



Erasmus+

Institution profile - University of Warwick



**EDUPRO – Promoting LLL
in HE by implementing
innovative practices in RPL**

Project Number: 2014-1-PL01-KA203-003629

Authors:

Maria Mendel, Ryta Suska-Wróbel, Marcin Zieliński

The publication is available under a Creative Commons Attribution – Share-Alike 3.0 Poland license. Some rights reserved by the authors and University of Lower Silesia. The content of the license is available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/pl/deed.en>

Publikacja dostępna na licencji Creative Commons Uznanie autorstwa – Na tych samych warunkach 3.0 Polska. Pewne prawa zastrzeżone na rzecz autorów oraz Dolnośląskiej Szkoły Wyższej. Treść licencji jest dostępna na stronie <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/pl>.

The Project „EDUPRO – Promoting LLL in HE by implementing innovative practices in RPL” financially supported by European Union under the ERASMUS+ Programme

Projekt “EDUPRO – Promocja uczenia się przez całe życie w szkołach wyższych przez wdrożenie innowacyjnych praktyk w zakresie uznawalności efektów uczenia się uzyskanych poza edukacją formalną” współfinansowany jest z Unii Europejskiej w ramach programu Erasmus+

Project website: www.edupro.dsw.edu.pl

Partners: Dolnośląska Szkoła Wyższa, Universidade do Algarve, University of Warwick, Uniwersytet Gdański

Gdańsk 2015

*The authors wish to express their gratitude to Barbara Merrill, Will Curtis,
and Steve Gascoigne from the Centre for Lifelong Learning
of the University of Warwick
for their co-operation*

Table of contents

Introduction **4**

Chapter 1

Recognition of Prior Learning at the University of Warwick **8**

Chapter 2

Benefits, challenges and risks of RPL **28**

Appendix 1

List of the strategic researched documents - tools and products **32**

Appendix 2

Selected RPL documents (copies) **33**

Appendix 3

Andrew Hay, University of Warwick: *Thoughts on Life Long Learning Experiences* (a “2+2” student’s essay) **49**

Introduction

Considering the discursive nature and multiple meaning of lifelong learning¹ plus given the institutional context and objectives of our project, we will mainly focus on and discuss the political aspect of Lifelong Learning (LLL). LLL Policy has been a cornerstone for the numerous social development strategies of the European Union² for many years, including the strategy aimed at the transformation of higher education in EU, described as the Bologna Process³. Tools that helped to implement this process were used over the past years as a part of a strategic role of LLL; the European Union responds towards challenges that are strongly linked with the economic crisis occurring in Europe; but also due to globalization, demographic changes, technological progress and with other transformations of social life⁴. The most important directions of the European universities activities in LLL are described, in created by European Universities Association based on consultations with rectors conferences in particular EU countries – European Universities' Charter on Lifelong Learning [*European Universities' Charter on Lifelong Learning (06.2008)*]. Charter promotes the University for Lifelong Learning model [*University for LLL, university as LLL institution (ULLL)*] and emphasizes increasing access to higher education that is used as a tool for validating the effects of Recognition of Prior Learning (*Recognition of Prior Learning - RPL*). With RLP practice, the LLL becomes possible in relation to wide range of higher education potential participants, who are entitled to access it with less traditional route, as they gained

¹ See: Knud Illeris (ed.), *Contemporary Theories of Learning: Learning Theorists – In Their Own Words*. Routledge: Oxon – New York, 2009

² The realization of the idea of lifelong learning learning mobility is a strategic objective No. 1 for European cooperation in education by the year 2020: the Education and Training 2020 Brussels, 12.05.2009 COM (2009). Other, current EU strategies based on LLL : EUROPE 2020 A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Brussels, 3.3.2010 COM (2010) /Uzeczywistnienie idei uczenia się przez całe życie i mobilności edukacyjnej to strategiczny cel nr 1 współpracy europejskiej w edukacji do roku 2020: Education and Training 2020, Brussels, 12.05.2009 COM(2009). Inne, aktualne strategie UE oparte na LLL: EUROPE 2020. A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Brussels, 3.3.2010 COM(2010) [EUROPA 2020. Strategia na rzecz inteligentnego i zrównoważonego rozwoju sprzyjającego włączeniu społecznemu/. Bruksela, 3.3.2010 KOM(2010)]; Towards Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion – including implementing the European Social Fund 2014-2020. Brussels, 20.2.2013 COM(2013) – “Social Investment Package”; Policy Roadmap for the 2014 Implementation of the Social Investment Package, September 2014 (<file:///C:/Users/Maria/Downloads/SIP%20Policy%20Roadmap%20 09 09 2014 en.pdf>).

