

Accreditation of Prior Learning & Credit Transfer Policy

Groups Responsible for Policy Review:	Academic Board
Executive Team Member Responsible:	Academic Secretary and Director of Academic Services
Date Last Approved:	September 2024
To be Reviewed:	Every 36 months
Review consultation:	Academic Board, Programme Leaders
Date of Next Review period:	Autumn 2027

1. Scope

- 1.1 This document defines and describes the London School of Theology's (LST) policy, procedures and process relating to;
- a. The awarding of '**Accreditation of Prior Learning**' (APL), and '**Accreditation of Prior Experimental Learning**' (APEL)
 - b. '**Internal Credit Transfers**'
 - c. '**Continuing Credit Transfer**'
- 1.2 This document is based on Middlesex University Regulations, [<http://www.mdx.ac.uk/regulations>] and is informed by the principles outlined in the QAA 'Guidelines for the Accreditation of Prior Learning' 2011, 2022.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. **Accreditation of Prior Learning** [APL] is the overall term used by LST for the recognition and award of, academic credit on the basis of demonstrated learning that has occurred at some time in the past. This learning may have come about as the result of previous academic study or as the result of previous professional or ministerial qualifications. The previous learning must be relevant to the programme for which a student is applying, and if their application is successful, the credit will count towards their chosen programme of study.
- 2.2. **Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning** [APEL] is the overall term used by LST for the recognition and award of credit for learning based on prior experience (e.g. from professional, ministry, community or volunteer experience), which has not previously been assessed and/or awarded academic credit.
- 2.3. No APL credit may be given for partial completion of a course/module unit. Credit can only be given for whole units/modules, where consideration has been given to mapping the Intended Learning Outcomes of the unit to the evidence provided of prior learning.
- 2.4. APL & APEL is used at LST to enable a student to gain;
- a. **Advanced Standing** on a programme: for example commence their studies at a higher level than the normal entry point to that programme.
 - b. **Credit** against some of the module learning outcomes of a programme that will count towards a final award.
 - c. **Internal Student Credit Transfer** describes the situation where a LST student wishes to transfer their credit from one LST undergraduate programme to another.
 - d. **Continuing Student Credit Transfer** relates to a LST student who has successfully completed the programme of studies that they were registered on (Cert HE / Dip HE) but now desires to continue their studies at the next level (Dip HE/ BA).
- 2.5 Closed Music and Worship programmes refers to the following programmes:
BA Theology and Music

BA Theology, Music and Worship
BA Theology and Creative Musicianship
BA Theology and Worship

3. Accreditation of Prior Learning & Credit Transfer Panel (APLT Panel)

3.1. **Responsibility:** The APLT Panel has delegated responsibility from the Academic Board to make decisions regarding;

- a. The accreditation of prior learning where an applicant is seeking;
 - i. Advanced standing on a programme
 - ii. And/or credit against some of the module learning outcomes
- b. The internal transfer of students from one undergraduate programme to another.
- c. The registration of a student who desire to continue their studies to the next level having successfully completed their original programme.

3.2. **Authority:** The APLT Panel has the authority to;

- a. Approve applications for APL & APEL
- b. To set conditions on APL/APEL by requiring applicants,
- c. To complete additional APL/APEL prior to commencing a programme at LST
- d. And/or studying certain modules as part of their programme at LST
- e. Approve the internal inter-programme transfer of credit from one undergraduate programme to another.
- f. Approve requests for continuing study at the next level of a programme.

3.3. **Membership:** The APLT Panel consists of the;

- a. Academic Secretary [Chair]
- b. Programme Leader of either;
 - i. the programme for which the application for APL/APEL is being made.
 - ii. or the programme into which the internal transfer is being requested.
 - iii. Or the programme in which continuing study is being requested.
- c. Registrar or their nominee,
- d. A member of the Admissions Team
- e. Academic Administrator [Secretary]

3.4. **Frequency of Meetings:** The APLT Panel will normally meet in September, January, March, and July. The Chair of the APLT Panel as required may call further meetings. Dates of the APLT Panel will be established as part of the LST Calendar of Academic Meetings.

