Appendix A

Recognition of Prior Learning

THE ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING (APEL) – STUDENT GUIDE - BUILDING A PORTFOLIO

A portfolio is one of the ways of presenting evidence to support a claim for the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL). As its name suggests, a portfolio is made up of various component parts which combine to demonstrate your prior learning. It usually takes the form of a folder containing statements about what has been learnt together with documentation or other material which acts as evidence in support of your claim.

It may be appropriate for assessment to take the form of, for example, an interview or the observation of your performance. If this is the case, the record of the assessment process will form part of your portfolio. If you feel that these forms of assessment are appropriate in your case, discuss the matter with your Adviser.

Appropriate sources of experiential learning may include work experience, voluntary work, short courses or other relevant activities.

In building your portfolio it is important to remember that you cannot get credit just because you have done something in the past. It is the learning that arises from your experience which provides the basis for its award. It is essential therefore to include in your portfolio a substantial element of analysis and reflection which can clearly demonstrate the separation of learning from experience. Your Adviser can help you with this process.

Normally a portfolio should include:

- a statement of the claim for credit. This must identify as precisely as possible the credit which is being claimed
- a CV – this puts the claim into context and assists the assessor in making a judgement
- a commentary identifying the learning gained from each experience
- a list of the evidence cross referenced to each learning outcome
- full evidence in appendices as appropriate
- a relevant bibliography as appropriate.

The evidence (and its associated commentary) that you present in any portfolio should have certain characteristics. It should be:

- Sufficiently detailed and in enough depth for the assessor to be sure that your learning has covered all the subject matter required
- At a level appropriate to the specific credit claimed. Level descriptors are available to help you with this
• Authentic – you must be able to prove that the evidence is all your own work
• Current - the University would normally expect your experience to have been
gained within the past 5 years.

Evidence of experiential learning may be **direct** or **indirect**.

Examples of **direct** evidence include:
• reports e.g. from work based projects
• assignments from previous non-academic-credit-bearing courses
• in-company projects and presentations
• reflective diaries
• professional or personal development portfolios compiled for professional bodies
  or for other awards.

Examples of **indirect** evidence include:
• testimony and witness statements e.g. from an employer or client
• certificates of achievement / attendance from previous non-academic-credit-
  bearing courses.

Evidence formats may differ and may, in addition to written documentation, take the
form of:

• electronic material
• log books and diaries
• video recording.

**Documentation to accompany the claim**

You will need to submit with your application:

• the originals of the evidence listed
• a Stamped Addressed Envelope for their return.

Once the APEL process is complete, your application will be returned to you. Please
note that you must retain the originals of all APEL related documentation whilst
completing your study at the University, and until graduation.

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