³ The Bologna Declaration of 19 June 1999. Joint declaration of the European Ministers of Education, http://www.magna-charta.org/resources/files/BOLOGNA_DECLARATION.pdf (see: p.3).

⁴ COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (2012/C 398/01), see: (2), p.1. [*Zalecenie Rady z dnia 20 grudnia 2012 r. w sprawie uczenia się poza-formalnego i nieformalnego*, Dz.U. C 398 z 22.12.2012; patrz: punkt 2, s.1.]

relevant qualifications before enrolling. Based on RPL, they can access, created at universities - institutions LLL, several opportunities to learn at an academic level, which – according to their wishes – through individual pathways can lead to gaining various results, including completing bachelor’s degree, master’s degree and also selected partial qualifications.

From the Polish point of view, an important step towards the realization of the LLL concept was to introduce National Qualifications Framework in 2012 (Eng.: National Qualification Framework for LLL). The next one is the recognition by universities those achievements gained by candidates outside the formal education system. Strategy called “The prospects of learning throughout life”⁵ accepted in 2013 works as political basis towards this step. From the legal point of view, those changes are allowed by Law on the Higher Education Act⁶ amended in 2014. At the time of writing this report, Polish universities have been working on the requirements in order to recognize prior learning outcomes, including – learning outcomes acquired outside higher education institutions, through non-formal education (i.e. at work place) and informal (from life experience).

Since 1st October 2015, the higher education in Poland becomes a RPL practice area.

Therefore, in the near future, we can expect increased interest relating to RPL solutions – on one hand – previously verified and on another, innovative. Knowledge emerging amongst them has practical nature, orientating and creating a possibility – necessary in process of creation of new reality – steady and controlled action. Presented in this paper outcomes from the research conducted in University of Warwick, promote formation of this type of knowledge. It seems also that they can effectively support the achievement of those objectives, seen in Polish universities at the moment, which is orientation and stabilization in an area of enabling Lifelong Learning and using flexible methods which allow effective recognition and potential accreditation of prior learning (RPL).

In pursuing our research goal, which is to describe of the profile of the University of Warwick as an institution of RPL practitioners, a key role plays a historical context. Solutions embodying LLL in British universities, including tools in the form of accreditation of achievements acquired outside of higher education, adopted in the UK many years before formulating strategies outlined above and at the beginning of the Bologna process in the European Union. In 1985 University of Warwick established rules for recognition of learning outcomes through non- formal and informal education (non- formal and informal learning, which eventually in 2007 have been identified as Accreditation of Prior (Certificate/ Experiential) learning. At the same time, UoW has created the Centre for Lifelong Learning that through a wide range meets the requirements as an institution providing lifelong learning. Overall, this is an important perspective from which the studied phenomenon can be observed. Our report is based on research material mainly gathered at the Centre for Lifelong Education, which, as it happens has just celebrated its 30th anniversary this year (the exact time of our visit).

⁵ The prospect of learning throughout life - Annex to the Act No. 160/2013 of the Council of Ministers of 10 September 2013. [*Perspektywa uczenia się przez całe życie* – załącznik do uchwały Nr 160/2013 Rady Ministrów z dnia 10 września 2013r.]

⁶ The Act of 11th July 2014 . Amending the Act - Law on Higher Education and other laws. [Ustawa z dnia 11 lipca 2014 r. o zmianie ustawy – Prawo o szkolnictwie wyższym oraz niektórych innych ustaw]

The photography of the Campus internal road
that leads to Centre for Lifelong Learning, University of Warwick
(source: own research)



The research was conducted with a case study method and further research techniques such as one to one interviews, group interviews, observations and desk research. Field research took place during a study visit at the University of Warwick between 16 and 20 March 2015. Using the case study method at the University of Warwick (UoW) was closely linked to the objectives of the project, which is revealed by our research task, involving the description of the profile RPL institution of higher education, which is the UoW. The course of the study has been strongly influenced by direct contact with wonderful people: employees and students of UoW, in particular the Centre for Lifelong Learning, and an excellent atmosphere and the open character of the place. These conditions are not restricting; on the contrary, confirm the adequacy of the choice of method to the context and objectives of the study. As noted by Yin: „[a] case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”⁷. Interested in particular phenomenon – RPL in UoW – we examined them while being immersed in an environment in which it takes a place. We were gathering at the same time all of the data that to some extent satisfied our interest.

