



## ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

### *A Practitioner's Guide*

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## 1. Introduction

The accreditation of prior and experiential learning is a process that enables people of all ages, backgrounds and attitudes to receive formal recognition for skills and knowledge they already possess. A person's learning and experience can be formally recognised and taken into account to:

- gain entry to further or higher education courses
- give exemption from certain parts of a new course of study
- qualify for an award in an appropriate subject in further or higher education

These outcomes are based on an examination of the principal objectives and competences of the courses prescribed by the institution. The candidate's prior qualifications and experience are compared against those objectives and competences. For the prior learning and experience to be deemed to be of value, there must be a good match between the prior learning and experience and the specified learning objectives and competences. This is the essence of the AP(E)L process.

## 2. About this guide

This guide has been developed following a review of the academic literature about AP(E)L visits to institutions already practising AP(E)L and by personal experience of working through the AP(E)L process. We hope it will be of value in:

- Training and informing staff in institutions that already have AP(E)L procedures
- Assisting institutions to establish or modify internal AP(E)L procedures and practises.

It may also be useful in establishing procedures to assess the learning that has taken place in a 'free' (uncontrolled) environment, such as individual or group projects or work placements.

The level of detail that must be adopted in matching a candidate's level of prior learning and experience against the competences demanded by the institution will vary. It will reflect both the admissions policy of an institution and the awarding policy of the examining or accrediting body. For example, some universities operate credit transfer and accumulation systems in which 'free' credit may be possible. This allows a candidate who has successfully completed any modular course of the appropriate level to be given credit for that module which will contribute towards the final qualification. In contrast, in vocational education, Edexcel/BTEC demand that a candidate must be able to demonstrate that (s)he can perform each principal competence before a module may be awarded.

Readers should therefore interpret and apply the guidelines presented here in a way that matches the regulations, protocols and philosophy of the accrediting body that will be awarding the candidates credit for their prior learning and experience.

## 3. What is AP(E)L? – a definition of terms

APL and APEL improve access to education and training and the awarding of academic, vocational and professional qualifications by recognising that learning is continuous, taking place at work, home and at leisure, as well as in the classroom. The process provides a route for recognising achievements and allows those achievements to contribute towards a qualification, a single module of study or a whole programme of study.

Although the AP(E)L process can be used to gain exceptional entry to or exemption from a programme of study, this is not its primary purpose. The AP(E)L process focuses on assessment and certification of the prior learning and experience. At the end of the process, a successful candidate could be awarded:

- Entry to an academic course of study
- Exemption from elements of the proposed course of study
- Credit points towards an academic qualification
- Units/modules recognised by a Certificate of Achievement
- Units/modules accumulated towards a full qualification
- A full qualification.

The terms APL (Accreditation of Prior Learning) and APEL (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning) generally describe the same process, but there is a difference in the nature of the evidence provided to support a candidate's claim for recognition of previous qualifications or experience.

APL generally refers to the situation when the candidate has attended relevant organised prior-learning which has been assessed by the learning provider, and for which certificates are awarded on completion.

APEL generally refers to incidental prior learning which is un-assessed. Such learning may be gained through unstructured experiences, arising from leisure pursuits, family experiences and work. It also includes un-assessed formal training courses. Certificates may or may not be available as evidence that the learning has taken place.

*This difference between APL and APEL is significant, and has consequences for both the candidate, and for the accrediting institution. This will be discussed in more detail in Section 5 below.*

One thing AP(E)L is not: it is not credit for life experiences. Candidates do not receive recognition for what they have experienced in life. Although all that they have learned in life may be of value to them, the AP(E)L process focuses on and gives credit for their attainments, skills and knowledge – in other words, their ‘competences’.

#### **4. Who will benefit from AP(E)L?**

APL and APEL are of particular value to:

- Mature students returning to education who lack the formal qualifications required for entry to a course of study. APEL can be used to gain access to a course of further or higher education.
- Students of all ages who wish to study overseas, and whose domestic qualifications are not automatically accepted for entry to the overseas course of study. Here, APL can be used to gain access to the course of study.
- Past students who have previous further and higher educational qualifications but who now seek to add to those qualifications in order to broaden their expertise or change careers. APL can be used to avoid repeating specific modules of learning by providing evidence that prior learning has already taken place.
- Students who wish to return to courses of study that have been interrupted by work or family commitments. Again, APL can provide evidence that prior learning has occurred.
- Those who are seeking the award of professional qualifications and need to provide evidence of specific training and practical work experience. APL and APEL provide the framework for collecting and presenting the evidence that is required.
- Students on full or part-time courses who wish to gain recognition (using APEL) for informal learning that has taken place through work or leisure –related activities.

## 5. Steps in the AP(E)L process

The AP(E)L process is essentially about three processes:

- identifying what a person can do
- equating those skills and knowledge with specific standards or requirements and
- crediting the learner in an appropriate manner

These processes take five steps to complete. These are:

- i. Candidate profiling
- ii. Gathering the evidence
- iii. Assessing the evidence
- iv. Accreditation
- v. Review of progress

These are discussed in more detail below.

However, before embarking on the AP(E)L process, it is recommended that the institution holds an introductory discussion with the candidate to see if the process is likely to be mutually valuable and useful.

### Step one: Candidate profiling

Should the preliminary discussions reveal that the AP(E)L process will be of value, the candidate and institution may embark on the AP(E)L process. The first step is normally for the candidate to attend a profiling interview so that the institution can assess his / her needs and requirements in detail; and can identify the potential match between any prior learning and experience to the programme on offer. This interview should also outline the AP(E)L process and make clear the contribution that the candidate will need to make to this process.

It is helpful for the candidate to bring to this meeting background information about him/her self. For example:

- A current curriculum vitae
- Academic certificates
- Details of other certificates and awards, including certificates of attendance at short courses and professional qualifications

After the interview, the institution will be able to recommend to the candidate what action (s)he will need to take if the AP(E)L process is to be taken to a successful conclusion.

### Step two: Gathering the evidence

The second step requires the candidate to gather evidence about his/her previous qualifications and experience to support the claim for entry to or credit towards the qualification being sought. The sort of evidence that will need to be compiled is as follows:

- i. Details of previous courses studied, supported by certificates showing successful completion of them

- ii. A report of accomplishments and skills focussing on the criteria or learning outcomes for which the candidate can receive recognition. This should be supported by a statement from an independent referee.
- iii. Copies of reports, and documents written by the candidate, supported by witness statements that the documents are your own work
- iv. Copies of presentations made by the candidate (again, supported by witness statements)
- v. Copies of work instructions carried out by the candidate (plus witness statements confirming the capability to undertake them successfully)

Hobbies and voluntary work can be included, especially when they have resulted in additional 'competences'.

