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UNIVERSITY OF WALES
Trinity Saint David

Recognition and Accreditation of Learning (RAL)

Programme of Study Handbook

September 2011

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The University of Wales Trinity Saint David (TSD) gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance of the European Social Fund in supporting this development for staff working in small to medium sized enterprises in Wales. This project will support the workforce in identifying and claiming credit for formal and informal learning gained.

The Project

LATERAL

Liberating Aptitudes by Technology Enhanced Recognition and Accreditation of Learning

Aims

- To develop, pilot and implement a bilingual technology enhanced learning environment to support the learner in achieving accreditation for experiential learning.
- To create implementation mechanisms which have a uniform application across sectors/individuals/spatial plan areas/CQFW levels
- Use ICT for employer engagement and virtual learning environments

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In addition to the Project Team the following members of staff teach on the module, and are responsible for ongoing development of course materials. Dr Wilson is also the Programme Coordinator for the Professional Practice Framework.

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Credit and Learning Wales © Crown copyright 2007
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Introduction

UNIVERSITY OF WALES TRINITY SAINT DAVID (TSD)

RECOGNITION AND ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RAL)

Introduction

Much learning is undertaken in the workplace and valuing staff is an important facet of growth in all organisations. This provision supports the workforce in claiming credit for the higher level work-based learning gained.

The accreditation of prior learning (APEL) based on work-based learning and development is currently negligible, although many higher level staff development activities are regularly undertaken in the workplace. Where it does occur successfully is where learning is related to the admission requirements of traditional institutional based courses in subject specific areas. Demonstrating a value by accrediting this work-based learning will directly benefit learners and their employers and will also provide a forum to support employers in work-based training activities.

The current workforce possesses skills, abilities and knowledge which may have been applied elsewhere or learned out of context. Participants will achieve accreditation for this prior learning and this can form part of a qualification such as a certificate, diploma or degree. There will be clear routes for progression identified and learners will be advised of all opportunities by their academic adviser. This scheme develops an innovative, quality assured approach to the APEL, promote lifelong learning and professional development in the learner and enable the employer to improve the adaptability of the workforce.

Accreditation of prior learning will enhance the learning experience and could also identify specific areas for the further development of the individual. It will also reintroduce the workforce to learning and thus widen the participation of non-traditional learners making further learning more accessible.

As accreditation of prior learning can only form two thirds of a qualification, and has limited standing outside such a recognised qualification, it is

envisaged that all the learners will be motivated to develop their credits further.

This scheme is relevant to all sectors as gaining accreditation on prior, experiential and certificated learning is non sector specific.

Use of RAL credit to gain qualifications

Subject to meeting specific programme requirements (see *Professional Practice, Programme of Study Handbook*) up to two-thirds of a Professional Practice qualification can be awarded through RAL credit. Therefore, as an example, a person could get up to 80 credit points at level 7 for a Postgraduate Diploma (total = 120 credit points), through RAL credit.

Once you have been awarded credit for your RAL claim, you will get a certificate of credit which shows how much credit you have obtained and at what levels. **This certificate is not a qualification, but the credit you have gained can be put towards a qualification.** Many people put their RAL credit towards a Professional Practice qualification.

The type of prior learning you submit in your RAL portfolio may be of two types:

- Learning on courses of study which has already been credit-rated. In this case, you are not asking the University to *give* you credit for this learning, but to *recognise* it.
- Experiential learning, for example, learning gained from work or other significant experiences. This learning must be described in detail in your areas of learning.

Whichever type of prior learning you claim credit for, and it can be a mixture of both the above types, it must be relevant to the focus of any future programme of study you go on to undertake.

The structure

The course outline should enable you to identify learning from your work-based experience and to claim credit for it. This, in addition to any credit gained from formal education or training at the right level, will enable you to gain credit towards a qualification. Many people have found this to be a transforming experience.

Content

The provision is organised in sections. Although the sections focus on one area and provide for the advancement of knowledge and understanding the material provided is pertinent to all sections and to the accomplishment of the final portfolio and evidence of reflection.

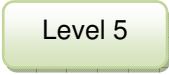
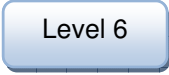
This is a flexible learning module which you work through, completing the tasks and exercises in the virtual learning environment (VLE). A wide range of activities, discussion and information are available and are indicated at each stage of the module by the icons. (see below)

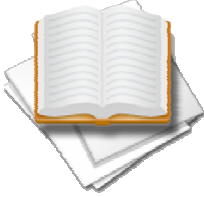
Each section has been organised following, wherever possible, a similar structure. The variations depend upon the content of the section. Generally each section will include the following:

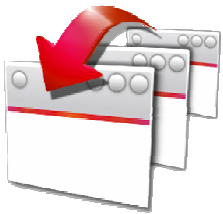
- Introduction and key concepts
- Background reading
- Examples of good practice
- Activity
- Reflection
- Cross-reference to the learning outcomes
- Contribution to final assessment
- Additional resources
- Advice and/or hints

The information will be indicated clearly using the following codes.

Table – Icons and colouring codes

Icon and colouring codes	
	Introduction – the objectives of the section
	Level 4 content
	Level 5 content
	Level 6 content
	Level 7 content

	Reading
	Writing
	Reflection
	Evidence
	Portfolio building
	DVD / Videos
	Audios
	Avoid

	Exercises - compulsory
	Activities - for personal development and support learning
	Can download to iPad / iPhone
	Link to web address
	PowerPoint Presentation
	Advice and/or hints
	Additional resources available on the Virtual Learning Environment Site

You have been allocated an Academic Adviser for the Recognition and Accreditation of Learning (RAL) and it is important that you seek feedback on your draft work from this Academic Adviser. You can also contact Catrin Evans, the Project Administrator on 01267 671304, c.e.evans@tsd.ac.uk.

The handbook is divided into stages, which include sources of information, key words, examples, exercises and tasks where appropriate. There are several exercises in this handbook and on the VLE which are designed to help you complete your portfolio. They should not be included in the portfolio, but we strongly recommend that you do them for your own benefit.

The *content* of this module is your own experience, which you critically evaluate and organise. The *structure* of module is contained in the guidelines given in this handbook. As has been already stated in the summary you will be allocated a RAL Academic Adviser. He/she is there to help you compile your claim. All queries about your claim for credit should be directed to your RAL Adviser.

Recognition and Accreditation of Learning, Academic Advisers (RAL AA)

You will normally meet your RAL AA at the Induction Day.

These notes clarify what you, the claimant, can reasonably expect from the RAL AA. Within the scope outlined below you should remember that the formulation and submission of the claim is your sole responsibility.

- The role of the RAL AA is to assist the individual claimant in preparing and submitting a claim for consideration by the University for accreditation. The RAL AA may be, but is not necessarily, involved in the assessment of the claim.
- The Professional Practice Administration Unit will provide the RAL AA with contact details for the claimant.
- The claimant should establish direct contact with the RAL AA who should at this point introduce themselves, explain their role as AA and establish the pattern for future communication. Where the claimant is attending the 'Recognition and Accreditation of Learning' sessions on campus, half hour sessions will have been set aside for a meeting with the claimant on a one to one or small group basis. If the claimant is preparing a claim at a distance, face to face contact may well not be possible and the contact will be a combination of telephone discussion and correspondence.

The RAL Academic Adviser (RAL AA) should:

- be familiar with and able to advise on the standard format for RAL claims and instructions given to claimants;
- be familiar with and able to advise on College procedures for RAL;
- assist the claimant in the identification of areas of learning, appropriate evidence and the statement of learning outcomes;
- receive and comment upon a draft submission;

At draft submission stage the Adviser can gain an overview of the claim which can often enable the Adviser to:

- suggest additional areas of learning hinted at within the claim but not explicitly put forward for assessment. Such areas are often regarded by the claimant as merely supplementary to an area of learning they have identified. Typical "hidden" areas are IT, human resource management/planning and communication skills;
- identify areas where additional or more appropriate evidence should be provided or where one piece of evidence could be used in support of a claim in more than one area of learning;
- advise on the development of the claim against the learning outcomes of specific modules if the claim is for specific credit;
- advise the Professional Practice Unit of specific areas of subject expertise likely to be required to assess the claim, if not for generic management skills.

In addition to the Induction Day a RAL learner is allocated up to a maximum of 3 hours of personal academic support. This time may be taken as tutorials for learners who can attend campus. If a learner is unable to visit the campus or if he/she is part of a cohort the arrangements will differ, and may include workshops and less one-to-one contact. You should discuss the specifics at the start of the programme with your RAL AA as part of the planning process.

Formative feedback from your RAL AA is an *essential* part of this module. You may also write, e-mail or use the website to contact your RAL AA for guidance. As Advisers are often away from their desks, it is useful to leave a message if you are unable to make contact by phone. Feedback on work will be returned by e-mail within 10 working days. Work that has been posted to the University of Wales Trinity Saint David will obviously take longer.

Schedule

We suggest you quickly scan through this scheme to gain an appreciation of the overall content and structure before working through it in detail.

To help you organise your time your RAL AA will negotiate a schedule to indicate what would be a reasonable rate of progress. Please adjust according to *actual* start and deadline dates. As you work through your schedule, make good use of the links to all resources indicated at each stage.

Our expectations

1. As a learner you are responsible for establishing contact with your RAL AA.
2. When asking for guidance, you are expected to have thought about alternative options.
3. You should seek and act upon adviser feedback. Advisers have a maximum time of 3 hours only per learner for personal academic support (face-to-face or by e-mail). Use your time wisely. During teaching periods you can expect feedback within 10 working days.
4. You are expected to find out the Higher Education values of credits for any previous courses by contacting the provider and getting an appropriate statement.
5. You are expected to access and use the Pebble Pad e-portfolio and the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) which supports this module. This contains additional information, activities and background material. Information on accessing the VLE is provided during Induction.

Continuing your studies - registering for new modules

Once accreditation has been achieved you may continue your studies to a full Award through the Professional Practice Framework. Further ESF funded provision is also available. Your RAL AA will be able to advise you on progression.

Bibliography – Work-based Learning

Raelin, J.A. *Work-based Learning: Bridging Knowledge and Action in the Workplace*
San Francisco: Jossey Bass Wiley, 2008.

Section 1

Curriculum Vitae and Job Description

Curriculum Vitae

Key Words / Concepts:

CV – Curriculum Vitae

Introduction

Your **CV** is the first element in your portfolio and will act as a reference document for you when you start thinking about the areas of learning that you wish to claim credit for. It will also enable your programme adviser to help you to develop areas of learning, and act as an introduction and a context for assessment purposes.



Curriculum Vitae – your past experience

Purpose

The purpose of producing a CV is to provide an overall picture of your past learning achievements. This information should be of a summative kind, giving dates and a brief description (including the title) of any post, activity or award.

Annotating your CV

You may well have a CV from the last time you applied for a job. An existing CV is certainly a valuable starting point. However, information not only about your employment but also about any voluntary/unpaid work you might have done/be doing and your major leisure activities can also be valuable. This is because the purpose of presenting your CV as part of your RAL portfolio is to provide contextualising information about the learning you have gained. In our experience, unpaid work (e.g. treasurer or secretary of a club or society, acting as school governor or voluntary work) and leisure activity (e.g. a serious hobby or interest) can be a significant source of learning achievement. Individuals often overlook this, as they do not automatically equate such activity with formal 'academic' learning. In order to gain the most from your claim it is important that your CV provides as full a picture as possible of your previous activities. Identifying what you achieved in each job and how it prepared you for the next one will help you to identify key learning from the previous work roles. This will then help you to identify themes of learning in your career and will help you identify and describe your areas of learning.

What you should do

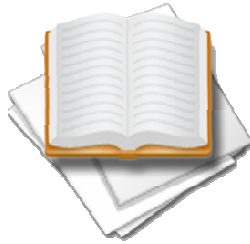
1. Write your CV. It should include the following, in each case starting with your most recent activity and working backwards:

- Education (post-16 only)
- Employment
- Unpaid work and relevant life experiences (such as study tours, hobbies)
- Courses undertaken

You may well have taken courses which do not carry academic credit, for example, short training courses. Such courses can be a valuable source of background evidence for one or more of your areas of learning. These should also be listed in your CV. Give brief details (date, duration, mode i.e. full or part-time, subject and whether there was any assessment involved) of courses/training programmes you have taken in relation to your job (do not go back beyond five years, since the task of writing this is to give a picture of your current activities). These courses may not carry credit but may form the basis of evidence for your areas of learning.

When you start writing up your areas of learning (Section 4) you may wish to add to your CV anything that is particularly relevant to your claim and cross reference to your areas of learning. You can then refer the reader to your areas of learning and to your CV for further or contextualising information.

Pebble Pad's CV builder can be used to complete your CV.



Full guidance on writing a professional CV may be found in Chapter 11 of Wilson, E and Bedford, D (2009) *Study Skills for Part-time Students*, Harlow: Longman. An extract from this chapter will be placed on the VLE.



There are a number of websites which can help you with planning your CV.



Insert your CV in your RAL portfolio.

Job Description

Your **job description**, like your CV, gives contextualising information about you to your adviser and assessor, and is likely to be a key source of information for you when you start to think about areas of learning that you wish to claim credit for.



Job Description – Your Current Experience

Purpose

To provide a picture of your current roles, responsibilities and achievements.

Annotating Your Job Description(s)

You should think of the term 'job description' as one which **encompasses** the work you do, whether it is paid or unpaid. A formal job description provided by an employer may be a starting point - but you will need to add to it to ensure that it gives as full and accurate a picture of your work role as possible. However, if you do not have a formal job description or you are not currently in paid employment, now is the time to write your own job description. If you have more than one current job, or have been in your current job for less than a year and wish previous experience to be taken into consideration, you will need to prepare additional job descriptions in order to present as full a picture as possible of the work you currently do.

What you should do

1. Write your job description(s), using the following guidelines:

- Provide an organisation chart showing your position (use job titles only)
- Give an idea of the scale of your responsibility e.g. the number of meetings you are responsible for minuting, the number of people you are responsible for, the value of resources controlled.

- Provide a brief commentary on each aspect of your current work roles and activities. This should include a short description of each task and its relative importance within the whole job and your level of responsibility. Concentrate on the knowledge and skills which are required to do each task.
- Add functions and activities not covered in any official job description.



2. Insert your job description (s) in your RAL portfolio.

3. When you start writing up your areas of learning, you may wish to add to your job description anything that is particularly relevant to your claim. You can then cross reference to your areas of learning and back to your job description for further or contextualising information.

NOTE: Both your CV and Job Descriptions will be continuously edited and updated during the process.



At the Induction you will have agreed a first meeting with your RAL AA. You should have a draft CV and annotated job description prepared to aid discussion.

Bibliography

Wilson, E and Bedford, D (2009) *Study Skills for Part-time Students*, Harlow: Longman.

Section 2

Reflection

Reflecting on Learning



Reflection on Learning and Reflective frameworks

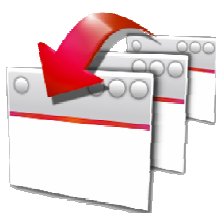
Key words / concepts:

reflective essay: your reflective essay is specifically about what you have learned from undertaking this module. For your essay you will also be reflecting on the learning achieved whilst gathering evidence for your claim.

learning log/diary: a learning log is a journal which evidences your own learning and skills development. It begins with a description of what you have done, but also needs to discuss what it is that you have learned and needs to include a critical reflection on that learning.

critical reflection: Reid (1993) in her definition noted reflection as an active process rather than passive thinking. She states 'reflection is a process of reviewing an experience of practice in order to describe, analyse, evaluate and so inform learning about practice' (Reid, B. (1993). *"But we're doing it already" Exploring a response to the concept of reflective practice in order to improve its facilitation.* Nurse Education? Today 13: 305-309).

Reflecting on practice is an important facet in the verification of experiential learning and assists in the authentication of the evidence gathered. The process and the supporting material will form an integral element of the portfolio. The RAL module requires that you reflect upon your personal learning based on experience whilst working. There is an additional requirement that you write a reflective essay reviewing learning based on the portfolio. (Section 7) The slides provide essential information on different theories and models of reflection which will support this process.



Aim

Discuss the concept of reflection as a learning strategy

Objectives

- *Discuss the concept and purposes of reflection; models of reflection; levels of reflection.*
- *Analyse the principles of reflective practice*

A great deal has been written about the process and value of 'reflection' as an aspect of learning, especially as an aspect of learning from experience. Some of the important literature in this field is shown at the end of this section.

Kolb (1984), in particular, has usefully distinguished between four different abilities that learners need to use in a cyclical fashion in order to learn from their experience. Learners need to *have concrete experience*. They then need to *reflect* on their experiences and *generate abstract concepts* or 'theories' in order to make sense of their experience. Finally, they need to *test out their theories* through active experimentation and engagement - in other words, use these theories to inform the decisions they make that will result in them having further concrete experience. Throughout the time that you take to undertake this module, we are asking you to reflect on your practice, through your learning diary, through the work that you do in writing about areas of learning and through the reflective essay.

In the reflective essay, we are asking you to reflect on and make sense of the experience of putting together your RAL portfolio. This sort of reflection often involves you in analysing the problem solving strategies you used to juggle

the work and study commitments you had while undertaking this module. You may also use this process of reflection to clarify your reasons for taking the module, and to discover more about the particular ways in which you learn best. In addition new learning could also include the reading you may have undertaken in order to support the justification of both learning achieved and evidence provided.

Such reflection has more value than simply indicating the quality of your learning on this module, though this is the reason we ask you to write such an essay. Reflection develops self-knowledge - that is, informal theorising about your own learning patterns and styles - that you can take with you into future life experiences.

Activities



Activities - for personal development which support learning

A learning diary

Examples of diary headings are given below. Duplicate and use them as necessary.

Activity

(The evidence from these activities, at the appropriate level, can be included in your portfolio if level appropriate.)

Using the following template, and responding to the questions, undertake a critical reflection of a learning event.

LEARNING DIARY – EXAMPLE 1 (Level 4 and Level 5)

Learning Diary

Date:

Nature of learning event: (frequently these occur when our expectations are not met and a situation develops differently from what we expected)

What were your expectations and what actually happened?

Explain why the incident developed differently from your expectation:

How will you handle similar situations differently in future?

Any other learning points:

How can this be evidenced?

EXAMPLE 2 (Level 6 and Level 7)

THE WHAT? MODEL OF STRUCTURED REFLECTION

The model (Driscoll 1994, 2000), contains three elements of reflection:

1. WHAT? A description of the event
2. SO WHAT? An analysis of the event
3. NOW WHAT? Proposed actions following the event.

1. A description of the event

WHAT? Trigger questions:

- What is the purpose of returning to this situation?
- What happened?
- What did I see/do?
- What was my reaction to it?
- What did other people do that were involved in this?

