QQI Delegation
RPL
Presentation Slides

SETU

28 January 2026

Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta an Oirdheiscirt
South East Technological University

setu.ie
INSPIRING FUTURES

PRESENTATION 1:

DR HELEN MURPHY, HEAD OF FACULTY EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING

SETU

RPL @ SETU

Dr Helen Murphy,

Head, Faculty Education & Lifelong Learning

28.01.26

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INSPIRING FUTURES

History and experience

Governance

Policy Development

Internal structures/people

Training and professional development

QQI
Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

www.priorlearning.ie

History and experience of RPL @ SETU

Long history in both legacy institutions of RPL

Experience of working with adult learners who present with significant professional and personal experience

Post 2000 emergent policy at EU

National policy development in HE started in the early 2000's (NQAI 2005) IT Carlow and WIT (legacy of SETU) both had policies in place by 2010

Significant national research between 2015 and 2024

SETU RPL Policy 2024

Context: RPL PRACTICE IN Higher Education in Ireland 2015 to date

Primary research among RPL practitioners in higher education institutions in Ireland conducted by ***Goggin et al. was published in 2015***.
The researchers positioned RPL as a key enabler of lifelong learning, recommendations to support a consistent and coherent approach to RPL included:

- **A national policy and strategy should be developed and implemented across higher education**
- **An agreed definition of RPL in higher education in Ireland**
- **Good practice guidelines should be developed to support practice at institutional and national levels**
- **Higher education institutions should seek to collect data in a consistent and systematic way**
- **Clarity of roles and adequate training and development for staff involved in the process**
- **The inclusion of RPL processes in a higher education continuous professional development framework**

SETU Strategic Plan & RPL Action Plan

The *Connecting for Impact SETU Strategic Plan 2023 – 2028*

Building on the strength of Lifelong Learning provision across SETU the development of an RPL policy that supports the expansion of RPL across all disciplines within the university both for admission and exemption purposes is a key aim (SETU, 2023).

SETU RPL Action Plan 2

Goal 4 Policy Enhancement

Review and update existing policies and procedures and learner information in light of the Pilot Framework for RPL in HE.

Governance of RPL @ SETU

SETU RPL Policy

SETU Academic Council

RPL Steering Committee

Faculty Examination and Programme Boards

Definition of RPL @ SETU

- Recognition of Prior Learning is a process by which prior learning is formally valued. It is a means by which prior learning is identified, assessed, and formally recognised by an educational institution as part of their modules and programmes on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).
- This makes it possible for an individual to build on learning achieved and to be rewarded for it. Learning encompasses the whole spectrum of formal, non-formal, and informal learning, these may be defined as follows:
- Formal learning takes place through programmes of study that are delivered by education providers and that are formally certified and credit bearing
- Non-formal learning takes place alongside the mainstream systems of education and training. It may be assessed but does not normally lead to formal certification. Examples of non-formal learning are learning and training activities undertaken in the workplace or in community-based learning, such as non-accredited continuous professional development.
- Informal learning takes place through life and work experience. Often, it is learning that is unintentional, and the learner may not recognise at the time of the experience that it has contributed to their knowledge, skills, and competences.

Key principles.....

1. The learner is central to the process of RPL

2. Policy, procedures, and practices of RPL are clearly documented and communicated

3.RPL is underpinned by quality assurance

4.The value of RPL is recognised and supported by all staff in SETU and its facilitation is recognised as part of the university's responsibility

Key principles.....

5. Assessment principles underpinned by Relevance, Sufficiency, Reliability, Validity and Currency in line with best practice

6.Training, support and guidance on RPL practice and procedures is available for all staff and applicants

7.Unsuccessful RPL applications may be appealed under the existing Appeals procedures of SETU

8.Double counting of credits towards different academic awards is not permitted

University supports for RPL

University Wide RPL Community of Practice

Students/learners

- Certificate in Study Skills & RPL
- Micro-credential RPL Portfolio Development

Staff

- RPL Digital Badge
- Post Graduate modules on RPL
- Micro-credential on RPL assessment

Plus a range of informal and non-formal training events and supports across various SETU campuses