Whilst the onus for this lies entirely with the candidate, the institution will need to support and advise him/her by:

- providing self-assessment checklists
- supplying written guidelines & videos
- appointing an AP(E)L tutor who will organise group work-shops and regular one-to-one discussions with AP(E)L candidates throughout this stage.

The skills, expertise, knowledge and understanding achieved by the candidate needs to be matched against the learning outcomes and performance criteria demanded by the institution. This is often best carried out by the student and the AP(E)L tutor working together in partnership.

Evidence of the candidate's prior education, training, work and life experiences should be compiled and presented in a portfolio. This ensures that all the evidence is collected into a single document. The portfolio should be suitably organised and indexed to show the link between the candidate's competences, and those required by the institution.

To complete this step successfully, the candidate will need to work in an organised and timely fashion. Regular contact between the candidate and the AP(E)L tutor can help in establishing (and achieving) deadlines and milestones, and in bringing planning and discipline to the whole process.

*For the student this second step is crucial, not only in its affect on the final outcome of the AP(E)L process but also in its impact on the wider benefits that the process can bring ([see section 7 below](#)).*

### **Step three: Assessing the evidence**

The completed portfolio is examined by an internal or external assessor, whose job is to evaluate the portfolio through the following actions:

**Reviewing the portfolio for completeness:** a check is made that the evidence provided relates to the standards or learning outcomes being claimed and that there are no gaps in the evidence. Some learning outcomes / performance criteria may be considered essential by the institution, and evidence must be provided that the candidate has achieved these. Others may be desired but not essential. [The AP(E)L tutor should provide guidance to the candidate as these requirements so the candidate has the opportunity to provide the appropriate evidence.]

**Assessing and verifying the evidence:** if the evidence is sufficient, the assessor records the outcome and recommends credit or recognition. If the evidence is not sufficient, the assessor should advise the candidate of what is missing, so that (s)he has the opportunity to collect and submit additional evidence that does meet the criteria.

There are five key questions that should be considered during the assessment and verification of the evidence. These are discussed in more detail in [Section 4](#) below.

*At the end of this step, the candidate and the assessor should reach agreement on what has been achieved and / or what is outstanding.*

#### **Step four: Accreditation**

Accreditation involves the final verification or endorsement by the establishment or the national awarding body responsible for awarding the credit or recognising the positive outcomes of the AP(E)L assessment. In making this final judgement, the institution will take into account:

- Guidelines concerning the extent of matching required between the learning outcomes required by the institution and those possessed by the candidate. This is normally at least 50% but rarely 100%. The degree of matching required may depend on whether the learning outcomes are a core or an optional part of the qualification.
- The limit on the overall amount of credit that can be awarded by the institution. For academic qualifications, usually no more than 50% of the course that can be credited through prior learning or experience. This means that, for the candidate to be awarded a certificate for completing an assessed course of learning at the Institution, (s)he will have studied at least 50% of the course under the tuition of the institution.

The candidate should formally be notified of the result of the final verification and assessment of the AP(E) portfolio.

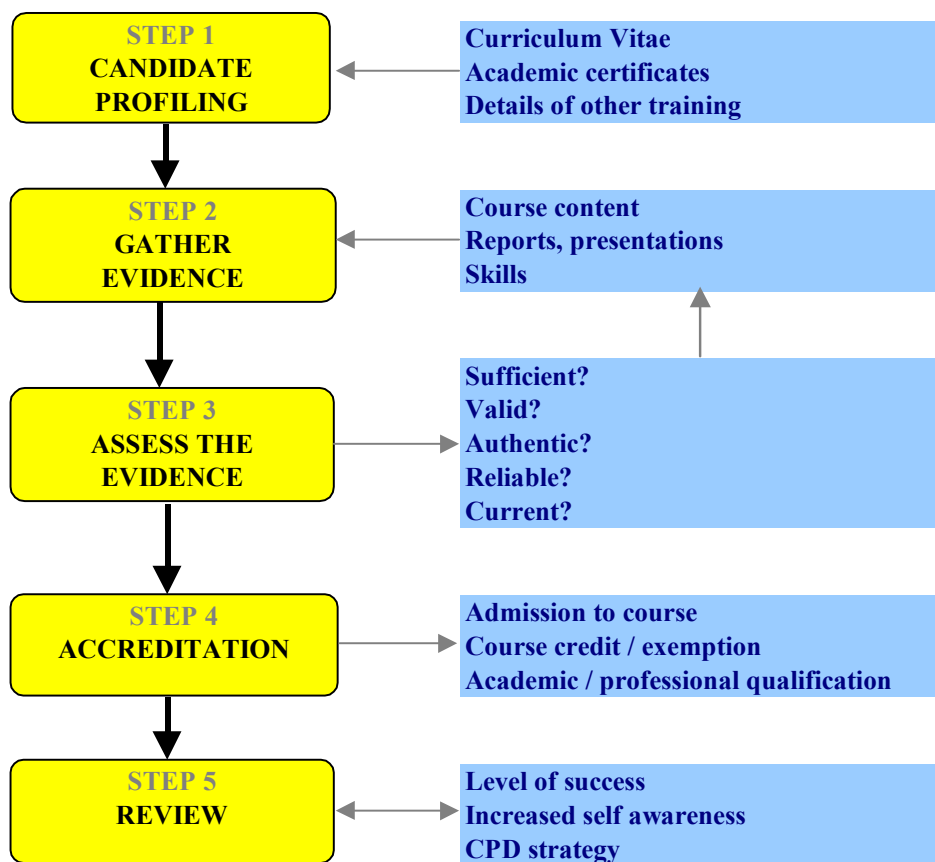
#### **Step five: Review of progress**

Once the AP(E)L process is completed, the candidate should be encouraged to review the experience, in order to:

- reflect on his/her achievement and relate it to initial expectations and goals.
- think about what (s)he has learned about their own competences, and
- consider what future action might be taken to build upon the achievements to date.

This step is important. It assists in developing student self-confidence and motivation to seek new learning and continuing professional development.