In this respect, our research material consists of eleven audio-recordings conducted among students and university staff. Interviews, recordings from the questionnaire interviews and other notes taken during and after the data collection were crucial for our research. In addition, copies of documents for analysis and photographs. Some of them were used later on in the report and some were referred to in the form of vignettes (Vignettes), while some were singled out as a frame with texts coming directly from the interviews (longer quotes). There are fragments of analysed documents; all of which are presented in the report;

⁷ Yin, R. (2009) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, p.18

whereby all are provided in the report also in annex as a full text. Acting as a research material such samples, vignettes are there to familiarize the reader with reality, presented through researcher point of view in the report. This enables readers to actively participate with analysis process and hopefully will aid in embracing particular issues in greater depth. The EU's recommendations recognize RPL process as 4 phases: identification, documentation, assessment and qualifications recognition⁸. Having them all in mind, we were focused on each of those phases in the research hence we decided on following queries:

a/ how the learning outcomes acknowledgement is conducted; the procedures and associated with them activities (observation and interview techniques were used here),

b/ which documents are relevant (the documents analysis technique were used here),

c/ in which context RPL is carried out [the following techniques were used here: observation, interview, documents analysis (including UoW web page)].

We were particularly interested in:

- institutional context (higher education system, where one of its elements is UoW activities; structures and internal system solutions, established by university in relation to LLL and RPL; etc.),

- socio- cultural context (socio-cultural specificity of Great Britain, including Warwick region, in particular the features having connection with the study, approach to higher education, etc.; the organizational culture of the university-artifacts area, overt and hidden values),

- demographic context (who is studying and what is the main socio-economic status, how old predominantly are students; with particular emphasis on non- traditional – if they are distinguished, etc.).

Therefore, as a result of implemented case study, the elements of our scientific research are generally distinguished within these three categories: RPL process, documents and context. These categories summarize the research results and shape the profile developed by us, specifics, RPL at UoW. A key component in this paper, apart from these already mentioned above, is also prospective analysis, which we express in the final part of this report. Overall, it is a unique attempt in determining the significance of the findings of our research especially important for Polish higher education, in particular for the University of Gdańsk, where we come from as researchers.

⁸ COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (2012/C 398/01).

[Zalecenie Rady z dnia 20 grudnia 2012 r. w sprawie uczenia się pozaformalnego i nieformalnego, Dz.U. C 398 z 22.12.2012]

Chapter 1

Recognition of Prior Learning at the University of Warwick

1.1. Accreditation of Prior (Certificate / Experiential) Learning: overview

In respect of the practices for recognition of learning outcomes outside the formal education system field, the „accreditation” terminology is being used in the United Kingdom. In 1996, British *Universities and Colleges Admissions Service* (UCAS) defined it as follows: „APL – the Accreditation of Prior Learning used as an umbrella term form to include both prior certificated learning and experiential learning”⁹. Respectively, Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) means accreditation related to the non-certified learning outcomes achieved by experience, an Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL) means accreditation where certificates are issued by educational institution or other education or training provider¹⁰. Barbara Merrill noticed in 2000, that in Great Britain a new trend has emerged, and it is approaching to the accreditation of learning outcomes based on experience, generating the following naming formula: AP(E)L¹¹. It developed, leading to the same approach as one functioning at the University of Warwick, where it has been accepted as: AP(C/E)L. At this University, within the framework of the Teaching Quality, there is a document undertaken in 2007 by Senate Resolution, including following exact name [see: vignette: AP(C/E)L; full content of the document - attached).

⁹ Accreditation of Prior Learning, Briefing for Higher Education (1996) UCAS, Cheltenham, UCAS, p. 7

¹⁰ Ibidem

¹¹ Merrill, B., Lönnheden, C. (2000): Experiencing APEL as a Language for Access (in:) Bron, A., Schemmann, M. (Eds.). *Language, Mobility, Identity, Contemporary Issues For Adult Education in Europe*. Münster, pp. 86-98, p. 88.

