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| **Accreditation of Prior and Experiential Learning (APEL)** |
| **Post Graduate Diploma in Nursing (Adult / Mental Health)** |
| Nicky Lambert, Tina Moore, Laura Foley. |

“Accreditation of Prior and Experiential Learning (APEL) is the overall term widely used for the recognition of, and award of, academic credit on the basis of demonstrated learning that has occurred at some time in the past.

This learning may have come about as the result of a course, self-directed study or as the result of experience either at work or in leisure pursuits”. (UCAS, 2008 p.1)

Dear Student,

*Welcome to the School of Health and Education at Middlesex University.*

This guide will help you to understand and complete the APEL process for entry to the Post Graduate Diploma in Nursing Programme for both the Adult and Mental Health fields. Your APEL claim is made for entry to the programme, and is not weighted for the award. It is assessed at level 6 (degree) and will be awarded as a pass/fail. The Nursing and Midwifery Council Standards for Pre-Registration Nursing Education allow the PGDip in nursing to be shortened by one year with a minimum of 4,600 hours by using this process; and on successful completion of your APEL) claim you will be able to undertake the PG Dip nursing programme in 2 as opposed to 3 years.

In order to achieve this you will have to demonstrate and provide evidence that you have completed *all of* the learning outcomes for the first three modules of this programme. That is, NIP 3090 (Demonstrating Graduate and Transferable Skills); PHC 3005 (Health and Social Science Research Approaches) and NIP 3091 (Knowledge and Skills for Healthcare Practice through Prior Learning). This process will enable us to award you credits for your prior learning which will then be entered onto your transcript of learning.

The APEL process can be a complex one and some people can feel overwhelmed, so the purpose of this handbook is to guide and support you through this APEL process. You will be required to match your learning against the learning outcomes of the three modules mentioned above. This handbook and the support on the website are designed to help develop your skills of critical reflection.

In order for you to benefit from this workbook, it is important that you read it carefully. You will need to set some ‘protected’ time aside – i.e. time where you will not be interrupted. The process of reflection will require you to think back into your past and tease out what you have *actually* *learnt* from your experiences. This may take a longer time than you anticipate!

We hope that you will find this handbook a useful resource to help prepare you for making your APEL claims.

**Tina Moore**

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The information found here is available in alternative formats.

If you have a disability which makes navigating the website difficult and you would like to receive information in an alternative format, please contact *Bryan Jones on 020 8411 5367* or e-mail [*B.Jones@mdx.ac.uk*](mailto:B.Jones@mdx.ac.uk) *.*

We can supply sections from this publication as:

* *a Word document with enlarged type — sent by email or supplied on a CD or memory stick*
* *printed copy with enlarged type*
* *printed copy on non-white paper*
* *as Braille*

Other formats may be possible. We will do our best to respond promptly. To help us, please be as specific as you can about the information you require and include details of your disability.

**Module contact team**

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**Purpose and status of your student programme handbook**

The purpose of this handbook is to introduce you to the APEL PROCESS FOR NURSING and to direct you to other general information about studying at Middlesex University. The material in this handbook is as accurate as possible at the date of production however you will be informed of any major changes in a timely manner.

Your comments on any improvements to this handbook are welcome. Please put them in an email with the name of the handbook to your Programme Leader.

**The University Regulations**

As a student of Middlesex University you agree to abide by the [University Regulations](file:///D:\temp\CACHE\Content.Outlook\P91JGCTO\mdx.ac.uk\regulations) when you enrol and therefore you should read this handbook in conjunction with the Regulations which are available online at: [www.mdx.ac.uk/regulations](http://www.mdx.ac.uk/regulations/).

Some of the key regulations have been repeated on the [Your Study](http://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/study) pages on UniHub <http://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/study>.

