



Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
Candidate Guidance Handbook on how to claim
RPL credits to access the
MSc Mental Health Nursing Programme
2026- 2027



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Dear Candidate,

This guide will help you to understand the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process for entry to the MSc Mental Health Nursing programme. The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) Standards for Pre-Registration Nursing Education allow the usual nursing course to be shortened by one year using this process. You need to get RPL 90 credits at level 6 to access the programme which equates to 900 hours of prior learning.

Your claim is assessed at level 6 (degree level) and will be awarded as a non-graded pass. You will have to demonstrate and provide evidence that you have completed *all of* the learning outcomes for all parts of the 4 Learning Domains, which are described in this handbook. On successful completion of your RPL claim you will be able to undertake the MSc Mental Health Nursing programme in 2 as opposed to 3 years.

On behalf of the MH MSc team, I wish you success with your RPL claim.



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Purpose and status of your RPL handbook:

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with the structure with which to submit your RPL claim. 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 Nicky Lambert - n.lambert@mdx.ac.uk

The University Regulations

As a student of Middlesex University, you agree to abide by the University Regulations when you enroll and therefore you should read this handbook in conjunction with the Regulations, which are available online at: www.mdx.ac.uk/regulations.

If you have a disability, which makes navigating the website difficult, and you would like to receive information in an alternative format, please contact Disability Support on 020 8411 2502 or e-mail disability@mdx.ac.uk.

HOW TO SUBMIT A CLAIM FOR RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)

The Process:

All candidates applying for the MSc Mental Health nursing programme (with Nursing and Midwifery Council registration) need to provide evidence of 900 hours of prior and relevant learning to access the programme via a portfolio submission.

What is required:

In order to be awarded 90 credits at level 6 via RPL, your submitted work is assessed against learning outcomes. A successful RPL claim will be presented at Middlesex University, School of Health, and Education Quality Committee for formal recognition of the RPL credits. You will be informed of the outcome prior to commencing the MSc Mental Health nursing programme, as successful RPL is an essential requirement.

Getting started:

There are four domains of learning relevant to the MSc Mental Health nursing programme that you are required to submit an RPL evidence against:

Domain:	Mapped to:
Learning domain 1	Graduate and transferable skills (<i>reflecting the learning outcomes of MHN 1801 Expansive learning for professional practice</i>)
Learning domain 2	Graduate research skills and knowledge
Learning domain 3	Foundations of scientific principles of nursing (<i>reflecting the learning outcomes of MHN1802 Scientific principles for Mental Health nursing</i>)
Learning domain 4	Foundations of nursing knowledge (<i>reflecting the learning outcomes of MHN1803</i>)

QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE ABOUT YOUR RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)

Will I have support during this process? There are resources in this document to help you to prepare your RPL portfolio and there will be further opportunities for you to contact the programme team to consult, review and discuss the completion and progress of your claim. There will also be workshops that you will be invited to attend to discuss your progress and portfolio.

How can I prove that I have achieved the learning outcomes? You need to map your prior learning to the learning outcomes of all the four domains required. You will also need to provide written critical commentary, contextualising your learning within Mental Health Nursing to meet the learning outcomes at level 6.

You will also present your relevant certificates from the courses that you have completed, along with any relevant assignments and/or learning activities that you have undertaken through experience if the learning outcomes are clearly mapped.

What can be used as evidence to support my RPL claim? Your claim for academic credit needs to be supported by evidence demonstrating achievement of the appropriate learning outcomes of the four domains.

Any evidence you select to use as your RPL claim needs to be in line with the Confidentiality Policy and GDPR regulations so please do not include names, data and images of people and organisations without their written permission /consent.

You can submit items that you have produced yourself, such as degree projects or a dissertation report or certificates from courses and correspondence you have received from colleagues or clients or attach a statement by your manager or supervisor who is familiar with your work, may be used as a supplement to discussions.

You can also use case studies: An evaluation of a particular case or event in which you have been involved, which demonstrates evidence of the learning you are claiming, and artefacts produced such as reports, policy and procedure documents, teaching plans, websites, designs, photography, video, audio files, articles etc.

