

RPL in Higher Education

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Overview

- Context: a changing landscape
- Supporting HE development in the HE sector
- QAA/Universities Scotland HEI RPL Network
- Streamlining RPL Support and Assessment processes
- European RPL Network
- QAA WBL Forum
- Developing and supporting the curriculum QET
- Discussion: supporting engagement in RPL development and links to WBL and wider HE developments

Context: A changing landscape

- **Role of HE in supporting Scotland's economic growth**
- **Scottish Government/Scottish Funding Council requirements for universities:**
- **Funding drivers:**
- **Funding challenges**
- **White Paper: 'Putting Learners at the Centre: Delivering our ambitions for post-16 Education**

Supporting RPL development in the HE sector in Scotland

- **QAA/Universities Scotland RPL HEI Network**
- **SCQF RPL Network**
- **European RPL Network (Bologna Follow Up Working Group)**
- **Prior Learning International Research Centre (PLIRC)**
- **Link to QAA Work-based Learning Forum**
- **Developing and Supporting the Curriculum Quality Enhancement Theme**

QAA /Universities Scotland HEI RPL Network

Purpose:

- Vehicle for **sharing practice and research** in RPL to assist development in **Scottish sector**
- **Raise awareness** of developments in the rest of the UK, Europe and internationally
- Link into **post-Bologna** developments via European RPL Network
- Link into **other RPL developments** via SCQF RPL Network and international research community e.g. PLIRC
- Link into other HE developments eg via QAA WBL Forum and new Quality Enhancement Theme

QAA /Universities Scotland HEI RPL Network

Programme of Work 2011-12

- **Developing guidelines for streamlining RPL processes**
- **Researching the effectiveness of RPL from the learner perspective**
- **Raising the visibility of the network**
- **Developing and supporting the Curriculum Enhancement Theme**

Streamlining RPL Support and Assessment processes

Purpose: To support the Scottish HEI RPL Network in the development of guidelines for the streamlining of RPL support and assessment for the HE sector

Timescale: CRLL commissioned by QAA to undertake the project between April and July 2011

Approach: 3 Phases

1. On-line scoping study
2. Web-based survey
3. Follow up telephone interviews

Outcomes: Scoping study (separate resource)

- Recommendations for HEIs: key areas of development and institutional enablers
- Typology to support development of guidelines

Aims and Outcomes

Phase 1 - On-line Scoping Study:

- To identify key features of RPL processes within the Scottish and UK sectors and beyond.
- Framework to compare differing models of RPL: initial guidance; support processes; assessment processes; monitoring, evaluation & QA processes
- 56 examples of practice (40 HEIs) collated
- Analysis to identify key trends/features: percentages of incidences of practice

Aims and Outcomes

Phase 2: Web-based survey

- Scottish HEI RPL Network and other UK and international Networks.
- Investigate scope and nature of RPL processes and ways in which practice could be streamlined and enhanced – focus on RPL initial guidance; support and assessment mechanisms
- 55 responses -response rate 33%
 - 36% of respondents from Scotland; 22% other UK HEIs; 42% other international HEIs and organizations
- Key areas of development for the sector identified:
 - Enhanced use of technology
 - CPD for staff
 - Enhanced monitoring, evaluation and tracking

Aims and Outcomes

Phase 3 - follow up telephone interviews:

- To explore particular examples of practice in more detail
- 6 Semi-structured interviews with sample of respondents (Scotland; England; Canada, US)
- Focus on three areas:
 - Use on online technology for RPL support, guidance and assessment processes
 - Processes for RPL claims made against learner-defined outcomes/NQF level descriptors
 - Monitoring and evaluation of use and impact of RPL

Outcomes of Web-survey

In what ways could RPL processes be streamlined and enhanced?

