QAA Scotland/European Network project on recognition of prior learning

Introduction to the project

This project was commissioned by QAA Scotland in May 2010, with the aim of gathering a number of case studies or exemplars of recognition of prior learning (RPL) in higher education institutions (HEIs) in Scotland and more widely in Europe. The intention is that this collection of case studies will be of benefit to practitioners across the European Higher Education Area, both as examples of existing RPL practice and as a means of sharing expertise and practice and building an evidence base of existing practice within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). We wrote to all Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) members to encourage submissions from all countries and stakeholders across the EHEA and followed this up with further emails and telephone calls. As the main aim was to provide examples of actual RPL practice, we also wrote to rectors' conferences in those countries identified by other European surveys as having significant RPL practice, to encourage their members to submit case studies.

We have now collected 25 case studies, from 10 countries and these are published and freely available on the QAA Scotland website. The intention of this project is not to create an overview or give a statistical analysis of RPL practice across the EHEA - other European initiatives and reports are better placed to do this. There are of course other European studies or projects on the recognition of prior learning and we hope that this project and this website will add to the knowledge and value of existing projects and websites such as: Euroval, Eurotec and the ENIC NARIC project: 'Study on formal recognition of non-formal and informal learning'.

This collection of case studies is not intended to be representative of practice in individual countries or across the EHEA. The intention is to provide actual examples of actual RPL in practice. We have tried to cast our net widely in order to capture a good variety of case studies and the collection which we have published provides a remarkable range of practice, ranging from modest individual projects to major national or sectoral initiatives.
It is striking that the overwhelming majority of case studies are from professionally-oriented universities, although it is important to recognise that RPL is also practiced in more 'traditional' or academically-oriented universities. The case study provided by France is particularly interesting, being a national initiative which is underpinned by law and covers all the universities and all degrees. Nearly half of the case studies are comprehensive with regard to the types of learning addressed and include all four types identified in the questionnaire, that is: formal, informal, non-formal and work-based learning. The large majority of cases cover two or more of these categories of learning.

This collection of case studies provides a very rich variety of RPL initiatives and taken together, should provide an important resource for practitioners, institutions and countries looking to introduce, develop, or expand practice and policies relating to the recognition of prior learning. The case studies provided range in scope from departmental examples through to initiatives covering professional or industrial sectors and national initiatives covering the whole higher education sector. Case studies have been submitted by departments, HEIs, professional or employer bodies and students' unions. There is also considerable variety in terms of the amount of credit awarded to learners in the case studies, from relatively modest examples of 10 to 30 ECTS credits, right up to instances of entire degrees awarded by RPL. A similar variety exists in the scope of the case studies in terms of the number of learners involved,

ranging from 14 learners to 13,000 learners! Also included are a university-wide project which has been agreed, but has not yet begun and one which focuses on providing support and training for university staff to help them implement RPL in practice.

Although this has been a modest project, conducted over a period of less than three months, the range and variety of projects submitted is impressive. We believe that it provides a rich source of information on actual RPL in practice covering all types of learning and the recognition of small components of learning programmes through to full degrees. We hope that this collection of case studies will provide information, guidance and inspiration to those seeking to develop RPL within their own context and scope of practice. Contact details are provided for those responsible for the case studies and practitioners are encouraged to use these to exchange information and share practice and experiences further.

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Case study - Ghent University Association, Belgium

QAA Scotland/European RPL Network project on recognition of prior learning

Case study completed by: Beatrijs Hollebosch

Scope of project: National ☐　　　Sectoral ☐ Institutional ☒ Departmental ☐Other ☐

Name of institution(s), country: Ghent University Association, Flanders, Belgium

Purpose of project: for exemption or to grant a diploma

Name of degree/award/learning programme(s) for which credit awarded:

Target group(s) of learners: learners who want to validate work experience or informal/non-formal learning experience

Approx number of learners involved: 300 (2005 - 2009)

Nature of RPL: Entry/access ☐ Exemption/credit ☒ Direct entry to year 2 or 3 ☒ Full award ☒

Number/range of ECTS credits awarded: no exact figures available

Learning recognised[1]: Formal ☐　　Informal ☒　　Non-formal ☒ Workbased ☒

Support/guidance for learners: informing candidates, helping them to define competences, helping them to make up a portfolio

Description of RPL process from initial enquiry to final decision: 5 phases: 1. guidance; 2. registration; 3. assessment; 4. decision; 5.aftercare

Potential for dissemination:

Short description of project/initiative (including: dedicated staff/services; relationship of RPL to learning outcomes/credit frameworks; future plans and timescales):

Since 2004 the Flemish government has decided by decree that associations - a network that stimulates the cooperation between a university and university colleges - should organise RPL procedures.

The Ghent University Association has developed a procedure which is being used by all 4 of its partner Institutions for Higher Education.

In March 2009 the Flemish Government evaluated the RPL-system in all associations in Flanders, for the first time, based on a self-evaluation report, submitted by each of the 5 associations.

In June 2009, the Flemish Government installed an RPL Network (Team of 22 RPL Promotors) in order to create a platform where organisations of different sector (work, education, and youth) could exchange experience in the field of RPL. The Government is working (2010-2011) on the installation of one integrated RPL policy in the Flemish speaking part of Belgium. The Team of RPL Promotors delivers advice and policy recommendations to the Government.

Aspects of the project which are innovative or of particular interest - this might include 'learning points' or difficulties faced by the project:

Difficulties:

- developing good assessments

- create the right expectations with the learners of the outcome of an RPL procedure -RPL

  language differs in different sectors; it is not easy to find a common agenda.

Web/email address for further information: Beatrijs.Hollebosch@AUGent.be

[1] **Formal learning**: Learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment (e.g. in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It typically leads to validation and certification.
Informal learning: Learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is in most cases unintentional from the learner's perspective.
Non-formal learning: Learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view.
Source: Cedefop glossary, 2009

Disclaimer

This case study was offered by the author as part of the QAA Scotland and European RPL Network project on recognition of prior learning. It is presented as it was submitted and note should be taken that any opinion given does not necessarily reflect the views of QAA.

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It is understood that the author of this case study is willing to be contacted for educational purposes, at the address given. Contact with the author should be made directly by the enquirer, and not through QAA.

Case study - Ministère de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherché, France

QAA Scotland/European RPL Network project on recognition of prior learning

Case study completed by: Yolande Fermon

Scope of project: National ☒ Sectoral ☐ Institutional ☐ Departmental ☐ Other ☐

Name of institution(s), country: Ministère de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche - France

Purpose of project: It is not a project but national provision set by national policies (laws and decrees). There are 2 different types of validation systems in HE: since 1985, a system of exemption gives access to any level of HE for a pursuit of studies and since 2002, the VAE, validation of prior experience allows anybody who has at least three years of job experience to apply for the validation of the outcomes of his/her personal and professional experience in order to get a degree.

Name of degree/award/learning programme(s) for which credit awarded: any degree

Target group(s) of learners: any citizen who has 3 years of job experience

Approx number of learners involved: Between 15,000 and 23,000 per annum

Nature of RPL: Entry/access ☒ Exemption/credit ☒ Direct entry to year 2 or 3 ☐ Full award ☒

Number/range of ECTS credits awarded: it would be difficult to say; we do not have the figures for the credits but only for the full and partial awards

Learning recognised[1]: Formal ☒ Informal ☒ Non-formal ☒ Workbased ☒

Support/guidance for learners: Yes. It is a very important element of the system.

Description of RPL process from initial enquiry to final decision:

Several steps, the main ones are:

- information delivered by information and guidance centres for VAE and by the HE institutions

- admissibility of the application by the institution

- writing of the portfolio and counselling (what we call "accompagnement"),

- interview of the candidate with a jury comprising professionals and professors, and jury's decision to award full, or partial degree or… nothing,

- advice ("prescription") of the jury in case of no validation or partial validation.

Potential for dissemination: All the HE institutions, and among them 83 universities, carry out the two systems.

Short description of project/initiative (including: dedicated staff/services; relationship of RPL to learning outcomes/credit frameworks; future plans and timescales):

The information and guidance centres for VAE are under the responsibility of the Regions.

In universities, the further training service is normally in charge of the two systems of validation.

VAE is a strong incentive for the learning outcomes approach which is currently applied in school vocational degrees, but not in HE. In France, the registration of our degrees in the national register of vocational qualifications requires them to be described in terms of LO. All our HE degrees are considered to have a professional purpose, what gives them the right to be in the national register.

As for the credits, they are normally given with the award of a full or a partial degree.

Aspects of the project which are innovative or of particular interest - this might include 'learning points' or difficulties faced by the project:

After 7 years of implementation of the VAE, vocational education and HE are facing a stagnation of the number of validations per year which had been before regularly increasing every year. The figures we have (especially in HE) do not allow us to make solid analyses of this phenomenon and now time has come to carry out a study to see if this stagnation is due to specific policies of the institutions or if it is due to external reasons (economic situation, policy of the Regions, policy of the financing, lack of publicity etc.)

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Source: Cedefop glossary, 2009

Statistics on validation of prior experiential learning in French Higher Education

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
VAP decree 1985 (1)							

Number of validations	17 460	14 930	13 695	12 254	11 630	18 545	18 474
VAE (2)							
Number of VAE (full and partial degrees)	1 140	2 780	3 165	3 838	3 705	4 199	4 081
(among which number of full diplomas)		827 (29,7%)	1 282 (40,5 %)	1 655 (43,1 %)	1 842 (49,7 %)	2 154 (51,3%)	2 016 (49,4%)
TOTAL : VAP 85 + VAE	**18 600**	**17 710**	**16 860**	**16 092**	**15 335**	**22 744**	**22 555**

Source : DEPP – Ministry of National Education – Ministry of Higher Education and Research - Study concerning validation of prior learning in universities

(1) VAP 1985 = validation that gives access to any level of higher education to carry on with studies

VAE = validation that allows to get a full or a partial degree

Case study - Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF), Germany

QAA Scotland/European RPL Network project on recognition of prior learning

Case study completed by: Florian Kaiser, of the Freie Zusammenschluss von StudentInnenschaften (FZS) (described as the umbrella organisation of student associations), Germany

Scope of project: National ⊠　　　Sectoral　　□　　　Institutional □ Departmental　□ Other □

Name of institution(s), country: BMBF - Federal Ministry for Education and Research, Germany. ANKOM project - Anrechnung beruflicher Kompetenzen auf Hochschulstudiengänge (Recognition of vocational competences for higher education programmes)

Purpose of project:　　Within the context of national education policy, the aim of the project was to create new educational pathways and greater permeability between vocational and university education.

Name of degree/award/learning programme(s) for which credit awarded:　not provided

Target group(s) of learners: People in employment seeking to upgrade their skills and training by joining a degree programme

Approx number of learners involved:

Nature of RPL: Entry/access ⊠　　　Exemption/credit ⊠ Direct entry to year 2 or 3 □ Full award □

Number/range of ECTS credits awarded:

Learning recognised[1]:　　Formal ⊠　　　Informal　　□　　　Non-formal　　　　□ Workbased ⊠

Support/guidance for learners:

Description of RPL process from initial enquiry to final decision: Various approaches - 11 pilot projects

Potential for dissemination:

Short description of project/initiative (including: dedicated staff/services; relationship of RPL to learning outcomes/credit frameworks; future plans and timescales):

The initiative was launched by the Federal Ministry for Education and Research, working with the HIS (HE Informations System), VDI, VDE, IT and was funded by the European Commission. It comprised three phases.

During Phase 1 (Oct 2005 to June 2008), 11 regional projects were developed, involving both universities and vocational higher education institutions. The aim of the projects was to develop processes and procedures for the recognition of prior learning and in particular for the recognition of vocational learning by universities. Quality Assurance criteria and guidelines for RPL were developed as part of Phase 1.

Phase 2 (July 2008 to June 2009) focussed on the evaluation of Phase 1 and in particular the 11 development projects. Broadly, Phase 2 aimed to evaluate the outcomes of Phase 1, to see if generalised procedures could be extrapolated from the outcomes of the projects and if recommendations could be developed for universities and for vocational and academic education and policy, including the development of quality assurance criteria for the recognition of prior learning. The evaluation work was led by the Hochschul Informations System (HIS) (HE Informations System), working with the BMBF Committee and the Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (BIBB) (Federal Institute for Vocational Training)

The third phase is referred to as an extension of Phase 2 and is ongoing (July 2009 to June 2011). It focusses on supporting higher education institutions and HE networks in RPL development and practice, including compiling and developing materials and information and disseminating these through conferences, workshops, publications etc.

Aspects of the project which are innovative or of particular interest - this might include 'learning points' or difficulties faced by the project:

Web/email address for further information: http://ankom.his.de/

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Source: Cedefop glossary, 2009

Case study - Cork Institute of Technology, Ireland

QAA Scotland/European RPL Network project on recognition of prior learning

Case study completed by: Irene Sheridan Cork Institute of Technology, email: irene.sheridan@cit.ie   Phone 353 21 4326585

Scope of project: National ☐   Sectoral ☐ Institutional ☐ Departmental ☐Other ☒

Name of institution(s), country: Cork Institute of Technology, Athlone Institute of Technology, Dublin Institute of Technology, Dundalk Institute of Technology, Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology, Institute of Technology Sligo, Letterkenny Institute of Technology, National University of Ireland Galway, University College Cork

Purpose of project: Our 'RPL' Project was part of a Strategic Innovation Project funded by the Higher Education Authority - the overall project title was Education in Employment and the project aimed at making third level education pathways more relevant and accessible to workplace learners and those with workplace experience. The RPL element of the project was aimed at sharing current practice and policy among the Higher Education Institutional partners and ensuring dissemination throughout the entire Higher Education spectrum in Ireland. As the project was focused on workplace learners, the employer and employer organisations were seen as significant partners in the learning process and in the support of the RPL process.