2. An analysis of the event

SO WHAT? Trigger questions:

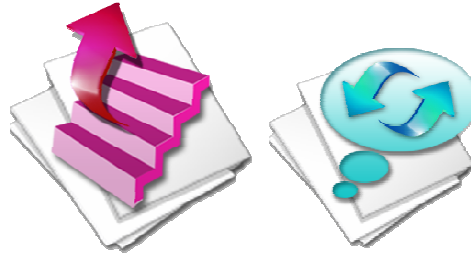
- What way did I act at the time?
- How did I feel at the time of the event?
- Were those feelings I had any different from other people who were also involved at the time?
- Are my feelings now, after the event, any different from what I experienced at the time?
- Do I still feel troubled, if so, in what way?
- What were the effects of what I did (or did not do)?
- What positive aspects now emerge for me from the event that happened in practice?
- What have I noticed about my behaviour in practice by taking a more measured look at it?
- What observations does any person helping me to reflect on my practice make of the change

3. Proposed actions following the event

NOW WHAT? Trigger questions:

- What are the implications for others and me in practice based on what I have described and analysed?
- What difference does it make if I choose to do nothing?
- Where can I get more information to face a similar situation again?
- How can I modify my practice if a similar situation was to happen again?
- What help do I need to help me 'action' the results of my reflections?

- Which aspect should be tackled first?
- How will I notice that I am any different in practice?
- What is the main learning that I take from reflecting on my practice in this way?
- How can I evidence this?



Structured Reflection

Activities - for personal development and support learning

Examples - Duplicate and use as necessary.

Activity

Responding to the questions, undertake a critical reflection of a learning event.

Describe a scenario.

1. Using the What? model of structured reflection to help you, describe on a sheet of paper in as much detail as you can remember, the situation or event (*What?*). You might just want to put in brief reminders, or phrases that were significant at the time rather than write the whole story.
2. Next, take a fresh sheet of paper and again using the trigger questions to help you, analyse in more detail why for you such an experience happened in your practice (*So What?*).
3. Now compare your findings with a colleague to disclose and share your practice with.

Concentrate particularly on your Proposed Actions due to what you have learnt. (*Now What?*).



- Re-visit your learning diary – cross refer to reflective frameworks
- Choose a point in time in your diary and write a paragraph reflecting on your own learning – send it to your adviser for feedback
- Ensure that you relate to levels (Section 4)
- Can you provide evidence?

The Learning Diary

Purpose:

- To help you focus on the learning that underpins your activities.
- To act as an ongoing *aide memoire*, which will be particularly useful when you write your areas of learning and find evidence to support them.
- To capture critical learning incidents and ideas as they occur which can then be used in your essay.

What is a critical learning incident?

A critical learning incident is an experience which is not routine which requires you to draw upon your knowledge/skills in order to respond to it and which tests/extends your learning. The diary is not a compulsory part of your claim but you may wish to use one as a way of identifying, recording and reflecting upon key learning experiences. We recommend spending five minutes at the end of each learning session to record your successes, outstanding issues and areas that you are having difficulties with, which will give you a framework for use when writing your essay. It will also save you time and probably result in a better essay.

What you should do

It is suggested that you keep a diary over the period covering all activities up to writing the essay. Remember it is not intended that you complete a diary sheet for each day but for each learning event. This may be a reflection upon a conversation at work, how you handled a work-based problem, a face-to-face tutorial, reading this workbook, using the website and so on. The diary

will help you to identify the knowledge/skills you are required to use and get you into the habit of thinking about your activities and the learning involved. Keeping a record of your daily activities for a short period may also help you to annotate your CV and job description more easily, and identify areas of learning.

Examples of diary headings are given in the templates in this section. If you do decide to keep a diary you may submit one or more pages as evidence in your claim, if they illustrate the application of skills and/or knowledge for which you wish to claim credit. Keeping a diary will also strengthen your understanding of reflection and reflective practice and prepare you for the writing of your reflective essay.

Peters (1991) describes a four-step protocol called "DATA" (Describe, Analyze, Theorize, Act):

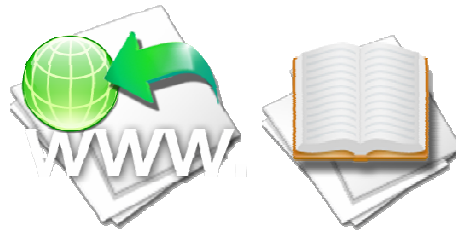
1. **Describe**: the basic elements of the problem, task or situation

2. **Analyze**: identify assumptions beliefs, rules, motives and any other factors underlying the current approach

3. **Theorize**: what alternatives are possible? What are their comparative merits and drawbacks?

4. **Act**: try out the new approach, evaluate the results

Examples of evidence:



Additional Reading:

<http://www.compact.org/disciplines/reflection/bibliography/>

Boud, D., R. Keogh and D. Walker (Eds.). 1985. *Reflection: Turning Experience into Learning*. London: Kogan Page.

Boud *et al.* (1985, 7) note that experience alone is not sufficient for learning and pose the following questions: What is it that turns experience into learning? What specifically enables learners to gain the maximum benefit from the situations they find themselves in? How can they apply their experience in new contexts? They suggest that structured reflection is the key to learning from experience, and that reflection can be very difficult. 'Perhaps if we can sharpen our consciousness of what reflection in learning can involve and how it can be influenced then we may be able to improve our own practice of learning and help those who learn with us'.

Boud *et al.* (1985, 7) tie the timing of reflective activities to the three stages in experience-based learning: preparation, engagement, and processing; underscoring the importance of including reflective activity at each stage. In the preparatory phase, students examine what is required of them and the demands of their field site; during the experience, they process a variety of inputs arising from the field site; finally, they must consider and consolidate what they have experienced.

Claxton C.S., P.H. Murrell. 1987. *Learning Styles: Implications for Improving Educational Practice*. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 4. Washington D.C.: The George Washington University.

Claxton and Murrell (1987) describe four 'layers' of learning style research - (1) personality types, (2) models of how people process information, (3) social interaction models, and (4) instructional preference models. One of the most widely used analyses of personality types is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). Kolb's experiential learning model is an example of information processing models.

Dewey, J. 1933. *How We Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process*. Lexington, MA: Heath.

John Dewey defined reflective thinking as ‘active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends [that] includes a conscious and voluntary effort to establish belief upon a firm basis of evidence and rationality’ (1933, 9).

Daudelin, M.W. 1996. ‘Learning from experience through reflection’. *Organizational Dynamics* 24(3): 36-48.

Daudelin (1996, 39) provides a definition of reflection that explicitly captures its relation to learning, ‘Reflection is the process of stepping back from an experience to ponder, carefully and persistently, its meaning to the self through the development of inferences; learning is the creation of meaning from past or current events that serves as a guide for future behaviour’. This definition suggests that reflection is integral to learning, when learning is defined as making sense of past experience in order to affect and understand future experience.

Gelman, S., B. Holland, *et al.* 2001. *Assessing Service-Learning and Civic Engagement: Principles and Techniques*. Providence, RI: Campus Compact.

Assessing Service-Learning and Civic Engagement: Principles and Techniques offers a broad overview of many issues related to assessment in higher education, with specific application for understanding the impact of service-learning and civic engagement initiatives. It builds upon an earlier publication from Portland State University. This version has been substantially revised and has been augmented with narrative addressing assessment issues and strategies; detailed discussion of learning from multiple research projects over the past six years about impact on multiple constituencies - students, faculty, communities, and institutions; and discussion of strategies for data collection, analysis, synthesis, and reporting. Specific assessment instruments for use with each constituency are provided, including suggestions for administration, preparation, and data analysis. This volume will assist individuals seeking a comprehensive resource on assessment issues, with applicability particularly in higher education as well as potential applications to other groups interested in assessment.

Giles Jr., D.E., E. Porter Honnet, and S. Migliore (Eds.). 1991. *Research Agenda for Combining Service and Learning in the 1990s*. Raleigh, NC: National Society for Internships and Experiential Education.

The National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE) notes that: ‘an effective service-learning program provides structured opportunities for people

to reflect critically on their service experience' (1991, 25). In addition, NSEE states in the preamble to its guiding principles, 'it is crucial that service toward the common good be combined with reflective learning to assure that service programs of high quality can be created and sustained over time...' (24).

Eyler J., Giles D.E., Schmiede. 1996. *A Practitioner's Guide to Reflection in Service-learning: Student Voices and Reflections*. A Technical Assistance Project funded by the Corporation for National Service. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University.

Eyler, Giles and Schmiede (1996) examined students' experiences of critical reflection using in-depth, personal, semi-structured interviews.

Continuous: Students commented that critical reflection must be an ongoing part of the service project. Continuous reflection involves reflection before, during and after the experience. Student interviewees often underscored the importance of reflective preparation as key to getting the most out of the service experience. Reflection during the experience was usually geared towards problem-solving and identifying actions. Reflection after the service tended to focus on evaluating the meaning of the experience, integrating old knowledge and new information, and formulating future course of action.

Connected: Students repeatedly emphasized the importance of integrating service with classwork. Faculty can use reflection to connect service and classwork in two main ways. First, faculty can help students develop conceptual framework required for the service project. Second, faculty can guide students in applying concepts/theories to their project. Connected reflection results in more effective service and enhanced learning of the experience, integrating old knowledge and new information, and formulating future courses of action.

Challenging: Students reported that challenging reflection pushed them to think in new ways, raises new questions, produces new understanding, and new ways of problem-solving. Faculty must challenge students while simultaneously providing support and creating a 'safe' environment where students are confident that their contributions and feelings will be respected.

Contextualized: Reflection should be appropriate for the context and setting of the particular service-learning project. Service projects in courses lend themselves to formal, structured methods of reflection. Informal discussions may be more feasible in co-curricular programs.

Communication Structured reflection can be enhanced by communication with peers and community organizations. Eyler, Giles and Schmiede (1996) found that the most common forms of reflection involved discussions, interactions with others and journals (48). They describe several reflection activities that involve interactions with peers and community partners including structured/unstructured discussions, presentations, interaction with community members and staff and interviews.

Goldsmith, S. 1995. *Journal Reflection: A Resource Guide for Community Service Leaders and Educators Engaged in Service-learning*. Washington, D. C.: The American Alliance for Rights & Responsibilities.

Goldsmith (1995) suggests that reflection should be continuous, noting that 'reflection should be a habitual activity, an ongoing conversation with the self (although the conversation may, at times, include others) that moves hand in hand with the experience'.

Guskin A. (1994). 'Reducing Student Costs and Enhancing Student Learning: Restructuring the Role of Faculty' 26(5): *Change*. 16-25.

Guskin notes coaching is a critical aspect of skills development. An experienced individual uses a combination of tips, advice and example to help students avoid pitfalls. In addition to faculty, coaching can be done by more experienced students and interactive technology. Both upper and lower level students learn through peer coaching. Another advantage of upper level students coaching lower level students may be that older peers may have a better appreciation of how to overcome learning hurdles while for faculty such hurdles may be only a faint memory for faculty. Guskin also notes that in addition to one-on-one faculty/student interaction, small group discussions can be very effective because (1) students receive support from peers, (2) can share their perspectives, and (3) pressure of peers can provide an intensity and excitement to discussions. Faculty can challenge students and provide feedback in such settings.

Kolb, D.A. 1984. *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

David Kolb (1984) postulated that learning occurs in a cycle in which students engage in and then observe and reflect on experiences, assimilate reflections in a theory, and then deduce implications for future action from that theory.

Lynch, C. L. (1996). 'Facilitating and assessing unstructured problem solving'. *Journal of College Reading and Learning*, 27, 16-27.

This paper describes a skill-focused developmental model for understanding and assessing critical thinking and professional problem solving. This paper provides several references on the reflective judgment model and its use in understanding student problem-solving efforts and in designing appropriate coursework.

McCarthy, B. 1987. *The 4MAT system: Teaching to Learning Styles with Right/left Mode Techniques*. Barrington IL: EXCEL Inc.

The 4MAT system relies on several theoretical foundations: the experiential learning model of Kolb, the concept of hemisphericity - the notion that varying skills and behaviours are more likely to be dominated by different areas of the brain or to be associated with neural activity in different areas of the brain - and in part the theory of Jung, which is most typically applied in education via the Meyers-Briggs Type Inventory.

Learning involves two dimensions: perception and processing. Human perception refers to the ways people take in new information (experience and conceptualizing). Human processing refers to the ways people process new information (reflection and action). Four major phases are identified in the learning cycle based on these two dimensions (1) experiencing, (2) conceptualizing, (3) applying, and (4) creating learning. Briefly, the experiencing stage seeks to connect new concepts/skills to learners' existing knowledge and experience. The conceptualizing stage focuses on helping students acquire facts and expert knowledge. The application stage involves practicing new knowledge and skills including open-ended explorations in unstructured settings such as service-learning. In the final stage, students demonstrate and share learning, and explore extensions to other settings.

McCarthy, M.D. 1996. 'One-time and short-term service-learning experiences'. In *Service-Learning in Higher Education*, edited by B. Jacoby and Associates. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. 113-134.

McCarthy (1996, 120) recommends that reflection should occur before, during, and after the service experience.

Schön, D.A. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner*. New York: Basic Books.

Schön (1987, 17) suggests that students learn skills by practicing them. He suggests solving real-world problems competently requires the artistry of problem-framing, implementation and improvisation in addition to technical expertise. Schön underscores the importance of the coaching process for learning the artistry of practice.

Schön (1987, 102) describes coaching in terms of telling/listening and demonstrating/imitating.

A coach can demonstrate how to solve certain types of problems, and students can imitate the coach's product or the problem-solving process. The coach can give specific instructions, criticize students' products or their processes of problem-solving, suggest future actions, help students establish priorities and ask questions.

The coach's description may not match the student's need to know, may be ambiguous, or may refer to concepts unfamiliar to students. Students' actions reveal the meanings they have constructed and the coach may produce

further instructions based on his understanding of the student's difficulty. The coach may ask questions to direct students' attention to issues they may not have considered previously.

The Ladder of Reflection

The dialogue between coach and student involves a chain of reciprocal actions and reflections. Schön (1987, 114) introduces a vertical dimension to this dialogue. Going up the 'ladder' of reflection involves moving from an action to a reflection on that action. Moving down involves moving from a reflection to an action based on that reflection. Diagonal moves occur when one party acts on the basis of another's reflection or when one party's action triggers the other's action. For example, a student could reflect on the coach's demonstration. Or a student could try an alternative approach based on the coach's criticism.

Example - Reflection Ladder

3. Reflection on Description
2. Description of Design
1. Design

In the example, designing is at the base of the ladder.

The student presents a description of the design to the coach. Description may also be embedded in the coach's advice.

Two levels up, the student could reflect on the coach's description (move up) or try out a new design (move down) based on the coach's description. Similarly, the coach could reflect on the student's design.

Bibliography - Reflective Practice

- Boud, D., Cohen, R. and Walker, D. (eds) *Using Experience for Learning*., SRHE, 1993
- Boud, D., Docherty, P. and Cressey, P. (eds) *Productive Reflection at Work* London: Routledge, 2005.
- Kolb, D. A. *Experiential Learning* London: Prentice Hall, 1984.
- Moon, J.A. *A Handbook of Reflective and Experiential Learning: Theory and Practice* London: Routledge Falmer, 2004.
- Moon, J.A. *Learning Journals* London: Routledge, 2006.
- Schön, D. *The Reflective Practitioner* San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1991.

LEARNING DIARY – EXAMPLE 1 (Level 4 and Level 5)

Learning Diary

Date:

Nature of learning event: (frequently these occur when our expectations are not met and a situation develops differently from what we expected)

What were your expectations and what actually happened?

Explain why the incident developed differently from your expectation:

How will you handle similar situations differently in future?

Any other learning points:

How can this be evidenced?

Peters (1991) describes a four-step protocol called "DATA" (Describe, Analyze, Theorize, Act):

1. **Describe**: the basic elements of the problem, task or situation

2. **Analyze**: identify assumptions beliefs, rules, motives and any other factors underlying the current approach

3. **Theorize**: what alternatives are possible? What are their comparative merits and drawbacks?

4. **Act**: try out the new approach, evaluate the results

Examples of evidence:

Section 3

Learning Styles

Key words / concepts:

learning styles The term 'learning styles' refers to the preferred way(s) in which individuals interact with, take in, and process new stimuli or information across the three domains of learning identified in the taxonomy of education objectives: cognitive (knowledge), psychomotor (skills) and affective (attitude). In other words, your preferred learning style is simply **how you learn best**.

http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Learning_styles#Definition (Note – this website also provides an outline of different learning styles)

experiential learning: Learning through experience and analysis.

How adults learn and learning styles

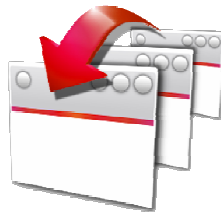
A learning style is the manner in which we receive and process information. Most learners fall within one or more style. The literature suggests that learners who are actively engaged in the learning process will be more likely to achieve success. Once students are actively engaged in their own learning process they begin to feel empowered and their personal achievement and self-direction levels rise.

A great deal has been written about the way that individuals learn but there is no evidence to suggest that there is a unique individual learning style. A wide range of learning styles has been introduced in recent years and preferences need to be considered. These preferences also need to be related to a variety of considerations, e.g. what it is that the learner needs to learn, the different ways it is possible to learn and the available resources. Therefore it is important to understand what learning style preferences are, and how to address them when identifying learning achieved and planning further learning. Reflecting (Section 2) on these styles is an important factor in the learning process.



The following PowerPoint slides provide a comprehensive guide to a range of learning styles. Please recognise those which are relevant to yourself and use in identifying learning.

For Level 6 and Level 7 reflection on learning, a wide range should be discussed.



Aim

An introduction to a variety of learning styles

Objectives

- Discuss personal styles of learning.
- Relate the different styles to learning achieved.
- Reflect on the learning achieved related to the different learning styles.



Using the templates, and responding to the questions, undertake a critical reflection of a learning event based on your knowledge and understanding of learning styles.

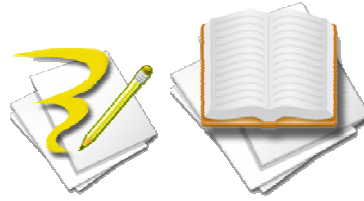
Despite the known benefits of using your preferred learning style, adults often neglect using their strongest learning style in more formal learning situations. Instead, many adults still tend to follow the standardised way of learning they grew up with in school.

However our goals as adults may have changed, dramatically. Generic learning is no longer feasible in today's fast-paced world. How quickly you learn and process information will determine how valuable you are to your employer, and how successful you will be in managing your time and personal resources well into the future.



