

RPL Practitioner Network (Ireland)

Moving Forward with RPL,
Advancing the Conversation:

Unpacking the EU guidelines for
validating non-formal and
informal learning

19 April 2024, 2 pm – 3.30 pm





<i>Time</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Speakers</i>
2.00 – 2.10	Introduction and Context The RPL Practitioner Network and our new Steering Group	Steering Group Co-conveners <i>Siobhán Magee</i> <i>Carol Lynch</i>
2.10 – 2.20	RPL, QQI and policy developments	<i>Andrina Wafer</i>
2.20 – 2.35	Introduction to the European Guidelines for Validating informal and non-formal learning – 3rd edition	<i>Deirdre Goggin</i>
2.35 – 2.40	Breakout Room Briefing <i>Q1 What are the best ways to place the individual at the centre of the RPL process? Give examples</i> <i>Q2 What are the enablers and barriers to RPL for the individual?</i> <i>Q3 What are the enablers to the implementation of RPL systems for organisations?</i>	<i>Patsy Hogan</i> <i>Angela Higgins</i>
2.40 - 3.00	Breakout Rooms	
3.00 - 3.15	Reflecting on Group Feedback	<i>Patsy Hogan</i> <i>Angela Higgins</i>
3.15	Close	<i>Siobhán Magee</i> <i>Carol Lynch</i>

*Share thoughts
and learnings via X
using #RPLPN*





‘Nothing else in all the world...not all the armies...is so powerful as an idea whose time has come’

Victor Hugo, The Future of Man



Dearbhú Cáilíochta
agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann
Quality and
Qualifications Ireland

QQI, Policy development, and RPL policy

QQI, Policy development

Approach is consultative under law and European Standards & Guidelines

QQI is required to inform itself and consult with stakeholders
Involve stakeholders in the development and design of QA policies etc.

QQI policy on RPL derives authority from Section 56 of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act, associated with access, transfer and progression, and subsequent credit policy.

When consulted on revising policy initially, stakeholders did not prioritise RPL / ATP, resulting in limited existing policy restatements, removing reference to the former awarding bodies and much broader Framework context.

Other QQI policies reflect subsequent international developments, for example, core quality assurance and programme validation reference European Recommendations and require fair recognition that is fit for purpose etc.



Time's winged chariot...

Features

Policy and approach is rooted in the NFQ Determinations and vision

- Lifelong Learning- suggesting continuous engagement, smaller awards
- Operational principles of policies, actions and procedures for access, transfer and progression for all learners- a variety of arrangements for access and entry, consideration of transitions, transfer and progression for all learners
- A national approach to credit(2006)- advocates ECTS for HE
- Programme orientation of vision

Amendment to the 2012 Act situates services close to individuals and institutions, accelerating our need for some aspects of national level development

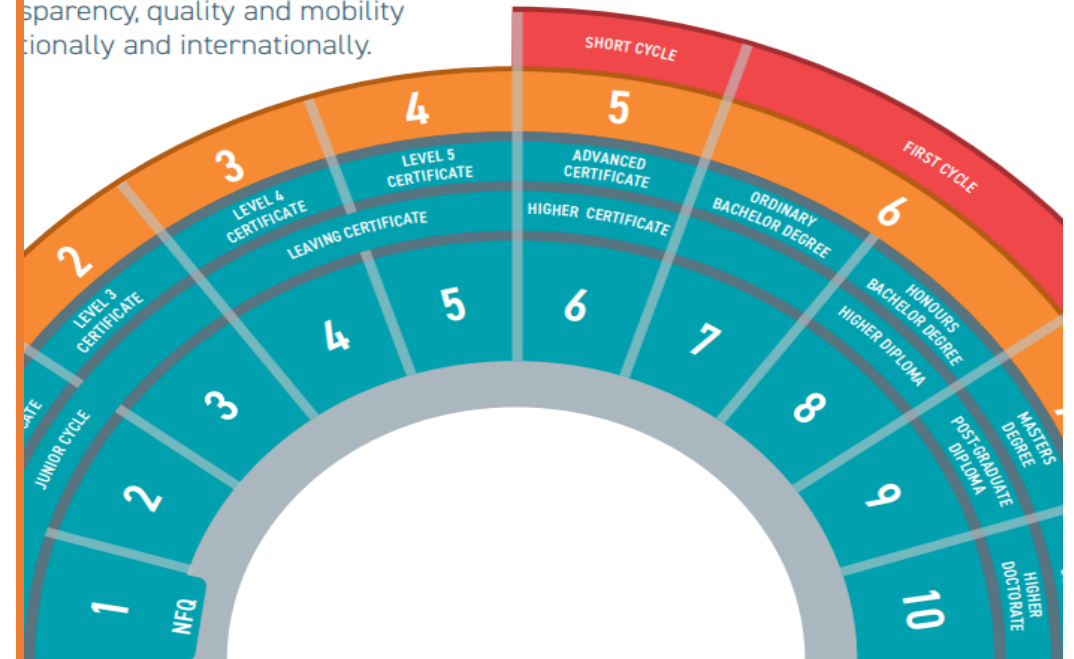
BUT – the policy approach- principles, operational guidelines, elements and approaches- is deemed helpful.

