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He is active in many aspects of credit related practice, with specific focus on APEL and the credit rating of work-based learning and in-house training. Recent work has included a survey of credit practice in UK HE institutions and 'reflections on credit practice', both with Anita Walsh and acting as external adviser on a project to establish a FE credit framework for Lincolnshire and Rutland. In addition, Bob advised and supported the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy in their successful application to obtain credit rating for some of their officer training courses.

Bob has played an active part in the activities of SEEC, having been a member of the SEEC Governing Council since 1991, and a member of the SEEC Development Group for the past three years. During the period 1996-98 he was the SEEC Chair of the Project Management Team for the DfEE/InCCA project 'A Framework for Learning'.

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Models of APEL and quality assurance

Contents

Foreword	5
Introduction	7
Part A Survey of SEEC APEL Network members	9
1.1 Background	9
1.2 Rationale	10
1.3 Methodology	11
1.4 Questionnaire	12
1.5 Analysis of responses	13
1.6 Analysis of documents provided	17
Part B	
2 Institutional framework and stages in the APEL process	23
2.1 Stage 1: Advertising, marketing and recruitment	25
2.2 Stage 2: Responding to enquiries	30
2.3 Stage 3 Dealing with applications from enquirers	33
2.4 Stage 4 Briefing and counselling APEL candidates	36
2.5 Stage 5 Advising on portfolio preparation	41
2.6 Stage 6 Portfolio assessment	50
2.7 Stage 7 Decision taking and ratification	55
Part C	59
3. Staff development and training	59
4. Information systems	68
Appendix 1 SEEC publications on APEL	79
Appendix 2 Letter to vice chancellors	80
Appendix 3 Covering letter accompanying the questionnaire	81
Appendix 4 The questionnaire	83
Appendix 5 Detailed results from the survey	84
Appendix 6 Listing of documents supplied by respondents	87
Appendix 7 Summary description of APEL contents of documents	89

Foreword

General Introduction and Context

In the early 1980s Higher Education faced the prospect of a demographic downturn amongst those sectors of the population that had always entered HE. Although the expansion of student numbers was part of the HE policy of the day, the problem facing many HEI's was knowing how and where to recruit new and different students.

One developmental response to this was the introduction of pilot schemes to assess the prior experiential learning of prospective HE entrants. It is instructive to remember that some of the APEL systems included in this report have their roots in those first APEL pilot schemes. Twenty years on, according to the latest HEFCE report on supply and demand in Higher Education, we are told a similar set of demographic changes combined with the saturation of 'A' level entrants means that once again the HE sector needs to meet the challenge of Widening Participation in order to achieve the government's general participation target of 30% of 18-30 year olds by 2010. During this twenty year intervening period we have not only witnessed the spread and development of APEL services to adult learners across a variety of HEIs, but also a growing dispersal and acceptance of the principles and values which have underpinned these APEL schemes within institutions. The awarding of credit for experiential learning, the use of portfolios of evidence for learning,

making assessment accessible. These features of APEL schemes have become increasingly dispersed in many institutions and often adapted for different purposes from those for which they were originally intended.

One of the differences highlighted from the survey of SEEC member institutions was that 74% of respondents said that their APEL services were an important part of their Widening Participation activity. This illustrates the significance that APEL has for these institutions in reaching and admitting under-represented groups. One of the reasons that members of the SEEC APEL network wanted this survey undertaken was to explore some of the questions that providing APEL services to adult learners in different institutional settings gives rise to. The diversity characteristics of the HE sector means that system for APEL can vary considerably in terms of their defining features and operational performance. It is these latter two points that much of the report provides a commentary on.

Reviewing, comparing and developing both APEL practice and policy was at the core of the network's discussion which lead to the proposal for the project under-taken by Bob Johnson and reported on in the following pages. However, it is important to situate the findings of the report in the more general context of Widening Participation to HE. The network is grateful to Bob for his efforts in providing a very clear and interesting report. The proposition that it might be possible to illustrate the range of APEL schemes by constituting a composite model from those schemes reported in the survey is reported on in section B of the report.

John Storan – SEEC APEL Network, Chair

Dr. Tony Wailey – SEEC APEL Network, Vice Chair

Introduction

It is important to note at the outset that the survey is confined to APEL, i.e. experiential learning and does not deal with APL, certificated learning.

The report is written in three sections, four if one is to include the depth of detail to be found in the appendices. All sections are there to assist in the:

- preparations for the introduction of the Assessment of Prior Experiential Learning, APEL
- fine tuning of an existing APEL system
- auditing and monitoring of APEL processes

In some senses, the report exists to share good, maybe best practice. However there is no sense in which it is intended to be prescriptive. The structure is such that those interested in specific aspects of APEL can access directly the relevant sections.

Part A, contains a report on a survey of SEEC APEL Network members who were asked to respond to a short focussed postal questionnaire. The results and analyses are there to inform the reader

of the range of good practice, to discover what other institutions are doing and the manner in which they carry out APEL.

Part B contains the ‘seven stages’ of APEL, a model that is the author’s own interpretation of an APEL system born out of his long experience in the field, to which has been added, the information received from the questionnaire and the documents which so many respondents very kindly submitted. The ‘seven stages’ are an amalgam based on all the documentary evidence received and as such represents an ideal, perhaps idealistic view of an ‘all-through’ APEL scheme. The model given is specified in some detail and it is not envisaged that institutions should use the model in its entirety. The detail is given to provide information on a range of APEL practices, so that institutions can select aspects they feel appropriate to enhance their own APEL provision. In addition, and importantly, the model is intended to act as a catalyst for the discussion and debate which is a necessary prerequisite for the wider acceptance of APEL. Each stage is described in a separate chapter describing who (within the institution) does what and to whom (students), and indicating how. Also in each stage there is a brief description of the training required and the types of information and records which might be kept.

Part C is designed with the view of helping those involved in establishing **staff development** programmes and setting up quality assured **information systems**. Both chapters contain a summary of the relevant details from each of the ‘seven stages’ described in section B of the report. Thus for example, the section on staff development, draws together the players in each stage and identifies in outline the knowledge, skills and expertise each should have in order to carry out their roles. The chapter on information systems, draws a distinction between the records which are kept and analysed to provide performance statistics and those which are used primarily for quality assurance purposes.

The **appendices** contain a wealth of information, particularly appendices 6 and 7, which, respectively, list and provide a summary of the documents supplied to the project leader. The appendices also contain the finer details of the implementation of the survey of SEEC APEL Network members and their responses.

PART A

THE SURVEY OF SEEC APEL NETWORK MEMBERS

1.1. Background:

SEEC has throughout its existence been operated for and by its member institutions. It provides staff development workshops, publishes a number of reports, supports projects as well as providing fora for group meetings so that members can network, share good practice and generally keep up-to-date. The APEL Network is one of the longest established groups and is extremely active. It has representatives from almost all of the 37 SEEC member institutions, the majority of whom are academic practitioners of APEL. However there is still a strong representation from the registry/regulatory parts of the institutions.

In the past the activities of the APEL network have led to the publication of a number of texts (see appendix 1). During 2000, members of the SEEC APEL Network were conscious of the growing role and influence of QAA with its emphasis on the effectiveness of the procedures and systems used by institutions to maintain and improve the quality of services to students. Subsequent discussions, both formal and informal between members of the network, revealed that institutions varied in the ways they dealt with the Assessment of Prior

Experiential Learning, APEL. Some have been operating APEL schemes for many years, whilst others are relative newcomers. Some operate across the whole of the institution, albeit maybe in a de-centralised manner whilst others run APEL in only one department/faculty. As a consequence, the network members asked SEEC to fund a project to survey APEL systems and provide an analysis with a view to exploring the feasibility of establishing a SEEC APEL information bank.

1.2. Rationale

The rationale for the project as included in the submission for funding to SEEC is:

“The SEEC APEL Network members and SEEC institutions have in place a range of systems concerned with the monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance of APEL arrangements. Precisely how APEL arrangements will feature within the emerging QAA framework remains to be seen. It is hoped that if the work of this feasibility study is positive that a fully operational SEEC database will be established. This database, predicated upon “all through systems” will provide an important resource for the further development and quality enhancement of APEL services within SEEC and add to the influence upon national frameworks.

And the original aims and objectives were:

- *to gather together information on, and record the types of existing APEL systems being used by SEEC member institutions*
- *To produce a pilot information bank, which will include a breakdown of data; received from the APEL consultation as well as a synthesis of members’ systems*
- *To canvass the views of SEEC members on the need and potential value of an information bank.”*

Such information should provide a sound basis for:

- a) APEL Network member institutions to benchmark their own systems and to share good practice. It is not intended to be prescriptive in the sense of identifying the “best” APEL system.
- b) other SEEC member institutions to introduce or fine-tune their own APEL systems
- c) use by SEEC members in preparation for QAA and QCA audit visits and in the preparation of responses to consultation papers.

1.3. Methodology

The resources and funding available meant that the study would be constrained in its scope and would be seen as a preliminary investigation which could provide a platform for subsequent work involving a more qualitative approach. It was also seen as providing the basis for a publication to be read in parallel with the SEEC “How to do APEL” due to be published early in 2002.

Initially, the thought was to follow the lines of the SEEC project 1999 ‘Credit a comparative approach 1994-9’ (SEEC 2000) and carry out a national survey of the institutions. However, given the limited resources available, it was decided to carry out a survey of SEEC member institutions. By concentrating it on members of the SEEC APEL Network, it was felt that the immense reservoir of APEL knowledge and expertise could be tapped. Given their interest in the subject, it was felt that this would have a beneficial effect on the response rate. Also, one of SEEC’s primary objectives is to benefit its institutions by identifying and sharing good practice within its membership. Hence it was decided to survey the members’ representatives in the SEEC APEL Network.

Although it would have been preferable to conduct face to face interviews with APEL practitioners in their own environment, funding limitations would not allow. However, it was felt that in a preliminary

investigation such as this, the aims of the survey could be met by using a postal questionnaire addressed to named members of the SEEC APEL Network.

Since the survey would be requesting copies of institutional documents, it was determined that as a matter of courtesy and in line with SEEC's policy a letter (copy in appendix 2) would be sent to the vice chancellors.

Also, as this was a project originating in the SEEC APEL Network and was a survey to be completed by the network's members, it would be appropriate that the covering letter accompanying the postal questionnaire should be signed by the chair of the network (copy in appendix 3).

Change of objectives

Following the presentation of the preliminary analysis to the steering group, it was decided to review the objectives of the study. It was decided to add an additional aim of including a comprehensive view of the APEL process by identifying all the stages, a 'cradle to grave' model, of the APEL process, that, whilst not being prescriptive might make the project more valuable to members. The consequent re-allocation of the budget was agreed by SEEC.

In order to check whether the new objective met with its agreement, a workshop presenting the idea was held for members of the SEEC APEL Network. The members fully supported the additional objective, confirming the feeling that this would give 'added value' to the project. The author also benefited from the many useful comments and contributions made by members.

1.4. Questionnaire

The steering group and APEL Network members were invited to comment on the initial draft of the questionnaire. It was felt that the

response rate was a critical factor and hence the questionnaire should be kept as short as possible (1 side of A4!) with many of the questions requiring little or no research on the part of the respondents. As a result only those questions relating to information which is important to the project were retained and those which fell into the category “nice to know” were eliminated.

The questionnaire covered the following 7 aspects:

- the ‘demography’ of the institution; e.g. type, size.
- APEL within an institution’s structure
- the subject areas for which APEL is used significantly
- volume of APEL work
- use of APEL within institutional processes
- where APEL is treated differently to other aspects of the curriculum
- APEL in institutions policies

A copy of the questionnaire can be found in appendix 4.

1.5. Results from the questionnaire

A full summary of the responses can be found in appendix 5.

1.5.1. Questionnaires were sent out to all 37 SEEC member institutions, to the SEECAPEL Network representatives, and, following the sending of the letter of reminder, there were 27 responses- a very encouraging 72% response rate.

1.5.2. Size of institution:

17 respondents (63%) identified their institutions as “new”, 6 as (22%) “old” and 4 as “other”.

In terms of size, as measured in terms of full-time equivalent students, the responding institutions were as follows:-

Total size (FTEs)	Under 5000	5000-10000	10000-15000	Over 15000
Number of institutions	3	10	4	8

Undergraduates(FTEs)	Under 3000	3000-5000	5000-10000	Over 10000
Number of institutions	1	6	10	4

Postgraduates(FTEs)	Under 1000	1000-2000	Over 2000
Number of institutions	4	8	7

1.5.3. Mission statements

All 27 institutions have mission statements; 12 submitted copies and one other referred to its web site. Only one mission statement made explicit reference to APEL, although for four others the sentiments expressed were consistent with those of APEL.

However, 20 (74%) of institutions reported seeing APEL as an important part of their widening participation activity.

1.5.4. Length of time APEL had been in operation

Two-thirds (18) of the institutions had been using APEL for over 5 years, whilst another 7 (26%) had been doing so for between 3 - 5 years. One institution had only just started using APEL within the past year.

1.5.5. APEL Structure

APEL **policy** appears to be predominately (15 responses - 56%) at a local departmental or faculty level within an overall institutional framework. However 6 institutions operate a central policy and 4 more a purely departmental one.

In terms of APEL **processes and procedures**, only 1 institution operated from the centre whilst 11 (41%) ran only via departments.

1.5.6. Where APEL is used

Twenty-one institutions responded to this question.

The general impression is that APEL is not used widely across institutions, but it appears in 'hot spots'. Most notably, 15 respondents quote significant use within "health faculties". Next highest with 9 (33%) was teacher education, followed by Business and Management with 7 (26%) and Continuing Professional Development with 6 (22%). Others mentioned were social work, law, technology and life long learning.

