

Prior learning Policy

Written May 2019

Approved by Trustees in October 2019

1. The rationale for Assessment of Prior Learning (APL) at Tobias School is consonant with the School's objectives to provide a learner-centred environment that is flexibly responsive to the academic requirements of individuals of all ages and backgrounds, and in which they may be empowered to reach their full potential. This avoids cumbersome and costly duplication of study and enhances efficiency and flexibility in student learning.

2. Prior learning will be recognised on the basis of the volume of learning achieved, which must be verified through reliable and valid assessment. Where there is doubt about the level, validity, or reliability of the assessment the School may require evidence to be produced in verification of standards (e.g. coursework or portfolio), or may require alternative evidence of learning attainment (e.g. a specially written essay or statement/reference from employer).

3. The applicant will be assessed on their CV, academic ability, biography, life experiences, specialist knowledge, work skills, art techniques and skills. Consequently, this task is the responsibility of Gillian David, Head of School, who assesses all applicants for their suitability for the training and who will assess any prior learning claims.

4. The judgements of APL reached are based on the following three distinct categories of assessments. All are assessed with the aim to allow students to progress to appropriate and challenging programmes of study and achieve a successful outcome:

4.1.1 Assessment of Prior *Certificated* Learning,

4.1.2 Assessment of Prior *Experiential* Learning

4.1.3 Assessment of *Art Portfolio*.

4.2 Assessment of Certified Learning

4.2.1 *Level*. The concept of 'level' for the various awards i.e. undergraduate and graduate learning is defined in accordance with the generic levels descriptors generally accepted tiers of learning achievement within further and higher education.

4.2.2 Credit may be awarded in recognition of assessed learning from a variety of sources, including courses at higher education institutions, BTEC courses, courses leading to higher vocational qualifications or awards of professional bodies, and employers' inhouse training courses.

4.2.3 In assessing the 'level' of prior learning from institutions outside the UK, assistance may be sought from recognized authoritative public sources, such as the British Council.

4.2.4 *Relevance*. For credit to be awarded, previous certificated learning must be 'relevant' to the target programme of study at the School. This means that it must be at a similar level, must have similar learning outcomes, and cover a similar knowledge-base. The level, learning outcomes and knowledge-base need not be identical, but they must be close enough to those in the target programme to allow the student to progress without the need to recapitulate exempted study.

4.2.5 *Status*. Confirmation of the 'status' of certificated learning requires that the learning has been assessed according to discoverable criteria, and that the result has been formally documented, normally through the medium of a transcript or official letter. If status is uncertain, an essay may be required before credit is confirmed.

4.2.6 *Currency*. Eligibility for a credit of certificated learning should be 'current'. The definition of currency may vary from subject to subject, and may need careful evaluation. Evidence of continuing academic activity between the certificated learning and application to the School may be adduced in support of an argument for the currency of the learning.

4.3 For Experiential learning the following evidence may include:

4.3.1 Applicant's CV

4.3.2 practice or work-based documents

4.3.3 reports on observations of practice or work

4.3.4 Counselling and/or coaching skills whether acquired through work or volunteering

4.3.5 analytic and evaluative description of practice or work

4.3.6 statements from supervisors in relation to aspects of practice or work

4.3.7 personal and professional references

4.3.8 is a holder of a DBS check

4.4 For the Art Portfolio the following may be assessed:

4.4.1 Volume and variety of media of work produced

4.4.2 Quality of art material handling techniques

4.4.3 Variety and depth of the themes of the art work

4.4.4 Depth of self-reflections upon that artwork