

**Part 1 Institute details**

Proposing Faculty	Applied Arts
Supporting Faculties (if any)	
Head of Department responsible	
Head of School responsible	Dr Noirin Hayes
Course/Programme Proposer	Dr Anne Murphy, RPL Policy Development Officer, Office of the Academic Registrar, Directorate of Academic Affairs
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**Part 2 Course details**

Code and title	Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in Higher Education (HE): policies, procedures, practices and pedagogies		
Award title	Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Certificate		
Proposed starting date	September 2008		
Distance Learning	Block	Sandwich	Modularised
Semesterised	New course	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Replacement for existing course	Modification of existing course		
New course duration	6 weeks		
New course frequency	twice per semester or subject to demand within capacity to deliver.		
Level and number of ECTS course credits:	5 ECTS credits at Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications		
Company for which course is provided (if any) for internal DIT professional development purposes in the first instance, thereafter for external access			
Description of course to be inserted on parchment			
Continuing education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>		
.....			

## Part 3 Demand for Course

### Rationale for the Course and Summary of Main Elements

This Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Course in Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in Higher Education (HE) was designed for the professional development needs of academic, administrative, and student support staff in the DIT who have responsibility for any aspect of RPL in the Institute. The development and provision of such a course was deemed an essential element in progressing internal arrangements for a comprehensive RPL Policy and Implementation Framework as required as an outcome of the Academic Council decision in April 2006 and June 2007.

It was also deemed necessary to develop this course as a coherent response to the statutory obligation that all higher education providers in the state make provision for access, transfer and progression on the basis of RPL as well as for the possibility for an individual to gain a full award through RPL (attached).

The course was also deemed, in light of the above, an essential response to the many challenges now facing staff of the Institute who are increasingly involved with adult learners in access courses, part-time programmes, progression programmes, franchised programmes, partnership programmes and customised programmes as general provision, and also for provision of specially designed or customised programmes with external partners and/or for industry/companies/sectors/statutory bodies/community groups.

### Focus

As with CPD courses generally, the emphasis of this course is on RPL in professional academic practice with opportunities to become familiar with, to critically understand, and to be able to apply, the concepts and principles underpinning recommended RPL policies, procedure and practice in the DIT specifically, and in higher and further education generally.

### Credits and Level

This CPD course attracts 5 ECTS credits at Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NQF). The notional work effort for achievement of credits is *circa* one-hundred hours, twenty of which will be structured as workshops, with the remainder allocated to individual research and writing activities.

### Certification

Participants have two options for certification as follows:

1. A Certificate of Attendance which does not attract ECTS credits and where assessment is not a feature
- or
2. A CPD Certificate of 5 ECTS credits at Level 9 on successful completion of an assessment assignment.

Participants may decide to register for assessment and accreditation at the initial stage or after the first session.

## Part 4 Admissions/Transfers

Minimum entry requirements **Minimum of primary honours degree with 2.2 classification or equivalent**

Transfer/ exemption arrangements **N/A**

This course is a discrete course designed for professional development and capacity building in the practice of RPL in higher education. However it may be used to gain RPL credits or module exemptions in other courses in the DIT and elsewhere at the discretion of the receiving programme.

Parallel award sought from external body (if any).....

Other external links There is support for this CPD Certificate Course in RPL in HE from the HEA funded SIF HE Consortium Project: **Education in Employment**, RPL strand group.  
It is likely that the institutions in that consortium, namely: UCC, UCG, CIT, Dundalk IT, Letterkenny IT, GMIT, Sligo IT and Athlone IT, may wish to access the course as participants for professional development reasons. However, this is not a formal agreement at this stage.

Is the course a pre-requisite for another course ? Yes No **X**

If so, specify the follow-on course

## Part 5 Summary course description

Course

The content and design of this CPD course were developed by the DIT RPL Policy Development Officer following extensive consultation across the Institute to provide its staff with a structured opportunity to become critically aware of, and competent in, RPL policies and practices within the Institute and elsewhere in light of developments within the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the OECD activities on RNFIL (recognition of non-formal and informal learning). It is also an opportunity to raise awareness within the DIT of the national strategy for RPL led by the NQAI and to which the DIT is contributing.

The course is also regarded as a significant capacity-building mechanism for academic staff who are involved in models of curriculum design and delivery which have elements of both RPL and work-based learning (WBL) and for staff working on executive education programmes, as indicated in the Academic Council document above. The content, therefore, reflects this emerging professional development need.