RPL Development in SETU

In progress

Faculty RPL Advisors

Faculty RPL Champions

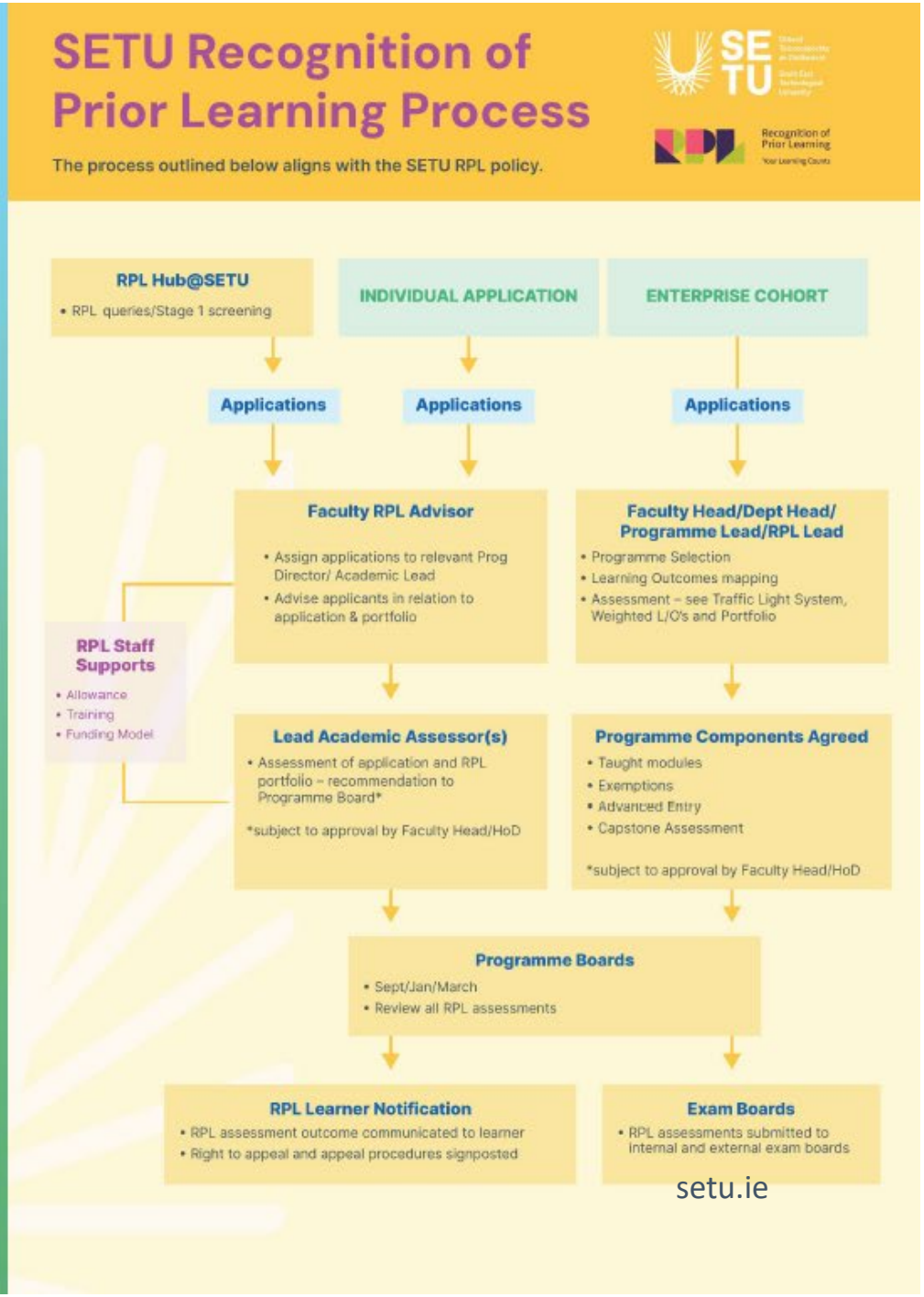
RPL Central Hub for applications

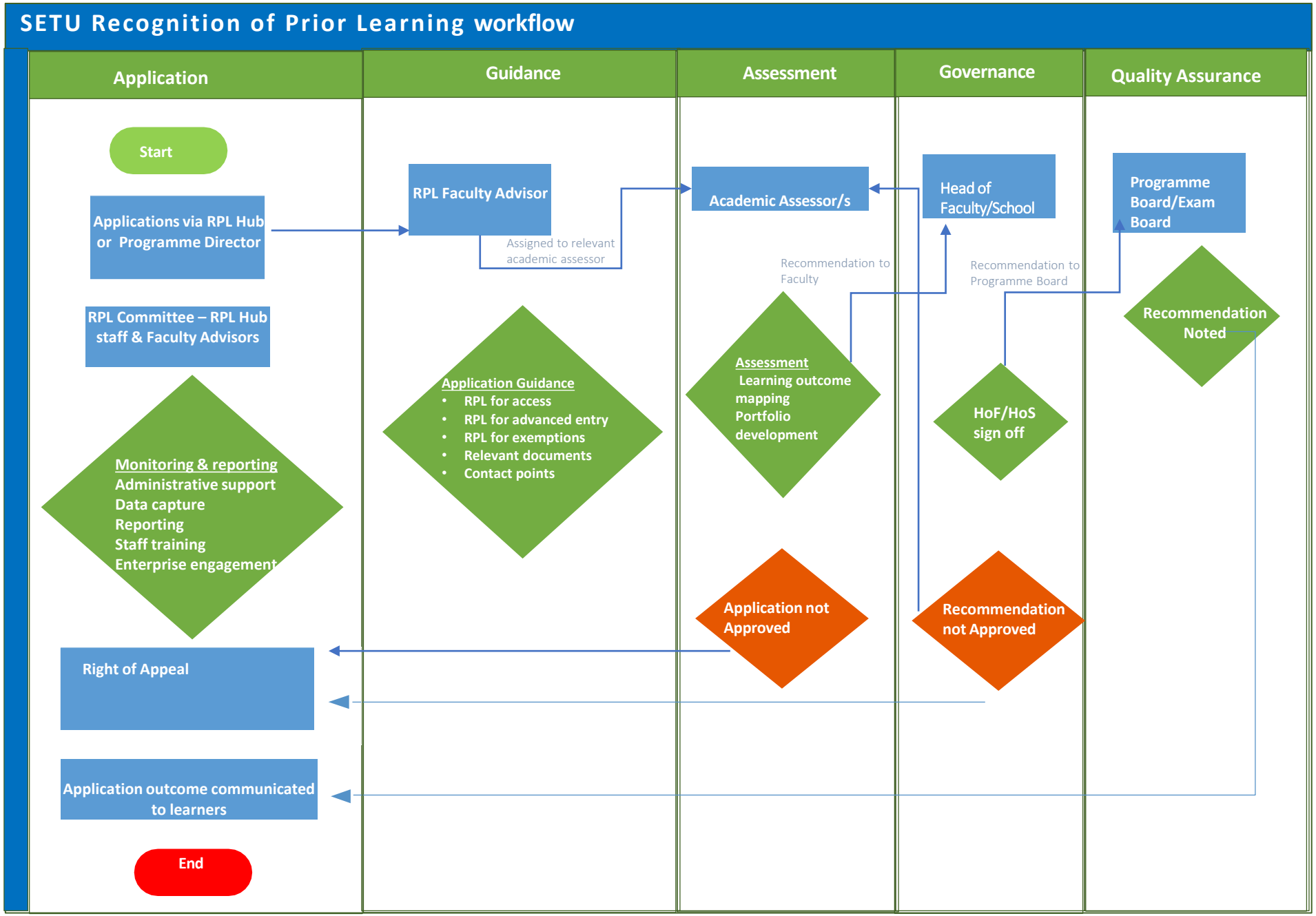
National tracking system connected to Student Information System in HE

SETU RPL Process Map

Implementation Stage – Key aspects

- RPL Hub
- RPL Faculty Advisors
- RPL Committee
- Individual Applications
- Enterprise Cohort Applications
- RPL Supports




SETU Recognition of Prior Learning workflow
Application
Guidance
Assessment
Governance
Quality Assurance
Start
Applications via RPL Hub or Programme Director
RPL Committee – RPL Hub staff & Faculty Advisors
Monitoring & reporting
Administrative support
Data capture
Reporting
Staff training
Enterprise engagement
RPL Faculty Advisor
Assigned to relevant academic assessor
Application Guidance
RPL for access
RPL for advanced entry
RPL for exemptions
Relevant documents
Contact points
Academic Assessor/s
Recommendation to Faculty
Assessment
Learning outcome mapping
Portfolio development
Application not Approved
Head of Faculty/School
Recommendation to Programme Board
HoF/HoS sign off
Recommendation not Approved
Programme Board/Exam Board
Recommendation Noted
Right of Appeal
Application outcome communicated to learners
End

Thank you!

Questions?

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INSPIRING FUTURES

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South East Technological University

PRESENTATION 2:

ANNE MEANEY, HEAD OF EXTENDED CAMPUS

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) SETU

Certified and Uncertified Learning

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INSPIRING FUTURES

Collaborations at South East Technological University (SETU)

Presentation outline:

- **Collaborations**
- **Defence Forces**
- **Case Study-RPL**
- **Testimonials**

SETU engages in collaborations, including:

Industry Partnerships

European Consortium Projects

Community Education

These collaborations show SETU's commitment to innovation and better educational outcomes.

Extended Campus collaborations: supporting organisations with bespoke learning & development through work based and prior learning.

Collaborative Partners

daa

LEINSTER

LASNTG

GAA

LloydsPharmacy

Óglaigh na hÉireann
DEFENCE FORCES IRELAND

Stobart Air

OBERSTOWN CHILDREN DETENTION CAMPUS
CARE
EDUCATION
HEALTH
WELLBEING

The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport

IAA
ÚDARÁS EITLÍOCHTA NA hÉIREANN
IRISH AVIATION AUTHORITY

Aer Lingus

NATIONAL AMBULANCE SERVICE IRELAND

DUBLIN FIRE BRIGADE

NORTHERN IRELAND FIRE & RESCUE

RYANAIR

An Bord Um Chúnamh Dlíthiúil
Legal Aid Board
Providing access to justice since 1979

Collaboration with the Irish Defence Forces

The organisation seeks "...to ensure…that members of the Permanent Defence Forces have qualifications which will enhance their job prospects on leaving the organisation".

