

Information Notes Series 4:

Recognition of Prior Learning for Credit Rating Bodies

Note 4.1

Developing Your RPL Policy

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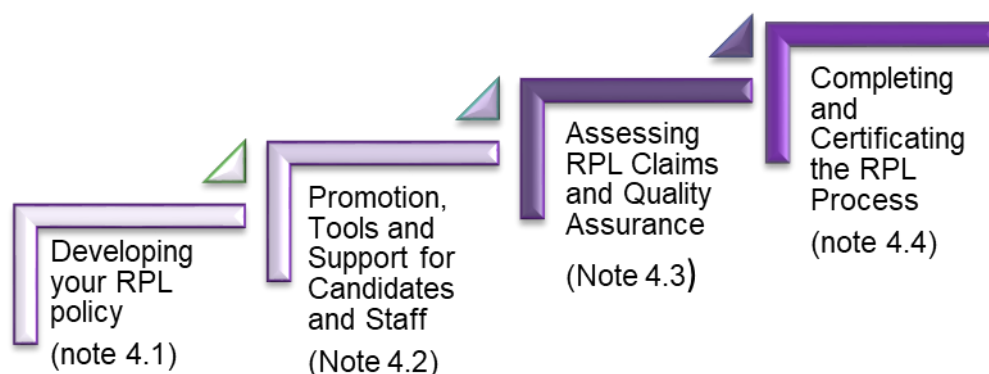
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for Credit Rating Bodies (CRBs)

Developing Your RPL Policy

This information note supplements the principles and guidance within the SCQF Handbook. Other useful resources include the [RPL Toolkit](#) which is a guidance tool to signpost learners, and employers and guidance professionals who are supporting a learner through the RPL journey.

In addition, the SCQF Partnership offers workshops on the principles and processes of RPL, where policy considerations are included. We would suggest that it would be useful to attend one of these workshops to improve your understanding of RPL in the context of the SCQF and to enable you to develop your policy and procedures.

This note is the first in a series about RPL for CRBs. There are four notes in total as indicated below.



Definition

Recognition of Prior Learning is defined as:

“The process for recognising learning that has come from experience and/or previous formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts. This includes knowledge and skills gained within school, college and university and outside formal learning situations such as through life and work experiences.”

but also....

“A process that involves a learner reflecting on experiences; identifying learning associated with the experiences and providing evidence of that learning to enable an institution to reach a decision on awarding credit or mapping to the levels on the SCQF.”

Developing your RPL Policy

Introduction

Many CRBs already have established RPL policies and procedures. These can include policies for learners and staff who may already have experience of RPL in its different guises.

RPL is for all types of learning, regardless of the context in which it has been acquired. It is important to state that recognition is for the learning that has taken place, and not simply for the knowledge and skills gained. The SCQF Level Descriptors should always be used when considering claims for RPL.

There are three main types of RPL:

- for personal/career development;
- to gain entry to a learning programme;
- for the award of SCQF Credit Points to gain entry or advanced standing in a programme or qualification.

Policy considerations

Here are some things to consider when developing your RPL policy: *(please note this is not an exhaustive list)*

- The scope of your policy including
 - Who your policy will apply to
 - Arrangements for staff development and capacity building
 - Types of learning recognised
 - What RPL can be used for
- Possible definitions to include in your policy
 - Formative and summative RPL
 - Credit transfer
 - Informal learning
 - Non formal learning
- What type of RPL and what volume of credit you will accept?
 - Credit transfer- for full or partially completed study that has been credit rated and what are the minimum and maximum volume of credit you will accept?
 - RPL for entry, where candidates do not have the normal entrance qualifications
 - RPL for advanced entry using informal and non-formal learning
 - RPL for career progression opportunities, recruitment and retention

<p><u>Acceptability of Learning</u></p> <p>The acceptable margins for matching evidence to learning outcomes should be indicated. For example, do you require an exact match to each learning outcome or would a percentage coverage be acceptable? This may differ in some subjects/professional areas.</p>	<p><u>Currency of Learning</u></p> <p>Are there any limitations to the timeframe for when the original learning was completed? You may also wish to outline what you would want to see in terms of the candidate keeping the learning current by work or volunteering. Please note, there may be variances to your policy depending on the subject matter - eg. computing or accounting where technology and standards change rapidly.</p>
<p><u>Authenticity of Learning</u></p> <p>Details of the methods in place to ensure that evidence submitted is the candidate's own work. You may wish to consider if you will require candidates to provide authentication of evidence from another source e.g. witness testimony, references or, for practical scenarios, a demonstration.</p>	<p><u>Sufficiency of Learning</u></p> <p>If you are considering RPL for informal and non-formal learning, you should outline the volume and depth of learning you would expect the candidate to have gained from experience in their field of expertise.</p> <p>If your policy is to be used for staff, you should set out any expectations, as an employer, for applications regarding career progression, recruitment and selection. You should also consider the issues of length and depth of learning etc. as above.</p>

- Your policy should also outline the possible outcomes of RPL such as:
 - The boundaries of your policy
 - Entry into a programme of study without the formal entrance requirements
 - Entry to an advanced stage of the programme
 - Consideration for a career progression or job role without the need for further training to be completed
 - The acceptance of alternative qualifications and experience during recruitment and selection processes

Assessment and quality assurance

- Your policy should also include a general statement on assessment and quality assurance (QA) and areas you may wish to consider are:
 - How claims for RPL will be assessed and if it will be the same for each type of RPL?
 - The parameters for a successful claim
 - Whether there will be an appeal process and, if so, what will be the criteria?
 - In the event of an unsuccessful claim, whether the evidence is permitted to be re submitted or re assessed at a later date once further learning has taken place?
 - Whether partial credit is available if the evidence was submitted for a larger claim?
 - The arrangements for the quality assurance of RPL claims. Will they be integrated into existing QA arrangements or will there be separate QA arrangements to deal with RPL claims?

Useful links	
RPL Hub	RPL Hub - Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SCQF Level Descriptors	SCQF Level Descriptors - Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SCQF Credit Points Explained	credit-point-explained-march-2017-web.pdf
SCQFP workshops	criteria-explained-final-web-oct-2017.pdf