Several of the project partners worked closely with cohorts of employees within specific local enterprises to develop pathways to tailored awards based on learners existing knowledge and experience.

One of the specific aims of the project was to develop pathways to map learning through the apprentice schemes onto the third level system to enable craft certificate holders to progress while gaining exemptions on a cohort basis for the learning that they have already achieved.

Name of degree/award/learning programme(s) for which credit awarded: Credit for Prior Learning is awarded by the project partners across the full spectrum of awards and levels up to Level 9 (Masters) on our qualifications framework. Generally the craft certificate holders gained entry at year 2 to Level 7 degrees in engineering or related disciplines.

Target group(s) of learners: Learners in the workplace (part-time learners generally) and those with significant workplace experience as well as craft certificate holders

Approx number of learners involved: Difficult to estimate as 9 different Higher Education Institutions were involved - probably more than 2,000 learners

Nature of RPL: Entry/access ☒ Exemption/credit ☒ Direct entry to year 2 or 3 ☒ Full award ☐

Number/range of ECTS credits awarded: Again this is very varied. Ranged from 5 credits for a single module exemption to the equivalent of 60 credits for exemption from all of year 1 for instance.

Learning recognised[1]:   Formal ⊠   Informal   ⊠   Non-formal   ⊠
Workbased ⊠

Support/guidance for learners: The project consortium aimed at a shared policy and practice for RPL across the various institutions involved. It was agreed that clarity of the process and mentoring and academic support for the learners is vital to ensuring that the learner is able to articulate their learning to ensure that it can be recognised and validated. As the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) were working closely with employers they generally took the approach that some of this mentoring and guidance can be supplied in the workplace. With the help of the HEI mentoring training was delivered within the partner workplaces. Handbooks and guidelines for learners were developed and shared among the project partners and a considerable staff development activity was undertaken to ensure that capacity and capability for RPL is developed among the HEI's.

Description of RPL process from initial enquiry to final decision: It is not exactly the same among all the project partners but the general process is:

Enquiries from learners are directed to either to staff responsible for the destination award or to RPL support staff or possibly through employer. An exploratory meeting takes place with the learner and RPL advisor to discuss their current learning and the award for which they seek entry or exemption from elements. The advisor will give general guidance on the recognition of prior certificated learning (formal) or the recognition of prior experiential learning (in-formal or non-formal). Learner will meet with course coordinators and will be provided with details of the modules for which they may wish to seek exemption and examples of evidence of attainment of learning outcomes and how evidence might be presented. Learner will prepare a 'portfolio' of the evidence. Portfolio will be assessed by academic staff responsible for the course or module. Result of the assessment process will proceed through examination and module board structures as appropriate. Learner will be provided with formal outcome of the process.

Where the learner does not seek exemption from elements of the programme but seeks entry to the programme, the 'portfolio' is generally prepared to provide evidence of attainment of the broadly defined entry level parameters and not of specific learning outcomes of modules.

This process is described in more detail in the project report.

Potential for dissemination: The project outcomes were broadly disseminated in Ireland and beyond through the publication of a report and a number of papers as well as presentation in a number of seminars and conferences.

Short description of project/initiative (including: dedicated staff/services; relationship of RPL to learning outcomes/credit frameworks; future plans and timescales):

The project provided funding which was distributed to the 9 higher education institutions in accordance with their resource commitments. Throughout the project timeframe, practice and policy was at a very different state in each of the project partners, having considerable expertise built up at the outset and in other cases little or no activity or consideration of RPL. Following the project, all project partners had fully institution-wide agreed RPL policies. All had shared examples of practice and a considerable shared staff development activity was

undertaken on a collaborative basis. Most partners have now published staff and learner guides to RPL and have clarified and shared financial and resource information.

Many of the institutions have worked with local employers to develop pathways to learning driven by the organisational learning needs incorporating RPL. All of the Institutes of Technology have developed pathways for craft certificate holders as cohort groups into existing third level programmes. By providing funding for resources and supporting staff development and dissemination activities the project has pushed forward understanding of and capacity for RPL throughout the Third Level System in Ireland.

Within the project framework all RPL activity is considered in the context of defined and approved programmes or modules on the national qualifications framework. In many ways this has been and continues to be facilitated by the modular approach to programme development - allowing recognition of learning to take place in the context of smaller (often 5 credit) blocks of learning. For the purposes of this project RPL in the context of full awards was not considered.

The successes of this RPL activity remain an important building block of the on-going work of the project consortium and this Education in Employment project has been merged with the Roadmap for Employment-Academic Partnership (REAP) project which will further develop the partnership spectrum between the HEI's and employers.

Aspects of the project which are considered innovative or of particular interest - this might include 'learning points' or difficulties faced by the project:

One of the real successes of this project was the collaborative approach, which took some considerable effort initially, but yielded real benefits. Through sharing openly practice difficulties and challenges and by asking and answering the difficult questions we were able to really learn from one another and to bring good practice into the open in an attempt to make it common practice.

The difficulties posed by the diversity of the consortium were generally overcome through the building of trust and good communication practices throughout the project. It was recognised that a single RPL policy would be unlikely to meet agreement by the various Academic Councils so the approach was to agree a 'top-level' policy document and to circulate that widely and they collate all of the various policy documents as they were debated and approved within the partner colleges.

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Source: Cedefop glossary, 2009

Case study - Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland

QAA Scotland/European RPL Network project on recognition of prior learning

Case study completed by: Dr Anne Murphy, RPL Officer, Directorate of Academic Affairs, Dublin Institute of Technology, 143-149 Rathmines Road, Dulbin 6, Ireland

Scope of project: National ⊠   Sectoral ☐ Institutional ☐ Departmental ☐ Other ☐

Name of institution(s), country: Irish Department of Education and Science with higher education sector, specifically the Dublin Institute of Technology

Purpose of project: To activate the labour force and to reskill unemployed workers in particular sectors which were negatively impacted by the global and local economic recessions through funding short higher education and training opportunities which include RPL where possible

Name of degree/award/learning programme(s) for which credit awarded: BSc (ordinary) in Manufacture of Medicinal Products

Target group(s) of learners: former workers in aspects of the pharmaceutical industry who are now unemployed and who could re-skill into more specific qualifications

Approx number of learners involved: 25 in the particular cohort funded under the initiative

Nature of RPL: Entry/access ☐ Exemption/credit ☐ Direct entry to year 2 or 3 ⊠ Full award ☐

Number/range of ECTS credits awarded: minimum of 60 ECTS credits (one academic year) to achieve advanced entry

Learning recognised[1]:   Formal ⊠   Informal   ⊠   Non-formal   ⊠ Workbased ⊠

Support/guidance for learners: specific application process developed: guidance offered with applications: formative interviews with academic team leader, RPL Officer and Industry Support Officer; qualifier activities designed where appropriate; induction and study skills support offered to all participants

Description of RPL process from initial enquiry to final decision: Advertising: Information provision: Common online CV application/portfolio template based on Europass CV template; common interview schedule and report documents: assessment of applications by academic staff with the support of the RPL Officer and Industry Support Officer with key principle of the applicant's capacity to succeed on such a specific programme and to benefit from it in their working lives later; qualifier activities where it was not clear that prior learning and work-related experiences indicated the capacity to succeed; right to appeal decisions about RPL; second interviews where appeals were made.

Potential for dissemination: This is an ideal case for sectoral RPL as it attracted a very specific profile of applicant and was related specifically to a programme designed with RPL

for advanced entry in mind. All applicants who started the course are likely to successfully complete. No student has left the programme so far.

Short description of project/initiative (including: dedicated staff/services; relationship of RPL to learning outcomes/credit frameworks; future plans and timescales):

The initiative was a response to a Government tender call for higher education to provide training opportunities for unemployed workers in a number of sectors including the pharmaceutical sector. Each student was funded to a specific sum for the one-year duration of the initiative. The academic programme leader submitted a proposal to offer advanced entry to the degree programme to applicants who met specific criteria and who had substantial work-based experience in the sector. It involved RPL for the first stage of the programme based on applicants having met the learning outcomes and being able to provide evidence of so doing using the online application CV/portfolio template provided. They also had to show a capacity to succeed on the programme. The process of application and of RPL processing involved 3 main staff: the academic programme leader, the RPL Officer and the Industry Supports Officer. Applications were initially processed in the Admissions Office. The programme itself was designed as a set of related but discrete modules, each with 5 to 10 ECTS credits and with specific learning outcomes - making an RPL process relatively easy to implement. It is not yet clear if the Government will fund a second intake for this particular programme but the model is being replicated in other programmes and the success factors are being imitated.

Aspects of the project which are innovative or of particular interest - this might include 'learning points' or difficulties faced by the project:

The success factors included: a programme which was designed with RPL applications in mind for advanced entry purposes: modules of appropriate size; learning outcomes specific; expertise in RPL on the academic team; involvement of the RPL Officer; a common application template/portfolio online: a common interview schedule and report form; specifically designed qualifiers; intense induction and clear support for students. The main weakness is the short-term funding conditions.

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[1]
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Source: Cedefop glossary, 2009

Case study - IBEC Retail Skillnet, Ireland

QAA Scotland/European RPL Network project on recognition of prior learning

Case study completed by: Sean Carlin

Scope of project: National ☒   Sectoral ☐ Institutional ☐ Departmental ☐Other ☐

Name of institution(s), country: IBEC Retail Skillnet, Ireland

Purpose of project: IBEC Retail Skillnet has demonstrated its commitment to developing a career path in retail and for maximising access and flexibility for learners.

IBEC Retail Skillnet see Recognition of Prior Learning as an appropriate method of widening access to qualifications and supporting life-long learning within the retail sector.

Recently IRS has been approached by a number of National Operators, such as Brown Thomas, A-wear and B&Q, who have well established in-company training programmes which are not accredited.

Accordingly the demand for RPL on particular modules has become more evident.

Name of degree/award/learning programme(s) for which credit awarded: Retail Operations, FETAC Level 5

Target group(s) of learners: Operatives in the Retail Sector

Approx number of learners involved: Over 200

Nature of RPL: Entry/access ☐ Exemption/credit ☐ Direct entry to year 2 or 3 ☐ Full award ☒

Number/range of ECTS credits awarded: 15 Credits per module, 120 in total for full award

Learning recognised[1]:   Formal ☐   Informal   ☐   Non-formal   ☐ Workbased ☒

Support/guidance for learners: Regional Training consultants offer support, training & mentoring to companies and candidates

Description of RPL process from initial enquiry to final decision: a) Candidates wishing to apply for Recognition of Prior Learning must apply in writing through a Network Member company.

b)   The application must be received at the date set for inclusion by IBEC Retail Skillnet.

c)   Applicants in participating Network Member companies may only apply for RPL on modules as specified by IBEC Retail Skillnet.

d)   Candidates applying for RPL may be interviewed by a member of IBEC Retail Skillnet staff to ascertain the merit of the application.

e)   Candidates who are advised that they may proceed will receive advice and support from IBEC Retail Skillnet staff on portfolio development.

f)   The time allowed for the production of the portfolio should typically take no more than 6 weeks.

g)   The candidate may be asked to perform learning tasks or other assessments as part of the portfolio assessment process.

h)   Submission of the portfolio does not guarantee that the applicant will receive a part/ full award

i)   The candidate will be informed in writing, by IBEC Retail Skillnet of the outcome of the portfolio assessment, within a designated time frame.

Potential for dissemination: Huge interest from retailers within Ireland in implementing RPL to their senior & long serving staff members

Short description of project/initiative (including: dedicated staff/services; relationship of RPL to learning outcomes/credit frameworks; future plans and timescales):

Please see attached newsletter page 3 for an RPL case study

Aspects of the project which are innovative or of particular interest - this might include 'learning points' or difficulties faced by the project:

Web/email   address   for   further   information: www.ibecretailskillnet.com/ sean@ibecretailskillnet.com

[1] *Formal learning*: Learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment (e.g. in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It typically leads to validation and certification.
Informal learning: Learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is in most cases unintentional from the learner's perspective.
Non-formal learning: Learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view.
Source: Cedefop glossary, 2009 Disclaimer

Case study - Letterkenny Institute of Technology, Ireland

QAA Scotland/European RPL Network project on recognition of prior learning

Case study completed by: Oran Doherty RPL Facilitator Letterkenny Institute of Technology, Co Donegal, Ireland. Phone: 00353 749186707.

Email: oran.doherty@lyit.ie

Scope of project: National ☒　　　　Sectoral ☐ Institutional ☒ Departmental ☐Other ☐

Name of institution(s), country: Letterkenny Institute of Technology, Ireland

Purpose of project:　　I am involved in a number of regional, national and international RPL projects.

Locally I would promote the RPL initiative by encouraging employers and employees from the North West of Ireland to get skills acquired in the workplace accredited with a higher level qualification. For example I might visit a call centre where 100-200 staff are employed and have received excellent training in customer care but have no third level qualification in customer care that reflects their training or experience. I would then give them an assessment to complete (RPL portfolio) whereby applicants must demonstrate their learning and experiences. The applicants will also undergo a RPL interview with the lecturer responsible for lecturing customer care. I would use this process to accredit skills in a wide range of sectors including IT, marketing, supervision, community studies, communications, business, training, HR etc….