Reflection and the reflective essay. (Section 7) Keep evidence of learning during this process to support your essay e.g. evidence of reading and reflection on learning styles





EXPLANATORY NOTES AND EXERCISES

Read and undertake some on-line questionnaires to understand a variety of theories and models:

<http://rapidbi.com/created/learningstyles.html#Kolblearningstyletheory>

including:

[Kolb and Lewin](#)

[Honey and Mumford](#)

[LSQ](#) - Learning Style Questionnaire

[NLP](#) - Neuro Linguistic Programming

[Gardner](#)

[4MAT](#)

[Pask](#)

[Free on-line inventories and tests](#)

[Sample Learning Styles Questionnaire](#)

[Sample VAK Learning Styles Inventory](#)

Howard Gardner - <http://www.howardgardner.com/MI/mi.html>, and

<http://www.infed.org/thinkers/gardner.htm>

Multiple Intelligence test –

<http://api.ning.com/files/i1uIJRjiSaWYenhyVGJsLJuivOZC0m89m3fv386Go0/gardnerMItest.pdf>



Learning Styles Questionnaires – on-line

VARK Learning Styles Questionnaire – <http://www.vark-learn.com/english/page.asp?p=questionnaire>
Questionnaire based on Honey and Mumford -
http://www.brainboxx.co.uk/a2_learnstyles/pages/roughandready.htm
http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/styles/honey_mumford.html
Peter Honey Publications –
<http://www.peterhoney.com/content/LearningStylesQuestionnaire.html>
Open University –
<http://www.open2.net/survey/learningstyles/>

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Knowles, M.S. 1970. *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: Andragogy vs. Pedagogy*. New York: Association Press.
Kolb, D. A. *Experiential Learning* London: Prentice Hall, 1984.
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Moon, J.A. *Learning Journals* London: Routledge, 2006.
Schön, D. *The Reflective Practitioner* San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1991.

Websites:

Higher Education Academy,
<http://www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/handbook/seminars/22>
Learning Styles and Active Learning, (some activities and You Tube videos),
<http://learningstyle.netproinfo.in/learning-strategy/learning-style-and-activist.html>
BBC, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/keyskills/extra/module1/1.shtml>
Learning Styles Online, <http://www.learning-styles-online.com/> (with activities)

Youtube - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2QtSbP4FRg>
Daniel Golman – Emotional Intelligence –
<http://danielgoleman.info/topics/emotional-intelligence/>

Section 4

Understanding Levels, Credit and Areas of Learning

Aim

An introduction to academic credit, levels of learning and level descriptors

Objectives

- Identify and use the different levels of learning;
- Reflect on learning and relate to appropriate levels

Key words / concepts:

academic credit (university level) - Academic credit is the formal recognition of learning, expressed in terms of a number of credit points, at a particular level (Level 4 = Certificate of Higher Education, Level 5 = Foundation Degree, Level 6 = Bachelors Degree, Level 7 = Masters Degree). 1 credit point is equivalent to 10 notional hours of study.

level descriptor - A level descriptor describes the complexity of learning expected at qualification level in higher education (university) levels.

areas of learning (AOL) – Underlying and informing the specifics of what you do, there will be generic skills, abilities and knowledge that you have learned. These areas of expertise can be categorised into themes or topics, which we are calling ‘areas of learning’.

The importance of level descriptors

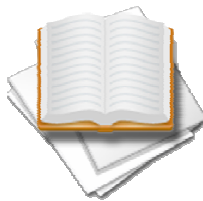
These are used to determine the Higher Education level of your experiential learning. Details of requirements at each level can be found at the end of the section.

To assess your written work, i.e. the reflective essay, we will use assessment criteria which describe the academic expectations at different levels. These criteria are central to the Professional Practice Framework and you will find that you are expected to develop your work during your programme to reflect these in other modules. These are shown in Section 7 and are derived from the Quality Assurance Agency's Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/FHEQ/default.asp>.

Credit rated learning, reflection and action planning

By this stage you should have completed your CV and job description and be working on the following:



An exercise in preparing an action plan for the completion of the work for the module

- Considering reflection and reflective frameworks (Section 2)
- Reading the explanatory notes and resources which will support you at this stage of the module.



- Drafting a list of areas of learning
- Considering the relationship between the theory and practice of learning from experience
- Researching and summarising your credit rated learning



Review

As this module is possibly your first experience of Work Based Learning Studies and even of Higher Education, it is important for you and your Adviser to undertake a review at this stage. This is to ensure that you have the opportunity to express any concerns, anxieties or particular issues impeding you on the module. Time taken now may very well save time at later stages.

Credit rated learning

Have you any relevant credit-rated learning?

Your portfolio is a claim for academic credit. This has a specific meaning and should not be confused with levels used in Further Education. Credit rated learning is for a course which has an academic credit at higher education level e.g. another course at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, other UK Higher Education Institutions or with a recognised professional body at HE level 4 or above or NVQ at levels 4 or 5. However, you may have completed a course which has already received academic recognition through the awarding of credit. This can be included in your portfolio if it is relevant to the focus of your claim. In this case, you are not asking University of Wales Trinity Saint David to *give* you credit for this learning, but to *recognise* the credit it already carries.

The following points should help you decide whether you already have relevant credit rated learning.

There are a number of different courses which are likely to carry academic credit:

- Academic qualifications such as an HNC or postgraduate certificate
- College courses / modules. For example, you may have done a course from an Open College programme. If a course carries academic credit, it is likely to say so on the associated certificate, and to indicate the amount and level.

Credit gained as a result of courses undertaken more than five years ago is not generally counted since such courses do not necessarily show that this learning is still current. They should still be listed in your CV. However, the learning from such courses need not be wasted. It is best used within an 'area of learning'. Here, you can show how you have *applied* the learning from these past courses, and thus how you now have *more* learning than was the case when you took the course.



Reminder - It is your responsibility to establish whether courses of study you have completed are credit rated or not. The way to do this is to contact the awarding body or HEI as appropriate and ask them for a statement of the award's equivalence in higher education credits, i.e. at level 4 and above; up to level 3 counts as further education. It is best to do this as soon as possible in case there are delays in getting a response.



Adding credit rated learning to your portfolio

Purpose

To use learning that has already been credit rated in your RAL portfolio

What you should do

1. From the information above, decide whether you have any credit-rated learning. Check with your RAL AA if you are not sure.
2. If you wish to include credit rated learning in your portfolio you should give details of each course (syllabus, duration) and a certified copy of the certificate must be included. You will be asked to show your RAL AA the original certificate. The amount of credit each course bears will be added to the credit you gain from your areas of learning.



Reminder - check that any relevant non-credit rated courses you have completed are listed in your CV or job description as appropriate. Remember, you can use these as supporting evidence for areas of learning.



Developing an Action Plan

Purpose

- To give you an initial overview of what your portfolio must contain.
- To make you aware of the tasks you need to do in order to complete your portfolio.
- To help you to plan your time.

Most learners who make a RAL claim have to juggle a number of competing responsibilities both at work and in the home, in addition to their studies. The aim of this exercise is to help you get a clear understanding of what is required of you in this module. With this information at the outset, you are likely to be able to plan your time as efficiently as possible. This exercise is not an assessed part of your work, simply an aid to using your time effectively. We strongly advise you to make use of the exercise in the way that will be most helpful to you, and to update your plan as circumstances change.

What is an action plan?

An action plan is a document produced by you and designed to identify a route to a chosen goal. An action plan should be SMART:

Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Realistic
Time bound

What you should do

1. Read the summary of each stage in the handbook. These give you an overview of what the handbook contains, stage by stage. Each of these summarises the content and tasks associated with a particular stage of compiling your portfolio.
2. Think about the following information:
 - The deadline for handing in your RAL portfolio. If you do not know when this is refer to your RAL AA.
 - Your work and home commitments.
 - The approximate percentages of your time required for the tasks involved in producing your claim, which are as follows.

<i>Task</i>	<i>% of Your Time</i>
<i>CV, Job description, credit rated learning</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>List of titles for areas of learning</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Working up one area of learning</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Working up your remaining areas of learning</i>	<i>45</i>



Reminder - Remember that you also need time to write a reflective essay. Check the word length in the Module Descriptors.

3. Using all the information above, write an action plan or timetable for yourself. You may like to use the module schedule at the front as a guide. Note that you will need to spend the largest proportion of your time on the tasks related to your areas of learning. The reflective essay is equivalent to 150 hours of study so plan in regular study time. As you write your action plan, you may want to ask yourself the following questions:
 - Shall I set aside time each day or periodically (say, once a week) for this activity?
 - Do I need to build in worry time or time for possible commitments I do not yet know about?
 - Do I have a contingency plan?
 - Is my plan SMART?
4. Remember that you can revise your action plan as you progress through the module.

What are areas of learning?

You have looked at your experience in a familiar way - most of us have an idea of what a CV and a job description might look like. Both CVs and job descriptions structure experience in terms of roles and activities - they are about what you do. Underlying and informing the specifics of what you do, there will be generic skills, abilities and knowledge that you have learned. These areas of expertise can be categorised into themes or topics, which we are calling 'areas of learning'.

'Areas of learning' consist of non-overlapping categories of skills, abilities and/or knowledge. This may appear somewhat artificial because, in your actual experience, the different parts of your learning are interwoven with each other and with your roles and activities.

In developing a CV you thought about your work-based and other experience chronologically. In developing a list of areas of learning you need to think thematically about your experience, and to pick out recurring themes of learning which you can then group together into 'areas'. For example, a person may look across their work experience and see that they have learned how to teach young adults. They may have developed this area of learning through a number of activities, such as teaching maths in a secondary school, running a youth group, and teaching a son or daughter how to play the flute. Each of these activities may have increased the person's teaching abilities.

It is the generic areas of knowledge and skill that you write up in your areas of learning which are assessed for credit, not the activities you listed in your CV and job description.

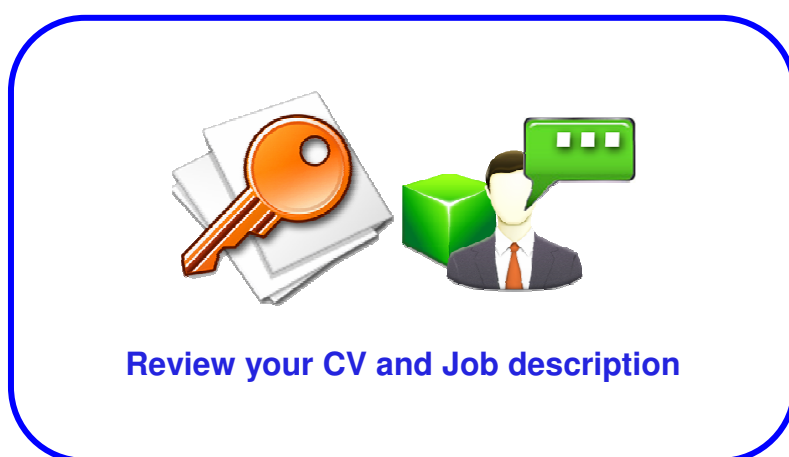
In summary, there are two ways in which we have asked you to think about your experience in developing your RAL portfolio:

CV and job description	Areas of Learning
What you do	What your knowledge and skills are
Your specific activities	The generic learning underpinning your activities
Looking at experience chronologically	Looking at experience thematically
<i>Purpose in portfolio:</i> to provide contextualising information on your work and other experience	<i>Purpose in portfolio:</i> to claim academic credit for experiential learning

Finding Areas of Learning

To claim credit you must compile an 'area of learning'. Areas of learning come from both experience and formal taught learning that you have acquired from a combination of sources, such as training days, experiences from work or voluntary activity, reading or investigating for specific activities such as projects. Sometimes it is not easy to find out where this learning started, but to be able to claim credits it is important to identify it, trace its development, and find the evidence that supports it, so that you can put together a sound claim.

To start to find areas of learning (AOL):



Now you have compiled and annotated an up to date CV and job description it is useful to consider the following points:

In your CV

- are there themes emerging, such as teaching, managing, counselling, budgeting or similar?
- what sort of patterns of work activities are reflected in your job changes, promotions or career changes?
- have you been doing particular types of work such as organising others, managing projects, providing administrative support? If so, where did this learning trail start? Can you see how your choices of work and activity developed particular knowledge and skills in you?
- can you explain in your annotated CV how each job built on the previous one?
- are you involved in particular types of voluntary work or hobbies? If so, are the activities you use for them similar to, or different from, the activities you do at work?
- what continuous professional development or training have you been involved in?

In your job description

- what are you doing now that you were not doing 5 years ago?
- what new things have you learned in the last two years?
- what responsibilities do you have at work?
- have you developed any trans-disciplinary skills e.g. negotiating skills, managing people?
- have you developed specific skills such as communication or project management? Did these grow through specific work practices and activities?
- what do you consider to be the routine parts of your work? How did you learn to do them? Did you need formal training or have you learned them over a period of time? Are there many people in your work environment who could do your job? If not, why not?
- why do people ask your advice? What sort of things do they ask you?

Relevance of your areas of learning to your future plans

Deciding on a list of areas of learning involves looking back over your experience to date. You are likely to have developed a great deal of skills, ability and knowledge over the years. How can you decide what to use as areas of learning in your portfolio?

The answer to this is that your areas of learning should be relevant to where you want to go in the future - particularly to any further study you may like to do once you have completed this module. For example, if you are thinking of using the RAL credit you gain towards a Professional Practice qualification, you will return to your areas of learning throughout your programme:

- In the Work-based Learning Programme Plan module, you will develop a customised programme of study to which your areas of learning must be relevant. You will also begin to think about a topic for your Work-based Project module. Your areas of learning should help to guide you towards a topic.
- In the Research Methods module you will develop a proposal for your work-based project.
- Then you will complete the work based project itself.

In short, your areas of learning can form a foundation on which you will eventually build a whole programme of academic study. In the light of your consideration of the above it may be a good time to re-visit your action plan.



Making a Provisional List of Titles for your Areas of Learning

Purpose

- To critically evaluate your past and current experiential learning for underpinning skills and knowledge
- From this evaluation, to generate a list of titles for areas of learning.

What you should do

1. Think about the information given above.
2. Prepare a provisional list of titles for your areas of learning. In addition to the explanatory notes above, you will probably find the following suggestions useful:

- your CV and job description(s): look for significant operational areas/skills in your job description(s); look for areas of major work/interest/activity in your CV (including unpaid/voluntary and leisure activities)

in order to be specific about knowledge, skills and learning outcomes, you might wish to think about your learning against related module descriptions in the other TSD modules, QAA Subject Benchmark statements and/or NVQ Standards. You should remember that such descriptions are only guides and that you are not necessarily seeking an exact match. QAA Benchmark Statements can be found by following this link:

www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/default.asp.

You may want to ask yourself the following question: 'If I go on to undertake a university programme of study, what topic do I want to explore in my dissertation or project?'

- A list of between 4 and 8 titles is appropriate at this preliminary stage.

Finding titles for your areas of learning

1. Having read through the above you may already have identified a preliminary list of areas of learning and some titles may begin to emerge, such as 'managing a budget', 'creating databases', 'working with people'. All titles should be short and unambiguous. Make a list of your titles so far and see where there are overlaps or similarities between titles.

Examples of titles are:

'Managing projects'
'Teaching literacy and numeracy'
'Building business relationships'
'Operational management'

2. Begin to consider what evidence you could use to substantiate your claim for learning and achievement in these areas e.g. testimonials, reports, appraisal reports, correspondence from and to you, artefacts (e.g. photographs/video tape, products). (Section 5).
3. Discuss your list of titles and evidence with your RAL Academic Adviser. It is very important to get feedback on your initial ideas for areas of learning before you start to develop them. Your Adviser will be able to tell you whether or not your ideas at this stage are likely to result in areas of learning of appropriate size, content and academic level.
4. Make a revised list of titles for your areas of learning and insert this list of titles into your portfolio. They should go on the standard first page. This list of titles and your ideas about how to substantiate them with evidence will form the basis of exercises. (Section 5)

Your areas of learning are likely to form the core of your portfolio. They contain the claim for academic credit which you will make from your experiential learning. In choosing what your areas of learning are you will look at your past and current achievements. From all this experience you will select themes or areas where you can identify your learning.

Understanding credit levels



Having completed your CV and Job description you should be working on the following:

- Understanding academic credit
- Identifying learning at different levels
- Developing your work on areas of learning

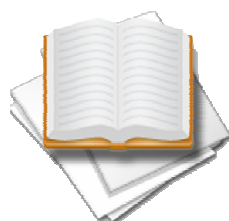
EXPLANATORY NOTES AND EXERCISES

Understanding Academic Credit

The notes below give you general background on what academic credit is and supplement the information in your student handbook. This is important, because you are making a claim for academic credit in your RAL portfolio. You should therefore begin to get an idea of *what* levels of credit there are and *how much* credit you think you can claim for. You do not have to understand it all now and it will become clearer as you work on your portfolio, particularly the 'Areas of Learning'. You can also ask your RAL AA for clarification.

The Academic Credit Scheme

Your RAL portfolio contains your claim for academic credit. Your areas of learning will be matched against the 'Level Descriptors' with a view to awarding you a certain amount of credit. This may be at more than one level to reflect different degrees of complexity.



For further details look at these two references from the QAA website:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/FHEQ/academicCredit/AcademicCredit.pdf>

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/FHEQ/EWNI08/FHEQ08.pdf>

It is essential you download, read and understand these documents when making your claim.

You may also find it useful to look at publications on the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales which is currently under review. These may be found at the following site:

http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/Learning_and_Teaching/framework.htm

See also 'Credit and Learning Wales' at the end of this section.

Nationally recognised academic qualifications have standard values expressed in terms of credit points and levels. For example, a Masters degree requires 180 credit points (of which 150 must be at Level 7 and 30 can be at Level 6 or above). The scheme covers the whole range of College awards. The amount and levels of credit required to gain one of these awards is given in the following table. Up to two thirds of any award can be achieved through RAL credit.

Credit can be achieved in different ways, depending on what the individual has already achieved through certificated learning and/or can claim from work-based and experiential learning.

Reminder:

1 credit = 10 hours of learning

Modules can vary from 10 – 60 credits per module. The total number of credits, required to achieve an Award is standard and as seen from the table there are a range of Awards which can be achieved. The following Model shows the actual number of credits required for the more traditional Awards.

Level 4 = First Year Higher Education	AWARD *
120 credits	= Certificate in HE

Level 4 = First Year Higher Education	PLUS	Level 5 = Second Year Higher Education	AWARD *
120 credits		120 credits	= Foundation Degree

Level 4 = First Year Higher Education	PLUS	Level 5 = Second Year Higher Education	PLUS	Level 6 = Third Year Higher Education	AWARD *
120 credits		120 credits		120 credits	BA (Hons)

These Awards can be achieved in a variety of ways through the Professional Practice Framework and work based learning.

Example 1 – Certificate of Higher Education

Level 4 Level equivalent to the first year of a degree programme.

Maximum Two – thirds RAL credit	PLUS	New Learning	AWARD *
80 Credits at Level 4		40 credits at Level 4	= Certificate in HE

Example 2 – Certificate of Higher Education

Level 4

Level equivalent to the first year of a degree programme.

