

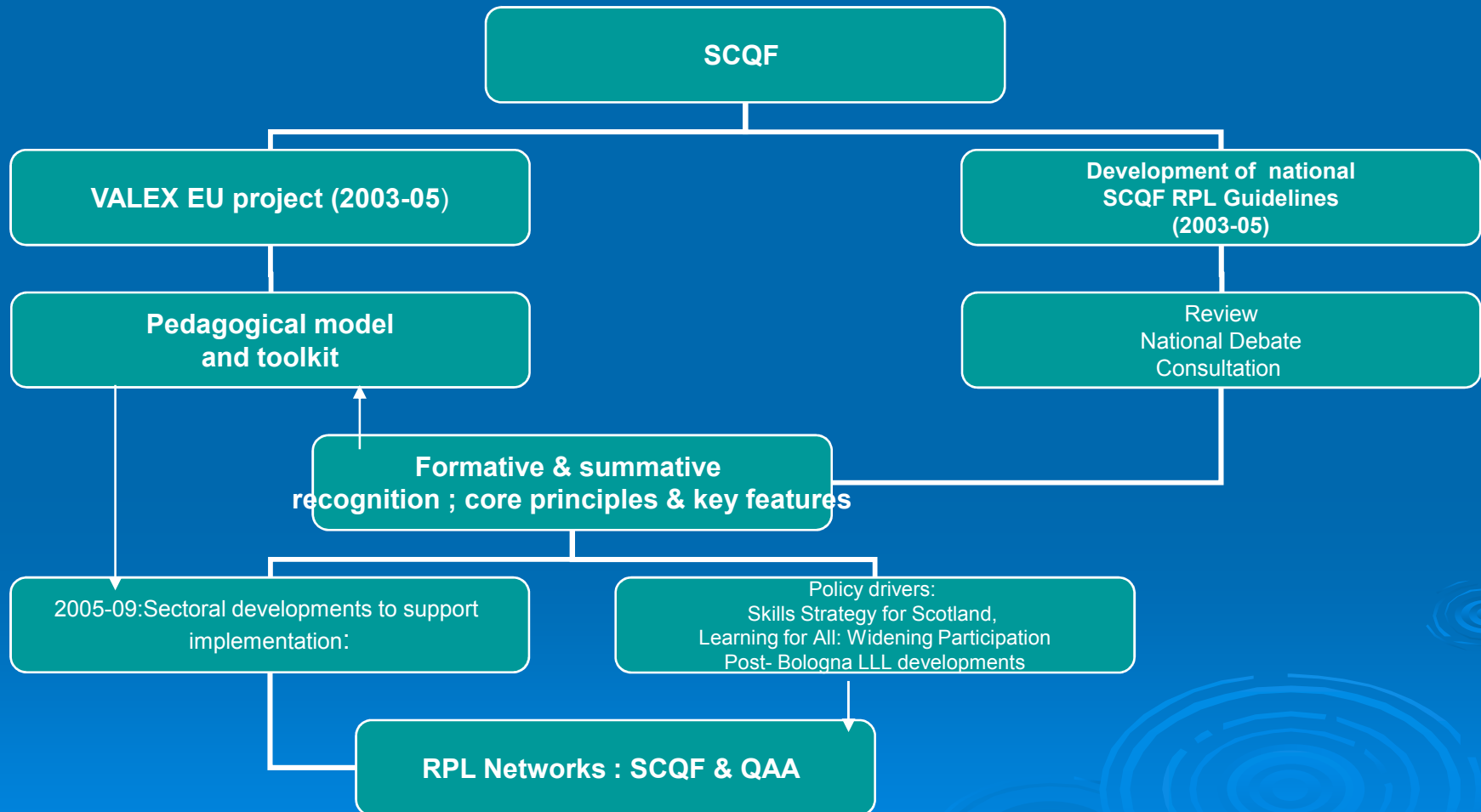
# RPL Research & Development in Scotland : current picture and ways forward

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# RPL development in Scotland from 2003



# RPL : Current Scottish Research and Development

**2005-2009 Sectoral development to implement RPL within the context of the SCQF**

**Scottish Executive  
RPL Scoping exercise(2006)  
SCQFP Review of RPL (2008)  
OECD Thematic Review (2008)**

**SCQF RPL Network  
Build supply and demand side across all sectors:  
shared understanding;  
practice ;  
development of materials and case studies  
Links to European development**