I also deal with RPL applicants from our full time learners. In the last 2 years there has been a significant increase in the number of mature learners returning to education. Because many of these learners have acquired prior learning from work experience and personal learning, we need to recognise this learning.

I have developed RPL policies and procedures which we use to process RPL applications. In Letterkenny Institute of Technology (LYIT), RPL can be used to access programmes, gain exemptions from certain parts of a programme or gain a full award.

I also meet with employers and develop programmes of study e.g. Minor awards, Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees. These programmes are jointly developed and delivered by the employer and LYIT.

Nationally I represent LYIT in a number of project aimed at sharing best practice in relation to RPL and WBL (Work Based Learning). I also have provided RPL and WBL training to the majority of colleges and universities throughout Ireland.

Internationally I am involved in a number of RPL projects. For example since 2009 I am responsible for representing Ireland in an EU project called FLLLEX. This project involves sharing best practices in RPL, WBL and Flexible Learning throughout Europe.

Name of degree/award/learning programme(s) for which credit awarded: We offer RPL to learners from all programmes offered in LYIT

Target group(s) of learners: Full Time Learners, Part Time Learners and external stakeholders such as employees and employers.

Approx number of learners involved: Typically we would process 300-500 RPL applications annually.

Nature of RPL: Entry/access ☒ Exemption/credit ☒ Direct entry to year 2 or 3 ☒ Full award ☒

Number/range of ECTS credits awarded: It varies. For example the majority of learners may only seek RPL exemptions for 2-3 modules (10-15 credits). However for the programmes developed for local organisations as much as 50% of the credits can be achieved for RPL /WBL.

Learning recognised[1]:   Formal ☒   Informal   ☒   Non-formal   ☒ Workbased ☒

Support/guidance for learners: There is good support for the learner in relation to RPL / WBL in LYIT. I am the RPL & WBL facilitator and I provide training (1-2 hour session) to all RPL / WBL applicants. This training provides the applicants with the knowledge and skills required to prepare RPL portfolios. I would also receive emails / phone calls / personal visits from RPL applicants seeking information about RPL. Learners need support in this area as typically RPL is a new concept to them.

Description of RPL process from initial enquiry to final decision: For Semester 1, RPL applicants must apply before October 1st using the RPL application form. The RPL facilitator delivers a presentation on RPL to all programmes and provides RPL application forms to any interested applicants. These forms are then completed and returned to the relevant head of department. The head of department and the RPL Facilitator then look at each application and a decision is made. the decision may be to refuse the application, accept the application or ask the applicant to provide more details and undergo an interview. For learners seeking RPL for prior certified learning, copies of previous qualifications must be attached to the application form. Learners seeking RPL for prior experiential learning usually have to prepare a RPL portfolio based on the learning outcomes of the relevant modules.

Potential for dissemination:

Short description of project/initiative (including: dedicated staff/services; relationship of RPL to learning outcomes/credit frameworks; future plans and timescales):

There have been 5 workshops / training sessions on RPL in LYIT in the last 2 years. At this stage the majority of staff are trained on how to deal with RPL.

The majority of RPL applications are seeking exemptions from 1-2 modules on their programmes. If the application is based on prior certified learning, the learner must prove that the prior learning is at the same level or higher to the module(s) he/she seeks exemption for. Also the learning outcomes must be similar and the currency of the prior learning is also considered (e.g. for computing modules the prior learning must be achieved within the last 3 years).

Learners seeking exemptions based on prior experiential learning must prepare a RPL portfolio. This portfolio must demonstrate that all the learning outcomes have been achieved. Typically a learner is expected to prepare the portfolio within a 4 week period.

Aspects of the project which are innovative or of particular interest - this might include 'learning points' or difficulties faced by the project:

LYIT would be one of the few third level institutes in Ireland that promotes RPL to employers and employees. The majority of colleges use RPL only for their registered students.

We have developed innovative RPL assessment tools and ensure that all our staff dealing with RPL are trained.

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[1]
  Formal learning: Learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment (e.g. in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It typically leads to validation and certification.
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Source: Cedefop glossary, 2009

Case study - University of Latvia

QAA Scotland/European RPL Network project on recognition of prior learning

Case study completed by: Agnese Rusakova, lecturer, University of Latvia, agnese.rusakova@lu.lv, mobile phone: +371 28350936

Scope of project: National ☒   Sectoral ☐ Institutional ☐ Departmental ☐Other ☐

Name of institution(s), country: Latvian Chamber of Crafts, Latvia: www.lak.lv

Purpose of project:

Name of degree/award/learning programme(s) for which credit awarded: The Latvian Chamber of Crafts (LCC) is eligible to provide the following qualification documents:

1)   journeyman diploma

2)   master craftsman diploma

Target group(s) of learners: Members of the Professional or Territorial craftsmen organizations.

Approx number of learners involved: 257 master craftsman qualifications, 5532 journeymen qualifications were awarded in total since 1994.

Nature of RPL: Entry/access ☐ Exemption/credit ☐ Direct entry to year 2 or 3 ☐ Full award ☒

Number/range of ECTS credits awarded: There are no explicit credits awarded.

Learning recognised[1]:   Formal ☒   Informal   ☒   Non-formal   ☒ Workbased ☒

Support/guidance for learners: The candidate for master of crafts initially follows two months of theoretical courses offered by The Latvian Chamber of Crafts.

Description of RPL process from initial enquiry to final decision: 1. Evaluation of the portfolio, admission to the examination

To pass the examinations for obtaining the journeyman/master of crafts the candidate has to prepare portfolio with the following documents:

• Certificate/recommendation letter from the Professional or Territorial craftsmen organizations

• Curriculum Vitae

• Copy of Passport

- Certificate on Declared place of living

- Copy on General Secondary Education

- Copy on Vocational Education Documents

- Document certifying practice under supervision of a master

- Document certifying the duration of employment as craftsman

- Portfolio of own creative activities: photography, projects, sketches

- Paid receipts

Additional for gaining the qualification of master of crafts:

- Copy of document stating the knowledge of state language

- Diploma of Journeyman (if there is one)

The documents stating previous acquisition of formal vocational education are not indeed prerequisite for gaining the qualification, but then the theoretical part of the examination (identical requirements as for graduates of formal vocational education) is compulsory.

2. Examination of practical skills (especially the central creative project of the candidate) and theoretical knowledge

Potential for dissemination:

Short description of project/initiative (including: dedicated staff/services; relationship of RPL to learning outcomes/credit frameworks; future plans and timescales):

According to the Law on Craftsmenship, as of 02.02.1993 (LR Likums "Par amatniecību", http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=63052&from=off) there are the following qualification levels of craft education in Latvia:

1) apprentice

2) journeyman

3) master craftsman

4) academically educated master craftsman

The Latvian Chamber of Crafts plans to create starting from end of 2010 an online register of all Journeymen and Master craftsmen that have obtained the diploma.

Aspects of the project which are innovative or of particular interest - this might include 'learning points' or difficulties faced by the project:

Observation: A good explanation about what is necessary for being awarded the qualification on the basis of RPL is needed to all involved stakeholders.

Web/email address for further information: agnese.rusakova@lu.lv

- **Information prepared based on expert-interview with Diana Karasa, Vice President, Latvian Chamber of Crafts, phone: +371 67213007, diana@lak.lv**

- **Homepage of the Latvian Chamber of Crafts: www.lak.lv**

[1]
   Formal learning: Learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment (e.g. in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It typically leads to validation and certification.
Informal learning: Learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is in most cases unintentional from the learner's perspective.
Non-formal learning: Learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view.
Source: Cedefop glossary, 2009

Case study - University of Luxembourg

QAA Scotland/European RPL Network project on recognition of prior learning

Case study completed by: Germain Dondelinger, premier conseiller de gouvernement,

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Scope of project:

☑ National   ☑ institutional

Recognition of prior learning is a statutory obligation for the institution and an educational right for the citizen. The University of Luxembourg as well as the institutes awarding short cycle diplomas implement recognition of prior learning.

Name of institutions, country:

University of Luxembourg,

162a, avenue de la Faïencerie, L-1511 Luxembourg www.uni.lu

Various Lycées techniques for the short cycle « Brevet de Technicien Supérieur »

Purpose of project:

Recognition of prior learning is not a project; it is part of the admissions procedures and of the awarding of degrees and diplomas.

Name of degree for which credits are awarded:

Bachelor, Master, brevet de technicien supérieur

Target groups of learners:

Any learner wishing to enter a programme, or to have a degree awarded

Approx number of learners involved:

2010: 70

2008: 170

Nature of RPL:

Entry/access ☑ exemption/credit ☑ direct entry to year 2 or 3 ☑ full award ☑

Number/range of credits awarded:

Up to the equivalent of full award **Learning**

recognised formal ☑ informal ☑ non-formal ☑

work-based ☑

Support/guidance for learners:

Not officially organised, but support given for the filling of the application dossier by the trade unions

Description of RPL process from initial enquiry to final decision:

- candidate's decision to gain access to a teaching programme through RPL
- deadline for submission of dossier to an ad hoc commission by May 31st
- desk-based analysis of dossier
- interview of candidate by + presentation of the dossier by candidate to the commission
- decision by the commission no later than 6 weeks after submission deadline

The decision by the commission can comprise one or more of the following items:

> *"*La commission ad hoc peut notamment prendre une ou plusieurs des décisions suivantes:
>
> *1.* dispense de présenter l'un des diplômes visés à l'article 10 (1) de la loi du 19 juin 2009;
> *2.* dispense de participer à une partie des modules ou une partie des cours constituant les modules de la formation ;
> *3.* dispense de se soumettre à une partie des mesures de validation ;
> *4.* dispense de la *totalité* des modules, cours et épreuves permettant l'obtention du diplôme;
> *5.* inscription sous condition d'accomplir un programme complémentaire. **»**

The dossier contains the following chapters:

> " Le dossier présenté par le candidat doit expliciter, par référence au diplôme postulé, les connaissances, compétences et aptitudes que le candidat a acquises par l'expérience.
> Il comprend les documents rendant compte de cette expérience et de la durée des différentes activités dans lesquelles le candidat l'a acquise ainsi que, le cas échéant, les attestations correspondant aux formations suivies et aux diplômes obtenus antérieurement. **»**

Short description of project/initiative:

Recognition of prior learning is based on the recognition of the learner's formal prior qualifications, his/her work-based experience, his/her experience gained through charitable/associative work and his/her personal advancement. The dossier to be presented to the commission gives an account of these multiple experiences and it gives the learner the opportunity to reflect on his/her experience. These linguistic requirements can be replaced by technical demonstrations.

Recognition of prior learning is set within the framework of the programme requirements defined in terms of learning outcomes.

Case study - University of Applied Sciences Amsterdam, The Netherlands (Stimulating lifelong learning)

QAA Scotland/European RPL Network project on recognition of prior learning

Case study completed by: Lucie te Lintelo; l.te.lintelo@hva.nl;

Tel: 00 31 20 5953951

Scope of project: National ☐ Sectoral ☒ Institutional ☐ Departmental ☐Other ☐

Name of institution(s), country: Hogeschool van Amsterdam (University of Applied Sciences Amsterdam), The Netherlands

Purpose of project: Stimulating lifelong learning, with a focus on: 1. enhancing accessibility and attractiveness of degree programmes for professional workers; 2. cooperation with organizations in upgrading their employees

Name of degree/award/learning programme(s) for which credit awarded: Bachelor degree programmes in the field of Economics/Business Administration; Engineering; Information Engineering; Built Environment; Social Work; Education.

Target group(s) of learners: Professional adult workers with a lot of experience in one of the domains mentioned above, but without formal qualifications.

Approx number of learners involved: about 100-125 RPL-participants each year

Nature of RPL: Entry/access ☒ Exemption/credit ☒ Direct entry to year 2 or 3 ☐ Full award ☐

Number/range of ECTS credits awarded: A maximum of 210 EC can be awarded (all bachelor degree programme are 240 ECTS); the outcome for most RPL-participants is between 60 and 120 EC's.

Learning recognised[1]: Formal ☒ Informal ☒ Non-formal ☒ Workbased ☒

Support/guidance for learners: There is an online RPL quickscan to test whether your professional working experiences matches one or more of the available RPL-procedures. Every candidate who is interested gets a personal introduction: information about the procedure and matching goals, ambitions and working experience with the possibilities and requirements of RPL and flexible learning routes. There is a FAQ available on the website.

Description of RPL process from initial enquiry to final decision:

1. Online quickscan RPL (optional);

2. Personal introduction interview;

3. Compiling a portfolio (online; with instructions and self-evaluation to guide the participants so they can do this on their own);

4. Review of the portfolio by two assessors (one teacher of the bachelor degree programme; one professional who is currently working in a relevant job);

5. Criterion based interview with the participant;

6. RPL report, written by the two assessors, on all competences of the bachelor degree programme;

7. Statement of the exam board about exemption(s) on the base of the RPL-report.

Potential for dissemination: A case study about the co-operation with Corus is published in 'Managing European diversity in lifelong learning, the many perspectives of the Valuation of Prior Learning in the European workplace' edited by Duvekot, Scanlon a.o. (chapter 11, 'Assessing competencies, an essential step in valuating, validating and accrediting prior learning' by Paul Bonsema) and was also presented at the Lissabon Conference on 'Valuing Learning, European experiences on validating non-formal and informal learning', on 26 and 27 November 2007, by Lucie te Lintelo. The case study about the co-operation with Yacht is documented for the Beflex Plus project of EUCEN, see www.eucen.org for more details. Members of the RPL-unit have led workshops and seminars in Lisbon, Tallin, Iasi, Brussels and London to share knowlegde and experiences. Topics: RPL in general; quality assurance with a focus on the quality and certification of assessors; flexible learning pathways; a university as a lifelong learning institute.