Maximum Two – thirds RAL credit		PLUS	New Learning	AWARD *
30 credits at Level 3	50 Credits at Level 4		40 credits at Level 4	= Certificate in HE

Example 3 – Foundation Degree

Level 4

plus

Level 5

Level 4 = First Year Higher Education	PLUS	Level 5 = Second Year Higher Education	AWARD *
120 credits		120 credits	= Foundation Degree
RAL = Maximum 80 Credits		RAL = Minimum 80 credits	
PLUS 40 Credits		PLUS 40 Credits	

Example 4 – BA (Hons)



Level 4 = First Year Higher Education		Level 5 = Second Year Higher Education		Level 6 = Third Year Higher Education	AWARD *
120 credits		120 credits		120 credits	
RAL = Maximum 80 Credits	PLUS	RAL = Maximum 80 Credits	PLUS	Minimum = 80 Credits	= BA (Hons)
PLUS 40 Credits		PLUS 40 Credits		PLUS 40 Credits	

Example 5 – Postgraduate Certificate



Level 7	AWARD *
60 Credits	
RAL = Maximum 40 Credits	= Postgraduate Certificate
PLUS 20 Credits	

Example 6 – Postgraduate Diploma

Level 7	AWARD *
120 Credits	= Postgraduate Diploma
RAL = Maximum 80 Credits	
PLUS 40 Credits	

Example 7 – MA

Level 7	AWARD*
180 Credits	= MA
RAL = Maximum 120 Credits	
PLUS 60 Credits	

* = A work-based project is an essential component of each Award.

Amount and level of credit required for each award offered by the University of Wales Trinity Saint David

The following table shows the minor and full awards available at each level:

<i>Level</i>	<i>Statement of Achievement/Awards</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Distribution of credits</i>
4	<i>Statement of Achievement (Academic Transcript stating modules and volume of credit)</i>	<i><60 credits at level 4</i>	
4	<i>TSD Certificate awarded</i>	<i>60 credits at level 4</i>	
4	<i>Certificate of Higher Education awarded</i>	<i>120 credits</i>	<i>120 credits, maximum 30 credits at level 3 and minimum 90 credits at level 4</i>
5	<i>Statement of Achievement (Academic Transcript stating modules and volume of credit)</i>	<i>level 5 <60 credits</i>	
5	<i>TSD Diploma awarded</i>	<i>60 credits at level 5</i>	
5	<i>Foundation Degree awarded</i>	<i>240 credits</i>	<i>120 credits at level 5</i>
6	<i>Statement of Achievement (Academic Transcript stating modules and volume of credit)</i>	<i>level 6 <60 credits</i>	
6	<i>TSD Advanced Diploma awarded</i>	<i>60 credits at level 6</i>	
6	<i>Graduate Certificate (graduate entry) awarded</i>	<i>60 credits at level 6</i>	
6	<i>Graduate Diploma (graduate entry) awarded</i>	<i>120 credits at level 6</i>	
6	<i>Honours Degree awarded</i>	<i>360 credits</i>	<i>360 credits, including a minimum of 120 at each of levels 5 and 6. Maximum of 30 credits at level 3 and remaining credits at level 4</i>
7	<i>Statement of Achievement (Academic Transcript stating modules and volume of credit)</i>	<i>level 7 <60 credits</i>	
7	<i>Postgraduate Certificate</i>	<i>60 credits</i>	<i>Maximum of 20 credits at level 6 and minimum of 40 credits at level 7</i>
7	<i>Postgraduate Diploma</i>	<i>120 credits</i>	<i>Maximum of 30 credits at level 6; minimum of 90 credits and maximum of 120 credits at level 7</i>
7	<i>Master's Degree</i>	<i>180 credits</i>	<i>Maximum of 30 credits at level 6; minimum of 150 credits and maximum of 180 credits at level 7</i>

The advantages of the Academic Credit Scheme to the individual learner

The individual learner can:

- Gain credit for relevant prior learning, including work-based learning - this could shorten the length of study required for a particular qualification and thus reduce the tuition fee required. *Your RAL portfolio is about gaining this kind of credit.*
- Choose from the extensive range of modules offered by TSD and, within certain rules, determine an individual programme of study leading to a particular qualification.
- Take advantage of credit transfer to enter or leave a programme according to individual need, at a variety of different points.
- Take advantage of ongoing credit accumulation to change your mode of study/desired qualification in response to differing work or individual requirements.

Example of an Area of Learning

The example given shows the way an area of learning graded at Level 7 was presented. It is prefaced by a short commentary on the way the area of learning has been presented. It has been adequately presented - that is it meets the requirements stipulated. However, Areas of Learning vary considerably, not only in topic but also in the way the writers have chosen to present their learning.

There is no right way of presenting your areas of learning, providing you meet the layout requirements.

Example

Here is an example of how *part* of an 'area of learning' entitled 'Planning Learning and Development Opportunities' was presented.

Part of the 'analysis of learning' is given overleaf. Some of the reasons why this strategy for presenting the claimant's learning is successful are apparent in the extract given below:

- The area of learning is sub-divided into parts - (1) and (2) are given. This allows each aspect of the learning comprising this area of learning to be detailed separately.
- The area of learning is discussed in relation to an illustrative case study - planning a training day for appraisers of teaching. This gives the skills and knowledge described, (i.e. the learning), a grounding in the claimant's actual work experience.
- Each aspect of learning is supported by evidence. Parts (1) and (2) use the same piece of evidence - the Appraisal Training Day programme. It is perfectly acceptable to use the same piece of evidence more than once. This is particularly successful in this instance because the claimant has written a short commentary stating how the evidence is illustrating the learning claimed for. Evidence is rarely self-explanatory and a commentary or short explanation is therefore important.

The example:

Analysis of Learning and Relationship to Evidence

1. Understanding of the dynamics of in-house training sessions

I knew from my experience of running staff development in-house that participants would want to spend some time discussing their particular context and the threats/constraints they perceived it to impose. I judged that this could cause negativity if allowed to happen early in the session. I therefore began with relatively neutral material to do with clarifying what was meant by 'teaching' in their appraisal context, and moved quickly into small group analysis of videoed teaching scenarios. This concentration on the task carried considerable momentum. Once a positive orientation had been established I made space for personal disclosure, part of the function of the day being to allow expression of anxieties. The energy generated by the small group work, and the fact that they had dealt successfully with the simulation, helped to increase confidence and minimise the perception of threat.

Evidence:

Appraisal Day Programme: This shows how I managed the balance of the day to allow for information giving, activity and expression of feeling in ways which allowed the business to be completed and people's sensitivities to be respected.

2. Skill in creating one-off training days

The challenge of the single day's training is to manage the expectations of the group. I used experience drawn from being a trainer and being a participant in training groups to create a pattern for this day which would meet the expectations and also allow some additional action planning. I drew on lessons learned through involvement in conference planning for the 'X' Association. The key conditions for effective training events include:

- clear statements of objectives/learning outcomes
- knowledgeable, accurate, up to date input
- relevant activities, suited to the type of participant
- excellent timekeeping
- good quality learning/briefing materials
- a closing section which both summarises and looks forwards.

I followed these precepts closely. I began by checking that the objectives were appropriate and at the mid point I checked that we were on target to meet them. The evaluation at the end asked whether they had been met. My input was based on knowledge of appraisal systems in education and training contexts, and the essence of the session was simulation activities to build confidence as well as expertise. The session ended with action planning for

further development. The degree of satisfaction expressed after the session suggested that the planning decisions were appropriate. I followed up the session with.... (contd.)

Evidence:

Programme as above: This shows how I followed recommended good practice in creating a training session which needed to be complete in itself, i.e. meet its objectives within a given time/place.

LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

Level 4

1. Responsibility for courses of action and their results, including wider impacts.
2. Thinking through and choosing courses of action.
3. Coping effectively with a range of unfamiliar situations and problems.
4. Recognising the implications of different issues and courses of action.
5. Identifying and evaluating the practical effects and impact of operating parameters.
6. Acting on understandings of relationships and contradictions between principles and ideas.
7. Investigating, analysing and evaluating information to identify relationships and make informed judgements.
8. Reinterpreting and combining information to develop ideas and choose courses of action or develop ways forward.
9. Designing investigations to provide new information and affect practice, including through practical investigation.
10. Evaluating the appropriateness of different approaches and their impacts.
11. Producing own ideas and developing innovative responses.
12. Developing novel solutions to problems.

Level 5

1. Responsibility across a broad area rather than for individual tasks, including for negotiating objectives and outcomes and for their wider impacts.
2. Developing thought through courses of action.
3. Coping effectively with a range of unfamiliar situations and problems.
4. Understanding the implications of different issues and courses of action.
5. Identifying dilemmas and value conflicts.
6. Identifying and evaluating the effects and impact of operating parameters and principles.
7. Drawing on a broad personal or formal knowledge base and set of mental models relating to the area of practice.
8. Developing practical theories, ideas and models including to find ways forward when faced with contradictions and gaps in theories.
9. Researching, analysing and evaluating information to identify relationships and patterns and make informed judgements.
10. Designing practical research to provide new information and affect areas of practice.
11. Evaluating the effects of options and actions, including impacts outside of the immediate context.
12. Taking innovative approaches to address issues.
13. Developing novel solutions to sets of problems.

Level 6

1. Responsibility across a broad area including for planning, resourcing and quality as well as for outcomes and their immediate and wider impacts.
2. Developing thought through courses of action.
3. Working effectively in complex and unpredictable contexts.
4. Understanding the implications of different issues and courses of action.
5. Understanding and managing dilemmas and value conflicts.
6. Identifying interrelationships between wider systems in which the area of practice is located.
7. Drawing on a broad personal or formal knowledge base and set of mental models relating to the area of practice.
8. Developing and evaluating a range of practical theories, ideas and models, including finding ways forward in problematic situations.
9. Researching, analysing and evaluating information to identify relationships and patterns and make informed judgements.
10. Designing practical, methodically sound research to provide new information and affect areas of practice.
11. Evaluating the actual and potential effect of theories and actions, including impacts outside of the immediate context.
12. Taking innovative approaches in complex situations.
13. Developing novel approaches to systems.

Level 7

1. Full responsibility for methods, actions and immediate and wider impacts which extend beyond the immediate area of practice.
2. Developing thought through courses of action which take into account issues beyond the immediate area of practice.
3. Working effectively in problematic contexts which contain value-conflicts and uncertainties which extend beyond the immediate area of practice.
4. Understanding alternative implications of different issues and courses of action.
5. Understanding and managing dilemmas and value conflicts.
6. Understanding and acting on interrelationships between wider systems in which the area of practice is located.
7. Using mastery of knowledge relating to and extending into the wider context of the area of practice.
8. Developing and critically evaluating a range of practical theories, ideas and models, including overcoming dilemmas and finding ways forward in problematic situations.
9. Researching, analysing and evaluating information to identify interrelationships between wider systems in which the area of practice is located.
10. Undertaking substantial investigation to address significant areas of practice, using methodologies which are consistent with their purposes and contexts.
11. Critically evaluating thinking, action and structural factors operating in the area of practice, including underlying assumptions, and identifying implications for wider systems beyond the area of practice.
12. Developing innovative ways forward in complex and unpredictable situations.
13. Developing novel approaches to systems.

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What is credit?

Credit and Learning in Wales

Credit is a currency for learning achievement that provides a measure of **learning outcomes** achievable in learning time at a given level. An award is made to learners in recognition of the verified achievement of designated learning outcomes at a specified level.

Level descriptors are used as an indicator of the demand, complexity and depth of study. These descriptors are accepted across Wales, England and Northern Ireland and ensure that learning can be located at the correct level. They span the full spectrum of learning from Entry level to postgraduate learning at level 8.

Credit is used to summarise and describe an amount of **learning time**. One credit is awarded for every 10 hours of learning time. The credit value is fixed at the point of recognition of the learning programme. In the CQFW a **module** is a discrete and coherent block of learning, a **unit** is the smallest part of learning that can be separately certificated. A unit would normally incorporate a title and learning code, learning outcomes and assessment criteria, the number of credits available to learners upon successfully completing the outcomes specified and the level at which learning is to be delivered and achieved

The Unit provides a simple way of indicating, using numbers, the amount of learning and how difficult it is. The unit format also enables comparison of learning between different units and **qualifications**, as all achievements are expressed as learning outcomes.

What are level descriptors?

When is credit awarded?

Credit is awarded to learners who have shown that they have successfully completed a block of learning. To do this, they need to meet the specific set of learning outcomes for that block of learning.

Learning outcomes outline what a successful learner will know, understand and be able to do as a result of the learning experience.

It is the achievement of the learning outcomes that is important for the award of credit, not how or where the learning took place, or how it was assessed, or how long it actually took.

Learners will need to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes of a module, unit or qualification by completing different types of assessment(s).

To be awarded the credits, a learner must reach the minimum standard, also known as the threshold or pass, in the assessment(s). The minimum standard expected to achieve the learning outcomes is set out in an awarding body's assessment requirements or regulations.

The number of credits awarded to a student is determined by the **credit value** assigned to a module, a unit or a whole qualification.

Exceeding the minimum standard does not result in a student being awarded more credits as the credit value is fixed before assessment.

Recognition of partial achievement within qualifications (i.e. achievement of some of the units required) will be recognised. This allows learners to build credit achievement over time towards a qualification or other learning aim.

The credit indicates both 'how much' learning (the outcome(s)) is expected and 'how hard' it is (at what level – level descriptors). Each module or unit has only one level for its credit (between Entry level and level 8);

Credit

The credit value
(e.g. 10 credits at Level 4 means)



Learning time

Level (4)

(10 credits @ 10 hours of learning for each = 100 hours of learning)
Indicates both the amount and level of learning

The credit is validated and set before any student begins their studies for a block of learning. Once a student has successfully achieved the required learning outcomes they can be awarded all of the credits at a specified credit level for that block of learning

Learning time

The amount of learning indicated by a credit value is determined by considering the overall learning time required.

All modules, units and qualifications have learning outcomes that outline what a learner will know, understand and/or be able to do once they have successfully completed the block of learning.

The amount of learning time indicates how long it will take a typical learner to achieve these learning outcomes. All types of learning activity are included in the estimate of learning time, including formal learning, practical activities, relevant information technology activity, information retrieval, self study, revision, work based activities which lead to assessment and assessment associated with teaching.

If a student takes more or less time than estimated to complete the learning they will still be awarded the set credit value – not more or less. If a student starts but does not complete any unit or module (they do not achieve all of the learning outcomes for that block of learning) they are not awarded the credits for that learning.

Example of how credit is assigned to modules

A module that involves **150 hours** of learning time for a typical student and has been designed with reference to the credit **level descriptors** of how challenging the learning is at level 4, will be assigned a credit value of **15 credits at level 4**.

A module that involves **100 hours** of learning time for a typical student and has been designed with reference to the credit **level descriptors** of how challenging the learning is at Level 5, will be assigned a credit value of **10 credits at level 5**.

Once a student has successfully demonstrated that they have met the learning outcomes of the module they can be awarded the 15 credits at level 4, or 10 credits at level 5, assigned to this module by the awarding body.

Credit and qualifications

Different qualifications reflect different levels of difficulty in the learning involved, for example, the learning for a level 4 is less complex than for a Master's Degree level 7. The amount and the difficulty of the work involved in gaining a qualification is reflected in the overall credit value and the combination of credit achievement requirements.

Typical* minimum credit values of some further education/higher education qualifications

- Bachelor's degree total of 360 credits with a minimum at honours of 90 at level 6.
- Foundation degree total of 240 credits with a minimum of 90 at level 5.
- Certificate of Higher Education total of 120 credits with a minimum of 90 at level 4.

** actual numbers can vary between particular awards.*

For further details refer to *Higher Education in Wales Credit Specification & Guidance*, June 2004

Credit transfer

Institutions and awarding bodies have recognition arrangements that can allow learners to transfer relevant credits they have been awarded. Learners may be able to transfer the credits they have been awarded as part of one study programme to another, offered by the same institution, and/or transfer credit when moving from one institution to another within Wales, UK and Europe.

The ways learners can transfer credits is determined by each institution's assessment regulations.

Some institutions describe credit as either general or specific to a particular programme. This may be important if a student wants to transfer the credit they have been awarded in one programme, to a programme in a different subject area or in a different institution.

Learners will need to discuss any potential transfer possibilities with all institutions involved.

Each institution can provide its learner with a record of their accumulated credits. In many cases this is in the form of a transcript. This record can be a particularly useful document for learners who want to learn slowly in bite sized chunks, to take a break from learning and return to study later, or transfer their credits.

Learning that takes place, for example in the workplace or in the voluntary sector, can also be formally recognised for the award of credit by an appropriate higher education institutions (HEI), professional institution or awarding body. This is done through a process known as the **Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)**, also referred to as **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**. In Wales the Centre for Strategic Development of Recognised Prior Learning engages the need for higher level learning in the Welsh workforce to boost the economic competitiveness of Wales. It aims to extend the opportunities for potential learners in the Welsh workforce of engaging in higher education via the use of innovative blended learning and learning recognition activities. This allows the Welsh HEIs to develop the assessing and accrediting of work based learning. For further information contact: www.cqfw.net

Credit and quality assurance

It is essential that there is confidence in the way in which the credit value for each block of learning is set. The amount of credit awarded is based on the required learning outcomes, irrespective of the type of learning, the place or

other context in which the learning takes place, or the way in which the learning is assessed. All institutions that use credit follow the same national guidelines for awarding credit.

There must also be confidence in the quality assurance processes that underpin the teaching, learning and assessment that result in the award of credit. These assurances are provided by the institution's own internal quality assurance mechanisms and externally by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) through their audit and review processes.

...

Section 5

Building and Reviewing the Portfolio

Key words: RAL portfolio

Your RAL portfolio is an extended statement about your past and current learning, following a specific format.

It is the means by which you argue a case for why you may deserve academic credit for learning you have already acquired: you are making a *claim* for credit in your portfolio. You will complete your RAL portfolio by completing each Section.

Prioritise your list of areas of learning



By this stage you should be able to prioritise your list of areas of learning and write one of them up

- Work on one area of learning deciding on the level and extent of the learning
- Submit a draft of your area of learning to your RAL Academic Adviser for feedback
- Produce appropriate evidence
- Work on your other areas of learning

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND EXERCISES

Dividing your learning into areas

Claimants evolve a range of ways of distributing their learning among specific areas of learning. For example:

- learning may be distributed between, for example, 4 major areas of learning. Each one of these is then sub-divided.
- learning may be distributed more or less equally between, for example, 6 areas of learning.
- most learning may be claimed for under, for example, 3 large areas of learning, but, for example, 2 smaller ones are also included.

There is no single correct way of doing this. The number of areas of learning you submit and the overall size of your claim for credit will depend on how extensive your experiential learning actually is and on how much of it you wish to claim for.



EXERCISE - Constructing an early draft of an area of learning

Purpose

*To help you to distinguish between 'learning' and 'activities'.
(Your areas of learning should be about learning).*

To generate a vocabulary which articulates the different ways you learn.

What you should do

You may now have a number of titles from your CV and job description. You will probably find that some overlap in content or that they complement each other. Now you need to refine your ideas. You will need to think about what will go into each area of learning.

