

Recognition of Prior Learning in Irish Higher Education – A Qualitative Study

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Introduction

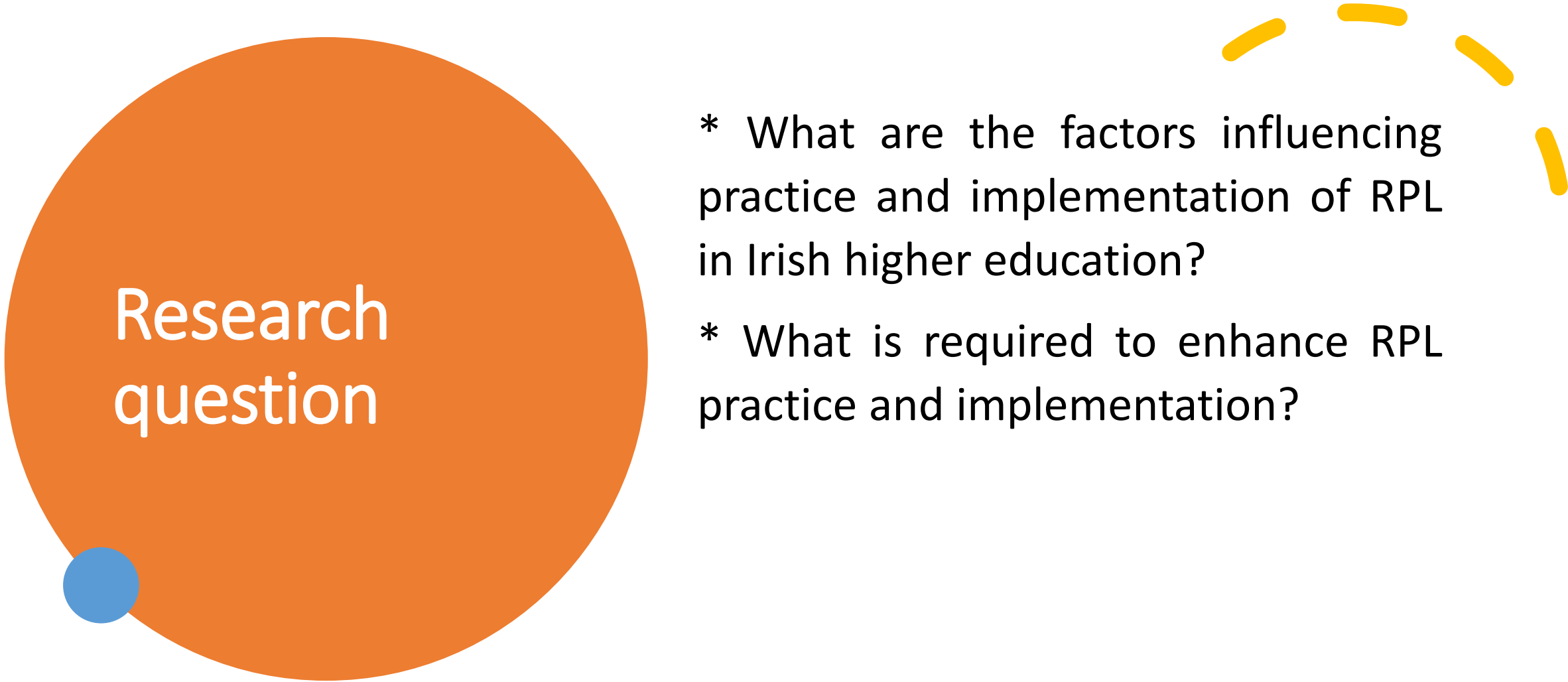
RPL is seen as valuable

Supported in policy and strategy

RPL provides opportunities

RPL practice and implementation remains low

Addresses the potential barriers and identify the enablers within the system



Research question

- * What are the factors influencing practice and implementation of RPL in Irish higher education?
- * What is required to enhance RPL practice and implementation?