Short description of project/initiative (including: dedicated staff/services; relationship of RPL to learning outcomes/credit frameworks; future plans and timescales):

In 2002 the HvA started with Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), to determine which competencies working adults already had acquired through work based learning. The goal is to determine a flexible, tailor made bachelor degree programme, in which students only learn what they need to learn and with the possibility to shorten the regular 4-year bachelor programme substantially. All qualifications of a bachelor degree programme are formulated in competences/learning outcomes: this is the standard used in the RPL procedure.

RPL started in the Economic Faculty. In 2006 the University Board decided that a central RPL unit had to be installed to:

- be able to address the questions of organizations as well as individuals more adequately; -

  develop expertise and quality on assessments by concentrating expertise and experiences;

The purposes of this central unit are:

- to provide a portal for organizations and individual candidates;

- develop RPL tools and procedures in co-operation with educational departments of the HvA and, when necessary, with the client;

- planning and organizing RPL assessments;

- quality assurance, including accreditation as a RPL provider (in 2009 a national requirement for all RPL providers) and training and accreditation of assessors;

- gaining and disseminating further expertise on RPL and supporting a lifelong learning policy of the HvA.

Since the second half of 2008 all tools used in the RPL process have been available online: a quick scan, the application-form, the planning for an intake, candidate instructions and models for compiling a portfolio. For advisors and assessors this means they have an online calendar as well as online versions of the various forms and reports they have to complete during the procedure. By implementing 'RPL Online' statistic information on the candidates, like their motivation for enrolling the procedure or ending it prematurely, has also become available.

For RPL and work based learning programmes the HvA works together with private companies and governmental organizations like Corus (an international steel company), Dienst Werk en Inkomen (Social Service for Work and Income), several banking companies and Yacht, a private company in staffing, temporary management and recruitment in IT.

The RPL units also coordinates and facilitates projects on flexible learning routes and lifelong learning, like institution wide project, started in January 2010, to become a 'lifelong learning university', funded by the national government. Several models of flexible learning routes are developed. A network with the seven other funded lifelong learning universities is formed. The LLL-projects consists of several innovative projects on flexible learning pathways in degree programmes, on continuous pathways and intermediate awards and diplomas; on facilities to support tailor made learning. The projects also include organizational and marketing aspects of lifelong learning.

Aspects of the project which are innovative or of particular interest - this might include 'learning points' or difficulties faced by the project:

The HvA was the first university of applied sciences with an accredited RPL system. Accreditation is obligatory in the Netherlands to be registered as a RPL provider. A unique programme for the quality and certification of RPL-assessors is developed, which is also in demand in other universities in the Netherlands and other European countries.

Although there are still less RPL-participants than expected the experiences with RPL have contributed a lot to developing expertise on flexible learning routes, work based learning and the quality of assessments in general. A lot of working professionals interested in a university programme or degree first get in touch with the RPL centre, even when an RPL procedure isn't the best way for them to start a degree programme. It seems that RPL also can function as a marketing tool to get employers and professional workers interested in higher education.

Web/email address for further information: www.evc.hva.nl (in Dutch)

[1] **Formal learning**: Learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment (e.g. in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It typically leads to validation and certification.
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Non-formal learning: Learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view.

Source: Cedefop glossary, 2009

Case study - University of Applied Sciences Amsterdam, The Netherlands (Enhancing assessor professionalism)

QAA Scotland/European RPL Network project on recognition of prior learning

Case study competed by: Antoinette van Berkel

Scope of project: National ☐ Sectoral ☒ Institutional ☒ Departmental ☐Other ☐

Name of institution(s), country: Hogeschool van Amsterdam (HvA), Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, The Netherlands

Purpose of project: Enhancing assessor professionalism

Name of degree/award/learning programme(s) for which credit awarded: NA

Target group(s) of learners: RPL assessors.

All criterion-related interviews in the HvA RPL procedures are carried out by two assessors. One is a lecturer from the bachelor degree programme from which the RPL-standard is derived. The other is an expert from the professional field (related to the domain of this specific bachelor degree programme). This combination of assessors guarantees sufficient expertise on the content of the standard. However, for assessors to be equipped for carrying out RPL assessments in a uniform way and getting the best out of a candidate, additional training and development on assessor skills is necessary. We therefore have developed an assessor certification programme. Basically, we only want to work with certified assessors as they guarantee an acceptable quality level. The programme we have developed, consists of the following six steps:

1.   A two-day training session focusing on assessor skills and tailored to assessors' learning needs and experience. Assessors learn how to apply interview and assessment techniques. In the training, authentic materials are used, such as the relevant RPL assessment standard and a portfolio. Assessors carry out an entire assessment during the training with an actor in the candidate's role. All participants get feedback on their interview- and assessment-skills.

2.   Practicing assessor skills and gaining experience on the job: assessors perform a number of assessments. Preferably the RPL centre, which is responsible for planning the assessments, makes pairs of junior and certified assessors in support of the junior's learning process.

3.   Organising workshops for proficiency-development, related to assessor skills and pitfalls. Assessors again practice specific interview and assessment techniques which they may need further training in applying. Common assessor pitfalls are related to a. applying interview techniques adequately, b. constructing a well-founded result/judgement at the end of the interview and c. giving constructive development-focused feedback.

4.   Giving assessors personal improvement-focused feedback. This task is performed by an independent assessment expert who gives feedback on the assessor-standard which is

developed for the certification programme. In this standard seven basic assessor skills are defined, namely: a. creating a safe atmosphere for the interview; b. structuring the interview; c. applying adequate interviewing techniques (also: directing the interview, staying in control); d. relating professional activities and competence criteria (together they are the assessment standard) to personal professional products (in the portfolio) and behaviour (in the interview). As a tool for assessors we have developed the so called 'assessment-triangle' which clearly indicates the scope of the assessment-interview; e. constructing a well-founded result/judgement; f. giving constructive and development-focused feedback; g. dealing with objections against the result/judgement, if applicable.

Feedback is given on the assessor's performance. The assessor obtains feedback immediately after the assessment. With this specific feedback the assessor is expected to work on his personal development with regard to the assessor standard.

5.   Assessing the assessor: for certification, again, an independent assessment expert observes the assessor during an interview. The observed assessor should be in the lead of the interview so that he can demonstrate all the criteria in the assessor-standard. Only if all the criteria in the standard are demonstrated adequately, the assessor will obtain a certificate.

6.   Maintenance: in order to retain the certificate, it is necessary to work on the maintenance of the assessor skills. Guidelines for maintenance are e.g. working as a professional in the field or as a lecturer in the bachelor degree programme; performing a defined number of assessments on a yearly basis; asking and giving feedback on the assessor-standard; contributing to the improvement of assessment standards and tools; and attending expert meetings on assessment-related issues.

 It is our experience that assessors find it hard to meet the standard. That is why we offer individual feedback and additional workshops. We have worked with this programme for three years now and we can say that assessors who meet the standard absolutely show professional behaviour when assessing candidates.

Approximate number of learners involved: Over 130 assessors have been trained by now. They are both RPL assessors (from the bachelor degree programmes and the professional field, as described above) and assessors who only work in a bachelor degree programme. As bachelor degree programmes in Amsterdam are mainly competence based, the RPL system of assessing competences is being increasingly adopted in regular bachelor programmes. This requires a greater number of skilled (and certified) assessors.

For RPL, there are about 40 certified assessors divided over 20 RPL-standards/procedures. Additionally, the number of certified assessors in bachelor degree programmes is increasing. On top of this, we get requests to support other universities and institutions in the Netherlands with developing assessor certification programmes and/or carrying out the assessor assessments necessary for certification. Our independent assessment experts perform this task and so enhance their expertise.

Nature of RPL: Entry/access ☐ Exemption/credit ☐ Direct entry to year 2 or 3 ☐ Full award ☐

Number/range of ECTS credits awarded: NA

Learning recognised[1]:   Formal ☐   Informal   ☐   Non-formal   ☐
Workbased ☐

Support/guidance for learners: For assessors, there is a reference document in which assessor skills are explained. In addition a certification manual is available in which the entire programme and procedure are described and which contains the necessary forms and report formats for enrolment, feedback and judgement.

Description of RPL process from initial enquiry to final decision: NA

Potential for dissemination: On this topic we can: do presentations, give recommendations from our experience with various assessor certification programmes being set up in the Netherlands, perform a training programme for assessors and carry out a train the-trainer programme for assessor trainers. An article on setting up a certification programme was published in Onderwijs Innovatie:
http://www.ou.nl/Docs/TijdschriftOI/OI_Juni_2008.pdf (unfortunately this article is in Dutch so for most readers it needs to be translated).

Short description of project/initiative (including: dedicated staff/services; relationship of RPL to learning outcomes/credit frameworks; future plans and timescales):

In 2002 the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences started with RPL procedures in which work experience was recognised with the aim of gaining exemptions from bachelor degree programmes, or to shorten these programmes considerably. From the start of RPL processes there has always been a focus on assessor quality. We therefore developed selection criteria for assessors. These were related to personal characteristics, such as interests in a person's development. Additionally, wide practical experience in the domain of the bachelor degree programme was considered necessary to become an assessor. Furthermore, a two-day training session was developed in co-operation with an assessment and development agency to gain expertise in the field of assessments in general. All RPL assessors were obliged to take part in the training, before they were able to carry out assessments.

Soon we found out that a two-day training session was not sufficient to guarantee high quality assessments. So we developed the programme described above, which has run in its present form since 2007. The charm of the programme is that the assessor is continuously working on assessor skills and expertise, mainly on the job. It therefore does not require extra time investment, which makes it cost-effective. Furthermore, when the assessor is finally assessed for certification, this happens at a random assessment. That means that he must be capable of dealing with all kinds of candidates and getting the best out of them, which is what assessor professionalism is all about.

For staff: In the certification programme a policy-maker/developer, an RPL co-ordinator and a team of independent assessment-experts are involved.

The policy-maker/developer works out the entire programme, provides manuals and guidelines, explains and discusses the programme with those involved, creates support from stakeholders in the organisation, monitors the programme when it is executed, evaluates it and is responsible for quality assurance.

The RPL co-ordinator plans the RPL assessments. Part of his task is monitoring assessors' personal development by making sure that they get feedback from an independent expert in time, i.e. after they have carried out a few assessments. Once an assessor has worked on his personal development in such a way that it is plausible that he will meet the assessor standard, the co-ordinator plans an assessment in which the assessor will be assessed for certification.

Although only one independent assessment-expert is needed to assess an assessor for certification, a team of five independent assessment-experts is involved in the programme. All experts have been selected on the basis of a specific competence profile. At least twice a year there are expert- and evaluation meetings in which the assessor-standard is discussed in detail in relation to experiences and critical situations from practice. The aim is to increase intersubjectivity and set an even clearer standard. At the same time experts work on their own professional development.

Aspects of the project which are innovative or of particular interest - this might include 'learning points' or difficulties faced by the project:

-A thorough preparation is necessary before starting a certification programme. Guidelines that may contribute to success:

-Find support in your organisation: from the management team, assessors, etc.;

-Celebrate successes;

-Define a workable assessor standard: not too detailed; open, but still guiding;

-Check the quality of the assessment-instruments: for assessors to show the required skills the assessment instruments they work with must be adequate;

-Inform assessors thoroughly about the programme: what is required from them? Are they familiar with the standard and the rules of the game?

Finally, some lessons learnt:

1. There is a wide diversity in assessor quality, but there are common pitfalls, such as applying certain interview and assessment techniques adequately;

2. Assessors must gain experience in performing assessments before they undertake assessments. This is due to the diversity of candidates that assessors must be able to deal with (verbose, nervous, introvert, etc.);

3. Being successful as an assessor also depends on one's personality;

4. Professional development programmes should be tailored to assessors' personal needs and pitfalls (free choice);

Certified assessors can easily support junior assessors with their personal development by giving them improvement focused feedback (on the job). In this way certified assessors work on their own professional assessor skills as well.

Web/email address for further information: www.evc.hva.nl (in Dutch)

1

Formal learning: Learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment (e.g. in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It typically leads to validation and certification.

Informal learning: Learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is in most cases unintentional from the learner's perspective.