3.5. **Recording:** The decision of the APLT Panel will be formally noted in the applicant's/student's file and in the Student Information System (SIS). Details relating to approved advance standing or module credit will be indicated on the student's SIS record and their Transcript.

3.6. **Reporting:** The APLT Panel secretary will formally communicate the panel's decisions to the applicants/students within 7 working days including a brief summary of the rationale for the decision.

3.7. **Complaints:** Applicants/students should in the first instance address their concerns to the Assistant Registrar, if this does not satisfactorily resolve the issue then the applicant/student is able to use the LST Student Academic Complaints Procedure.

4. Assessment of Prior Learning

- 4.1. In order that the APLT Panel can assess prior learning, appropriate evidence must be submitted to support an application.
- 4.2. Applicants may apply for admission with APL, having undertaken study or learning elsewhere, or previously at the School. The maximum number of credits for which exemption may be given are as follows:

Undergraduate Level	
Certificate of Higher Education	up to 60 credits
Diploma of Higher Education	Up to 120 credits with no more than 40 credits at HE level 5
BA Honours degree	Up to 240 credits with no more than 40 credits at HE level 6

Postgraduate Level	
Postgraduate Certificate	up to 30 credits
Postgraduate Diploma	up to 60 credits
MA degree	up to 120 credits

- 4.3 APL Applications will require evidence such as;
- Award Certificate
 - Transcript
 - Programme Specification or equivalent showing subject content, volume and level of learning.
 - Programme Handbook or equivalent.
 - Module Descriptors
- 4.4 APEL Applications will require;
- Identification of the specific learning derived from the experience and its relevance to the module.
 - Systematic statements clearly articulating the learning achieved through the experience.
 - Appropriate evidence to support any statements made.
- 4.5 Documents submitted must be either be original documents or legally certified copies.

5. Appropriate Academic Credit

- 5.1. Decisions regarding the accreditation of prior learning are a matter of academic judgement.
- 5.2. Applications should meet the following criteria:
- Evidence must be current (not more than 5 years from the date of award)
 - Evidence must be authenticated
 - Evidence must be acceptable (according to the Framework of Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ))
 - Evidence must be sufficient (additional evidence can be requested)
- 5.3. In order for previously gained academic credit to be approved by the APLT Panel it must;
- Demonstrate equality with UK Higher Education academic credit at the level at which APL is being sought. This would normally require the credit to have been gained in a programme validated by a UK University. Where there is uncertainty about the equitability of the level of credit, particularly if the credit has been gained in a non-UK institution, then the applicant may be required to provide a [UK ENIC 'Statement of Comparability'](#).
 - Be of equal quantity to the APL, which is being sought.
 - Have been gained in either;
 - an academic programme whose Programme Learning Outcomes clearly match those of the Programme for which APL being applied for.
 - and/or Individual modules where the Module Learning Outcomes clearly match those of the modules for which APL being applied for.

6. External Credit Transfer

- 6.1. Credit already obtained at another institution may be re-used towards qualifications at LST
- 6.2. Credit, which has already been re-used towards other qualifications at another institution, must not normally be used towards a second qualification at the same or lower level.
- 6.3. A student may be permitted to transfer credit taken in another institution provided:
 - a. that the academic level of these units can be established
 - b. and not more than two thirds of the total required for a qualification is transferred in this way.
- 6.4. Credit previously obtained will contribute to the satisfaction of the criteria for a qualification, but will not contribute grades for the classification of qualifications.
- 6.5. Normally credit towards a new qualification must have been gained no more than five years before the programme of study commences.
- 6.6. External Credit transfer can only take place before the commencement of a programme of studies.