What can I do to start preparing? Look at the learning outcomes for all 4 domains and collect and arrange the evidence, e.g., transcripts and certificates, course information, learning activities, dissertation and other evidence that is relevant to this programme.

The evidence submitted needs to meet the following criteria:

- **Validity** – All your 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.
- **Authenticity** – It must be clear that any evidence submitted originates from you or refers especially 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 headed notepaper.
- **Currency** – Evidence should be recent and dated if possible (within 5 years). 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 learning. Evidence that is associated with learning undertaken five years ago or earlier should only be included if you are able to demonstrate that the learning has been updated or been in use recently.
- **Sufficiency** – You must submit sufficient evidence to cover all the learning outcomes for each of the 4 learning domains.
- **Reliability** – You should be able to show the learning you claim can be repeated. Thus, evidence provided from one instance should also be relevant in another similar instance.
- **Ethical aspects** - Have you maintained confidentiality? You should always seek not to disclose and 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.

Ethical aspects of your evidence: This is a key requirement, so it is expanded upon here.

You must not disclose confidential information about individuals, so please protect any person or organisation names in your evidence by keeping them anonymous.

The following points form a useful guide if you wish to include confidential material as evidence:

- Ensure *consent* for the use of the 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.
- Consider how to *anonymise* the evidence. 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 enough. Photocopying documents and blotting out names with black pen is preferable.
- Always check the *legal status* of material before using it. If in doubt, check with your organisation or line manager.

Portfolio Templates

Front sheet:

Please submit the front sheet below with each submission:

Full name:

Middlesex University student number:

Email address:

Phone number:

Please indicate the date of your RPL session and who it was with (for MH this is likely to be Nicky Lambert, Helen Kehoe, or Suzanne McGowan):

About me

Add a short paragraph introducing yourself e.g., your work role(s) previous degree and key courses.

Learning Domain 1: Graduate Capabilities and Skills (20 credits, Level 6)

Learning Outcome:

1. Describe how you plan to use and develop your graduate and transferable skills in your future career as a nurse

Evidence examples/guidance

Middlesex's Graduate Framework Attributes are described below.

1. **Leadership and Influence** - You are action-oriented and motivated with a capacity for self-management and autonomy.
2. **Curiosity and Learning** - You embrace the spirit of enquiry, curious to understand the world around you. You proactively seek to acquire knowledge to engage in informed debate and be able to effect change.
3. **Communication, Empathy, and Inclusion** - You are a strong, confident, and professional communicator. You are compassionate and considerate, at ease with diversity and difference.
4. **Collaborative Innovation** - You are a leader of change, confident to collaborate. You are experienced and comfortable working in groups and multidisciplinary teams.
5. **Resilience and Adaptability** - You are strong in the face of adversity. You are flexible and pragmatic and able to adapt when circumstances demand.
6. **Problem solving and Delivery** - You can critique and solve complex problems. You generate ideas and see a project through to the end.
7. **An Entrepreneurship Mindset** - You have a capacity for innovative and strategic thinking in relation to decisions and organisational resources and using this to maximise positive outcomes.
8. **Technological Agility** – You can use technology to solve problems through creative solutions. You are agile in your capacity to evolve and upgrade your skills as needed.

Assessment of RPL Claim

Consider and map your own prior learning/experience to Middlesex Graduate Attributes

- **Show you have these graduate and transferable skills.**
- **Critically analyse how you plan to use and enhance these attributes within your future career as a nurse and include your complete BSc transcript.**

**Critical analysis: 750 words
LO 1**

Weighting: 20 credits

Please complete this on the following page.

Learning Domain 1: Commence your writing here.