Develop enhanced information on RPL and more training/awareness/recognition and CPD opportunities for staff

Design of programmes and learning outcomes to facilitate recognition /assessment of prior informal learning

Central institutional database for RPL

Greater levels of institutional coordination of process

Centralised evaluation process for staff and learners

More extensive use of VLEs and e-portfolios to supplement individual /group support

Peer support from previous Claimants

Outcomes of Web-survey

In what ways could RPL processes be streamlined and enhanced?

‘RPL works best when staff using it are well-informed and supportive of the purpose of the process. We try to regard RPL as ‘normal’ practice and not something set aside for a central service to deal with’

Conclusions and Recommendations

In developing an effective system of RPL, institutions need to address the following key issues:

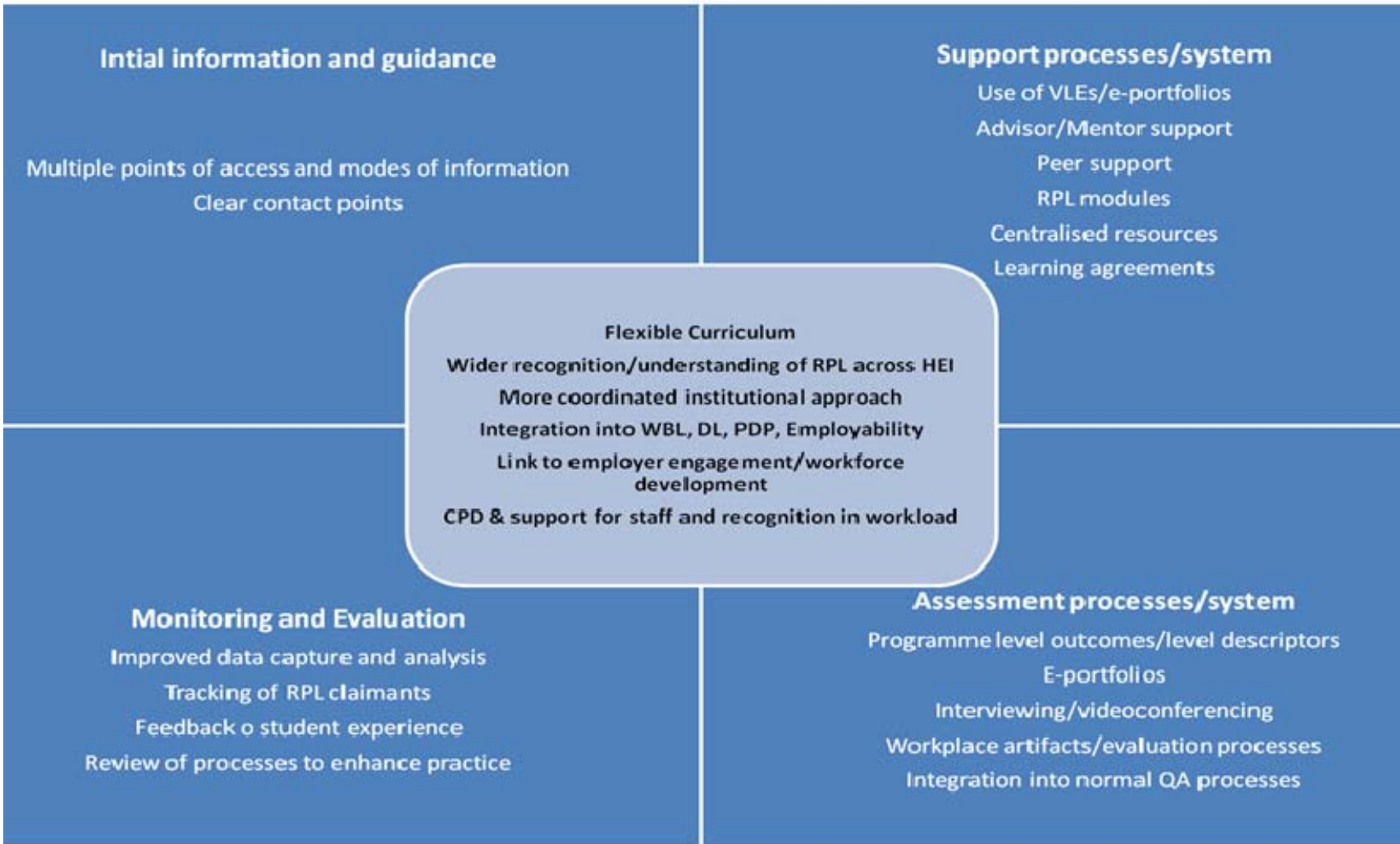
- Operating a centralised or devolved model;
- Developing policy and guidelines;
- Designing a flexible curriculum;
- Enhancing initial information and guidance processes;
- Developing enhanced support systems/processes;
- Developing enhanced assessment systems/processes;
- Enhancing support and CPD of staff; and
- Developing enhanced monitoring and evaluation processes.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Streamlining and enhancing RPL support and assessment require a set of institutional enablers related to:

- Policy and process that mainstreams and integrates RPL within admissions, learning, teaching and assessment strategies and quality assurance mechanisms;
- Curriculum design that explicitly addresses flexible modes of entry, progression and delivery;
- Clear points of contact for RPL for potential applicants, existing students and staff;
- Building staff capacity and capability, linked to the need for CPD opportunities and the increased visibility of RPL across the institution and in staff workload;
- Greater use of technology-enhanced RPL provision through VLEs and e-portfolios as part of a blended learning approach
- Integration of RPL processes within related developments such as PDP, WBL and distance learning; and
- Data gathering and analysis to ensure effective monitoring, tracking and evaluation as part of a process of reviewing and enhancing practice.

Typology/proposed key features of guidelines



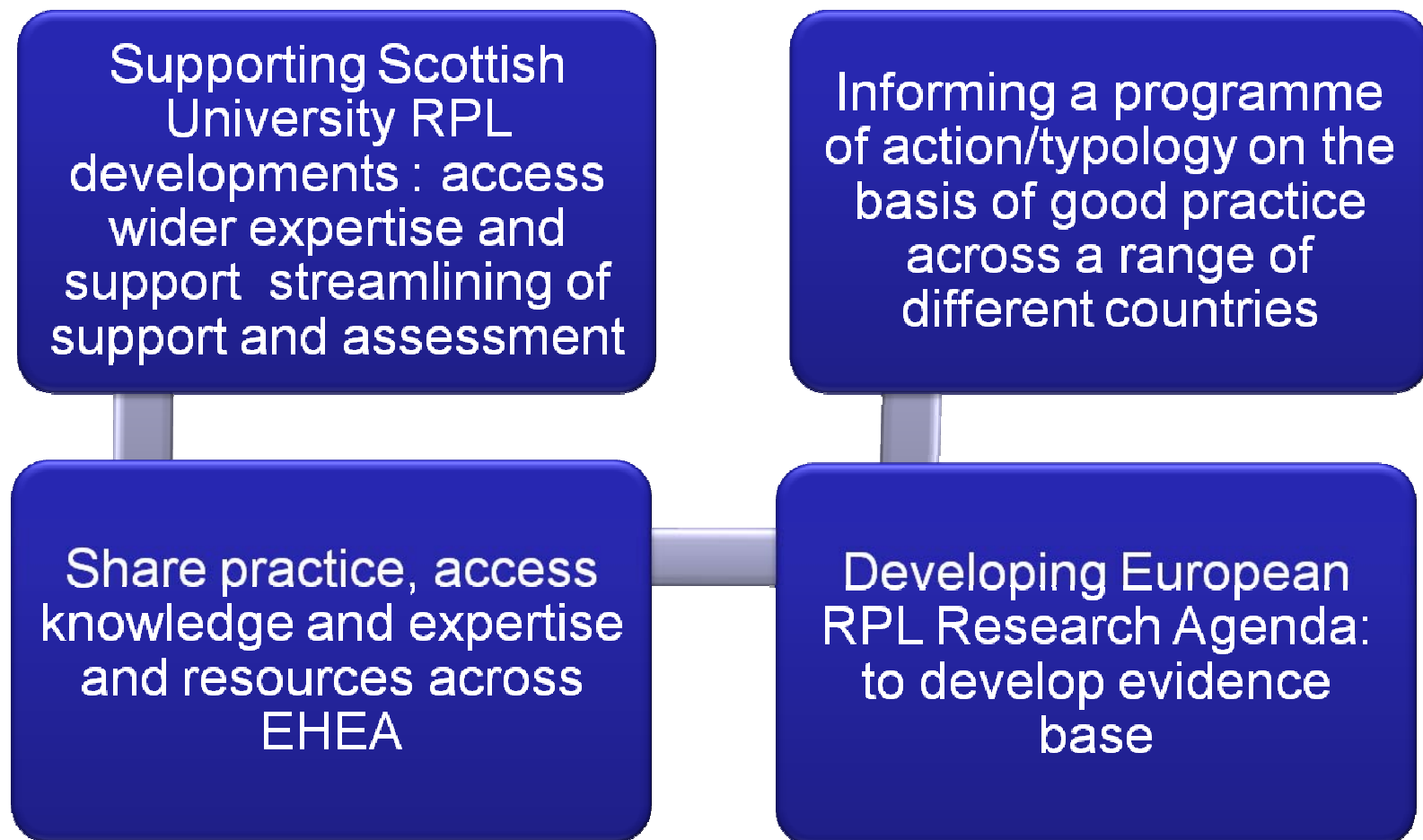
European RPL Network



European RPL Network

- **Formal status: Bologna Follow-Up Working Group**
- **Practitioner network and Steering Group**
- **Challenge to share practice and learn over different cultural and geographical boundaries with no money!**
- **Dating profile**
- **Face to face meetings**
- **Online discussion group**

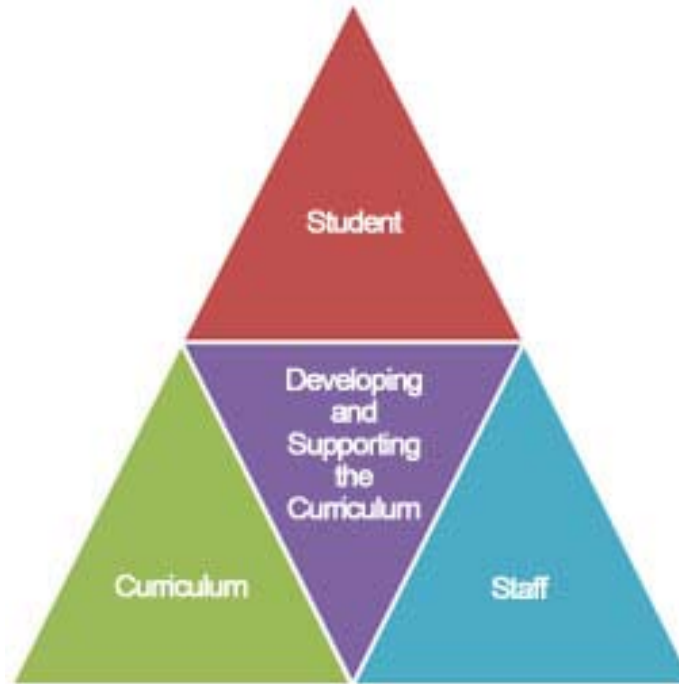
Benefits of European collaboration



QAA Scotland WBL Forum

- **“How to do it”**
- **Key areas**
 - Assessment
 - Reflective learning
 - Curriculum design
 - Working with employers
 - Supporting the WBL Student in the workplace and in HEIs
 - Staff development – in the workplace and in HEIs
 - Quality assurance

Developing and Supporting the Curriculum new Quality Enhancement Theme



Discussion

Supporting engagement with the RPL development work across the HE sector and across sector divides

Making the connection: collaboration with work-based learning developments and a more flexible, inclusive, accessible curriculum