Both legislation and policy support RPL for access, credit towards an award, exemption from some programme requirements and for eligibility for a full award.

Continuing rapid infrastructural transformation at sectoral level, new challenges, contexts and considerations

Networks - Going Global

Transparency, quality and mobility
nationally and internationally.



● NFQ
● EQF
● QF-EHEA

Irish National Framework of Qualifications
European Qualifications Framework
Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area

‘It’s a dangerous business, Frodo, going out your door...’

Why does RPL make us nervous?

Policy requirements include e.g.that providers make available information about

- arrangements for eligibility to enter, including a statement of the knowledge, skill and competence needed by the learner as a basis for successful participation on the programme
- A statement of arrangements available for recognition of prior learning, for entry to each of their programmes, and for access to an award

That there is

- Fair recognition of education and training qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning
- The provider ethos enables flexible learning pathways
- Processes for assessment, complaints and appeals meet the same standards for fairness, consistency and fitness of purpose as assessment in general and are straightforward, efficient, timely and transparent



Dearbhú Cáilíochta
agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann
Quality and
Qualifications Ireland



Who boldly go...

Providers publish policies, and there are several effective, critical and ambitious models of practice and service across all sectors

The OECD acknowledge that in FET, the process to obtain RPL in Ireland is fairly straightforward, and that the National RPL Project in HE is one of many steps strengthening practice nationally. The RPL PN is noted also as an asset

But- the report states that we have no nationally agreed definition around which to agree standards, and that data accordingly are fragmented.

We are nationally slow to promote RPL, so awareness is limited. Funding and capacity building are necessary, as is development of access to lifelong guidance systems.

Yet the evidence is there, in awards and credits obtained through RPL of effective quality assurance, of information, mentoring assessment and certification services for individuals, communities and industry, reflected in Country Inventories.



National RPL context- the local *is* global

QQI - scope a national approach, - policy, criteria, guidelines

Europe-wide community of practice

2012 Recommendation

2016 Recommendation

European Guidelines

Inventories

Evaluation- data, purposes, inclusion

Programme for Government, 'Our Shared Future'

Future FET, Transforming Learning

National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030

National Access Plan: A Strategic Action Plan for Equity of Access, Participation and Success in Higher Education 2022-2028.

Progressing A Unified Tertiary System for Learning, Skills and Knowledge

A concern with individuals
Challenges of inclusion

European Year of Skills-
'Skills First',
'Europe on the Move'
EU Skills and Talent Pool

Partnership models

- RPL in Higher Ed, HCI range of projects
- Innovation funding
- Skills to Advance
- Regional Skills For a
- Skillnet Ireland
- Civil Society
- Volunteer, Community based and Youth service provision, and collaborations
- Micro- credentials and micro-qualifications