### Focus

As with CPD courses generally, the emphasis of this course is on RPL in professional academic practice with opportunities to become familiar with, to critically understand, and to be able to apply, the concepts and principles underpinning recommended RPL policies, procedure and practice in the DIT specifically, and in higher and further education generally.

Course objectives/learning outcomes

### Course Learning Outcomes

On completion of this CPD course participants should be able to:

1. articulate the genesis and development of different models of RPL nationally and internationally
2. articulate an understanding of the differences between a traditional higher education paradigm of learning, teaching and assessment, and a paradigm of recognising prior certificated and experiential learning

3. show an understanding of existing models of RPL and AP(E)L in use in the DIT and in Ireland generally
4. show familiarity with, and understanding of, models of RPL/AP(E)L policies, procedures and processes in place in the DIT specifically and HE generally, including quality assurance dimensions
5. show understanding of the process of evidence presentation and assessment of an RPL claim
6. show understanding of, and be able to design, support mechanisms for RPL applicants, accompaniers/mentors and assessors.

Subjects (for each, indicate C for core or E for elective)
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### **Course Syllabus Content**

This CPD course in RPL in HE will generally cover the areas listed below, though it may be augmented with additional content for specific programme contexts.

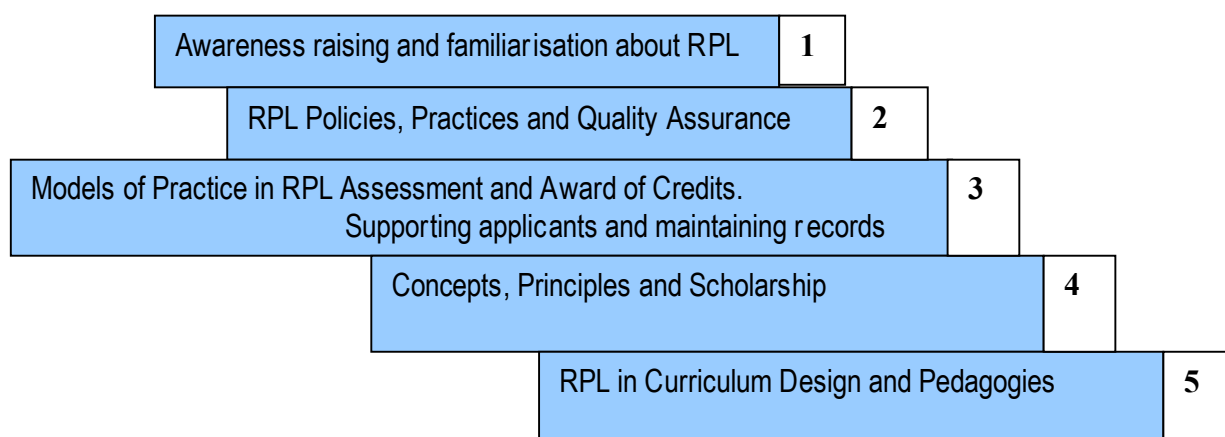
1. Overview of the origin and development of RPL/AP(E)L in higher education.
2. Models of RPL in the DIT, in Ireland and elsewhere
3. Statutory obligations and agreed Institute policies, procedures, practices, documentation and quality assurance requirements
4. Concepts and principles of RPL and AP(E)L
5. Assessment methods and criteria for learning gained through experience for the purposes of access, transfer, exemptions and progression within DIT programmes
6. Supporting the RPL applicant individually and as a member of a cohort
7. RPL in curriculum and programme design.

### **Teaching & Learning Strategy**

This CPD course is designed to meet the needs of staff in the DIT specifically and in higher education generally. It is likely that there will be significant need for awareness raising and familiarisation within national and Institute policies and procedures and within quality assurance requirements. It is also likely that a significant number of staff will require capacity building in the practices of RPL, in mechanisms for assessing claims and in recording decisions for access, transfer and exemptions made on the basis of RPL. A number of staff will also seek opportunities to explore the scholarship of RPL and its implications for curriculum design and delivery. It is likely that staff involved in the practice of RPL will require opportunities to build their capacity in supporting and guiding RPL applicants individually and as cohorts.