Case study - Further education colleges in Northern Ireland

QAA Scotland/European RPL Network project on recognition of prior learning

Case study completed by: Tim Burton, QAA t.burton@qaa.ac.uk

Scope of project: National ☐   Sectoral ☒ Institutional ☐ Departmental ☐Other ☐

Name of institution(s), country: Northern Ireland - the six further education colleges which deliver HE programmes awarded by other institutions; project sponsored by Department of Employment and Learning (DEL) in Northern Ireland (DELNI)

Purpose of project: to develop a single Accreditation of Prior Learning (APEL) scheme applicable across all six colleges, designed to encourage greater numbers of applicants with relevant experiential learning into HE

Name of degree/award/learning programme(s) for which credit awarded: range of Foundation Degrees offered by the colleges

Target group(s) of learners: those with relevant experiential learning but without HE level qualifications; part of DEL initiative to up-skill the workforce in NI

Approx number of learners involved: expectations are between 50 and 100

Nature of RPL: Entry/access ☒ Exemption/credit ☒ Direct entry to year 2 or 3 ☐ Full award ☐

Number/range of ECTS credits awarded: unclear at this stage; majority of cases expected to be entry/access

Learning recognised[1]:   Formal ☐   Informal ☒   Non-formal ☒ Workbased ☒

Support/guidance for learners: This is being developed by the colleges as an essential part of ensuring the effectiveness of the scheme

Description of RPL process from initial enquiry to final decision: Details limited at this stage, as based on the pilot involving a limited number of programmes; will be further developed once the full scheme is launched. Standard approach involving application, primarily supported by a portfolio. Advice available from a designated APEL adviser at each college, with each application being considered by the adviser and by a subject specialist. Assessment of each application against the standard principles (currency, reliability, sufficiency and validity) and against the learning outcomes of the relevant programme of study

Potential for dissemination: High

Short description of project/initiative (including: dedicated staff/services; relationship of RPL to learning outcomes/credit frameworks; future plans and timescales):

The project was developed by a working group established by DELNI, with an experienced chair (formerly a member of Foundation Degree Forward), representatives of the six colleges, the three main awarding bodies (see below), DEL and an employer representative.

The group focused on looking at their experience of APEL and some examples of APEL procedures from English institutions. Examples of guidance/good practice were also considered, such as the Quality Assurance Agency Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) Guidelines and the South East England Credit Consortium (SEECC) guidelines. A basic scheme was then devised and arrangements for a small scale pilot discussed. There was much uncertainty about the potential market and therefore the likely workload implications and take up of the scheme. The pilot was run towards the latter end of the academic year and at time of writing is due to be evaluated in September. More information will be known at that stage. Intentions at the time of writing are for a launch in November.

The focus of the project is on APEL for entry although there might be a small number of cases where applicants seek the award of credit.

Aspects of the project which are innovative or of particular interest - this might include 'learning points' or difficulties faced by the project:

The interesting element of the project is the attempt to devise a single model involving six institutions (effectively the whole of the HE in FE sector in Northern Ireland) given these institutions themselves are relatively newly established (following a series of mergers), that they vary in size considerably and that HE is a minority of their provision. Experience of APEL also varied for those staff involved. the added dimension was the need to involve the awarding institutions (again these varied). Necessarily this had to concentrate on the main players (University of Ulster, Queen's University, Belfast and the Open University) because of the vast number of institutions with which the college have agreements.

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[1] **Formal learning**: Learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment (e.g. in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It typically leads to validation and certification.
Informal learning: Learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is in most cases unintentional from the learner's perspective.
Non-formal learning: Learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view.
Source: Cedefop glossary, 2009

Case study - Oslo University College, Norway

QAA Scotland/European RPL Network project on recognition of prior learning

Admission to courses based on prior learning and work experience ("realkompetanse") at Oslo University College (OUC)

Foundation Studies are defined as undergraduate and one year studies, where admission takes place within the Norwegian national admission model - NOM, with Samordna opptak (Universities and Colleges Admission Service - UCAS) as the coordinating secretariat. Applications are done electronically on UCAS, www.samordnaopptak.no. There is also some information in English, but we require that applicants with foreign education speak and write fluent Norwegian.

The annual deadline for applications is 15 April each year. Applications on the basis of prior learning and work experience have an application deadline of 1 March.

There are 47 higher education institutions in Norway included in the national admission model. Universities and public colleges (University College) is required by the Ministry to use this national admission model, while private schools can choose to join.

Oslo University College is the largest public college in Norway, and we are the fourth largest institution of higher education. Only three of seven universities in Norway are greater in respect to the number of students. OUC has approximately 12 000 students and 1200 employees. We make offer of admission to app. 4000 students each year for foundation studies.

The Ministry presented in 2000 a circular on the conditions for validation of prior learning and work experience (F-55-00), and the provisions were later incorporated into the Regulations on access to higher education:
- applicants must be 25 years or older during the admission year
- They cannot satisfy the general entry requirements as such
- "realkompetanse" is defined as knowledge applicants have work experience, unpaid work, organizational work, education or otherwise.

It is the respective institution, which considers whether the applicant's qualifications in relation to the study the applicant wishes to study. It is the respective institution which determines the procedure for how these assessments are to be made.

After applications are submitted online, applicants will receive a paper form, testimonial forms and miscellaneous information about the prior learning and work experience from The Oslo University College. Applicants can make up to 10 study options throughout the country and will receive a cover sheet from the respective institutions. Cover sheets with attachments are to be sent to the respective institution.

Testimonials should cover:
- why the applicant believes to have sufficient knowledge of Norwegian to complete a study. - Why they believe to have sufficient knowledge of English to be able to read English literature.
- Motivation

- thoughts on what the study program will require of effort

The provisions relating to qualifications are set forth in internal guidelines, determined by the Board of Oslo University College.

To be eligible to apply, we require at least five years relevant work experience. A maximum of two of these five years can be replaced by the relevant education, organizational work and in some cases caring for own children. In addition, all testimonials should be sufficiently completed.

The term relevant is broadly defined. E.g. For all programs in health, social care and education, relevant practices are work within health, welfare, nursing, care or education. There may be nuances in relation to some studies.

Some studies have special requirements, which must be met by all applicants. This may be special requirements in mathematics, physics, work practice, entrance test etc.

Oslo University College is the largest educational institution with respect to the number of applicants with prior learning and work experience, since arrangement with UCAS was established in 2001. It is therefore usually not enough to be eligible to receive an offer of admission; they compete with the rest of the applicants.

When the cover sheet is submitted to the University of Oslo, the application is dealt with by the central admission office at the college. When there are deficiencies, the applicants are notified. The applications we consider to be qualified, are forwarded to the respective faculty for ranking, i.e. the qualified applicants for each course are ranked relative to each other. Ranking is done on basis of relevance and extent of professional experience and the content of their declarations.

There is no scoring of those applicants, and they have no specific quota. Admission Regulations states, however, that offer of admission will be granted after review, but in relation to level of entry. The faculties provide feedback on which students they believe want to grant admission. Admissions Office does the follow up with UCAS.

We have not yet compiled statistics for the study implementation, compared to students who meet the admission requirements of higher education. College does not have the resources to provide additional support for this student group. Therefore, they struggle a lot in the first semester, and it's a part that ends, because the study situation is more difficult and more demanding than the pre-thought. But the students who "survive" the first semester, is a resource for the study and the other students.

The grades they achieve in the course of study may be somewhat lower than students admitted on a foundation of general education, but this experience has little impact on later.

Case study - University of Bergen, Norway

QAA Scotland/European RPL Network project on recognition of prior learning

Case study completed by: Judith Morland, Head of Section, Division of Academic Affairs, Section for Academic Administration, University of Bergen

Scope of project: National ☐   Sectoral ☒   Institutional ☒ Departmental ☐Other ☐

Name of institution(s), country: University of Bergen, Norway

Purpose of project: Acknowledge and formalise the value of existing competences in the general population with reference to the national regulations for admission to higher education (second cycle) in Norway.

Name of degree/award/learning programme(s) for which credit awarded: RPL can be used to qualify for admission to degree programmes. Degrees/qualifications are normally obtained by satisfying the formal requirements.

Target group(s) of learners: Adults, minimum age of 25 years, who do not satisfy the general requirements for admission to higher education.

Approx number of learners involved: ca. 20 per year

Nature of RPL: Entry/access ☒   Exemption/credit ☐ Direct entry to year 2 or 3 ☐ Full award ☐

Number/range of ECTS credits awarded: 0

Learning recognised[1]:   Formal ☒   Informal   ☒   Non-formal   ☒ Workbased ☒

Support/guidance for learners: No special support or guidance is provided for students admitted on the basis of RPL

Description of RPL process from initial enquiry to final decision: Applicants must, by law, be at least 25 years of age. Additional criteria for consideration as an RPL applicant are determined by each institution. Information and guidance about local admission requirements are therefore handled by the individual institutions.

Electronic applications are normally submitted via the Norwegian UCAS. Documentation is sent to each institution applied to, which treats the application in accordance with the locally defined criteria. Offer of admission/denial of admission to the individual study programmes applied to are sent by UCAS. Appeals are handled by the individual institutions.

Potential for dissemination: Applicability must be considered for relevance to the individual study programmes.

Short description of project/initiative (including: dedicated staff/services; relationship of RPL to learning outcomes/credit frameworks; future plans and timescales):

Not evaluated.

Aspects of the project which are innovative or of particular interest - this might include 'learning points' or difficulties faced by the project:

Challenges:

* Criteria for evaluation and qualification: Informal and non-formal learning that can be reasonably documented and considered preparatory for admission to traditional university study programmes.

* Documentation and evaluation of applicants in a point-based admission system.

Web/email address for further information:

[1]
Formal learning: Learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment (e.g. in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It typically leads to validation and certification.
Informal learning: Learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is in most cases unintentional from the learner's perspective.
Non-formal learning: Learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view.
Source: Cedefop glossary, 2009

Case study - Edinburgh Napier University, Scotland and Hong Kong University

QAA Scotland/European RPL Network project on recognition of prior learning

Case study completed by: Margaret Mill, Edinburgh Napier University

Scope of project: National ☐ Sectoral ☐ Institutional ☐ Departmental ☐Other ☒

Name of institution(s), country: Edinburgh Napier University, Scotland, Hong Kong University

Purpose of project: Awarding credit for short cycle programmes at Hong Kong University, enabling direct entry into year 3 of degree programmes at Edinburgh Napier University.

Name of degree/award/learning programme(s) for which credit awarded: Higher Diploma in Engineering and Certificate in Engineering, leading to Honours Degree in Engineering.

Target group(s) of learners: Hong Kong based Engineering students

Approx number of learners involved:

Nature of RPL: Entry/access ☐ Exemption/credit ☒ Direct entry to year 2 or 3 ☒ Full award ☐

Number/range of ECTS credits awarded: 65 ECTS

Learning recognised[1]: Formal ☒ Informal ☐ Non-formal ☐ Workbased ☐

Support/guidance for learners:

Description of RPL process from initial enquiry to final decision:

Potential for dissemination:

Short description of project/initiative (including: dedicated staff/services; relationship of RPL to learning outcomes/credit frameworks; future plans and timescales):

The Centre for Credit Rating at Edinburgh Napier University is an expert resource centre with considerable expertise in credit-rating programmes of learning across a range of vocations and disciplines. The learning outcomes of the programme in Hong Kong were evaluated and compared with the learning outcomes of the programme at Edinburgh Napier University towards which credit was to be awarded. The process is consistent with the existing programme validation process within Edinburgh Napier University.

Aspects of the project which are innovative or of particular interest - this might include 'learning points' or difficulties faced by the project:

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Case study Edinburgh Napier University, Scotland and BAE Systems & Machine Tool Technology

QAA Scotland/European RPL Network project on recognition of prior learning

Case study completed by: Margaret Mill, Edinburgh Napier University

Scope of project: National ☐   Sectoral ☐   Institutional ☐   Departmental ☐ Other ☒

Name of institution(s), country: Edinburgh Napier University, BAE Systems & Machine Tool Technology

Purpose of project: To provide a degree specifically for BAE Systems to upgrade the skills of their maintenance engineers. Bespoke programme of learning, with combination of RPL, degree modules, and work-based learning, leading to a BSc degree.

Name of degree/award/learning programme(s) for which credit awarded: BSc in CNC Machine Tool Engineering

Target group(s) of learners: BAE Maintenance Engineers

Approx number of learners involved:

Nature of RPL: Entry/access ☐ Exemption/credit ☒ Direct entry to year 2 or 3 ☐ Full award ☐

Number/range of ECTS credits awarded: 30

Learning recognised[1]: Formal ☒   Informal ☐   Non-formal ☐ Workbased ☒

Support/guidance for learners:

Description of RPL process from initial enquiry to final decision:

Potential for dissemination:

Short description of project/initiative (including: dedicated staff/services; relationship of RPL to learning outcomes/credit frameworks; future plans and timescales):

Aspects of the project which are innovative or of particular interest

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Non-formal learning: Learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view.
Source: Cedefop glossary, 2009

Disclaimer

This case study was offered by the author as part of the QAA Scotland and European RPL Network project on recognition of prior learning. It is presented as it was submitted and note should be taken that any opinion given does not necessarily reflect the views of QAA.

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It is understood that the author of this case study is willing to be contacted for educational purposes, at the address given. Contact with the author should be made directly by the enquirer, and not through QAA.

Case study Edinburgh Napier University, Scotland and NHS Lothian

QAA Scotland/European RPL Network project on recognition of prior learning
Case study completed by: Andy Gibbs

Scope of project: National ☐ Sectoral ☒ Institutional ☒ Departmental ☒ Other ☐

Name of institution(s), country: NHS Lothian/Edinburgh Napier University

Purpose of project: To provide an employer-led Life Long Learning framework

Name of degree/award/learning programme(s) for which credit awarded: All levels of Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

Target group(s) of learners: National Health Service (NHS) employees

Approx number of learners involved: 13000

Nature of RPL: Entry/access ☒ Exemption/credit ☒ Direct entry to year 2 or 3 ☒ Full award ☒

Number/range of ECTS credits awarded: variable

Learning recognised[1]: Formal ☒ Informal ☒ Non-formal ☐ Workbased ☒

Support/guidance for learners: Personal Development Planning (PDP)/NHS Knowledge and Skills framework

Description of RPL process from initial enquiry to final decision:

Potential for dissemination: High

Short description of project/initiative (including: dedicated staff/services; relationship of RPL to learning outcomes/credit frameworks; future plans and timescales):

This case study describes the creation of a lifelong learning framework which links vocational and academic educational systems to form a three way partnership between students, employers and educationalists. This was achieved through the application of many of the tools and frameworks associated with the Bologna Process and European Higher Reforms. These included qualifications frameworks, learning outcomes, formal and informal learning, and recognition of prior learning. The transparency of educational frameworks was matched by the addition of an employer developed tool – The "knowledge and skills framework" which provided an objective linkage of employment roles, individual development needs and pay progression.

