A partial overview of Work based learning in English and Welsh universities

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An unnoticed revolution?

- First university WBL programme 1996 (Middlesex) - probably the largest provider: Chester from 1998

- Currently at least 40 universities out of 131 in England and Wales have some sort of WBL provision.

- No official statistics since data is collected on the basis of subject

- Survey summer 2015: 41 universities in England and Wales with WBL contacted, 26 responses. Survey to discover who will accept MOOC certificates as the basis for a RPL claim
What is Work based learning?

- Work placements for full time students
- Work based learning modules within a defined curriculum mostly comprised of subject discipline modules within a university created curriculum
- Curriculum based around subject discipline modules negotiated with an employer
- Negotiable (with students/employers) curriculum based upon work based learning modules
- Negotiable (with students/employers) curriculum including work based and subject discipline modules
How many students are engaged in WBL?
How many FTEs in WBL (estimated)?
Estimated proportion of WBL students who are distance learners

- None
- 0-20%
- 21-50%
- 51-100%
RPL in WBL Departments: currency of allowable RPCL

- None allowed
- Up to three years
- Up to five years
- Up to seven years
- Up to 15 years
- No upper limit
Methods for giving currency to outdated APCL

- We do not allow any claims out of time
- Give currency by updating knowledge
- Give currency through application of knowledge
- Assessment of experiential knowledge
- Assessment via line manager appraisal
The uses of RPL

- Admissions only
- Obtaining credit only
- Admissions and credit
Estimated number of students admitted to WBL programmes on the basis of RPL claims
Evidence of RPL as the basis for admission purposes
Assessment methods of RPL claims for credit

- All APL/RPL claims are graded
- All APL/RPL claims are ungraded
- Generic APL/RPL claims are graded
- Generic APL/RPL claims are ungraded
- Subject specific APL/RPL claims are upgraded
- Subject specific APL/RPL claims are ungraded
Estimated number of students making APL claims for credit
Trojan horse v Procrustean approaches to curriculum

- Programme can adapt to APL/RPL
- APL/RPL must adapt to the programme
Permitted RPL as part of an award

- Whole award
- Up to two thirds of a named award
- Up to half a named award
- Up to one third of a named award
- Awaiting a decision
RPCL or RPEL?

Bar chart showing:
- APCL/RPCL only: 2 votes
- Accept APCL/RPCL and APEL/APCL: 18 votes
RPEL: specific or generic credit?

- Subject specific modules only
- Generic non-specific credit only
- Specific and generic credit allowable

The chart shows a comparison of the three options: Subject specific modules only, Generic non-specific credit only, and Specific and generic credit allowable. The specific and generic credit allowable option is significantly more prevalent than the others.
Acceptable sources of non-formal learning for RPEL claims

- Non-NARIC recognised university
- Higher level NVQ
- Accredited professional qualification
- Unaccredited professional qualification
- Industry specific qualification
- Employer specific qualification
- MOOC Certificate
Acceptability of a certificate obtained via automated assessment as the basis for an RPEL claim

- Probably
- Maybe
- Unlikely
Acceptability of an online source of learning as the basis for a RPEL claim
Acceptability of a Non-formal qualification in a foreign language as the basis for a RPEL claim
Practices associated with the assessment of Non-formal learning as the basis for RPEL claims

- Each is assessed on merit
- Consult with an external body (eg NARIC)
- We have a list
- We use someone else's list
- Mapped against learning outcomes
Methods for assessing RPEL claims - credit exchange v developmental model

- Portfolio of evidence
- Reflective review
- Portfolio and reflective review
- Written assessment
Content of reflective reviews

- Statement summarising professional attainment
- Reference to evidence of professional attainment
- Use of academic literature
- Statement outlining future actions
Summary and conclusions

- Enables an estimation of the number of students engaged in WBL in English and Welsh universities- 10,000-20,000
- Is not a comprehensive survey- some very large providers are excluded. The Open University is becoming increasingly work based
- Provides valuable broader lessons about flexibility in terms of curriculum design, short cycle awards, VNIL and application of learning
- Gives some insight into the variety of practices in some respects but not others- the survey identified only four universities where the curriculum is potentially fully negotiable. I suspect it is probably only two
- Highlights the need for more comprehensive surveys both in respect of WBL and RPL