**Scottish Quality  
Enhancement Themes  
in HE –QAA Scotland  
(2004-09)**

**Scottish Universities RPL Network (QAA)  
Build confidence and capacity  
through sharing of practice & research;  
raise awareness and link  
into relevant developments in rest of UK,  
Europe & internationally**

# Key areas of RPL development/research



# Connecting thread: SCQF

- **Government commitment to RPL** within the context of the SCQF as part of economic strategy: skills development & utilisation
- **'Skills for Scotland'** : learning providers and awarding bodies challenged to 'develop a system to ensure that they recognise the value of individuals' prior learning and wider achievement by building on work already undertaken through the SCQF'
- ***SCQF review of RPL in Scotland in 2008*** to ascertain
  - The expectations of government and stakeholders
  - Current landscape of activity and existing practice
  - Views of stakeholders on where the focus for RPL should lie within SCQF ( SCQF , 2008)

# SCQF Review of RPL activity

## Research findings:

- Significance of RPL 'in contributing to the necessary skills upgrading in Scotland required for **sustainable economic growth** and competitive advantage in the global economy'
- Some good practice exists for RPL, but **provision patchy and not consistently accessible** across all education/training providers , or across the country
- **Useful tool to assist employers** in the recruitment process to identify the skills of a diverse workforce and for effectively targeting resources for employee development.
- **Diversity of existing practice** within a number of organisations : need to share these across sectors to encourage an increased awareness, understanding and use of RPL.
- **SCQF RPL Network** : meeting the challenges of supporting the increase on both the demand side for RPL with learners and the supply side in learning providers and awarding bodies to meet the potential demand.

# Community Learning & Development

- ***SCQF Communities Scotland RPL pilot project*** (2005-06) : to develop and pilot RPL profiling to support recognition of informal learning of youth workers in relation to National Occupational Standards
- ***Community Learning and Development Portfolio*** (2008-09): Recognition of learning, experience and achievement of part-time paid and volunteer workers operating within the field of community learning and development (CLD)
- The ***Learner Passport*** project (2009-11) records all the learning in which a learner is involved and can be used to track what they have learnt.

# Workforce Development

## ➤ **Social Service sector:**

- ***SSSC RPL pilot project(2006-8):*** RPL model, Resource Pack and Mentor Guide
- ***Development of Work-based learning programmes:*** collaborative partnerships between universities and employers

## ➤ **Health Sector: Knowledge & Skills Framework; NHS Career Framework and Skills for Health –meeting workforce development needs of the sector.**

## Social Services RPL project (2006-08)

### ➤ Aims :

- Explore effectiveness of RPL process as means of increasing learner self-confidence; accelerating achievement of vocational qualifications; improving the quality of the learning experience; evaluating and enhancing practice
- Identify means of integrating an RPL process within existing organizational systems of workforce development,

### ➤ Developed materials to support learners through formative stages, recognise skills and knowledge they have and develop capacity to think and write reflectively. Also support through assessments towards SVQ3 in Health and Social Care.