The assessment and progression regulations for taught programmes of study can be found in Section E of the regulations;

<http://www.mdx.ac.uk/regulations/sectioneug.aspx> <http://www.mdx.ac.uk/regulations/sectionepg.aspx>

**The Process**

*What’s required? -* In order to be awarded credits for the three modules requiring APEL your claim is mapped against the learning outcomes of the three modules. We will look at your evidence that you provide and assess whether it demonstrates that you have achieved the requirements of the learning outcome. We will then provide written feedback supporting your claim or explain how it can be improved to the required standard. The successful claims will then be presented at the accreditation board for formal recognition of the APEL credits. You will be informed of the outcome prior to commencing on the programme.

*Getting started. -* There are three modules within this programme that require this type of accreditation. These are: NIP 3090 (Demonstrating Graduate and Transferable Skills): PHC 3005 (Health and Social Science Research Approaches and NIP 3091 (Knowledge & Skills for Healthcare Practice). You are required to reflect on your learning and find evidence (to support this learning) and state how you have achieved the learning outcomes.

*How can I prove that I have achieved the learning outcomes? -* You can present your certificates from the courses that you have done, along with any relevant assignments and/or learning activities that you have undertaken. For the practice related learning outcomes, this is normally done through a portfolio of reflection that provides examples of learning (particularly from your relevant work experiences). You will need to provide some written commentary of your learning in these areas.

*Will I have support during this process? -* There are resources online and there will be a further opportunities for you to contact your programme/field leaders in order to review and discuss the progress of your APEL claim.

*What can I do to start preparing? -* You can look at the learning outcomes for all three modules. Think very carefully how you will be able to *prove*that you have achieved them from your prior learning. Find and keep the evidence, e.g. certificates, course information, learning activities. Write and keep notes about what you have learnt. Look at the resources online and make sure you understand what is required.

**Critical Reflection**

Reflection and reflective practice is embedded in the philosophy of adult learning. It is also a key feature within the PG Dip programme. Through your previous studies, you may have already had the opportunity to have undertaken this process. The development of reflective skills is a core, essential component of any nursing programme. Critical reflection is a powerful way of learning as it enables nurses to make sense of their experiences. It is also valued because it is a way of integrating practice experience with academic study. Reflecting on experience encourages and facilitates ‘deep’ rather than ‘surface’ learning. This is an important skill to master as it will help you to engage lifelong learning.

Your written commentaries should be *your* *own* reflections on *your* learning. You can also include some evidence from the literature. This article may be helpful to you: Oelofsen N (2012) ‘Using Reflective Practice in Frontline Nursing’. *Nursing Times*; 108: 24, 22-24 <http://www.nursingtimes.net/using-reflective-practice-in-frontline-nursing/5045779.article>

**Note**

* Very carefully read the learning outcomes – one at a time
* Identify the key words (this will demonstrate the area of learning that you should be concentrating on)
* You must be careful that you match your evidence to the stated learning outcome
* Think back to when you were taught/had experience of this area – write down what you did (very briefly) and what you learnt. You may not need to do this if you have the evidence – for example you have written an essay on the topic.
* For written commentaries, write a little description of what you did followed by what you have learnt

**What can be used as evidence?**

Your claim for academic credit needs to be supported by evidence which demonstrates achievement of the appropriate learning outcomes of the three modules. This is what you need to remember about evidence:

* Present your evidence in a way that links it clearly to the learning outcomes
* Think carefully about what evidence to use and how to ensure that you are not using images of people/organisation or their names without their permission (think confidentiality)
* Think about how to use evidence to illustrate your knowledge/skills and demonstrate the extent to which you can analyse your own learning
* Different media, for example, photographs, audio tapes, videos, written work
* Items that you have produced yourself, such as school/ college projects
* Information gathered from others about what you can do, e.g. certificates from successfully completed courses, correspondence you have received from colleagues or customers/clients, a statement by your manager or independent source familiar with your work
* Writing up a ‘learning incident’ from an experience that you have had in a diary
* Discussion of how you have applied learning gained on a course to your work or other activities. Certificates of achievement from courses may be used as a supplement to discussions
* Daily work, for example, letters, emails,

Note the use of testimonials should be to confirm other evidence. They are not adequate evidence in themselves.