Vignette: Document (fragment; full text:
<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/aro/dar/quality/categories/courseapproval/apel/>)
AP(C/E)L: Accreditation of Prior (Certified/Experiential) Learning

The University has adopted a policy that allows applicants' prior learning, whether certified or experiential, to be used as partial credit towards some courses, where appropriate.

Policy and Procedures for the Accreditation of Prior Learning

1. Definitions

APL: Accreditation of Prior Learning

A generic term covering the exemption of a student from a module or modules on taught courses at the University on the basis of prior achievement of the relevant learning outcome, whether certificated or by experiential learning.

APCL: Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning

Applicants may apply for exemptions from modules on taught courses at the University based on evidence of learning formally assessed through certificated awards. The University expects that such applications will only be granted following a satisfactory mapping of learning outcomes for the modules for which exemption is sought and course aims against such prior certificated learning. This might require an applicant to provide a portfolio of evidence.

APEL: Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning

Applicants may apply for exemptions from modules on taught courses at the University based on evidence of learning arising from professional experience and related study or training which may not be formally certificated. This might require an applicant to provide a portfolio of evidence.

This document defines key concepts in terms of AP(C/E)L and presents policy adopted by university and principles of organizing practice accreditation in this field at the University of Warwick. By using the fragments of this document, we can present in contextual manner, outline of research phenomenon, resulting from the analysis.

APL (Accreditation of Prior Learning)

This is a general name for exemption (underline by the authors) from the module or modules within the framework of the courses offered by the university, carried out on the basis of prior student's achievement of relevant learning outcomes, both certified (formal, APCL) and resulting from experience (informal, non-formal, APEL).

It is worth mentioning that the approach itself determines the definition. It emphasizes the "exemption" from certain classes at university, in conjunction with his previous achievements rather than "only" recognizing achievements, not associated with the studying. In Poland, no such act regulates this, and in practice it may as well develop a tendency to detaching the recognition process of learning outcomes outside the university from lifelong learning (RPL without LLL). In UoW the candidate to APL is already a UoW student (see: document vignette: *Application for Accreditation of Prior Learning*), or is seen as a student due to APL is eligible to "skip" some classes.

Vignette: Document (fragment)

APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING

Student/Applicant should complete this form and then submit it to their department for approval.

Once approved and signed the department should be scan it and send it via email to *****, Administrative Officer Student Records (*****@warwick.ac.uk).

Name:*****

Date of Birth: *****

University of Warwick student ID number:

only if you have been or are currently a student at Warwick

Employees of UoW can freely apply for studies taking into account APL. One of the examined documents, highlights this situation, where one of employees was allowed to enhance the qualifications within the – appropriately shortened – study time, due to recognition of his previous achievements (see: vignette: *Transfer of Credit to a Part Time Degree*).

Vignette: Document (fragment)

TRANSFER OF CREDIT TO A PART TIME DEGREE

Student name: *****

Student number: 1328753

Degree: Social Study

Date: 25th March 2014

Dear *****,

Could I please request that 30 credits at level 4 be transferred to a part time BA in Social Studies for ***** (...)

As a member of staff at the university, ***** will be using Warwick Learning Account Vouchers to fund his studies.
From our perspective *****'s previous qualifications and work experiences make him eligible for this transfer of credit.

Many thanks

Dr *****
Director of part time degree and 2+2 programmes
Centre for Lifelong Learning

Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL)

Applicants can apply for exemption from some modules in the range of university courses on the basis of evidence from previously formally assessed learning, in the form of certificates (certificates, diplomas, etc.).

The University will only consider applications submitted with satisfying prove of evidence that prior learning outcomes map outcomes which can be achieved through taking particular modules. An exemption from which the applicant is applying is possible only when a course aims are similar with prior, certified learning however a further detailed portfolio including relevant evidence and certificates allowing the exemption are necessary.

These "considered applications" containing, for instance, mapping outcomes statements, as provided at vignette below (the case when applicant is requesting for an exemption from some modules at UoW based on the convergence of the results achieved previously at another university):

Vignette: Document (*fragment*)

TRANSFER OF CREDIT TO A PART - TIME DEGREE

Student name: *****

Student number: 1328753

Degree: Social Study

Date: 25th March 2014

Dear *****

Could I please request that 30 credits at level 4 be transferred to a part time BA in Social Studies for ***** . (...)

