



## **Real Life Case Study – UWS BA Business (Hons) RPL Procedures**

### Background

The University of the West of Scotland (UWS) is widely known as a widening participation University and has well established practices surrounding RPL\*. Here is the established route that they use for admitting students with relevant work experience with advanced standing using SCQF RPL principles and adhering to UWS quality procedures. We hope that this example provides some practical advice and guidance that you may find useful.

This route offers candidates advanced standing (entry to the programme at an advanced stage) to the BA Business (Hons) programme through the University's Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL\*) policy. As a rule of thumb 5 years' management experience is the minimum for admission through the RPL route, although some of the applicants are managers with up to 20 years' experience and are looking for a degree to progress their career. UWS recognises that the breadth and depth of this experience can be mapped to the programme learning outcomes and work with candidates on an individual basis to offer SCQF credit at levels 7, 8 and 9 through a structured and tested RPL process. Admission to the programme at an advanced level is awarded on completion of the process. The successful candidates will have demonstrated the currency, depth and breadth of their learning to support the SCQF credit awarded and will have gained confidence in their ability to write in an academic manner and be fully accustomed to using UWS systems. Two video case studies are presented to demonstrate the success and future career path of students that have gone through the process below.

### Facilitation and Guidance

Selected candidates, who have requested admission through an APEL claim or have referenced considerable relevant work experience within their application, are invited to a structured one to one guidance appointment with an experienced guidance adviser who takes the candidate through:

- SCQF entry levels
- Types of evidence
- Academic writing style
- Procedure and process
- Timelines
- Outcome

The candidate is shown an example of a previous anonymised portfolio to familiarise themselves with the types of evidence and the style of academic writing required for a successful RPL claim. The process of submission and support alongside clear guidance on the timelines and UWS internal and external quality processes are all explained at this point.

### Next Steps

Should the candidate wish to proceed with an APEL claim, they are asked to complete a unique UWS module called Making Experience Count for 10 credits at SCQF level 7. The module runs online over one academic term during which the candidate submits their work. The module has specific learning outcomes based upon reflective practice and is assessed by the portfolio containing a written statement of learning with associated evidence.

### Breadth, Depth and Currency

The candidate is asked to submit an up to date CV, which includes all other SCQF credit rated programmes such as HNC/partial degree that may be taken into account, and to complete a personal chronology of their work experience.

The personal chronology and CV are the starting point in the RPL process: a detailed reflective account of what they have done, what they have learned and the evidence they can produce to support this.

Reflecting on experience can be challenging and each candidate is advised that they must submit a variety of different activities that can demonstrate the currency, breadth and depth of their learning and link this to the overall learning outcomes of the programme. The experienced guidance advisers ask the applicants to reflect upon what they do and, if they repeat these exercises, what they did differently as this is where learning takes place. This part of the claim is crucial in the process as it is then scrutinised by a subject specialist (academic supervisor) who maps the candidate's learning to the learning outcomes of the programme and decides if the candidate has the appropriate depth and breadth of learning and that their learning is up to date. This process involves consideration of the specific experiences highlighted by the applicant and judging the equivalency of the experience to the explicit learning outcomes of the programme of study. The candidate's experience may only satisfy the learning outcomes of certain modules within the programme depending on their experience - an example would be that a candidate has no experience in accounts and has much more experience in marketing and credit will only be awarded where experience can be mapped to the programme learning outcomes. An estimate of how much SCQF credit could be awarded is discussed and the candidate must complete the written element of the claim and submit an acceptable portfolio of evidence before a final decision is made.

Tailored learning outcomes are written, and guidance upon the word count and expectation of academic writing style alongside timescales for the completion of each stage of the portfolio are agreed between the applicant and the academic supervisor.

The candidate submits written work, which must take account of their own experience and reflect upon appropriate academic theory. Constructive feedback is offered on each learning outcome until the final portfolio is presented, alongside the evidence indicated within the personal chronology. Where a candidate submits an RPL claim in excess of 60 SCQF credit points a presentation is also required as part of the assessment. The candidate presents to

the guidance adviser and both academic markers, who are all permitted to question the candidate about their work.

Throughout this process applicants are registered students at the university so have access to all student support facilities and the continued support of their academic supervisor and a guidance adviser.

### Quality Procedures

All claims for APEL must go through the usual University Quality procedures of internal marking with each claim being double marked and verification by a subject external examiner. The assessment methods of a portfolio and a presentation are consistent with the type and quantity of assessment from all other UWS modules and standards adhere to the strict quality standards applied to all academic assessment.

\*RPL and APEL are some of the terms used to describe the process of Recognition of Prior Learning

### Real Life Success Stories

Here are two short videos of UWS students who have gone through the RPL process.



[Morag's](#) Story



### [Brian's](#) Story

### Links to Further Reading

If you are a facilitator and would like some guidance around taking a learner through the process, please use the tool by ticking the relevant box, full guidance is available [here](#).

SCQF RPL toolkit for learners can be found [here](#).

UWS APEL policy can be found [here](#).

The SCQF Partnership runs a half day workshop about RPL and details of when this will be available will be posted [here](#).

If you have any questions regarding RPL please contact [f.garry@scqf.org.uk](mailto:f.garry@scqf.org.uk) to discuss