Accordingly the course will be structured into a cascade model in terms of content, broadly as follows:

## Cascade of Content Delivery



### Reading list

#### Essential Reading:

Murphy, A. (2008) *Conceptual Guide for RPL in HE*, DIT publication - forthcoming  
Murphy, A. (2008) *Implementation Guide for RPL in HE*, DIT publication - forthcoming  
Murphy, A. (2008) *APEL Matters in Higher Education*, Kilkenny: Red Lion Press

NQAI (2007) *Country Background Report on RNFIL for OECD Activity: Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Learning in Further and Higher Education*, available on NQAI website <http://www.nqai.ie>

#### Recommended Reading:

Harris, J, and Anderson, P. (Eds) (2006) *Re-theorising Experiential Learning*, UK: NIACE

Fenwick, T. (2006) *Learning Through Experience: troubling orthodoxies and intersecting questions*, US: Krieger Publishing

#### Additional Reading attached

### Assessment

Participants who opt to achieve the 5 ECTS credits available for the course will be expected to complete an RPL-related assignment in which they will be expected to relate theoretical aspects to their own specific practice, and to negotiate a learning contract and assessment assignment/s appropriate to their roles and responsibilities for RPL in their School within the course learning outcomes. Participants will also negotiate which assessment criteria should be applied to their particular assignments.

Technical and procedural aspects of teaching and assessing within a WBL paradigm will be integrated

into the workshop sessions and into the practice aspects of the learning contracts. Both formative and summative assessment will be involved as follows:

#### *Formative Assessment*

Formative assessment (not counted as part of the final module mark) and supportive feedback will be used to help guide participants on performance and to direct them in appropriate aspects of scholarship and practice.

#### *Summative Assessment*

Summative assessment (counted as part of the final course mark) will be used to evaluate performance in the learning contract assignment against the course learning outcomes.

Assignments will be assessed by two internal examiners. DIT General Assessment Regulations of the providing will apply.

### **Assessment Methods**

There are no pre-defined assessment methods in the traditional sense in this work-based learning RPL in HE course. Rather, participants are required to negotiate a learning contract with the course leader, and agree an assignment, or set of assignments, to address all the learning outcomes for the course listed above.

It is recommended that participants begin the process of negotiating learning contract assignments as early as possible in the course. A useful first step in this process is to initially self-evaluate current and required levels of knowledge/skills/competences in order to meet the learning outcomes.

Assessments assignments proposed by participants should generally relate to the NQF Level 9 descriptors for knowledge, skills and know-how. The proposed assignments should be related specifically to each participant's HE work context as well as to the course learning outcomes within the guidelines or framework.

### **Assessment Criteria**

A set of generic assessment criteria has been designed for this CPD course in RPL for HE: Those criteria are an adapted version of the criteria developed by the Scottish Centre for Work Based learning in Glasgow-Caledonian University for degrees by learning contract.

The criteria are deliberately designed for course assignment by learning contract, reflecting a work-based learning paradigm rather than a paradigm of traditional teaching.

All criteria are unlikely to apply to any one assignment. Rather, criteria may be selected, or weighted, to reflect the purpose of the learning in any one assignment. The criteria selected will be recorded on the learning contract agreed between each participant and the tutor responsible.

The **wordcount** for the assessment assignment should normally not exceed 5,000 words. The wordcount may be reduced appropriately where artefacts or other products are submitted.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

This CPD course will be evaluated terminally by participants and subjected to quality assurance reportage as per regulations at School, Faculty and Institute levels.

**Part 6 Resource implications of new course**

**Accommodation and equipment required**

How and where course will be accommodated

It is not expected that additional physical accommodation will be required.

Equipment and other special resources (if any) needed, including costs and time scale

It is not anticipated that any new equipment will be required.

Costs incurred will be in relation to copying of teaching materials, web resources, and library stock.

**Academic staff requirements**

i. Hours per week to be serviced by existing full-time staff

Year 1 1.5 (one and a half) hours per week averaged per cohort of 25 participants ;  
Year 2 N/A Year 3 N/A

ii. Other programmes for which the staff required for i. above will be replaced

N/A

iii. Hours per week to be serviced by part-time staff N/A

Year 1 .....; Year 2 .....; Year 3 .....

iv. Full-time staff to be recruited for this programme, and time scale N/A

**Administrative and technical staff requirements**

Can the existing administrative and technician staff provide the required level of service to this course ? Yes No

It is likely that existing administrative and technical staff of the Institute will be sufficient for internal delivery. If the course is externally delivered a cost-recovery model will be used to calculate fees and required student numbers to meet such costs.

If not, additional resources needed:

**Part 7 Confirmation of support**

Signature	.....	.....
	Head of Department	Date
Signature	.....	.....
	Head of School	Date
Signature	.....	.....
	Director/Dean of Faculty	
Date		