## THE AP(E)L PROCESS



### 6. Technical requirements in AP(E)L.

The evidence provided by the candidate about his/her prior learning and experience is checked and assessed by the institution (step 3 above) against the following key criteria:

**Validity:** Does the evidence match the competences being looked for by the institution? Are the skills, knowledge and expertise being demonstrated by the candidate at the level required by the institution? [In assessing the level of competence being demonstrated by the candidate, assessors might find the descriptions of the generic outcomes of the various academic levels to be of value. These are reproduced in [Appendix A](#).]

**Sufficiency:** Is the amount of evidence sufficient? Does it cover all the aspects being looked for? [Institutions rarely demand 100% matching between the competences demonstrated by the candidate and those demanded by the awarding body. Each institution / awarding body will have its own guidance on this, but the degree of matching is likely to be more than 50%, and should include all the key competences required.].

**Authenticity:** This refers to the ownership of the evidence. Assessors should be confident that the work submitted really is the result of the candidate's own effort and expertise.

**Reliability:** How reliable is the evidence? Will different assessors place a similar value on the evidence provided and make similar judgements when confronted with the same evidence?

**Currency:** This refers to the date of the evidence. Assessors must be sure that the evidence submitted by candidate is recent enough to be (a) a measure of the candidate's current levels

of competence and (b) appropriate to the assessment given the changes that have taken place in technology and thinking over the years.

The currency of the candidate's skills, knowledge and expertise will vary with the pace of change in particular subject areas. The AP(E)L tutor should be able to provide him/her with guidance on the 'shelf life' of his/her competences. However, as a general rule, the candidate should be able to demonstrate that (s)he has practised each of the competences being claimed within the last 3-5 years.

## 7. APL and APEL

In section 1 above, attention was drawn to the differences between APL and APEL. The implications of these differences are discussed in more detail here.

Because APL is based upon prior certificated learning, the matching of prior qualifications against specific competences required by an institution is relatively straight forward, requiring only information about course content and verification of the awarding bodies certificate of achievement. The candidate's role is simply to provide this information to the institution.

APL is widely and often used by institutions to admit candidates to a course who do not have the standard entry qualifications required by the institution. In view of this, and because it is a relatively straight forward process, APL may be a rapid process, taking perhaps six weeks, for which no charge is made by the institution. [However, where APL is used to gain exemption from elements of the course or to award credits towards completion of the course, then a charge is normally made because the candidate is benefiting from a reduction in the amount of effort required to achieve the qualification. Although charges may vary between institutions, candidates often pay about half the cost of achieving the same learning outcomes by traditional taught class.]

APEL requires the candidate to find or prepare documents that illustrate the level of skill, expertise, knowledge, and understanding (s)he possesses by virtue of on the job training, short courses and life experiences. Because competences developed in this way are not assessed, and are largely uncertificated, witness statements are needed to confirm the authenticity of the claim being made. All this makes APEL a more rigorous and time-consuming task than APL, for both the candidate and the APEL tutor. A likely timeframe for APEL is therefore three months. Furthermore, it is better if AP(E)L can be undertaken when the candidate is free of any commitments to academic study, such as before the course begins or during the long vacation, so that the appropriate amount of effort can be devoted to APEL.

Because of the amount of work involved, the institution may decide to charge a fee to cover the cost of the APEL process itself. This fee would be in addition to any fees charged when the student receives credit for previous experience against the course. Again, charges vary. Where a student holds non-standard academic qualifications and APL is used to gain entry to an academic course, the institution may decide not to charge a fee for the APL process.

The table below summarises the differences between APL and AP(E)L.

		APL	APEL
<b>Process</b>	Timescale	6 weeks	3 months
	Focus of effort	Institution	Candidate & tutor
	Fees	none	possibly
<b>Outcomes</b>	Course entry	No fee	No fee
	Course credit or exemption	Fees for credit awarded	Fees for credit awarded

## 8. Recording the evidence

A number of forms have been developed to assist the AP(E)L process. These are designed to:

- Allow the candidate to monitor her/his progress during the process
- Assist the candidate to prepare and organise the portfolio of evidence that is required

These forms are collected in [Appendix B](#) of this guide, and their purpose is outlined below.

The [AP\(E\)L Claim Form / Summary of Achievement](#) provides the candidate with a list of those topics / areas / subjects that make up the qualification or the entry requirements for the qualification. (S)He can then highlight those areas where (s)he has some evidence of achievement, and outline the source of that evidence. The form can continue to be used throughout the AP(E)L process by the AP(E)L tutor who can record the suitability of the evidence once it has been assessed. Thus, as this form evolves during the AP(E)L process, it provides the candidate with a summary of what (s)he has achieved by virtue of prior or experiential learning.

Ultimately, the candidate will need to provide evidence of achievement for each of the principal learning outcomes in each subject or topic area. The [Evidence Sheets](#) record the matching of evidence against individual learning outcomes / performance criteria within a particular unit. These forms provide space for the currency and level of the evidence to be recorded. A form will need to be completed for each unit being claimed or partially claimed by the candidate.

In AP(E)L, the candidate will need to provide witness statements to support the claim for uncertificated learning or skills. A typical [Witness Testimony](#) is provided for this.

These forms, and the evidence referred to in the forms, should be presented by the candidate in a portfolio for assessment and verification. The [Portfolio Index of Evidence](#) provides a list of the documents enclosed in the portfolio. The candidate should allocate a reference number to each item of evidence and record that reference number on the Index of Evidence sheet. The [Unit Index of Evidence](#) allows you to match the evidence you have listed against particular learning outcomes and performance criteria demanded by the institution. There is space at the bottom of the form for final verification of the outcome by the Institution.

Finally, the AP(E)L [Progress Log](#) can be used to plan meetings between the candidate and her/his AP(E)L tutor, record the outcomes of those meetings and list the actions agreed.

## 9. The benefits of AP(E)L

Intending students and those applying for professional qualifications benefit from AP(E)L since it enables them to build upon their experiences so that they do not have to revisit what they already know and can do. It also:

- recognises the value of their accomplishments
- shortens the time required to complete formal qualifications
- save significant sums of money by giving exemption from course elements or providing credit points and awards towards a qualification
- assists career development
- focuses on their individual development and training needs.

However, the benefits of AP(E)L are more wide-ranging and fundamental than the awarding of credit for achievement. There is evidence that those who complete the AP(E)L process become more self confident, are willing to take greater responsibility for their own development and have a more positive approach to education and training.