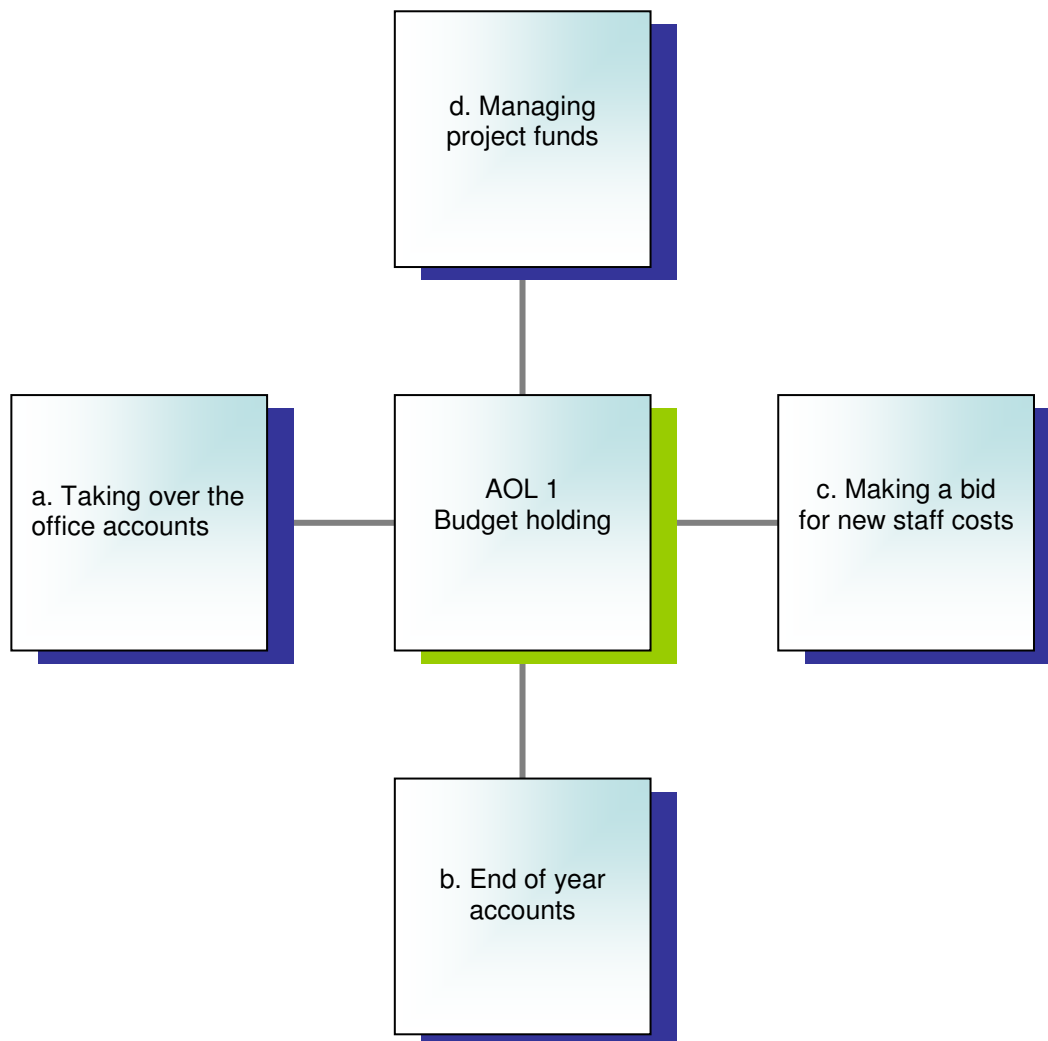
There are a number of ways you can do this:

Make a mind map / spidergram of each title and identify key learning associated with each title as an offshoot. In the example below you can see that several key points have been identified as contributing to the area of learning.

The example below indicates four key activities that helped this claimant develop knowledge and learning in 'Budget holding'. The claimant has usefully identified the starting point (a) and so can start to develop the content of the area of learning building upon each of these stages. You may find it helpful to think of these as 'key learning points' or 'learning outcomes', because they express specific outputs that can be expressed as outcomes which are measurable and which may be supported by specific evidence. There are also indications in (c) and (d) that there may be other areas of learning that might link or overlap with this one.

You may also find the Activity pro forma from the Induction Pack useful to facilitate identification of learning.

Figure 1. Shows an example of a spidergram



For example: 'Making a bid for new staff' might be part of a larger area of learning around managing people, or recruitment costs and selection. You will have to decide whether you put this learning outcome into this AOL and keep all things financial together, or whether to transfer it into a 'people' focused area of learning. Managing project funds suggests that this person has been running or managing projects and that there may be more learning in an area around project management. You will have to decide as you progress with your areas of learning how to allocate your evidence and which specific learning outcomes you can emphasise.

Identify specific achievements – you may have a specific example of something that you have accomplished such as project work, a document you have written or produced, an artefact you have created, or some publicity material you have designed. You will be able to use it as evidence too, to support your claim.

By starting with the finished product, you can begin to reflect on the processes that you went through to create it and the learning that you gained from it. To help you discover the learning you gained from the achievement ask yourself specific questions such as:

- Why did I do this and how did I know how to do it?
- If I did this again how would I do it differently? Why?
- How did I know what to do in this situation? Where had that learning come from?
- Why did I do this in a particular way? What would the consequences be if I did it differently?
- What went well, what went wrong and why?
- Have I done this like this before? Would I do it the same way again? Why?

Identify a newly acquired skill or work activity – this may emerge from reviewing your job description and identifying something that you have had to learn recently from job changes or developments. You may be starting a new project and are learning the basics of it as you prepare your area of learning. This is an ideal opportunity to keep a learning log over the next few weeks where you record the new things you are learning to add to your claim.

Review training documentation - or other evidence such as minutes of meetings to help you trace the development of learning. If your routine work is different to that of other people and has grown in a specific direction you may be sought after as an expert on some issues.

To help you find that learning ask the following questions:

- What would someone else need to know in order to do my job? If I handed it over to someone tomorrow what would they need to know?
- What is the context of my work? How does this influence what I do?
- Are there policies / legislation/ procedures that I must be acquainted with to practice / work safely?
- Do I have to address specific types of problems? How do I go about this? How did I learn how to tackle them?
- What specific responsibilities or professional updating must I ensure are included?

Building on the early draft of an area of learning

Once you have identified the area of learning and some of the key points you want to include, this is where the hard thinking and reflection start as you begin to write your learning journey for that area of learning. Writing up an area of learning is far more time consuming than you think.

These activities may help:

- Carry a notebook and keep a record of some of the things you do at work during the day
- Jot down why you made certain decisions, or how you knew what to do in both routine and unusual circumstances – where did that learning come from? Can you provide evidence for it?
- Ask yourself questions such as; what did I learn from that training day? What have I started to do differently because of it?
- Allow yourself lots of time and some quiet to reflect and write out specific learning incidents that come to mind.

You may find it helpful to write lots of notes to start with, just to tell the story of how your learning grew over time. Remember, we are interested in what you have learnt, how you learnt it and the consequences of your learning, and not just the experience you had. Be careful not to focus only on your achievements as it's the 'learning' that you are receiving credit for, not the 'doing'.

Writing about the key learning points from your mind map, or your specific achievements will help you remember what happened, but you will need to include some analysis of your learning. You will need to write drafts and later edit them, but rather than stare at a blank page it is better to write something, so using key learning points is a good way to get started to describe your learning journey. There are no word limits to areas of learning, but the good ones are often about 2000 words long. Organising your thoughts clearly and in an orderly manner will be to your advantage as you are likely to gain more credits by doing so, but be careful not to 'waffle on' and miss the focus of your learning.

Analysing your learning

Analysing your learning means to explore the different parts that contribute to the whole area of learning and explaining how each part contributes to it. If you are able to interweave into the narrative how you applied your learning and link it to relevant evidence this will also improve your credit rating.

A common difficulty is that claimants describe their learning, but forget to include what the consequence of their learning was:

- did the organisation work better?
- were they more able to do the job?
- what would they have done differently next time and why?

To overcome this, an effective way of showing that you have learned and understood something is to illustrate how you have used the learning. For

example, when you managed a project the first time you did not allow sufficient time for interdependent activities to run alongside it, so when other people's contributions did not come in on time the project deadline was delayed. This means that next time you ran a project, you remembered the difficulties that late contributions made, and so you allowed extra time in your plans. In other words, you have thought through the consequences of your actions. If when you write your area of learning you make sure that you have stated what you have done, why and how and what the outcomes were, it will help you. This will also help you to define or analyse the learning and help you to discover a lot of knowledge that you take for granted. Some reflective thinking models may help you to do this, so that the conclusions that are drawn from the learning are made explicit. (Section 3)

If you get stuck and are not sure what to include, look at the level descriptors for the academic level you are trying to gain credits for and think how to include aspects of your learning that reflect these.

For example:

- do you have to make ethical choices? (further details on ethics in research may be found on the VLE.
- what kind of planning are you involved in?
- how do you make decisions?
- how many people are influenced by your work or impacted by your actions?

Alternatively you may find that reviewing your evidence and deciding what you needed to know to create it may help you identify your learning.



Remember ...

In order for the learning that you detail in your RAL portfolio to be accredited, it must be clearly presented in a standard format. The 'Analysis of Learning' part in each area of learning is the most important part of your whole portfolio.

How many areas of learning do I need?

The number of areas of learning that are needed depends on the amount of experience you have and the amount of credits you may wish to claim for this. The more credits needed, the more detail and information that will be required. You may not need more areas of learning, but if you make them as comprehensive as possible then you may get more credits. However, depending on the extent of your experience, you may find it helpful to divide one area of learning into two or more separate areas. Read 'Making the most of your claim' at the end of this section to ensure you maximise the credit from your learning.

What will the assessor want to know about in your areas of learning?

The assessors on the RAL Accreditation Panel will want to know *exactly* what you are claiming credit for. Consequently, within each of your areas of learning, there must be a detailed breakdown of the learning for which you are claiming credit. This should come in the 'Analysis of Learning' section. Within the requirement that you structure each area of learning in the format described in the next exercise, you are free to present your areas of learning in the way that you think will make most sense to the assessors.

The assessors are likely to find it helpful if you:

- Divide up the analysis of learning section in some way. Two methods claimants commonly use are either bullet points, or sub-headings, followed by a brief analysis, for each skill/type of knowledge claimed.
- Cross-refer to your CV, job description or other areas of learning, where appropriate.
- Substantiate each item of learning with evidence.
- Make it very clear which piece of evidence refers to which item of learning.



EXERCISE - Writing up one area of learning

Purpose

- *To prepare one area of learning as fully as you can, for feedback from your RAL Academic Adviser*
- *Once you have discussed your area of learning with your Adviser and revised it as necessary, it will provide you with a template for writing up your other areas of learning*

Format and content of each area of learning

Each area of learning must include the following headings and information:

a. Name of the Area of Learning

b. Introduction

A short paragraph introducing the area of learning. This should cover how you acquired the learning. Ask the reader to refer, where appropriate, to your CV and job description, rather than repeat information here. You may want to selectively expand parts of your CV or job description(s) in order to give more detailed contextualising information about an area of learning. Make sure you explain why this learning is important.

c. Relevant courses attended

List any relevant training or professional development courses attended in the last five years, (for each give date, duration, outline content and form of assessment, if any). If these include courses you are submitting as 'credit rated learning', refer the reader to where you have listed them.

d. Analysis of Learning

Itemise the learning you are claiming credit for in this area of learning. This should be a fairly extensive breakdown of the knowledge, skills and abilities you are claiming credit for. You may want to explore wider implications and examine how this learning can be used in other settings e.g. managing conflict can be used at work, at home and also in any voluntary organisation you work with.

e. Evidence

You need to supply evidence for each area of learning. The same pieces of evidence can be used in more than one area of learning.

What you should do

1. Use the format described above to make a first draft of one of the areas of learning that you have listed. You are likely to find the following resources useful:
 - RAL level descriptors (Section 4)
 - An example of areas of learning, with comments
 - Bloom's Taxonomy. (Induction Pack)
2. It will help you, if you take note of the following points:
 - The title of your area of learning should be succinct and reflect the learning you are making a claim for.
 - The 'analysis of learning' section is the key to your claim for credit. What is required here is not a bald statement of what you have done but identification of the intellectual activity involved. Ask yourself what decisions you had to take when 'doing something', what factors you had to take into account and, most importantly, if you were 'doing' this again what would you repeat or do differently and why.
 - It is vital that you support the claim for credit that you make in the 'analysis of learning' with appropriate evidence (see below).
3. For the 'analysis of learning', (section d), you may want to express your learning using terms outlined in Bloom's Taxonomy e.g.:
 - Knowledge: "I am able to list/state/outline ... (for example) the key principles of..."
 - Understanding: "I can discuss/explain/clarify/identify ... (for example) the policy of/procedures for..."
 - Application: "I can illustrate/demonstrate/apply ... (for example) the process of..."

The three above are suitable to introduce an area but the ones below will show the greater depth of learning we require.

- Analysis: "I know how to distinguish/contrast/compare/calculate ... (for example) the effectiveness of..."
 - Synthesis: "I am able to organise/set up ... (for example) ...plans for..."
 - Evaluation: "I know how to evaluate/appraise/assess/review ... (for example) the causes of..."
4. When you have drafted one area of learning, make contact with your RAL Academic Adviser to discuss it.
 5. Revise as necessary.
 6. Put it into your portfolio.

Using this area of learning as a template, write up your other areas of learning. If you need further assistance, you can arrange a tutorial with your RAL Academic Adviser. It is not an admission of weakness or uncertainty to contact your adviser. We expect it and it is planned into our work schedule.

What does a good accreditation claim look like?

Claims that are good have the following qualities:

- the context in which learning occurs is explicit, and factors affecting the situation are captured without being too descriptive;
- the task or role that was being undertaken is clearly explained and situated within the context and work activity;
- when problem solving is used there is a clear rationale for the choices and decisions made;
- self-awareness is shown, together with an understanding of the implications of one's own and other people's behaviour and actions;
- where appropriate, reference to academic theories or knowledge is included to support decisions and actions, and is referenced accurately using academic conventions;
- learning is shown to be progressive, is built upon and the outcomes explicit;
- there is evidence of reflection and analysis within the area of learning;
- it is well written, concise, organised and tightly worded;
- evidence is carefully selected, referred to and linked with the narrative, and demonstrates how the learning was used. Where there is limited available evidence, illustrations, such as case studies within the text show how learning was applied and developed;
- each piece of evidence may be used in several ways to demonstrate different aspects of learning, thus reducing the amount of evidence but showing discrimination towards those pieces that support several aspects of learning.

Making the most of learning in your RAL claim.

People use the term 'volume descriptor' to describe the ways in which you can look again at your claim, and draw out more from your areas of learning, which can in turn lead to you gaining more credit. Because you are closely involved in your work, you may not immediately recognise all of the learning that you have gained through your work activities. So volume descriptors are designed to help you get the most credit from your claim, and they explain the qualities the assessors will look for when awarding credit.

An awareness of the volume descriptors below will help to maximise the credit from your RAL claim. Although they should help you to get as many credits as you can, they do not automatically guarantee extra credits. You must be

explicit within each area of learning to optimise the credit awarded. Not all descriptors will be applicable to every area of learning.

Guide to Volume Descriptors

Incremental learning over time, demonstrates broadening or deepening of learning and knowledge with application to practice

Explicit outcomes or product(s) that may correspond to:

- a validated module or
- accredited learning activity or
- WBL project outcomes

Presenting your claim with sections or components that reflect learning outcomes (LO) or specific learning incidents

Demonstrates building levels of learning from first principles through increasing complexity e.g. includes reflection and analysis of learning and / or consequent impact upon others is clearly evident or applied in several contexts

Demonstrates learning from formal training/ education hours, or qualification older than 5 years. (10 learning hours = 1 credit for accredited training). N.B. Same training days can only be counted once per RAL portfolio

Draws on a variety of sources of knowledge and/or demonstrates originality / uniqueness / creativity

High quality evidence presented and annotated appropriately

EXPLANATORY NOTES – Volume descriptors

1. Incremental learning over time, demonstrates broadening or deepening of learning and knowledge with application to practice.

This is an opportunity for you to demonstrate what you have learnt over a period of years. You may find that recent learning, such as in the last two years, is easier to recall, e.g. if you have just begun to access knowledge through searching the internet. More importantly, you may have started a new job within the last two years, and therefore be very aware of what you didn't know when you started in the job as compared to what you know now. Alternatively, you may have started this learning a long time ago, more than five years, and therefore how you learnt it may not be so easy to recall. You may also be very proficient at this area of learning now, and be able to express this in a way that demonstrates you have a lot of expertise and knowledge. This means that your assessors are likely to give you high level credit for this learning, but as an undergraduate you will also need some credits at lower levels, 4 and 5, and therefore it is a good idea to try to recall and record how your learning grew over a period of time. This should show that you started off with a small amount of learning, and that you have built on it to make more knowledge. If you are able to do this, your assessors will see if you can be awarded a range of credits within the claim.

Learning usually grows over time. For example, you may have started in an office and being responsible for the stationery order. To broaden your learning, you may have extended this learning into how to order other types of equipment required in the department, or perhaps taken additional responsibilities related to hiring of equipment. When you are analysing this learning in your claim, you would state the starting point that you began at, and then explain the learning that you developed in order to broaden your skills. Be careful not to describe in too much detail but try to provide a concise summary. An example of deepening your learning might be how you developed the ordering of equipment in your department into understanding the budgetary and financial implications associated with it. This may have developed your learning yet further into understanding cash flow in the department. Make sure your learning progression is explicit within your claim, as assessors cannot award credits for learning that is hinted at, rather than fully presented. Illustrate with examples to show what you can do now as opposed to where you started.

2. Explicit outcomes or a project.

This category is used when you can demonstrate that you have produced an outcome or carried out a project that is similar to a specific module. Your advisor will be able to help you with this, but if you have undertaken a project at work, you should be able to describe what you have learned from the process of undertaking that project. One way of doing this is to think about how you would do it differently next time if you were to do it again, and the reasons why learning took place.

You may not think you have done a project at work before, because it hasn't been called that, but you may have been involved in developing things like: a protocol, a policy or procedure, or an information leaflet, a newsletter for your organisation or perhaps a teaching package for new staff. All of these activities will have given you learning opportunities, so by reflecting on these you can identify what you learnt from the process. By stating the outcome of the learning very clearly, such as in the form of a product, it may be possible to equate this learning with an equivalent taught module and therefore gain credits that reflect a formal module outcome. For example, a qualified nurse from the Czech Republic came to work in the UK. She had to learn technical medical language as well as sufficient English to converse with colleagues and patients. She made a claim for learning English and her learning was recognised as being similar to a taught module that international nurses coming to this country had to study. She therefore gained credit that recognised the similarities between the module and her own learning. This can be seen as matching specific modules available to your study.

You may have undertaken training in the workplace, such as Health and Safety or Risk Assessment training. These training programmes may not have formal accreditation already but TSD may have awarded credits to similar programmes elsewhere, and therefore be able to award your training experience with similar credits. Remember, it is the learning that we are interested in, not just the experience, so make it clear as to what you took away from that training programme and how you were able to apply it at work.