Learning Domain 2: Research Knowledge and Skills (25 credits, Level 6)

<p>Learning Outcome(s)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Critically appraise the strengths and weaknesses of peer-reviewed research 2. Demonstrate and justify selection and applicability of appropriate research methods and data analysis in qualitative and quantitative studies/research 	
<p>Select one of the options below based on your evidence to show prior learning of Research Knowledge and Skills. You must choose either “Option one”, “Option two” or “Option three”.</p>	
<p>Evidence examples/guidance</p> <p>Option one Provide your BSc dissertation and / or Research Methods transcript or another research project.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Option two Submit a written analysis (1,000 words +/- 10%) of a recent peer-reviewed Mental Health nursing research article (using a research critiquing tool. Find some critiquing tools below)</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Option three Submit a reflection on being part of a research project/study perhaps in the role of a research assistant (1,000 words +/- 10%)</p>	<p>Assessment of RPL Claim</p> <p>Identify if you are submitting Option 1, 2 or 3.</p> <p>For option 1, provide your dissertation / research project as a separate PDF.</p> <p>Then consider and map your own prior learning/experience to the 2 learning outcomes above. This should show you have basic research knowledge and skills.</p> <p>Critically analyse how you plan to use and enhance your research skills within your future career as a nurse (refer to evidence based practice).</p> <p>Critical analysis: 1,000 words LO 2, 3 Weighting: 25 credits</p> <p>Please complete this on the following page.</p>

Critical appraisal tools/frameworks:

	Name of Framework/Model	Type of Research
1.	Caldwell et al (2011) critiquing framework	Qualitative and Quantitative
2.	Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (2018)	Qualitative and Quantitative
3.	Holland and Rees (2010) framework quantitative	Quantitative
4.	Holland and Rees (2010) framework qualitative	Qualitative

[A step-by-step guide to critiquing research. Part 1: quantitative research](#)

[A step-by-step guide to critiquing research. Part 2: qualitative research](#)

[Understanding research: 3 Critiquing findings and conclusions](#)

[Critical Appraisal: Centre for Evidence Based Medicine](#)

Learning Domain 2: Commence your writing here.

Learning Domain 3: Foundations of Scientific Principles of Mental Health Nursing (25 credits, Level 6)

<p>Learning Outcome(s): Demonstrate knowledge of anatomy and physiology and explain the role of body systems and mechanisms in maintaining homeostasis; and critically reflect on its relevance for Mental Health nursing</p>	
<p>Select either Option one or Option two to make your claim, as set out below.</p>	
<p>Option one (certificated – if your BSc has a scientific basis)</p>	<p>Option two (uncertificated – if your BSc does not have a scientific basis)</p>
<p>For option 1, provide your BSc Certificate and Transcript as a separate PDF, along with any relevant assignments.</p> <p>Then critically analyse the importance of this scientific knowledge (LO3) to the role of Mental Health nursing practice including in this (500 words).</p> <p>a) How are mental and physical health and wellbeing linked?</p> <p>b) Why are physical/medical conditions more common in people with mental illness? - Give two examples of physical/medical conditions common in this patient population.</p> <p>c) Why is it important for mental health nurses to be aware of service users' physical health needs when planning and delivering care in mental health settings bearing in mind current local/national health policies and guidelines?</p>	<p>To claim academic credit in option two for learning domain 3, you need to demonstrate your achievement of learning outcome. Watch the <i>links</i> to the videos below and write a short narrative discussion (of not more than 150 words) guided by the set questions alongside each link.</p> <p><u>Question 1.</u> Describe the structure and the function of the parts of the heart https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VWamhZ8vTL4 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sh5DZU2eVxk&t=2s https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MPZ_Am4HgQA</p> <p><u>Question 2.</u> What are the implications of conducting pulse oximetry (monitoring blood oxygen saturation) in clinical practice? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3wouUBT80nU https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2v3rae-73jc</p> <p><u>Question 3.</u> Blood circulation in the circulatory system is complex but simple. What are the differences between systemic and pulmonary circulation and what parts of the circulatory systems are involved in both? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1576t9-SP6A</p> <p><u>Question 4.</u> Describe the structure and the functions of the liver https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKZS9lpfuXw&t=8s</p> <p>Assessment of RPL Claim Complete option two and then critically analyse the importance of this knowledge (LO3) to the role of Mental Health nursing practice including in this (500 words).</p> <p>a) How are mental and physical health and wellbeing linked?</p> <p>b) Why are physical/medical conditions more common in people with mental illness? - Give two examples of</p>

	<p>physical/medical conditions common in this patient population.</p> <p>c) Why is it important for mental health nurses to be aware of service users' physical health needs when planning and delivering care in mental health settings bearing in mind current local/national health policies and guidelines?</p>
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Learning Domain 3: Commence your writing here.