Findings

Concept and understanding

- Diversity in understanding
- Mature, industry, workplace learning
- Learning

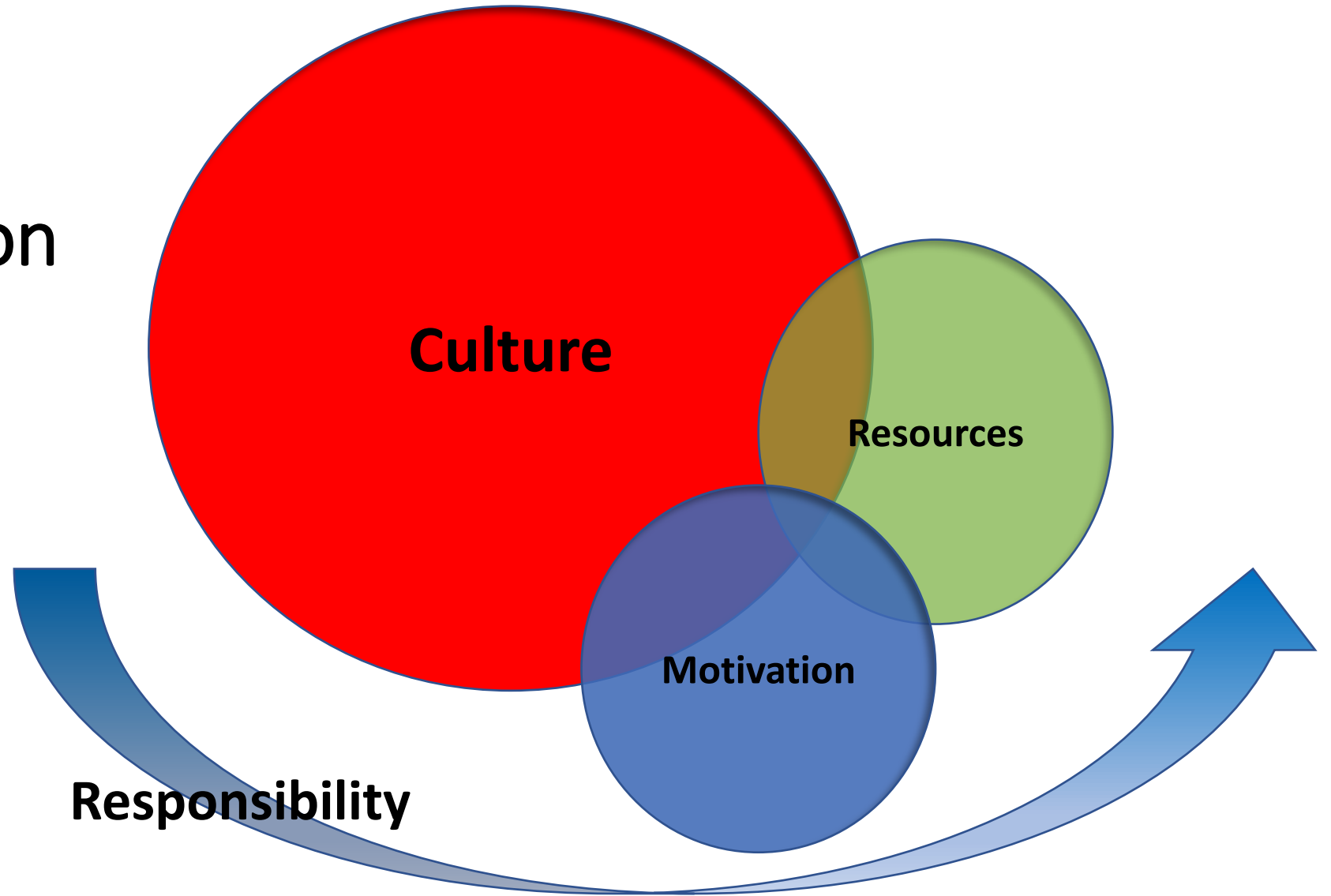
RPL practice

- Espoused view vs actual practice
- 88% strategic focus of institution
- Implicit vs explicit inclusion
- 24% RPL not a key focus
- 84% alignment with institutional view

Future directions

- 94% national policy , 35% national principles
- data collection
- good practice guidelines
- Training and development

Challenges to practice and implementation



Culture

‘from the academic side there is still ... resistance’

‘my understanding and whether it is keeping with what we do are two different things’

‘we are doing ourselves out of a job’

‘it represents a change ... there is the fear’

‘Fundamentally RPL requires a mind change in every organisation’