The amount of credits that you are awarded for a particular claim may be related to the fact that a number of other claimants have submitted similar areas of learning in the past, and therefore there may be some precedent, which will guide the award of credits. For example, previous claimants may have submitted a particular area of learning, and it has always been awarded a specific amount of credits. This may be because it reflects a taught module of a similar nature, or the assessor feels that this reflects the usual amount of credit awarded. You may be tempted to compare the results of your claim with other claimants, but this may not be doing yourself justice, as other claimants will present their case differently and will be awarded credits accordingly. The feedback from your adviser after your draft will give you some good pointers as to how you can make the maximum credit from your claim.

3. Presenting your claim in sections or components

When you make your RAL claim, you should try to break each area of learning into component parts. Sometimes these components may relate to specific learning incidents. These learning incidents can sometimes be expressed as outcomes which indicate particular activities, or, as educators express it: 'learning outcomes', which arose from this time of learning. For example, you may be compiling a claim regarding communication within your organisation. This area of learning is likely to consider aspects such as; verbal communication, written communication, electronic communication,

dissemination of information, standards and procedures to communicate key issues and such like. It may be that a critical learning opportunity occurred during the time you that you learnt the skills, and was a key influence in what and how you learnt. A critical learning opportunity may have been an incident or a particular issue that demonstrated how well or how poorly communication systems were working, and therefore provided you with a learning insight that helped you to develop your skill in this area.

Critical learning incidents do not need to be a negative experience but can also be positive experience and may result from feedback from your workplace or colleagues. There may be several separate incidents that contributed to your area of learning but it is not a guarantee that the more learning incidents you include, the higher the number of credits will be, but it will help you to analyse your learning in more depth, and that should contribute to the amount and level of credits you gain.

4. Demonstrates building levels of learning from first principles through increasing complexity.

If you are experienced in a particular area in which you are making a claim, you may be able to articulate your learning in a way that demonstrates you are able to think at a high level of academic ability, as indicated by the level descriptors. This may mean that you are clearly thinking and explaining your learning at graduate or postgraduate level. However, if you are an undergraduate, you will also require credits at level 4 and level 5 which are equivalent to first and second year undergraduate level. You will need to gain credit at these levels as they are not awarded automatically even if you have made a claim that reaches a higher level. This is can be achieved by explaining what knowledge you had at the beginning of this area of learning, and what you have learned over a period of time. You should demonstrate that you have the underpinning knowledge which is reflective of the lower levels of academic ability, and therefore several levels of academic credit may be awarded for the same claim. In order to make the best of this, you will need to be analytical and to explain more fully as to how your initial learning developed. Showing how you are able to use your learning in a variety of contexts is another way of demonstrating higher level learning. Your assessor may be able to see this when they look at a draft of your claim, but you need to think about it as you write to show how your learning has grown.

Very often claims at all levels have not been made explicit within the written text, and although the assessor will be able to see that you could have more knowledge within the claim they would be guessing what you have learnt and therefore it is not possible to award credits. If the learning is implicit, credits cannot be awarded. Therefore you need to review the area of learning critically when you have drafted it, and demonstrate that learning has occurred and is progressive so that all possible learning is captured.

You may be able to demonstrate additional reflection and consequent learning from a situation, or be able to analyse your learning particularly well and this

may result in your assessor awarding more credits. If you are able to demonstrate the extent of the impact of your learning and how it has involved and affected other people, this too may be awarded in additional credits. For example, if only your immediate colleagues have been impacted by your learning then you are likely to have few credits. However, if you can demonstrate that your learning has had an impact upon a group or department, then it is more likely that you will gain additional credits because of the extent of the impact of your learning.

5. Learning from formal training.

Attending training days does not guarantee that you have learned anything. You need to be able to explain what you have done with the learning following the training. Training days can only count if you show what you do with the learning afterwards. This means that any evidence of formal training, such as a certificate, cannot guarantee credits. You need to make it clear what you have learned from that training and how it has impacted your practice. You may want to use the same training days as evidence for several areas of learning, but they cannot be counted more than once, so if you include them in several areas of learning, you must indicate that they are repeats. Remember that it is not "experience" that is being accredited, but your learning. You must show how that learning has affected your work and that will enable recognition of the training time. Awarding credits for training days is not obligatory.

There are occasions when a formal programme of study has been undertaken over 5 years ago. It may carry credits and you may have the transcript to prove that you did the training. Because it was over 5 years ago, you will need to show the assessor that the learning is still in use and that you have maintained its currency, and built on it. A typical example is a Certificate in Education, which can carry different amounts of credit, depending on when and where it was studied. If it is over 5 years old and you have not used it in the last few years, you cannot expect to have the credits from it acknowledged in your claim. If however, you didn't use it for a while, but have returned recently to teaching, and have evidence that you have updated yourself and refreshed your skills, the original credits may still be awarded. It is **your** responsibility to gain a transcript of credits from the awarding institution, and you need to be aware that you may not be able to use all the credits in the transcript, depending on College regulations as to how much credit you can use at every academic level.

6. Variety of sources of knowledge used and/or demonstration of originality, uniqueness or creativity.

If you are able to demonstrate the use of a variety of sources of knowledge in your claim such as reading, work shadowing, searching the Internet, gaining additional training, or the use of a variety of published information, this will

demonstrate that you have drawn on a wide variety of learning resources which will encourage the assessor to consider awarding more credit.

There are occasions when you may be able to present an unusual area of learning, or be particularly creative in how you make a claim for your learning. This is encouraged, and may be recognised as part of the credits. Don't forget that you may have learning from activities outside paid work that you may be able to claim for, such as a position as a club secretary, a school governor, or perhaps you've travelled and worked abroad and learned things about different cultures. You may also have learned from a project that you have just started at work, which may be one of your work-based projects later on in your programme. These activities can contribute significant learning and additional credits to your claim if you are able to demonstrate transferable skills from one context to another. If you're unsure how one of these activities might contribute, contact your adviser to discuss it.

7. High quality evidence presented and annotated appropriately.

You may present your evidence very well and so gain more credits. For example, if you annotate it very clearly and link it into the discussion in the areas of learning so that it is easy to see how the evidence illustrates your learning the assessors will be inclined to award more credit. Similarly, if you use a variety of evidence that illustrates your learning particularly well, then this too may contribute to more credit. However, careful selection of evidence should show that you can discriminate between one piece of evidence that illustrates a number of aspects of your learning, as compared to a lot of evidence that says very little.

Good organization and planning of evidence demonstrates an ability to think through your learning and shows that you have considered how you want to present it to others and maximise its potential. The inclusion of testimonials should be to confirm other evidence and should not be considered as adequate evidence in itself. You **must** also ensure that evidence protects the confidentiality of your workplace, colleagues and anyone else involved. If you specifically want to use something as evidence that involves others, such as photos, a written agreement from the person involved will suffice as consent. You will need to get written parental consent if you are using any material that involves children. Failure to protect others in your evidence may mean that credits cannot be awarded.

Making your planned programme explicit

If you know that you require a specific number of credits from a claim you must make sure you have discussed this with your adviser before you submit a claim. However, your advisor may not remember this much detail about your claim, and it is essential that **you** take responsibility for ensuring that you have made your needs clear. If you are submitting an additional claim it is important you should include a list of areas of learning already achieved so

that the assessor can understand where this new claim fits in. This means that they can become aware of the amounts of credits that you will need to complete your programme and they will consider this as they assess your claim. If you need a lot of credits, then you need to show that your additional claim fulfils all the criteria for both level and volume of credit by following some of these guidelines, so that you can maximise your learning from it. The assessor will try to ensure that the credits that you are awarded reflects the learning that is presented within your claim, but it is your responsibility to make it as clear as you can.

These guidelines only give you some help with preparing your claim. They do not guarantee particular amounts of credits but will depend on how you demonstrate the learning within it, and the evidence that you use to support it.

EVIDENCE

Evidence should substantiate the claim for credit you make in each area of learning. Without evidence the assessors cannot know whether what you are claiming is true.

What is meant by 'evidence'?

Your claim for academic credit must be supported by evidence which demonstrates the knowledge/skills for which you are seeking credit. You must link evidence clearly to each of your areas of learning. In doing this, it is important to think not only about *what* evidence to use, but *how* to use it to illustrate your learning - since the assessors will want to evaluate the extent to which you can analyse your learning.

Types of evidence

Evidence can be in many different media, for example:

- Photographs
- Videos
- Audio tapes
- Written work
- Signed observations of practice

Your evidence might include examples of items you have produced yourself, for example:

- Business plans showing objectives and results
- Financial forecasts/plans
- Monthly/annual reports
- A work product

Your evidence might include information gathered from others about what you can do, for example:

- Certificates
- Evidence of attendance at staff development events certified by the trainer or your line manager
- Correspondence you have received e.g. from colleagues, customers/clients, suppliers
- Witness testimony - a statement by a line manager or other independent source familiar with your work

Your evidence might include case studies. What is required here is that you describe a particular case or critical event in which you have been involved, and discuss in detail how it demonstrates the learning you are claiming for in

a particular area of learning. This is a very useful way of providing evidence for some areas of learning (often related to practical skills), where it can be difficult to provide physical evidence.



Example: a learner responsible for fire fighting on an oil tanker showed how he simulated events for planning and training purposes. This was accompanied by analysis of the event in order to improve performance. The documents used were signed off by a senior officer to indicate that the learner was responsible for and had completed the activity.

Your evidence may include the writing up of an activity your learning diary, or it might include a discussion of how you have applied learning gained on a course to your work or other activities. Certificates from courses may be used as a supplement to such a discussion, or other evidence that that demonstrates you have applied the learning from the courses in your subsequent work.

Using Evidence

Possible areas of learning may develop from the evidence that you have in your work environment. By looking at evidence of your daily work you may be able to gather significant evidence to support your learning just by looking at: letters, emails, minutes of meetings, certificates, products or artefacts, books, reports, articles, policies and procedures.

A few tips about evidence:

- Evidence does not speak for itself so make sure you choose it and use it appropriately, linking it to specific learning outcomes in areas of learning. You can use it more than once if selected well.
- Show the quality of thinking by your choice and use of evidence by selecting carefully and explaining it clearly.
- The quality and annotation of evidence can make a significant difference to your credit; explain why each piece is in there and what learning it shows.

- Seek to protect anyone/any organisation named in the evidence by keeping it confidential and anonymous unless you get written permission to use it – include the permission as part of the evidence. This is particularly important if you use materials that relate to children or vulnerable adults.
- Be sensitive to the implications of your evidence; are you exposing internal problems or placing anyone in a bad light?
- Provide a context for the evidence – how does it fit into your work and learning?
- If you are short of evidence you can always write more; use illustrations to show how you have used your learning. It can bring a claim to life by illustrating a point you are trying to communicate.

An example of using evidence might be as follows: you may have made a point about managing a project, such as forward planning. You might support this with a variety of evidence such as:

- A project plan – *this provides the context*
- The project report – *this explains the process that you learnt from*
- Minutes of meetings – *this demonstrates your communication and planning skills*
- E-mail conversations – *this demonstrates communications that supported the project*
- An illustration/portrait/cameo of the project process, such as: - ‘*I have learnt that when I manage a project there are other departments involved in it who do not work to my timescales, so therefore I have to factor in extra time to take account of that; e.g. I have had particular problems with the finance department who will not process payments on some days because there is only one person available to do it. I now plan to invoice them on specific days to work around their competing deadlines*’.

Ethical considerations

Work roles and the information generated through work are inevitably important in deciding on evidence to use in your RAL portfolio. It is possible that you may wish to use sensitive information originally gathered for a different purpose as evidence. Where this is the case, it is essential that you comply with the professional, legal or moral standards appropriate to the nature of the information used.

It is your responsibility to find out what these standards are from appropriate sources. However, you will find the following points a useful guide, if you wish to include confidential material as evidence:

- Ensure consent for the use of material is obtained from all people involved, e.g. team members, clients. Details of the consent obtained should be included with the evidence itself, e.g. legible signature on organisational headed paper.

- Consider how to anonymise material adequately. For example, you may wish to re-present names and addresses using pseudonyms. Striking names through with a pen or painting them out is not sufficient, but photocopying and then using a thick black felt pen is more effective. Specific care must be taken with materials referring to children or vulnerable adults.
- You may wish to use simulations to demonstrate situations and get them corroborated by a line manager as representative of your work.
- Always check the legal status of material before using it.
- If in doubt, check with both your RAL AA and your organisation or line manager.

Level 4

- DESCRIPTORS

Descriptor	Work activity	What was learnt?	How was this learnt?	What is the evidence?
13. Responsibility for courses of action and their results, including wider impacts.				
14. Thinking through and choosing courses of action.				
15. Coping effectively with a range of unfamiliar situations and problems.				
16. Recognising the implications of different issues and courses of action.				
17. Identifying and evaluating the practical effects and impact of operating parameters.				
18. Acting on understandings of relationships and contradictions between principles and ideas.				
19. Investigating, analysing and evaluating information to identify relationships and make informed judgements.				
20. Reinterpreting and combining information to develop ideas and choose courses of				

action or develop ways forward.				
21. Designing investigations to provide new information and affect practice, including through practical investigation.				
22. Evaluating the appropriateness of different approaches and their impacts.				
23. Producing own ideas and developing innovative responses.				
24. Developing novel solutions to problems.				

Level 5

- DESCRIPTORS

Descriptor	Work activity	What was learnt?	How was this learnt?	What is the evidence?
1. Responsibility across a broad area rather than for individual tasks, including for negotiating objectives and outcomes and for their wider impacts.				
2. Developing thought through courses of action.				
3. Coping effectively with a range of unfamiliar situations and problems.				
4. Understanding the implications of different issues and courses of action.				
5. Identifying dilemmas and value conflicts.				
6. Identifying and evaluating the effects and impact of operating parameters and principles.				
7. Drawing on a broad personal or formal knowledge base and set of mental models relating to the area of practice.				

8. Developing practical theories, ideas and models including to find ways forward when faced with contradictions and gaps in theories.				
9. Researching, analysing and evaluating information to identify relationships and patterns and make informed judgements.				
10. Designing practical research to provide new information and affect areas of practice.				
11. Evaluating the effects of options and actions, including impacts outside of the immediate context.				
12. Taking innovative approaches to address issues.				
13. Developing novel solutions to sets of problems.				

Level 6 - DESCRIPTORS

Descriptor	Work activity	What was learnt?	How was this learnt?	What is the evidence?
1. Responsibility across a broad area including for planning, resourcing and quality as well as for outcomes and their immediate and wider impacts.				
2. Developing thought through courses of action.				
3. Working effectively in complex and unpredictable contexts.				
4. Understanding the implications of different issues and courses of action.				
5. Understanding and managing dilemmas and value conflicts.				
6. Identifying interrelationships between wider systems in which the area of practice is located.				
7. Drawing on a broad personal or formal knowledge base and set of mental models relating to the area of practice.				
8. Developing and evaluating a range of practical theories, ideas and models,				

including finding ways forward in problematic situations.				
9. Researching, analysing and evaluating information to identify relationships and patterns and make informed judgements.				
10. Designing practical, methodically sound research to provide new information and affect areas of practice.				
11. Evaluating the actual and potential effect of theories and actions, including impacts outside of the immediate context				
12. Taking innovative approaches in complex situations.				
13. Developing novel approaches to systems.				

Level 6 - DESCRIPTORS

Descriptor	Work activity	What was learnt?	How was this learnt?	What is the evidence?
1. Responsibility across a broad area including for planning, resourcing and quality as well as for outcomes and their immediate and wider impacts.				
2. Developing thought through courses of action.				
3. Working effectively in complex and unpredictable contexts.				
4. Understanding the implications of different issues and courses of action.				
5. Understanding and managing dilemmas and value conflicts.				
6. Identifying interrelationships between wider systems in which the area of practice is located.				
7. Drawing on a broad personal or formal knowledge base and set of mental models relating to the area of practice.				

8. Developing and evaluating a range of practical theories, ideas and models, including finding ways forward in problematic situations.				
9. Researching, analysing and evaluating information to identify relationships and patterns and make informed judgements.				
10. Designing practical, methodically sound research to provide new information and affect areas of practice.				
11. Evaluating the actual and potential effect of theories and actions, including impacts outside of the immediate context				
12. Taking innovative approaches in complex situations.				
13. Developing novel approaches to systems.				

Level 7

- DESCRIPTORS

Descriptor	Work activity	What was learnt?	How was this learnt?	What is the evidence?
1. Full responsibility for methods, actions and immediate and wider impacts which extend beyond the immediate area of practice				
2. Developing thought through courses of action which take into account issues beyond the immediate area of practice.				
3. Working effectively in problematic contexts which contain value-conflicts and uncertainties which extend beyond the immediate area of practice.				
4. Understanding alternative implications of different issues and courses of action.				
5. Understanding and managing dilemmas and value conflicts.				
6. Understanding and acting on interrelationships between wider systems in which the area of practice is located.				
7. Using mastery of knowledge relating to and extending into the wider context of the area of practice.				

8. Developing and critically evaluating a range of practical theories, ideas and models, including overcoming dilemmas and finding ways forward in problematic situations.				
9. Researching, analysing and evaluating information to identify interrelationships between wider systems in which the area of practice is located.				
10. Undertaking substantial investigation to address significant areas of practice, using methodologies which are consistent with their purposes and contexts.				
11. Critically evaluating thinking, action and structural factors operating in the area of practice, including underlying assumptions, and identifying implications for wider systems beyond the area of practice.				
12. Developing innovative ways forward in complex and unpredictable situations.				
13. Developing novel approaches to systems.				

Section 6

Justifying the Evidence

Key words / Concepts

Credit rated learning

You may have done courses which have already been assessed and which have received an academic credit rating i.e. a certificate or transcript which clearly identifies the credit points and credit levels of the learning. Such courses may be included in your RAL portfolio, providing they meet the criteria given.

This refers to the 'recognition' part of the title of this module - the 'Recognition and Accreditation of Learning', since TSD may be able to *recognise* the academic credit attached to these courses.

Key words: *Area of Learning*

Most individuals who make a claim for accreditation of prior learning wish to have experiential learning accredited i.e. learning which is acquired through work or other experiences. To make such a claim, you must define discrete fields, topics or themes of the experiential learning for which you are claiming credit.

Deciding on these 'areas', in which you already have learning, involves critically reviewing your experience and deciding on categories or groupings into which your learning falls. Each area of learning must be supported by evidence. It is in the 'areas of learning' part of your portfolio that you will actually be making your claim for academic credit.

This refers to the 'accreditation' part of the title of this module, since the University may be able to *accredit* learning gained from your experience.

How to present evidence

Evidence is never self-explanatory. How you intend your evidence to be understood must be explicit to the assessors. We suggest that you attach a short commentary to each piece of evidence explaining how it authenticates a particular area of your learning.

The evidence you use to support the learning for which you are claiming academic credit should be illustrative. Remember that quantity of evidence does not equate with quantity or quality of learning. As a rough guide, you might think of selecting between two and four substantial pieces of evidence for each area of learning.

It is often possible to find a piece of evidence that demonstrates several skills or that can be used in more than one area of learning. Be sure to cross-refer clearly in this case.