Evidence is never self-explanatory. Always try to make explicit to the assessor how you intend your evidence to be understood. We suggest that you attach a short commentary to each piece of evidence explaining its context and how it authenticates a particular area of your learning. Please note that the quantity of evidence does not equate with quantity or quality of learning. It is often possible to find a piece of evidence that demonstrates achievement of more than one learning outcome. Be sure to cross-refer clearly in this case. The quality of the evidence and the way you have used it can indicate achievement of the learning outcomes / or not. So, ensure that you state why each piece of evidence is included and what learning it demonstrates.

The evidence you use should meet the following criteria (adapted from RAL handbook, 2010):

1. *Validity* – Evidence must be directly related to the learning claimed of a particular learning outcome. If you claim that you have an ability or skill, your evidence is only valid if it illustrates that ability or skill. For example, PHC 3005 LO 2 – your evidence could be an essay that you did for your undergraduate degree (research methods module) that asked you to critically examine the major research designs.
2. *Authenticity* – It must be clear that any evidence submitted originates from you, or refers specially to you. One way to do this is to ensure that pieces of evidence are signed (e.g. testimonial). You may need to ask for supporting statements on organisational notepaper.
3. *Currency* – Evidence should be recent and dated if possible. Where you are claiming for prior learning, supplementary evidence may be necessary to show that you are still capable of achieving the same level of leaning. Evidence more than five years should only be influenced if you are able to demonstrate that the learning has been in use more recently, if appropriate, has been updated.
4. *Sufficiency* – You must submit enough evidence to cover all the learning outcomes of the three modules.
5. *Reliability* – You should be able to show the learning you claim for can be repeated. Thus, evidence provided from one instance should also be relevant in another similar instance.

**Ethical aspects of your evidence**

* Your work roles and information generated through your work are likely to be useful sources of evidence. It is possible that you may wish to use sensitive information originally gathered for a different purpose as evidence. Where this is the case, it is essential that you comply with the professional, legal or moral standards appropriate of the nature of the information used. It is your responsibility to find out what these standards are from appropriate sources.
* You should always seek to protect any person or organisation names in your evidence by keeping them anonymous, unless you get written permission to use the names of individuals or organisations. You will find the following points a useful guide, if you wish to include confidential material as evidence:
* Ensure consent for the use of material is obtained from all people involved, for example, team members/managers. Details of the consent obtained should be included with the evidence itself, for example a signed letter on headed notepaper.
* Be sensitive to the implications of your evidence. Are you exposing internal problems or placing anyone in a bad light?
* Consider how to anonymise material adequately. For example, you may wish to represent names and addresses using pseudonyms. Striking names through with a pen or concealing them with correction fluid is not sufficient. Photocopying documents and blotting out names with black felt tip is preferable.
* Always check the legal status of material before using it. If in doubt, check with us and your organisation or line manager.

**The Modules**

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| 1. **NIP 3090: DEMONSTRATING GRADUATE AND TRANSFERABLE SKILLS** (GTS | |
| ***GTS are defined here as your skills in the following areas:***  **a**. using information technology, **b.** numeracy, **c.** communication, **d.** team work,  **e.** effective learning, **f.** personal and career development. | |
| **LEARNING OUTCOME**  **1.1** Demonstrate use of skills of critical reflection and self-assessment to identify their current level of graduate and transferable skills (GTS)   * 1. Construct a persuasive   argument for the recognition of GTS in each of the following areas: (information technology, numeracy, communication, team work, effective learning, personal and career development)   * 1. Reflect on how GTS will be utilised and   enhanced in future postgraduate (PG) studies | **EVIDENCE FOR APEL**   * **In 200 hundred words critically reflect on an incident related to working in a team that influenced your decision to be a nurse. (LO 1.1 and 1.2).** * **In 200 hundred words critically reflect on how your GTS skills are transferable in your future career as a nurse (LO 1.3).**   ***Nb. Your successful numeracy test is acceptable as evidence here.*** |