Aspects of the project which are innovative or of particular interest - this might include 'learning points' or difficulties faced by the project:

This describes a large scale employer led initiative, highlights undeveloped links with EHEA.

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Case study Edinburgh Napier University, Scotland and Ross International

QAA Scotland/European RPL Network project on recognition of prior learning

Case study completed by: Margaret Mill, Edinburgh Napier University

Scope of project: National ☐ Sectoral ☐ Institutional ☐ Departmental ☐ Other ☒

Name of institution(s), country: Edinburgh Napier University, Scotland. Ross International private training provider

Purpose of project: Credit rating of study programme as 'standalone' credit and as part of a new programme of study for an award.

Name of degree/award/learning programme(s) for which credit awarded: Certificate in Leading Rapid Improvement, with pathways towards MSc.

Target group(s) of learners: Employees of local authorities and the National Health Service

Approx number of learners involved:

Nature of RPL: Entry/access ☐ Exemption/credit ☐ Direct entry to year 2 or 3 ☐ Full award ☐

Number/range of ECTS credits awarded: 30 ECTS credits at SCQF level 11

Learning recognised[1]: Formal ☒   Informal ☐   Non-formal ☐ Work-based ☐

Support/guidance for learners:

Description of RPL process from initial enquiry to final decision:

Potential for dissemination:

Short description of project/initiative (including: dedicated staff/services; relationship of RPL to learning outcomes/credit frameworks; future plans and timescales):

Aspects of the project which are innovative or of particular interest - this might include 'learning points' or difficulties faced by the project:

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Non-formal learning: Learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view.

Source: Cedefop glossary, 2009

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Case study - Glasgow Caledonian University, Scotland

QAA Scotland/European RPL Network project on recognition of prior learning

Case study completed by: Ruth Whittaker, Glasgow Caledonian University, rgwh@gcu.ac.uk

Scope of project: National ☐ Sectoral ☒ Institutional ☐ Departmental ☐Other ☐

Name of institution(s), country: Scottish Social Services Council; ORCHA; Cross reach; Inclusion and C Change; Viewpoint; Glasgow City Council; Perth and Kinross Council

Purpose of project: Scottish Social Services council: the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Social Services Recognition of Prior Informal Learning
(RPL) Resources

Phase 1

To develop and pilot an RPL approach; profiling tool and resources for learners and mentors in order to:

• engage social service workers who lack confidence as learners and/or are reluctant to undertake formal learning

• speed up and streamline the process of RPL for credit towards qualifications, for example SVQ 3- without losing quality

Phase 2

• Review the effectiveness of the RPL process as a means of increasing learner self-confidence; accelerating the achievement of vocational qualifications;

• improving the quality of the learning experience; evaluating and enhancing practice.

• Identify the means of integrating an RPL process within existing organisational systems of workforce development, from the recruitment and induction stage onwards, and within existing systems for SVQ assessment

The project therefore explored both formative and summative recognition processes

Name of degree/award/learning programme(s) for which credit awarded:

SVQ Level 3 Health and Social Care, HSC 33

Target group(s) of learners: employees in the social services sector working towards qualifications required for registration with the Scottish Social Services Council

Approx number of learners involved: 70, across the different employing organisations listed above

Nature of RPL: Entry/access ☒ Exemption/credit ☒ Direct entry to year 2 or 3 ☐ Full award ☐

Number/range of ECTS credits awarded: SCQF level 7 8 credits

Learning recognised[1]:   Formal ☐   Informal ☒   Non-formal   ☒
Workbased ☒

Support/guidance for learners: An SCQF RPL resource pack and profiling tools were developed, piloted and evaluated. The materials consisted of the following elements:

1.   Mentor guidance

2.   Resources

3.   Profiling tool

4.   Links to SVQ 3 unit HSC 53 reflect on and develop your practice.

RPL profiling helps learners to identify:

•   the key learning experiences through which they may be able to demonstrate the elements for each unit

•   the reflective evidence of their learning

•   further action they need to undertake to fully achieve or demonstrate the elements. This further action might be in terms of further training, learning and development or in relation to the production, gathering and selection of evidence to enable assessment towards the qualification.

The Resource Pack supports this process through:

•   introducing the learners to RPL

•   building their confidence as learners through identifying their strengths and skills

•   helping them to develop the skills of reflective thinking and writing

•   preparing them to undertake the profiling tool.

The pack is designed to be used by Mentors who are working with a group of learners. A Mentor may be a line manager or supervisor or a trainer or an assessor. The pack contains suggested activities and handouts which can underpin group preparatory sessions with participants. The activities and handouts are intended to be used flexibly by the mentors to meet the needs and goals of their learner group.

 The RPL profiling tool supports learners in identifying the extent to which they have achieved the elements of the core units through their life and work experiences. It aims to help learners recognise the ways in which they have applied, and built on, the skills and knowledge they have gained through these experiences to their current social care practice. The process is

designed to support learners in their achievement of a qualification. The profiling tool developed for the pilot was in relation to the core units of SVQ3 Health and Social Care.

 The development work was carried out in consultation with an RPL working group comprised of experts in social services training and development.

Description of RPL process from initial enquiry to final decision:

Step 1 Preparatory support provided by mentor This

has been divided into 3 stages:

Stage 1: Introduction to learning from experience

Stage 2: Identifying learning from life and work experiences

Stage 3: Identifying learning from social care, and other relevant, experience in preparation for the profiling process.

The Resource Pack can be used by mentors to underpin Step 1 of the process: preparatory support. Activities and handouts are provided to support each of the three stages and can be used flexibly by the mentor. The activities are designed to be undertaken by a group of learners, although support can also be provided on an individual basis. The advantage of a group approach is that of peer group support provided by other learners, which can enhance the learning experience and the confidence-building process.

Step 2 Undertake RPL Profiling

The learner will undertake RPL profiling for the units, or elements of the qualification they are seeking, which have been agreed by the Mentor. As part of the profiling process, the learner will undertake two reflective exercises: one in relation to a life experience and one in relation to a recent practice-based experience. A follow up meeting with the mentor will be arranged to discuss the outcomes of the profiling exercise.

Step 3 Professional discussion with mentor

This is a reflective discussion in which the mentor will encourage the learner to explore, in more depth, the experiences they have identified in the profiling tool; the learning which has resulted; and the evidence which the learner can use to demonstrate this learning. This will include the production a reflective account as evidence, based on the two reflective exercises undertaken as part of the profiling process.

The mentor and learner will agree what other action needs to be undertaken to meet the learner's particular goals in terms of further learning, training or development to prepare them to undertake RPL for credit in relation to the qualification. If this is the case, the mentor will discuss with the learner the ways in which the scope and performance or assessment criteria of the qualification can be met. The mentor and learner will agree timescales for the action identified.

Step 4 Production of reflective evidence and updating of profile

As a result of the discussion with the mentor, the learner produces the reflective account and updates his or her Profile in relation to experiences/evidence /action and timescales.

Step 5 Undertaking other agreed action

The learner will undertake agreed action. A follow-up review meeting with the mentor should take place to discuss progress at an appropriate point. When the learner is ready to seek credit for their prior informal learning in relation to the qualification, an assessment planning meeting will be arranged with an assessor.

Step 6 Gaining RPL credit

Through the assessment process, credit can be sought for the prior informal learning identified through the profiling process, for example towards an SVQ in Health and Social Care.

The flowchart in the appendix shows how the RPL process can be used as part of the process of gaining a qualification.

Potential for dissemination: There is great potential for dissemination as the RPL resource pack can support an RPL process for all levels of qualification within the social services sector. It is also informing RPL developments in other sectors such as Health. The SCQF Partnership have produced a generic version of the Social Services RPL toolkit to support RPL developments across the different education and training sectors.

Short description of project/initiative (including: dedicated staff/services; relationship of RPL to learning outcomes/credit frameworks; future plans and timescales):

The Social Services RPL guidance and resources were developed by the SCQF Social Services RPL working group for the Scottish Social Services Council. They were written by Ruth Whittaker, Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) and edited by Alison Harold, SSSC. Audrey Thomson, Perth and Kinross Council developed Links to HSC Unit SVQ33. The RPL working group comprised of experts in social services training and development.

The social services sector has led the way in developing processes for the recognition of prior informal learning to support workforce development within the context of the SCQF. The SCQF/Social Services Recognition of Prior Informal Learning (RPL) project (200508) was commissioned by the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) as part of development work to support the implementation of the SCQF within the sector.

The RPL model and resource pack were piloted and evaluated in two stages. The first stage was undertaken between April 2006 and March 2007 and its purpose was to test out the usefulness and applicability of the RPL process for learners (i.e. the formative, preparatory sessions and the profiling tool); check the ease of use by mentors and identify refinements to the materials. Fifteen learners across three organisations (both private and voluntary care homes) participated via group sessions facilitated by a mentor from within the organisation. These learners completed and submitted evaluation questionnaires to the project team. Mentor feedback was provided to a meeting of the RPL working group.

A refined version of the resource pack and profiling tool was produced and further piloting took place. The second evaluation stage reviewed the effectiveness of the RPL process as a means of increasing learner self-confidence; accelerating the achievement of vocational

qualifications; improving the quality of the learning experience; and evaluating and enhancing practice. Four pilot organisations participated at this stage; one had participated in the first stage so tested out the revised materials with a different learner group. The organisations utilised the revised processes and materials (formative stage) as a preparation for summative assessment towards qualifications, as well as within the context of induction. Focus-group discussions with learners and mentors were carried out to explore impact on personal and professional development, as well as on practice. Additionally, questionnaire responses from learners were gathered. The second evaluation stage was completed in March 2008 (Whittaker, 2008b).

The value of the RPL process in terms of increasing learners' confidence and their motivation to undertake further learning and development was confirmed through the project evaluation. The process helped learners to gain confidence, to recognise their skills and knowledge, to think and write reflectively and supported them to gain SVQ3. Pilot evaluation and subsequent, and growing, use of the resources within organisations has indicated that RPL, supported by the resource pack, can be used within the social services sector to support every aspect of workforce development including the gaining of qualifications at all levels; recruitment; induction; supervision and appraisal and performance interviewing. The idea of building RPL into a process of continuous employee development is now being explored. An interactive online RPL profiling tool, based on the materials but designed for individual learners to use, has also been developed for SVQ 3 Health and Social Care.

Current and future developments

The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) is currently developing the following versions of the RPL profiling tool:

An interactive online RPL profiling tool for SVQ 2 and SVQ 4 Health and Social Care.

 RPL Guidance and profiling tools for Leadership and Management in Care Services.

An amended RPL guidance profiling tool linking to degree in Social Work, in particular SVQ 4 in Social Work.

 Amended RPL guidance and profiling toolkit linking to Degree in Childhood practice.

In July 2010 a Social Services RPL interest Group was established to take forward RPL developments in the sector. This includes:

Supporting the development of materials for the on-line profiling tools

Following up the evaluation to find out if the RPL process   shortened the length of time it took for people to gain the qualification and to explore usage - to what extent have people used RPL and to what extent it has been successful.

Aspects of the project which are innovative or of particular interest - this might include 'learning points' or difficulties faced by the project:

Although the model and materials were piloted mainly with learners who were working towards achievement of the SVQ in Health and Social Care, their generic aspects have broad applicability within the social services sector for workers at all levels. Moreover, the resources

have been adapted by the SCQF partnership as a generic resource to support the development of RPL within workforce development in other sectors.

Web/email address for further information: Ruth

Whittaker: rgwh@gcu.ac.uk

Alison Harold: Alison.Harold@sssc.uk.com

The resources and evaluation report are available at:
http://ewd.sssc.uk.com/ewd/learning/the-recognition-of-prior-informal-learning-rplguidance-and-resources-for-mentors-and-learners.html

The on-line profiling tools are available at:
http://workforcesolutions.sssc.uk.com/course/view.php?id=12

Keith Quinn: Keith.quinn@sssc.uk.com

[1] **Formal learning**: Learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment (e.g. in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It typically leads to validation and certification.
Informal learning: Learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is in most cases unintentional from the learner's perspective.
Non-formal learning: Learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view.
Source: Cedefop glossary, 2009

Case study - The Open University in Scotland

QAA Scotland/European RPL Network project on recognition of prior learning

Case study completed by: Pete Cannell, Open University in Scotland

Scope of project: National ☐   Sectoral ☐ Institutional ☒ Departmental ☐Other ☐

Name of institution(s), country: Scotland

Purpose of project: To help prepare learners for the transition from vocational study to university and to help learners have work skills and experiences recognised for entry and some credit towards a degree programme.