# Project outcomes

## Evaluation highlighted:

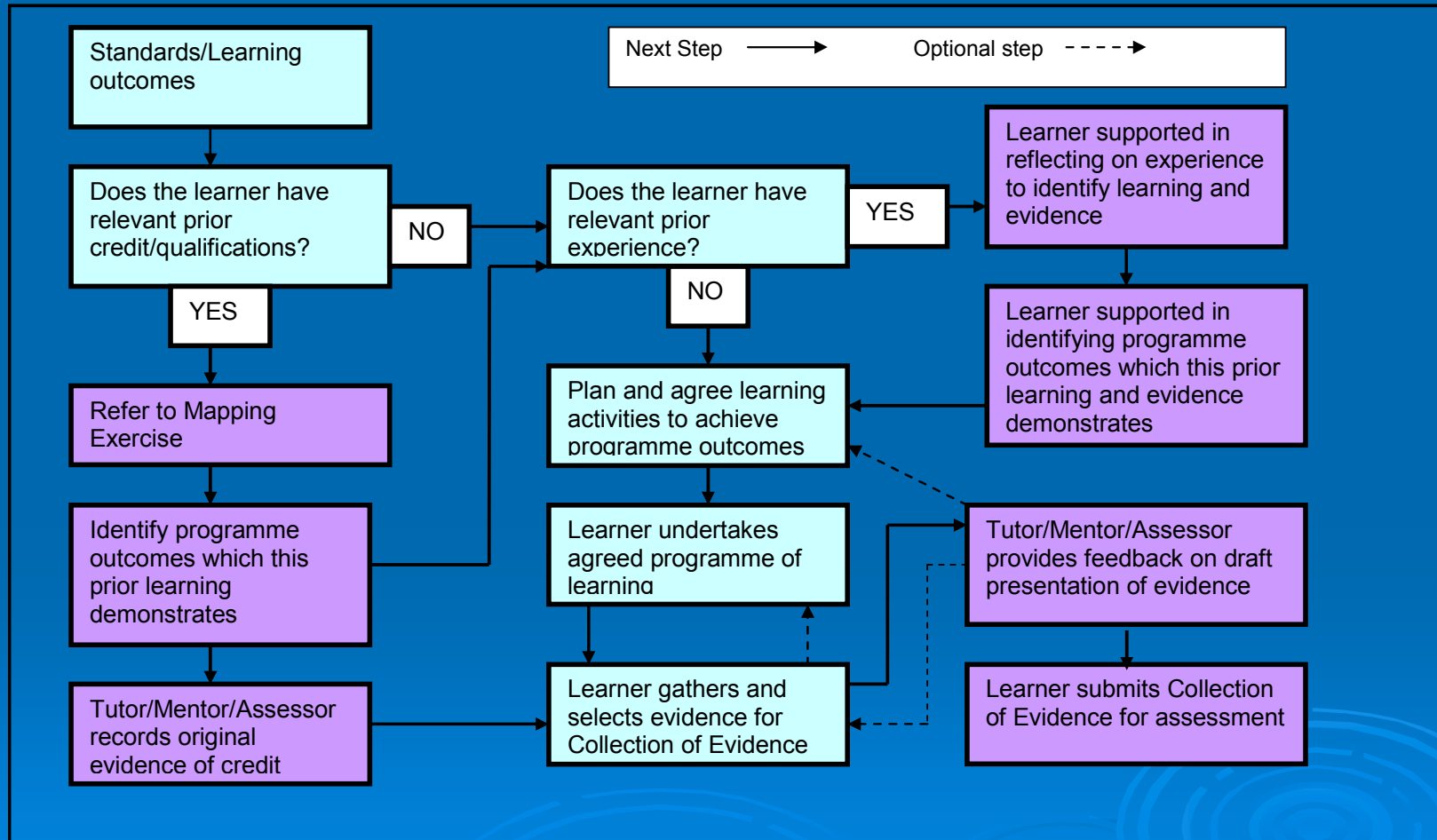
- RPL **increased learner's self confidence** and their motivation to undertake further learning and development
- Learners embarked on a qualification with greater self-confidence and a **greater understanding of how they learn** and how to express and demonstrate that learning
- RPL process provided a **useful preparation in learning how to think and write reflectively** and lessened the fear undertaking a qualification
- Mentors reported that learners had greater self-confidence within the workplace itself and that it had a **positive impact on their practice**
- There was increased confidence and levels of enthusiasm and **enhanced critical evaluation** of their own and others' practice.

# Project outcomes

- RPL is being used in number of ways within the social service sector:
  - Gaining of qualifications
  - Recruitment
  - Induction
  - Supervision and appraisal
  - Performance interviewing
- RPL Resources being widely disseminated across the sector –use of RPL champions
- Significant interest in the RPL Resources has been generated in other sectors - SCQFP have commissioned production of generic version of resources to support cross sectoral development of RPL within Scotland.

# RPL & Credit Transfer process as part of qualification achievement *(RPL and Credit Transfer*

*Guidelines for the Practice Learning Qualifications (SS) (SSSC, 2007)*




# Workforce Development

- **Professional bodies:**
  - Scottish Police College
  - Chartered Institute of Bankers in Scotland
- **Sector Skills Councils- Skills Passports**
- **SMEs – REALISE Research project- EU objective 3 Managing Progress programme 2005-07, University of Edinburgh** (*Ahlgren L, et al ,2007*)

# Guidance sector

**Development and Evaluation of an RPL Profiling Tool and SCQF Benchmarking guide for Skills Development Scotland, Careers Services. (2008-09): linked to Curriculum for Excellence; Recognising Wider Achievement; More Chances, More Choices**



# Skills Development Scotland RPL project

## ➤ Aim of pilot project :

- To develop and evaluate an RPL profiling tool and SCQF Benchmarking process as part of a careers guidance process with young people in schools.
- To explore the extent to which RPL profiling and SCQF benchmarking could help young people in their Career Planning Journey

## ➤ Fourth-year summer and winter leavers at risk of no positive destination in terms of education, training or employment.

