



The Accreditation of Prior Learning

1 DEFINITIONS

The terms used in this document have the following meanings.

Accreditation	A process of formally recognising and awarding credit for learning achievement
APL	Accreditation of prior learning
APCL	Accreditation of prior certificated learning
APEL	Accreditation of prior experiential learning
Credit	The amount and academic level of learning that has been achieved or is expected
Prior certificated learning	Qualifications gained prior to the current programme by academically rigorous and valid assessment
Prior experiential learning	Uncertificated prior learning from experience
APL advisor	A member of staff who has the competence and authority to advise a student on the production and submission of an APL claim
APL application	A collection of evidence which shows clear and logical connections between experience and proven learning

2 PRINCIPLES

Harper Adams recognises the validity of prior learning, whether certificated or based on experience, and seeks to give credit for such learning. This may be in order to indicate that a student satisfies the entry requirements of a programme or to provide evidence that the outcomes of a module have been achieved. However it is prior **learning** which is assessed rather than **experience** from which it is derived.

Harper Adams will provide opportunities for the accreditation of prior certificated or uncertificated learning for credit towards an award. Credit will be given for prior learning where the level and content of that learning is appropriate to a particular programme of study.

For candidates seeking entry to a Harper Adams award with recognition of credit obtained either from a previous programme of study or a different institution, general credit may be awarded. In these instances, the course manager and a senior member of the course team will be responsible for determining the level and value of credit that may be awarded to the candidate as part of the conditional offer of entry.

The accreditation of prior learning will be undertaken in a manner which ensures consistency and equity and preserves the academic integrity of awards. In particular the award of credit will be based on the same principles of academic judgement as that of taught modules, be given the same academic weighting as other components of a programme and be moderated through the normal subject assessments board procedures. However, in order to ensure the reliability of the award outcome, credit awarded for modules achieved through APL processes will not be graded and will, therefore, not contribute to the final classification of the award.

Assessment will be carried out by the module tutor, in consultation with the APL advisor. If the module assessor (normally the module tutor) and APL advisor cannot agree upon the evaluation of the evidence presented, the Head of Department will arrange for another independent assessment.

It is the responsibility of the student to prepare applications and submit adequate documentation in accordance with guidance provided by the institution.

3 RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Responsibilities of the course manager

Inform all students and potential students of opportunities for the assessment of prior learning.

Advise the candidate on modules that might reasonably be claimed on the basis of existing knowledge, understanding, competence or certification.

Liaise with the APL advisor to identify suitable candidates for APL and refer candidates to him or her.

Receive moderated assessment results from the chairs of subject assessments boards and present them to the course assessment board.

Notify students of assessment results in conjunction with Examinations Officer.

Ensure that the student is registered on the student record system for assessment by APL.

3.2 Role of the Candidate

Inform the course manager that s/he is interested in being considered for APL.

With the help of the course manager, identify which module/s might reasonably be claimed on the basis of existing knowledge, understanding, competence or certification.

Agree an assessment plan with the APL advisor.

With the help of the APL advisor, prepare an APL application which demonstrates the candidate's achievement in relation to the outcomes of the module the candidate wishes to claim.

Liaise with the APL advisor and module tutor to establish mutually convenient dates for assessment.

Submit via the APL advisor the portfolio of evidence for assessment.

Submit for current assessment where evidence from prior achievements is not available to satisfy all outcomes of the module.

3.3 Role of the APL Advisor

Help the candidate to identify previously acquired knowledge and skills.

Review the preliminary APL outline submission and determine if the proposed evidence is likely to sufficiently meet the learning outcomes for the module(s).

Provide the candidate with support and guidance in the preparation of an APL application for assessment purposes.

Identify current assessment opportunities and make arrangements for candidates to receive tutorial guidance or further study as necessary and to be assessed where evidence from prior achievements is not available.

Agree an assessment plan with the candidate.

Liaise with the module tutor to establish mutually convenient dates for the review of the APL application and the assessment of current performance where applicable.

3.4 Role of the module tutor

Liaise with APL advisor to identify assessment opportunities both for the assessment of the candidates' APL application, and for current assessment where evidence for prior achievement is not available.

Carry out the assessment of the candidate's APL application (certificated &/or experiential) against the outcomes of the module.

Enter the result in the student record system.

3.5 Role of the chairs of subject boards

Liaise with the course manager to identify appropriate APL advisors.

Receive and arrange moderation (by external examiners) of assessment results.

Make the results definitive in the student record system.