Name of degree/award/learning programme(s) for which credit awarded: Any degree of the Open University

Target group(s) of learners: Learners moving from vocational study to university or employees/ voluntary workers to gain access to degree studies

Approx number of learners involved: Approximately 50 so far in Scotland - several hundred others in the rest of the UK

Nature of RPL: Entry/access ☒ Exemption/credit ☒ Direct entry to year 2 or 3 ☐ Full award ☐

Number/range of ECTS credits awarded: 15

Learning recognised[1]: Formal ☒   Informal ☒   Non-formal ☒ Workbased ☒

Support/guidance for learners: Support and guidance is integrated into the module through facilitation by a personal tutor, in order to support reflection by the student.

Description of RPL process from initial enquiry to final decision: Students who have prior experience of non-accredited formal or informal education or training at work or other contexts are able to register for the module U122 Making Your Experience Count. In recognition of the fact that students have already devoted considerable time to significant episodes of prior learning that form the basis of the course the expected study hours are half what would normally be required for a 30 point course.

Potential for dissemination:

Short description of project/initiative (including: dedicated staff/services; relationship of RPL to learning outcomes/credit frameworks; future plans and timescales):

Making Your Experience Count is a 30 point online module at SCQF level 7 that enables students to reflect on past learning experiences, develop higher education skills and plan for future progression. In most cases student use it to make the transition from workplace experience to higher education, from vocational further education to higher education or from Higher National Certificate to HE study at SCQF level 8. The module allows participants to

select prior learning experiences (which may be at SCQF level 6 or below) and reflect on processes and outcomes. Over a 16-week period, students are supported by a personal tutor and learn how to analyse and reflect on these experiences in an academic environment, take stock of their skills and plan for personal and career development. The course is suitable for anyone in paid or voluntary work, planning a career change, or wishing to enter or re-enter the labour market. It's also appropriate for those who would like to undertake some personal or academic development but don't have a clear career goal in mind.

Evaluation of student experience on U122 suggests that, whether studied as an individual or in the context of a workplace group, the ability to gain SCQF credit for prior learning and at the same time develop HE study skills at level 7 is a very positive support to transition.

Aspects of the project which are innovative or of particular interest - this might include 'learning points' or difficulties faced by the project:

Evaluation and feedback from students suggest that the role of reflection on past learning experiences (which may be at any level) combined with active engagement with the skills required for HE study at SCQF level 7 enables successful transition from vocational to academic study.

Web/email address for further information: "P.A.Cannell" <p.a.cannell@open.ac.uk>

[1] *Formal learning*: Learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment (e.g. in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It typically leads to validation and certification.
Informal learning: Learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is in most cases unintentional from the learner's perspective.
Non-formal learning: Learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view.
Source: Cedefop glossary, 2009

Case study - Queen Margaret University, Scotland

QAA Scotland/European RPL Network project on recognition of prior learning

Case study completed by: Dr K M Munro, Head of Nursing, School of Health Sciences

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Tel: +44 131 474 0000 Fax: 0131 474 0001 E-Mail:

mail to:kmunro@qmu.ac.uk www.qmu.ac.uk

http://www.qmu.ac.uk/hn/

Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh is a registered charity. Scottish Charity Number SC002750

Scope of project: National ☐ Sectoral ☐ Institutional ☐ Departmental ☒ Other ☐

Name of institution(s), country: Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh

Purpose of project:

Name of degree/award/learning programme(s) for which credit awarded: A range of undergraduate BSc, BSc (Hons), MSc and Professional Doctorate programmes within subject area of Nursing and the School of Health Sciences

Target group(s) of learners: undergraduate post registration/postgraduate and professional doctorate learners

Approx number of learners involved:

Nature of RPL: Entry/access ☒ Exemption/credit ☒ Direct entry to year 2 or 3 ☒ Full award ☐

Number/range of ECTS credits awarded: both general and specific credits are awarded up to 50% of programme at SCQF level of entry

Learning recognised[1]: Formal ☒ Informal ☒ Non-formal ☒ Workbased ☒

Support/guidance for learners:

For formal, informal and non-formal learning we provide advice about the process. If a student or candidate applies for accreditation of non-certificated learning, they will be given a named academic tutor to advise on their portfolio of evidence to support claim for credit. Similarly if the work-based learning is formal it is the same process. This can be achieved prior to embarking on a programme or while undertaking a programme. Work-based learning is also accredited as student-directed work-based learning within a formal programme of studies. The processes are similar as work-based learning is the obverse of RPL

Description of RPL process from initial enquiry to final decision: please see
http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/fm/others.htm   for more information and accompanying
documentation

Potential for dissemination: Yes, provided QMU materials are acknowledged.

Short description of project/initiative (including: dedicated staff/services; relationship of RPL to learning outcomes/credit frameworks; future plans and timescales):

The QMU RPL framework articulates with the Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework. The exemption from studies, based on prior certificated learning, or the award of credit for prior experiential learning, is either specifically aligned with module learning outcomes for specific exemption, e.g.from core requirements, or aligned with general programmes outcomes for general credit set against 'elective' choices within a given curriculum. One initiative within QMU is the multiprofessional approach, as a school wide RPL panel considers all complex applications. This panel encompasses all health science professional programmes at different levels, ensuring rigour and transparency of decision-making.

Aspects of the project which are innovative or of particular interest - this might include 'learning points' or difficulties faced by the project:

The whole approach is innovative as it crosses all academic levels, encourages the recognition of prior learning and facilitates the accumulation and transfer of credit into programmes of learning. It is particularly appropriate for mature adults who intend to learn as part of their careers and on-going employment and therefore is also recognised by employers as a way of increasing employee's knowledge of work through the workplace

Web/email address   for further information: kmunro@qmu.ac.uk   or
scameron@qmu.ac.uk

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[1] *Formal learning*: Learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment (e.g. in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It typically leads to validation and certification.
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Non-formal learning: Learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view.
Source: Cedefop glossary, 2009

Case study - Scottish Social Services Council, Scotland

QAA Scotland/European RPL Network project on recognition of prior learning
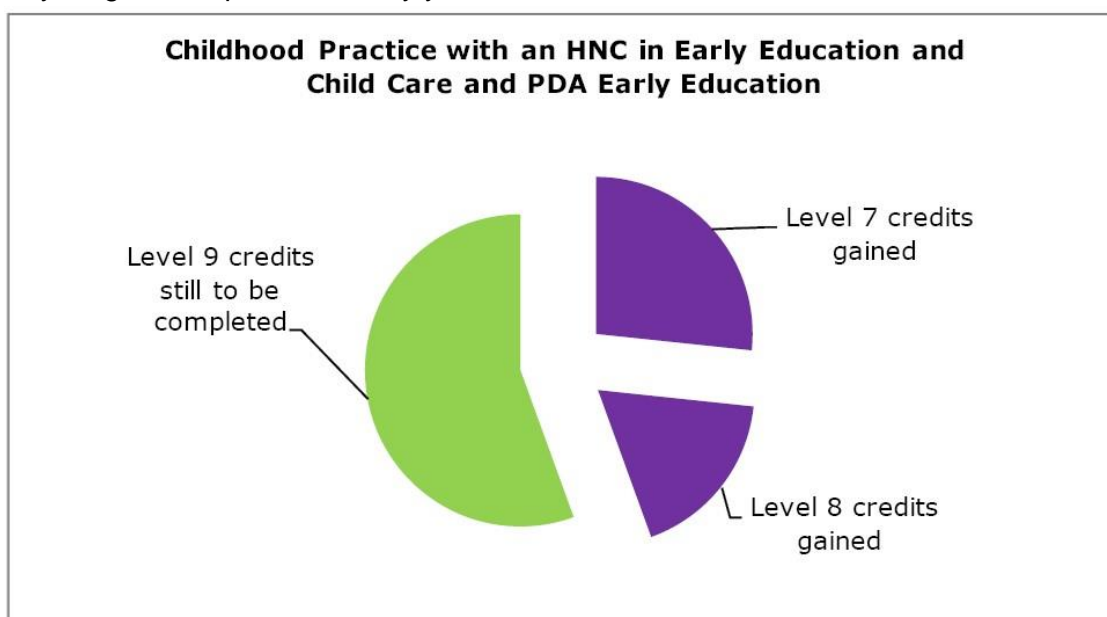
RPL and Credit Transfer into the BA in Childhood Practice

The Scottish Government responded to the National Review of the Early Years and Childcare Workforce in Investing in Children's Futures. A key action which arose from the review included developing leadership in the early years and childcare sector by creating a workforce that is led by professionals qualified at level 9 in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). The benchmark standard for childhood practice sets out guidelines intended to support the development and delivery of childhood practice awards. It details the requirements of programmes around the issues of work-based learning, assessment and recognition and accreditation of prior learning.
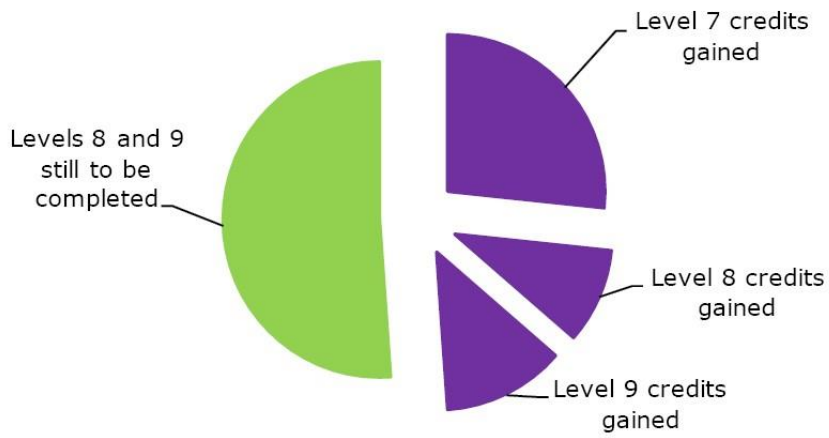
The benchmark standard states that newly developed childhood practice awards must be built on and explicitly include learning assessed at levels 7 and 8 on the SCQF and have effective procedures for the recognition and accreditation of prior learning. It recognises that those applying to undertake the award will come with a vast amount of experience and a range of qualifications. Qualifications such as the SVQ 4 in CCLD/Playwork, the HNC in Early Education and Childcare and the older NNEB can contribute to the professional progress of workers towards the award.

There is currently only one level 9 childhood practice award, this being the BA in Childhood Practice. This award is being delivered by universities throughout Scotland. There is also a Post Graduate Diploma in Childhood Practice which is currently being delivered by Glasgow University. This award if for those people who currently hold a degree but who are still required to meet the standard for childhood practice.
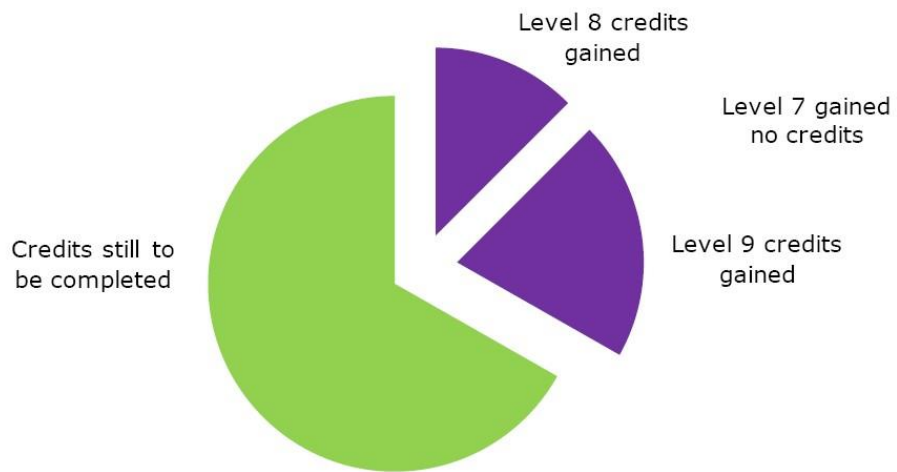
The illustrations below show examples of credit which candidates may already have, that can be used towards the level 9 childhood practice award. Each illustration shows how credit may be given for particular early years and childcare awards.
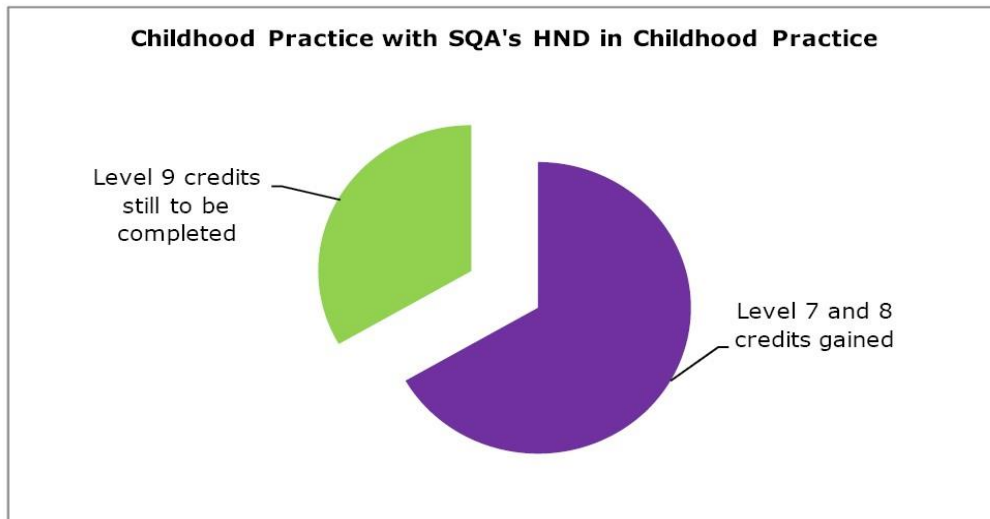

Childhood Practice with an HNC in Early Education and Child Care and PDA Early Education

Level 9 credits still to be completed

Level 7 credits gained

Level 8 credits gained

Childhood Practice with an HNC Early Education and Child Care plus an SVQ level 4 in Children's Care, Learning and Development

Level 7 credits gained

Levels 8 and 9 still to be completed

Level 8 credits gained

Level 9 credits gained

Childhood Practice with an SVQ level 4 in Children's Care, Learning and Development without an HNC

Level 8 credits gained

Level 7 gained no credits

Credits still to be completed

Level 9 credits gained

Childhood Practice with SQA's HND in Childhood Practice

Level 9 credits still to be completed

Level 7 and 8 credits gained

Many applicants will come forward for the award with the old Scottish Nursery Nursing certificate, this award was not credit rated. Candidates who hold this award are asked to submit a learning statement which indicates their learning to date and their potential to complete the level 9 award. Based on this learning statement, candidates will be given credit towards the level 9 award. This is done on an individual basis to ensure candidates are entered at the correct level of the BACP.

