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Recognition and Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) Policy

The ISTD is committed to ensuring that all prospective dance teachers can access its teaching qualifications at an appropriate level. To this end the ISTD runs two processes for assessing Prior Learning:

1. **Exemptions** for ISTD Level 4 Diploma in Dance Education – Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)
2. **Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)** for ISTD Level 6 Diploma in Dance Pedagogy (DDP), Licentiate and Fellowship

Exemptions - ISTD Level 4 Diploma in Dance Education (DDE)

The ISTD operates a scheme for recognition of prior experience and learning for the DDE qualifications. There are three routes for applying for exemptions depending on the applicant's learning and experience:

1. Matching qualifications – **listed on the ISTD planned exemption table.**

It is an essential requirement that learners who have comparable qualifications have identical outcomes for exemptions of the relevant units of these qualifications. The ISTD has created a **table of exemptions** which includes its own and other dance awarding organisations' qualifications, mapped against all units within the DDE. This is available to Approved Dance Centres to discuss relevant exemptions with students before they register for the DDE qualifications. The ISTD automatically recognises those qualifications offered on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) which are offered by Ofqual approved awarding organisations in the same sector and level and includes certain other established recognised higher level qualifications from those organisations.

The table of exemptions is reviewed and updated as necessary by the society. It does not include overseas qualifications, as these may not be verified.

Certificated evidence of achievement must be sent with the registration form to the ISTD. The ISTD does not charge an additional fee for these exemptions, at the time of student registration, if they are listed on the planned exemption table. Once approved, the learner is registered for the qualification with exemption for the relevant unit(s).

2. Individually Requested Exemptions – **Not on the planned exemptions table**

If the candidate **has other learning that relates to units of the DDE but it is not on the planned exemptions table**, then the student teacher can apply for an individual unit exemption request.

When applying the candidate should send copies of certificates, including transcripts of modules, and any relevant evidence, depending on the unit exemption being applied for. This can be sent with the completed registrations to Professional Qualifications who will then pass on to Education and Training to validate the information. If this is an initial enquiry prior to registration it can be sent directly to Education and Training.

If the candidate achieves other qualifications whilst already registered for and taking the DDE, they can apply for an exemption at any time as appropriate, with evidence.

The requested exemption process is free for members, or there is an administration fee of £130.00 for non-members. The process will be administered by Education and Training. ***A fee will only be taken if an exemption can be applied. A full fee is charged for partial or full exemptions.***

Exemptions can only be awarded when the learner has certificated learning which is at the same level and covers the same content of that of the DDE, and therefore all applications will be carefully checked against the relevant DDE unit learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

3. Tutor applying an exemption

If the candidate holds at least two years regular teaching experience, then the Tutor may take the decision to exempt the student teacher from DDE Unit 2 'Assisting'. This will mean that the student teacher will not have to complete the 5 'assisting' lesson plans but will be required to complete 10 'Teaching Practice' lessons instead. A guided meeting should take place between the student teacher and the Approved Tutor to establish whether this exemption is relevant, and it should then be recorded on the registration form as an exemption and signed by the Tutor. The Tutor can identify further exemptions from the table and also record this on the registration form. All

evidence for the exemptions must be submitted at the point of registration and submitted to the Professional Qualifications Team.

Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)

The APEL scheme is designed to allow members and new entrants to access ISTD qualifications at an appropriate level for their professional status.

This APEL scheme takes account of professional experience and unregulated qualifications, in order to enable applicants to be granted exemption from usual entry requirements for the ISTD Level 6 Diploma in Dance Pedagogy, Licentiate and Fellowship qualifications. The scheme is designed for mature professionals who:

1. Do not have accredited qualifications which can be directly matched with ISTD qualifications.
2. Existing ISTD members who wish to progress through ISTD qualifications more quickly than stated in the entry requirements.
3. Have qualifications (such as Licentiate or Fellowship) with another teaching organisation and who wish to take an equivalent qualification with the ISTD.

Application Process

Applications for APEL can be submitted at any point in the year. Those meeting the application guidelines will be considered as follows:

- Applications received by 30 April will be processed by 31 July
- Applications received by 31 October will be processed by 31 January

Applications will be considered by a panel comprising the Head of Teacher Training and two Heads of Faculty Developments (Dancesport and Theatre). Applicants will be invited to attend a short interview with the Panel (by Skype or telephone) to discuss their application and future training interests. Panel recommendations will be sent for approval and comment by one faculty representative per genre. This is then submitted to the Qualifications Development Panel for final approval by Director of Dance and Director of Education. Applicants will be informed of the final decision of the Qualifications Development Panel in writing and, if successful, this letter will serve as proof of exemption from the entry requirements to take the named examination. A successful candidate will have three years from receipt of letter to complete their examination. After three years the candidate would need to reapply through this process.

This process is free for members and £130 for non-members. This is required to be paid when submitting the APEL application. Candidates will also be required to provide references to support their applications.

Appeals Procedure

If an applicant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their application for APL or APEL, they may appeal to Director of Education within 28 days of receipt of the outcome. The Director of Education will review the evidence and confirm a final decision within a further 10 working days. If the applicant is not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, they may write to the Chief Executive Officer within 10 working days of receipt of the decision. The Chief Executive Officer will review the processes and evidence to ensure they have been carried out fairly and equitably. This decision is final and the applicant will be informed immediately.

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