Mobility

Immigration and emigration

Recognition of foreign qualifications- LRC, GRC-NARIC

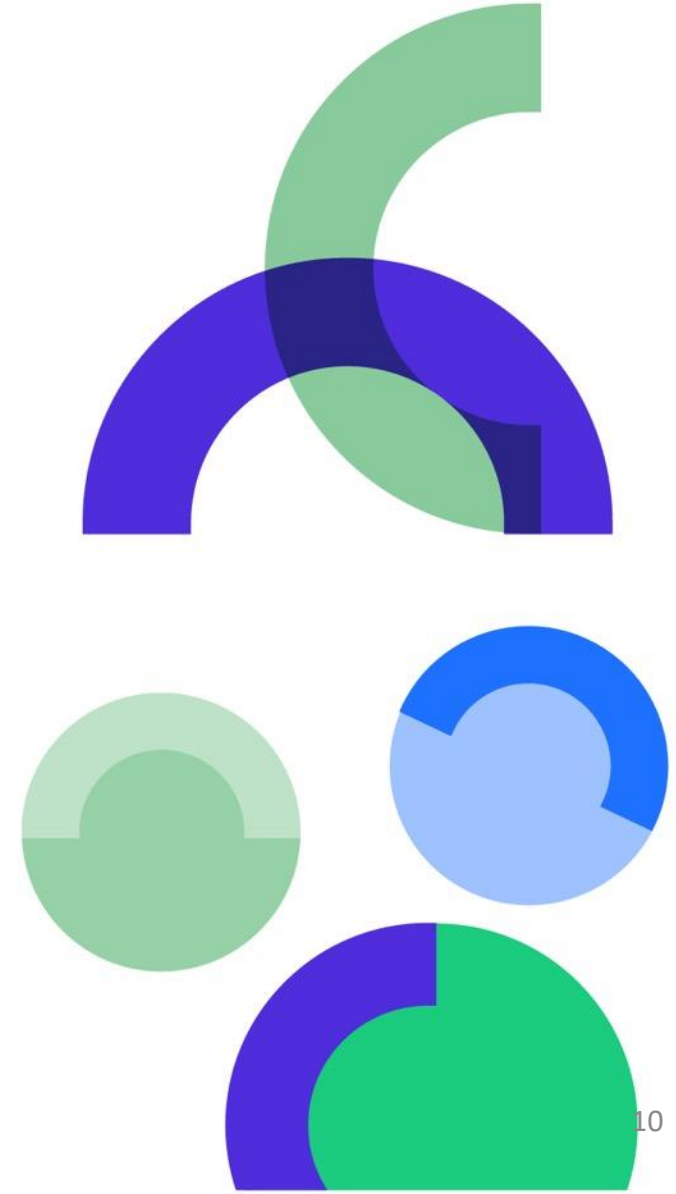
Refugees with incomplete/missing documentation- European Qualifications Passport for Refugees, Council of Europe

Supporting integration where occupations e.g. are obsolete/don't exist here- RPL optimizes experience

NFQ tools and instruments protect and support lifelong learning and learners

Read some more...

- [\(Revised Acts \(lawreform.ie\) Section 9 \(2\) \(e\)\)](#)
- [\(ESG 2015.pdf \(enqa.eu\)\)](#)
- [ATP Policy Restatement FINAL 2018.pdf \(qqi.ie\)](#)
- [Draft principles for the implementation of a national approach to the recognition of prior learning in Irish higher education and training \(qqi.ie\)](#)
- [qq-1-core-statutory-quality-assurance-guidelines.pdf \(qqi.ie\) ; qp-17-policies-and-criteria-for-the-validation-of-programmes-of-education-and-training.pdf \(qqi.ie\)](#)
- [\(OECD Skills Strategy Ireland: Assessment and Recommendations | en | OECD\)](#)
- [European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning 2018 update: Ireland | CEDEFOP \(europa.eu\)](#)
- [\(economicgraph.linkedin.com/content/dam/me/economicgraph/en-emea/pdf/skills-first-report-european-highlights.pdf\)](#)
- [Factsheet on Talent Mobility.pdf.pdf \(ampeu.hr\)](#)
- [Lisbon Recognition Convention - Higher education and research \(coe.int\)](#)
- [Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education - Legal Affairs \(unesco.org\)](#)
- [Recognition of foreign qualifications | Quality and Qualifications Ireland \(qqi.ie\)](#)
- [European Qualifications Passport for Refugees - Education \(coe.int\)](#)
- [News & Events – RPL Practitioners Network Ireland \(rpl-ireland.ie\)](#)



