

Case Study 1: Claim for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) towards a BA French and Spanish, University of the West of Scotland



Janet left school at 16 and took up an array of employment options which included working in the Civil Service. In time she had her own business and this required her to spend some periods of time living and working in France and Spain. However, a change of personal circumstances led to Janet returning to Scotland and deciding on a change of career.

Janet decided she wanted to become a teacher of French and Spanish but to do this she needed to return to formal learning to gain the necessary qualifications. She set about investigating the most appropriate learning opportunities to allow her to achieve her goal quickly without having to repeat learning that she had already gained.

Janet's search led her to the University of the West of Scotland, which, she says, was extremely helpful and flexible in meeting her learning needs. With support from the University's RPL Co-ordinator and subject specialists, Janet was successful in making a claim for credit towards her Degree programme as she was able to demonstrate that she had reached the required standard of learning to allow her to gain advanced entry into the second year of the Languages Degree.

Janet was able to transfer credit from previous certificated learning, which had 50 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7, into her Degree programme. In addition to the certificated learning, Janet made a claim for the accreditation of prior learning - learning that she had gained through experience. She provided evidence of having developed language skills in French and Spanish and of having an in-depth knowledge of the day-to-day culture and customs of both France and Spain.

To demonstrate her learning, Janet put together a portfolio of evidence for the subject specialists so that a decision could be made on the level and amount of SCQF credit points that could be awarded. In addition to the portfolio, Janet also:

- submitted a written piece of work (5,000 words) with sections written in English, French and Spanish to test her competence in written language skills;
- delivered presentations in English, French and Spanish which were audio taped.

Janet's claim was supervised and assessed by academic staff within the Languages Department at the University which included a native French and Spanish speaker. As a result, Janet was awarded a further 70 SCQF credit points at SCQF Level 7.

A combination of these 70 credit points and the 50 credit points from her certificated learning meant that she had gained 120 credit points at SCQF Level 7, equivalent to the full first year of university study, enabling her to gain advanced entry to the second year of the Languages Degree.

Janet successfully completed her BA in French and Spanish following which she completed the Professional Graduate Diploma in Education at Strathclyde University. She has since undertaken her probationer year in teaching and is hoping to find a permanent teaching post. Janet said of her experience of RPL:

"There were really no barriers for me in getting recognition for my prior learning. I would certainly undertake the process again if appropriate. It was really helpful having RPL specialists to support me in my learning and I would certainly encourage others to take up these kinds of opportunities."