3.6 APL Limits

For undergraduate awards, no more than two thirds of the credit may be derived from the assessment of prior learning (i.e. a combination of APCL and APEL). Additionally, experiential learning (APEL) may not contribute more than 50% of the total credit value of the award.

For postgraduate awards, no more than one half of the credit may be derived from the assessment of prior learning as in table 1 below (i.e. a combination of APCL and APEL).

Table 1 APCL and APEL limits for Harper Adams Awards

Award	Minimum total credit required for award	APEL + APCL credit may NOT exceed	APEL credit may NOT exceed
University College Foundation Cert	60	40	30
Cert HE/Grad Dip	120	80	60
HNC	150	100	75
HND/FdSc/DipHE	240	160	120
BSc	300	200	150
BSc (Hons)	360	240	180
PgC	60	30	30
PgD	120	60	60
MSc/MBA	180	90	90
MEng	480	240	240

For the conferment of a Harper Adams award, at least 50% of the level 5, 6 or 7 (intermediate, honours or masters level) minimum credit requirement (as defined in section 4 (table 4.1) of the AQAM) must be graded through Harper Adams assessment procedures.

3.7 Re-use of Academic Credit

Candidates may re-use academic credit (subject to the APL limits defined in Table 1 above) where the award previously earned will be subsumed within another award (for example, credit earned from a Foundation Degree award may be incorporated into a Bachelor's award). For candidates who wish to re-use credit towards an award of the same level, the maximum volume of credit that can be re-used in undergraduate awards is two thirds, whilst for postgraduate awards, the maximum credit that may be re-used is 50%.

4 The APL PROCESS

4.1 Submitting an APL claim

Candidates may only submit one APL claim per part of the course and, where possible, the opportunity for APL should be discussed and identified in advance of the delivery of the taught module. However,

potential APL candidates will be allowed a two week (or equivalent) period at the start of the academic session to express an interest in submitting a claim for APL with the course manager. Candidates will then be required to present a preliminary outline of the evidence that they intend to use to support their claim to the APL advisor by the end of the fourth week (or equivalent) of the academic session. This evidence will be reviewed by the APL advisor, to determine if the APL claim has the potential to meet 75% of the learning outcomes for the module(s). For candidates who meet, but are not considered to exceed this threshold, additional balancing assessment(s) will be required, as directed by the module tutor. The APL advisor will then inform both the candidate and the course manager if continued attendance at the taught module is necessary

4.2 The APL Application

Candidates will be expected to produce an APL application that substantially meets the learning outcomes for each module. If required, the evidence of prior learning may be supplemented by the inclusion of coursework or other form of assessment in order to fully demonstrate attainment of all learning outcomes.

The precise nature and form of the APL application will depend upon the type(s) of evidence that the candidate will utilise to demonstrate their competence with respect to the learning outcomes for each module. Whilst not exhaustive, the following provides an illustration of potential APL application elements:

- Original certificates of achievement, accompanied by verification of the awarding body of qualification content and learning outcomes;
- Reflective account;
- Presentation;
- Demonstration;
- Viva Voce* examination / interview;
- Artefact / product;
- Completion of standard assessment components;
- Completion of candidate specific assessment components;
- Assessments completed as part of another award
- Testimonials

4.3 Level of student support

Typically, APL candidates will receive up to two hours of support from the APL advisor. The APL advisor will help the candidate to identify evidence to support the claim, develop an assessment plan and schedule meetings to review progress with the APL application.

4.4 Grading and Feedback

All APL claims will be graded on a pass/fail basis by the module tutor, in consultation with the APL advisor. If a fail grade is awarded, the candidate will be entitled to a reassessment opportunity, providing that the total value of failed credits (APL and taught modules) in that part, does not exceed the limits defined within Harper Adams assessment regulations (annex 5.01 of the AQAM).

Module tutors will provide the candidate with written feedback on the APL application within four weeks of submission of the documentation.

The APL processes and the arrangements for moderation are summarised in the flow chart overleaf.