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| **2. PHC 3005: HEALTH AND SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH APPROACHES** | |
| **LEARNING OUTCOME**  **2.1** Explore the application of qualitative and  quantitative strategies in health research.   * 1. Critically examine the major research   designs.   * 1. Critically examine the main data collection   methods and methodologies in which these may be employed.   * 1. Demonstrate an ability to   adopt and justify appropriate methods for the analysis for quantitative and qualitative data   * 1. Examine and apply key ethical issues   related to research   * 1. Explain how you might identify   researchable questions   * 1. Critically appraise the strengths and   weaknesses of a piece of published research in your field of nursing | * **You can demonstrate your achievement of the learning outcomes by submitting a portfolio of evidence (both written commentary and certificated learning where appropriate). (LO 2.1- 2.7).** * **To demonstrate certificated learning you can map the learning outcomes of your previous research modules to those required here (LO 2.1- 2.7).**   ***Or***  **If you cannot evidence your research skills (by for example a module) you can read and critique a recent nursing research article. This should be less than 500 words. (LO 2.1- 2.7).** |

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| 1. **NIP 3091: KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS FOR HEALTHCARE PRACTICE** | |
| **LEARNING OUTCOME**  **3.1** Demonstrate an understanding of ethical  concepts and legal requirements relating to patient care within your chosen field of practice.   * 1. Transfer and apply communication,   assessment and decision making skills to your role as a nurse.   * 1. Differentiate the roles and responsibilities   of members of the Interprofessional team & agencies.   * 1. Describe the partnership between health   care services, the service user and their carers’ in addressing their health needs | **EVIDENCE FOR APEL**   * **You could provide evidence details of study days/courses you’ve attended, for example: certificate of attendance /testimonials etc. (LO 3.1 only)**   ***Or***   * **You can evidence these learning outcomes through a critical reflection (no more than 500 words) on an ethical issue related to Interprofessional team working. Please be mindful that team working involves service users/patients and carers (LO 3.1, 3.3 and 3.4)** * **Evidence here could be testimonials from your manager in support/confirming this. Appraisal forms could also be used as evidence. (LO 3.2)** |

**Assessment**

The following criteria will be used to identify if you have met the learning outcomes for the APL Claim.

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| ***Has the applicant demonstrated an ability to work at level 6 by:***  *(Appendix 1. Describes the marking criteria for level 6)* |
| * Producing an organised and structured account that is clearly structured, grammatically correct and uses formal/academic language |
| * Evidenced that the learning they wish to have credited at level 6 meets that academic standard. |
| * Used an established referencing system and use relevant references that reflect depth and breadth of reading. |

# Additional support for completing your essay

If you have any questions about the essay you can email us at our PgDip Nursing APEL account: [APEL@mdx.ac.uk](mailto:APEL@mdx.ac.uk)

# How to Submit Your Work

The work should be submitted electronically to the PgDip Nursing APEL account [APEL@mdx.ac.uk](mailto:APEL@mdx.ac.uk) by 16.00 at the latest on the date specified in your offer email. If you do not submit the essay by this date your offer will be withdrawn.

The essay should be submitted as a single **word document attachment** and must include the **coursework declaration** and the **feedback and results form**.

Please save your essay with a file name in the following format with your UCAS personal ID in the header.

Firstname\_ Lastname\_ APELSubmission

For example: Eve\_Smith\_ APEL Submission.

**Presentational Aspects**

# Please double space text and use Arial size 11. All pages should be numbered. Please include your UCAS personal identification number in the header of your essay.

# Confidentiality

Please show your suitability for this programme by respecting confidentiality: use pseudonyms for people, clinical areas and services and state that this is what you have done for clarity. Do not include other people’s personal information (***address, hospital number, G.P. etc.)*. If you breach confidentiality your submission will be marked as a fail.**

**Word Count**

For this assignment there is a 10% leeway on the word count. References are not included in the word count but any references made within the text of your essay are.

**Referencing**

If you are unfamiliar with the Harvard system, we will accept alternative referencing, provided it is recognised and consistent.