As HE learning becomes more fragmented with for example, more and more students interrupting their studies, institutions having policies to encourage widening participation and to provide more flexible modes of delivery, it would seem that the use of APEL could be exploited much more fully and across the board. Indeed, it may be argued that institutions may need to develop APEL more seriously in response to such developments and initiatives.

1.5.7. APEL numbers

Many institutions do not record APL and APEL students separately and the numbers reported here probably tend to be an underestimate of the numbers involved. Ten institutions did not submit information. However, for those who did, as one would expect, there are proportionately more part-time APEL students, out numbering their full time colleagues by almost 3 to 1, (2046 v 789).

The number of part-time students averaged 120 per institution, with numbers ranging from 10 to 700. Whilst the number of APEL full time students averaged 46, with individual institutions recording a range of 1 to 250.

None of the institution felt that number of APEL students would fall in the coming year. Indeed 5 (24%) expected growth to be in excess of 5%. However, over half of the respondents, 12 institutions, did not expect APEL to grow in the coming year.

1.5.8. Where APEL is used explicitly

The number of institutions, and the %, explicitly reporting using APEL in their non academic activities are as follows:-:

	no.	%
admissions	20	74
advice and guidance	18	67
recruitment	17	63
central support services	8	30

1.5.9. Treatment of APEL

The purpose here was to discover the extent to which APEL is embedded in an institution's psyche and culture and to what extent it is treated differently to other "modes" of learning and delivery.

Only a minority of respondents replied to this question, but it is significant to note that 6 (32%) said that there were no areas in which APEL is treated differently. However 6 other institutions (32%) stated that it was treated differently at examination boards. Four (21%) stated that the monitoring of APEL was treated in a different manner to other monitored activities within the curriculum.

Only one institution claimed to use 2 assessors, whilst 3 stated that the assessor is independent of the adviser. However on looking through the documents supplied with the responses, it is evident that almost all institutions separate the two functions. It is possible that so many take it for granted that they did not see this as significant enough for comment.

1.5.10. APEL and institutional policies.

APEL features in several aspects of the policies of institutions and is written into the processes and procedures with which they are associated. By far and away the most popular area (70% of institutions) of inclusion is that of course validation, where courses, new or coming up for review explicitly consider the arrangements for APEL.

When institutions carry out their annual monitoring, some 9 (35%) require the APEL element to be commented up. Similarly some 6 (23%) institutions will also include APEL in their internal audits. Elsewhere APEL is considered when framing policies on teaching and learning, on collaborative programmes and continuing professional development.

1.5.11. Summary

Most institutions are pursuing widening participation, increasing flexibility of delivery and working more closely with companies and organisations. The use of APEL is primarily at local, department or faculty level within an institutional framework. Whilst the number of APEL students varies very considerably from one institution to another, there is evidence that it appears to be well embedded into all their activities. None of the respondents expected the number of APEL students to fall in the coming year. However it is evident that, even where there is an institutional framework, APEL is not used across the whole of the institutions, but rather in isolated pockets, most notably health care and nursing.

There are many new developments to which institutions have to respond, including widening participation, delivering the curriculum in more flexible ways, allowing students to ‘step off and step back’ into learning,. The advent of new initiatives such as the development of Foundation degrees, the growing demand for the recognition of work-based and work related learning and the demands for lifelong learning also require institutions to review their operations. In so doing, institutions may need to develop APEL in a more serious manner than hitherto. In this context, and as reported in Johnson and Walsh (2000) it would seem that the use of ‘A Quality code for APEL’ (Croker 1996) has provided a sound foundation for the operational practice of APEL.

1.6. Analysis of documents provided

Institutions were invited to submit a copy of ‘any protocols, guidelines and other relevant documents’ used in their institutions. Twelve

institutions, just under half of those responding did send in documents. A full list of the documents is contained in Appendix 6.

The documents fell into two broad groups

- Regulatory frameworks appertaining to APEL
- Staff and student handbooks

1.6.1. Documents relating to regulatory matters

There were a number of documents sent in which loosely could be described as regulatory. They included

- Proportion of APEL permitted in awards
- Undergraduate and postgraduate award regulations
- Institutional policies and procedures for APEL

Proportion of APEL permitted in awards

The proportion of APEL permitted in awards varied from institution to institution ranging from ‘*no APEL beyond level one*’ through to the whole award based upon APEL. Both of these are extremes and used by a tiny minority of institutions. A number of institutions allow different proportions for undergraduate and postgraduate awards.

Many institutions allow up to 50% of the award, whilst others claim to allow up to two thirds. However there were differences in the interpretation of the statements. While some institutions regard ‘two thirds’ as covering say levels 1 and 2 at undergraduate level, others interpret it as two thirds of any particular stage of the award.

An example from one institution, shows how the ‘50% rule is applied differently for undergraduate and postgraduate awards is:

‘A student who submits evidence of prior experience or learning in accordance with the applicable regulations may be

given credit equivalents to the following provisions in respect of the award of:

- i) PG Certificate up to a maximum of 30 credits (sic 50%)*
- ii) PG Diploma up to 60 credits (sic 50%)*
- iii) Masters up to 90 credits, provided that in no circumstances shall M level equivalents exempt a student from the dissertation element of the award.’ and*

‘The student is allowed to have APEL-ed (sic) up to 9 out of 12 twenty-credit modules at levels 2 and 3, but must complete a minimum of 60 institution credits at level 3 (i.e. 50% of level 3)’

Another example is:

‘maximum 66% at undergraduate and 33% at postgraduate’

Others have quite simple statements such as:

‘Up to 2/3 via AP(E)L’

‘Maximum of 50% of award (n.b. professional body regulations permitting) but for direct entry can be 60%’

Some institutions take a tougher line on the part played by APEL

*‘Exemption up to 50% from the supervised work experience (sandwich) element of the programme
Normally credit limited to maximum of 50%’*

or

‘APEL usually only for admission up to entry to level 2, other than assessed experiential learning that goes before an Assessment Board’

‘APEL procedures not used for advanced standing nor entry to masters’

‘APEL normally only for 50% of taught element (unless there is a close match to course requirements’

Classification

Often the assessment of APEL is on the basis of pass or fail and only very rarely is it graded or given a percentage score. Thus, when it comes to classification of first degrees or qualifying for distinction/merit on postgraduate awards, all the responding institutions noted that the ‘calculation’ must be undertaken excluding the credit obtained via APEL

‘Distinction based on non-APEL marks’

‘Exempted units are not counted for purposes of classification’

but

‘Where a student who relies on accreditation of prior experience or learning, gains a weighted average of 60% or above in the remaining modules, it shall be for the Assessment Board to determine whether it is appropriate to make the award with merit or distinction’

Although it is very rare for APEL credits to carry marks - most experiential learning is graded pass/fail - some institutions have regulations designed to allow for this

‘The classification will be calculated on the basis of the marks of the modules undertaken with the institution plus marks of modules imported from prior studies, ‘APEL credit with marks.’

Staff handbooks and student guides

Most of the institutions sending in APEL documentation had obviously spent a lot of time and thought on the content, structure and presentation of the guidelines. There was no one model of a handbook, although all covered more or less the same ground and were user/student-friendly. Some institutions produced a combined staff and student APEL handbook, whilst others produced them as separate volumes. Yet others split the student guidelines into a number of subsections.

Although entitled ‘Staff handbook’, the following is an example of a combined booklet:

Staff Handbook for the AP(E)L

Contents

Introduction

Purpose of AP(E)L

Definition of terms

Process for Advanced standing and AP(E)L within the regulatory framework

Proportion of credit awarded via advanced standing

Calculation of honours classification

Operational stages for the process of accreditation of courses

Conclusion and references

App.1 Faculty Marketing strategy for course accreditation and AP(E)L

App.2 Guidelines for implementation of advanced standing

App.3 APL and AP(E)L information sheet

App.4 APL/AP(E)L Information booklet Student

App.5 Fees for APL/AP(E)L

App.6 Portfolio Pro formas for completion by students

App.7 Portfolio guidelines Student

An example of a separate booklet for students

Accreditation of APEL: Guidance booklet for applicants

Introduction

Glossary

Assessment

Guidance for application for APL

Guidance for application for APEL

Cost

Regulations

Appendix 1 Levels of study

Appendix 2 Flowchart of APEL process

Appendix 3 Harvard system of referencing

Appendix 4 ENB Key characteristics

A full listing of the documents including staff and student guides, with indicative contents appears in appendix 7

Summary

One of the objectives of the project was to examine the feasibility of establishing an information bank of APEL documents. However for a number of reasons a data bank proved infeasible. Institutions were concerned that confidentiality and indeed competitiveness might be jeopardised if particular institutions could be recognised, rightly or wrongly from given documents. Also on reading through the documents submitted, it was very apparent that there is no one 'stereotype' for any of the APEL activities. Even where documents have similar sounding titles, it was quite apparent that the approaches, structure and tenor, were different. As a consequence, it was decided to supply (in appendix 7) brief, outline summaries, which can be used by readers in designing/re-designing their own documents.

PART B

AN 'ALL-THROUGH' MODEL OF THE APEL PROCESS

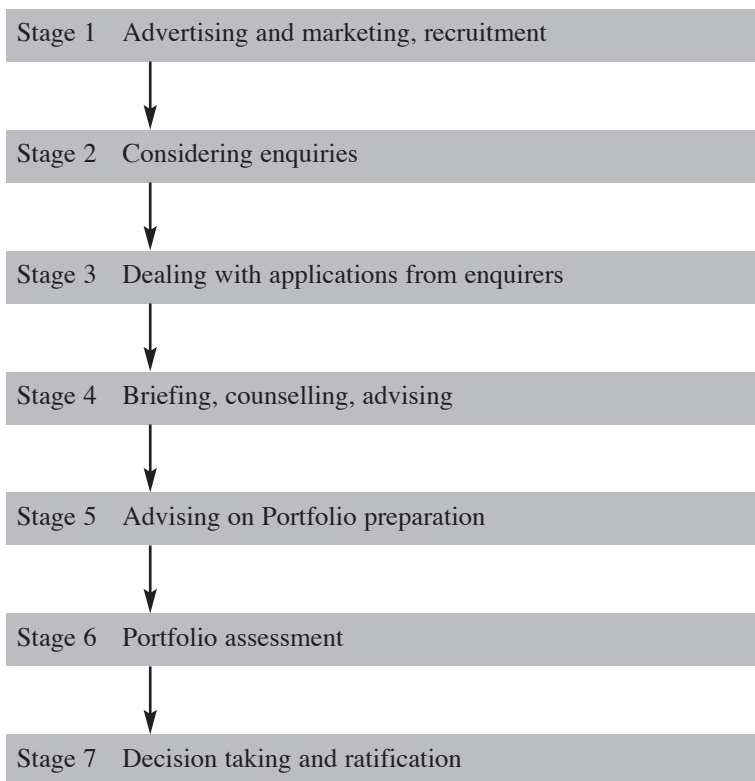
2. Institutional framework and the stages in the APEL process

Institutional framework

The purpose of this report is to chart the APEL processes and not to detail the institutional framework. However, in outline, the first requirement in the establishment of an institutional framework for the APEL process, is to provide answers to such questions as:

- How much APEL will be allowed within the awards offered?
- How will it be assessed? Pass/fail or with grades/percentages?
- How will modules, which have been subject to APEL be considered within a classification scheme?
- How will APEL be treated within the validation and review process?
- What constitutes a 'quality-assured' APEL process?
- What is the relevant reporting and committee structure?

Stages in the APEL process



Each stage is described in terms of what is involved, who within the institution carries out the activity and how they might do it. This is followed by a brief outline of the skills, knowledge and expertise thought desirable for the person(s) - identifying possible staff development needs. Each stage is completed by an examination of the records which might be kept as an audit trail for quality assurance purposes and those which the institution may wish to use to measure the effectiveness of its operations.

2.1. STAGE ONE: Advertising and marketing recruitment

2.1.1. APEL is not, and should not be seen as something extra ‘tacked on’ to the curriculum. It is both an essential and a necessary element, embedded in the culture and ethos of the institution. Thus, any advertising and marketing should be part of the ‘jigsaw’ and each element should fit with the overall marketing strategy. Therefore it would seem sensible that an institution’s marketing/commercial unit department should be involved in the decisions of where the ‘message’ should be placed, the mode of the delivery and the layout and presentation. However, it is also paramount that the APEL Co-ordinator/Manager/Director or designated APEL expert agrees the content.

2.1.2. Target groups

Each element of the strategy must be clear as to its target market and be used in a relevant and appropriate way in order to reach its potential customers/clients. In the case of APEL the target groups may be divided into two categories viz. those inside the institution and those outside.

2.1.2.1. Within the institutions we are speaking of

- a. those students already enrolled upon courses whether they be full-time or
- b. part-time, associate students or
- c. those attending ‘short’ courses.
- d. the institution’s own academic and non-academic staff

Whilst it is fairly obvious that those students in groups b) and c) above, will almost certainly have experiential learning to a greater or less extent, it is less evidently so for full-time students. However, the advent of ‘mass education’, the reduction in maintenance grants and the imposition of fees, means that more and more ‘full-time’ students are undertaking term-time jobs and work through the vacations. In addition many programmes of study incorporate a placement period in industry, commerce or the voluntary sector (paid or unpaid) ranging

from a few days to a whole academic year. It can be seen therefore that an increasing proportion of 'full-time' will acquire experiential learning during their period of study.

A number of institutions refine the group further to target a particular sector eg nursing/health education.