Example: the fire fighter from the previous example may choose “managing people” and “managing resources” as two areas of learning which will both use evidence from his fire fighting activity.

Evidence can also be effected by describing what you learnt and writing a short narrative illustrating the learning in practice. This is sometimes called a ‘case study’, ‘vignette’ or ‘cameo’.



EXERCISE - Supporting your Areas of Learning with Evidence

Purpose

- *To decide on the evidence you will use to support the learning you claim for in each of your areas of learning.*
- *To link each piece of evidence clearly to the appropriate area of learning.*

What you should do

1. Use the information given above to make a preliminary selection of evidence for each of your areas of learning. Be discriminating in your evidence; quantity does not always mean quality.
2. It is important to check this selection against the following criteria:
 - **Validity**
Evidence must be directly related to the learning claimed for in a particular area of learning. If you claim you have an ability or skill, your evidence is only valid if it illustrates that skill or ability.
 - **Authenticity**
It must be clear that evidence submitted originates from you, or refers specifically to you. One way is to ensure that each piece of evidence is signed and on appropriate headed paper.
 - **Currency**
Evidence should be recent, and dated if possible. Where you are claiming for prior learning, supplementary evidence may be necessary to show that you are still capable of achieving the same level of learning. Evidence more than five years old should only be included if you are able to demonstrate that the learning has been in use more recently and, if appropriate, has been updated.
 - **Sufficiency**
You must submit enough evidence to cover the range of the learning that you are claiming for in any particular area. You can use evidence for more than one area of learning if appropriate. e.g. a letter may support communications skills, organisational activities and administrative procedures
 - **Reliability**
You should be able to show that learning you claim for can be repeated, that the evidence provided from one instance could be repeated in another instance.
3. Put each piece of evidence into your portfolio, supported by the short commentary (as mentioned above). Each commentary should make clear how you intend the evidence to support your learning. It should also state which area of learning the evidence is illustrating. You will need to decide how to do this, for example, by using appendices. There is no right or wrong way of doing this.
4. As you write your area of learning, link it to the evidence

- If you are putting evidence into plastic inserts please do not place multiple sheets into one insert.
- When you have drafted your area of learning make your own assessment of it:
 - Have you analysed your learning?
 - Have you shown how your learning has grown and changed?
 - Does your evidence show what you learned?
 - How have you used the level and volume descriptors?

The format, content and assessment of your RAL portfolio and ongoing reflection upon your practice



At this stage you need to be absolutely clear about what your RAL portfolio must contain, how to lay it out, and how it will be assessed. It is also important to continue to reflect upon your learning diary in preparation for your reflective essay. (Section 7).

What you need to do now:

- Understand the necessary elements of a RAL portfolio.
- Read the explanatory notes on the format, content and assessment of your portfolio (you will need to refer back to these again when you begin to write up your portfolio).
- Annotate your CV with a description of your work based activities
- Work in the same way on your job description, tracking and reflecting upon your work based learning and competences across the two documents.



Log on to the VLE for further resources which will support you at this stage of the module and follow the links to PebblePad.

Content of the RAL portfolio

To submit a claim for credit at University of Wales Trinity Saint David the elements of your portfolio must be as follows:

- Standard cover page
- Standard first page
- Curriculum vitae
- Job description(s)
- Credit rated learning (if applicable) i.e. higher education level credits already gained
- Areas of learning
- Evidence

The seven elements of the portfolio shown above are not equal in importance, though each element is compulsory. It is the 'areas of learning' that are the most important part of your portfolio, since it is here that you actually make your claim for credit. If you have already completed courses which have been assessed at Higher Education level and are relevant to your study these may be recognised by us as 'credit rated learning.'

Format of the RAL portfolio

Your claim should be word processed. As a general guide, an A4 ring binder can contain an adequately sized complete portfolio. You may of course submit via PebblePad, e-mail or through Blackboard.

Please use the following headings to structure your portfolio.

Cover Page (in this order)

*Application for Recognition and Accreditation of Learning
Your full name and student number
Date of submission*

First Page

Write as follows:

Your work address/telephone number

I wish to apply to the University of Wales Trinity Saint David for accreditation of my prior learning in respect of: (either or both)

*Credit Rated Learning
(Give the titles of qualifications which you describe more fully later in your portfolio.*

*Uncertificated Areas of Learning
(Give a list of the headings of the areas of learning which you describe more fully later in your portfolio)*

Declaration: I hereby testify that the information contained in this portfolio represents an accurate reflection of work I have undertaken.

Print your name and sign, with date.

Then: -

Curriculum Vitae
Job Description(s)
Credit Rated Learning
Areas of Learning
Evidence

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Level 4 - Generic Marking Criteria

Cognitive and Intellectual Skills - Level 4

This level introduces students to Higher Education. Students are expected to demonstrate skills and competencies relevant to the assessment requirement; to be articulate in expressing ideas orally; and to be coherent and structured in terms of written or other media. Forms of expression at this level may be descriptive or imitative, but students are expected to demonstrate an increasing understanding of the theoretical background of their study and the analytical competence to explore it, as well as its relationship, where appropriate, to particular skills.

Transferable and Practical Skills - Level 4

Students are expected to demonstrate relevant skills and competencies which are practical and transferable. They are expected to adhere to standard practice in terms of style and presentation and the correct use of sources and referencing. The required assessment needs to be sequenced and structured correctly and the reading undertaken and vocabulary used must address content and be level appropriate.

Degree Classification	Mark %	Marking Criteria	
		Cognitive and Intellectual Skills	Transferable and Practical Skills
	80 +	Exceptionally articulate showing a very high level of conceptual understanding.	Exceptional range of sources with faultless presentation, using correct referencing and subject and level appropriate vocabulary.
First	75 – 80 70 +	Excellent and articulately expressed using relevant media and showing a high level of cognition. Pertinent theories are analysed and related appropriately to the study. Very good academic and intellectual skills with analytical skills being effectively developed.	Excellent range of sources used and correctly referenced using standard processes. Very well presented and appropriately styled and structured. Very good range of vocabulary utilised and applied at the correct level. Excellent management of learning resources.
Upper Second (2.1)	67-68 65 62	Very good information base; explores and analyses with some originality. Very good academic and intellectual skills. Some analysis undertaken.	Good management of learning resources with some self-direction. Structured and mainly accurate expression. Good practical and professional skills. Language is very good and subject and level appropriate.

Lower Second (2.2)	57-58-59	Good / satisfactory information base that begins to explore and analyse but is still mainly imitative and descriptive. Acceptable academic and intellectual skills	Good / satisfactory use of learning resources. Some lack of structure and inaccuracy of expression. Satisfactory practical and professional skills
	55		
	50+		
Third	48-7+	Basic information base; weak evidence of understanding of major issues. Largely descriptive. Some difficulties with academic and intellectual skills	Basic use of learning resources with no self-direction. Some difficulty with structure and accuracy in expression. Developing practical and professional skills. Needs to develop better structure and appropriate vocabulary.
	45		
	40 - 42		
Fail	30-39	Limited information base; limited understanding of discipline. Little evidence of academic and intellectual skills	Limited use of learning resources. Difficulty with structure and accuracy of expression. Practical and professional skills are not yet secure
	20-29	Inadequate information base; lack of understanding of discipline. Wholly descriptive with very weak academic and intellectual skills	Inadequate use of learning resources. Major problems with structure and accuracy of expression. Very weak practical and professional skills
	1- 19		
	0		
Allocation of grade / mark within each classification: Top grade: the work meets all the criteria. Middle grade: the work meets a substantial majority of the criteria. Bottom grade: the work meets the bare requirements of the criteria.			

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Level 5 - Generic Marking Criteria

Cognitive and Intellectual Skills - Level 5

At this level students are not fully autonomous but are able to take responsibility for their own learning with some direction. Students are expected to locate an increasingly detailed theoretical knowledge of the discipline within a more general intellectual context, and to demonstrate this through forms of expression which go beyond the merely descriptive or imitative. Students are expected to demonstrate analytical competence in terms both of problem identification and resolution, and to develop their skill sets as required.

Transferable and Practical Skills - Level 5

Students are expected to demonstrate relevant skills and competencies which are practical and transferable. They are expected to adhere to standard practice in terms of style and presentation and the correct use of sources and referencing. The required assessment needs to be sequenced and structured correctly. The scope of reading undertaken should be greater than at previous levels and the vocabulary used must address content and be level appropriate.

Degree Classification	Mark %	Marking Criteria	
		Cognitive and Intellectual Skills	Transferable and Practical Skills
	80 +	Exceptionally articulate showing a very high level of conceptual understanding.	Exceptional range of sources with faultless presentation, using correct referencing and subject and level appropriate vocabulary.
First	75 – 80 70 +	Excellent knowledge base, exploring and analysing the area of study, the theoretical exploration is considerable, with originality and autonomy. Very good academic and intellectual skills.	Excellent management of learning, with a degree of autonomy and exploration. Structured and accurate expression. Very good practical and professional skills.
Upper Second (2.1)	67-68 65 62	Very good knowledge base; explores and analyses the discipline and its theory with some originality, detail and autonomy. Very good academic and intellectual skills.	Very good management of learning with consistent self-direction. Structured and mainly accurate expression. Good practical and professional skills.

Lower Second (2.2)	57-58 55 50+	Good / satisfactory knowledge base that begins to explore and analyse the theory of the discipline. Acceptable level of academic and intellectual skills.	Good / satisfactory use of learning resources. Acceptable structure and accuracy in expression. Satisfactory practical and professional skills. Inconsistent standard of structure and presentation.
Third	48-7+ 45 40 - 2	Basic knowledge base with some omissions and/or lack of a theoretical dimension. Some difficulties with academic and intellectual skills. Largely imitative and descriptive.	Basic use of learning resources with little self-direction. Some difficulty with structure and accuracy of expression, but developing some practical and professional skills.
Fail	30-39 20-29 1- 19 0	Limited knowledge base; limited understanding of discipline and its dimensions. Weak academic and intellectual skills. Still mainly descriptive. Inadequate knowledge base; lack of understanding of discipline and its dimensions. Very weak academic and intellectual skills. Wholly imitative and descriptive.	Limited use of learning resources, working towards self-direction. General difficulty with structure and accuracy of expression. Little evidence of practical and professional skills. Inadequate use of learning resources. Major problems with structure and accuracy of expression. Very weak practical and professional skills. No ability to direct own learning.
Allocation of grade / mark within each classification: Top grade: the work meets all the criteria. Middle grade: the work meets a substantial majority of the criteria. Bottom grade: the work meets the bare requirements of the criteria.			

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Level 6 - Generic Marking Criteria

Cognitive and Intellectual Skills - Level 6

This degree level is characterised by an expectation of students' increasing autonomy in relation to their study and developing skill sets. Students are expected to demonstrate problem solving skills, both theoretical and practical. This is supported by an understanding of appropriate theory; creativity of expression and thought based in individual judgement; and the ability to seek out, invoke, analyse and evaluate competing theories or methods of working in a critically constructive and open manner. Output should be articulate, coherent and skilled in the appropriate medium, with some students producing original or innovative work in their specialism.

Transferable and Practical Skills - Level 6

At degree level students are expected to display significant skills and competencies which are practical and transferable. They are expected to adhere to standard practice in terms of style and presentation and the correct use of sources and referencing. The required assessment needs to be sequenced and structured correctly. The scope of reading undertaken should be greater than at previous levels and the vocabulary used must address content and be level appropriate.

Degree Classification	Mark %	Marking Criteria	
		Cognitive and Intellectual Skills	Transferable and Practical Skills
	80 +	Exceptionally articulate showing a very high level of conceptual understanding. Considerable originality of thought and excellent synthesis of theoretical sources.	Exceptional range of sources with faultless presentation, using correct referencing and subject and level appropriate vocabulary.
First	75 – 79 70 +	Excellent knowledge base that supports analysis, evaluation and problem-solving in theory and practice of discipline with some originality. Very good academic and intellectual skills.	Excellent management of learning, with degree of autonomy and research. Structured and creative expression. Very good practical, professional and problem-solving skills.

Upper Second (2.1)	67-68 65 62	Very good knowledge base that supports analysis, evaluation and problem-solving in theory and practice of discipline. Some originality evidenced. Good academic and intellectual skills.	Very good management of learning, with consistent self-directed research. Structured and accurate expression. Good practical, professional and problem solving skills.
Lower Second (2.2)	57-58-59 55 50+	Good / satisfactory knowledge base that supports some analysis, evaluation and problem-solving in theory and practice of discipline. Good / acceptable level of academic and intellectual skills.	Good / satisfactory management of learning. Some autonomy in research but inconsistent. Structured and mainly accurate expression. Satisfactory practical, professional and problem-solving skills.
Third	48-7+ 45 40 - 42	Basic knowledge base with some omissions at the level of theoretical issues. Some difficulties with academic and intellectual skills. Restricted ability to discuss theory and/or or solve problems.	Basic use of learning resources with little autonomy. Some difficulty with structure and accuracy of expression, but some evidence of developing practical, professional and problem-solving skills.
Fail	30-39 20-29 1- 19 0	Limited knowledge base; limited understanding of discipline. Weak academic and intellectual skills. Still mainly descriptive. Difficulty with theory and problem solving in discipline Inadequate knowledge base; lack of understanding of discipline. Very weak academic and intellectual skills. Unable to discuss theory or solve problems in discipline.	Limited use of learning resources. Unable to work autonomously. Little input to teams. General difficulty with structure and accuracy of expression. Practical, professional and problem-solving skills are very weak. Inadequate use of learning resources. Failure to contribute. Major problems with structure and accuracy of expression. Very weak practical and professional skills. No ability to direct own learning.
Allocation of grade/mark within each classification: Top grade: the work meets all the criteria. Middle grade: the work meets a substantial majority of the criteria. Bottom grade: the work meets the bare requirements of the criteria.			

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Level 7 - Generic Marking Criteria

Cognitive and Intellectual Skills

Level 7 is characterised by an expectation of students' expertise in their chosen area of research. Students are expected to demonstrate independence and the ability to evaluate, challenge, modify and develop theory and practice. Students are expected to demonstrate an ability to identify the significant features of problems and to offer reliable solutions, with some producing original or innovative work in their specialism that is worthy of publication or public performance or display.

Transferable and Practical Skills

At **Level 7** students are expected to apply skills and competencies which are practical and transferable and to a very high level. They are expected to adhere to standard practice in terms of style and presentation and the accurate use of sources and referencing. The required assessment needs to be sequenced and structured correctly. A wide range of reading should be undertaken at this level and the vocabulary employed must address content and be at postgraduate level. The scope of the research methods must respond to the negotiated and agreed study.

Degree Classification	Mark %	Marking Criteria	
		Cognitive and Intellectual Skills	Transferable and Practical Skills
	80+	Original work of publishable quality which displays mastery of the subject. A wide range of methods applied, with an argument covering all significant aspects of the subject; logically argued. Exceptional work and at a very high level in every respect	Presentation faultless, using correct referencing and subject and level appropriate vocabulary. The range of research methods used respond wholly to the agreed study.

First	79	Thorough and comprehensive knowledge of substantive content with some originality. Shows a sound ability to inter-relate concepts and ideas and to evaluate theory critically at the appropriate level. Makes points clearly and precisely, always uses a wide range of source materials which are appropriately referenced to substantiate points. Coherent argument which is methodically analysed supports a reliable conclusion based on discussion and examination. Evidence of independent thought. The reading cited is extensive and very relevant.	Written work is very well planned and presented, is wholly relevant, clearly expressed and coherent in organisation, with evidence of reading and correct referencing and citation. Excellent use of language relevant to the study. The range of research methods selected wholly appropriate for the study.
	75 +		
	70 +	All outcomes achieved to an exceptional /excellent / very high standard.	
Upper Second (2.1)	67-68	Sound knowledge of the topics and issues is evidenced through critical treatment of the material, inter-relating concepts, ideas and practical examples. Discussion is at an appropriate level. Points are mostly substantiated with appropriate evidence. Content is wholly relevant, links made between all paragraphs and sections. Reading cited is very satisfactory and the conclusion relevant to the discussion.	A good standard of writing and presentation, largely coherent and relevant, based on very satisfactory reading. Relevant points made are justified and referenced adequately. Referencing is on the whole correct and citations follow the appropriate system. Use of language is very good with some minor errors. The range of research methods selected are appropriate for the study.
	65	All outcomes achieved to a high/very good/good standard.	
	62		
Lower Second (2.2)	57-58-59	The content generally is relevant, showing evidence of acceptable knowledge and understanding of issues, but limited ability to apply theory and concepts critically. Line of reasoning not always clear and there is a lack of coherence. Word can be inappropriately descriptive for this level. There is some evidence of points made which are unsubstantiated and some examples of work not cited.	Work is generally planned but there are weaknesses in the relationship between some sections. The presentation and expression are appropriate. Referencing is more often than not correct and citations follow the standard required. Use of language is good but there are some weaknesses which need to be addressed. The research methods selected are in the main pertinent for the study.
	55	Most outcomes achieved to good/very satisfactory/satisfactory standard.	
	50+		

Third	48-7+	Content is largely descriptive, but with some attempt at analysis; knowledge and understanding are weak and lack depth. Some points supported with limited evidence. Conclusion is weak. Some difficulty in achieving written work at the appropriate level. Not all outcomes achieved satisfactorily. Generally satisfactory/weak/poor.	Limited evidence of planning and there are substantial weaknesses in the development. The presentation is fair and referenced sources, although limited, are appropriate. Use of references need to be reviewed. Sources are not always cited. Language used is acceptable but there are frequent errors on syntax, spelling and sentence structure needs reviewing. Insufficient research methods selected.
	45		
	40 - 42		
Fail	30-39	Very insubstantial with inadequate evidence of knowledge and understanding of the topic. Much of the work is not level appropriate.	No evidence of planning. Background reading is very weak. Inadequate bibliography and references insufficient/unavailable. Use of language is very weak/poor/very poor. The presentation is untidy and lacks any coherence.
	20-29	No evidence of appropriate reading and investigation; descriptive only,	
	1- 19	No work submitted	
	0	Outcomes not achieved to the standard required.	
Allocation of grade / mark within each classification:			
Top grade: the work meets all the criteria.			
Middle grade: the work meets a substantial majority of the criteria.			
Bottom grade: the work meets the bare requirements of the criteria.			

Section 7

The Reflective Essay

THE REFLECTIVE ESSAY

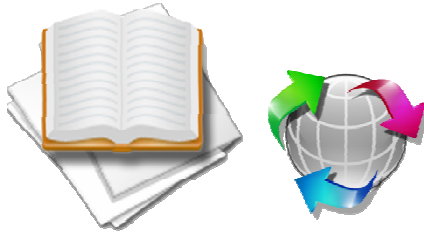
EXPLANATORY NOTES AND EXERCISES

As a starting point, re-read the discussion about reflection

Your reflective essay is required in order to complete this module and is an evaluation of your learning on the module. It is marked according to the University of Wales Trinity Saint David's generic and specific assessment criteria at the appropriate level. If successful, you will receive your mark and 15 credit points for this following the Professional Practice Examination Board.