Since the outcome of the AP(E)L process is credit towards a professional or academic qualification, Institutions also gain from its use. They find they can:

- maximise the effective use of educational and training resources
- better meet the needs of individual clients, students or employees
- motivate their clients or employees to participate more willingly in and to complete programmes
- provide equal opportunities to a greater range of clients
- integrate AP(E)L with on-going services or programmes
- diagnose individual strengths and weaknesses

To be fully effective AP(E)L needs to be associated with learner centred training and education.

In addition, the rigors of the AP(E)L process ensures consistency of standards in recruitment, in giving credit (or exemption) to students for past achievements and in the award of professional and academic qualifications.

## **10. Promoting AP(E)L**

Accreditation of Prior Learning or any other words that have been used to describe the process simply do not make sense to the majority of ordinary people. The concept may be clear to educationalists but to the general public and usually those who might benefit most from the process understand neither the process nor its purpose. It is therefore essential that the concept be marketed using understandable words. An 'Introduction to AP(E)L' has been written with this in mind.

However, promoting and explaining the concept of AP(E)L can bring further problems. In promoting the process and the opportunities it can create, it is easy to create the impression that the process is automatic and easy and that everything that a candidate knows and can do will be useful and relevant to the process. Disappointment can arise when previous courses successfully completed by the candidate cannot be given due credit because the course did not reach the required level of competence or because the course content did not contain the required elements. It needs to be explained to students that, since the outcome of the AP(E)L process is credit towards a professional or academic qualification, the process is understandably demanding and rigorous. There can be no gain without pain! Introductory discussions with potential candidates provides the opportunity to explain the process in more detail.

Once candidates agree to embark upon the AP(E)L process, they will need further information on how to begin the process, how the process works (stage by stage), what they need to do, the expected time frames and costs. They also need to be kept fully informed during the process of progress and outcomes. The AP(EL) tutor has a major part to play in this. His/her role is discussed in more detail in section 9 below. To assist in this, we have written a student guide that contains much of the information presented here but in a way that is directed at the candidate. We have also developed forms for planning and recording the APL process so that both tutor and candidate can see what has been achieved and what lies ahead (see [section 6](#) above and [Appendix B](#))

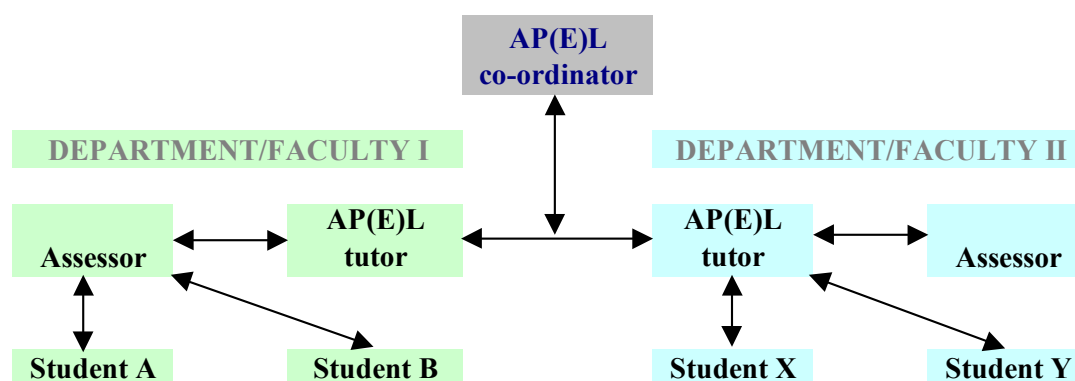
## 11. Organising for AP(E)L

The accreditation of prior and experiential learning itself requires skill and experience. It requires wide knowledge of national, and potentially international, educational systems so that advice can be given and judgements made about the validity and suitability of evidence that the candidate may be able to provide. Subject specific knowledge is often important in judging the scope and level of learning being submitted for accreditation.

This being so, many organisations nominate or appoint specific named individuals as AP(E)L tutors and co-ordinators within specific subject areas. Usually such staff carry out their AP(E)L duties alongside other departmental responsibilities, such as subject leaders or admissions tutors. Their job is to work with candidates and support the AP(E)L process.

In order to ensure consistency of interpretation and implementation of the organisation's policy on AP(E)L, an overall APL co-ordinator is usually appointed. His/her role is to co-ordinate the activity of the team of APL tutors dispersed amongst the departments, schools, faculties etc, setting out the institution's policy on AP(E)L, monitoring its implementation and ensuring the sharing of best practise amongst the team of AP(E)L tutors.

Assessment of the AP(E)L process should be carried out independently, either internally, or externally (or both). Thus the organisation and structure for the AP(E)L process is likely to be as shown in the figure below.



## 12. Acknowledgements

The preparation of this guide was funded by a Teaching Development Grant provided by the Centre for Materials Education at the University of Liverpool. Thanks are due to colleagues at Bradford College, the University of North London and Salford University for advice and comment.

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**SCQF Level 1 - (Access 1)**

**NB** These descriptors set out the characteristic generic outcomes of each level. They are intended to provide a general, shared understanding of each level and to allow broad comparisons to be made between qualifications and learning at different levels. They are not intended to give precise or comprehensive statements, and there is no expectation that every qualification or programme should have all of the characteristics. The descriptors have been developed through a series of consultations and are offered as a first working guide and will be revised in the light of feedback on their use.

There is no separate descriptor for level 1, which covers all provision that comes below the full achievement of level 2

**SCQF Level 2 - (Access 2)**

**NB** These descriptors set out the characteristic generic outcomes of each level. They are intended to provide a general, shared understanding of each level and to allow broad comparisons to be made between qualifications and learning at different levels. They are not intended to give precise or comprehensive statements, and there is no expectation that every qualification or programme should have all of the characteristics. The descriptors have been developed through a series of consultations and are offered as a first working guide and will be revised in the light of feedback on their use.

