RPL Glossary of Terms

Academic Advisor A member of the academic staff who can advise a learner on both general issues relating to university life and also on specific issues such as RPL applications.

Access The process by which learners may start a programme having received recognition for prior learning.

Advanced Entry admission under certain circumstances may be granted to access a course in year 2 or above. In the case of an RPL applicant this would be on the basis of prior learning, be that formal accredited learning (RPCL) or informal 'experiential' learning (RPEL) that has been gained through work/life experience.

An ***Award*** is conferred by the awarding body when you have successfully completed a programme of study. An example of an award is an Honours Bachelor Degree.

Concurrent Learning Concurrent learning refers to learning that has been completed outside of the programme after the student has been admitted to the programme. Concurrent learning applies to graduate research students only.

Exemptions are awarded where the lecturer is satisfied the learning outcomes for the current module are met, at the required level or higher from previously certified or experiential learning.

Formal Learning Takes place through programmes or courses of study that are delivered in an organised, formal way by education providers. These programmes are assessed and attract awards or credits. Formal learning is sometimes referred to as ***Certified or Accredited Learning.***

Informal Learning Takes place through life and work experience. Typically, it does not lead to certification. Informal learning is sometimes considered to be learning that is unintentional from the learner's point of view, and the learner may not recognise at the time of the experience that it has contributed to their knowledge, skills and competences. This is sometimes referred to as ***Experiential Learning***.

Learning Outcome is a statement of what the learner should know and, more importantly, be able to do to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding, skills and/or competences at the end of a module or programme.

Learning reflection *refers to the process by which a learner actively engages in their learned knowledge and experience. By reflection, the learner is able to form a deeper understanding of the importance and transferability of his/her knowledge so far gained.*

Level In academic settings, 'level' refers to the level of the programme on the National Framework of Qualifications. For example, Level 6: Higher Certificate, Level 7: Bachelor Degree, Level 8: Honours Bachelor Degree, Level 9: Masters Degree, Level 10: Doctorate.

Lifelong Learning this term encompasses all purposeful learning activity, whether formal, non-formal or informal, undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills, and competence.

Module is a self-contained unit of a student's workload and can also be known as a **Subject**. Modules are typically delivered and assessed within a semester. A 'module descriptor' is available to students for all modules. The module descriptor sets out what the objectives and learning outcomes of the module are, how many credits attach to the modules, how it will be assessed etc.

Module exemption is where a student is granted an exemption from a module or a number of modules on the basis of prior learning that they have undertaken, be this formal accredited learning or informal learning, depending on the learning that the student has gained through work/life experience.

National Framework of Qualification (NFQ) The Irish [National Framework of Qualifications | Quality and Qualifications Ireland (qqi.ie)](#) is a 10-level system used to describe qualifications in the Irish education and training system. The NFQ shows how General Education Awards, Further Education and Training and Higher Education Awards are mapped against the 10 levels of the framework. It describes what learners need to know, understand and be able to do to achieve a qualification.

Non-formal Learning Takes place alongside or outside the mainstream systems of education and training. It is typically intentional from the learner's perspective, it may be assessed but does not normally lead to formal certification. Examples of non-formal learning are planned learning and training activities undertaken in the workplace, voluntary sector, or in community-based settings.

Occasional Students: Students who are studying at and are registered to credit-bearing modules which do NOT lead to a UCD award. Examples include, Study Abroad, ERASMUS, credit-bearing Continuous Professional Development (CPD), Pre-Masters programmes.

Prior learning is learning that has taken place before starting a programme or a module. Some prior learning – for example formal learning, may already have been assessed, measured, and assigned credit whereas other learning may not have – for example informal learning.

Programme This is the specified programme of study that a student pursues to earn an award. A programme consists of modules. Further information on modules that make up the programme can be found here UCD Course Search.

Programme leader/coordinator. *Every programme has a leader/coordinator who is a member of the academic staff teaching on the programme. The programme leader liaises between students, academic staff and university management on the day-to-day coordination of the programme.*

Programme Entry Requirement*s* are formal entry criteria which must be met to be considered for entry to stage 1 of a programme of study.

Recognition is a process by which prior learning is given a value. It is a means by which prior learning is formally identified, assessed, and acknowledged. This makes it possible for an individual to build on learning achieved and to be rewarded for it, e.g., in the form of acknowledgement or accreditation.

RPL Process Describes the distinct stages of the RPL application process which are information, identification, documentation, assessment & certification.