



Evaluating Non-Accredited Learning: Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement

Upskilling Pathways in AE-PRO Webinar, 17.03.20

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Context

- Adult educators understand the value of non-formal approaches in adult education, but ...
- In some contexts (e.g. in England), education systems are focussed on formal learning and the achievement of qualifications.
- This may mean that among funders and policy makers, there can be a perception that non-formal provision lacks rigour compared to formal learning.
- Evidencing that non-formal education does in fact deliver significant and meaningful learning outcomes for learners can be essential.
- Most importantly, it can help learners to understand the progress they have made, and to think about their next steps.

Upskilling Pathways – A Reminder



Background

- **Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement or RARPA** is a quality assurance process used in publicly funded non-accredited learning in England. It is frequently used in:
 - Non-formal adult community education
 - Specialist provision for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities
- Originally developed in 2002, it was formally adopted in 2005 and is recognised by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and Ofsted (education inspectorate).
- It is 'sector owned' – different organisations have re-interpreted RARPA for different purposes at different times.
- ESFA asked L&W to update RARPA in 2017, to support the introduction of new, flexible funding rules. The changes allowed providers to deliver non-accredited learning, where this could be demonstrated to meet the needs of local employers.

Overview: The 6-Step RARPA Process

Key Principles

- Non-prescriptive
- Learner-centred
- Aligned with provider's wider quality assurance processes



Step	Evidence (not prescriptive)
<p>1. Aims appropriate to an individual or group of learners and local needs. Clearly stated programme aim(s) supporting outcomes in line with local learning and skills priorities.</p>	<p>Curriculum planning records in line with local delivery agreements reflecting both community and skills needs; marketing and prospectus records. Meetings with key stakeholders.</p>
<p>2. Starting points. This refers to establishing and recording the learner's starting point in relation to the course aims, sometimes known as initial assessment. Processes and details will depend on type and length of course.</p>	<p>Easily identifiable records of learners' starting points in relation to course aims. Can include self-assessment (where learners define their own starting points), as well as practical evidence of prior learning.</p>
<p>3. Identification of appropriately challenging learning objectives (initial, re-negotiated, revised) and incorporating generic and individual objectives.</p>	<p>Records of clearly stated suitably challenging learning objectives for all programmes and wherever feasible identification of individual learners' objectives, lesson plans, learners' portfolios ...</p>

Step	Evidence (not prescriptive)
<p>4. Formative feedback and recognition of progress during programme. Formative feedback to learners supports the development of reflection and the setting of challenging learning objectives.</p>	<p>Learner self-assessment; tutor records of assessment. Learners' files, journals, diaries, portfolios, photographs, exhibitions and displays, individual or group testimony. Observation of performance, practical demonstration, tests, projects, interviews, professional discussion, case study, showcase.</p>
<p>5. End-of-programme learner self-assessment, tutor assessment, review of overall progress and achievement. This is in relation to learner starting points and on-going learning objectives.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
<p>6. Next Steps. Supporting learners to make informed choices about their next steps into further learning and work e.g. through appropriate information, advice and guidance (IAG).</p>	<p>Evidence of individual and / or group information, advice and /or guidance Providers need to show that they have evaluated the overall learning programme with learners.</p>

What do you want to achieve from your course?

In order to help me provide you with a useful and enjoyable learning experience please list below three or four main things that you hope to learn while on the course. I will collect these and try to take them into account when teaching you.

At the end of the course I'll ask you to consider the extent to which you achieved these goals. This will assist you in recognising your achievement and deciding where you may want to go next.

What I hope to learn:

(Please complete this in class today)

Your Learning Journey

Think about the learning you have done over the years:

What was the **best** learning experience you have had?

What is the **worst** learning experience you have had?

Achievements so far: for example –

- GCSE/O Level/National Test/
Functional Skills
- Work related courses/qualifications
- NVQ / NOCN

Example

On Employability programmes aimed at building people's confidence it is important to establish a culture of 'can do' early on. One technique for doing this is 'The Wow! Factor' – a short activity where learners interview one another in pairs and have to find out at least one remarkable achievement, skill or experience of the other person. They then explain to the group why this person is so remarkable and describe their accomplishment. The tutor is then able to build on this and reinforce the 'You can do this' sense of purpose and positivism.

Goal-setting:

Provider examples from Chichester College and Thurrock Adult Community College

Organisational Context



Key Principles:

- RARPA does not operate in isolation
- It is part of wider organisational quality assurance processes.
- These will apply to formal and non-formal, accredited and non-accredited provision.

Quality Improvement Framework



Wider Organisational Context
Derby Adult Learning Service's quality improvement framework.

Essential Support Factors

- **Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)** – critical at all stages of the process, to help learners make informed choices.
- **Professional learning and development** – for tutors new to RARPA, and to ensure consistency.
- **Management information** – collection of data on achievement of learning outcomes should be rigorous and robust, as with data on the achievement of qualifications.
- **Curriculum review and evaluation** – to ensure this continues to meet local needs.

Top Tips

- RARPA is about **the process, not the paperwork** – think beyond the traditional ‘Individual Learning Plan’.
- Take a **proportionate approach** – a 10-hour course will not require the same level of detail as a one-year programme.
- Use **internal moderation** (and external, if appropriate) to ensure consistency of assessment decisions, achievement of learning goals and outcomes.

Discussion

- Are there equivalent systems for quality-assuring non-formal learning in other educational settings you know?
- What are the key similarities / differences?
- What did you like or dislike about the RARPA process and why?
- Are there any elements of the RARPA process you think it would be useful to use or adapt in your setting? If so, which?

Further Information

- Full RARPA Guidance Document

<https://www.learningandwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/RARPA-Guidance-2017-v1.pdf>

- RARPA Case Studies

<https://www.learningandwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/RARPA-Case-Studies-2017-v1.pdf>