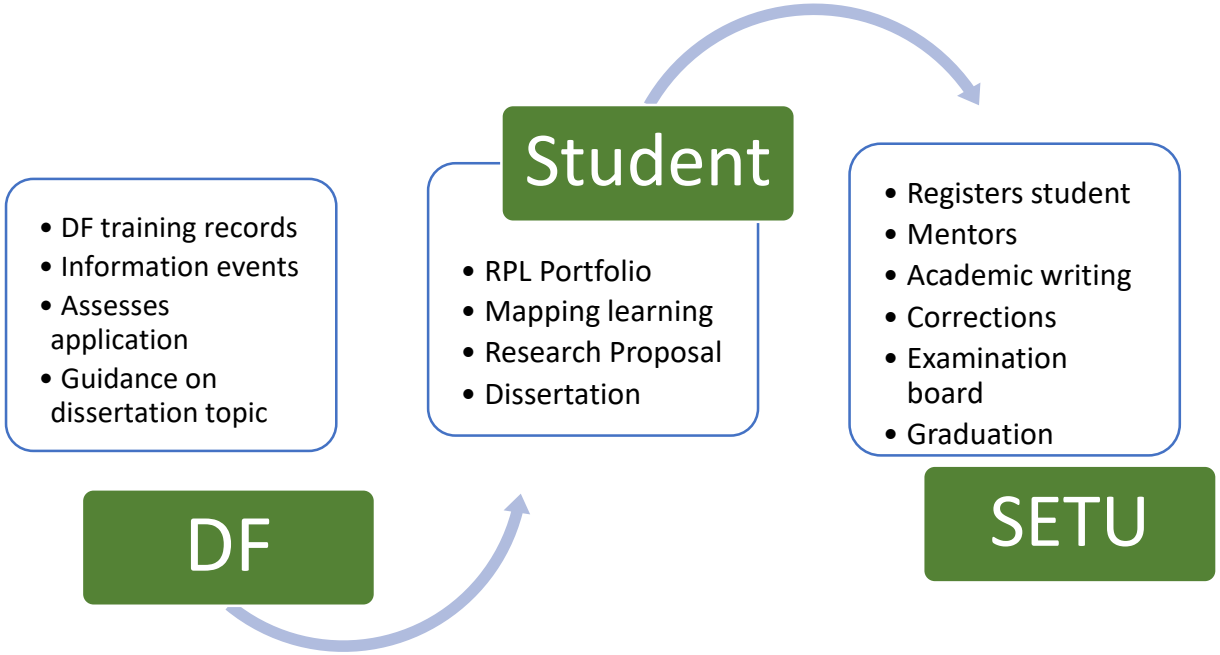
"All personnel will be provided with the opportunity for personal development and associated professional experience in order to realise their full potential during their service in the Defence Forces."

- 2012 Working together
- Programmes up to Masters level
  - **Leadership Management Defence Studies**

Case study:

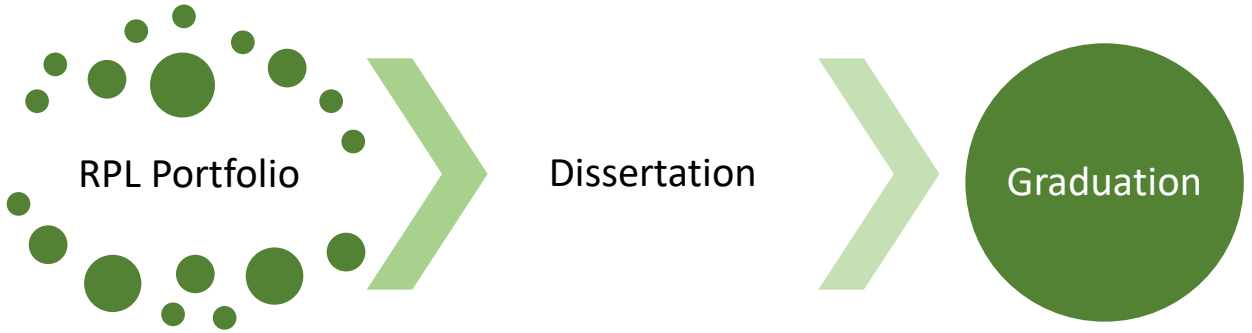
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) & the Irish Defence Forces

- Pre – 2012
- Qualifying criteria
- Pathways
- Selection of participants
- How it works
- Structures
- Supports DF/SETU
- Resources



Case study:

RPL & Irish Defence Forces



Demonstrate experience against the **Learning Outcomes** of 3 programmes; Formal learning; Informal learning; Mentor; Supports; Independent assessor

Research methods; Reflects role in Leadership; Approval; Supervisor; Dissertation Handbook; Supports; Academic Writing

Defence Forces conferring ceremony - regardless of status in organisation

Student Numbers

Course Code	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021		2022		2023		2024		2025	
CW_EDLMD_C	144	864	192	327	299	579	354	446	201	195		318		325		389		502	
CW_EDLMD_D	31	3	42	3	n/a	46	1	0	12	18		30	7	40	9	25	9	60	4
CW_EDLMD_R	33	52	58	127	113	68	178	70	10	20	1	30	6	26	5	70	5	70	6
CW_EDLML_D	20	20	37	17	40	4	17	23	12	15	1	3	7	23	7	30	6	23	10
CW_EDCTM_M	n/a	n/a	14	0	7	0	3	10	8	9		7		6		8		8	
CW_EDMEM_M	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	0	7	10	5	6		5		7		6		5	
CW_EDMEM_E	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0		0		0		0	
CW_EDWOM_M	n/a	n/a	n/a	9	15	6	4	7	4	0		5		0		0		8	
CW_TSICS_U	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	12	14	n/a	20	n/a	18		n/a		16		n/a		18	
	228	939	343	489	492	717	564	586	252	281		398		443		528		694	

Testimonials

Evidence & Assessment

Outcomes & Decisions

- *"RPL recognised my Defence Forces experience, giving me access to the LMDS programme and a qualification that supports my career progression."*

"RPL meant I didn't have to start from the beginning. My previous experience and work experience were acknowledged, allowing me advanced entry into the programme. This saved time and made the learning more relevant and motivating."

"The RPL process was fair and supportive. It recognised the skills I had developed on the job, even though I didn't meet the standard entry criteria. Completing the programme has increased my confidence and opened up new professional opportunities."

Student:

Mr Kevin Farrell BBS (Hons) in Aviation Management

https://youtu.be/6Mu0V1fWNys

RPL For Enterprise - Featuring SETU and the Irish Defence Forces

RPL in action

ASPEN SKI

PRESENTATION 3:

DR GINA NOONAN, HEAD OF CENTRE FOR ACADEMIC PRACTICE

‘Charged with Experience: ESB’s RPL Journey into Teaching and Learning’

Dr Gina Noonan,

Head of Centre for Academic Practice

Programme Director for MA in Teaching and Learning

Email: gina.noonan@setu.ie

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INSPIRING FUTURES

Energy for generations

QQI Event - SETU

Wednesday 28.01.26

Context of this Cohort

Setting the Context

- Electricity Supply Board (ESB) – Ireland's leading energy provider, over 8,000 employees
- ESB Networks Training Centre (NTC) in Portlaoise
- Training includes:

i. ESB Staff Training

ii. External Parties

iii. Apprenticeship Programmes

ESB and SETU

April 2025:

SETU and ESB Networks Training announced a new collaboration aimed at enhancing the energy sector in Ireland.

Key aspects of the collaboration

Focus on:

- ***Development of an SETU-accredited training programme*** in Electrical Network Operations.
- ***Access to vital infrastructure***, including high-voltage substations, will provide learners from both organisations with invaluable, hands-on experience in real-world environments.
- ***Support colleagues*** in the area of ***pedagogical practice*** to enhance the overall learner experience.

Focus on Pedagogical Practice

"Our upskilling programme will be tailored to enhance the teaching and learning skills of ESB Networks instructors, fostering a culture of teaching excellence within the organisation. Alongside this will be the creation of a strong community of practice, to facilitate knowledge-sharing and collaboration. It will be comprised from a network of electrical lecturing staff from SETU, and instructors and subject matter experts from ESB Networks' Training Centre."

Anne Meaney, SETU's Head of Extended Campus.

Identifying the inst nee

CW_HRTLF_A
NFQ Level 9 (10 ECTS)

Certificate in
Teaching & Learning 1 (Foundation)

Overview

The aim of this module is to provide the participant with the necessary introductory skills to evaluate current learning theories and teaching practices within higher and further education. It seeks to help the learner explore pedagogy and digital pedagogy in order to develop their own teaching practice, whilst recognising that this practice will be informed by contemporary changes in education and society in general. The module will encourage the participant to begin to interrogate the scholarship of teaching and learning, and identify how this research scholarship can enhance their own teaching practice. The module will encourage reflective practice within the participant's own teaching environment in order to facilitate continual professional development and to support a contribution to the scholarship of teaching and learning through the communication of ideas and practices to peers.