The Social Studies degree allows part time students to take modules from a wide range of departments across the university – including Sociology, Business, Philosophy, Politics ,

Economics and Lifelong Learning. The course ***** completed shares much in common with modules offered by the Business School, as well as by the Sociology department. Two instances where there in congruence in learning outcomes and aims are outlined below:	
HNC Units	Warwick Modules
Managing Financial Resources (20 credits at Level 4)	WBS - IB132 Foundation of Finance (12/15 credits at Level 4)
<p>This unit is designed to give learners a broad understanding of the way in which finance is managed within a business organisation. Learners will learn how to evaluate the different sources of finance, compare the ways in which these are used and will learn how to use financial information to make decision. Included will be consideration of decisions relating to pricing and investment, as well as budgeting. Finally, learners will learn techniques for the evaluation of financial performance.</p> <p>The unit aim is to provide learners with an understanding of where and how to access sources of finance for business, and the skills to use financial information for decision making.</p> <p>On successful completion of this unit a learner will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand the sources of finance available to a business 2. Understand the implications of finance as a resource within business 3. Be able to make financial decisions based on financial information 4. Be able to evaluate the financial performance of a business. 	<p>The module aims: to introduce you to the key concepts of Finance in a way that builds sound intuition from the outset, without sacrificing rigour; to prepare the foundations for more advanced study of Finance by encouraging you to develop a critical understanding of the main theories and models of Finance (and the assumptions that underpin them); to provide you with structured opportunities to practise using the key tools and techniques of Finance; to encourage you to read the financial press and to make links with what you are learning in the classroom.</p>
Research Project (20 credits at Level 4)	SO115 – Understanding Social Research (15 credits at Level 4 – revised module)
<p>This unit is designed to introduce learners to the techniques and methods of research. The unite addresses a variety of research methodologies, including the opportunity to carry out interventionist or action research.</p> <p>Learners well be required to produce a project report based on independent research into an area of professional business practice interests them and will add to their professional development.</p>	<p>To develop ability to evaluate and interpret social research reports, monographs and journal articles, and</p> <p>To introduce students to a range of studies which apply quantitative methods in different ways.</p> <p>Evaluate the appropriateness of different social research methods to range of area of social research.</p>

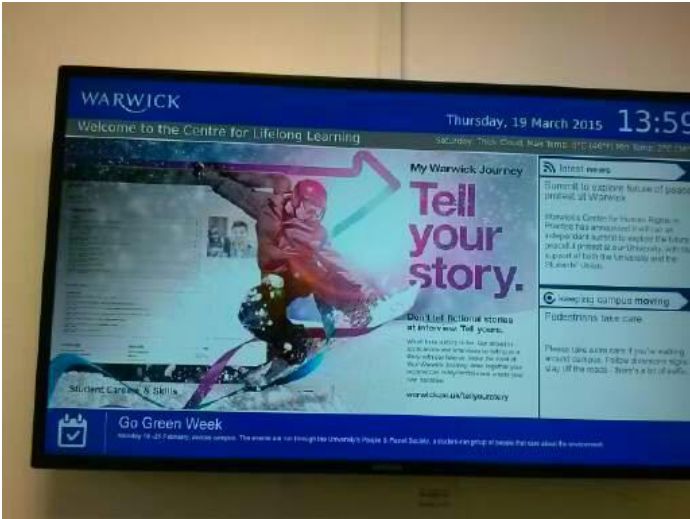
<p>The study should use both primary and secondary sources of information, and should be an exploration of a current major issue. The study undertaken should build on knowledge, skills and understanding that have been achieved in other units. Tutor approval should be sought before commencing study.</p> <p>To achieve this unit a learner must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a research proposal relating to a specified area of business • Conduct research using primary and secondary sources of information • Carry out the research project into a specified area of business • Present and evaluate the findings with regard to the initial proposal. 	<p>Communicate the principles behind research design and research methods, and the way that these have informed sociological studies in a range of sociological fields.</p> <p>Demonstrate understanding of existing academic research in a range of subject areas and using a range of methodological approaches.</p> <p>Ability to apply understanding of research design principles to research design and analysis.</p>
---	---

Further to mentioned portfolio, we can notice the support provided by University, offering a special program

„My Warwick Journey. Tell your story”,

Program advertisement „My Warwick Journey. Tell your story”.