5 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Assessors are expected to exercise the same academic judgement that they would bring to other assessments. In making assessments the assessors should consider:

the authenticity of the evidence;

the currency of prior learning, the evidence for which will normally be no more than seven years old at the time of the intended award, but may be less in specific subject areas, at the discretion of the module tutor;

the amount and level of credit;

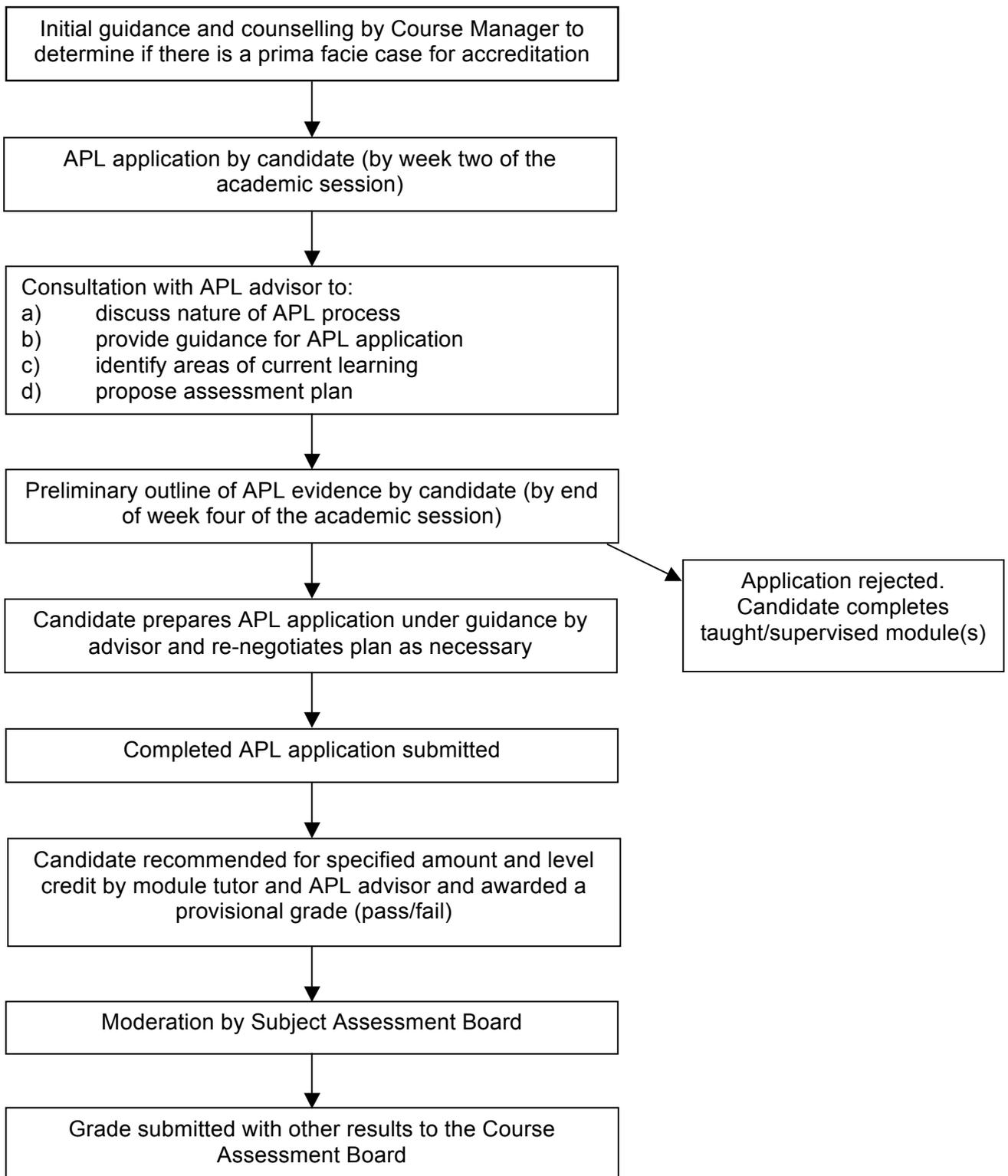
whether there is evidence of learning rather than simply evidence of experience i.e. that the intended learning outcomes are clearly demonstrated;

whether the credit sought will allow students to progress to later stages of the course without disadvantage.

6. FEES

A fee will be charged for APL in those cases where the cost is not already covered by the standard fees for the programme of study. In the event that an APL candidate is required to be reassessed, the standard college reassessment fee will apply.

Diagram showing APL Procedure



Harper
Adams



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Accreditation of Prior Learning

Student Guide

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Preface

Harper Adams University College recognises that student learning may have taken place during previous educational or work experiences. As such, this provides an opportunity for academic credit to be awarded where it can be established that students have met the appropriate learning outcomes associated with a module (or modules).

What is Accredited Prior Learning?

