programme and the record for that learner should be noted on the broadsheet as an EX (Exemption Granted) for the module(s) in question.</p> <p>Conditions/ Recommendations Exemptions/ advanced academic standing are awarded on the basis of the demonstrable achievement of the programme/ module learning outcomes. Where the Programme Director is of the view that these have not been fully achieved, he/she has the right to recommend that exemptions be granted with conditions / recommendations (<i>e.g. additional research/ assignment is carried out, attendance at specific workshops etc.</i>)</p> <p>Limitations for Prior Certified Learning When PCL is accepted as the basis for granting an exemption on a programme of study, additional applications using the same learning for the granting of further exemptions in the same programme will</p>	<p>Learner</p> <p>Learner</p> <p>Examinations office</p> <p>PD QA</p>	<p>Translated Transcripts Syllabi Assessment outlines</p>
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normally not be considered.

Some programmes may require a limitation on the volume of exemptions or on the type of learning that may be exempt due to implications for third party or other State/ professional bodies.

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING (PEL)

Introduction

This involves the awarding of credit for learning from experience. This is primarily intended for mature applicants who have acquired learning through experience or through non-accredited bodies. As a general principle, credit is given for learning, *not for experience per se*. The portfolio of evidence must be prepared in such a way that the matching of the module learning outcomes to the prior learning is clearly demonstrated.

Portfolio of Evidence

To achieve this, the applicant must submit evidence, which may be as follows:

- (a) References from previous employers;
- (b) CV, outlining career, voluntary work etc.;
- (c) Job descriptions and experiences, verified by an employer;
- (d) Details of any 'on the job' training, supported by certificates for qualifications, training courses etc.;
- (e) Sample work such as drawings, minutes from meetings, lesson plans and other specific tasks undertaken in the workplace;
- (f) Evidence from the applicant's personal life;
- (g) Published work;
- (h) Professional licenses/registrations or membership of professional organisations;
- (i) Acknowledged accomplishments;
- (j) Diaries and other journals supporting evidence of learning;
- (k) Relevant recreational activities or hobbies;

The applicant may be required to provide verification from previous or current employers that the learning stated has been achieved. As part of the assessment, the Programme Director/ Director of Quality may also interview the applicant.

Applicant's Responsibility

It is the applicant's responsibility to apply for RPEL through the Admissions Process. The Admissions Officer will pass the application for evaluation to the Programme Director. Applicants must submit their claim on the relevant form.

Learner

Portfolio of evidence
As described

Learner

<p>Limitations for Prior Experiential Learning When PEL is accepted as the basis for granting an exemption on a programme of study, further application using the same learning for the granting of further exemptions in the same programme will normally not be considered.</p> <p>RPL AND THE MODULE/ STAGE</p> <p>Introduction SNMCI is committed to the promotion of RPL as a means to the realisation of learners' ambitions. It is important that the learner is aware of the context of the decision and his/ her programme of study. This section details this.</p> <p>Module A module is a discreet unit of learning, integrated within itself, but also with other modules with the programme of study. SNMCI's policy is to construct modules on the basis of multiples of 5 ECTS, with 5 ECTS being the most common. For this reason, exemptions may only be awarded for complete modules.</p> <p>Results When approved by the Examinations Board, the outcome of the RPL process, irrespective of the source of PCL or PEL, will lead to the result EXEMPTION GRANTED in the non-award stage.</p> <p>RPL in Award Stage Exemptions are not allowed in the Award Stage of any programme. Any module which forms the basis of award classification must be marked/ graded for that purpose.</p> <p>EXTERNAL EXAMINER The External Examiner has the right to review material which ordinarily forms part of SNMCI's examinations and awarding of marks. For this reason, all evidence submitted by the applicant to support his/ her application for RPL, together with SNMCI's recommendations must be kept for the normal period specified for retaining archived assessment documents.</p> <p>APPEAL PROCESS In common with any assessment process, the outcome of the RPL process may be subject to appeal. The applicant must clearly specify the ground of appeal, within 10 days of the notification of the original decision. This should be sent to the RPL Committee. A suitably qualified member of academic</p>	<p>Programme Administrator</p> <p>QA</p>	
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<p>staff, external to the RPL Committee and the Director of Quality will review the appeal. The decision of the Appeals Panel, which should be notified with 20 days, is final.</p> <p>COSTS The fee for the submission of RPL application will be determined by the CEO on an annual basis. The fees will reflect the volume of work undertaken by SNMCI to support the learner in preparing the application and its subsequent assessment. There will be a separate fee for those submitting an appeal.(Determined yearly)</p>		
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Monitoring		
	Frequency	Monitoring Method(s)
	Yearly	RPL Committee Review

Policy Control Sheet				
Policy		Recognition of Prior Learning		
Responsible Officer(s)		Chair RPL Committee/Director of Quality		
Issuance Date		Sep 2018		
Effective Date				
Last Review Date				
Supersedes		Version 2.0		
Next Review Date		Jan 2019		
Designated Reviewer(s)		RPL Committee		
Scope				
Revision	Approval Date	Revision Description	Originator	Approved By
New Policy				A.C.
Version	3.0			

References	
SNMCI Policy area	Recognition of Prior Learning
Statutory & System Wide Basis	
Related SNMCI Policies / Forms	RPL Learner Information Guide; RPL Application Form; RPL Evaluation Sheet (sample);