Photography of the monitor screen located in the one of the UoW corridors, Centre for LLL
(Source: own research)



and to enable its implementation, online tool that allows students and candidates for students, collecting information about their achievements in an orderly manner.

One of the interviews conducted at the UoW, firmly drew not only the tool itself, but also the organizational culture of the researched university, allowing to identify both, intentions

and detailed methods of UoW operation towards the provision of assistance – on one side – in employment, on the other, the lifelong learning.

Vignette below presents the a fragment which is particularly interesting in this aspect.

*Vignette: Interview (fragment)
[I-SB-MW-staff-18-03]*

We run „My Warwick Journey” Project. Students evidence their own journey during studies. They can study History or Chemistry, but in the same time they can be volunteers, do sports or work. Every day will be different however if they are engaged and understand what every stage gives them – what skills they are developing through voluntary work, sport, running scientific groups or other work related activities but also through participation in classes such as History, Chemistry or Biology – then they will be easily directed towards a success path. All of those elements and experiences are crucial. We want to encourage students to make maximum use of their time and potential. Then, at the end of this journey, they will be able to tell their stories. We want students who apply for a job to say “I studied History, but I have also done all those things and as a result I am who I am, here are my skills, here are my strengths, that’s what I am good at, those are set of skills I can offer, and all of this because of what I did there”. The idea is, that they will be able to create their testimonies through studies and then share them as their stories afterwards. There must be a place where they can collect all those things. We use platform called Mahara. It is used by other universities, but also colleges. It can be accessed before enrolment. The part of the service which we run is obviously ours. This is our content, however people can gain an access to the Platform earlier and can create their own accounts. College may use the same or quite similar Platform, so someone who is a student, has the opportunity to use something very similar to what the Warwick provides to their students. Platform looks the same, and everyone can create their own accounts or profiles, however, we run this service only for our students. Our students can describe their previous educational experiences, in the same way, how they were doing it now. Once they complete their studies, within next 3 or 4 years, they will have a collection of everything that can be presented to potential employer or anyone else. They can also take advantage of this when they want to continue with their studies at higher levels. Mahara is an independent provider, however the profiles of our students are marked with the Warwick logo. Every student and employee has an account/profile. Everyone has their own control panel that can personalize and match as they wish. You can create groups, add friends, chat with others, just like in social media. But most importantly – the one, that Mahara mastered the most is provision of tools to create your own CV. You can then manage it online and amend it when necessary. Then you can simply export it. You can list everything you have done and send it to selected individuals, links to these achievements are automatically created. To help students, we’ve made a website, which includes all materials and tools, acts like a guide. They can find there, all sorts of information about leadership,

they can write about their work and check from where their experience and particular skills are derived. It is important for us, because this ensures that our students can easily find a job. Students can create a portfolio of evidence of everything they do – every kind of learning outcomes, i.e. on Teaching Studies, they can gather here everything which certifies what they have achieved specifically experience and skills. The main idea is to gather those crucial information in one place so students are able to reach out and demonstrate their own portfolios of knowledge and experience gained along the way, at time when they need it most.

Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning - informal and non-formal learning (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning) APEL.

Applicants may apply for an exemption from modules within a framework of university courses, based on submitted evidences in the form of professional experience and relevant (compared to application content) non-certified studies or trainings. This may require from applicant to provide the appropriate portfolio.

APEL refers to learning from experience, which is mainly informal learning, which does not involve any formal credentials of its results but it requires particularly reflective analysis. As indicated by the content on APEL articles mainly consider the text here by one of the researchers working at the Centre for LLL at UoW, Barbara Merrill (see vignette: Literature, APL) – This accreditation has its own specific languages and requires thinking about it in the light of the significant changes taking place in connection with it and the learning adults. This change of identity, often result in the accomplishment of its subjective form, often despite of widespread and vast nature of adversity (see vignette: Interviews, students). Thanks to APEL, the subjective self; adult lifelong learner can change favourably for the learner themselves and for the community in which they live.