7. Internal Credit Transfer

- 7.1. Internal transfer of credit from one LST validated programme to another, is permissible only where there is an appropriate correlation between the Programme Learning Outcomes of the programme being transferred from and those of the programme being transferred to.
- 7.2. Due to the subject specific programme learning outcomes of the Theology and Counselling, the Music and Worship programmes, transfer between these programmes or to them from the Theology programmes is not normally permitted. Except that;
 - a. Internal transfer between the closed Music and Worship programmes and the Theology and Worship studies programme is permissible under certain conditions (see 7.f.ii below)
 - b. Students wishing to transfer into the Theology and Counselling, and Theology and Worship Studies programmes from any other LST programme may be given exceptional permission to make an APL or APEL application.
- 7.3. Internal transfer of credit is to facilitate the transfer of a student from one LST programme to another.
- 7.4. Where programme transfer is allowed, students transferring programmes after completion of their first semester (or 60 credits of study for BA Theological Studies students) all module assessment relating to their studies in the first semester must be successfully completed in accordance with the requirements of the programme that they are transferring from. This includes any re-assessment requirements from the Board of Examiners.
- 7.5. The APLT Panel will;
 - 7.5.1 Consider the programme transfer request taking note of the student's academic record, comments from their personal tutor and current programme leader.
 - 7.5.2 Ensure that the potential programme transfer will provide the opportunity for the student to meet:
 - a. The module learning outcomes, assessment and timetabled teaching and learning requirements for the programme that the student is seeking to transfer to.
 - b. Any module pre-requisite requirements.
 - c. Any additional programme admission criteria
- 7.6. **Internal Transfer of Credit is permissible in the following circumstances:**
 - 7.6.1 Transfer into the Cert HE/ Dip HE / BA Theology Programme: Students studying the Theology and Counselling, any of the closed Music and Worship programmes, BA Theology and Worship Studies and BA Theological Studies programmes can transfer into the Theology programme at the following points
 - a. At the start of semester two in Level 4 of the Theology programme
 - b. At the commencement of the level 5 Theology programme
 - 7.6.2 Additionally, students studying the BA Theological Studies programme can also transfer into the Theology programme at the following points

- i. At the start of semester two in Level 5 of the Theology programme
 - ii. At the commencement of the level 6 Theology programme.
- c. Transfer into the Cert HE / Dip HE / BA Theology and Worship Studies Programme: Students studying any of the closed Music and Worship programmes can transfer into the Theology and Worship Studies programme at the following points
 - i. At the start of semester two in Level 4
 - ii. At the commencement of level 5

8. Continuing Student Credit Transfer

- 8.1. Students who have successfully completed their registered programme of studies at LST (Cert HE, Dip HE, PG Cert or PG Dip) may be given permission continue their studies to the next academic level/s by transferring the credit from their completed programme to the new programme.
- 8.2. The APLT Panel will;
 - i. Consider the programme transfer request taking note of the student's academic record, comments from their personal tutor and programme leader.
 - ii. Ensure that the student has met all the criteria for progression into the new level of the programme.
- 8.3. The APLT Panel may;
 - i. Require the student seeking approval to be interviewed using the normal LST criteria prior to making a decision.

9. Application Process:

- 9.1. Advice and support will be given to applicants in the preparation of their application by the Registrar.
- 9.2. Applications remain the responsibility of the individual applicant, as is the gathering and presentation of any appropriate evidence required to support any claim. LST are not financially responsible for any charges incurred by an applicant in providing this evidence; e.g. certificates, transcripts, certified copies etc.
- 9.3. In the case of APL / APEL applications can only be made once a student has made a formal application, including appropriate payment, to study at LST.
- 9.4. APL / APEL applications can only be made prior to the commencement of a programme of studies, except that registered LST students seeking transfer through internal credit may make an application during their studies.
- 9.5. APL / APEL application must be made using the 'Application for Accreditation of Prior Learning' form.
- 9.6. Requests for internal student credit transfer or continuing student credit transfer approval must be made using the 'Application for Change of Programme' form.
- 9.7. Informal comment about general suitability of an application and or evidence to be submitted may be made by the Registrar, relevant Programme Leader or the Academic Secretary. This informal advice however does not:
 - a. Constitute a formal statement by LST regarding the appropriateness or otherwise of any evidence submitted as an application for APL / APEL
 - b. Infer any judgement relating to a future decision that may be made by the APLT Panel.
- 9.8. Each 'Application for Accreditation of Prior Learning' and 'Application for Change of Programme' will be subject to an administrative charge

Approved by the Academic Board 11th September 2024.