Thank you!

awafer@qqi.ie

VPL Biennale – May 6-8 May 2024, Ireland

Introduction to the European Guidelines for Validating Non- formal and Informal Learning – 3rd edition

Dr Deirdre Goggin

Munster Technological University



Background and overview

- Third edition
- Complements the European Council recommendation, 20th December 2012 on the validation of informal and non-formal learning
- Developed in consultation with stakeholders and experts in the field of validation
- Two fundamental principles need to be shared to ensure validation (RPL) meets its full potential
- Guidelines are for everyone – clarify the conditions, present the critical choices within the process
- A single approach does not exist – flexibility

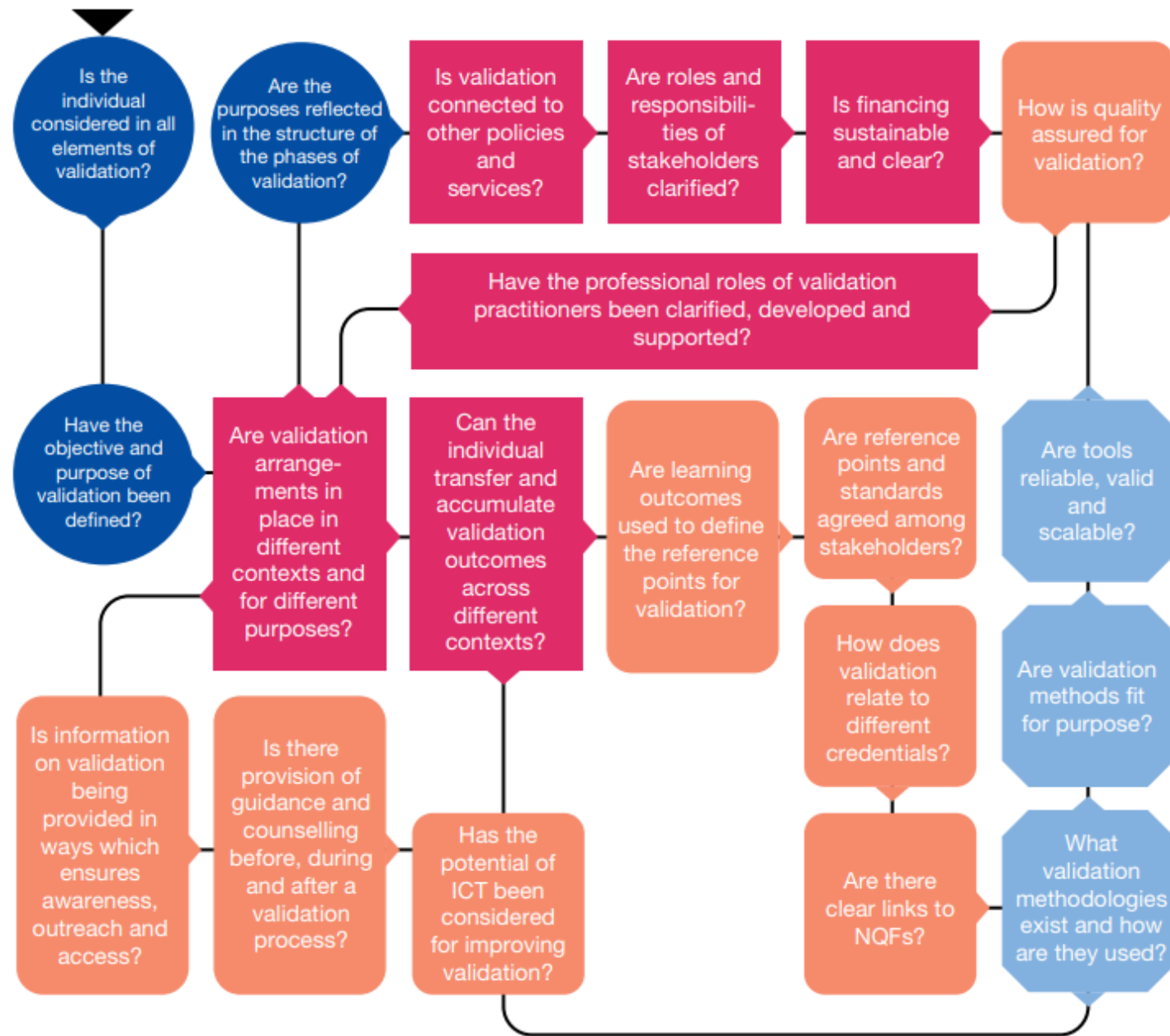
Core elements

- Centrality of the learner
- Clarity on objective, purpose and expected outcome
- Communication
- Contexts
- Integration
- Mobility
- Systems and supports
- Standards (NFQ)
- Quality Assurance
- Process

Foundations of validation and the guidelines

- 4 phases of validation (European Council Recommendation , 2012)
 - Identification
 - Documentation
 - Assessment
 - Certification
- Importance of guidance and counselling
- Key questions for consideration
 - Purpose, as reflected in the process, in the phases of validation, communicated to the individual

Figure 2. Main aspects of validation



Source: Cedefop.

Key questions on education and training

- Has the purpose of validation within education and training been clarified and clearly communicated to individuals?
- Is validation offered in all parts of education and training systems?
- Does validation offered in different parts of the education and training system build on similar or different principles?
- Is there coherence on validation across different parts of education and training?
- Can validation arrangements in different parts of education and training aid progress across types and levels of education?
- To what extent can validation results be used across different parts of education and training?
- How is validation linked to credit transfer and accumulation?

Key questions on validation in the labour market

- Are there systematic validation possibilities in the labour market?
- Is there a coherent approach to validation in the labour market across different labour market actors?
- Has the purpose of validation within the labour market initiatives been clarified and clearly communicated to individuals?
