

Developing SCQF National Guidelines for RPL Workshop

Summary of key points from both workshop sessions

- Participants expressed a great level of interest in the **cross-sectoral, collaborative approach** used to develop the SCQF RPL guidelines, which centred on a national debate. Questions were asked regarding the authorisation/coordination of the national debate and what made this approach successful in the Scottish context.
- The definition of RPL used in the guidelines and the distinction between **formative and summative recognition** (RPL for personal/career development and RPL for credit (APEL), respectively) was welcomed by participants. The emphasis on confidence –building; valuing learning by self and others; and identifying further learning opportunities was agreed by participants to a useful and important function of RPL. Viewing RPL as a two stage process, based on this distinction between formative and summative recognition, was considered helpful and may enable harder to reach learners to engage in the process of recognition.
- The idea of **national framework for RPL**, which recognised sectoral differences but utilised common core principles and common mechanisms for support and recognition, was viewed positively. There was interest expressed by one of the participants in basing the approach to a national framework for RPL in Greece on the Scottish, SCQF approach.
- The potential use of the proposed **Validpass** tool to underpin the formative recognition process, which was also described as an affirmation process, was discussed. Participants found the idea of notional levelling or mapping of learning within the SCQF as part of an educational guidance or personal /professional development process interesting. The idea of explicitly linking the Validpass tool to the proposed **European Qualifications Framework** and using it as a means of mapping learning onto the EQF through reference to the EQF level descriptors was briefly explored. It was considered that by using a common European reference point this may facilitate mobility by making the outcomes of informal learning more transparent.
- The potential linking of Validpass and the RPL model developed through the Socrates-funded **Valuing Learning through Experience (VALEX) project** was discussed. (www.valex-apel.com)

- The issue of how to address the **quality assurance of RPL** processes within institutions was raised. The embedding of RPL processes within the existing quality assurance mechanisms and assessment procedures of an institution and designing programmes which enable more flexible routes to the gaining of credit was discussed. Reference to the **Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)** was made and the url for the website was provided (www.qaa.ac.uk), along with that of the SCQF (www.scqf.org.uk) .
- The **lack of central funding to support RPL** provision within institutions was discussed. Current APEL/RPL activity in the UK is still patchy. Developing **more resource-efficient approaches to support and assessment** (e.g., using group/on-line approaches to support and moving away from portfolio mechanisms of evidence gathering to more streamlined ones such as reflective accounts; profiling and structured interviews) was considered a useful development. The **use of RPL modules**, like those developed at Glasgow Caledonian University through the Socrates-funded VALEX project, give the learner credit for the process of compiling a claim and enable resources to be attached to the support and assessment process. It also enables fee waivers for those students that are eligible.
- **Parity of Esteem** .The importance of a single credit currency for both vocational and academic qualifications was emphasised, as well as the point that credit gained through RPL is of the same value as credit gained through formal learning.

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