<i>Knowledge and Understanding</i>	<i>Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding</i>	<i>Generic Cognitive Skills</i>	<i>Communication, ICT and numeracy skills</i>	<i>Autonomy, accountability and working with others</i>
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level include the ability to:				
Demonstrate and/or work with knowledge of simple facts and ideas in a subject/discipline.	<p>Relate knowledge to a few simple everyday contexts with prompting.</p> <p>Use a few very simple skills.</p> <p>Carry out with guidance a few familiar tasks.</p> <p>Use, under supervision, basic tools and materials.</p>	<p>Use rehearsed stages for solving problems.</p> <p>Operate in personal and/or everyday contexts.</p> <p>Take some account, with prompting, of identified consequences of action.</p>	<p>Use very simple skills with assistance - for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>produce and respond to a limited range of very simple written and oral communication in familiar /routine contexts</i></li> <li>• <i>carry out a limited range of very simple tasks to process data and access information</i></li> <li>• <i>use a limited range of very simple and familiar numerical and graphical data in familiar and everyday contexts</i></li> </ul>	<p>Work alone or with others on simple routine, familiar tasks under frequent and directive supervision.</p> <p>Identify given simple criteria some successes and/or failures of the work.</p>

**SCQF Level 3 - (Access 3, Standard Grade Foundation level, GCSE Foundation Tier)**

**NB** These descriptors set out the characteristic generic outcomes of each level. They are intended to provide a general, shared understanding of each level and to allow broad comparisons to be made between qualifications and learning at different levels. They are not intended to give precise or comprehensive statements, and there is no expectation that every qualification or programme should have all of the characteristics. The descriptors have been developed through a series of consultations and are offered as a first working guide and will be revised in the light of feedback on their use.

<i>Knowledge and Understanding</i>	<i>Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding</i>	<i>Generic Cognitive Skills</i>	<i>Communication, ICT and numeracy skills</i>	<i>Autonomy, accountability and working with others</i>
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level include the ability to:				
Demonstrate and / or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• basic knowledge in a subject/discipline</li> <li>• some simple facts and ideas associated with a subject/discipline</li> </ul>	Relate knowledge with some prompting to personal and/or everyday contexts. Use a few basic, routine skills to undertake familiar and routine tasks. Complete pre-planned tasks. Use, with guidance, basic tools and materials safely and effectively.	Identify with some prompting a process to deal with a situation or issue. Operate in familiar contexts using given criteria. Take account of some identified consequences of action.	Use simple skills - for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>produce and respond to simple written and oral communication in familiar, routine contexts</i></li> <li>• <i>carry out simple tasks to process data and access information</i></li> <li>• <i>use simple numerical and graphical data in everyday contexts</i></li> </ul>	Work alone or with others on simple tasks under frequent supervision. Participate in the setting of goals, timelines, etc. Participate in the review of completed work and the identification of ways of improving practices and processes. Identify, given simple criteria, own strengths and weaknesses relative to the work.

**SCQF Level 4 - (Intermediate 1, Standard Grade General level, GVQ 1, GCSE Middle Tier)**

**NB** These descriptors set out the characteristic generic outcomes of each level. They are intended to provide a general, shared understanding of each level and to allow broad comparisons to be made between qualifications and learning at different levels. They are not intended to give precise or comprehensive statements, and there is no expectation that every qualification or programme should have all of the characteristics. The descriptors have been developed through a series of consultations and are offered as a first working guide and will be revised in the light of feedback on their use.

<i>Knowledge and Understanding</i>	<i>Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding</i>	<i>Generic Cognitive Skills</i>	<i>Communication, ICT and numeracy skills</i>	<i>Autonomy, accountability and working with others</i>
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level include the ability to:				
Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• basic knowledge in a subject/discipline which is mainly factual</li> <li>• some simple facts and ideas about and associated with a subject/discipline</li> <li>• knowledge of basic processes, materials and terminology</li> </ul>	Relate knowledge to personal and/or practical contexts. Use a few skills to complete straightforward tasks with some non-routine elements. Select and use, with guidance, appropriate tools and materials safely and effectively.	Use, with guidance, given stages of a problem solving approach to deal with a situation or issue. Operate in straightforward contexts. Identify and/or take account of some of the consequences of action/inaction.	Use straightforward skills - for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>produce and respond to simple but detailed written and oral communication in familiar contexts</i></li> <li>• <i>use the most straightforward features of familiar applications to process and obtain information</i></li> <li>• <i>use straightforward numerical and graphical data in straightforward and familiar contexts</i></li> </ul>	Work alone or with others on straightforward tasks. Contribute to the setting of goals, timelines, etc. Contribute to the review of completed work and offer suggestions for improving practices and processes. Identify own strengths and weaknesses relative to the work.

**SCQF Level 5 - (Intermediate 2, Standard Grade Credit level, GVQ 2, GCSE Higher Tier)**

**NB** These descriptors set out the characteristic generic outcomes of each level. They are intended to provide a general, shared understanding of each level and to allow broad comparisons to be made between qualifications and learning at different levels. They are not intended to give precise or comprehensive statements, and there is no expectation that every qualification or programme should have all of the characteristics. The descriptors have been developed through a series of consultations and are offered as a first working guide and will be revised in the light of feedback on their use.

<i>Knowledge and Understanding</i>	<i>Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding</i>	<i>Generic Cognitive Skills</i>	<i>Communication, ICT and numeracy skills</i>	<i>Autonomy, accountability and working with others</i>
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level include the ability to:				
Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• basic knowledge in a subject/discipline which is mainly factual but has some theoretical component</li> <li>• a range of simple facts and ideas about and associated with a subject/discipline</li> <li>• knowledge and understanding of basic processes, materials and terminology</li> </ul>	Relate ideas and knowledge to personal and/or practical contexts. Complete some routine and non-routine tasks using knowledge associated with a subject/discipline. Plan and organise both familiar and new tasks. Select appropriate tools and materials and use safely and effectively (eg without waste). Adjust tools where necessary following safe practices.	Use a problem solving approach to deal with a situation or issue which is straight forward in relation to a subject/discipline. Operate in a familiar context, but where there is a need to take account of or use additional information of different kinds, some of which will be theoretical or hypothetical. Use some abstract constructs - eg make generalisations and/or draw conclusions.	Use a range of routine skills - for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>produce and respond to detailed written and oral communication in familiar contexts</i></li> <li>• <i>use standard applications to process, obtain and combine information</i></li> <li>• <i>use a range of numerical and graphical data in straightforward contexts which have some complex features</i></li> </ul>	Work alone or with others on tasks with minimum supervision. Agree goals and responsibilities for self and/or work team with manager/supervisor. Take leadership responsibility for some tasks. Show an awareness of others' roles, responsibilities and requirements in carrying out work and make a contribution to the evaluation and improvement of practices and processes.