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proaches within higher and/or further
education landscape in Ireland.
appropriate teaching, learning and

es to support teaching, learning and

Entry Requirements

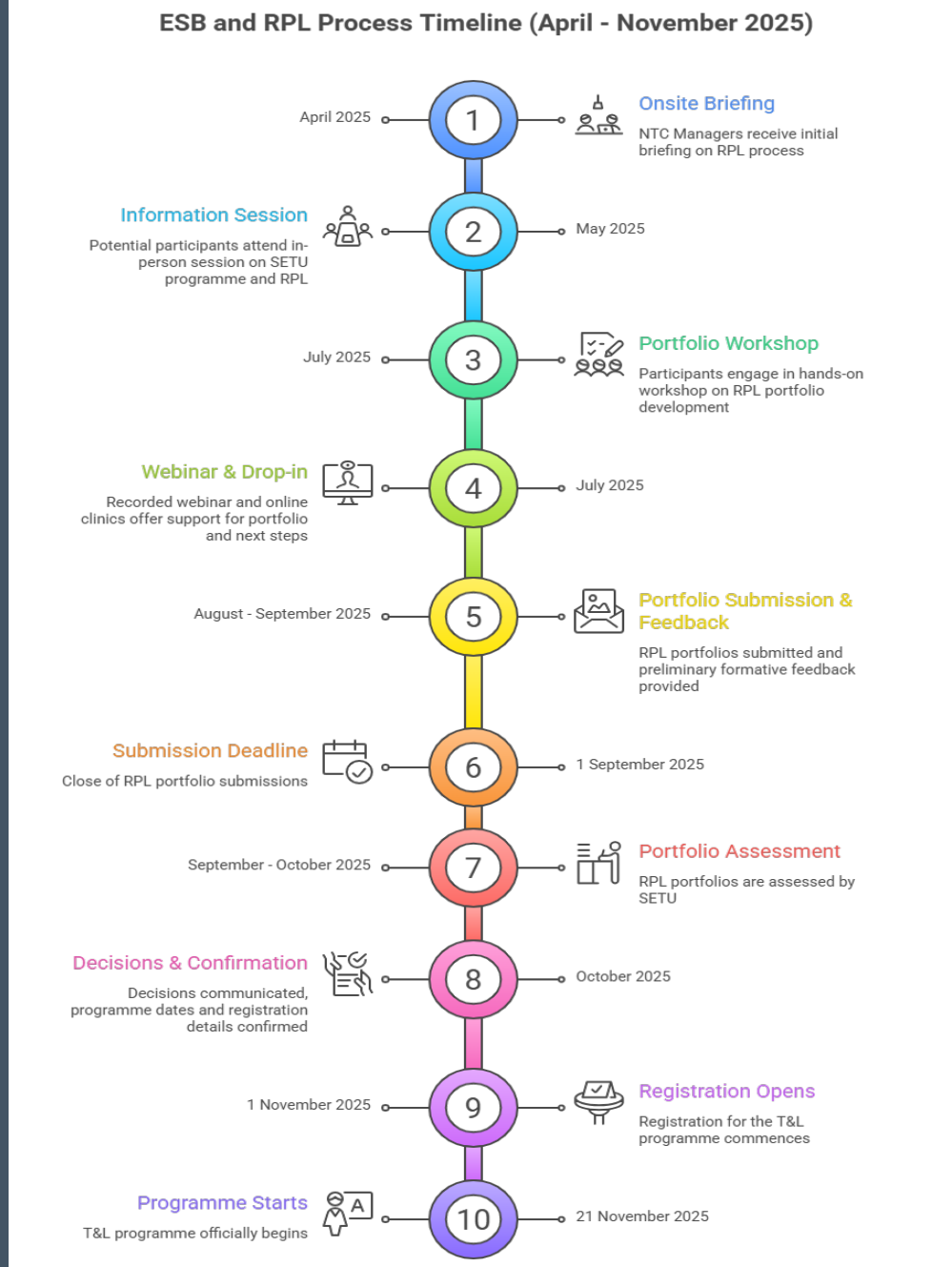
As this is a level 9 programme, applicants must hold a minimum of a level 8 Honours degree or equivalent award.

All applicants will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The Faculty of Lifelong Learning reserves the right to require applicants to attend for interview to determine suitability for the programme.

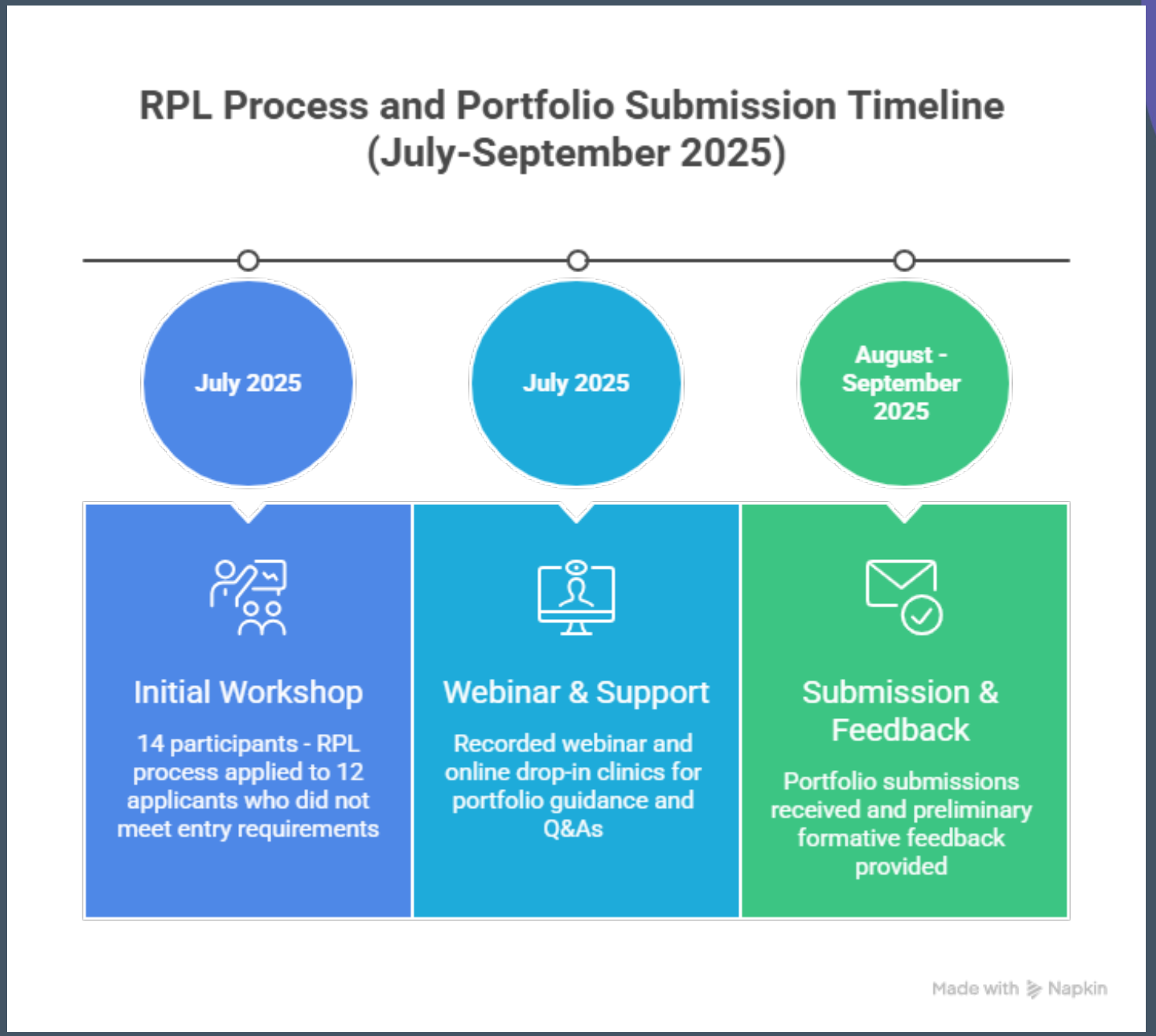
Duration: 8 sessions
Day: Tuesdays and Fridays
Delivery: Blended
Start Date: September 2024
Fees: €670 (free or subsidised for SETU staff)
Facilitated by: Teaching and Learning Centre, Carlow