‘each discipline is very protective of its space’

Resources

‘more resources are needed in terms of people’

‘RPL designated staff members’

‘problem for institutions is that they need to invest’

‘to do it right it needs to be coordinated’

‘resources not put in until demand is there’

Motivation

‘greater place [for RPL] if there were a lot of people unemployed or if there was a mismatch in the employment market’

‘motivation is not there as places are always filled’

‘learning outside of the course of study is a lesser kind of learning’

‘unless you actually study it You can not know it’

‘reluctance to equate learning that has not been acquired in their programme’

Responsibility and accountability

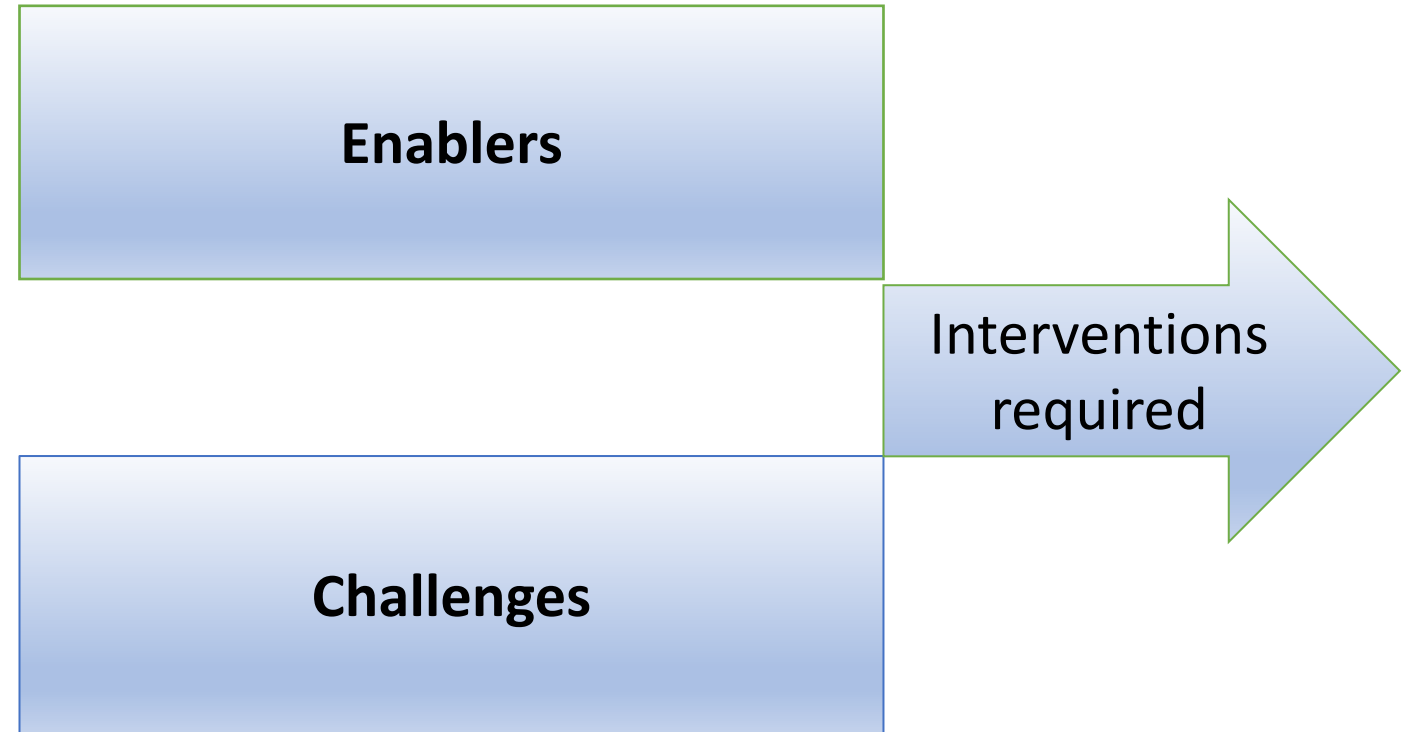
‘unless somebody takes the lead it will not happen’

‘There is a lack of clarity about where best practice and guidelines are emanating from’

‘there is no body with central authority over RPL at the national level’