Guidelines for your reflective essay

- It should be the correct word length. Look at the module descriptor to identify the correct length for the level you are working at.
- The essay *must* be received by the deadline date for completion of course work, otherwise it will not be able to be submitted to the Examination Board.
- It should be a separate piece of course work from your portfolio, because it will be assessed separately. You should submit two copies.
- It will be assessed according to the generic assessment criteria. Look at for details of how we assess academic work. This is important if you are to meet the academic criteria and ensure that your effort is appropriately directed.



Look at information in the *Student Handbook* regarding guidelines on presentation and how to avoid plagiarism.



Writing your reflective essay

Purpose

- In order to successfully complete the module, you are required to submit an essay in addition to your portfolio
- The essay is your personal reflection upon what assembling your claim has involved and what significance it has for you - in other words, what you have learned from undertaking the module and preparing your RAL portfolio.

Format and content of the essay

You should give your essay an appropriate title according to the level you are working at.

The essay is your own reflection on what you have learned from the module. Consequently, there is no right or wrong way of structuring your essay. It will help you to decide how to write your essay to know that the assessor will want to evaluate your essay in terms of:

- the development of a reasoned train of thought (typically answering the questions 'how?', 'why?' and 'with what consequences?');
- sufficient analysis to suggest that you have seriously reflected upon the learning process involved in compiling your RAL portfolio;
- the effectiveness of your communication.

What you should do

1. Write your reflective essay using the information provided.
2. You may find the following resources useful:
 - Your diary, if you kept one
 - Reading on 'Reflection' (Section 2)
 - guidance on essay writing techniques in Wilson, E and Bedford, D (2009) *Study Skills for Part-time Students*
3. You may find it helpful to ask yourself the following questions:
 - Why did you wish to take the module?
 - What were your initial expectations? Did this change during the course of the module?
 - What did the process of assembling the claim involve (the emphasis should focus on any problems encountered and how you coped with them, how did the process develop)?
 - Have you discovered anything about yourself or your work role from your claim?
 - Has it changed the way you approach or think about your work?
 - Have you discovered new areas of learning you and/or your employer had not previously recognised or fully used or has the process confirmed what you already knew?
 - How easy/difficult was it to identify learning and provide evidence of it?
 - Has the identification of areas of learning made you think about areas you wish to focus on in future?
 - Has the development of the portfolio and your reflection on it influenced/alterd how you view yourself, your work role(s) and/or your career aspirations?

It is essential you refer to appropriate theories of learning and reference these correctly. Look in your *Student Handbook*, or Wilson and Bedford (2009) for guidance on referencing techniques.

MODULE CODE:	SBAL4000				
TITLE:	Recognition and Accreditation of Learning				
DATED:	15/12/2008				
MODULE AUTHOR:	Dr Catrin Thomas				
LEVEL:	4				
CREDITS:	15				
TEACHING METHODS:	<table> <tr> <td>Tutorials</td><td>5%</td></tr> <tr> <td>Work-based Learning</td><td>95%</td></tr> </table>	Tutorials	5%	Work-based Learning	95%
Tutorials	5%				
Work-based Learning	95%				
JACS CODE:	X220				

AIM(S)

- To enable the learner to compile a claim for academic credit based on prior learning.
- To enable the learner to evaluate and reflect upon their own learning experience.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this module learners should be able to:

- review their work and other activities to identify the learning that has taken place;
- develop a vocabulary to define their own learning and relate this learning to the College's assessment criteria;
- produce a portfolio of evidence to support a claim for academic credit which accurately reflects their learning experience, specifying the number and level of credits claimed;
- analyse and evaluate their learning experience;
- demonstrate an awareness of concepts, models and theories that underpin practice in their own workplace.

CONTENT

- Learners will explore the concepts of learning through the use of discussion and personal examples, and will be introduced to the higher education language and vocabulary that is used to define learning outcomes at different levels.
- The main role of the academic adviser will be to provide the appropriate academic framework within which the learner can identify the learning that has already taken place, and so define a set of associated learning outcomes. Learners will be provided with advice and practical guidance on how to:
 - identify and evaluate the possible learning outcomes that exist within their own CV and job description, and to relate the learning outcomes to their own work;

- develop a portfolio of evidence of their own accredited and experiential learning.
- The academic adviser will also provide guidance on:
 - the nature of the evidence required to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes;
 - identifying the academic level and likely credit value of the learning experience.
- An exploration of the concepts, theories and models that underpin practice in the learner's workplace setting. Guidance on how to evaluate and reflect upon their own learning experiences.

ASSESSMENT

Portfolio

The portfolio will consist of:

- an annotated CV describing the learner's work based activities;
- an annotated job description;
- a portfolio of learning experience supported by evidence.

Reflective essay 3000 words or equivalent (100%)

Reflective essay based upon the portfolio, summarising and evaluating their own learning experiences, and identifying opportunities for increasing the impact of this learning on their own practice.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Recommended

- Boud, D., Docherty, P. and Cressey, P. (eds) *Productive Reflection at Work* London: Routledge, 2005.
- Kolb, D. A. *Experiential Learning* London: Prentice Hall, 1984.
- Moon, J. A. *A Handbook of Reflective and Experiential Learning: Theory and Practice* London: Routledge Falmer, 2004.
- Moon, J. A. *Learning Journals* London: Routledge, 2006.
- Raelin, J. A. *Work-based Learning: Bridging Knowledge and Action in the Workplace* San Francisco: Jossey Bass Wiley, 2008.
- Schön, D. *The Reflective Practitioner* San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1991.
- Simosko, S. and Cook, C. *Applying APL Principles in Flexible Assessment: a practical guide* London: Kogan Page, 1996.

MODULE CODE:	SBAL5000				
TITLE:	Recognition and Accreditation of Learning				
DATED:	15/12/2008				
MODULE AUTHOR:	Dr Catrin Thomas				
LEVEL:	5				
CREDITS:	15				
TEACHING METHODS:	<table> <tr> <td>Tutorials</td><td>5%</td></tr> <tr> <td>Work-based Learning</td><td>95%</td></tr> </table>	Tutorials	5%	Work-based Learning	95%
Tutorials	5%				
Work-based Learning	95%				
JACS CODE:	X220				

AIM(S)

- To enable the learner to compile a claim for academic credit based on prior learning.
- To enable the learner to evaluate and reflect critically upon their own learning experience.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this module learners should be able to:

- analyse their work and other activities to identify the learning that has taken place;
- develop a vocabulary to define their own learning and relate this learning to the College's assessment criteria;
- produce a portfolio of evidence to support a claim for academic credit which accurately reflects their learning experience, specifying the number and level of credits claimed;
- analyse and evaluate their learning experience;
- demonstrate an awareness of concepts, models and theories that underpin practice in their own workplace.

CONTENT

- Learners will explore the concepts of learning through the use of discussion and personal examples, and will be introduced to the higher education language and vocabulary that is used to define learning outcomes at different levels.
- The main role of the academic adviser will be to provide the appropriate academic framework within which the learner can identify the learning that has already taken place, and so define a set of associated learning outcomes. Learners will be provided with advice and practical guidance on how to:
 - identify and evaluate the possible learning outcomes that exist within their own CV and job description, and to relate the learning outcomes to their own work;

- develop a portfolio of evidence of their own accredited and experiential learning.
- The academic adviser will also provide guidance on:
 - the nature of the evidence required to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes;
 - identifying the academic level and likely credit value of the learning experience.
- An exploration of the concepts, theories and models that underpin practice in the learner's workplace setting. Guidance on how to evaluate and reflect upon their own learning experiences.

ASSESSMENT

Portfolio

The portfolio will consist of:

- an annotated CV describing the learner's work based activities;
- an annotated job description;
- a portfolio of learning experience supported by evidence.

Reflective essay 3500 words or equivalent (100%)

Reflective essay based upon the portfolio, analysing and evaluating their own learning experiences, and identifying opportunities for increasing the impact of this learning on their own practice.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Recommended

- Boud, D., Docherty, P. and Cressey, P. (eds) *Productive Reflection at Work* London: Routledge, 2005.
- Kolb, D. A. *Experiential Learning* London: Prentice Hall, 1984.
- Moon, J. A. *A Handbook of Reflective and Experiential Learning: Theory and Practice* London: Routledge Falmer, 2004.
- Moon, J. A. *Learning Journals* London: Routledge, 2006.
- Raelin, J. A. *Work-based Learning: Bridging Knowledge and Action in the Workplace* San Francisco: Jossey Bass Wiley, 2008.
- Schön, D. *The Reflective Practitioner* San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1991.
- Simosko, S. and Cook, C. *Applying APL Principles in Flexible Assessment: a practical guide* London: Kogan Page, 1996.

MODULE CODE:	SBAL7000				
TITLE:	Recognition and Accreditation of Learning				
DATED:	15/12/2008				
MODULE AUTHOR:	Dr Catrin Thomas				
LEVEL:	7				
CREDITS:	15				
TEACHING METHODS:	<table> <tr> <td>Tutorials</td><td>5%</td></tr> <tr> <td>Work-based Learning</td><td>95%</td></tr> </table>	Tutorials	5%	Work-based Learning	95%
Tutorials	5%				
Work-based Learning	95%				
JACS CODE:	X220				

AIM(S)

- To enable the learner to compile a claim for academic credit based on prior learning.
- To enable the learner to evaluate and reflect critically upon their own learning experience.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this module learners should be able to:

- critically analyse their work and other activities to identify the learning that has taken place;
- develop a vocabulary to define their own learning and relate this learning to the College's assessment criteria;
- produce a portfolio of evidence to support a claim for academic credit which accurately reflects their learning experience, specifying the number and level of credits claimed;
- critically analyse and evaluate their learning experience;
- critically evaluate concepts, models and theories that underpin practice in their own workplace.

CONTENT

- Learners will explore the concepts of learning through the use of discussion and personal examples, and will be introduced to the higher education language and vocabulary that is used to define learning outcomes at different levels.
- The main role of the academic adviser will be to provide the appropriate academic framework within which the learner can identify the learning that has already taken place, and so define a set of associated learning outcomes. Learners will be provided with advice and practical guidance on how to:
 - identify and evaluate the possible learning outcomes that exist within their own CV and job description, and to relate the learning outcomes to their own work;

- develop a portfolio of evidence of their own accredited and experiential learning.
- The academic adviser will also provide guidance on:
 - the nature of the evidence required to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes;
 - identifying the academic level and likely credit value of the learning experience.
- An exploration of the concepts, theories and models that underpin practice in the learner's workplace setting. Guidance on how to evaluate and reflect critically upon their own learning experiences, and on identifying strategies for optimising the impact of this learning on their own practice and that of others in the workplace.

ASSESSMENT

Portfolio

The portfolio will consist of:

- an annotated CV describing the learner's work based activities;
- an annotated job description;
- a portfolio of learning experience supported by evidence.

Reflective essay 5000 words or equivalent (100%)

Reflective essay based upon the portfolio, analysing, synthesising and critically evaluating their own learning experiences, and identifying strategies for increasing the impact of this learning on their own practice and that of others in the workplace.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Recommended

- Boud, D., Docherty, P. and Cressey, P. (eds) *Productive Reflection at Work* London: Routledge, 2005.
- Kolb, D. A. *Experiential Learning* London: Prentice Hall, 1984.
- Moon, J. A. *A Handbook of Reflective and Experiential Learning: Theory and Practice* London: Routledge Falmer, 2004.
- Moon, J. A. *Learning Journals* London: Routledge, 2006.
- Raelin, J. A. *Work-based Learning: Bridging Knowledge and Action in the Workplace* San Francisco: Jossey Bass Wiley, 2008.
- Schön, D. *The Reflective Practitioner* San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1991.
- Simosko, S. and Cook, C. *Applying APL Principles in Flexible Assessment: a practical guide* London: Kogan Page, 1996.

MODULE CODE:	SBAL6000				
TITLE:	Recognition and Accreditation of Learning				
DATED:	15/12/2008				
MODULE AUTHOR:	Dr Catrin Thomas				
LEVEL:	6				
CREDITS:	15				
TEACHING METHODS:	<table> <tr> <td>Tutorials</td><td>5%</td></tr> <tr> <td>Work-based Learning</td><td>95%</td></tr> </table>	Tutorials	5%	Work-based Learning	95%
Tutorials	5%				
Work-based Learning	95%				
JACS CODE:	X220				

AIM(S)

- To enable the learner to compile a claim for academic credit based on prior learning.
- To enable the learner to evaluate and reflect critically upon their own learning experience.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this module learners should be able to:

- critically analyse their work and other activities to identify the learning that has taken place;
- develop a vocabulary to define their own learning and relate this learning to the College's assessment criteria;
- produce a portfolio of evidence to support a claim for academic credit which accurately reflects their learning experience, specifying the number and level of credits claimed;
- critically analyse and evaluate their learning experience;
- critically evaluate concepts, models and theories that underpin practice in their own workplace.

CONTENT

- Learners will explore the concepts of learning through the use of discussion and personal examples, and will be introduced to the higher education language and vocabulary that is used to define learning outcomes at different levels.
- The main role of the academic adviser will be to provide the appropriate academic framework within which the learner can identify the learning that has already taken place, and so define a set of associated learning outcomes. Learners will be provided with advice and practical guidance on how to:
 - identify and evaluate the possible learning outcomes that exist within their own CV and job description, and to relate the learning outcomes to their own work;

- develop a portfolio of evidence of their own accredited and experiential learning.
- The academic adviser will also provide guidance on:
 - the nature of the evidence required to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes;
 - identifying the academic level and likely credit value of the learning experience.
- An exploration of the concepts, theories and models that underpin practice in the learner's workplace setting. Guidance on how to evaluate and reflect upon their own learning experiences.

ASSESSMENT

Portfolio

The portfolio will consist of:

- an annotated CV describing the learner's work based activities;
- an annotated job description;
- a portfolio of learning experience supported by evidence.

Reflective essay 4250 words or equivalent (100%)

Reflective essay based upon the portfolio, analysing, synthesising and critically evaluating their own learning experiences, and identifying opportunities for increasing the impact of this learning on their own practice and that of others in the workplace.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Recommended

- Boud, D., Docherty, P. and Cressey, P. (eds) *Productive Reflection at Work* London: Routledge, 2005.
- Kolb, D. A. *Experiential Learning* London: Prentice Hall, 1984.
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- Moon, J. A. *Learning Journals* London: Routledge, 2006.
- Raelin, J. A. *Work-based Learning: Bridging Knowledge and Action in the Workplace* San Francisco: Jossey Bass Wiley, 2008.
- Schön, D. *The Reflective Practitioner* San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1991.
- Simosko, S. and Cook, C. *Applying APL Principles in Flexible Assessment: a practical guide* London: Kogan Page, 1996.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

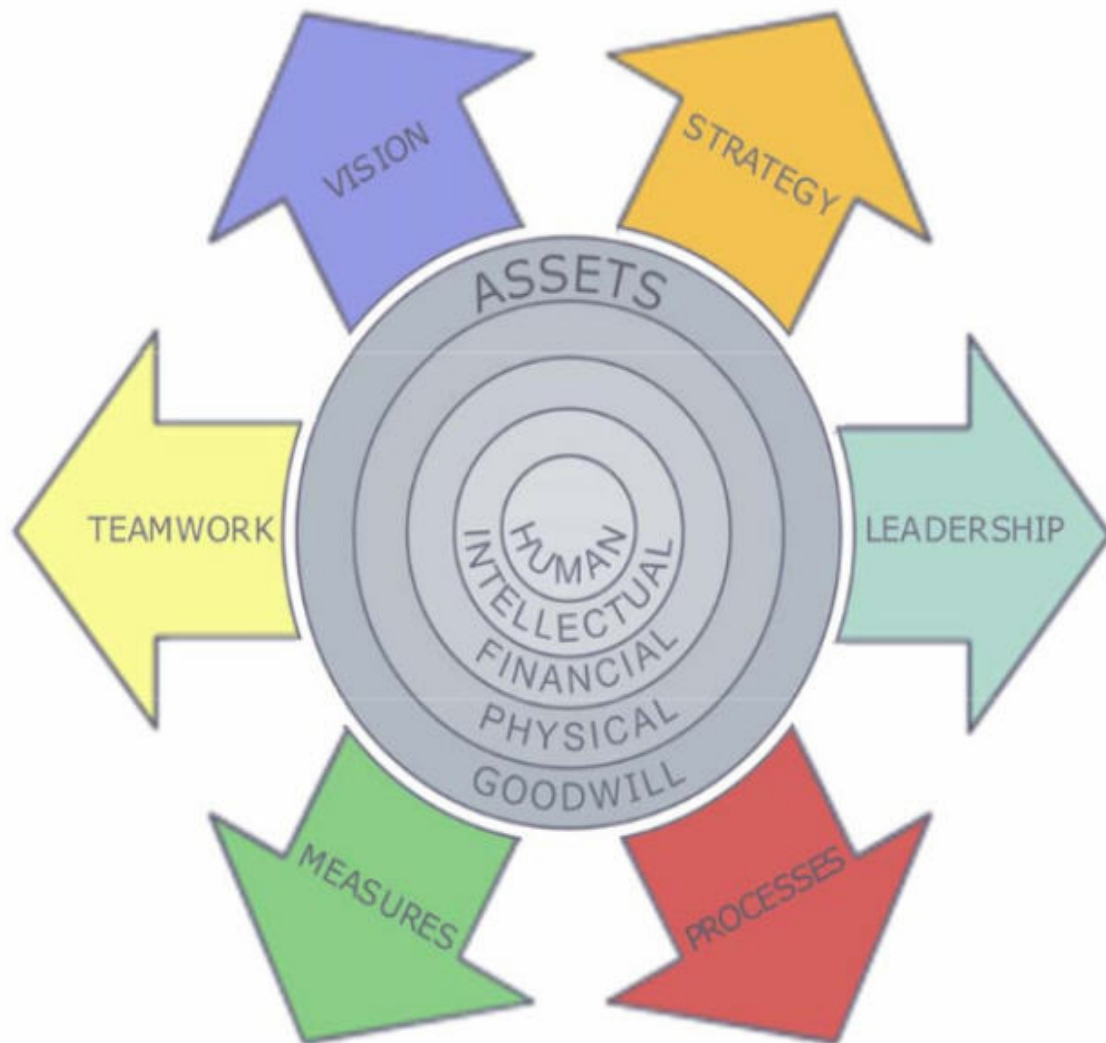
There are some useful web sites which can support your action planning. The following are examples which might be useful.

http://worldwork.biz/legacy/www/downloads/Personal_Development_Plan.pdf

http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/Horizontal_Services_files/PDPSample.pdf

http://www.ogrd.wsu.edu/r6ncura/2011ProgramMaterials/04_Weds_1030_Succession_Planning_Individual_Succession_Planning_Forms.pdf

<http://www.ice.org.uk/getattachment/28abbbcc-3499-47c9-8891-197800dfec1a/ICE-3006A---Continuing-Professional-Development.aspx>



<http://www.personal-development-coach.com/personal-development-plan-sample.html>