**Guidance for submission of APEL evidence**

Your evidence should be submitted as one document consisting of a front page, assessment submission sheet, your CV and evidence that you have met the learning outcomes for the following modules:

NIP 3090 Graduate and Transferable Skills in PG Studies

PHC 3005 Health and Social Science Research Approaches

NIP 3091Knowledge & Skills for Nursing Practice

**Academic misconduct**

# By submitting my work I am certifying that the word count declared is correct and that the coursework that I have submitted is my own unaided work. You should be aware that Turnitin software may be used and plagiarised work will be marked as a fail.

**FEEDBACK AND RESULT FORM**

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| **L.O 1 NIP 3090: Demonstrating Graduate and Transferable Skills**  ***GTS are defined here as your skills in the following areas:***  **a**. using information technology, **b.** numeracy, **c.** communication, **d.** team work,  **e.** effective learning, **f.** personal and career development. |

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| **LEARNING OUTCOME** | **EVIDENCE SOURCE FOR APEL** | **PASS / FAIL** |
| 1.1 Critically reflect on your current level of GTS in the areas above and demonstrate how you meet them at Level 6 academic standard. |  |  |
| 1.2 Reflect on how your GTS will be utilised and enhanced in your future postgraduate (PG) nursing studies. |  |  |
| 1.3 Demonstrate use of skills of critical reflection and self-assessment to identify their current level of graduate and transferable skills (GTS) |  |  |
| **L.O.2 PHC 3005: (Health and Social Science Research Approaches)** | | |
| **LEARNING OUTCOME** | **EVIDENCE SOURCE FOR APEL** | **PASS / FAIL** |
| 2.1 Explore the application of qualitative and quantitative strategies in health research |  |  |
| 2.2 Critically examine the major research designs |  |  |
| 2.3Critically examine the main data collection methods and methodologies in which these may be employed |  |  |
| 2.4 Demonstrate an ability to adopt and justify appropriate methods for the analysis for quantitative and qualitative data |  |  |
| 2.5 Examine and apply key ethical issues related to research |  |  |
| 2.6 Explain how you might identify researchable questions |  |  |
| 2.7 Critically appraise the strengths and weaknesses of a piece of published research in your field of nursing |  |  |
| **L.O. 3 NIP 3091: (Knowledge & Skills for Healthcare Practice)** | | |
| **LEARNING OUTCOME** | **EVIDENCE SOURCE FOR APEL** | **PASS / FAIL** |
| 3.1 Demonstrate an understanding of ethical concepts and legal requirements relating to patient care within your chosen field of practice. |  |  |
| 3.2 Transfer and apply communication, assessment and decision making skills to your role as a nurse. |  |  |
| 3.3 Differentiate the roles and responsibilities of members of the Interprofessional team & agencies. |  |  |
| 3.4 Describe the partnership between health care services, the service user and their carer’s in addressing their health needs |  |  |

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| **OVERALL COMMENT PASS / FAIL** |
| * Organised and structured account, clear structure, grammatically correct, formal/academic language. * Learning at level 6 academic standard. * Sound referencing, relevant references, depth/breadth of reading. |