RPL Process and Portfolio

The 10 Steps in the RPL journey



Spotlighting Steps 3-5

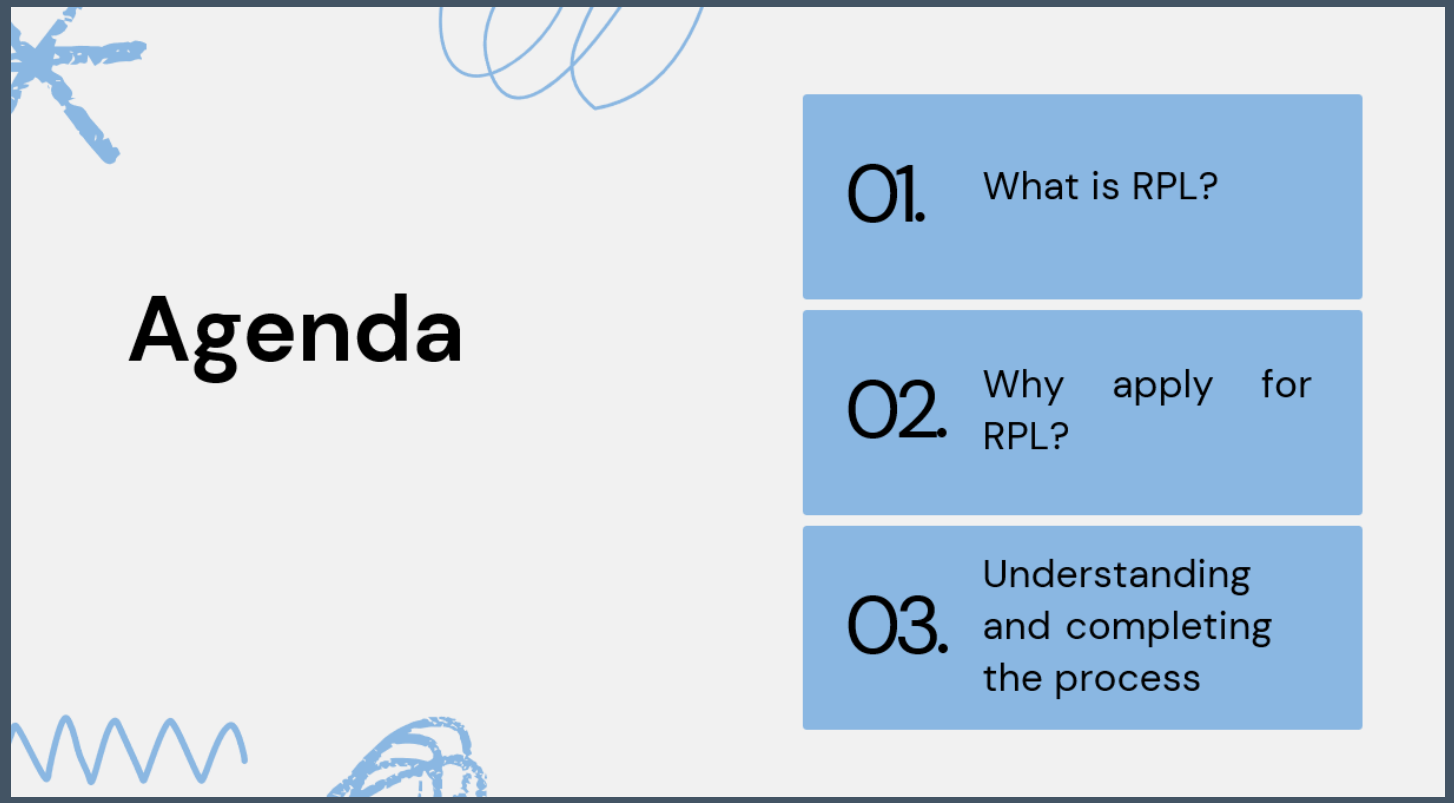


Initial Workshop

Familiarisation Process

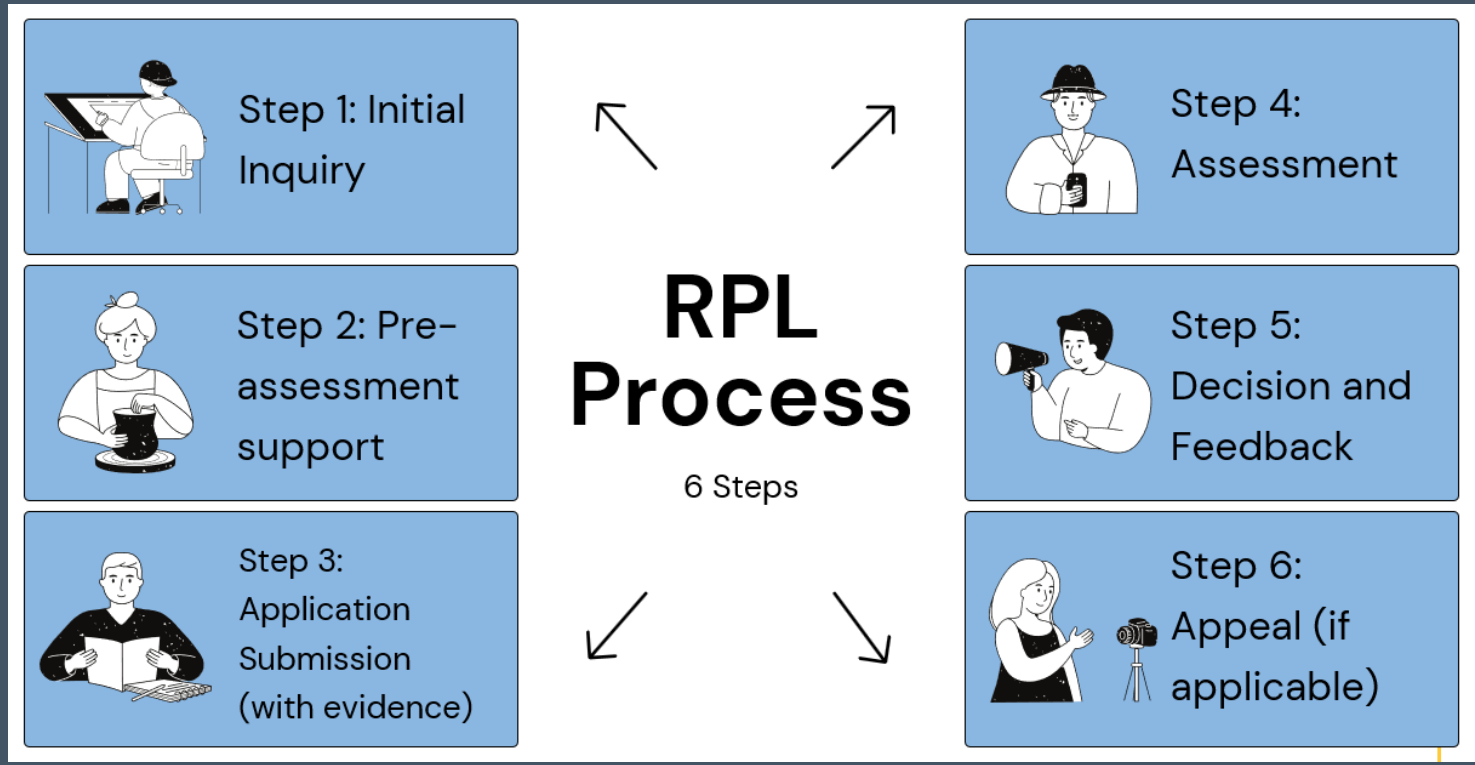
Initial Workshop

Familiarisation with concept and process

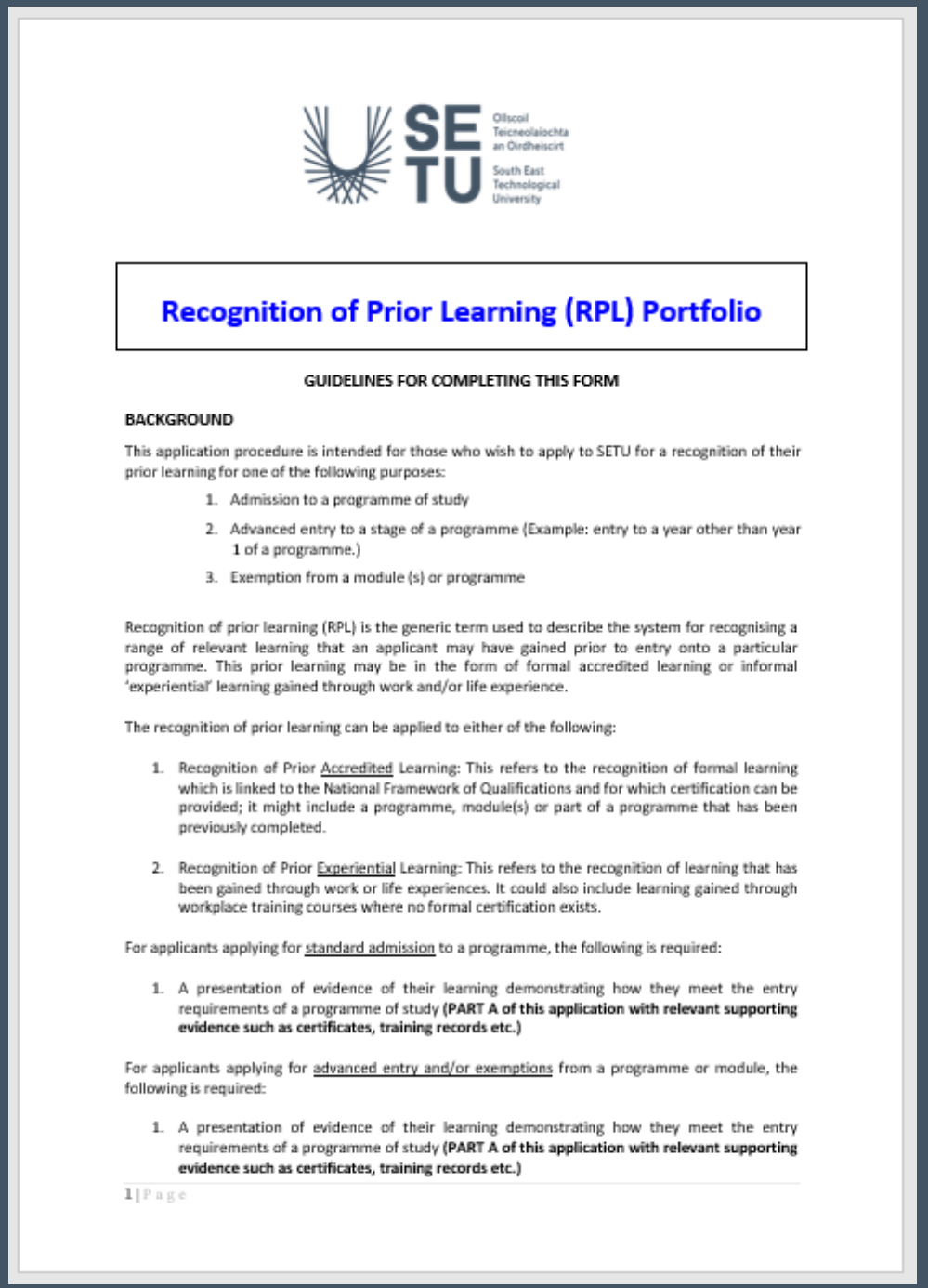


Initial Workshop

Familiarisation with the Process



Familiarisation with the Guidance Documentation



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South East Technological University

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Portfolio

GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETING THIS FORM

BACKGROUND

This application procedure is intended for those who wish to apply to SETU for a recognition of their prior learning for one of the following purposes:

1. Admission to a programme of study
2. Advanced entry to a stage of a programme (Example: entry to a year other than year 1 of a programme.)
3. Exemption from a module (s) or programme

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is the generic term used to describe the system for recognising a range of relevant learning that an applicant may have gained prior to entry onto a particular programme. This prior learning may be in the form of formal accredited learning or informal 'experiential' learning gained through work and/or life experience.