Accreditation by Prior Learning (APL) may take one of two forms:

Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning - where you have undertaken a course/module, been assessed and have been awarded a documented (APCL) qualification &/or academic credit (e.g. a HNC or HND);

or

Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning - where evidence from your workplace/previous experience demonstrates your learning in a particular (APEL) field/subject.

In either case, your tutors will need to evaluate whether you have successfully demonstrated the achievement of the outcome of the module(s) that you are seeking accreditation for. The purpose of this guide is to provide you with an outline of the process that you will need to follow in order to accredit your previous learning.

For Harper Adams undergraduate awards, no more than two thirds of the academic credit may be obtained from the assessment of prior learning (APCL plus APEL). Furthermore, APEL may not contribute more than 50% of the total credit value of an undergraduate award.

For Harper Adams postgraduate awards, no more than one half of the credit may be obtained from APL.

For the conferment of your Harper Adams award, you will need to successfully complete a minimum number of taught/supervised modules at either level 5, 6 or 7 (Intermediate, Honours or Masters level), as required by the level of your award. Your course manager will be happy to advise you of the specific requirements for your course.

If you believe that you have prior learning which may be eligible for APL consideration, you should discuss this with your course manager in the first instance. Your course manager will be able to direct you to an appropriate member of staff who can provide you with advice and guidance in completing your APL application.

Overview of the APL process

The purpose of the APL process is to ensure that your prior learning allows you to meet the learning outcomes (ie the skills, knowledge, understanding etc) that are associated with a module (or modules). Therefore, the key to this process is the evidence which you will be required to provide. This will allow the academic staff to assess that your prior learning is equivalent to the learning that you would gain from participating in the taught module in the normal way. The evaluation of your APL evidence by academic staff seeks to consider if your learning from experience or previous study substantially covers the learning outcomes of the module. Typically, you will be required to demonstrate that your prior learning meets at least 75% of the learning outcomes for a module, with any balance to be made up with a further assessment e.g. a report, examination, practical demonstration etc. In addition, since many modules are pre-requisites for modules that you will study later in your course, it is important to ensure that by awarding APL, you will not face any significant difficulties at a later date.

Where possible, candidates are encouraged to submit their APL claims prior to the start of a programme/module. For all APL claims, you should discuss the opportunity to accredit your prior learning with the course manager in the first instance.

For APL claims that are registered after the start of a programme/module, you will be required to attend all taught sessions until the end of the fifth week of delivery. This is to ensure that should your preliminary application be rejected, you will not be placed at a disadvantage in completing the taught module(s).

All APL claims will be graded as either pass or fail only. If your APL submission is unsuccessful, you will be entitled to a reassessment opportunity, provided that the total value of failed credits (Your APL claim + taught modules) in that part of the course, does not exceed the limits defined within Harper Adams assessment regulations (annex 5.01 of the Academic Quality Assurance Manual).

For some candidates, the fee for APL will already be covered by the standard fee payable for your programme of study. Where this is not the case, APL claims will be charged at the same rate as a standard taught module. In the event that an APL candidate undertakes a reassessment, the standard college reassessment fee will apply.

Evidence of Prior Learning

The evidence that will support your claim for prior learning will be determined by the nature of APL that you are seeking. For the Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL), you will need to provide the formal certificates/transcripts that demonstrate the successful completion of an award and/or module. Certificated learning is normally considered to be current for a period of up to seven years, although, in fast moving subjects this will be at the discretion of the module tutor. If your learning took place outside of this period, you will be required to demonstrate that you have maintained and updated your skills for the evidence to be considered.

For the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL), it is important to note that, ultimately, it is your prior learning that will be assessed, NOT the actual underpinning experience. For APEL claims, the evidence must be both current (i.e. no more than seven years) and relevant to the course/module content. This is likely to require a range of evidence, which will form the basis of your APL application. Typically (although not exhaustively), the APL application may include the following elements:

- A reflective account of the learning derived from prior experience (approx. 400-500 words per learning outcome);
- Completion of standard module assessment components (e.g. a written report, presentation, laboratory experiment, or practical demonstration of skills) which address specific learning outcomes (pass or fail grade only);
- Completion of candidate specific module assessment components which address specific learning outcomes (pass or fail grade only);
- Assessments completed as part of another award;
- Appropriate supporting documentation – business plans, diet formulations, technical drawings etc;
- Testimonials/references/appraisals

In addition, to paper-based evidence, prior learning may also be demonstrated via:

- Interview / *Viva Voce* examination;
- Presentation;
- Demonstration.

