



Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process through which an individual may be awarded credit for previous informal and formal learning.

Matrix College, in collaboration with Middlesex University and the UKCP operate an RPL scheme in relation to the Year 2 (DipHE).

We also offer in collaboration with Middlesex University an RPL scheme in relation to the Year 3 BSc (Hons) programme.

The RPL scheme is intended to provide equal opportunities to people to enter Year 2 of the BSc (Hons). UKCP registration is not available for those undertaking only Year 3 as in order to achieve UKCP registration at least 50% of the course is required to be taken.

The underlying principle of RPL is that all learning which can be judged to be at higher education level can be assessed and quantified in terms of academic credit, and capability to progress to the next level of learning – integrating knowledge and understanding, skills and personal development.

Because personal development is such an important part of training to be a counsellor all training groups once they start at the beginning of the first term are closed. It is for this reason that applicants can only enter the course at the beginning of each academic year and there are no exemptions from any modules. This is to keep the training group a safe place for learning about self through being in relationship with the other members of the group.

Stages in RPL

1. Application with Portfolio

Candidates send us a portfolio that shows evidence of the specific requirements outlined below.

This portfolio of evidence is added to the full application and is to be submitted *at the same time* as the application.

2. Assessment and Accreditation

Before interview two senior Matrix tutors will review the application together with the portfolio of evidence.

The candidate may or may not be offered an interview depending on the strength of the application.

After interview, the interviewing tutors will recommend credit, based on the agreement of the RPL process with Middlesex University and the UKCP; accept and approve the application for

a place on the relevant year.

If the evidence is not sufficient then the candidate will be advised of the steps which might be taken to improve the portfolio. This might include developing or providing additional evidence; undertaking additional personal therapy, learning, skills or other development. This may be discussed during the interview process or communicated to the candidate by writing, prior to, during or after interview.

A deadline for the submission of further supporting evidence will be communicated to the applicant.

Specific Requirements

RPL for entry to Year 2 (FHEQ level 5)

Evidence of learning must be shown in three areas:

1. Listening and communication skills that relate to the course learning outcomes (FHEQ level 4);
2. Counselling theory;
3. Self-development.

This evidence must be covered by a portfolio covering the 3 sections as follows:

1. Evidence of acquired counselling and listening skills

One of below is required:

- Certificate(s) in Counselling Skills amounting to 120 university credits;
- Counselling skills training of at least 100 hours. e.g., Certificate in Counselling Skills or similar

The materials covered must include:

Key counselling skills of empathy, unconditional positive regard, congruence, immediacy, mirroring, reflecting, paraphrasing and management of time boundaries, approaches to integration.

At least 20% of previous training to have been spent on experiential and self-awareness work.

2. Evidence of academic achievement to support your application

- Submission of a 1,000-word written assignment on a topic relating to the field of counselling, written at FHEQ Level 4;
- One reference to be an academic reference from the most recent institution/college you attended to show you have an ability to cope with the academic expectations of training at degree level and a suitability for counselling training in particular.

3. Evidence of self-awareness to support your application

- 35 hours personal therapy (within the last two years) is a compulsory requirement
- Submit one of the following:
 - Professional reference by therapist
 - Therapy log (signed by your therapist)

RPL for entry to Year 3 (FHEQ level 6)

Formal evidence of progressive learning at FHEQ level 5 must be shown in 3 areas:

1. Counselling theory
2. Skills - Counselling practice and work-related experience
3. Self-development

This evidence can be covered by a portfolio in 4 sections as follows:

1. Evidence of counselling skills and theoretical knowledge

One of the below is required:

- Diploma HE in counselling amounting to 240 university credits
- Counselling training of at least 300 hours at FHEQ level 5

The materials covered must include:

- Key counselling skills, management of time boundaries. There must also be evidence of learning about transference relationships and the unconscious plus an understanding of developmental concepts and an understanding and ability to work with traumatised clients. There must be evidence of understanding of developmental relational integration.
- At least 20% of all training must have been spent on experiential and self-awareness work.
- Advanced counselling skills.

2. Evidence of academic achievement to support your application.

- Submission of a 1,500-word essay on your theoretical understanding of counselling integration written at FHEQ level 5.
- One reference to be an academic reference the most recent institution/college you attended to show you have an ability to cope with the academic expectations of training at degree level.

3. Evidence of a counselling placement

- A counselling placement agreement where you are in a formal counselling role to show a minimum of 100 practice hours with adult (post 18yrs) clients within two years prior to application.
- Supervision report or letter of support from the agency or current employment/voluntary work.

4. Evidence of personal development to support your application

- 70 hours personal therapy (within the last three years) is a compulsory requirement
- Submit one of the following:
 - Professional reference by therapist
 - Therapy log(s) signed by your therapist (s)

NB Please note that it is not possible to apply for UKCP registration as a Psychotherapeutic Counsellor if you enter Matrix at Year 3.

Document name	RPL Policy		
Owner	Principal	Review Lead	Quality Manager
Approving Committee	Ops Team		
Last review	January 2026	Next review	December 2026
Amendments since last review	Detail of Revision Version control added Small wording change	Date of Revision January 2026	Revision approved by Ops Team