**SCQF Level 6 - (Higher, GVQ 3, AS level)**

**NB** These descriptors set out the characteristic generic outcomes of each level. They are intended to provide a general, shared understanding of each level and to allow broad comparisons to be made between qualifications and learning at different levels. They are not intended to give precise or comprehensive statements, and there is no expectation that every qualification or programme should have all of the characteristics. The descriptors have been developed through a series of consultations and are offered as a first working guide and will be revised in the light of feedback on their use.

<i>Knowledge and Understanding</i>	<i>Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding</i>	<i>Generic Cognitive Skills</i>	<i>Communication, ICT and numeracy skills</i>	<i>Autonomy, accountability and working with others</i>
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level include the ability to:				
Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• generalised knowledge of a subject/discipline</li> <li>• factual and theoretical knowledge</li> <li>• a range of facts, ideas, properties, materials, terminology, practices, techniques about/associated with a subject/discipline</li> <li>• Relate the subject/discipline to a range of practical and/or everyday applications.</li> </ul>	Apply knowledge and understanding in known, practical contexts.  Use some of the basic, routine practices, techniques and/or materials associated with a subject/discipline in routine contexts which may have non-routine elements.  Plan how skills will be used to address set situations and/or problems and adapt these as necessary.	Obtain, organise and use factual and theoretical information in problem solving.  Make generalisations and predictions.  Draw conclusions and suggest solutions.	Use a wide range of skills - for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>produce and respond to detailed and relatively complex written and oral communication in both familiar and unfamiliar contexts</i></li> <li>• <i>select and use standard applications to process, obtain and combine information</i></li> <li>• <i>use a wide range of numerical and graphical data in routine contexts which may have non-routine elements</i></li> </ul>	Take responsibility for the carrying out of a range of activities where the overall goal is clear under non-directive supervision.  Take some supervisory responsibility for the work of others and lead established teams in the implementation of routine work.  Manage limited resources within defined and supervised areas of work.  Take account of roles and responsibilities related to the tasks being carried out and take a significant role in the evaluation of work and the improvement of practices and processes.

**SCQF Level 7 - (SHE level 1, Cert HE, HNC, Advanced Higher, AGCE)**

**NB** These descriptors set out the characteristic generic outcomes of each level. They are intended to provide a general, shared understanding of each level and to allow broad comparisons to be made between qualifications and learning at different levels. They are not intended to give precise or comprehensive statements, and there is no expectation that every qualification or programme should have all of the characteristics. The descriptors have been developed through a series of consultations and are offered as a first working guide and will be revised in the light of feedback on their use.

<i>Knowledge and Understanding</i>	<i>Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding</i>	<i>Generic Cognitive Skills</i>	<i>Communication, ICT and numeracy skills</i>	<i>Autonomy, accountability and working with others</i>
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level include the ability to:				
Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a broad knowledge of the subject/discipline in general</li> <li>knowledge that is embedded in the main theories, concepts and principles</li> <li>an awareness of the evolving/changing nature of knowledge and understanding</li> <li>an understanding of the difference between explanations based in evidence and/or research and other forms of explanation, and of the importance of this difference</li> </ul>	Use some of the basic and routine professional skills, techniques, practices and/or materials associated with a subject/discipline.  Practise these in both routine and non-routine contexts.	Present and evaluate arguments, information and ideas which are routine to the subject/discipline.  Use a range of approaches to addressing defined and/or routine problems and issues within familiar contexts.	Use a wide range of routine skills and some advanced skills associated with the subject/discipline - for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>convey complex ideas in well-structured and coherent form</i></li> <li><i>use a range of forms of communication effectively in both familiar and new contexts</i></li> <li><i>use standard applications to process and obtain a variety of information and data</i></li> <li><i>use a range of numerical and graphical skills in combination</i></li> <li><i>use numerical and graphical data to measure progress and achieve goals/targets</i></li> </ul>	Exercise some initiative and independence in carrying out defined activities at a professional level.  Take supervision in less familiar areas of work.  Take some managerial responsibility for the work of others within a defined and supervised structure.  Manage limited resources within defined areas of work.  Take the lead in implementing agreed plans in familiar or defined contexts.  Take account of own and others' roles and responsibilities in carrying out and evaluating tasks  Work with others in support of current professional practice under guidance.

**SCQF Level 8 - (SHE level 2, Dip HE, HND, GVQ 4)**

**NB** These descriptors set out the characteristic generic outcomes of each level. They are intended to provide a general, shared understanding of each level and to allow broad comparisons to be made between qualifications and learning at different levels. They are not intended to give precise or comprehensive statements, and there is no expectation that every qualification or programme should have all of the characteristics. The descriptors have been developed through a series of consultations and are offered as a first working guide and will be revised in the light of feedback on their use.

<i>Knowledge and Understanding</i>	<i>Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding</i>	<i>Generic Cognitive Skills</i>	<i>Communication, ICT and numeracy skills</i>	<i>Autonomy, accountability and working with others</i>
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level include the ability to:				
Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a broad knowledge of the scope, defining features, and main areas of a subject/discipline</li> <li>detailed knowledge in some areas</li> <li>understanding of a limited range of core theories, principles and concepts</li> <li>limited knowledge and understanding of some major current issues and specialisms</li> <li>an outline knowledge and understanding of research and equivalent scholarly/academic processes</li> </ul>	Use a range of routine skills, techniques, practices and/or materials associated with a subject/discipline, a few of which are advanced or complex.  Carry out routine lines of enquiry, development or investigation into professional level problems and issues.  Adapt routine practices within accepted standards.	Undertake critical analysis, evaluation and/or synthesis of ideas, concepts, information and issues which are within the common understandings of the subject/discipline.  Use a range of approaches to formulate evidence-based solutions/responses to defined and/or routine problems/issues.  Critically evaluate evidence-based solutions/responses to defined and/or routine problems/issues.	Use a range of routine skills and some advanced and specialised skills associated with a subject/discipline, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>convey complex information to a range of audiences and for a range of purposes</i></li> <li><i>use a range of standard applications to process and obtain data</i></li> <li><i>use and evaluate numerical and graphical data to measure progress and achieve goals/targets</i></li> </ul>	Exercise autonomy and initiative in some activities at a professional level.  Take significant managerial or supervisory responsibility for the work of others in defined areas of work.  Manage resources within defined areas of work.  Take the lead on planning in familiar or defined contexts.  Take continuing account of own and others' roles, responsibilities and contributions in carrying out and evaluating tasks.  Work in support of current professional practice under guidance.  Deal with ethical and professional issues in accordance with current professional and/or ethical codes or practices under guidance.

