



RPL – Introduction

What are we talking about?

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

= the process by which prior learning is identified, assessed, and formally recognised to facilitate admission to a programme or to receive credits from parts of that programme.

Policy & Practice?

- **Life Long Learning (LLL):** RPL for flexible learning pathways
- **EU policy base:**
- COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (2012/C 398/01)
- **Policy–Practice gap**



Session overview

- 1. Interactive Reflection**
- 2. RPL in Austria**
- 3. RPL in Germany**
- 4. International cooperation for RPL: European RPL Network**
- 5. Discussion**

Kick-off question:

What is your personal or professional experience with RPL?

Discuss with your neighbour

5 Minutes



RPL in Austria

Agnes Witzani, AQ Austria

National RPL structure in Austria



Legal Framework

RPL for credits vs RPL for access

- AUT: Focus on RPL for credits

Legal framework: RPL for all sectors, optional provision

- 1994: Universities of Applied Sciences: recognition of professional qualifications
- 2021: new legal framework ⇒ RPL as possibility for all HE sectors

Policies:

- National strategy for social dimension (2017)
- LLL strategy (2011)

AQ Austria as Key Player

- Since 2014 projects related to recognition of non-formal and informal learning
- Legal mandate to provide information and advice for all matters RPL since 2021
- Close cooperation with all HE sectors
- Erasmus+ projects
- Founding partner of RPL Network Austria and European RPL Network
- Focus: RPL and Quality Assurance

RPL practice in Austria

Status Quo

Where we're at:

- Access via RPL remains less common; mainly UAS sector for first cycle currently
- Formally acquired competences must be recognized for credits
- All Universities of Applied Sciences and approx. half the all other HEI's have regulations in place for RPL for credits for non-formal and informal qualifications

Current challenge: Fostering Trust in RPL

- Raise awareness for the societal impact of RPL in addition to the individual benefit
- Building RPL-friendly culture in higher education

Support through project-related collaboration, peer learning, raising awareness: RPL Network Austria



About RPL Network Austria

- est. 2021
- coordinated by AQ Austria
- meets 4x per year
- members: 13 higher education institutions



2025 publication:

„Anerkennung non-formal und informell erworbener Kompetenzen: Einblicke in die hochschulische Praxis und Empfehlungen zur Gestaltung von Validierungs- und Anerkennungsverfahren“



RPL in Germany

**Tilman Dörr, German
Rectors' Conference (HRK)**

National RPL structure in Germany



Status quo

Legal framework:

- Resolutions from 2002 and 2008
- Higher education laws of the federal states
- (Examination) Regulations of individual HEI

Practical implementation

- Access based on professional experience or VET possible
- RPL for credits
- RPL as part of degree programmes
- High relevance for students with professional experience outside academia

Challenges:

- knowledge of RPL options and procedures is often limited (staff and students)
- lack of sustainable institutionalisation and (additional) funding
- partially lacking acceptance/development of a culture of recognition
- differences between types of HEI and study fields
- generating, validating and utilising relevant information originating from two different (education) systems

RPL practice in Germany



HRK supporting HEIs

- Several projects related to recognition
- Resolutions and recommendations for HEI
- Development of widely accepted guidelines
- Close cooperation with other stakeholders (accreditation, business/industry, students, ...)
- Participation in European projects
- Founding partner of European RPL Network



Enhancing student mobility
across educational boundaries
through recognition



MODUS project

- 2020-2025, financed by Federal Ministry of Research and Education
- Support for HEI in cooperation with HEI and external experts
- Recommendations on Microcredentials, digitalisation, use of AI, competence-based recognition, etc.
- 89% of HRK universities reached with events
- more than 20 conferences, workshops with approx. 3,000 individual participants
- 17 webinars with approx. 1,400 participants
- university specific counselling in 40 HEI
- 10 publications
- FAQ, website, good practice database, etc.

ERPL

- **Benefit of Networking**
- **Regional cooperation**



European RPL Network



[LinkedIn](#)



[Website](#)



Goals

- Enhance the use of RPL in higher education
- Exchange of experience on the implementation of RPL in the national higher education area and the establishment of networks
- Support the establishment of national RPL networks
- Added value for the members of the national networks through peer support
- Common voice on RPL topics

Association of national RPL Networks



Discussion

- **What good practices exist in other countries?**
- **What structures and instruments support fair recognition?**
- **How can national developments be supported through international cooperation?**