

Self-directed Learning



For anyone at any age.



An increase in an individual's knowledge, skill or ability that is self-taught rather than mediated by a teacher. Examples might include using a library, museum, gallery or the internet to find out about new developments in a vocational sector or learning how to use new software by following the manual provided or accessing online help. Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) can enable experiential and self-directed learning to be assessed and formally recognised or given credit towards qualifications by a learning provider. It is often used to support enrolment in learning by people who do not have any formal qualifications or who have not studied for a long time, no longer hold up-to-date qualifications or are 'expert' by virtue of their experience in a particular area.



Ask before enrolment on a learning programme if APEL would be considered. The Government is encouraging self-directed learning groups to expand informal learning opportunities: <http://www.selforganisedlearning.com/> .



- There is no requirement for APEL to be offered by a learning provider and it still tends to be used more in higher education than further education.
- APEL offers a potential route for people with mental health problems who have taken non-accredited courses, or have been volunteers, or members of management groups or actively involved with peer self-help activities or improving mental health services.
- Learning providers may charge a fee for APEL.

