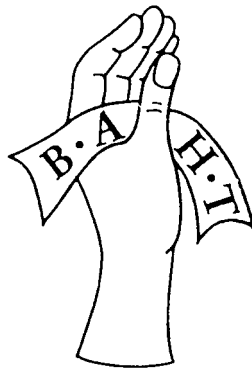


**BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF HAND THERAPISTS
POST-QUALIFICATION HAND THERAPY PROGRAMME**

ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING

POLICY DOCUMENT



Revised April 2005

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Summary

The abbreviation **APL** is used throughout this document to cover both the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) and the Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL), on the assumption that it is the **LEARNING** that is important rather than the **experience which promoted that learning**. The learning identified as the outcome of experience and submitted for accreditation must be relevant to the Post-qualification Hand Therapy Education Programme of the British Association of Hand Therapists (BAHT).

It is anticipated that therapists with five or more years of practice within the speciality of Hand Therapy will consider applying for APL while pursuing the goal of Accredited Hand Therapist (BAHT).

Therapists of less than two years experience in Hand Therapy are advised to pursue BAHT credit points via attendance at validated courses at Levels I and II, and to submit a paper at Level III.

Introduction

The Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) acknowledges two basic beliefs:

1. People learn in many ways, including those outside the formal framework of established courses which lead to recognised awards and qualifications.
2. Learning acquired outside the formal framework can be recognised and awarded credit.

Prior learning includes both certificated achievements and uncertificated experiential learning. The British Association of Hand Therapists (BAHT) Post-Qualification Hand Therapy education programme has been designed to deal effectively with learning in both categories. Detailed information is given in the procedural framework section (Section II) of this document but briefly the key stages in dealing with a therapist's claim for APL are:

1. The therapist makes an initial enquiry to BAHT Education Sub-Committee (BAHT ESC).
2. The therapist is given advice on the appropriateness of the APL route to his/her aims and intentions. The therapist may be advised to take one or more of the post-qualifying BAHT courses and/or to collect supporting evidence for the APL claim.
3. If the therapist wishes to proceed with the APL route they should complete form APL/1 and send the completed form to the Secretary, BAHT ESC. Thus giving notice of the intention to use the APL system to claim credit points.
4. After receipt of APL/1, the Secretary of ESC sends a copy of Form APL/2 and the name of an Advisor to the therapist, who then completes and submits Form APL/2, together with the required registration fee.
5. The therapist prepares and submits a Portfolio of Evidence of evidence to support the claim for credit points. Between registration date and the submission of the completed Portfolio of Evidence, a time limit of 12 months is normally observed.
6. The therapist's claim is processed and the evidence scrutinised by two assessors appointed by the ESC (details described in the Procedural Framework section). It is essential that the member who advises the therapist is NOT appointed as the assessor of that therapist's formal claim.
7. The Assessors report to the ESC who endorse or rejects the recommended award of points. If discrepancy arises between the two assessors decisions and external verifier will be appointed by the ESC secretary to assess the Portfolio of Evidence blindly and reach a decision. There decision is final and a report will be sent to the BAHT ESC.

8. Once the number and level of points to be awarded have been agreed, the therapist is notified as soon as possible by the Secretary of BAHT ESC. Unsuccessful candidates are also notified as soon as possible.
9. Feedback will be provided for all candidates whether they pass or fail the process. Candidates who have their Portfolio of Evidence deferred will have the opportunity to resubmit it again for reassessment. If the candidate fails this time the process must be commenced from the beginning again.

Evaluation of evidence based on co-authorship/collaborative projects

In keeping with the policy stated in Level III Guidelines, the BAHT ESC will consider papers/reports based on joint and/or collaborative work. The BAHT credit points that can be awarded for joint or collaborative work will reflect the level of involvement and responsibility of the author who is applying for APL. For example, where it can be clearly demonstrated that 50% of the work was undertaken by each of two authors, a maximum of 2.5 BAHT credit points can be awarded.

Definitions adopted within this document

The APL concept assumes that people's achievements can be assessed without regard to time, place or conditions of learning. In accrediting people's prior learning and experience, the emphasis is on the **OUTCOMES** or **ACHIEVEMENTS** of the learning and not on the learning processes themselves. It also assumes that the resultant knowledge, skills and abilities are equal, and/or possibly superior, to those obtained by students following traditional routes through formal education.

The process of APL depends on making valid and reliable judgements about knowledge and skills acquired through life experience, work experiences and study which has not been formally attested through any educational or professional certification. It can include instruction-based learning provided by any institution but not examined by any public examination system.

The terms **therapist, applicant, or claimant** in BAHT APL documentation relate to the person making application for APL .