- Are there possibilities of connecting certificates obtained through validation in the labour market to formal education programmes?
- What is the value of labour market certificates, and can they be acquired through validation?
- Is validation used and connected to up- and reskilling initiatives?
- Can results of a validation process in the labour market be used in other contexts, for example to access formal education programmes?

Key questions on third sector

- Are there systematic validation possibilities in the third sector?
- Have the objectives of validation within third sector initiatives been clarified and clearly communicated to individuals?
- Are there possibilities of connecting certificates obtained through validation in the third sector to formal education programmes?
- Can results of a validation process in the third sector be used in other contexts, for example to access formal education programmes?

Key questions on skill and lifelong learning strategies

- Have the role and purposes of validation within education and training, labour market and social policies been clarified?
- Are there guidelines or frameworks that govern the relationship of validation with other services, for example career guidance and public employment services?
- Are there forums in which diverse actors governing different policy fields can come together to discuss validation issues?

Key contribution of the guidelines

- Provide key questions that require consideration
- Positions validation and its importance to society
- Highlight the interconnected nature of validation
- Stresses the need for flexibility and adaptability within our systems, underpinned by quality assurance and standards

Thank you

https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/3093_en.pdf

Deirdre Goggin

deirdre.goggin@mtu.ie


Breakout Room Discussion Topics

1. What are the best ways to place the individual at the centre of the RPL process? Provide some examples.
2. What are the enablers and barriers to RPL for the individual?
3. What are the enablers to the implementation of RPL systems for organisations?



Continuing the conversation

Next Steps ...

 <https://rpl-ireland.ie/>

 Follow us on X, formerly Twitter, @rpl_network

 RPL Practitioner Network LinkedIn Page and Group

5th BIENNALE

- Lightning Talk “The RPL Practitioner Network Ireland, Collaboration in Practice”
- Concurrent Panel Session for Networks
- Breakfast Briefing – Day 2