For both APCL and APEL, you will need to demonstrate that your claim for prior learning closely matches the learning outcomes for each of the modules for which you are seeking accreditation. Whilst it is the student's responsibility to prepare the APL application, your APL advisor will provide support and guidance during this process.

Certificated Learning

Within the APL application, you should clearly indicate the elements that are derived from certificated learning, as well as providing a brief overview of the

course(s)/module(s) (content, level of study, currency (or, how currency has been maintained) etc). Critically, it is important that you ensure that this is clearly cross-referenced to appropriate documentation eg copies of certificates, transcripts, schemes of work etc.

Experiential Learning

If your APL submission is based upon learning from your previous experience, you will need to clearly demonstrate how your prior learning was acquired (cross referenced to appropriate supporting evidence) and how it relates to the intended learning outcomes. This may require you to produce a reflective account of your experience, which should seek to explain:

- How the learning outcome is met;
- How the approach to an issue/problem was selected, in light of the theory included in the module;
- How difficulties were identified and overcome;
- How practical experience is underpinned by theory;
- How your approach to a problem would be informed by past experience.

Importantly, your reflective account must also be sensitive to the academic level of the learning outcome. A descriptive account will be inappropriate in almost all cases. Instead, your account should seek to provide analysis and discussion of your prior learning.

Support and Guidance during the APL process

During the preparation of your APL submission, you will be guided by your APL advisor. Whilst you are responsible for producing all of the elements that will be required for your APL application, you should regularly consult with your APL advisor, who will be able to provide guidance upon:

- The nature of the preliminary APL outline;
- The interpretation of learning outcomes;
- An appropriate structure for the APL structure;
- Structure and content of no more than one reflective account;
- Additional evidence that will be required e.g. completion of coursework, demonstration etc

Submitting your completed APL application

The precise date for submission will need to be agreed with your APL advisor. Please ensure that you have carefully labelled and indexed each piece of evidence within your portfolio and that your submission clearly cross-references the evidence to the learning outcomes.

Making an APL claim

Stage 1 – Meet with Course Manager

You will need to arrange to meet with your course manager to discuss the opportunity to accredit your prior learning. During this first stage, it will be important to carefully review the module descriptors which form your award, in order to identify those elements that you wish to apply for APL. Copies of the module descriptors are available from the library, the network 'H' drive or your course manager. The latest date by which you may apply for APL is the end of the second week of the academic session. You should also note that you may only submit ONE APL claim per part of the course, although this may be for more than one module.

Stage 2 – Meet with APL advisor

Your course manager will identify an APL advisor who will help to support and guide you as you collect and collate your evidence. Initially you will be required to complete a preliminary version of the APL application form (annex 5.8 in QA manual), which will be used to judge if your claim has the potential to be successful. This preliminary application should identify the evidence that you plan to use and to which learning outcomes each piece of evidence will address. At this stage, you will not be expected to provide a fully documented application. Your APL advisor will also determine if continued attendance at the taught module is still required, based upon this preliminary submission.

