



towards
recognition
of prior learning



RPL & Credit Rating in Scotland: Benefits & Critical Success Factors

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6th December 2012

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About Edinburgh Napier University

Since 1992, a leading modern university committed to the highest standards of excellence in teaching, learning, research and knowledge transfer.

Our purpose is to develop in individuals, organisations and communities the skills and knowledge which will enable them to succeed.

We pride and promote ourselves on innovative learning and teaching which meets the needs of industry and learners from all backgrounds

We must continue to provide high quality student experiences when availability of knowledge and the role of learning organisations is changing

We have:

14,000 students

25% study at least part of their degree out with the UK

Over 20% use some form of RPL or credit transfer for entry





Innovation in Learning & Teaching

- Use of technology: e.g. podcasts, online learning, social media, “Moodle”, learning apps etc.
- Different means of assessment: e.g. work-based, presentations, mobile apps, games, designs, clinical outputs
- Pride ourselves on quality of student experience, with learning continually building on previous knowledge
- Recognise that learning takes place in different environments:
 - Articulation & progression: transfer of credit between institutions/courses
 - Application of RPL: recognition of formal training and prior experience
 - Credit Rating: approval of external programmes

External Pressures & Policies

- Need to increase our economic & social impact
 - *Lifelong Learning*: encouraging and facilitating continuous learning
 - *Widening Access*: to learners from non-traditional backgrounds
 - *Workforce Development*: enabling learning for people in the workforce
- Reduced public sector funding and need to diversify income streams
 - *Cost Reduction*: delivering “more for less”
 - *Commercialisation*: exploiting expertise/assets for income e.g. training/consultancy
 - *Internationalisation*: recruiting overseas students, new campuses/collaborations
- Output-based funding & student fees
 - Competing with other universities for student recruitment
 - Need to increase our proportion of non-government funded students
 - Differentiated by service levels, student choices and impact measures

RPL can help with all of these

Recognition of Prior Learning

Our project looks at two kinds of RPL application:

1. **RPL for Individuals:** Recognition of formal or experiential learning to allow learners to continually build their skills to a higher level as they journey through education and work.
 - **Articulation:** Established mechanisms and agreements credit transfer between formal education programmes to allow advanced entry at a given level.
2. **Credit Rating** (“RPL for Organisations”): Enabling organisations outside the formal education system to award academic credit for training, learning and development programmes by applying academic rigour and quality standards to external programmes. (www.napier.ac.uk/ccr)

Non-Accredited learning for RPL can be:

- Formal: recognised and designed training activities outside accredited education
- Non-formal : planned development activities not designed as learning
- Informal or Experiential: in different contexts and environments

Why do RPL & Credit Rating?

- Brings clear benefits to our customers:
 - Individuals: students and learners from all backgrounds
 - Business & organisations
 - Governments & funding agencies
- Fits with government policy and strategy:
 - Recognising and building a more skilled workforce
 - Encourages lifelong learning
 - Creates economic and social impact
- Brings benefits to university and higher education
 - Changes in the nature of learning and knowledge
 - Role of HE organisations in delivering that – enabling vs delivering

Benefits: Individual

RPL supports a more tailored learning experience which better meets the needs and aspirations of individual learners

- Recognises their achievements and boosts self-confidence and self-esteem
 - Recognises skills and knowledge from different learning environments
 - Recognises experience as well as formal training
- Improves career development and progression to higher learning
 - Supports lifelong learning and continuous professional development
 - Levelling of skills against recognised frameworks
 - Encourages access to formal education
- Supports labour market entry and mobility
 - Gives skills currency, value and transferability between subjects and occupations
 - Widens career choices
- Reduces time and costs of gaining qualifications

Benefits: Businesses & Organisations

- Improves the quality and impact of their training
 - Easier to identify and address skill gaps
 - Helps to plan staff development
 - Measurable improvement from focus on learning outcomes
- Improved skills and productivity in their workforce
 - Staff motivated and empowered to develop and contribute more
 - Improved productivity and performance, able to work more autonomously
 - Identification of process improvement opportunities throughout the business
- Improved recruitment and retention of staff
 - Simplifies the recruitment process
 - Offering recognised training helps attract potential employees
 - Able to keep their best people by offering clear career progression routes