The HEI group, a sub group of the Childhood Practice Development Group, have been working together to reach an agreed tariff of credit for qualifications that candidates come forward to the level 9 CP award with. This tariff has not yet been made public but candidates can be assured that regardless of the HEI they apply to, they will be given the same amount of credit for their previous qualifications.

Recent Childhood Practice Developments

SQA are currently developing a level 9 Childhood Practice award and hope to have this ready for the beginning of next year. This award is also based on the benchmark standard for childhood practice and candidates will be given credit into the award based on previous learning and experience that relates directly to the standard. SQA and the HEI group have been working together to ensure, where possible, that there is parity between the SQA CP award and the BACP.

We have a revised Guidance Document for those people who are interested in the BACP award. This gives information on RPL into the BACP. I have attached a copy along with the email.

The SSSC have a Childhood Practice area on our main website, this can be accessed by going to: http://ewd.sssc.uk.com/ewd/learning/the-new-childhood-practice-awards.html The link on the left entitled FAQs about Childhood Practice gives information on RPL into Childhood Practice. Once completed, the agreed tariff of qualifications will be put here.

Case study - University of West of Scotland

QAA Scotland/European RPL Network project on recognition of prior learning

Case study completed by: Lea McKay, Acting Director, Lifelong Learning Academy

Scope of project: National ☐   Sectoral ☐   Institutional ☐   Departmental ☒ Other ☐

Name of institution(s), country: University of West of Scotland (UWS), Scotland

Purpose of project: Credit for entry to degree programme at SCQF level 9

Name of degree/award/learning programme(s) for which credit awarded: BA Management

Target group(s) of learners: Applicants for above

Approx number of learners involved: 14

Nature of RPL: Entry/access ☐   Exemption/credit ☐ Direct entry to year 2 or 3 ☒ Full award ☐

Number/range of ECTS credits awarded: 120

Learning recognised[1]:   Formal ☒   Informal ☐   Non-formal ☒ Workbased ☒

Support/guidance for learners: Making Experience Count workshops and individual guidance/supervision

Description of RPL process from initial enquiry to final decision: Students attend workshops where UWS procedure for RPL is explained. Certificated learning was assessed and where there is a credit deficit in the 120 ECTS points needed for entry to SCQF level 9, students are given guidance and support in writing statements of learning to allow a claim for experiential learning to be made. Students making a claim for experiential learning are allocated a supervisor with academic expertise in the subject area. A written piece of work linking theory to practice and relating clearly to the statements of learning will be produced. This will be accompanied by a portfolio of supporting evidence and will be double marked by UWS academic staff. In addition students will undertake a short presentation and question and answer session on the work produced. A pass/fail decision will be made. Decisions will be ratified at the appropriate Subject Panel and will be open to external examination

Individual RPL Examples

Subject Area – Human Resource Management
A successful claim was made for 120 SCQF points at level 7 (60 ECTS credits) based on learning achieved through working for a number of years as a training and development officer. Statements of learning were submitted along with a written submission of 5,000 words. A portfolio of supporting evidence was also provided.

Subject Area – Human Resource Management

A successful claim was made for 120 SCQF points (60 ECTS) at level 7 plus 60 points (30 ECTS) at SCQF level 8 based on the students work in the area of HRM and qualifications achieved in South Africa for which no equivalence could be established. He submitted a series of statements of learning and a written submission of 5,000 words. A portfolio of supporting evidence was also provided.

Subject area - Biomedical Sciences

A successful claim was made for 120 SCQF points (60 ECTS) at SCQF level 7 plus 120 points (60 ECTS) at SCQF level 8 based on qualifications achieved in India for which no equivalence could be established. In conjunction with relevant academic staff the student submitted a series of statements of learning and a written submission of 5,000 words. A portfolio of supporting evidence was also provided.

Subject Area – Languages

A successful claim was made for 120 SCQF points (60 ECTS) at SCQF level 7. This was a combination of certificated learning and learning derived from time spent living and teaching in France and Spain. Certificated learning resulted in the award of 50 SCQF points (25 ECTS) at SCQF level 7 the remaining points were acquired through evidence of having developed language skills in French and Spanish and of having gained an in depth awareness of the day to day culture and customs of both countries lived in. The claim consisted of a series of statements of learning and a written piece of work of 5,000 words. This had sections written in English, French and Spanish to test competence in written language skills. A portfolio of supporting evidence including details of a web site developed by the student was also provided.

In all cases the students met with the RPL Co-ordinator who provided guidance on the university's approved procedures for accreditation of prior learning and with appropriate academic staff. Written guidelines were made available to students and staff. The claim was supervised by a subject specialist and was double marked. In addition the students gave a presentation and underwent a viva voce where they were questioned on the presentation and written submission. The award of credit was approved by the external examiner and the appropriate programme panel. The credit is recorded on the student's academic history.

Potential for dissemination: This could be applied to other areas within UWS and the wider sector.

Short description of project/initiative (including: dedicated staff/services; relationship of RPL to learning outcomes/credit frameworks; future plans and timescales):

This project was a collaboration between the Lifelong learning Academy and the Business School at UWS. The aim was to award credit for SCQF levels 7 and 8 through certificated and/or experiential learning for part time students who had considerable work related experience to allow entry to SCQF level 9 on a BA Management programme. The project was co-ordinated by Lifelong Learning Academy staff who also provided guidance on UWS RPL procedure and in constructing statements of learning through workshop sessions. Specialist academic supervision and assessment was provided by the Business School. The project began in May and will hopefully be completed by the end of the year.

Aspects of the project which are innovative or of particular interest - this might include 'learning points' or difficulties faced by the project:

The RPL procedure involves the construction of statements of learning pertaining to the individual students experiential or work based learning linked to the award sought and to the SCQF level descriptors. It does not match learning against module outcomes as this is seen to be too rigid and constrictive when recognising learning of an experiential or work based nature.

Web/email address for further information: lea.mckay@uws.ac.uk

[1]
  Formal learning: Learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment (e.g. in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It typically leads to validation and certification.
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Non-formal learning: Learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view.
Source: Cedefop glossary, 2009 Disclaimer

Case study - University of West of Scotland and the Scottish Police College

QAA Scotland/European RPL Network project on recognition of prior learning

Case study completed by: Dr Anne McGillivray

Scope of project: National ☒   Sectoral ☒   Institutional ☐ Departmental ☐ Other ☐

Name of institution(s), country: University of the West of Scotland and Scottish Police College

Purpose of project: Accreditation/Credit-rating of Scottish Police College courses

Name of degree/award/learning programme(s) for which credit awarded: BA Police Studies and other CPD

Target group(s) of learners: Police and ancillary workers

Approx number of learners involved:

Nature of RPL: Entry/access ☒   Exemption/credit ☒ Direct entry to year 2 or 3 ☒ Full award ☒

Number/range of ECTS credits awarded: 10 - 180

Learning recognised[1]: Formal ☒   Informal ☐   Non-formal ☒ Workbased ☒

Support/guidance for learners: Educational Guidance

Description of RPL process from initial enquiry to final decision: SCQF guidelines for Recognition of Prior Learning:
http://www.scqf.org.uk/RecognitionofPriorLearning/Recognition-of-Prior-Learning-Home.aspx

Potential for dissemination: Yes

Short description of project/initiative (including: dedicated staff/services; relationship of RPL to learning outcomes/credit frameworks; future plans and timescales):

Mapping of courses and learning outcomes to Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

Work-based learning

Assessment

Entry points using RPL

Staff development

Aspects of the project which are innovative or of particular interest - this might include 'learning points' or difficulties faced by the project:

Web/email address for further information: anne.mcgillivray@uws.ac.uk

[1]
   Formal learning: Learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment (e.g. in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It typically leads to validation and certification.
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Non-formal learning: Learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view.
Source: Cedefop glossary, 2009

Disclaimer

Case study - University of Primorska, Slovenia

QAA Scotland/European RPL Network project on recognition of prior learning

Case study completed by: Živana Marčeta (zivana.marceta@fm-kp.si), Adam Antolič (adam.antolic@fm-kp.si)

Scope of project: National ☐   Sectoral ☐ Institutional ☒ Departmental ☐Other ☐

Name of institution(s), country: University of Primorska, Faculty of management Koper

Purpose of project:

Name of degree/award/learning programme(s) for which credit awarded: Professional Higher Education Study Program Management and University Study Program Management

Target group(s) of learners: full time and part time students

Approx number of learners involved: in Appendix 1

Nature of RPL: Entry/access ☐ Exemption/credit ☒ Direct entry to year 2 or 3 ☐ Full award ☐

Number/range of ECTS credits awarded: in Appendix 1

Learning recognised[1]:   Formal ☒   Informal   ☒   Non-formal   ☒ Workbased ☐

Support/guidance for learners: The applicants get special training in developing their portfolios and can benefit from additional advisers' assistance if necessary. A manual for preparing the portfolio was designed to help candidates to prepare their documents for the official application for the recognition and validation of prior non-formal and informal learning

Description of RPL process from initial enquiry to final decision: A candidate who wishes to recognize and value his/her knowledge and skills acquired through formal, nonformal and/or informal informal learning before enrolment and during study at Faculty of management, submits an application. In accordance with the Rules, prior learning can be recognized before enrolment or during study. The whole recognition process should be finished no later than in two months after submission of an application. If an applicant submits a certificate or other document which clearly shows one will not claim more than 30 ECTS credits of previous learning, the Commission for the Recognition of Knowledge and Skills can reach the decision based on such documents alone. However, if an applicant submits documents which clearly show more than 30 credits, the Commission for the Recognition of Knowledge and Skills must arrange an additional examination (conversation, interview, written or oral exam). This additional examination is carried out by an appointed teacher or Assessment Commission.

Potential for dissemination:

Short description of project/initiative (including: dedicated staff/services; relationship of RPL to learning outcomes/credit frameworks; future plans and timescales):

The Faculty of management in Koper is one of the first higher education institutions which implemented its own system of recognition of non-formal and informal education and skills in Slovenia. The Faculty of Management in Koper has been implementing the process of recognition of knowledge and skills since academic year 2005/2006. In the Academic Year 2005-06 the faculty adopted special Rules to regulate the procedure for examining, validating and recognizing non-formally and informally obtained knowledge. The Rules were upgraded in 2007, 2008 and 2009. The case of the Faculty of Management in Koper shows that higher education institutions in Slovenia are very much autonomous in implementing the recognition and validation of previous learning. At least in the first couple of years it is a rather demanding process as the institution needs to take several decisions on defining the whole process and to build its own capacities of administrative and academic staff involved in the process which is very demanding in terms of time and costs. Additional training is needed for potential candidates for application to teach them how to prepare their portfolio and inform them about the whole procedure.

So far the faculty managed to define and upgrade the validation and recognition procedures on the basis of their own experiences and examples of good practices like France for example.

Aspects of the project which are innovative or of particular interest - this might include 'learning points' or difficulties faced by the project:

Due to a very loose national legislation it is about the motivation of the individual institution whether to implement validation and recognition of prior learning. So far the process has been found as a rather costly and complex. The recognition of non-formal, informal and experiential knowledge has many benefits. Formal education might become more accessible, shorter and cheaper. It might lead to recognition of certain qualifications, stimulate lifelong learning, improve employability of people and overcome social, cultural and economic inequalities. However, the implementation of recognition of non-formal, informal and experiential knowledge is a very slow process in the area of higher education. It is very much related to national legislation and particularly on the level of the autonomy of higher education institutions. There are very few European countries with coherent practice in this field like France and the UK. The Slovenian case shows that this type of recognition gain importance in current higher education policies but due to a rather permissive national legislation, higher education institutions are fully autonomous in implementation of the whole process. This allows them to adapt to their own needs and fields of study but on the other hand they get hardly any guidance which might be very helpful at the beginning stage of the implementation. Thus at least at the beginning higher education institutions struggle with the complexity of the process which relates to definition of the whole procedure, criteria and rules of accreditation procedure and particularly on necessary training of professionally trained staff as well as guidance and training of candidates who want their prior learning to be validated and recognised (accredited). So the recognition process is not only complex, but also lengthy and costly.

Web/email address for further information: www.fm-kp.si

[1] **Formal learning**: Learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment (e.g. in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It typically leads to validation and certification.
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Non-formal learning: Learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view.
Source: Cedefop glossary, 2009