**SCQF Level 9 - (SHE level 3, Ordinary degrees)**

**NB** These descriptors set out the characteristic generic outcomes of each level. They are intended to provide a general, shared understanding of each level and to allow broad comparisons to be made between qualifications and learning at different levels. They are not intended to give precise or comprehensive statements, and there is no expectation that every qualification or programme should have all of the characteristics. The descriptors have been developed through a series of consultations and are offered as a first working guide and will be revised in the light of feedback on their use.

<i>Knowledge and Understanding</i>	<i>Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding</i>	<i>Generic Cognitive Skills</i>	<i>Communication, ICT and numeracy skills</i>	<i>Autonomy, accountability and working with others</i>
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level include the ability to:				
Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a broad and integrated knowledge and understanding of the scope, main areas and boundaries of a subject/discipline</li> <li>a critical understanding of a selection of the principal theories, principles, concepts and terminology</li> <li>knowledge that is detailed in some areas and/or knowledge of one or more specialisms that are informed by forefront developments</li> </ul>	Use a selection of the principal skills, techniques, practices and/or materials associated with a subject/discipline.  Use a few skills, techniques, practices and/or materials that are specialised or advanced.  Practise routine methods of enquiry and/or research.  Practise in a range of professional level contexts which include a degree of unpredictability.	Undertake critical analysis, evaluation and/or synthesis of ideas, concepts, information and issues.  Identify and analyse routine professional problems and issues.  Draw on a range of sources in making judgements.	Use a range of routine skills and some advanced and specialised skills in support of established practices in a subject/discipline, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>make formal and informal presentations on standard/mainstream topics in the subject/discipline to a range of audiences</i></li> <li><i>use a range of IT applications to support and enhance work</i></li> <li><i>interpret, use and evaluate numerical and graphical data to achieve goals/targets</i></li> </ul>	Exercise autonomy and initiative in some activities at a professional level.  Take some responsibility for the work of others and for a range of resources.  Practise in ways which take account of own and others' roles and responsibilities.  Work under guidance with qualified practitioners.  Deal with ethical and professional issues in accordance with current professional and/or ethical codes or practices, seeking guidance where appropriate.

**SCQF Level 10 - (SHE level 4, Honours degrees)**

**NB** These descriptors set out the characteristic generic outcomes of each level. They are intended to provide a general, shared understanding of each level and to allow broad comparisons to be made between qualifications and learning at different levels. They are not intended to give precise or comprehensive statements, and there is no expectation that every qualification or programme should have all of the characteristics. The descriptors have been developed through a series of consultations and are offered as a first working guide and will be revised in the light of feedback on their use.

<i>Knowledge and Understanding</i>	<i>Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding</i>	<i>Generic Cognitive Skills</i>	<i>Communication, ICT and numeracy skills</i>	<i>Autonomy, accountability and working with others</i>
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level include the ability to:				
Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>knowledge that covers and integrates most of the principal areas, features, boundaries, terminology and conventions of a subject/discipline</li> <li>a critical understanding of the principal theories, concepts and principles</li> <li>detailed knowledge and understanding in one or more specialisms some of which is informed by or at the forefront of a subject/discipline</li> <li>knowledge and understanding of the ways in which the subject/discipline is developed, including a range of established techniques of enquiry or research methodologies</li> </ul>	Use a range of the principal skills, practices and/or materials associated with a subject/discipline.  Use a few skills, practices and/or materials which are specialised, advanced, or at the forefront of a subject/discipline.  Execute a defined project of research, development or investigation and identify and implement relevant outcomes.  Practise in a range of professional level contexts which include a degree of unpredictability and/or specialism.	Critically identify, define, conceptualise, and analyse complex/professional level problems and issues.  Offer professional level insights, interpretations and solutions to problems and issues.  Critically review and consolidate knowledge, skills and practices and thinking in a subject/discipline.  Demonstrate some originality and creativity in dealing with professional level issues.  Make judgements where data/information is limited or comes from a range of sources.	Use a wide range of routine skills and some advanced and specialised skills in support of established practices in a subject/discipline, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>make formal presentations about specialised topics to informed audiences</i></li> <li><i>communicate with professional level peers, senior colleagues and specialists</i></li> <li><i>use a range of software to support and enhance work at this level and specify refinements/improvements to software to increase effectiveness</i></li> <li><i>interpret, use and evaluate a wide range of numerical and graphical data to set and achieve goals/targets</i></li> </ul>	Exercise autonomy and initiative in professional/ equivalent activities.  Take significant responsibility for the work of others and for a range of resources.  Practise in ways which show a clear awareness of own and others' roles and responsibilities.  Work effectively under guidance in a peer relationship with qualified practitioners.  Work with others to bring about change, development and/or new thinking.  Deal with complex ethical and professional issues in accordance with current professional and/or ethical codes or practices.  Recognise the limits of these codes and seek guidance where appropriate.

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**SCQF Level 11- (SHE level 5, PG 1, PG Dip, PG Cert, MA, MSc, SVQ 5)**