Benefits: Government & Funding Bodies

- Economic Impact
 - Recognise level of transferable skills in the workforce and can identify gaps
 - More effective investment in skills and workforce development
 - Greater economic productivity (local, regional and national)
 - Increased university/business engagement leading to innovation
- Social Impact
 - Improving employability and skills (particularly among disadvantaged groups)
 - Wider access to further and higher education
 - Social inclusion, cohesion and mobility
 - Supports lifelong learning

Benefits: University

- Allows us to have a wider role in enabling knowledge
 - Recognising learning in different contexts
 - Bringing quality and consistency to different learning environments
- Respond to the changing nature and availability of knowledge
 - Changing role of Higher Education in facilitating and assessing learning
 - Continued relevance and value of HE in providing high quality learner experience
- Meet funding requirements and support government policy
 - Widening access to HE participation, to build a more flexible and skilled workforce
 - Closer engagement with business community
- Supports income diversification:
 - Greater levels of recruitment: undergraduates, overseas students
 - Credit rating fees and partnership delivery with colleges and overseas partners

Benefits: Partners & Other Stakeholders

- Partners in education, learning and development
 - **Colleges** can promote articulation routes to Higher Education
 - **International partners** can promote advanced entry to UK Higher Education
 - **Professional and industry bodies** can increase membership levels by:
 - Demonstrating level and value of their programmes
 - Offering partial exemptions
 - Attracting and retaining talented staff to their industry
 - **Private training providers** can increase customer revenue by:
 - Offering accreditation and assessment as an additional service
 - Meeting customer requirements for formal accreditation
 - **Scottish Credit & Qualifications Partnership** have increased availability and uptake of nationally-recognised qualifications



Critical Success Factors for introducing RPL/Credit Rating

Critical Success Factors

URPL Project Report highlighted critical factors enabling successful implementation of RPL in Scotland:

- 1: Policy interest; consistent, incremental and pragmatic policy towards RPL developments
- 2: Lifelong Learning (LLL) policy
- 3: Scottish system of education
- 4: Learning outcomes based approach
- 5: System of Scottish qualifications; SVQs
- 6: Credit transfer system
- 7: Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
- 8: Institutional framework for RPL
- 9: Co-operation between different stakeholders
- 10: Developing institutional capacity to provide RPL provision



Critical Success Factors

Political and policy-level support for collective adoption of RPL across learning providers and partnerships over a number of years

- Lifelong Learning
- Wider Access and Social Inclusion

A system of education and training supportive for Lifelong Learning and RPL

- Modular and outcome-based nature of Scottish qualifications
- Highly unified system of qualifications recognition
- Credit arrangements in education and training
- Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

Scottish Credit & Qualifications Framework

SCQF Levels	SQA Qualifications			Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions	Scottish Vocational Qualifications
12			↑	Doctorates	
11				Masters Post Graduate Diploma Post Graduate Certificate	SVQ5
10				Honours Degrees Graduate Diploma	
9			↓	Ordinary Degree Graduate Certificate	SVQ4
8		Higher National Diploma		Diploma of Higher Education	
7	Advanced Higher	Higher National Certificate		Certificate of Higher Education	SVQ3
6	Higher		↑ ↓		
5	Intermediate 2 Credit Standard Grade				SVQ2
4	Intermediate 1 General Standard Grade	National Certificates		National Progression Awards	SVQ1
3	Access 3 Foundation Standard Grade		↓		
2	Access 2				
1	Access 1				

- The new Skills for Work courses are National Courses available as Access, Intermediate and Higher Qualifications (SCQF levels 3 – 6).
- Ongoing work to credit rate SVQs shows that SVQ units range from SCQF level 4 to level 12. SVQs at 3 and 4 can be placed at different SCQF levels.



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SCQF vs EQF Level Comparisons

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)	European Qualifications Framework (EQF)
12	8
11	7
10/9	6
8/7	5
6	4
5	3
4	2
3	1
2	
1	



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