

BCS, Chartered Institute for IT

Recognition of Prior Learning

August 2021

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1. Introduction

This policy applies when prior learning, achievement and / or experience of a learner is recognised by BCS either as a means of getting on to a qualification, or being exempt from part or all of a qualification.

It defines the principles by which BCS will assess applications for accreditation of prior learning and how that recognition will be treated when assessing the awards, in accordance with these regulations.

2. General Principles

The amount of credit to be awarded by BCS for previous assessed learning will be with regard to the program structure that the qualification is credited against. This will take into consideration credit values using the RQF (Regulated Qualifications Framework).

Credit will be awarded at the discretion of BCS for previous certificated learning which is deemed to be equivalent to the learning outcomes of individual modules or some or all of the learning outcomes of programs of study.

Any application for assessment of prior certificated learning should be accompanied by relevant documentation. This will normally include a transcript from the institution concerned confirming any results received by the learner.

Credit is awarded to those learners who have demonstrated their achievement of specified learning. Learners applying for assessment of prior experiential learning will need to be able to demonstrate, via a specified form of assessment, the learning gained from their prior experience. The essential feature of this process is that the learning is gained through experience which is being assessed not the experience itself.

Professional or accrediting bodies may specify restrictions in the amount of credit that may be awarded on an accredited program. Should the maximum amount of credit permitted by the accrediting institution be lower than that permitted by BCS, then the regulations of the accrediting body shall override that of BCS.

The qualification in which we credit will have a time limit that begins from date of the first unit pass. For example, if the qualification has a 3 year time limit and we credit a unit with a prior achieved result from 2 years ago, the learner will now only have 1 year remaining to complete the qualification. Please contact BCS Customer Service Team if you would like further information.

Any application for prior learning will be reviewed and a response given within 8 weeks.

3. Definition of Prior Learning

For the purposes of this policy, recognition of prior learning is the:

- (a) Identification by an Awarding Organisation of any learning undertaken, and/or attainment, by a Learner
 - (i) Prior to that Learner taking a qualification which BCS makes available or proposes to make available, and
 - (ii) Which is relevant to the knowledge, skills and understanding which will be assessed as part of that qualification and
- (b) Recognition by BCS of that learning and/or attainment through amendment to the requirements which a Learner must have satisfied before the Learner will be assessed or that qualification will be awarded.

4. User Guide

BCS produces a User Guide that Approved Centres can access via the Approved Centre Forum – Ordering & Administration, which provides guidance on how to register a valid prior achievement through the Approved Centre Forum. This also covers the valid qualifications that we recognise.

5. Appeals Process

If an applicant wants to appeal against a decision made about their exemption for a qualification, please contact BCS Customer Service Team with the following information;

- Details of the qualification you applied for an exemption for and the qualification you would like this applied to.
- Reasons why you believe the appeal applies.
- Evidence to support and substantiate your appeal.

The Team will review your application and results of your appeal will be confirmed within 4 weeks.

6. Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis in line with departmental quality standards and regulatory criteria. We will also take into account any customer feedback, trends from our internal monitoring arrangements, changes in our practices, actions from the Awarding Bodies or other relevant external agencies as well as changes in legislation. If you would like to feed back any views, please contact us.

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