The recognition of prior learning can be applied to either of the following:

1. Recognition of Prior Accredited Learning: This refers to the recognition of formal learning which is linked to the National Framework of Qualifications and for which certification can be provided; it might include a programme, module(s) or part of a programme that has been previously completed.

2. Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning: This refers to the recognition of learning that has been gained through work or life experiences. It could also include learning gained through workplace training courses where no formal certification exists.

For applicants applying for standard admission to a programme, the following is required:

1. A presentation of evidence of their learning demonstrating how they meet the entry requirements of a programme of study **(PART A of this application with relevant supporting evidence such as certificates, training records etc.)**

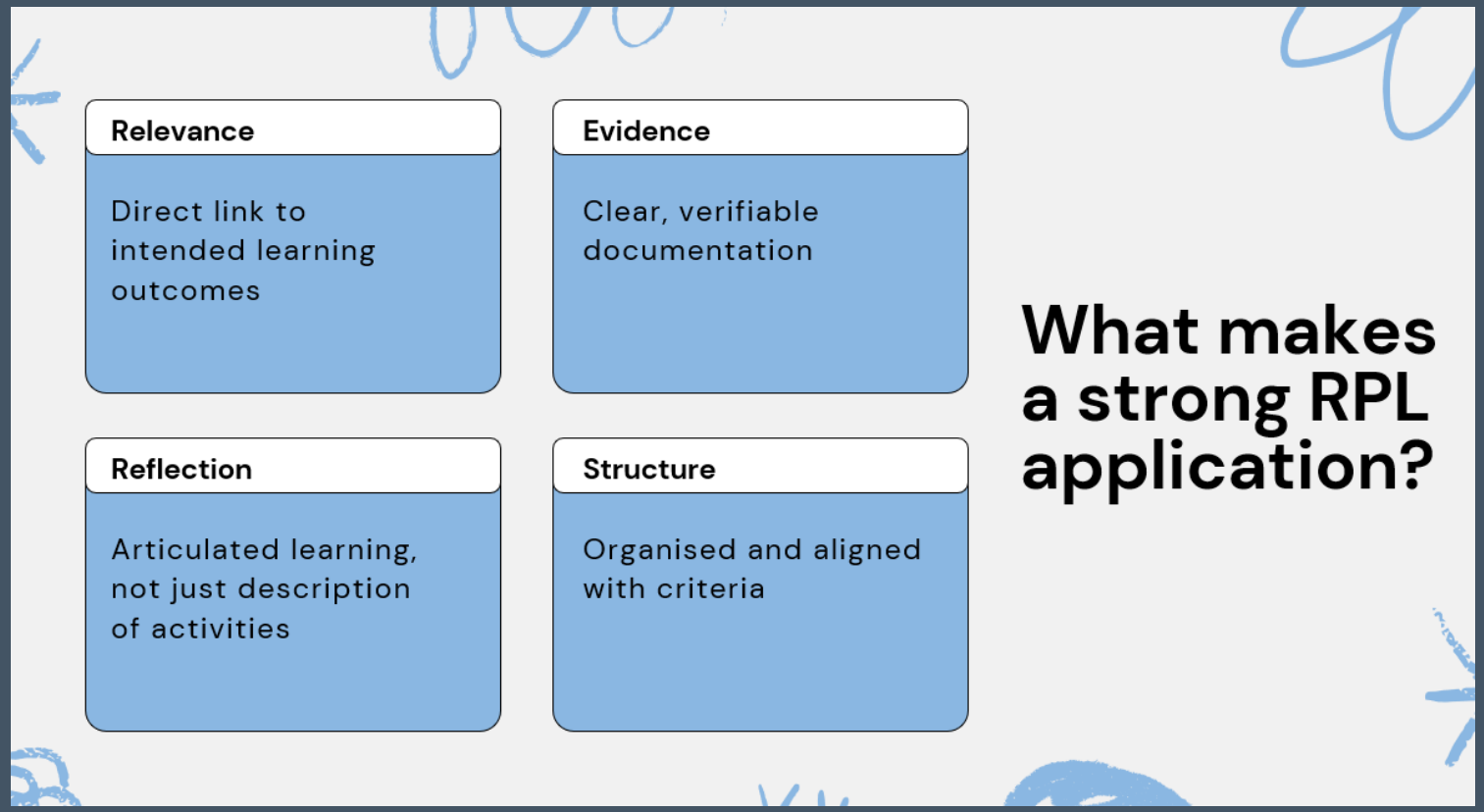
For applicants applying for advanced entry and/or exemptions from a programme or module, the following is required:

1. A presentation of evidence of their learning demonstrating how they meet the entry requirements of a programme of study **(PART A of this application with relevant supporting evidence such as certificates, training records etc.)**

1 | Page

Initial Workshop

Familiarisation with the Application

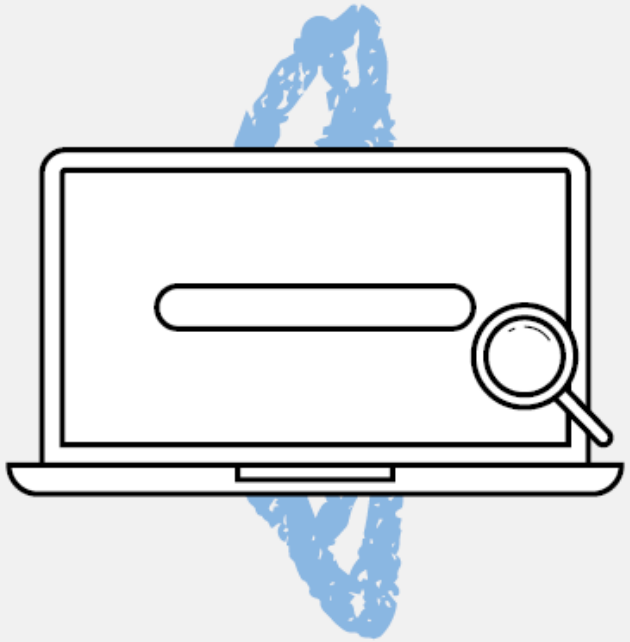


Initial Workshop

Familiarisation with the Evidence

Initial Workshop

Familiarisation with the Process



Mapping to LOs

- Explain how prior learning matches the learning outcomes of the module/programme.
- Include a visual or matrix to illustrate

Initial Workshop

Familiarisation with the Process

Matrix Example

Module Learning Outcome	Prior Learning Evidence	Explanation
e.g. Analyse data using SPSS	Completed workplace project from July-Oct 2024	Attached project report, reflection on data analysis skills used

Sample RPL Portfolio

8. Other Information

USE THIS PAGE TO OUTLINE YOUR REASONS FOR COMPLETING THIS RPL OR ANY OTHER INFORMATION / EXPERIENCE THAT YOU FEEL MAY BE RELEVANT TO YOUR APPLICATION BUT IS NOT CAPTURED IN THE DOCUMENT.

I am applying for entry to the Masters in Teaching and Learning based on over 18 years of experience in the construction industry, during which I have taken on increasing responsibilities in instructing, mentoring, and supporting learning within my organisation.

Although I do not hold a formal teaching qualification, I have developed and delivered training sessions for apprentices and new hires, focusing on technical skills, safety compliance, and task planning. I have also led small-group workshops to upskill colleagues on new machinery, digital tools, and sustainable construction methods.

My learning has been hands-on, practical, and collaborative. I have learnt to adapt my communication to suit different learners, to scaffold instruction, and to provide feedback that supports growth. An example of this is when I designed a series of CPD sessions for staff that introduced the topic of sustainability in the home, as a way of informing colleagues about new practices and grants available. Through this series of sessions, I gathered information about participants' knowledge in relation to the topic, before and after the sessions, so that I could evaluate their learning and design the sessions to meet their needs.

These experiences, combined with a genuine passion for helping others succeed, have motivated me to pursue formal study. I am particularly interested in developing a theoretical understanding of pedagogy to complement my practical experience.

9. Skills and Competencies

Please give evidence/description of tasks/roles where you may have used the following skills

Presentation Skills	I've presented safety updates and weekly task briefings on site. More recently, I led a session at our internal CPD day where I introduced a new eco-conscious roofing material and shared instructional strategies, I found useful for apprentice learning. At the start of every apprentice block, I complete an induction training session with learners and present an outline of the block.
Information Technology / Computing Skills (e.g. Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) etc)	I use email, cloud storage, and spreadsheet software daily. I have also created visual aids and PowerPoint decks for training sessions, and I am familiar with digital safety reporting tools. Recently, I've begun exploring learning management systems as our company transitions to more digital onboarding. Whilst I have used a LMS as a learner myself, I have not yet engaged with one from an instructor's perspective.
Leadership	As a team lead, I support not only task completion but professional development. I assign mentoring roles, resolve interpersonal challenges, and promote a culture where learning from mistakes is encouraged. One example of this is in a position I occupied two years ago where I was tasked with completing the onboarding for a new member of staff in my unit. This involved working through operating protocols and SOPs with the new member of staff and giving them an overview of operational protocols.
Managerial	In my role as an instructor working with apprentices, I have consistently taken on managerial responsibilities, particularly in coordinating training schedules, supervising on-site learning activities, and ensuring compliance with safety regulations. While not a formal management position, I was responsible for overseeing the day-to-day progression of multiple apprentices, tracking their development, and providing feedback that informed performance reviews and certification readiness. I also managed the allocation of workshop resources, ensuring that tools, materials, and space were appropriately scheduled and maintained for training purposes. In a previous role as a senior tradesperson, I was tasked with leading small teams on project sites, which involved delegating tasks, mentoring junior staff, and liaising with supervisors to meet deadlines and quality standards.
Problem-Solving	I often deal with learners struggling to grasp technical concepts or practical tasks. In these cases, I try different instructional strategies — breaking down the task, using analogies, or demonstrating multiple times — until the learner gains confidence and understanding.
Report-Writing	As part of my role instructing apprentices, I have been regularly involved in writing reports that document learner progress, attendance, and skills acquisition. These reports are used to inform internal reviews and contribute to official assessments for apprenticeship certification. I have developed structured progress evaluations that include both qualitative feedback and quantitative tracking of competencies. In addition to learner-focused reporting, I have also prepared health and safety compliance reports, equipment maintenance logs, and incident summaries, all of which require accuracy, clarity, and adherence to institutional or regulatory templates. In my previous role as a senior tradesperson, I was responsible for compiling site completion reports, which included summaries of daily outputs, delays, risk assessments, and materials usage for submission to project supervisors and clients. These experiences have strengthened my ability to communicate technical and instructional information in a clear, structured, and professional manner — a skill I believe is highly transferable to academic and reflective writing contexts.
Education Policy	
Research	
Critical Thinking/Evaluation	I regularly evaluate the effectiveness of our in-house training. After delivering sessions, I seek informal feedback from colleagues and reflect on what worked, what didn't, and how to improve. For example, I adjusted my instruction style when I realised some staff preferred visual aids and hands-on practice rather than verbal instruction. Every year, I am also obliged as part of my position to develop my own personal development plan (pdp). This provides me with the opportunity to reflect on my own practice and to identity areas of professional competence that I would like to develop as part of the following year's work. This exercise allows me to self-evaluate my own performance against previously agreed benchmarks and to identity areas for self-development.
Curriculum Design and Development	While working as a senior foreman, I co-developed a six-week induction plan for new apprentices. This included sequencing tasks from foundational to advanced, ensuring alignment with industry standards. I trialled and adapted this content over time based on feedback and observation of learner performance.