Vignette: Literature

APEL

The accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) is just one initiative within a lifelong learning strategy, but an important one, as it enables adults to return to learn at different levels, thus providing the potential to gain mobility in an individual's learning and work careers. APEL is, therefore, a significant factor in the move towards providing greater equality of opportunity and the social inclusion of groups marginal to the formal education system.

(...) the process and language of APEL enables adult learners to actively give 'voice' to their life and learning experiences, thus shaping a new self identity through learning. APEL encourages non-traditional learners to take their first steps back into learning and possible educational and career mobility both within and across European countries.

Merrill, B., Lönnheden, C. (2000): Experiencing APEL as a Language for Access (in:) Bron, A. Schemmann, M. (Eds.). *Language, Mobility, Identity, Contemporary Issues For Adult Education in Europe*. Münster, pp. 86-87

People feel, as the result of recognition their previous achievements by the university, appreciated and empowered, their sense of causative power is increasing, and they are able to transform themselves and the world. Empowerment in adult learning is drawn as an experience of changing individual who come to an understanding of self and the world, and as pointed by B. Merrill – through empowerment, individuals and groups can gain power in action and they can change their biographies by new, critical new perception¹². Thus, *Prior learning is part of and also shapes an individual biography*¹³. Therefore, APEL is recognizing those biographies.

At UoW we noticed the understanding of this dependence every single time. All interviews with students, proved to us, researchers, that the University attentively “listens to individuals, their life narratives and take them into a close account, using deeply personalized and non-bureaucratic approach in recognizing previous achievements (see: vignette: Documents). Then, allowing non-traditional students for flexible learning paths that correspond with their life journeys (i.e. part-time studies)

*Vignette: INTERVIEW – Students: Part-time undergraduate degrees
[I-Students-P/T-19-03]*

I thought about studying before but because I became a mother, I decided that this was not the right moment. When my eldest son was 10 years old, I started thinking about it again. At this time only Access Courses were available at universities but none of them offered a degree in Philosophy. So, I googled “philosophy” and noticed something at Warwick. They had part time programs on offer. I found out that they offer Gateway courses - it was such a novelty. On the Gateway you didn’t need to have any previous qualifications, and I didn’t have GCSE. In the past I sat some exams, which you do at the age of 16 years and nothing beyond that. Then, I decided to apply for Gateway but haven’t completed an online application. However, the reminder system worked wonders and I received an email reminding: “you have started your application, but have not finished it, would you like to continue?” I thought that maybe someone saw my application and decided that I should finish it. So, without second guessing, I did it, and I went for an interview afterwards. It was a very good experience because I was not focused so much on continuing with the education. On the other hand, if only I had enough confidence to start studying again, if I had enough strength and was ready to sacrifice my time, then I would return to studies for sure. The other thing was my disability. The Gateway seemed to be the answer for all my worries and for me, it was the only way to study, because it understood and addressed many issues people encountered throughout their lives as adults. They also said they have an adequate framework and it made complete sense to give it a go. It was an excellent decision!

¹² Merrill B., Hill S. (1998): APEL, Access and Learning. A UK perspective, *DIE*, IV/98, p.23

¹³ *Ibidem*, p.22.

Every interview with the learners had elements of a unique biography and countless of them, one could consider as, individual life stories. Lectors paid plenty of attention and they never cease to provide with enough space for a narration and then utilize them in their own teaching-learning process. Those biographic stories were foundation for assessment of skills and needs required on courses such as The Gateway Programme and others which endorse one to the academic level of studying. (see: vignette INTERVIEW – Students: *Gateway Programme*).

*Vignette: INTERVIEW – Students: Gateway Programme
[I-Students-GP-19-03]*

Steve (teacher): When I interviewed Abby before she got to the Gateway I was impressed by her life experiences and fact that she has such a responsible role in the community. I was afraid that she will not find enough time - she is a very busy person.

Abby (student GP): I am coping with it but for me, my family is the priority, a wellbeing of my mother and my husband.

Steve: When I interview people who want to study I pay a special attention when they talk about their life and experience they have, I have to decide whether they are able to manage their personal lives with studies

Researcher: What if you knew someone seems like they haven't got enough time for the course, then would you not let them take the course?