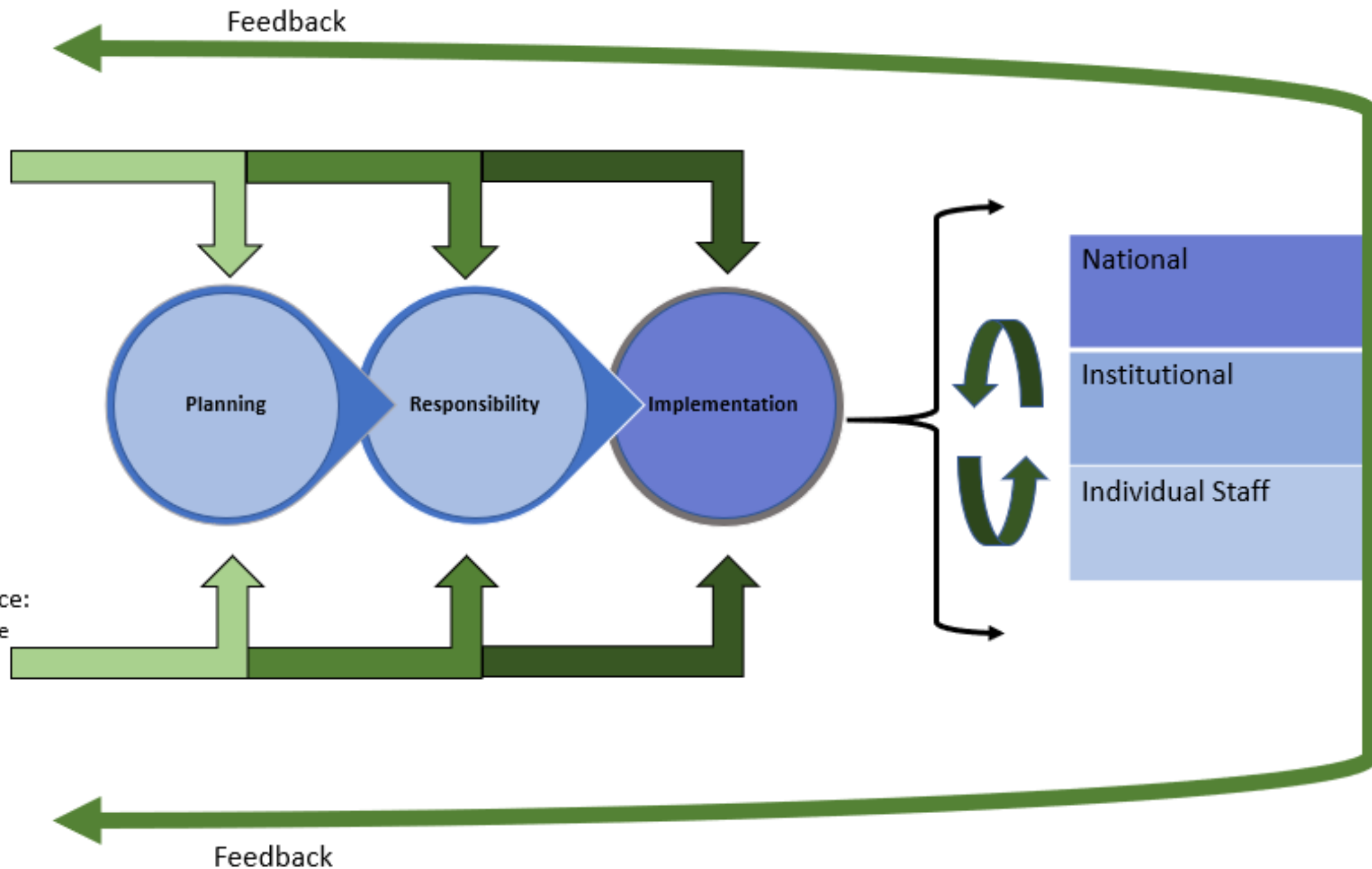
‘you need an infrastructure to be put around RPL’

**To enhance the
practice and
implementation of
RPL within higher
education**



Mechanisms to structure practice:

- National policy and common definition
- Data collection
- Good practice guidelines
- Continuous Professional Development



Where this
research sits....

Policy



Where this
research sits...

Practice





Thank you

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Questions