**Marker’s Name:**

**Marker’s Signature**:

**Date:**

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| **Level 6** is characterised by an expectation of students’ increasing autonomy in relation to their study and developing skill sets. Students are expected to demonstrate problem solving skills, both theoretical and practical.  This is supported by an understanding of appropriate theory; creativity of expression and thought based in individual judgment; and the ability to seek out, invoke, analyse and evaluate competing theories or methods of working in a critically constructive and open manner. Output is articulate, coherent and skilled in the appropriate medium, with some students producing original or innovative work in their specialism. | | | | |
| **Mark Bands** | | **Pass/**  **Fail** | **Generic Learning Outcomes** | |
| **Knowledge & Understanding** | **Intellectual, Practical, Affective and Transferable Skills** |
| **Characteristics of Student Achievement by Marking Band** | 90-100% | **PASS** | Exceptional information base exploring and analysing the discipline, its theory and ethical issues with extraordinary originality and autonomy. | Exceptional management of learning resources, with a higher degree of autonomy/exploration that clearly exceeds the assessment brief. Exceptional structure/accurate expression. Demonstrates intellectual originality and imagination. Exceptional team/practical/professional skills. |
| 80-89% | Outstanding information base exploring and analysing the discipline, its theory and ethical issues with clear originality and autonomy | Outstanding management of learning resources, with a degree of autonomy/exploration that clearly exceeds the assessment brief. An exemplar of structured/accurate expression. Demonstrates intellectual originality and imagination. Outstanding team/practical/professional skills |
| 70-79% | Excellent knowledge base that supports analysis, evaluation and problem-solving in theory/practice/ethics of discipline with considerable originality | Excellent management of learning resources, with degree of autonomy/research that may exceed the assessment brief. Structured and creative expression.  Very good academic/ intellectual skills and practical/team/professional/problem-solving skills |
| 60-69% | Good knowledge base that supports analysis, evaluation and problem-solving in theory/ practice/ethics of discipline with some originality | Good management of learning resources, with consistent self-directed research. Structured and accurate expression. Good academic/intellectual skills and team/practical/ professional/problem solving skills |
| 50-59% | Satisfactory knowledge base that supports some analysis, evaluation and problem-solving in theory/practice/ethics of discipline | Satisfactory management of learning resources. Some autonomy in research but inconsistent. Structured and mainly accurate expression.  Acceptable level of academic/ intellectual skills going beyond description at times. Satisfactory team/practical/professional/problem-solving skills |
| 40-49% | Basic knowledge base with some omissions at the level of theoretical/ethical issues. Restricted ability to discuss theory and/or or solve problems in discipline | Basic use of learning resources with little autonomy. Some difficulties with academic/intellectual skills. Some difficulty with structure/accuracy in expression, but evidence of developing team/practical/professional/problem-solving skills |
| -39 | **FAIL** | * Limited knowledge base. Limited understanding of discipline/ethical issues. Difficulty with theory and problem solving in discipline * Limited use of learning resources. Unable to work autonomously. Little input to teams. Weak academic/ intellectual skills. Still mainly descriptive. General difficulty with structure/accuracy in expression. Practical/professional/ problem-solving skills that are not yet secure * May also be awarded for: (i) non-submission; (ii) dangerous practice and; (iii) in situations where the student fails to address the assignment brief (e.g.: answers the wrong question) and/or related learning outcomes | |

**Appendix 1**

**Appendix 2**

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| **School of Health and Social Science Assessment Submission Sheet** | | |
| Student Full Name: | | Student No: |
| Name of Programme: PGDip (ADULT/MENTAL HEALTH) | | |
| Name of Programme Leader: Tina Moore | | |
| Title of Assessment Item: APEL | | |
| Word Count: | Campus/Site: Hendon | |
| Date Assessment due: | Date Assessment Submitted: | |
| Mode of Submission: Electronic Submission | | |
| Declaration of Academic integrity:   1. I confirm that this is all my own work and that any information copied in part or full including references and quotations from both primary and secondary sources have been fully identified and properly acknowledged in line with the Guidelines on Referencing and Citation Style in Health and Social Science 2. I have read the regulations relating to academic misconduct and submit this work as my own in line with those regulations. 3. I understand that my work may be compared against the work of others for the purposes of detecting plagiarism and collusion. When software is used for this purpose, I am aware this will mean it will be held on a (secure) external database for the sole purpose of detecting plagiarism. When requested by the module tutor, I agree to provide an electronic copy of the work. 4. This work has not been submitted previously towards any credit bearing component of an award   Please sign and enter your student number here to confirm adherence to the above:  Signed:…………………………………… Student No:…………………………………… | | |
| Items Submitted (please tick as appropriate)  Self-Assessment and Cover Sheet  Supporting Electronic Copy  E-mail address for electronic feedback | | |