Learning Domain 4: Foundations of Mental Health Nursing Knowledge

(20 credits, Level 6)

Learning Outcome(s):

1. Define public health, discussing the key drivers influencing public health policies and the public health role of the Mental Health nurse.
2. Discuss the factors that can impact on physical and mental health and discuss how the nurse can safely assess the physical and mental health needs of service users / patients

For option 1, provide your BSc Certificate and Transcript as a separate PDF, along with any relevant assignments that reflect the 2 learning outcomes above.

For example: Modules/studies undertaken previously and associated with relevant subject areas can be drawn upon to provide evidence to support your claim e.g. sociology; psychology; human sciences; public health; social and/or political sciences; social policy.

For option 2, if you have not studied public health, physical and mental health before; Complete a reflective account against one of the 'themes' below drawing on their learning and experience from any related practice e.g. nursing assistant; support worker, volunteer.

Theme 1: Role of the nurse in promoting public health (1500 words +/- 10%)

<https://www.rcn.org.uk/clinical-topics/public-health/the-role-of-nursing-staff-in-public-health>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/developing-the-public-health-contribution-of-nurses-and-midwives-tools-and-models>

OR

Theme 2: Impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACE) on physical and mental wellbeing (1500 words +/- 10%)

<https://www.iriss.org.uk/resources/esss-outlines/aces>

<https://www.nationalelfservice.net/mental-health/psychosis/adverse-life-events-and-the-risk-of-psychotic-experiences/>

Assessment of RPL Claim

Complete either Option 1 or Option 2.

Then consider and map your prior learning/experience to the 2 learning outcomes above, making sure you include:

- **Demonstrate your knowledge of public health.**
- **As part of your consideration of theme 1 or theme two critically analyse how you plan to use and enhance your knowledge within your future career as a nurse**

**Critical analysis: 1,500 words
LO 1,2**

Weighting: 20 credits

Please complete this on the following page.

Learning Domain 4: Commence your writing here.

How to submit your RPL portfolio for assessment:

Once you have collated the necessary evidence and completed the required critical reflection and analysis for EACH domain.

- If your RPL tutorial was with Nicky Lambert, please send to N.Lambert@mdx.ac.uk
- If your RPL tutorial was with Helen Kehoe, please send to: H.Kehoe@mdx.ac.uk
- If your RPL tutorial was with Suzanne McGowan, please send to: S.Mcgowan@mdx.ac.uk

Your RPL claim needs to be submitted as a *one document file* which is divided into 4 *domains*. This means that your evidence and any certificates need to be scanned and attached to the relevant section.

- Add a short paragraph introducing yourself e.g., your work role(s) previous degree and key courses.
- Make sure that you include your name; student number and contact details (phone and email) and your RPL portfolio.

Submissions:

You will be permitted two submission attempts, which are one formative and one summative.

The purpose of the formative assessment is to get feedback on your progress in meeting the learning outcomes of the domains. If this is a pass on all domains, it may become your summative submission, which means your RPL is successful. You will then be contacted by the admission team with the next steps.

However, if the formative is not a pass, you will receive feedback and a chance to resubmit. Hopefully, this will be a pass. If not, you will get feedback and one more final opportunity to submit.

RPL submission checklist:

	Please check and confirm that you have completed the following:	Tick here to indicate completion ✓
1	Front sheet	
2	Learning domain 1 evidence	
3	Learning domain 1 written piece 750 words	
4	Learning domain 2 evidence	
5	Learning domain 2 written piece 1000 words	
6	Learning domain 3 evidence	
7	Learning domain 3 written piece 500 words	
8	Learning domain 4 evidence	
9	Learning domain 4 written piece 1500 words	

Good luck with your submission from the Mental Health Team!