Other Abbreviations used in APL documentation

APL	=	Accreditation of Prior Achievement
APLA	=	Accreditation of Prior Learning Achievements
APEL	=	Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning
ESC	=	Education Sub-Committee

Basic principles of APL within BAHT

Listed below are eight principles which make clear the responsibilities, of claimants/candidates and assessors respectively, to ensure the validity and reliability of the APL process. The first three of these principles state the tasks of the candidate while the remaining five relate to the responsibilities of ESC and its appointed advisors, assessors and external verifiers.

Principle 1

The person/candidate is responsible for submitting a claim for accreditation

The most important guiding principle throughout the APL process is that it is the candidate who **claims** that he/she has acquired certain knowledge and skills. They also have the responsibility for supporting that claim with appropriate evidence. Recognising that some candidates may need considerable help in deciding how many credit points to claim, ESC appoints an advisor to each potential candidate. This advisor can be consulted during the process of making a claim and preparing evidence to support it, but the prime responsibility remains with the claimant. The claimant has full responsibility for assembling and submitting evidence. No responsibility for the quality and content of a Portfolio of Evidence can be attributed to the advisor.

Principle 2

APL is about learning outcomes not just experience

It is essential that throughout the APL process it is stressed that the experience of a candidate/student is significant only as a source of learning. Moving from describing an experience to identifying and reflecting on the learning derived from that experience is a demanding intellectual task. If the learning cannot be identified, there is no learning to assess, however important to the candidate that experience might have been.

Principle 3

Identification of significant learning must come before Assessment

There is a clear separation between preparing evidence of learning and the assessment of that evidence. Preparing evidence of prior learning comes through systematic reflection on experience, using a three stage approach:

1. systematic reflection on past experience
2. identification of significant learning
3. synthesis of evidence as a Portfolio of Evidence

The claimant prepares a Portfolio of Evidence of evidence to support the claim and is also required to submit statements, which links the evidence produced to the objectives published in the relevant BAHT Guidelines for Levels II and/or III.

The prepared Portfolio of Evidence can then be submitted for assessment, following registration using form APL/2.

Principle 4

Assessment is an academic responsibility

Therapists approved and appointed by BAHT ESC provide the academic and professional assessment. Guidelines, containing details of agreed marking criteria, are available. Appointed therapists can employ any procedure they think is appropriate to reach an academic and professional judgement about the submitted evidence of prior learning. Normally, good practice requires that a submitted Portfolio of Evidence is assessed by at least two assessors. These assessors should not have been involved actively as advisors during the preparation of the Portfolio of Evidence.

Principle 5

The two academic functions (Advocate vs. Judge) must be separated

Advisors who help students prepare evidence should not have any part in making academic and professional judgements about that evidence.

Principle 6

Assessment and Evidence must be appropriate

In addition to the Portfolio of Evidence submitted, the assessors may choose to request a variety of further evidence to support the candidate's claim. For example:

1. They may decide to probe a candidate's level of knowledge through an interview, either in person or by telephone.
2. They may require additional written or assigned work.
3. They may examine artefacts or observe performance.

Whatever methods of assessment are used, they must be as credible as those in traditional settings and must be seen to enable unbiased judgements to be made with the same degree of confidence as those taken by Boards of Examiners, with their external examiners, in higher education institutions.

Principle 7

Assessment of individual Portfolio of Evidences may be subject to external verification.

As stated earlier if a disagreement occurs in the marking by the assessors an external verifier will be appointed. This person must not be a member of the current BAHT ESC. They must report their decision in writing and their decision is final.

Principle 8

Quality should be assured within the accreditation process.

This principle seeks to ensure that the Education Sub-Committee, the assessors, and if necessary the external verifiers, are satisfied that :-

- the Portfolio of Evidence and/or other evidence has been conclusive
- the number and level of points to be awarded has/have been identified and agreed
- programmes/courses towards which the awarded points could be counted have been identified.

Procedural framework for Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) within the British Association of Hand Therapists

The procedural framework has been designed to ensure that:

1. there is consistency of practice both in terms of the advice given to claimants and in the identification of the number and level of points awarded;
2. the process is managed, monitored and evaluated centrally by BAHT ESC and is subject to external verification;
3. those involved in providing advice are distinct from those who subsequently assess the claim;
4. submitted claims are dealt with as efficiently as possible, having particular regard to differences in need.

Submissions of the claim:

Whether the Portfolio of Evidence submitted by the claimant is based on certificated learning, non-certificated learning or a combination of both, all submissions are made to BAHT ESC, using form APL/2 which has been completed after the claimant has received advice.

Assessment of the claim:

There is a clear difference between the assessment of claims based solely on prior certificated learning and of those which involve advice on presentation of a claim which includes elements of non-certificated learning.

