

Annexe 1

Guidance and advice for the accreditation of prior learning (APL) for programmes currently approved under the *Standards of proficiency for pre-registration nursing education (2004)*, the *Standards for specialist community public health nursing (2004)* and other programmes where APL is permitted.

The following standards and guidance needs to be considered in relation to the new guidance and advice set out in this annexe.

For pre-registration nursing programmes:

- Standard 3 – Accreditation of prior (experiential) learning (AP(E)L)
- Standard 4 – Admission with advanced standing
- Standard 5 – Transfer with AP(E)L

For specialist community public health nursing programmes:

- Guiding principles - Recognition fitness for award - Access and credit
- Standard 1 - Length of programme

For other programmes where APL is permitted, see relevant standards of proficiency.

New guidance

- 1 Approved education institutions (AEIs) should apply APL when accrediting previous certificated or experiential learning to students:
 - commencing a programme
 - transferring from one AEI to another
 - moving from one nursing branch or field of practice to another
 - returning to a programme after a lengthy break.
- 2 AEIs should develop their own APL procedures based on best practice, for example *Guidelines on the accreditation of prior learning* (Quality Assurance Agency 2004) to be endorsed at programme approval.

- 3 AEs should show for each student how previous learning is mapped to programme outcomes and requirements.
- 4 AEs should determine the amount of learning accredited in both theory and practice (up to the NMC permitted maximum).
- 5 AEs should be able to show how all programme outcomes and requirements have been met in both theory and practice by the end of the programme through a mix of prior learning and programme attendance. Students cannot be exempted from meeting any programme requirement.
- 6 AEs, when applying APL, should make sure that all the progression criteria have been met in both theory and practice for entry to the branch programme or specified field of practice.
- 7 AEs must ensure that, where APL is applied to students studying pre-registration adult nursing programmes, the general care requirements of Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications (Article 31) are met in full.

New advice

- 8 AEs are advised to embed the following APL principles into their recruitment and selection processes, together with programme documentation, assessment, evaluation, quality assurance and reporting arrangements. These are informed by the *Guidelines on the accreditation of prior learning* (Quality Assurance Agency 2004) which help to demonstrate that processes are:
 - robust, valid and reliable, and sufficient to ensure that professional requirements and academic standards are met
 - as equally challenging as other methods of assessing learning in higher education
 - rigorous in accrediting practice based learning
 - explicit, unambiguous and fair, and applied in a consistent, transparent and rigorous way
 - well defined, setting out clear roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of staff, applicants and external examiners
 - effective in ensuring that staff are competent, prepared and developed for their roles
 - clear, explicit and accessible to potential applicants
 - monitored through an institution's quality assurance framework.

- 9 The NMC in approving a pre-registration programme can only approve the APL arrangements: it has no jurisdiction over access or other similar courses designed locally to link in with the approved pre-registration nursing programme. The approval and quality assurance of such programmes rests with programme providers.