Stage 3 – Preparation of the APL portfolio

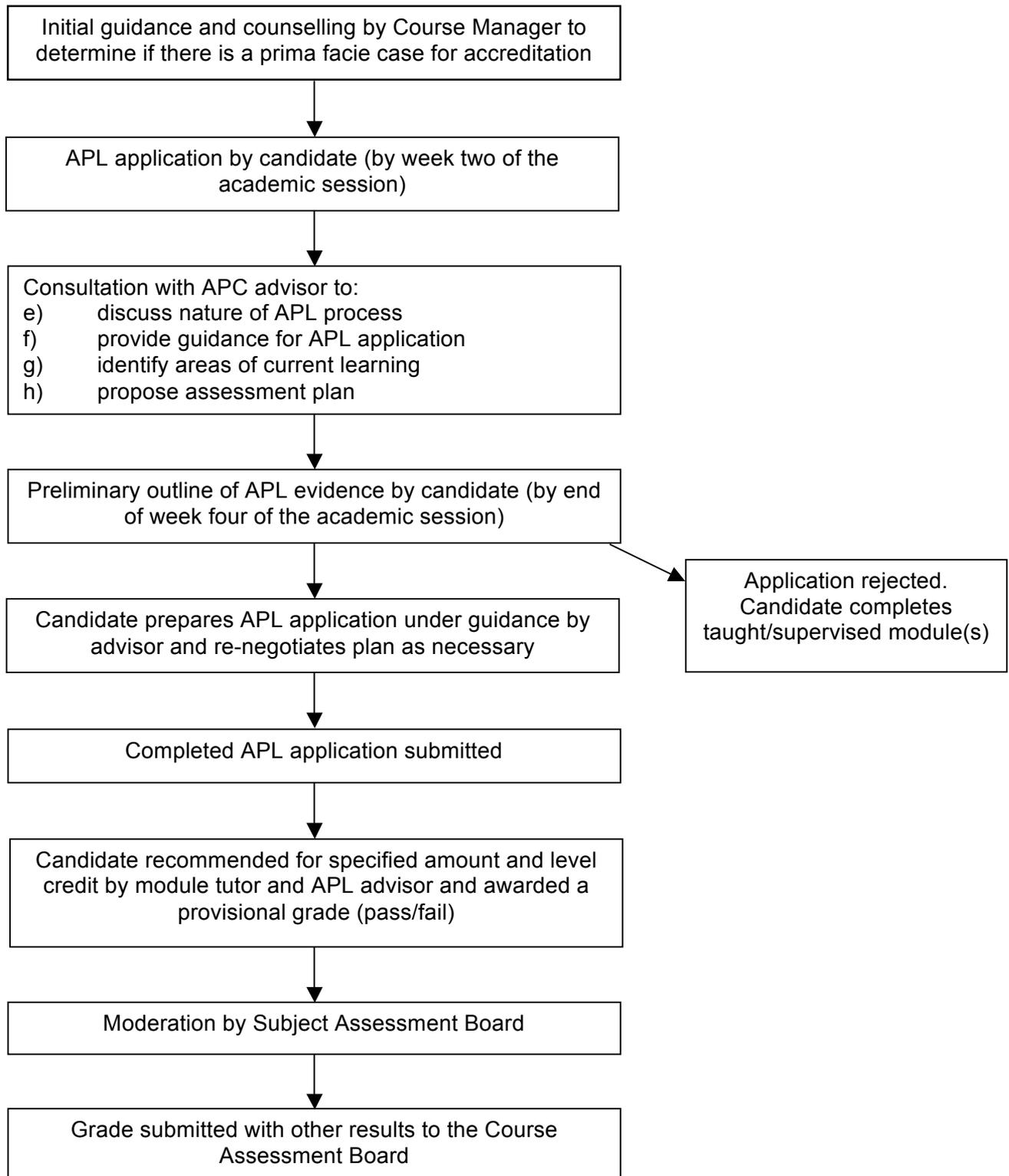
Under the guidance of your APL advisor, you will be required to compile the detailed content of your APL application. It is important that the portfolio demonstrates how your prior experience enables you to meet the learning outcomes of the module(s), rather than merely a 'list' of previous experience. Above all, you will need to ensure that your evidence is clearly cross referenced to ensure that the internal marker can immediately link learning outcomes to the supporting evidence.

Stage 4 – Assessment of the APL claim

Once you have submitted your APL claim (and supporting documentation) your application for APL will be considered by two members of staff, the module tutor and the APL advisor. They will be responsible for reviewing and assessing the evidence that you present to ensure that the level of your experience is appropriate as well as the extent to which you meet learning outcomes of the module.

The decision of the academic staff will be referred to the appropriate subject assessment board, to ensure the rigor and consistency of the outcome.

Diagram showing APL Procedure



Accreditation of Prior Learning Application Form

Family Name:	First Name:
Student ID Number:	
E-mail Address:	Tel. No:
Course Title:	
Module Title:	Module Code:
Number of credits applied for:	Module Level:
APL advisor:	

APL Claim Details

For certificated learning, copies of course content, examples of assessed work and results must be attached to this document.

For experiential learning, evidence must be submitted which provides verifiable support for the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Learning Outcome	Evidence Checklist (certificated or experiential)	Page

I hereby certify that the information and evidence provided is a true account of my previous learning and experience.

Signed: _____ Printed: _____ Date: _____

APL and AP(E)L Assessment Form

Family Name:		First Name:	
Student ID Number:			
Module Title:			
Module Level		Credit Value	
Nature of guidance/support provided:			
Feedback for Student:			
<p>From the evidence presented, the candidate has/has not* met the Intended Learning Outcomes of the module identified above (please note that all results are subject to Subject Assessment Board ratification).</p> <p>Application Approved / Rejected* (*delete as applicable)</p>			

Signed (Module Tutor):

Date:

Signed (APL Advisor):

Date:

Signed authorisation for input of input APL outcome into student record (Subject Board Chair):

Date:

Record Amended by Examinations Office:

Date: