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## **Staff training and RPL**

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**RPL and WBL Facilitator at LYIT**



# Presentation Content

- Background to RPL at LYIT
- RPL guidelines for Irish providers
- Staff Training
- Recognition of Prior **Certified** Learning
- Recognition of Prior **Experiential** Learning



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# About LYIT

- LYIT is a modern third level college based in the NW of Ireland.
- 3000 Full Time learners and 400 part time learners.
- Courses in Business, Computing, Engineering, Tourism & Culinary, Retail, Design, Law, Nursing and Science



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# Background to RPL at LYIT

- 2006 LYIT Participated in a government funded project aimed at **recognising Learning in the Workplace.**
- Specifically the project involved recognising with a third level qualification (e.g. single subject certificate) learning achieved in **IT and Business** that occurred in the individual's personal life or in the work environment.



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# Background to RPL at LYIT

- LYIT identified generic skills such as IT, Communications, Sales, Marketing, HRM, Office Admin, Managing People and Customer Care that local employees could seek accreditation for (provided they successfully completed a RPL portfolio demonstrating their skills).



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# Background to RPL at LYIT

- The RPL facilitator would visit local companies and invite employees to get their skills accredited with a single subject certificate in e.g. IT, Customer care etc...
- See Sample Customer Care assignment and Portfolio...
- For the first year the emphasis mainly on promoting RPL to employees (not students)
- Now employees and LYIT learners.



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# First Steps

- Appointed a dedicated RPL / WBL Facilitator
- Developed RPL **Policy**
- Provided staff **training**
- Promoted RPL to local employers that had employees with IT and Business skills seeking qualifications.



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# Background to RPL in Ireland

- The Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999 in Ireland established the **right for a learner to get recognition for prior learning**.
- The Act reflects a national commitment to widening participation to education and is supported by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (**NQAI**) guidelines.
- NQAI has responsibility for developing and maintaining the National Framework of Qualifications



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# Background to RPL in Ireland

NQAI believe:

- Learning occurs in many contexts that include formal education, work, involvement in social and community activities, or learning through life experience generally.
- In order to enable the individual to learn throughout life, **equal value** should be given to all these forms of learning regardless of source, how it is achieved or when in life it is achieved.



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# Background to RPL in Ireland

- A major objective of the National Framework of Qualifications is to recognise all learning achievements.
- It aims to do this by supporting the development of alternative pathways to qualifications (or awards) and by promoting the recognition of prior learning.



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# Background to RPL in Ireland

- Recognition is a process by which prior learning is given a value. It is a means by which prior learning is formally **identified, assessed and acknowledged**.
- This makes it possible for an individual to build on learning achieved and be formally rewarded for it.



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# What can RPL be used for?

- RPL can be used for:
  - **Entry** to a programme leading to an award (Masters of Business in Innovation)
  - **Credit** towards an award or exemption from some programme requirements
  - **Eligibility** for a full award



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# Guidelines for Education Providers

- The NQAI recommend that all third level education providers would develop RPL procedures and policies that would have the following elements:
  1. Review and updating
  2. Operational approaches
  3. Assessment
  4. Applicants
  5. Communications



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# 1. Review and updating

- All third level institutions must review and update their policies and procedures regarding RPL in line with recommendations from NQAI.
- The recognition of prior learning will give **value to all learning**, no matter how that learning is achieved.
- Participation in recognition is a **voluntary** matter for the individual.



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## 2. Operational approaches

- The roles and responsibilities of those involved in the process should be **clearly set out**, for example the applicant, assessor and any other person or boards/committees in the recognition process.
- Where any **limits** are put in place on the proportion of learning that can be recognised as prior learning, these should be explicitly stated.
- The process should ensure where possible the applicant can complete the recognition in a **shorter time** than it would normally take.



# 3. Assessment

- The development and use of a **range of assessment** mechanisms should be encouraged.
- Assessment of RPL should be carried out by persons who are **competent**.
- Assessors should be given **training**



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# 4. Applicants

- Applicants should be **fully informed** of the application process, the stages within it and the range of evidence that is considered appropriate to support a claim for RPL.
- The availability of **guidance and support** to applicants in the submission of evidence for assessment will be promoted.



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# 5. Communications

- Information for learners/applicants should be clear, accessible and fit for purpose.
- Awarding bodies should promote the availability of the recognition of prior learning.



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# Staff Training and Development at LYIT

- 3 hour workshop developed for staff training delivered by RPL Facilitator.
- Over 70% of LYIT lecturers have attended one of these workshops (encouraged by head of departments).



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# Staff Training and Development at LYIT

- Workshop covered:
  - Introduction to RPL
  - NQAI Guidelines
  - LYIT policy on RPL
  - Recognition of Prior Certified Learning
  - Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning
  - Promoting RPL to employers



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# RPL Policy

## Policy should define:

- What is RPL?
- Rules and Regulations associated with RPL
  - Costs
  - Maximum credits allowed for RPL
  - Dates / times
  - Assessment procedures
- Roles and responsibilities of various parties.
- Differentiate between certified and experiential learning.



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# RPL Audiences

1. Registered Learners (Full Time and Part Time).
2. External potential learners (e.g. industry)



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# Categories of RPL

The Prior Learning can be either:

1. Prior **Certified** Learning
2. Prior **Experiential** Learning



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# Prior Certified Learning



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# Prior Certified Learning

- **Prior Certified Learning** is learning that has already been accredited by an awarding body such as HETAC, FETAC or other state recognised colleges/institutes.
- Prior certified learning can also include qualifications received abroad.
- NQAI have a service dealing with foreign qualifications



# Prior Certified Learning

- This prior learning can be **recognised** on the National Framework of Qualifications and may entitle the applicant to:
  - Admission to a programme or course of study.
  - Advanced academic standing.
  - The award of **exemptions** from some parts of a programme.
- Where prior certificated learning is the basis for RPL, the applicant is required where possible to provide the relevant syllabus and a transcript of results.



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# Assessing Prior Certified Learning

- When assessing the prior learning. consider the following:
  - Level of Prior Award in the National Framework of Qualifications (**NFQ**)
  - Comparison of learning outcomes
  - Currency of learning



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# Level of Prior Award in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)

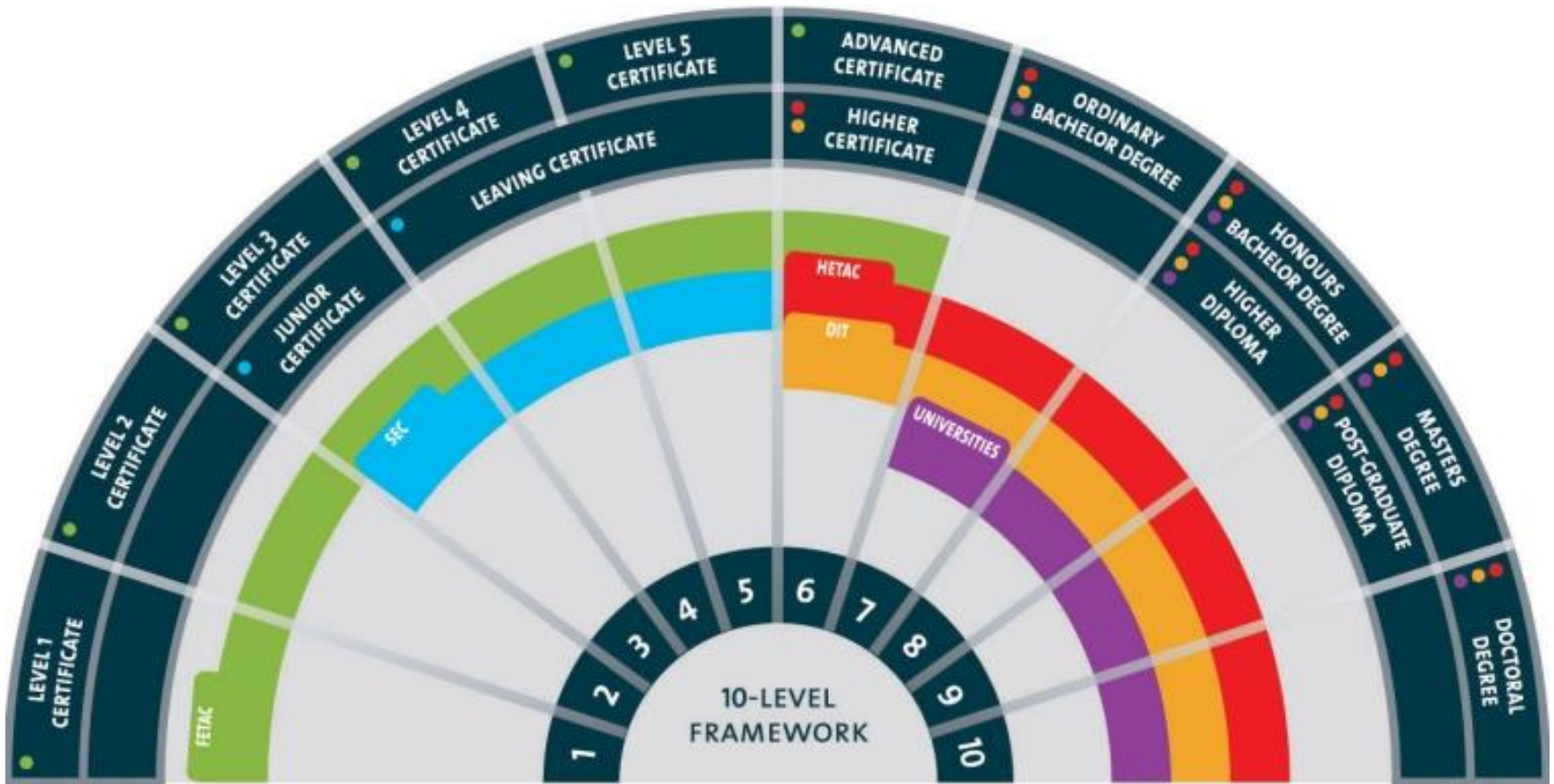
- The Prior Certified Learning which the applicant is basing his/her exemption/advanced academic standing on must be at the same level or at a higher level in the framework that the level the learner is seeking the exemption in.
- The process of recognising prior learning should maintain the standards of the National Framework of Qualifications and its awards.



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# Framework of Qualifications



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# Comparison of learning outcomes

- The assessor should compare the learning outcomes of the prior certified learning to the learning outcomes of the module(s)/programme the learner is seeking the exemption(s) in.
- If the assessor believes the learning outcomes are sufficiently similar, then an exemption may be awarded. It is at the discretion of the assessor to decide what is sufficiently similar.



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# Currency of Prior Certified Learning

- The Prior Certified Learning must have been achieved in a comparatively appropriate time frame (in some instances this may be in the last 3 years, 5 years or 10 years – dependent on the learning achieved) i.e. computing learning 10 years ago is of limited benefit today on a current programme– psychology outcomes may be more timeless.



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# Prior Certified Learning at LYIT (when seeking exemptions)

- RPL Facilitator visits each first year class in first week and explains RPL and gives out application form.
- Set a submission date e.g. October 1<sup>st</sup> Semester and February 1<sup>st</sup> Semester 2.
- If learner believes he/she entitled to exemption, they complete application form and attach details of prior qualifications to form and give to relevant lecturer to examine and sign (if exemption approved).





# Prior Certified Learning at LYIT (when seeking exemptions)

- Lecturer follows the RPL guidelines presented at workshop to examine exemption application.
- Learner returns completed form to RPL Facilitator who processes exemption.
- Each year 400 exemptions processed by RPL Facilitator.
- Learners continue to attend class until written confirmation received.



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**Learner Details:**

<b>Title (Mr / Ms.)</b>	Mr
<b>Surname</b>	Joe
<b>Forename</b>	Bloggs
<b>Student Number</b>	L000682146
<b>Email Address</b>	<a href="mailto:L0006821466@LYIT.IE">L0006821466@LYIT.IE</a>
<b>Contact Number</b>	083 22222744
<b>Which programme are you currently completing</b>	Applied Computing
<b>Year (year 1,2 or 3)</b>	1
<b>Learner Type (Full Time, Part Time or ACCS)</b>	FT
<b>Name of Module you seek exemption from (separate form for each module)</b>	Communications
<b>Details of your prior learning (name of programme and module you previously completed, date of completion etc..)</b>	BA Business Studies (I successfully completed Learner Dev and Study skills in 2009 /2010

**To be completed by Lecturer (Please Tick)**Award Exemption x Refuse Exemption Other **Reason for decision**

I compared the learning outcomes of the learner's previous studies and I am satisfied that this learning covers the learning modules of the current module.

---

Lecturer Name (Block Capitals) Ann Gallagher

Date 16/09/2010

Lecturer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**To be completed by Head of Department**

Decision made (please tick):

Award Exemption Refuse Exemption 

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL)



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# Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (when seeking exemptions)

- This involves the awarding of credit for learning from experience.
- Unusual for full time learners and not encouraged
- Used sometimes for:
  - Learners seeking entry to programmes where they don't meet the formal requirements e.g. MSc in Marketing Practice
  - Used at LYIT for single subject certificates
  - Used for exemptions in WBL programmes



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# Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (when seeking exemptions)

- In this case, the candidate must demonstrate that the learning experience has occurred by e.g. producing a **Portfolio of Evidence** to support the claim for access, exemption or credit (in some instances the assessor may decide to use an alternative method of assessment, e.g. presentation, interview or examination).



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# Learners seeking access to a programme based on RPEL

- Occasionally applicants entry on to programmes without the required prerequisite qualification.
- E.g. 60% of our current **Masters in Innovation** learners did not have the Honours Degree entry requirement.
- LYIT do accept applicants without this but with relevant industry experience and learning.



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# Learners seeking access to a programme based on RPEL

- Applicants are provided with an assessment that would allow the applicant to demonstrate he/she has acquired learning that equates to Honours Degree level.
- Assessment typically include portfolio, interview and company visit.
- Normally completed over a 2 month period.



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# RPEL

- As a general principle, credit is given for learning, not for experience per se.
- The portfolio of evidence must be written in such a way that the matching of the knowledge, skills and competencies of the module learning outcomes to the prior learning is clearly demonstrated.



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# RPEL

- The portfolio the learner has to submit will be based on the learning outcomes of the module(s)/ programme he/she seeks credits for.
- Evidence contained in the portfolio may include:
  - References
  - CV (e.g. Europass CV)
  - Job Descriptions and experiences
  - Details of any training completed
  - Certificates for qualifications, training courses etc...
  - Sample work
  - Evidence from the learner's personal life
  - Professional licenses/registrations or membership of professional organisations



# Assessing Portfolios

- The HOD will appoint a suitably qualified assessor to assess the portfolio of evidence prepared by the RPL applicant.
- As part of the assessment, the assessor may also interview the applicant.



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# Assessing Portfolios

- When assessing portfolios, it is important to consider the **currency** of the prior learning.
- It must be achieved within a suitable time frame – for example within the last five years (depending on the nature of the learning achieved).



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# Lessons Learned

- Good RPL Policy
- Training and Support
- Dedicated Resource
- Develop documents / tools such as
  - Application forms
  - Assessment forms
  - Skeleton Portfolios
- Have deadlines for students



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