# Project outcomes

- **Pupil feedback positive:** helped them to think about what to do next
- **Shared/organised experience** as focus for reflection

## **Careers advisors need:**

- training and support in SCQF benchmarking process
- guidance on ways use of RPL can be integrated within careers guidance processes
- Single, simple tool to provide focus of discussion through a mind mapping process

Tools should be **piloted with a wider range of client groups**, including the long term unemployed and individuals facing redundancy.

# Colleges

- Exploring use of RPL resources developed through SCQF Social Services RPL project within college and community provision
- Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA): Awareness-raising of SQA Workforce Development unit & new Flexible Credit policy

# Universities

- **Scottish Universities RPL Network**
- **Piloting RPL modules** with specific groups eg refugees; community-based learners :formative recognition (GCU, Stirling,2005; UWS 2009)
- **Mapping outcomes of prior informal learning against SCQF/QAA level descriptors**
- **Integration within work-based or lifeplace learning programmes** - flexible entry/delivery: negotiated learning outcomes and assessment.
- **RPL,workshadowing and professional development model** for refugee academics (GCU CARA projects 2007 & 2008); **Educational needs of New Migrants & Refugees** research (OU,2008)
- **Integration into CPD programmes**

# Cross –sector work

- **Development of generic version of SCQF Social Services resource pack and facilitator guide (2009) via SCQF RPL Network– to be tailored/adapted within different sectors**
- **Scottish Government Scoping Study of support and recognition mechanisms for refugees and migrant workers(2009-10):**  
Partners: SCQFP; GCU, representing Universities Scotland; Scotland's Colleges and Skills Development Scotland

# Links to EU & International development

- **Leonardo EuroguideVal project and RPLO project**
- **Scottish Universities RPL network- RPL Bologna Seminar (Dec 2008)**
- **QAA Scotland and the Scottish government : proposed European RPL network of participants in Higher Education**
- **Transnational policy platform - Scottish Government funded Thematic group: Skills and wider recognition. RPL /SCQF will be explored in working group on Skills Assessment.**
- **International PLAR Research Centre : collaborative research**

# The way forward

- **Integration of RPL into workforce development processes**
- **Development of RPL 'toolkits'** which can be tailored for different sectors, including profiling tools: development of more accessible processes
- Development of more **collaborative learning partnerships**
- Development of **SCQF Recognition Centre/integrated provision** for refugees and migrant workers
- **Awareness-raising, marketing strategies** to highlight benefits and opportunities presented by RPL
- **RPL networks** to encourage sharing of practice and research and raise awareness of related developments at sector, national and international levels : building capacity and confidence.
- **National online resource** – existing tools, approaches, case studies

## Possible areas of collaborative research

- Investigate **ways in which RPL can support national agendas**, such as employability/workforce development and widening participation, and the **impact of national credit and qualifications frameworks** on RPL within this context.
- Comparative exploration of the ways in which RPL:
  - can be used to support **skills recognition and skills development**
  - can be integrated within **workforce development strategies**
  - can support **participation of the workforce in lifelong learning**
  - can support **participation in further and higher education** by non-traditional learner groups
  - can **support transitions** between informal, non-formal and formal learning contexts

# Possible areas of collaborative research

- Ways in which development and integration of RPL processes within existing systems and infrastructures can be supported through **capacity-building** within learning and training providers, as well as employing organisations
- Extent to which **creative use of credit and qualifications frameworks** can support the development of learning cultures within employment sectors/organisations
- Ways in which **effective collaborative partnerships** can be formed between employers, learning and training providers

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*Community Learning and Development Portfolio : a Resource to Record Learning, Experiences and Achievements* (2008) Community Learning & Development Managers , Scotland

Inspire Scotland (2008) *The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership (SCQF) A Review of the Recognition of Prior Learning. Final Report*, SCQF  
<http://www.scqf.org.uk/Resources/Downloads.aspx>

OECD (2008) *Thematic Review and Collaborative Policy Analysis Recognition of Non-formal and informal learning : Scotland & England*, OECD

SCQF RPL Guidelines (2005) <http://www.scqf.org.uk/Resources/Downloads.aspx>

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Whittaker, R & Anderson, P (2009) *Evaluation of RPL Profiling Tool and SCQF Mapping Guide pilot*, Skills Development Scotland (forthcoming)

# Useful websites

[www.scqf.org.uk](http://www.scqf.org.uk)

[www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk](http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk)

[www.sssc.uk.com](http://www.sssc.uk.com)

[www.euroguideval.org](http://www.euroguideval.org)

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