1. Two assessors per claim are appointed by BAHT ESC. These assessors are separate and distinct from those who gave advice to the therapist in the preparation of the Portfolio of Evidence.
2. In order to maintain objectivity and rigour of APL Portfolio of Evidence Assessment, it is recommended that the assessor(s) should be subject specialists able to evaluate the evidence offered and to establish the authenticity of the claim in accordance with APL principles.
3. The Secretary circulates the two copies of the Portfolio of Evidence to the appointed assessors. As part of the assessment process the applicant/claimant may be required to attend an APL assessment interview. As soon as possible, the assessors make verified recommendations to BAHT ESC on the number and level of points to be awarded.
4. The External Verifier considers and ratifies the recommendations prepared by the assessors if this is required.

5. BAHT ESC considers and ratifies the verified recommendations.
6. The Secretary is responsible for informing the BAHT Executive Committee and also for notifying the applicant in writing of the decision taken.

Role of Education Sub-Committee and Executive Committee

Formal responsibility for the assessment of all claims through the APL process lies with the Education Sub-Committee who submit verified recommendations to the Executive Committee of BAHT.

In discharging its responsibilities, the Education Sub-Committee makes judgements in respect of applications on the basis of the authenticity, relevance, reliability, sufficiency and validity of the claimed learning. It also considers the appropriateness, currency and quality of the evidence provided.

The BAHT ESC Secretary compiles an annual report on the APL system and the results of APL claims for the Executive Committee.

On behalf of the Executive Committee, the Education Sub-Committee is responsible for:

- appointing an advisor
- appointing two assessor(s)
- appointing an External Verifier if necessary
- determining the number and level of points to be awarded for each APL claim
- submitting its decisions to the Executive Committee

Role of the advisor

The potential roles of the advisor are listed below

1. Answer queries on the APL process or refer back to ESC secretary as necessary.
2. Discuss possible information to be included in extended CV.
3. Discuss choice of options for written paper i.e. review paper, OR employment-based report OR research project.
4. Check draft copy of CV and written paper submitted noting errors and omissions. The advisor is not expected to read and review further versions.
5. Note - the ultimate decision on the final text lies with the candidate; the advisor is not held responsible for the submitted Portfolio of Evidence.

It is recommended that the advisor keep a copy of any corrected text and to document issues discussed with the candidates in case the BAHT secretary requires this at a later date.

There is peer support available for advisors if they feel it is necessary through the BAHT ESC Secretary.

Role and Function of an Assessor

In keeping with good practice in APL, the role of an assessor cannot be undertaken by an advisor. The role of an assessor is objectively to assess Portfolio of Evidence claims or other relevant evidence. The following checklist is used to guide the function of assessing the evidence:

- **Authenticity** – that accreditation is being sought for the applicant's own experience and resultant learning
- **Relevance** – that the learning to be accredited represents up to date knowledge and skills
- **Reliability** – that the Portfolio of Evidence assessment can be repeated with the same outcome
- **Sufficiency** – that the assessors know and judge the appropriateness and quantity of evidence in relation to the required skills and knowledge for the Level(s) being addressed/claimed
- **Validity** – that the Portfolio of Evidence identifies knowledge and skills it purports to assess.

Role and Function of an External Verifier

External verification of the APL process is achieved through the appointment of an External Verifier who has a role similar to that of any other External Assessor. External Verifiers are nominated (if necessary) by BAHT ESC on the basis of particular knowledge and expertise in APL in Hand Therapy. .

An External Verifier give independent advice and to assist in maintaining quality and good practice in the APL procedures and processes.

External Verifiers provide to the Secretary of BAHT ESC a written report on each Portfolio of Evidence.

British Association of Hand Therapists (BAHT) Post-qualification Hand Therapy Education Programme

The structure for education and training is set out in Table 1.

LEVEL I

“The Level I Course is designed for therapists with minimal or no experience of hand injuries and conditions and for therapists who wish to refresh their basic knowledge of, and skills in, the field of hand therapy. It will promote recognition for professional competence and will improve the quality of patient care.”

(BAHT Guidelines Level I Course)

One Point is awarded for success in a Level I Course

LEVEL II

“The Level II Course is designed for therapists with proven experience (see APL Procedural Framework) in the field of Hand Therapy or for those who have successfully completed an accredited Level I Course It will promote recognition for professional competence in a specialist aspect of Hand Therapy; improve the quality of hand care; and foster evaluation and research in Hand Therapy” *(BAHT Guidelines Level II Course)*

Two points are awarded per course for successfully completed Level II courses, with a maximum of 6 Level II points. Each two points must be gained in a different specialist area of Hand Therapy.