Initial Workshop

Advice Sharing

Advice and Avoiding Pitfalls

- Talk your learning through with someone who is not familiar with it
- Avoid vague descriptions ("I did a lot of work")
- Don’t just list tasks – focus on learning from them (positive and negative)
- Align evidence to each outcome
- Be concise and clear
- Write and rewrite

Initial Workshop

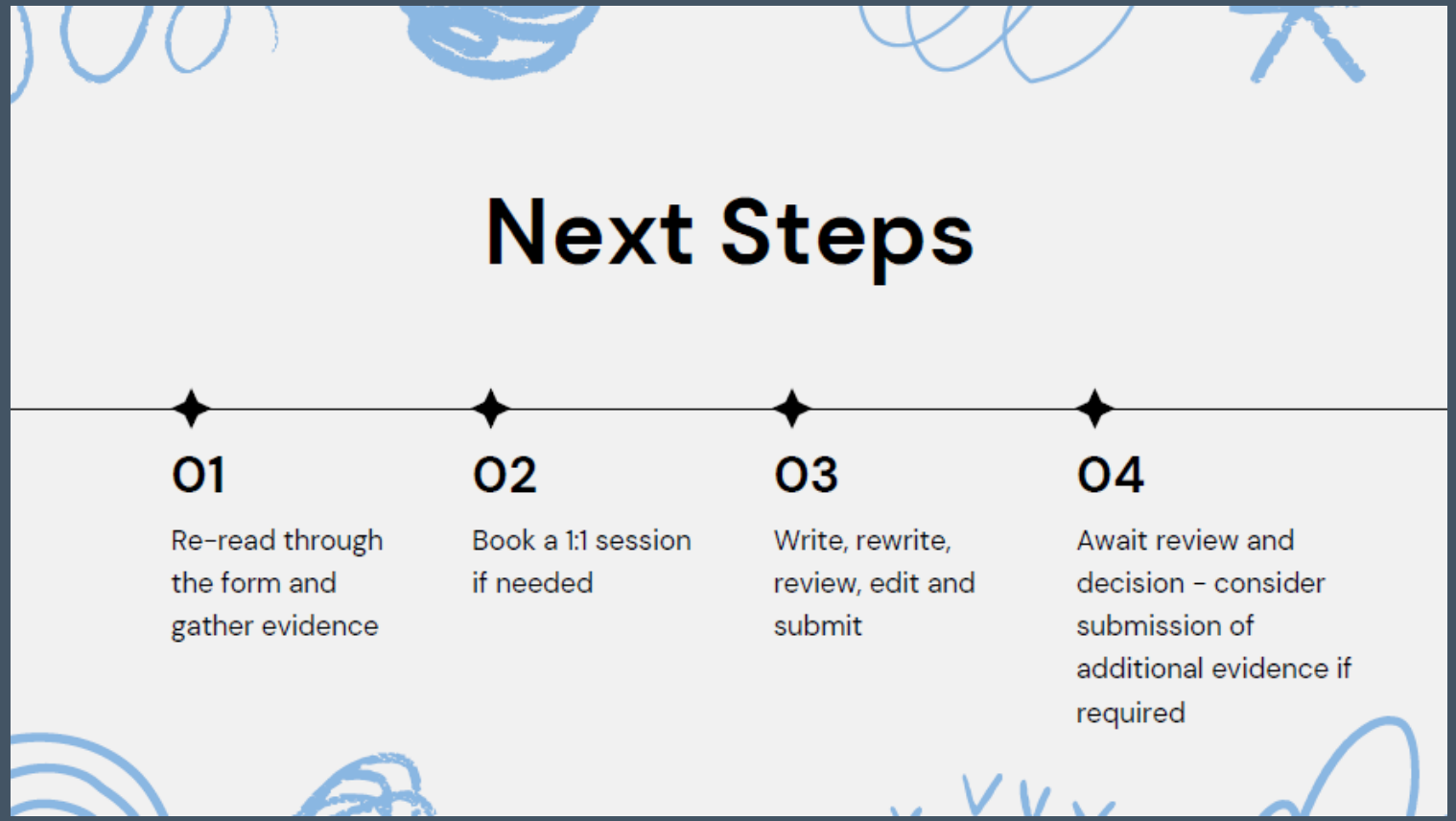
Set up a community

Talk to your peers

- Set up an informal/formal group within your cohort and lean on each other for support
- Work through examples of practice with your colleagues
- Contact your HR Office for records of training, CPD (accredited and non-accredited)
- Think about formal and non-formal learning and map to learning outcomes

Initial Workshop

Step out the process



RPL Assessment

Assessment

RPL Assessment template

Programme Code	Programme Title	Award	Faculty/Dept	Duration	ECTS

Programme Outcomes	Programme Specific PLO's or NFQ Level Indicators	Score
P01 - Knowledge - Breath		
P02 - Knowledge - Kind		
P03 - Skill - Range		
P04 -Skill - Selectivity		
P05 - Competence - Context		
P06 - Competence - Role		
P07 - Competence - Learning to Learn		
P08 - Competence - Insight		
Total Score		

Key	Descriptor
	Learning Outcome not achieved (0%)
	Learning Outcome partly achieved (25%/50%/75%)
	Learning Outcome fully achieved (100%)

Type of Learning Assessed
Combined

Note 1: colour code the PLO/Indicator & input % in Score column

Note 2: Formal learning is accredited learning gained through work-based training and learning, community work or volunteering work

Note 4: Combined category is selected when the learning assessed is a combination of formal and experiential learning

Assessment Outcome

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING APPLICATION FORM	
This section must be completed by the relevant designated person (form can be stored and updated electronically)	
Name:	
Receipt date of application:	
RPL Applicant Name:	
Application:	
RPL Process Tasks	**Tick when complete:**
Outcome of initial provider screening process	Successful ☐ Unsuccessful ☐ Date: ___/___/_____
Notification of outcome of Provider screening process sent to applicant	Yes ☐ No ☐ Date: ___/___/_____
Applicant assigned an RPL Mentor	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐ Date: ___/___/_____
Applicant assigned an RPL Assessor	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐ Date: ___/___/_____
RPL application outcome	Referred ☐ Pass ☐ Merit ☐ Distinction ☐ Date: ___/___/_____ N/A ☐
Signature:	
Position:	
Date:	
Signature:	
Position:	
Date:	

Key Learnings

Advice for RPL for cohorts:

- Have a contact person
- Engage with applicants and start the familiarisation with RPL concept and process early
- Encourage the creation of a community within the cohort

Scaffold the process:

- Host information and Q&A sessions/record sessions
- Share exemplars of portfolios
- Leave enough time for reflection and drafting
- Check-in and feed back…

Any thoughts…?

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INSPIRING FUTURES

Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta an Oirdheiscirt
South East Technological University

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