Furthermore a group which is often forgotten is the institution's own staff, academic and non-academic, especially the latter, who have a wealth of experience and learning which, often hitherto has not been 'recognised' by certification; qualification or credit transcript/Record of Achievement.

2.1.2.2 External Clients

Externally the institution may well wish to attract:

- a. individual students to gain recognition for their experiential learning.
- b. Organisations and companies with training and development programmes both formal and informal, and with work-based learning. (Johnson 1999)

2.1.3. The Message

At this stage the message is one of raising awareness of the existence of APEL and may include

- What is APEL?
- Benefits to the target group
- What to do next!

What is APEL?

Each institution will develop its own form of words, but they will be based upon a formal definition adapted by it. For example:

- APEL is the official recognition of learning which has occurred through life/work experience and study which has

not been formally attested through any educational or professional certificate.

or

- APEL is the ‘process by which appropriate uncertificated learning is given academic value and recognised. acquired through life, work experience and study which are not formally attested’.

Benefits to the target group

Quite obviously the benefits to an organisation or company will differ in many respects from those accruing to individuals. The former may look to APEL to denote a seal of quality and approval by an HE institution of the learning occurring in the workplace. The recognition so given can then be used to promote its corporate image, maybe as a ‘learning organisation’ or for tendering purposes, by demonstrating the possession of a good quality (qualified) staff. It may also use APEL as a basis for recruiting and retaining staff and of increasing staff morale and thus efficiency.

On the other hand, an individual may be looking for the award of credit to boost self-esteem and career prospects. It could lead to exemption or partial exemption from modules on a programme of study leading to an award, thus reducing the subsequent time to complete the requirements for an award. However, there is a danger that APEL can be ‘oversold’ by suggesting it is cheaper than taking a given module/course. It is in fact more resource intensive for the institution and may only be cheaper to the applicant if the institution is willing to absorb all or part of the cost, as a loss leader, in the hope of gaining fee income at a later stage. One must be careful not to create an erroneous impression whereby APEL is seen to be easier and quicker for the student to acquire than taking the course. Whereas in practice, the production of sufficient and reliable evidence to demonstrate that learning has taken place can be equally time consuming.

What to do next?

The promotional material must show clearly and simply what the prospective client must do next. It is advisable that they should be

encouraged to seek further details on which they can carry out self-diagnosis to ascertain their likely progression. It is always preferable, though not always practicable to have a named person in the institution as the point of contact. However the means of contact must allow for all forms of communication including letter, telephone, fax and e-mail, with all the relevant details being clearly displayed.

Nature of advertising and marketing

Where might awareness-raising information be displayed?

Institution website

Institution prospectus

All course/programme information

Student handbooks

Student guidance/counselling information packs

Staff handbooks

Flyers

2.1.4. Staff development. Who should know (the players):

ALL staff, academic and support

Receptionists and telephonists

Student Union

Student Guidance and counselling service

Librarians/Learning Resource Centre

Recruitment/Admissions Officers

Course Leaders, Admission Tutors

Commercial Unit staff

2.1.5. Staff development: What should they know? (training needs)

- a) The institution offers APEL
- b) The timing and the content of APEL promotion and advertising
- c) How to give simple information to enquirers re APEL and,
- d) more importantly to know when and to whom to pass enquirers' details, i.e. named APEL person(s) and their contact details.

2.2. STAGE TWO: Consideration of enquiries for APEL

2.2.1. It is regarded as good practice for the recipient of enquiries to act in a friendly, knowledgeable manner. Therefore, the role and responsibilities of the person(s) receiving the enquiry must be clearly defined.

Probably the most difficult scenarios to deal with are those when an individual turns up 'out-of-the-blue' at a reception desk or rings the general number of the institution, getting the person on the switchboard.

2.2.2. The institution has to decide on a policy for dealing with enquirers

- Should the enquirer be passed straight on to the relevant APEL person, and to a named substitute if he/she is not available? Or should the receptionist/telephonist take contact details of the caller to be passed on later? Or indeed, should the receptionist be authorised to give information about APEL to enquirers?
- How best to alert prospective students to the existence of APEL and
- What APEL means.
- Who is 'authorised' to carry out some initial sifting, give verbal information re the APEL process including how to apply and maybe, even help the student to decide whether or not to proceed. Clearly there is a need for staff development involving both knowledge and skills to include how to give general advice, indicative fees, the APEL process, contacts and application forms.

2.2.3. Students already enrolled on a programme will have details of whom to contact in the various course documents they received at the start of the course/academic year. However, many may still raise the

matter with their tutors in class and will rightly expect all academic staff to be familiar with the concept of APEL. It may also be reasonable to suppose that they may also be able to provide some general advice. However, it is essential that they know sufficient about the APEL process to be able to direct the student to the relevant APEL colleague and/or take details to pass on to their APEL colleagues(s). The Course Leader/Director and to a lesser extent the year/level tutors should be well versed in APEL in relation to their own programme. They also ought to be in a position to give more detailed advice on whether or not the student has a 'good' claim and if so how to go about applying for APEL. In addition, knowledge about the relevant deadlines is also important.

Fax, letter and e-mail enquiries must be passed to the relevant person(s)/unit without delay and a response sent within a specified time period, e.g. within two working days.

2.2.4. Typically 'Further details', still user-friendly but more technical, may be contained in a pack consisting of the following information together with an application form.

What is APEL?	Definitions
The APEL Process	How to make a claim - self-diagnosis Portfolio v. Learning outcomes Advice and Assessment

Record of Achievement

Where to seek further advice, e. g. how to complete the application form.

Application Form

2.2.5. Staff development and training

All those persons who either formally or informally receive enquiries about APEL must have a basic awareness of the APEL processes within the institution. In particular, they should be aware of named individuals who have more detailed knowledge and who can assist in

the process of initial sifting of the enquiries. However the primary task is to supply enquirers with good quality advice or informative documentation such as that listed in section 2.2.4 above. It is likely that the APEL Manager, Institutional/faculty, will be responsible for the production of such material.

In summary, the following staff dealing with enquirers,

- Receptionist/Telephonist
- All academic staff
- Admission Unit/Office
- Course Leaders/Tutors

should have training in

- basic awareness of APEL and the key contacts
- being able to record pertinent contact details and
- either sending out the information pack details or knowledge of who should.

2.2.6. Record Keeping

For performance evaluation purposes it will also be useful to record number and type of enquiries

Tracking of enquirers

Contact details

Date and mode of enquiry

Date of initial response and by whom

Date information/details sent, how and by whom

The information should be forwarded to the APEL Administrator who will collate and keep the records of enquiries.

Performance statistics include the periodic (monthly?) production of a summary of response times.

2.3. STAGE THREE: Dealing with applications

2.3.1. The information sent to enquirers/prospective applicants should contain clear instructions on how to proceed with an application. In particular, it is important to prevent delays and loss of good will, to make clear to whom the application form should be sent. For instance,

applications from

- enrolled students to go through the Course Leader
- prospective students go to the Institution/Faculty/ Department APEL Co-ordinator
- organisation/company clients to WBL/Commercial/ Marketing Unit

2.3.2. The decision to proceed with the APEL application

The APEL scheme will not be appropriate for all applicants and there will generally be a need to sift them. However, with an appropriately designed application form there should be sufficient information and detail in the relevant format to enable a trained APEL person to make a preliminary assessment. This person may well come to one of the following initial conclusions:

- a) This is a sound case and some indication can be made about the likely level of the credit and maybe also about the possible volume
- b) The applicant would seem to have a reasonable case for APEL but more information is required before a decision to proceed can be made.
- c) On the evidence presented there seems to be little likelihood of any credit being awarded.

The interim decision should be sent in writing to the applicant within a set period of receipt of the application, say 5 working days. In support of the institution's mission on widening participation, in the case of b) and c), especially c), the applicant should NOT receive a

response which is discouraging or which is capable of being interpreted as a barrier/hurdle especially for those wishing to enter or return to study.

Where decision a) is reached it must be stressed to the applicant that any statement on level and volume of credit is purely advisory and in no way should be regarded as binding. The eventual credit rating will depend upon the evidence to be presented (in a portfolio) and may be more or less than the initial indication.

2.3.3. Next steps

Decision a). results in the APEL person giving the applicant an outline of the next steps in the APEL process, showing that once the appropriate fee has been received, the APEL applicant will be enrolled, briefed and assigned an adviser to guide him/her through.

2.3.4. Staff development

Although at this stage only a limited number of people are involved it will be necessary for those at earlier stages in the APEL scheme to be aware of the process at this stage.

- Course Leader(s)
- Institution/Faculty/Department APEL Manager
- WBL/Commercial Unit - APEL specialist

The persons charged with the responsibility of doing the initial sifting of APEL applications will need to fully understand the principles of APEL and the processes used within the institution. In order to be able to give an initial assessment of the possible level of credit, the person will need to be familiar with and understand the use of the credit levels and qualifications descriptors. Although it is desirable, it is not essential for the person to be a subject expert. For example a Faculty APEL manager is unlikely to be an expert in all the subjects delivered in that faculty.

In summary the training needs are

- to understand the principles of APEL and the processes used within the institution
- to understand the use of the credit levels and qualifications descriptors

2.3.5. Record keeping:

For performance and monitoring purposes

A record should be kept of the date of the receipt of the application and the date of the response, together with a note of the respondent.

The student's record card should be updated for tracking purposes.

The application form plus the recommendation from the APEL briefer is returned to the APEL Administrator who will be responsible for recording the advice/decision and tracking the application and its associated paperwork.

Those involved in later stages, particularly APEL advisers and assessors will need to know what has occurred. Advisers and assessors will need to be in receipt of the student's application/claim and the decision reached by the briefer.

NB It is important that the student is made aware that any decision/information re the likely credit given at this stage is simply indicative and not to be interpreted as a 'promise' as to the credit which will result from the assessment of the portfolio of evidence.

2.4. STAGE FOUR: Briefing, counselling and initial advising

2.4.1. Once the student has enrolled, been registered (and paid the fee), the APEL Manager will be responsible for assigning an **APEL briefer/adviser**. Often due to resource implications, the institution will require the APEL briefings on a group basis. Therefore the person doing the briefing may or may not be the person who subsequently advises the student on how to prepare and present a portfolio of evidence. However where the briefing is done on a one-to-one basis, the APEL briefer/adviser will also be the APEL adviser, taking the applicant through the next stage of portfolio preparation. At this point, the APEL manager may also assign an assessor. It is good practice and, usually as a matter of institutional policy, that the student will not be assigned the same person as adviser and assessor. The APEL manager will be responsible for informing the student of the adviser's name and contact details. The student's file containing the original application/claim and the APEL Manager's response(s) will be passed to the APEL Adviser (see stage 5).

Normally it will be the student's responsibility to contact the APEL briefer/adviser, but institutions tend to be pro-active with the briefer/adviser contacting the student within a prescribed period, for example 3 working days. The primary purpose of the initial contact is to arrange a date, time and place for the initial discussion.

2.4.2. The discussion

It is important, particularly with applicants who are learners accessing the institution for the first time or return to study students, to make the session as friendly and welcoming as possible. This is particularly important as some of the applicants will be unused to speaking in public, and unfamiliar with 'question and answer' sessions and with role-play exercises, all quite common practices used by the briefer/adviser to identify and to elicit further evidence of learning.

Thus if resources allow, the discussion is often best conducted on a one to one basis. Although, a group discussion with a one to one follow up

can also be very effective. The group discussion might well have the following pattern.

- Introductions -
 - a) adviser: name, contact details
 - b) student, name, background
 - c) brief outline of expectations
- Background to the institution and the APEL process
- Role and responsibilities of a). adviser b). student
- Meaning of credit, credit tariffs, credit levels, qualification descriptors
- Evidence: what constitutes evidence, evidence to meet learning outcomes (specific credit) and setting own learning outcomes (general credit)
- APEL module
- Agree an outline 'learning contract', with copies for the student and the adviser
- Agree date, time and place of the first meeting, one to one, between student and adviser with a clear remit of the
 - purpose and potential outcome of the meeting.
 - material which the student has agreed to produce.

2.4.3.1. The student

At the end of the briefing meeting the student should

- a. feel comfortable with what has gone on,
- b. have had plenty of opportunities and been encouraged to ask questions.
- c. have understood the APEL process
- d. have fully understood what is expected of him/her
- e. understand the role and responsibilities of the APEL adviser

- f. agreed an outline learning contract
- g. go away enthused, having agreed in detail what is to be done for the next meeting.

2.4.3.2. The APEL Briefer/Adviser

The role and responsibilities of the AEPL briefer/adviser will be clearly laid down in the institution's documentation, a user-friendly copy of which is often given to the student.

It is recommended that many of the aspects and details of the briefing will be summarised (in a student friendly format) in documentation which can be distributed during the briefing.

It is vitally important that the APEL briefer/Adviser keeps comprehensive records of the briefing meeting and especially of the 'learning contract' that may be countersigned and dated by both the student and the adviser, each retaining a copy. In terms of efficiency, it is better if the adviser has the 'authority' to sign the contract on behalf of the APEL Manager rather than passing the contract into the system for further scrutiny and decision making, which can introduce unnecessary delay into the process.

2.4.4. Staff Development

The APEL briefer/adviser should be an 'expert' practitioner of APEL, having full knowledge of credit, credit frameworks, APEL, WBL, roles and responsibilities of advisers AND assessors. The adviser will need to be fully aware of the institution's APEL processes including time scales, deadlines and fee structure. Also he/she will need to be fully aware of the institution's regulations on APEL including:-;

- the amount of credit allowed at different levels,
- the modules for which APEL is NOT allowed,
- how the decision on the APEL portfolio is recorded, ie pass, graded or a percentage score (and the consequent impact upon the way in which a degree is classified).

Summary

Staff involved

APEL Briefer/adviser

who will require training to become

- expert APEL practitioners
- fully aware of the institution's regulations appertaining to APEL
- familiar with the institutional time scales and deadlines

2.4.5. Record keeping

Most of the record keeping at this stage will be for quality assurance purposes, providing information on the operation of the processes laid down by the institution. Most institutions will want to be assured that all aspects of its work are being carried out to the required standards. It is therefore useful for the student to complete a feedback form that could consist of

- a. A series of tick boxes for factual information, e.g. documentation received (for instance, detailing role and responsibility of the student, the adviser and assessor.)
- b. Questions of a more qualitative nature re. The value and usefulness of the briefing session, the content and the delivery.

Documents for quality assurance purposes include

- outline learning contract
- adviser's notes of briefing meeting
- student feedback form
- summary report(s) from the APEL manager

Performance statistics

It is advisable that a copy of the signed learning contract is lodged with the APEL Manager within the period prescribed by the institution, e.g. 3 working days, so that the progress of students can be logged and monitored. Thereby providing an audit trail should the external examiner or an internal/external QA auditor wish to investigate.

2.5. STAGE FIVE: Advising on portfolio preparation

2.5.1 Once the student has undergone the briefing and counselling discussion, the APEL manager appoints an adviser to act as a support and a ‘friend’ to the student. It is usually good practice for the student to receive a letter informing her/him of the appointment with a description of the roles and responsibilities for both her/him and the APEL adviser.

As part of an institution’s policy of encouraging students to take ownership of their own learning, the onus may be on the student to contact the adviser. On the other hand, in pursuit of a policy of being supportive and of widening participation etc., an institution may require the adviser to make the first step. Even in the former case, it can be argued that the institution, ultimately has responsibility for the student and hence will have a fall-back position, whereby if the student fails to make contact, the adviser contacts the student within a specified period, say 10 days.

The primary purpose of the initial contact is to set up the first meeting between the student and the tutor, an outline of the agenda of which has been notified to the student in the ‘appointment of adviser’ letter.

2.5.2. First meeting

The initial meeting is designed to ‘break the ice’ and to set up the foundations for a productive and effective working relationship. The meeting is best conducted in a pleasant relaxed atmosphere with a view to allaying any fears and apprehensions that the student may have.

2.5.3. The agenda

The agenda may consist of

- Getting to know each other
- Going through the APEL claim in detail, giving initial feedback on the strength of the student’s claim
- Devising and agreeing a ‘learning’ contract

- Discussion of the style, form and format of a portfolio of evidence
- Discussion of the process of assessment
- Agree a work schedule including dates for future meetings.

2.5.3.1. Getting to know each other

Prior to the meeting the student will have received the name of the adviser and description of the adviser's role. The adviser will have received the folder containing the student's details, their APEL claim and the evaluation by the counsellor/briefer.

During the meeting it is the adviser's task to ensure that the student has a full understanding of the APEL process and the roles and responsibilities of themselves and the adviser.

2.5.3.2. The APEL claim

The adviser will discuss with the student the claim for credit. Depending upon the institution's APEL regulations this may include volume and level of credit, general v. specific credit, and the number of credits/module exemption. The adviser makes sure that the student thoroughly understands the terms used and the implications of the claim. The adviser will inform the student of the definition of credit, how the volume and level is determined and the need to identify the learning outcomes or the learning that has been evidenced. The adviser will ensure that the student fully appreciates what constitutes evidence and the need for it to be valid, reliable and current. All this information will also be contained in a student handbook on APEL.

There could then follow a discussion in which the student begins to explain those parts of her/his experience she/he is intending to use as evidence of learning, and with the help of the adviser, will begin to assign parts of the learning experience to different parts of the APEL claim. This process is often referred to as 'mapping' (the evidence of learning on to the learning outcomes of the claim). The adviser will elicit further details or clarification and will ascertain if there is

evidence of any other learning that the student may not realise has taken place or can be ‘counted’ towards the claim. The original claim may be amended. The adviser will advise the student the strengths and weaknesses of the claim, indicating the areas where it is believed that there is sufficient evidence and those that appear rather thin.

2.5.3.3. Learning Contract

The discussion will then continue to explore further the student’s experience, to ascertain whether or not there is the potential for extra evidence in these areas. If at this stage the adviser believes that there may be insufficient evidence then they will discuss ways in which further evidence can be produced, maybe through a ‘learning contract’ (or if no further evidence is forthcoming, the need to adjust the claim). At this early stage, any learning contract will be only in outline and will undoubtedly be amended as the portfolio of evidence is produced.

2.5.3.4. The Portfolio

The student must be made aware that when the assessor ‘marks’ the portfolio, she/he will be looking at the strength of the evidence vis-a-vis the learning outcomes put forward in the APEL claim. Therefore the student has to be clear on what and how to present the information. A portfolio therefore will be structured to contain, for instance:

- The student’s details: name, address, student number etc.
- The student’s CV. Typically even for the most experienced and mature student this may no more than 1 side of A4.
- The claim: This claim which will begin with a statement of the volume and level of credit, general/specific and the names (and institution’s reference codes) of any modules for which exemption is being claimed. This can then be followed up, maybe in tabular form, typically on 1 side of A4, a listing of the learning outcomes in column 1, with a summary of the evidence in column 2.
- The evidence

NB Although portfolios are the most commonly used form of presenting evidence of learning, there are other situations where different evidence is appropriate, most notably artefacts, e.g. a piece of sculpture.

Typically this would set out each of the learning outcomes giving full details of the evidence to support the claim followed by an overarching conclusion. The student must be reminded that credit is awarded NOT for the experience per se but rather for the learning derived from that experience. The student will need to reflect on the learning in a manner consistent with the level of credit being sought. Thus for example at HE1 Level 1, the reflection will be recognising the learning which has taken place and correctly identifying it in terms such as ‘describe’, ‘understand’, ‘do’. Whereas for higher levels the student will need to reflect on the learning and be able to compare and contrast with similar learning in other environments. Whilst at higher levels still, the student will need to call upon the works of various authors as a basis for critical reflection.

Finally, the portfolio may well be completed by a reflection of the learning as a whole, providing additional integrated evidence overarching the claim as a whole.

2.5.3.5. Process of assessment

The student will be advised that the summative assessment will be carried out once the portfolio has been completed. In other words there will be one final assessment at the end of the process. However, the adviser will be providing formative assessment with relevant feedback on each section of the portfolio as and when it is completed. Although it will always be the student who decides when to submit a portfolio for assessment, most institutions will feel it is to the student’s advantage whereby the adviser ‘signs off’ the portfolio. However it is the student’s responsibility to submit the portfolio to the APEL Administrator, who will record its arrival and acknowledge its receipt in writing.

2.5.3.6. Schedule for the completion of the portfolio

Instead of allowing the student to embark on producing the portfolio of evidence at one go, it is advisable to divide the work involved into 'bite size' sections. The adviser and student agree how many sections there should be and also a realistic timetable for the submission. In this way the student is not daunted by what might seem to be the enormity of the task and has the encouragement of successfully completing elements by given deadlines. It is also beneficial to the adviser, in planning her/his workloads since she/he will be able to plan when formative assessment and feedback will need to be provided. It would be quite normal for an institution to have guidelines detailing the turn around times for assessment, e. g. 10 working days. Although in the case of formative assessment of APEL portfolios, the time is likely to be much shorter.

In devising the time schedule the adviser needs to incorporate the timing of certain key events such as examination and progression boards. Allowing for assessment and administrative time, the student should be made aware of the very latest date for submission of the finished portfolio. Thus a schedule of work (and formative assessment) is constructed at the initial meeting. To maintain momentum, it is good practice to hold the first review meeting very shortly. At each future meeting, the student and the adviser will review the work to date, preview the work to be done for the next meeting and plan the remaining work. It is not uncommon for the original plan to be revised both in terms of the sectioning of the work and the dates of subsequent meetings. However once a date (deadline) has been agreed for submission, that agreement is as binding as any deadline (hand in) date faced by students elsewhere in the institution.

2.5.4. Information for the student/candidate

Students will be better prepared especially for the first meeting, if they have already received information on the

- APEL process

- preparation of portfolios
- roles and responsibilities of the student and the adviser

Although this information may well be distributed in advance of the first meeting, the contents will be subject to discussion, questions and clarification.

2.5.4.1. The APEL Process

Before attending the first meeting, it is extremely useful for the student to have some clear understanding of the APEL process. This document may contain information on how to make a claim and to whom it should be addressed. In addition the document should explain how to evidence learning and the need to ‘map’ it against the learning outcomes. Indeed it should describe, with examples, what is evidence and how to assemble it into a portfolio. The student will also have to be made aware of the different players especially the adviser and assessor and the key dates, such as submission deadlines to meet examination board(s) schedules.

2.5.4.2. Portfolio preparation

A student guide to portfolio preparation helps to avoid unnecessary work on the part of students who might be tempted to include everything in their portfolio, irrespective of its relevance to the claim for credit. Similarly, it is necessary to avoid disappointment for those students who wrongly believe that simply stating the basis of the claim, without appropriate evidence, is sufficient. The guidelines therefore must make clear the nature of the evidence which is admissible, particularly with regard to its currency, reliability, validity and sufficiency. To add further to the student’s understanding there should be a variety of examples of the type of evidence which is relevant. The guidelines should also clearly show the basis on which the portfolio is to be assessed.

2.5.4.3. Roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of the key players must be set out clearly for all concerned but especially for the student. The key players are the

students, the briefer/adviser, the adviser and the assessor. Most institutions believe that APEL is a student-centred and student-driven process in that it is the student's responsibility to make the claim, provide the evidence, prepare the portfolio and submit it at an appropriate time.

The briefer/adviser has the responsibility of carrying out a preliminary assessment of the 'skeleton' claim, advising the student on the possible outcome, whilst making it perfectly clear that this is purely indicative and not binding on the institution. Indeed the major purpose is to give the student a sound basis on which to decide whether or not to proceed with the APEL claim and if so how.

The adviser has the responsibility of guiding the student in the choice of the evidence, the construction of the portfolio, formative assessment and 'signing off' the completed portfolio.

At this stage the student needs to be aware that the assessor is a different person to the adviser. (NB the assessor for this student may well be an adviser for another). The assessment will be done primarily on the portfolio - very few institutions include a viva as part of the process. Should any further work be required, this will be clearly defined and passed back via the adviser.

2.5.5. Staff Development

The adviser needs to be an 'expert' in all aspects of APEL: counselling, advising and assessing and hence requires the training to act in these roles. A few institutions use NVQ APL unit D36 as the basis for training advisers, but the majority recognise that valuable though that is, it does not fully reflect the different requirements for APEL in a credit-rating environment. The training would include a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the key players.

In addition, normally the adviser will need to be a subject expert with a clear knowledge and understanding of the meaning of learning outcomes applicable at different credit levels. However some institutions see the advising as a process and as long as the adviser has

access to a subject specialist, they do not necessarily require the adviser to be an expert in the subject.

The adviser must have an up-to-date knowledge of the institution's APEL regulations. For example, the amount of APEL allowed. The adviser must be clear about the turn around time allowed by the institution for the assessor to assess the portfolio. In addition, the adviser must be aware of the frequency and timings schedule of APEL, progression and examination boards.

Summary

Staff involved

APEL Briefer/adviser

who will require training to become

- expert APEL practitioners
- fully aware of the institution's regulations appertaining to APEL

2.5.6. Information and record keeping

2.5.6.1. The adviser's file

The adviser keeps a record of the date (and time) of all communications with the student including letter, fax, e-mail and telephone together with the date and time of the response.

A record is kept of all discussions whether face to face or telephone, clearly itemising the advice given, any decisions agreed with the student and including preliminary/formative assessment. Some institutions operate a devolved system whilst others will require the advisers to copy their on-going reports within a set time period of e. g. 3 days to the APEL manager. Alternatively, the institution may require the advisers to provide summary progress reports to the APEL manager at pre-determined times or as and when required.

When a student's portfolio is ready for assessment, institutions require the adviser's 'file' to be passed to the APEL Administrator

2.5.6.2. Student feedback

After each meeting or formative assessment and feedback, the students may be required to complete a feedback form.

Documents for quality assurance purposes may include:

- adviser's notes of meeting(s)
- copies of formative feedback
- student feedback form(s)
- summary report(s) from the APEL manager

Performance statistics could include:

- Response times
- Turn around times for formative assessments
- Adherence to institutional deadlines

2.6. STAGE SIX: Portfolio Assessment

2.6.1. Once the portfolio has been ‘signed off’ by the adviser as being ready for assessment, it is the student’s responsibility to ensure the portfolio is delivered to the appropriate person, often the APEL administrator, who notes the date and issues a receipt to the student.

Meanwhile the adviser who has notified the administrator that a portfolio is on its way will submit his/her adviser’s file on the student to the administrator.

In order to plan the workloads of assessors, it is useful if the likely time of submission of the portfolio is given in advance.

2.6.2. The institution will have a policy for assessment of APEL portfolios including -

- Whether the assessment will be based purely on the portfolio or supplemented by a viva voce
- Whether there will be a second assessor/verifier and
- Whether that person ‘double marks’ all or a sample of portfolios.
- Role of the external examiner

2.6.3. Portfolio assessment

2.6.3.1. First Assessor

The APEL manager will notify the assessor that there is a portfolio to be marked and can be collected from the APEL office together with the adviser’s file. The assessor will also be reminded of the maximum turn around time specified by the institution, e.g. 10 working days.

The administrator will note the date of notification and the date the portfolio is collected.

The assessor examines the evidence in the portfolio and decides whether the evidence is sufficient (and valid, reliable and current) to justify the claim. Where the claim is for specific credit or for exemption from module(s), the assessor has to be assured that the relevant learning outcomes have been met. However, where the claim is for advanced standing (exemption from a stage of an award), the assessor will need to be assured that stage descriptors have been met, and, in the main the content has been covered. The portfolio of evidence will be judged on the basis of equivalence, not strict detailed ‘mapping’, with regard more for the qualification (levels) descriptors than for the module learning outcomes.

The assessor will annotate the portfolio, particularly where the evidence is a rather weak or perhaps missing, being very careful to clearly show any shortfall and suggest ways in which it might be remedied. In addition, the assessor will complete the assessment pro-form stating both the decision reached and the basis of that decision.

It is important to note that this is more than just a tick box exercise with decisions ranging from ‘claim approved in toto’ to the need for more evidence of the learning and where the regulations require, to attend for a viva voce.

The report, together with the portfolio and the adviser’s file are returned to the APEL administrator who will duly note the date of receipt.

The APEL manager will communicate the decision, which is subject to ratification by the APEL Board to the student - a copy to the adviser.

2.6.3.2. Viva (where applicable)

If the student is required for a viva, dates within the next 10 working days will be offered to the student, together with guidance on the items for consideration. The portfolio will also be returned to the student so that additional work if necessary can be completed and preparations can be made for the viva. The letter inviting the student will detail the form and structure of the interview and who will be present, and in what capacity.

At the end of the interview the student will be told of the decision to be confirmed in writing, and which is subject to APEL Board ratification. The student will leave the portfolio, which the assessor will send together with the report/decision to the APEL manager.

2.6.3.3. Second assessor/internal verifier

More often than not the role of the second assessor/internal verifier will be one of quality assurance with regard to the process and not re-assessing the portfolio. In order to do this the verifier will receive

- The student's portfolio
- The adviser's reports
- The assessor's reports (portfolio and viva)

The APEL guidelines will contain a time frame, say 5 working days within which the verifier will report back to the APEL manager. Where there are areas of concern, the APEL manager will relay these in an appropriate manner to the first assessor and also use the experiences as examples in staff development sessions for both continuing and new assessors.

2.6.4. Staff development

The assessors and verifiers will need to be 'experts' in all aspects of APEL and hence will require training. As noted in section 2.5.5, only a few institutions use the NVQ/IPD 'D' units as qualifications but the majority do not. Although the second assessor/verifier will usually be a subject expert it can be argued that the quality assurance is about process and hence the need for subject expertise is desirable but not essential.

Summary

Staff involved

APEL assessor
APEL internal verifier

who will require training to become

- expert APEL practitioners
- fully aware of the institution's regulations appertaining to APEL

2.6.5. The audit trail

2.6.5.1. Quality assurance audit trail

The assessor will complete the assessment decision form and return it to the administrator. The form might contain the following information:

- Student details: full name and registration/pin number
- Claim for credit (and target course)
- Number and level of credits awarded; general and/or specific, including full name and code of any module(s) for which exemptions have been granted
- Summary of supporting evidence, duly cross referenced
- Names of the adviser, assessor and verifier
- Date

The internal verifier/second marker completes and submits the verifier's report to the APEL administrator.

The institution may also require the student to give feedback on the assessment process

The documentary evidence of the fact that the process has taken place in accordance with the institution's APEL policies and regulations is held by the APEL Administrator and may include

- Assessors report form
- Verifier's report form
- Student feedback form(s)

2.6.5.2. Performance indicators

The APEL Administrator logs the movement of the student's portfolio and keeps it secure at all times when it is in his/her possession. The movement of the adviser's file is also noted.

Having received the assessor's assessment decision report form, he/she will send copies to the adviser and the verifier and make a note of the decision.

The administrator will keep a note of all communications with the student, in particular notification and agreement on the date for the viva and the letter notifying the student of the assessor's decision.

2.7. STAGE SEVEN: The decision and ratification

2.7.1 The APEL manager should by this stage have for each student the portfolio, the student feedback forms, the adviser's file and the reports from the assessor and the verifier.

The way in which institutions confirm the decisions recommended by the assessor and verifier varies. However most have found that a separate APEL Board, acting much in the manner of, and with similar remit to subject/programme examination boards appears to be an appropriate way to receive the 'results'

2.7.2. The APEL Board

Most institutions operate in a devolved manner, with examination boards being convened within faculties/departments. Thus the model described here will be that of a Faculty APEL Board.

The role of the APEL Board is to receive the recommendation of the assessors, to assure itself that the appropriate procedures have been adhered to and that the decision reached is consistent with those confirmed at previous boards, at other APEL boards in the institution and those held externally. The membership of the APEL Board must be such as to enable it to meet its obligations. The members will include

- APEL manager
- APEL advisers and assessors
- Subject representatives from the faculty
- Faculty/institutional quality manager
- An APEL 'expert' from another faculty in the institution
- External examiner

Just as any other examination board does, the APEL Board will come to a decision about the credit rating awarded to each APEL applicant

2.7.3. Dissemination of the decision

2.7.3.1. to the student

It is the responsibility of the APEL manager to inform the student in writing of the decision ensuring that it is made clear to the student that the result is still subject to ratification by the institution

2.7.3.2. Within the institution

The APEL manager has the responsibility of informing, usually by sending a copy of the minutes of the APEL Board, the various relevant parties and sections of the institution and these include

- Relevant module and programme(s) for information at subsequent examination boards
- Student information records unit
- Faculty Board
- Relevant Quality Managers (institution and/or faculty)

2.7.4. Staff development

2.7.4.1. Other than the APEL ‘experts’, all APEL Board members will need to have an understanding of the principles of APEL, a thorough knowledge of the institution’s policies and processes for APEL and a knowledge of the institution’s APEL regulations.

2.7.4.2. External examiners

The few external examiners whose role is primarily to oversee APEL within a faculty/department or across the institution will have been appointed on the basis of their ‘expert’ knowledge and experience in the area of APEL. Thus they will require only to be made aware of the role of APEL within the institution; the processes as operated by the institution and the regulations appertaining to APEL.

However, in more instances, existing external examiners will have taken on APEL as an additional responsibility. In which case there could well be a need for full training to be given to them to enable them to become ‘experts’.

There will be yet others, probably the majority of external examiners, whose appointments are to programmes or modules where APEL is NOT at present significant, but does occur occasionally. Small as this activity may be, it is important that APEL is treated in a fashion as close, as possible to that for ‘mainstream’ delivery. Hence once again the institution should seek to develop these externals to become APEL experts.

2.7.4.3. Faculty/Institution Quality Manager.

Quality accreditation audits, whether sector based, e. g. QAA or professional body, more and more are moving to auditing an institution’s internal quality procedures and away from the direct inspection of a particular activity, e. g. teaching. As a consequence therefore institutions will need to have in place person(s) with responsibility for the internal audit of their activities including APEL. Although it would be desirable for such a person to be ‘expert’ in the application of APEL, their primary task is to ensure that the various processes and procedures for APEL have been followed. As such a working knowledge is required to provide the necessary to understand the underpinning required in the use of APEL.

In summary the staff involved are

- APEL Board members
- External examiners for APEL
- Institutional Quality Assurance person responsible for APEL

who require staff development to have

- an understanding of the principles and processes of APEL
- a knowledge of the institution's processes of APEL
- a knowledge of the institution's regulations with respect to APEL

2.7.5. Information and Record keeping

The primary concern will be the recording of the decisions of the APEL Board and the dissemination of those decisions to the relevant parties. Probably the most significant record will be the minutes of the APEL Board, which will contain a dated record of the number and names of those members attending, all the decisions taken (including deferrals), the discussions and other items of business, such as external developments, conferences and staff development needs.

In addition, records will need to be kept of where and when copies of the minutes were distributed.

For quality assurance purposes the following documentation is important

- Minutes of the APEL Board
- Details of the dissemination of the decisions

And in terms of performance statistics,

- Times between meetings and the dissemination of the decisions of the APEL Board

PART C

STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

3. Staff development and training

3.1. Introduction

This section of the report draws together the various strands of staff development and training referred to and described in part B - the seven stages of an all-through system of APEL.

It is clear that not all participants of an institution will need the same development and training. Rather it will depend upon their particular roles and responsibilities for APEL. Many staff will have a number of roles. For instance an APEL adviser could also be a member of the Faculty Board or a validation/review panel, where the knowledge, skill and expertise in the practice and implementation of APEL is quite different.

There are of course a number of different ways of categorising the level and depth of the training required. In this report only the general principles are addressed and, in no way is it meant to be prescriptive, but rather to suggest broad guidelines as a basis for good practice. As

a consequence, the training needs are defined simply as three levels, each subsuming the previous one:

- Awareness of APEL
- Understanding the principles and processes of APEL
- Becoming an 'expert' practitioner

3.2. Raising awareness

All individuals within an institution who either formally or informally receive enquiries about the learning opportunities at and with an institution need awareness training. The obvious, and often forgotten persons are those on the front line: the telephonists and receptionists, together with those with responsibilities for working with companies and other organisations. Similarly the same need arises where an institution has a centralised admissions unit, and especially during the period of ‘clearing’ when many temporary staff are employed. In replying enquiries staff will need not only to respond to queries about APEL, but be confident enough to be pro-active and raise the matter with the caller. In the latter case, staff will need to be able to explain in simple terms what is APEL, with just enough detail for the enquirer to have sufficient information to be able to consider whether APEL is an option for them.

Although such frontline staff may be able (and authorised) to do some filtering of enquiries, their primary task is to put people in touch with the relevant APEL person(s). For instance:

Type of enquiry	Contact person(s)
General enquiries	Institution APEL (CATS) Manager
Subject/programme specific	Faculty/department APEL Manager
Company/organisation	Named person in the Commercial Unit

In summary therefore all staff in the institution should be made aware of the APEL provision within the institution, (including new staff who should be introduced to it during their induction programme)

The staff requiring an **awareness of APEL** may include:

- All academic staff
- Receptionists and telephonists
- Recruitment and Admissions Unit
- Student Advice and Guidance
- Library/Learning Resource Centre
- Commercial/Marketing Unit

and the training required might be

- Be aware of and familiar with what the institution offers in terms of APEL
- Be able to pass on simple information about APEL
- Be aware of the institution's advertising (timing and content) of APEL
- Know who within the institution deals with what aspect of APEL

3.3. Understanding the principles and processes of APEL

The next level up in terms of knowledge, skills and expertise of APEL is one of understanding the principles and processes of APEL. The principles are those derived from external sources such as the HEFCE and SEEC Codes of Practice and the QAA Code due to be published in 2002. The principles may well appear in an institution's mission statement, its APEL policies and strategies, and will be reflected in its award regulations. The full versions of which are likely to be contained in the institution's quality management handbook or its equivalent.

The way in which an institution defines the process of APEL will differ from one to another. For instance an institution may operate APEL solely at the faculty/departmental level, another at faculty level within a wider institutional framework and yet others will operate via a central unit (see the survey results in section 1.5.5). The last model seems to be suited to a smaller institution with very little call for APEL. The purely faculty model appears where the demand for APEL is very localised, e.g. health and nursing studies or the institution has yet to take it on board. Although APEL processes are most likely to be based upon externally defined good practice, (SEEC code of practice), the particular process will be idiosyncratic to the individual institution. Institutions will have different committee and reporting structures that in turn affect aspects of the curriculum including APEL.

The sorts of persons who would benefit from this level of development are those who carry out validation of programmes and modules, course/programme monitoring and those with a responsibility for internal quality assurance monitoring at the institutional level. In addition it is recommended that all the units dealing with enquiries identify a named person who is the point of contact or reference for APEL. This person will generally benefit from a deeper understanding of APEL.

Staff likely to require an **understanding of APEL** include:

- Admission tutors
- Course and year tutors
- Personal tutors
- Named person for instance, in
 - Admissions unit
 - Library/learning resource centre
 - Student guidance and counselling unit
 - Commercial/marketing unit

Having an understanding of the principles and processes of APEL will include

- Knowledge of the principles and processes of APEL
- Knowledge of the institution's APEL processes
 - Familiarity with named APEL persons and their areas of responsibility, e.g. faculty APEL manager, Subject APEL specialist advisers and assessors

3.4. Expert practitioners of APEL

Practitioners of APEL require not only a deep understanding of the principles and processes, but also to have the practical skill and expertise of advising students and/or organisations on

- APEL processes within the institution
- Strength and potential of an APEL claim in terms of level and number of credits.

The staff development may include

- Initial briefing/counselling of applicants, individuals and organisations
- Advising on the preparation of portfolio
- Formative and summative assessment of portfolios
- Internal verification and auditing of the APEL process
- Roles and responsibilities of the APEL practitioners: advisers, assessors and verifiers
- Roles and responsibilities of the APEL committees, e.g. APEL Board
- Familiarity with the pro-formas required for record keeping and quality assurance purposes
- Understanding and appreciation of the need to maintain accurate, complete and up to date records of
 - tracking data on students progression and portfolios
 - APEL statistics, e.g. volume of business and turn round times
 - Quality assurance information, e.g. student feedback forms, record of advice and formative assessment

The persons requiring training and development at this level may include:

- APEL briefers/advisers
- Advisers
- Assessors
- Internal verifiers
- APEL Board members
- External examiners for APEL
- Faculty and/or Institutional APEL managers
- Faculty/institutional internal auditors with responsibility for APEL

Level of staff development and training

Players v stages in APEL process

KEY A = AWARE U = UNDERSTAND E = EXPERT

stage	Player	marketers	Commercial unit	Telephonist receptionist	Admissions unit	Briefer	Adviser	Assessor 1	Internal verifier	Course leader	Academic/other staff	Institution APEL Mgr	Faculty APEL Mgr	External examiner
1. Advertising/marketing		U	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	E	E	A
2. Dealing with enquiries			U	A	U	E				U		U	U	A
3. dealing with applications			U		U					U		E	E	A
4. Advising					A		E	E	E	U	A	E	E	A
5. portfolio preparation					A	U	E	E	E	U	A	E	E	A
6. portfolio assessment			U		A	U	E	E	E	U	A	E	E	A
7. Decision			A		A	U	E	E	E	U	A	E	E	E
8. Ratification			A		A	U	E	E	E	E	A	E	E	E
APEL Strategy		A	A		A	U	E	E	E	U	A	E	E	A
APEL Award regulations			A		A	U	E	E	E	U	A	E	E	E

4. Information and record keeping

4.1. Context

Information and record keeping probably can be described as performing three inter-related roles; viz. supporting the student, measuring the efficiency (performance) of the process and providing an audit trail for quality assurance purposes.

The student is best supported by a recording system containing up to date contact details and a tracking system which enables the institution to know at any point in time the stage at which the student is.

An institution will always be looking for the best ways to deploy its limited resources whether it is cash, staff, equipment or buildings. Therefore it will want to keep records that will enable it to monitor the use of those resources, and their effectiveness with a view to continuous improvement.

As a recipient of public funds, every institution is charged with being accountable for its use and is subject to audits of its activities. In

addition each institution must be able to withstand the scrutiny of its academic standards and the processes in place to support and maintain them.

However, notwithstanding the ever-increasing demands for documenting information, it must be subject to the same stringent criteria of cost-effectiveness with critical questions being asked. For instance, why is the information collected? Is it cost-effective or could it be done in some other way? Is all the information collected entirely necessary or for instance is it already available elsewhere in the institution? How long should each bit of information be kept and in what format?

However, where it is needed, the requirement is for it to be up-to-date, complete and accurate. Members of staff who already feel overworked, may need to be persuaded that the information being collected is necessary for good reasons and not just there for bureaucratic purposes.

4.2. Stages 1 (Marketing) and 2 (consideration of enquiries)

For evaluation purposes it will also be useful to record number and type of enquiries.

Tracking of enquirers

- Contact details
- Date and mode of enquiry
- Date of initial response and by whom
- Date information/details sent, how and by whom

It is probable that the APEL Administrator will have the responsibility of collating and keeping the records of enquiries.

Production of a summary of response times to be produced periodically (monthly?)

Institutions are keen to ensure that all expenditure is cost-effective including that associated with promoting, publicising and advertising APEL. It is therefore advisable for institutions to record details of all enquiries received and their source. In this way; the relative performance of different forms of promotion, advertising and marketing can be measured, thus forming a basis of future spending decisions.

In addition, where there is no response to information sent out to enquirers, the details collected would enable the institution to follow up the enquiry with the prospect of progressing the enquiry to the application stage.

It is also useful to note the date of the receipt of the enquiry, the date on which information was sent out the dates of any follow-up activity.

Enquiries come in different forms via letter, e-mail, fax, telephone and personal contact and to different persons within institutions. Therefore the institution will need a process for collecting the information, probably a common pro-forma and for collating it. Of course, if the information is collected via a computerised pro-forma, then the onward transmission can be effected very efficiently (instantaneously),. However, with a paper-based system, decisions have to be made on how frequently the information is passed to the APEL administrator.

4.3. Stage 3 Consideration of applications for APEL

For performance and monitoring purposes

A record should be kept of the date of receipt of the application and the date of the response, together with a note of who responded.

The student's record card should be updated for tracking purposes.

The application form plus the recommendation from the APEL briefer is returned to the APEL Administrator who will be responsible for recording the advice/decision and tracking the application and its associated paperwork.

Those involved in later stages, particularly APEL advisers and assessors will need to know what has occurred. Advisers and assessors will need to be in receipt of the student's application/claim and the decision reached by the briefer or what might be interpreted as a promise as to the likely credit, both in terms of level and volume.

In the main, applicants will be follow-ups from the enquiry stage and hence their basic details will be in the 'system' already. Once again the dates of the receipt of the application and the letter inviting the student for initial discussion/interview should be noted so that response times can be monitored. The institution will also be interested in monitoring the time between the initial discussion, when the administrator is informed and when the letter of notification is sent out.

It is good practice to link the enquiry and application stages. Then the institution will be in a position to record the typical time which elapses between the stages and use the information as a basis for the scheduling of advertising etc in the future.

In terms of quality assurance the institution may wish have access to the report and recommendation of the APEL initial adviser/counsellor and also the feedback on the process from the student..

Following the initial counselling session, a decision is made as to whether the applicant has sufficient of a case in order to proceed to the stage of enrolment. The APEL Administrator will set up a system that enables the information on the decision, the date and the name of the APEL counsellor to be tracked. Should the decision be positive, the administrator will ensure that the student's details are entered onto the institution's student record/registration information system and the student invited to a briefing session.

4.4. Stage 4 Briefing the APEL candidate

The initial briefing, either one to one or in a group, will normally follow the same pattern of agenda items. The outputs from the meeting will be

- An outline learning contract
- Date of next meeting
- Student feedback

After the meeting all three items are to be lodged with the APEL Administrator, who records when this was done. Thus the institution will be able to monitor whether or not its performance targets re turn round times have been met.

The summary report of the meeting, learning contract and the student feedback will form the basis for monitoring the quality assurance of the process.

4.5. Stage 5 Advising on the portfolio preparation

It is advisable that a copy of the signed learning contract is lodged with the APEL Manager within the prescribed period, e.g. 3 working days, so that the progress of students can be logged and monitored. Thus providing an audit trail should the external examiner or an internal/external QA auditor wish to investigate..

Most institutions will want to be assured that all aspects of its work are being carried out to the required standards. It is therefore useful for the student to complete a feedback form which could consist of

- A series of tick boxes for factual information e.g. received document detailing role and responsibility of the student, the adviser and assessor.
- Questions of a more qualitative nature re. the value and usefulness of the briefing session, the content and the delivery.

The adviser will keep a record of all communications with the student, including meetings, telephone calls, e-mails etc. noting in particular dates of receipt and responses. In addition the adviser will keep notes of any discussions and especially of any formative assessment, feedback and action plans for the student. When the portfolio is completed to the satisfaction of the adviser, it is 'signed off' and dated. This information is sent to the APEL Co-ordinator although the student is responsible for the submission of the portfolio.

During the period of advice, an institution may require the adviser to submit a copy of the notes of meetings to the APEL Co-ordinator within a specified period, e.g. 3 days of the meeting. Alternatively, institutions may rely on the adviser keeping adequate records, submitting a 'progress' report periodically, no less than once a year. Some institutions would wish to receive an update for presentation at each APEL Examination Board.

4.5. Stage 6 Portfolio Assessment

4.6.1. Performance indicators

The APEL Administrator logs the movement of the student's portfolio and keeps it secure at all times when it is in his/her possession. The movement of an adviser's file is also noted.

Having received the assessor's assessment decision form, he/she will send copies to the adviser and the verifier and note the decision on the file.

The administrator will keep a note of all communications with the student, in particular notification and agreement on the date for the viva and the letter notifying the student of the assessor's decision.

The assessor will complete the assessment decision form and return it to the administrator. The form might contain the following information:

- Student details: full name and registration/pin number
- Claim for credit (and target course)
- Number and level of credits awarded; general and/or specific, including full name and code of any module(s) for which exemptions have been granted
- Summary of supporting evidence, duly cross referenced
- Names of the adviser, assessor and verifier
- Date

The internal verifier/second marker completes and submits the verifier's report to the APEL administrator.

The institution may also require the student to give feedback on the assessment process

4.6.2. Quality assurance audit trail

The documentary evidence of the fact that the process has taken place in accordance with the institution's APEL policies and regulations is held by the APEL Administrator and may include

- Assessors report form
- Verifier's report form
- Student feedback form

The institution may stipulate that the APEL Administrator sends the portfolio to an assessor within say 5 working days of receipt. Furthermore, the assessor may be required to submit the assessment report within 10 working days.

The assessment report, which will be signed and dated by the assessor, will clearly state the decision reached with a summary of the reasons, often including an indication of which evidence supports which part of the claim.

Where the assessor feels that the evidence is insufficient to support the claim in full, the assessor will provide the necessary feedback, which will usually include annotations to the portfolio itself. The assessor will return the materials to the APEL Manager. The manager may decide to present the decision to the next APEL Board or inform the student, who after consultation with the adviser, will decide whether the additional evidence is available and, if so, whether to proceed with its retrieval and collation into a revised portfolio.

If the student does decide to re-present an enhanced portfolio, it will be sent to the same assessor for re-appraisal

The portfolio and assessment form is returned to the APEL Co-ordinator for processing, and held for possible perusal by the external examiner and/or the institutional internal quality auditor.

The student will provide feedback on the assessment process

4.7. Stage 7 The decision and ratification

The primary concern will be the recording of the decisions of the APEL Board and the dissemination of those decisions to the relevant parties. Probably the most significant record will be the minutes of the APEL Board, which will contain a dated record of the number and names of those members attending, all the decisions taken (including deferrals), the discussions and other items of business, such as external developments, conferences and staff development needs.

In addition, records will need to be kept of where and when copies of the minutes were distributed.

The Board will receive the decision with a view to ratification. In order to do so and in order to ensure parity across a faculty or across the institution (for centralised APEL systems), the Board members should receive the following information:

- Student name and enrolment number
- The APEL claim made by the student
- The decision of the assessor
- The basis for the decision
- The name of the assessor(s)

The details of the notified decision are then passed to student records for entry on to the student's profile.

4.8. APEL Annual Report

Each year the APEL Co-ordinator will present a report to the relevant committee within the faculty/institution. This will mirror very closely the reports required from courses and programmes and will include the usual statistics such as numbers of enquiries, applicants, and students completing (ie whose results have been ratified). In addition there will be a status report of all students still in the APEL process. The figures alongside previous years' enable the identification of trends and other changes in demand.

For internal purposes, the APEL Co-ordinator will also need to report upon the performance indicators such as the number of percentage of response times which meet the requirements laid down by the institution.

The annual report will also contain a review of the process, the effectiveness of the APEL players, especially the assessors and advisors and developments in APEL, both within the institution and externally.

Appendix 1

SEEC publications on APEL

Croker David, (editor) (1996) 'A quality code for AP(E)L: Issues for managers and practitioners' SEEC

Croker David et al,(editors) (1998) 'APEL: Beyond graduateness' SEEC

Johnson Bob (1999) 'Crediting work-based learning: A win-win situation' In Credit, Qualifications and Life Long Learning; Proceedings of the SEEC Annual Conference 1999 SEEC

Johnson Bob and Walsh Anita, (2000) 'Credit Practice: A comparative approach 1994 - 1999' (sections 2.1.5, 2.1.6, 4.3 and 4.4) SEEC

Johnson Bob and Walsh Anita, (2001) 'Reflections on credit practice' (chapters 6 and 7) SEEC

Moon Dr Jennifer (2000) 'Assessing reflective or experiential learning- In Crediting key skills': Report of the proceedings of the SEEC National Conference 2000 SEEC

SEEC (1995) 'SEEC Code of Practice for AP(E)L' SEEC

Storan John (Editor) (1993) 'Getting to the core of APEL' SEEC

Wailey Dr Tony (2002) 'How to do AP(E)L' SEEC

Appendix 2

SEEC logo and address

To the Vice Chancellor
University name
and address

Dear Vice Chancellor

As you are well aware SEEC continues to support its member institutions in many ways, not least of all in its very successful staff development workshop programme and annual conference (this year's theme being "Key skills". In addition SEEC has carried out research to determine the development of credit within HE institutions ("Credit practice: a comparative approach 1994-1999). The report has proved to be an extremely valuable aid to SEEC member institutions in the self assessment of the standing of their own credit and qualifications frameworks.

SEEC is currently following up that survey with a series of in-depth qualitative interviews with institutions, the results of which are due to be published and disseminated in January 2001.

Earlier this year SEEC Governing Council took a decision to fund a proposal from the APEL Network to investigate the feasibility of establishing an information bank of APEL systems used by its member institutions. The information collected will provide SEEC member institutions with a sound basis to:-

1. benchmark their own systems and to share good practice
2. fine tune/ introduce their own APEL systems
3. prepare for internal and external audits
4. prepare responses to consultation papers on credit and APEL

The first stage was put into motion this month when a questionnaire with an accompanying letter giving full details of the proposal was sent to SEEC APEL Network members to complete. As a matter of courtesy we enclose a copy for your information.

We will keep you informed of the outcome by sending all respondents a free copy of the project report.

Yours sincerely

Chair of SEEC

SEEC headed paper

Name and address
of SEEC APEL Network Member

Date

Dear xxxx

SEEC APEL Systems Information Bank

As chair of the SEEC APEL Network, I was pleased when earlier this year SEEC Council approved a proposal put forward by the SEEC APEL Network to investigate the feasibility of establishing an information bank derived from the systems being used by its members.

You will recall that the rationale is:

“The SEEC APEL Network members and SEEC institutions have in place a range of systems concerned with the monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance of APEL arrangements. Precisely how APEL arrangements will feature within the emerging QAA framework remains to be seen. It is hoped that if the work of this feasibility study is positive that a fully operational SEEC database will be established. This database, predicated upon “all through systems” will provide an important resource for the further development and quality enhancement of APEL services within SEEC and add to the influence upon national frameworks.

Aims and objectives

- 1 One key aim of this project will be to gather together information on, and record the types of existing APEL systems being used by SEEC member institutions*
- 2 To produce a pilot information bank, which will include a breakdown of data; received from the APEL consultation as well as a synthesis of members’ systems*
- 3 To canvass the views of SEEC members on the need and potential value of an information bank.”*

Such information will provide a sound basis for

- d) APEL Network member institutions to benchmark their own systems and to share good practice. It is not intended to be prescriptive in the sense of identifying the “best” APEL system.
- e) other SEEC member institutions to introduce or fine-tune their own APEL systems
- f) use by SEEC members in preparation for QAA and QCA audit visits and in the preparation of responses to consultation papers.

We at SEEC are keen to capture the “all-through” systems. Thus this letter is a request for your participation in the project. You can do this by sending a copy of any protocols, guidelines and other relevant documents used in your institution. Your institution may for example have a set of protocols/procedures for registry purposes, maybe contained within a Quality Management Handbook, which inform and frame the procedures used for recruitment, admissions, accreditation etc. .

The papers submitted to SEEC will be treated in the strictest confidence and no institution will be identifiable from the project report nor from the dissemination workshop(s).

In order to contextualise the responses it would be helpful if you would also supply some “demographic” details of your institution. Would you please therefore complete the short questionnaire attached below and return it with your institution’s documentation NO LATER THAN Friday 29th September to the SEEC office.

By way of thanks for your support, all respondents will receive a free copy of the project report.

Yours sincerely

John Storan
Chair SEEC APEL Network

Appendix 5

SEEC APEL Systems Information Bank Project Questionnaire analysis

1. Type of institution

Type	New	old	Other HEI	Total
Number	17	6	4	27
Percentage	63%	22%	15%	

2. Size of institution

a) Total FTE's

Total FTE's	Under 5000	5000 and under 10000	10000 and under 15000	15000 and over	Totals
Number	3	10	4	8	27
Percentage	12	40	16	32	100

b) undergraduate under 3000 3000 - 5000 5000 -10000 over 10000

U/grad. FTE's	Under 3000	3000 and under 5000	5000 and under 10000	10000 and over	Totals
Number	1	6	10	4	21
Percentage	12	40	16	32	100

c) postgraduate under 1000 1000 - 2000 over 2000

P/grad. FTE's	Under 1000	1000 and under 2000	2000 and over	Totals
Number	4	8	7	19
Percentage	21	42	37	100

d) percentage of part-time students

Percentage of p/t students	Up to 10%	11 to 20%	Over 20%	Totals
Number of institutions	3	8	11	22
Percentage	14	36	50	100

3. Does your institution have a mission statement? yes no

(if yes, please attach)

Mission statements	Yes	No	Totals
Number of institutions	25	0	25
Percentage	100	0	100

4. How long has APEL been used in your institution

Experience	Under 1 year	1 to 3 years	3 to 5 years	Over 5 years	NOT at all	Totals
No. of institutions	1	1	7	18	0	27
Percentage	4	4	26	67	0	99*

* due to rounding

6. The institution has an APEL policy at the level of the institution/department/both/neither

Level of policies	Institution	Department	Both	Neither	Total
No. of institutions	6	4	14	1	25
Percentage	24	16	56	4	100

6. Are your APEL procedures administered centrally departmentally both

Administration	Centrally	Departmentally	Both	Campus-wide	Total
No. of institutions	1	11	14	1	27
Percentage	4	41	52	4	101*

* rounding error

7. Is APEL seen as part of widening participation strategy? yes no

Mission statements	Yes	No	Totals
Number of institutions	19	7	26
Percentage	73	27	100

7a. If so, please list the areas within your institution in which a significant amount of APEL takes place, e.g. Health School, Continuing Education Department, etc.

Areas of use	Health	Teacher education	Bus & Mgt	CPD	Social work	LLL	Law	Technology	None reported	Total
No. of institutions	15	9	7	6	2	2	1	1	6	27
Percentage	56	33	26	22	7	7	4	4	22	101*

7. Please estimate the current size of the yearly APEL operation in terms of the number of students

part-time17 institutions with numbers ranging from 10 to 700, with an average of 120

full time 12 institutions with numbers ranging from 1 to 250, an average of 45

8a. Would you say that in the coming year, the number of APEL students will grow

Growth	Reduce	Stay same	Grow less than 1%	Grow between 1 and 5%	Grow between 6 and 10%	Grow by more than 10%	Total
No. of institutions	0	12	1	3	5	2	21
Percentage	0	57	5	14	24	10	100

9. Is APEL used explicitly in any of the following areas

	Yes	%
Recruitment	17	63
Admissions	20	74
Advice and guidance	18	67
Central support services	8	30
Other (please state)	2	negotiated programmes and APEL module

10. Please circle those areas where APEL is treated differently to other aspects of provision:-

Number of institutions responding 19

	Yes	%
none	6	32
examination boards,	6	32
second assessors	1	5
independent assessors	3	16
special monitoring	4	21
Other(s)	none reported	

11. In which areas is APEL an explicit part of the institution's policy:

Number of institutions responding 26

	Yes	%
NONE	2	8
Audits	6	23
course validation	19	73
others: monitoring	9	35
course accreditation	1	4
Teaching & Learning.	2	8

Plus 1 respondent for each of CPD, admissions and Collaborative programmes

SUMMARY OF DOCUMENTS RECEIVED

Appendix 6

Institution	Mission	Documents
1	Yes	none
2	Institution Plan	none
3	yes	None
4	yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Taught post-graduate regulations paper B2.5 Quality Mgt Handbook b. Under-graduate modular credit accumulation scheme regulations paper B2.3 Quality Mgt Handbook c. Summary of changes to ug and pg regulations d. APEL Paper B7 Quality Mgt Handbook e. Staff Handbook for the Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning Dec 1999
5, 6, 7	yes	None
8	yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. AP(E)L website contents b. University Policy and practice for the assessment of prior learning QA Handbook section xvii website c. Module: Making your experience count d. Learning from experience guide (student) stage one e. A (student) guide to writing learning outcomes Learning from experience f. Compiling a Learning from Experience report stage Two g. Experiential learning application form
9	Strategic plan	a. Guidelines for the accreditation of prior learning (APL) 10.9.99
10	yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Manual of general regulations and policies (updated Sept 1999) website b. University Policies Section two website c. Undergraduate degree scheme Definitive document section 7.4 AP(E)L a. AP(E)L Handbook 1999 edition
11, 12, 3	yes	none
14		a. Policy for the award of credit for prior learning APC Sept 2000
15	yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Admission with credit APRP Section C revised July 1996 b. Procedures for the admission of students APRP Section D revised July 1996 c. 'Getting the credit' A guide for applicants d. Master of Human resource Management (Professional) programme e. Master of Business Administration programme
16,17	yes	none

Institution	Mission	Documents
18	yes	a. Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning Workshop Handbook Autumn 1999
19	yes	a. Guidance for the APL and APEL 2000/2001 b. CATS APL Guidance booklet for applicants Sept 1999
20	yes	None
21	yes	None
22	yes	None
23		a. APL and APEL for i) Dip HE/BSc ii) BSc Nursing and Social Work studies b. Understanding AP(E)L and CATS c. Skills for success: Towards student profiling
24 (see also 13)	yes	a. Section IV Credit accumulation and transfer The complete AP(E)L process b. APL and APEL Information pack - 2000/2001 c. APEL Committee: Terms of reference d. APL and APEL: Overview of the process e. AP(E)L charges 2000/2001 f. Guidelines for completion of application for APL/AP(E)L g. Consideration of request for Accreditation of prior learning h. Approval form for credit relating to prior (experiential) learning i. AP(E)L Co-ordinator: Role and remit APL and APEL Draft Roles and responsibilities: adviser, assessor, verifier
25	yes	a. Academic Credit Rating handbook April 1999 b. Academic Quality Assurance handbook July 1999
26	yes	none

Summary of contents of documents submitted by institutions**Institution number 4**

Doc 4a	Regulations for post-graduate awards Management Handbook Paper 2.5 Revised Sept 2000	Quality
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Regulations are based on credits ALL at level M. Distinctions/merits are calculated using module weights equal to the credits.

“Accreditation of prior experience and learning

2.5 A student who submits evidence of prior experience or learning in accordance with the applicable regulations may be given credit equivalents to the following provisions:

- iv) in respect of the award of PG Certificate up to a maximum of 30 credits (sic 50%)
- v) ditto PG Diploma up to 60 credits (sic 50%)
- vi) ditto Masters up to 90 credits, provided that in no circumstances shall M level equivalents exempt a student from the dissertation element of the award.
- vii) 2.6 Where a student who relies on accreditation of prior experience or learning gains a weighted average of 60% or above in the remaining modules, it shall be for the Assessment Board to determine whether it is appropriate to make the award with merit or distinction. In making its decision the Board may, if it thinks it appropriate *, take into account marks obtained in any prior award for which credit is given on this occasion

- NOTE: The Board would normally follow the recommendation of the APEL Board”

Document 4 b Structure and regulations of the undergraduate modular credit accumulation scheme for new registrations at level 1 in September 2000

“Classification and APEL

4.3.1 The classification will be calculated on the basis of the marks of the modules undertaken with the university plus marks of modules imported from prior studies, ‘APEL credit with marks (see paper B2.1 section 6 and Paper B7 section 5.2)

Thus for a student for a student who has been awarded APEL without marks, the formula is”.

The student is allowed to have APELled up to 9 twenty-credit modules at levels 2 and 3, but must complete a minimum of 60 institution X credits at level 3 (i.e. 50% of level 3)

Doc 4c Credit Accumulation Framework Summary of key changes for ug and pg

Regulations

Nothing to add to docs 4a and 4b

Doc 4d APEL Paper B7 Quality Management Handbook April 1998

Term APEL used for APL and APEL

Learning: wherever, however and whenever

Based on SEEC Code of Practice for AP(E)L

Committee structures

Institution APEL Development Group

Faculty/department Accreditation Panels to credit rate courses

APEL Boards to credit rate individuals

Credit rating based on what has been learned, how it was assessed
and assurance re continuing quality of assessment
Level of learning based on SEEC levels descriptors
Credit both general and specific
APEL gives advanced standing up to 50% of the stage/level of entry

Doc 4e Staff Handbook for the AP(E)L Dec 1999

Contents

- Intro
- Purpose of AP(E)L
- Definition of terms
- Process for Advanced standing and AP(E)L within the regulatory framework
- Proportion of credit awarded via advanced standing
- Calculation of honours classification
- Operational stages for the process of accreditation of courses
- Conclusion and references
- App.1 Faculty Marketing strategy for course accreditation and AP(E)L
- App.2 Guidelines for implementation of advanced standing
- App.3 APL and AP(E)L information sheet
- App.4 APL/AP(E)L Information booklet Student
- App.5 Fees for APL/AP(E)L
- App.6 Portfolio Proformas for completion by students
- App.7 Portfolio guidelines Student
- App.8 APL/AP(E)L Advisers and Assessors guide roles and responsibilities
- App.9 Guidelines for the accreditation of study days and courses client and staff

Institution No 8

All website extracts

Document 8a AP(E)L

Contents only

- A guide to applicants to courses
- A guide to credit for current students
- Searchable database for certificated credit
- AP(E)L module Making your experience count (see doc. 8c below)
- ECTS European credit transfer system
- Further information for staff

Document 8b University policy and practice for the assessment of prior learning Section xvii

Awarding credit for prior learning

Introduction and definitions, including “general” and “specific” credit

Principles governing AP(E)L

Up to 2/3 via AP(E)L

Admissions and credit

Accreditation of Prior Experiential learning

Process for AP(E)L

Quality assurance includes CATS Committee, Assessment Boards, Faculty-based annual monitoring and Academic Quality Committee

Document 8c AP(E)L Module Making your experience count Preliminary level

Level Preliminary

Credits 15

ILO: “having completed this module, students will be clear about the AP(E)L process, their own situation in relation to making a claim for

AP(E)L and will have acquired the understanding necessary to undertake a successful claim for AP(E)L credit”

Document 8d Learning from experience (student) guide Stage one

Document 8e A (student) guide to writing learning outcomes
Learning from experience

Document 8f Compiling a learning from experience report
Stage two

Institution No. 9

Document 9a Guidelines for the accreditation of prior learning (APL)

APL covers ALL learning; certificated, non-certificated and experiential learning

Assessment via a portfolio

SEEC Code of Practice for Assessment of Prior Learning 1995

“proved a useful starting point....”

Institutional recognition explicitly in

- Strategic plan

- Generic scheme regulations

- Relevant UPRs

- Student charter

- Teaching and learning policy and strategy

- Academic Quality Handbook

- Staff Development Policy

- Equal Opportunities policy

MIS “ ..capable of generating a clear credit profile....”

92

Applicant responsible for “identifying through systematic reflection, what has been learned by experience and to provide evidence to support this claim.”

Advising and assessing are separate

External moderation at levels 2 and 3. n.b.. level 1 arrangements only;

Normally only specific credit

Institution No. 10

Document 10a Manual of general regulations and policies (updated Sept 1999)

Table of Contents: Section One General regulations and part 4

Available on website regulations and policy management

Part 4 Admission of students

Paragraph 4 Admission with advanced standing

Specific credit

General credit : leads to study alternative modules

Exemption up to 50% from the supervised work
experience (sandwich) element of the programme

Normally credit limited to maximum of 50%

Paragraph 5 Assessment of prior certificated learning

Paragraph 6 Assessment of prior experiential learning

Applicant has responsibility for the claim

Learning must be identified, via e.g. systematic reflection

APEL usually only for admission up to entry to level 2,

other than assessed experiential learning goes before an

Assessment Board

Document 10b Manual of regulations and policies

Section 2 University policies

Contents list includes

AP(E)L Policy

Principles; Rationale for AP(E)L Policy; AP(E)L Policy -

Terms of reference; AP(E)L Policy Implementation.

Document 10c The Undergraduate Degree scheme Nov 99 p51

Section 7.4 The assessment and accreditation of prior learning (AP(E)L)

All forms of learning have equal statusdemonstrate appropriate knowledge,.....admission to a programme and if eligible advanced standing

Credit is responsibility of the Assessment Boards

Overall content of AP(E)L within UDS will be monitored by the UDS Executive Committee.

Document 10d AP(E)L handbook 1999 Edition

Published by the Centre for Access, advice and continuing education

Contents

Definition of terms

Advantages of AP(E)L

Limitations in the award of credit

Mechanisms for credit

Student makes the claim

Learning not experience

Identification of what has been learned, learning outcomes, assessment by ACADEMIC staff, advice and assessment separate

Sources of credit

AP(E)L procedure, CAACE support For Masters and

AP(E)L procedure, Validation Review P13 and 14

APEL same as any other course/programme

Validation under Assessment Boards under subject and faculty control

Validation docs: determine who is responsible for APEL;

Prog Leader, Subject Area Co-ordinator, Admissions Tutor,

another academic member of staff, Faculty Validation and Review Committee

Use of external advisers/assessors

Need for staff development

Appendices

- APEL University Policy (1998)
- SEEC Levels Descriptors (1997)
- APEL fees
- Undergraduate APEL Characteristics 1998
- Leaflet: Learning from experience (for students)
- Monitoring APEL 1995 Assessment via main Assessment Boards, with each APEL claim minuted and reported to the central information system (Studio System)
- SEEC APEL Code of Practice 1996
- Bibliography

Institution 14

Document 14a Policy for the award of credit for prior learning Sept 2000

- Definitions
- Statement of commitment
- Principles for implementation
 - APEL integrated within existing regulatory and QA frameworks
 - Based on learning outcomes achieved
- Integration within regulatory and Quality Assurance framework
- Limits to APEL e.g. Certificate of HE 60 credits
 - Degree with honours 300 credits
- APEL procedures not used for advanced standing nor entry to masters -discretion of Admission tutors (informed by APEL processes?)
- Distinction based on non-APEL marks
- AUDIT Trail
 - Award of credits and advanced standing overseen by Unit Assessment Boards/ Boards of Examiners - confirm correct procedures have been followed and to identify any anomalous judgements

APEL Assessment Management:

- Code of practice for assessment of students
- Maintenance of accurate records about basis for decisions
- Inform students promptly
- Evidence retained for potential scrutiny by external examiner
- APEL advisers/assessors must be trained

Institution 15

Doc 15 a Admission with credit (APRP Section C revised 7/96)

- Candidate makes claim
- Learning must be identified, e.g. by systematic reflection and clear statement of learning outcomes
- Specific credit must be considered by external examiner(s) and the Boards of Examiners
- Advice and assessment kept separate

Doc 15ba Procedures for admission of students (APRP Section D revised 7/96)

- Principles (D2.2.1)
- Schools appoint senior member of staff with overall responsibility for credit transfer
- Candidate's advised on course for which credit is allowable
- Student responsible for assembling the evidence
- APEL normally only for 50% of taught element (unless there is a close match to course requirements
- Schools must appoint at least two APEL adviser: one as mentor, the other as assessor.
- APEL-ed units (D2.2.2)

not contributing to award decision, e.g. progression,
credit is awarded by sub-committee of Examination Board
(Chairman of Examination Board, Course tutor and APEL
Co-ordinator, an independent member and subject specialist)
Contributing to an award decision
Credit awarded by School Examination Board
Summary of decisions lodged with registry
AppealsLD2.2.4)
only on basis of deficiencies in the procedures

Doc 15 c Getting the credit A guide for applicants

BRIEFLY, covers assessed qualifications, unassessed training and experience

Would credit be useful to you?

Applying for credit

Assessed prior experience

Level and content of learning is assessed, based upon portfolio of existing artefacts but probably need to have specially written sections to demonstrate understanding of relevant theory and have developed the relevant skills, e.g. problem solving.

Proformas: request for more information and application for credit

Doc 15d Master of Human Resource management (Professional) programme

Doc 15e Master of Business Administration programme

Gaining advanced entry through experiential learning

‘It is unlikely that you will gain significant credits based solely on experiential learning

Usually used to supplement certificated learning, which does not quite map exactly onto units.

Institution 18

Doc 18 a Accreditation of prior experiential learning workshop handbook, Autumn 1999

Outline notes

APEL: Within programme of Continuing Professional Development

Portfolio:

Reflective report: rationale for claim, critical reflection on experience to professional development, theoretical underpinning reflecting critical analysis of reading, demonstrate meeting criteria at appropriate level (F, H or M)

Institution 19

Doc. 19a Learning AP(E)L 2000/2001

Definitions and protocols

Based upon SEEC, CNAAC and OUVS

NB level M: one credit based on **15** hours of student work

Procedures for APEL (section 4)

Not on experience but on what is learned from reflecting on experience” HEQC 1995

Adviser not sole assessor

AUDIT (Diagram attached appendix 1)

Application to **Departmental** APEL co-ordinator

Recommendation to appropriate Accreditation sub-committee (there are 3 for the institution) which includes a member of the institution’s Academic Affairs and Quality Management staff

Reports to
Registry and then to Applications and Admissions Department
Academic Standards Committee
Appeals ONLY on grounds of procedure
Evidence
Written portfolio, direct observation of practice, production of
artefacts, formal assessments, e.g. module examinations, or
alternative written assignment
Authenticity, currency (up to 5 years), validity, extent of claim

Doc. 19b Accreditation of APEL: Guidance booklet for applicants

Introduction up to 50% of the award
Glossary
Assessment: credit points are not graded
Guidance for application for APL
Guidance for application for APEL
Cost
Regulations
Appendix 1 Levels of study
Appendix 2 Flowchart of APEL process
Appendix 3 Harvard system of referencing
Appendix 4 ENB Key characteristics

Institution 23

Doc 23a APL and APEL for 2 programmes: Information for teachers draft 30/08/00

Pre registration, joint nursing and social work
Intro: APL policy, Flowchart of APEL process, what is APL,
making a claim, assessing APL potential
APEL: Not for experience, but for learning derived
Via 'challenge assignment' (if failed; no re-submission!)

Results go to examination board, ratified results recorded on student profile/SRS system or
Portfolio of evidence;
Adviser not the assessor, assessment same as internal c/w, exams., etc
Moderated externally
No resubmission
Results to examination board for ratification and then to SRS system
APEL workshop for candidates plus 2 hours
APL Co-ordinator reports to head of Division, Vocational Activities and Franchised Courses
Monitoring: APL assessment subject to student evaluation
APL co-ordinator tracks progress of credit students, reports to cluster co-ordinator
Cluster monitoring of progress
Process
Detailed flowchart

Doc 23a APL and APEL for 2 programmes: Information for students draft 30/08/00

Contents
What is APL and APEL
The APEL process
Making a claim for APEL
Reflections and experiential learning
Suitable candidates for APEL, with examples
Contacts

Doc 23 c Understanding AP(E)L and CATS Flyer A guide for nurses/midwives with ENB awards

**Doc 23d Skills for success: toward student profiling,
Admissions WP Nov 1996**

No reference to APEL found

**Doc 23e Academic regulations for taught courses 2000/2001
7/6/00**

8.27 et seq

Transferred credit will normally be less than 50% required for an award, but

8.30 'Transfer credit (Certificated credit) will never exceed two thirds of the credit required for the award

Exempted units are not counted for purposes of classification

Results for individual units sent to 1st tier examination board

Outline of AP(E)L process

8.45 '.... double counting is NOT normally permitted'

Re-grading of credit, especially upwards is not normally allowed.

Institution 24

**Doc 24 a University Policy Statement on CATS (Section IV from
University Regulations - updated annually)**

School-based decisions within University-wide framework;
(max 66% at ug and 33% at pg)

'granting exemption from part(s) of the programme towards a second award, provided ...ii).. credit on which the exemption has been based has not already been used to gain exemption from part(s) of the first University of award.'

Clearly stated minimum number of credits to be studied at the university for an award, e.g. 'degree 100, of which at least 60 at level 3 and remainder at level 2.'

APEL ‘assess the relevance, level and currency of prior learning’

All exemption/credit recorded on student’s transcript

Assessment as ‘stringent and rigorous as that used for assessing any module’

Guidance: LOs, gathering and presenting evidence, means by which assessment will be undertaken and conducted.

Counsellor/adviser separate from assessor

APPENDIX IV G The complete AP(E)L process

Based on SEEC Code of Practice

University-wide pro-forma, which can be slightly modified by schools, for application for APEL

Counselling: initially by school/departmental admissions officer

Preparation of portfolio normally within one semester

Assessor must be a subject specialist, and carry out assessment within 1 week

Portfolio can be re-submitted

Verification

Second assessor, normally leader/director of the programme being entered ‘preferably’ blind 2nd marker, sees all documentation

Two assessors meet to agree decision

Verification within 1 week of receipt and prior to student being admitted and registered on the course.

Quality assurance

Summary of decision, signed and dated by 1st and 2nd assessor, sent to QA and Enhancement Office

Schools ensure APEL decisions, procedures are monitored in Annual Programme Review.

QA and Enhancement Office produce an annual report to Academic Standards Committee on exemptions made.

Doc 24 b APL and APEL Information pack 2000/2001 School of Educational Studies, APEL Committee

- Contents list
- Terms of reference of AP(E)L Committee
- Policy and procedures (includes provision for staff training)
- Charging
- Forms to be used
- Role of AP(E)L Co-ordinator (School-based)
- Roles and responsibilities of advisers, assessors and verifiers
- Advisers and assessors nominated by Director of Studies, approved by AP(E)L Committee
- Verifiers approved by Academic Board

Doc 24 c AP(E)L Committee terms of reference , July 2000

- Membership
- Meetings
- Chair and vice-chair
- Terms of reference
- Quality control of approval of advisers, assessors and verifiers
- Decision-making process
- Consistency of practice
- Promotion of good professional practice
- Receives reports from
 - Director of Studies
- Boards of Studies meetings
- Sends reports to
 - Examination Boards
 - Academic Board

Doc 24 d APL and AP(E)L Overview of the process

- Flowchart and verbal explanation
- Application sent to SES central administration, recorded and then sent on to Director of Studies

Approval decision sent to Administrative assistant to put on database

Director of Studies informs student by letter

Credit confirmed by examination Board

Director of Studies reports to APEL Committee, who reserve the right to review the decision to ensure uniformity of principles and practice.

Doc 24 e AP(E)L charges

Module ‘Learning from experience’ 20 credits at level 1 or 2

Doc 24 f Guidelines (*for students*) for completion of application for AP(E)L

Doc 24 g Form for consideration of request for APL

Doc 24 h Approval form for credit relating to AP(E)L

NB signature (and block capitals) and dates of assessor and verifier

Doc 24 i Role of AP(E)L Co-ordinator

Includes ‘ to monitor principles and practice across all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes on behalf of AP(E)L Committee and to report to the AP(E)L Committee on quality assurance issues

Doc 24 j Roles and responsibilities of adviser, assessor and verifier (draft)

Adviser and assessor

Need to keep appropriate and accurate records

Verifiers

Monitor and evaluate the process and outcomes of
APL/AP(E)L assessment decisions

Institution 25

Doc 25 a Academic Credit Rating handbook (April 1999)

All purpose for students, organisations and academic staff
Credit rating for **external (to the university) provision**.

Normally by Faculty Quality Committee, but occasionally
centrally by Academic Collaborative Committee.

FQC; Chair, max 6 subject and credit rating specialists, officer
from registry, who distributes documents 7 days in advance of
meeting.

Quality Assurance external moderation via

External moderator approved by university

University staff as moderator

Panel, Progression and Award board including professional
body representation.

AP(E)L

Max 50% of award (n b. professional body regulations)
but for direct entry can be 60%

Monitored by Faculty Quality Committee

General (towards a programme) and specific (module
exemption) credits

Currency less than 5 years

Application Prior to and during period of registration

No double counting

Student responsible for providing 'sufficient evidence in
order that a secure judgement about the volume and level of
credit can be made.'

Decision is valid for 3 years

Process

Programme Leaders give guidelines to students and ensure claims are processed as laid down, which 'should ensure effective moderation, monitoring and reporting'

Programme Leaders ensure Campus Registry is informed of decisions and write to inform students

Copies of evidence kept until decisions are ratified by Progression and Award Boards

External examiners may wish to sample completed portfolios

**Doc 25b Academic Quality Assurance Handbook
Approval and monitoring procedures July 1999**

Nothing specifically on AP(E)L apart from a reference on entry requirements

LIST OF MEMBERS

Anglia Polytechnic University
Bournemouth University
Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College
Canterbury Christ Church University College
Fire Service College
Kingston University
London Guildhall University
Middlesex University
Open University
Oxford Brookes University
Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication
Royal College of Nursing Institute
Southampton Institute
South Bank University
St Mary's Strawberry Hill
Surrey Institute of Art and Design University College
Thames Valley University
University of Brighton
University of Cambridge, Board of Continuing Education
University of East London
University of Essex
University of Exeter
University of Greenwich
University of Gloucestershire
University of Hertfordshire
University of Kent at Canterbury
University of Luton
University of North London
University of Oxford, Department for Continuing Education
University of Plymouth
University of Portsmouth
University of Surrey
University of Sussex
University of the West of England, Bristol
University of Westminster

ASSOCIATE MEMBER

Macmillan Cancer Relief