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<i>Knowledge and Understanding</i>	<i>Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding</i>	<i>Generic Cognitive Skills</i>	<i>Communication, ICT and numeracy skills</i>	<i>Autonomy, accountability and working with others</i>
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level include the ability to:				
Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>knowledge that covers and integrates most, if not all, of the main areas of a subject/discipline including their features, boundaries, terminology and conventions</li> <li>a critical understanding of the principal theories, principles and concepts</li> <li>a critical understanding of a range of specialised theories, principles and concepts</li> <li>extensive, detailed and critical knowledge and understanding in one or more specialisms, much of which is at or informed by developments at the forefront</li> </ul> critical awareness of current issues in a subject/discipline and	Use a significant range of the principal skills, techniques, practices and/or materials which are associated with a subject/discipline.  Use a range of specialised skills, techniques, practices and/or materials which are at the forefront or informed by forefront developments.  Apply a range of standard and specialised research or equivalent instruments and techniques of enquiry.  Plan and execute a significant project of research, investigation or development.  Demonstrate originality or creativity in the application of knowledge, understanding and/or practices.  Practise in a wide and often unpredictable variety of professional level contexts.	Apply critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis to issues which are at the forefront or informed by developments at the forefront of a subject/discipline.  Identify, conceptualise and define new and abstract problems and issues.  Develop original and creative responses to problems and issues.  Critically review, consolidate and extend knowledge, skills practices and thinking in a subject/discipline.  Deal with complex issues and make informed judgements in situations in the absence of complete or consistent data/information.	Use a range of advanced and specialised skills as appropriate to a subject/discipline -for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>communicate, using appropriate methods, to a range of audiences with different levels of knowledge/expertise</i></li> <li><i>communicate with peers, more senior colleagues and specialists</i></li> <li><i>use a wide range of software to support and enhance work at this level and specify new software or refinements/improvements to existing software to increase effectiveness</i></li> <li><i>undertake critical evaluations of a wide range of numerical and graphical data</i></li> </ul>	Exercise substantial autonomy and initiative in professional and equivalent activities.  Take responsibility for own work and/or significant responsibility for the work of others.  Take responsibility for a significant range of resources.  Demonstrate leadership and/or initiative and make an identifiable contribution to change and development.  Practise in ways which draw on critical reflection on own and others' roles and responsibilities.  Deal with complex ethical and professional issues and make informed judgements on issues not addressed by current professional and/or ethical codes or practices.

one or more specialisms				
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**SCQF Level 12- (SHE level 6,PG 2, Ph.D. — Doctorate )**

**NB** These descriptors set out the characteristic generic outcomes of each level. They are intended to provide a general, shared understanding of each level and to allow broad comparisons to be made between qualifications and learning at different levels. They are not intended to give precise or comprehensive statements, and there is no expectation that every qualification or programme should have all of the characteristics. The descriptors have been developed through a series of consultations and are offered as a first working guide and will be revised in the light of feedback on their use.

<i>Knowledge and Understanding</i>	<i>Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding</i>	<i>Generic Cognitive Skills</i>	<i>Communication, ICT and numeracy skills</i>	<i>Autonomy, accountability and working with others</i>
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level include the ability to:				
Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a critical overview of a subject/discipline, including critical understanding of the principal theories, principles and concepts</li> <li>a critical, detailed and often leading knowledge and understanding at the forefront of one or more specialisms</li> <li>knowledge and understanding that is generated through personal research or equivalent work which makes a significant contribution to the development of the subject/discipline</li> </ul>	Use a significant range of the principal skills, techniques, practices and materials associated with a subject/ discipline. Use and enhance a range of complex skills, techniques, practices and materials at the forefront of one or more specialisms. Apply a range of standard and specialised research/equivalent instruments and techniques of enquiry. Design and execute research, investigative or development projects to deal with new problems and issues. Demonstrate originality and creativity in the development and application of new knowledge, understanding and practices. Practice in the context of new problems and circumstances.	Apply a constant and integrated approach to critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas, information and issues. Identify, conceptualise and offer original and creative insights into new, complex and abstract ideas, information and issues. Develop creative and original responses to problems and issues. Deal with very complex and/or new issues and make informed judgements in the absence of complete or consistent data/information.	Use a significant range of advanced and specialised skills as appropriate to a subject/discipline - for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>communicate at an appropriate level to a range of audiences and adapt communication to the context and purpose</i></li> <li><i>communicate at the standard of published academic work and/or critical dialogue and review with peers and experts in other specialisms</i></li> <li><i>use a range of software to support and enhance work at this level and specify software requirements to enhance work</i></li> <li><i>critically evaluate numerical and graphical data</i></li> </ul>	Exercise a high level of autonomy and initiative in professional and equivalent activities. Take full responsibility for own work and/or significant responsibility for the work of others. Demonstrate leadership and/or originality in tackling and solving problems and issues. Work in ways which are reflective self-critical and based on research/evidence. Deal with complex ethical and professional issues. Make informed judgements on new and emerging issues not addressed by current professional and/or ethical codes or practices.

**AP(E)L CLAIM FORM / SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENT**

Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

APL Tutor : \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate the module(s) for which you are claiming credit and state on what basis you are making the claim. For (a) successful study of same or similar unit, please enter an 'L' in the APEL claim column and name the examining body or (b) if you would like consideration given to related experience, place an 'E' in the APEL claim column and state, briefly, the basis of your claim.

<b>Core Units</b>					<b>Official use only</b>	
<b>Unit title</b>	<b>Unit value</b>	<b>APEL claim</b>	<b>Basis of claim</b>	<b>Ref No</b>	<b>Tutor Comment</b>	<b>Award</b>
<b>Optional units --- additional units from:</b>					<b>Official use only</b>	
<b>Unit title</b>	<b>Unit value</b>	<b>APEL claim</b>	<b>Basis of claim</b>	<b>Ref No</b>	<b>Tutor Comment</b>	<b>Award</b>

Accreditation approved by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**UNIT / MODULE EVIDENCE SHEETS**

Unit no. and title: \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit level: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit value: \_\_\_\_\_

AP(E)L Tutor: \_\_\_\_\_

Learning outcome or Performance Criteria	Evidence for achievement	Date	Level	Grade	Folio Ref.	Tutor	Internal verification	External verification

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Witness Testimony**

**Candidate's name:**

**Unit number and title:**

**Element:**

**Witness name:**

**Position and organisation:**

**Relationship to candidate:**

*Please give a brief description of the occasion(s) on which you observed the candidate, what they did and how they did and the outcomes of their work meet the performance criteria and range indicators for this element*



## Unit Index of Evidence

UNIT CODE:

LEVEL:

UNIT VALUE:

UNIT TITLE:

STUDENT NAME:

REG. NUMBER:

PERSONAL TUTOR:

Item ref	Description of evidence	Performance criteria or learning outcome met				
		A	B	C	D	E

<i>Start date</i>	<i>Completion date</i>	<i>Grade Awarded</i>	<i>AP(E)L tutor (Signature &amp; date)</i>	<i>Internal verifier (Signature &amp; date)</i>	<i>External verifier (Signature &amp; date)</i>

**AP(E)L PROGRESS LOG****Candidate:****Course:****APL Tutor:****Time Period:**

<b>Meeting date/time</b>	<b>Agenda</b>	<b>Action Plan</b>	<b>Signatures</b>
			<i>Tutor:</i>  <i>Candidate:</i>
			<i>Tutor:</i>  <i>Candidate:</i>
			<i>Tutor:</i>  <i>Candidate:</i>