

BACP Course Accreditation Scheme

Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)

Some courses have an Accreditation of Prior learning (APL) admissions procedure whereby student applicants are credited for their previous learning and/or experience. APL is an academic process that recognises a student applicant's previous training and/or work experience to save them repeating similar or past study when enrolling onto a course. This means that students can omit the equivalent part of the training and join it at a later stage, e.g. be admitted straight onto year two of a three-year training.

APL is sometimes referred to by other titles such as Recognition of Other Learning, Credit of Prior Learning, Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning or Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning or credit transfer.

Admission of Students Part-Way Through an Accredited Course Via APL Procedures

Accredited course students and graduates - BACP membership

Only students joining an accredited course via an APL procedure which has been approved by BACP under the course accreditation scheme may claim to be on an accredited course and may claim to have completed a BACP accredited course upon graduation.

Students who join a course via an APL procedure which has not been approved by BACP cannot claim to be studying on a BACP accredited course and will not be able to claim completion of an accredited course when they graduate even if the procedure appears to meet the requirements of the course accreditation scheme.

Course graduates who have completed the whole of a BACP accredited course or who APL'ed onto the course via BACP approved APL procedures may transfer directly from Individual Member to Registered Member MBACP. Individual Member and Registered Member MBACP applications from accredited course graduates will be screened to check if the applicant was admitted to their course via APL and the following criteria will apply:

Applicants who have been admitted to an accredited course via an APL procedure which has been approved by BACP may transfer directly from Individual Member to Registered Member MBACP.

Applicants who cannot claim a BACP accredited course upon graduation must pass BACP's Certificate of Proficiency 'CoP' in order to transfer from Individual Member to Registered Member MBACP.

It is the course's responsibility to inform APL students of these criteria and of those which will have a bearing on their application for individual accreditation (below)

NB: It is the accredited course provider which is responsible for BACP's assessment and approval of its APL procedure, not individual students/course graduates. The procedure under which an applicant for Individual Membership/Register was admitted to a course will not be considered as part their application on a one-to-one basis.

Accredited course graduates - BACP counsellor/psychotherapist accreditation

BACP Registered Members will not have to resubmit all of the course evidence that they previously submitted as part of their application for Individual Membership/Register when they apply for individual counsellor/psychotherapist accreditation*. A certificate from the accredited course is acceptable evidence for all applicants.

Accredited course graduates who became Registered Members via the CoP (having been unable to claim completion of an accredited course due to APL reasons) must apply for accreditation via the non-accredited course route which requires a breakdown of all practitioner training submitted in the application (currently Criterion 4.2).

APL procedures and accredited courses/course accreditation

APL requirements for accredited courses appear under criterion B9 in the current scheme ('Gold Book'). If courses wish to admit students after the start of the course, they should develop an APL procedure in line with the requirements at B9 and have these procedures approved by BACP.

Accredited course status may be placed at risk where courses have APL procedures that cannot meet the course accreditation requirements at B9. Such procedures may have a detrimental impact on the dynamics of the existing learning group for both new and existing students and cause disruption to the consistency of the course in general. Courses under significant pressure to introduce APL procedures outside of B9 should contact BACP course accreditation as soon as possible.

If accredited courses wish to APL students via a procedure outside of BACP's course accreditation requirements, they must pay careful attention to how the course meets sub criterion B9.2iii, given that the internal consistency of the course must be maintained. Specific attention must be given to how the course ensures that the existing students and any new students joining the group are not being negatively impacted upon.

In exceptional circumstances where non-approved APL routes have been considered acceptable by BACP, it is the courses responsibility to inform any relevant APL students that they will not be eligible for a BACP Accredited Award and that when they apply for Individual Membership/Registration they must successfully complete the Certificate of Proficiency (CoP) as part of their application. In addition, if such graduates wish to apply for individual accreditation they will need to do so via the non-accredited entry route (currently Criterion 4.2).

*BACP Board of Governors decision September 2015

(Last reviewed July 2018)