LEVEL III

This level offers members of BAHT a challenging opportunity to demonstrate their advanced knowledge of Hand Therapy. Level III requires an in-depth study, normally of 2,000-2,500 words, and can take the form of a Review paper, an Employment-based report, or a Research Study. Guidelines are available for issue to all candidates wishing to achieve this level.

If a candidate wishes to submit a previously completed piece of work it must be adjusted and updated in accordance with the Level III guidelines.

Five points are awarded for successful completion of Level III.

TABLE 1: Progression of Post-qualification Education in Hand Therapy (BAHT)

LEVEL	Target population	Validation	Content	Assessment
Level I	OT/PT general therapist	BAHT	Introductory course see Course Guidelines	BAHT designed exam. short answer/MCQs 1 hour
Level II	OP/PT specialist Eligibility via Level I Or Indicative experience	BAHT	Specialist course see Course Guidelines (20 hours contact teaching)	Unseen examination MCQ/short answers OR written assignment OR case history OR combination of these
Level III	OT/PT specialist Eligibility via Level II Or Indicative experience	BAHT	In-depth study (self-directed)	Paper, plus publication from the study in a recognised journal.

APL application Flow Chart

Stage	Action by applicant	Responses and those responsible	Points
Pre-entry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • request APL information from BAHT ESC secretary • receive notification of appointed advisor • decide to proceed: register application for APL assessment • pay assessment charge to BAHT • receive confirmation of registration 	<p>APL information, including objectives and structural guidelines for Portfolio of Evidence, sent by secretary BAHT ESC</p> <p>BAHT ESC & Secretary of BAHT ESC</p> <p>Secretary BAHT ESC</p>	<p>Level I = 1 Level II = 2 x 3 Level III = 5</p>
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflect on experience and achievements with assistance • use check lists to compare experience & achievements with those stated in the objectives for the Level being considered • prepare a profile of own learning using objectives listed • identify sources of evidence • identify any areas needing further study/experience 	<p>Assistance given by APL advisor Applicant</p> <p>Applicant Applicant Assistance given by APL advisor</p>	
Gathering evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assemble evidence for each objective in the Level being considered • produce Portfolio of Evidence of evidence conforming to structural guidelines given by BAHT ESC (Guidelines at level II OR III) 	<p>Guidance given by APL advisor in individual support sessions</p>	
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • submit Portfolio of Evidence • produce additional evidence as required 	<p>Submission considered by Assessors and External Verifier if required.</p> <p>Requirements advised by secretary BAHT ESC</p>	
Accreditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • receive some or all of the points sought • candidates given chance to re submit Portfolio of Evidence once • all candidates provided with feedback on their Portfolio of Evidence. 	<p>Assessors' recommendations considered & verified by External Assessor if required Recommendation by Assessors to BAHT ESC Decision taken by BAHT ESC, then recommended to Executive Committee</p>	

APL/1

APPLICATION FOR BAHT ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING

SURNAMEFIRST NAME(S)

ADDRESS

.....

TELEPHONE (work) (home)

EMAIL:

PROFESSION GRADE.

QUALIFICATIONS

.....

LEVEL FOR WHICH APL IS SOUGHT. LEVEL 1 LEVEL 2 LEVEL 3

NUMBER OF BAHT CREDIT POINTS SOUGHT.

LEVEL 1 COURSE OR EXPERIENCE

LEVEL 2 2 POINTS 4 POINTS 6 POINTS

LEVEL 3 5 POINTS

Please submit a short curriculum vitae with this application form

Signature Date

Please return form to : Eve Dunn
 BAHT Education Sub-committee
 April Cottage, The Knoll
 Alderton
 Woodbridge
 Suffolk IP12 3BS

P.T.O. For Office Use Only

For Office Use Only

Date received

Applicant's Surname & Initials

Adviser appointed (name).....

(address)

Date of receipt of registration

Date of receipt of submitted evidence

Record of appointed Assessors & External Verifier

1. Assessor (name).....

(address)

2. Assessor (name).....

(address)

External Verifier(name).....

(address)

APL/2B

REGISTRATION FOR BAHT ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING

SURNAME FIRST NAME(S)

ADDRESS

.....

TELEPHONE (work) (home)

PROFESSION GRADE.....

REGISTRATION FEE (£30.00) Cheque no.

Made payable to 'British Association of Hand Therapists'

Credit card no.

Signature Date

Please return form to :
Eve Dunn
BAHT Education Sub-committee
April Cottage, The Knoll
Alderton
Woodbridge
Suffolk IP12 3BS

For Office Use Only

BAHT APL Registration fees

Received from (Surname & Initials)

the sum of Date

To be completed and returned to registrant.