Steve: That's correct, if I they led me to believe, that they can't devote enough of their time for it, then I am afraid yes, I would not let them to take it up however this is rarely the case as most people have already a rough idea about the hours and responsibilities in regards to the course they want to enrol for. Of course if I knew that learner is working full-time and have other responsibilities I would reconsider whether to enrol them on the course or not.

Researcher: And this decision is your own?

Steve: Yes, that's one of my responsibilities.

Certainly, APEL it's not restricted to biographic stories only but "This might not be so clear cut for some" writes Barbara Merrill, researcher from Centre for LLL – "students often come in trying to prove that, they already have experience hence they look for the accreditation straight ahead¹⁴. The task of LLL advisers is to inform and get an understanding from a candidate that the experience needed for APEL is not sufficient in itself hence the candidate needs to focus on demonstrating it, which is the final effect for this experiment [*the first task of anyone who is advising such incoming students is to convey the message that the experience is not enough on its own, and that what does matter is to demonstrate the learning which has occurred as a result of that experience.*]

¹⁴ Merrill B., Hill S. (1998): APEL, Access and Learning. A UK perspective, *DIE*, IV/98, p.22

Furthermore, it is also necessary to explain that the student must demonstrate that the learning has occurred at a level which is appropriate for the study which he or she desires to undertake. The potential student must then be led through the process of making an APEL claim. Typically, this will involve preparing and presenting a portfolio of evidence of experience and reflection on the learning and understanding which has been acquired through that experience]¹⁵. As well as in AP(C/E)L documents and in practices described by us previously in the interviews plus the observations we did in UoW, however it is the UNIVERSITY that controls the direction of approach in this case.

1.2. Accreditation of Prior (Certificate / Experiential) Learning: selected practices and innovations

Centre for Lifelong Learning

One of the most characteristic of the UoW practices in relation to the Lifelong Learning idea is the accumulation of almost all of them at the Centre for LLL. As a direct result, the AP(C/E)L procedures are extremely rare occurrence in the faculties of the university and outside the centre (one of the surveyed administration worker responsible for the procedure AP (C/E)L at the institutional level, disclosed that it is a matter of two, sometimes four applications per year). This may be reflection of the university adopted policies and procedures AP(C/E)L (attached). Describing the policies document in Section 2(a) states that no department has an obligation to deal with applications for AP(E)L, if it accounts them for incompatible with its own offer of education (provision does not apply to APCL, which is the accreditation of prior learning under certification).

As it seems, Centre for LLL launched in 1985, is generally the unit of UoW, which mediates in determining compliance with the offering of these departments, but above all, the unit itself provides rich opportunities to study as they focus on social sciences and is organized conveniently for non-traditional students. The last year offer consisted of:

- Undergraduate studies, first degree studies, at level 6 (6 level), offered in the system of "2+2", which includes two years in a state college and 2 in university, at the end resulting in the title of a Bachelor UoW. The academic interviewees perceived the "2+2" studies as a flagship of the Centre for Lifelong Learning. For the interviewed "2+2" students – one could say - it was the best study that they ever experienced. Andrew Hay was one of them, who – after the interview – decided to send us his *Thoughts on Life Long Learning Experience*¹⁶ (see Appendix 3). According to his description *the course (2+2 in Social Studies) was designed to ease students back into the educational environment by incorporating academic skills into*

¹⁵ Ibidem

¹⁶ Andrew Hay sent his text to us feeling invited to describe his learning experiences after our group interview with Barbara Merrill's students of "2+2". His initial idea was to prepare an article to the journal ("Contemporary Educational Leadership") that Maria Mendel recommended to all the interviewees as a forum for their writings about learning experiences which usually become a kind of personal leadership. When we read the text Andrew sent, we were sure that it is an important part of our research material. So we asked Andrew if it is possible to use his story as such material and we received his acceptance to do this. Andrew is still thinking about preparing his article for the "Contemporary Edu...".

Hereby we thank Mr. Andrew Hay for his essay which excellently contextualized our research and let us see a more detailed landscape of the studies at the UoW, especially in the frame of "2+2" system.

the study programme. The core elements of the course were spread over two year as opposed to one. This allowed for the course to be taught at a slower pace and created room in which students' were taught academic skills. Personally, I found this approach extremely useful as I hadn't progressed beyond the level of GCSE in my own academic life. I had no idea how to engage with and produce academic material at this level and so without this aspect of the course, I'd have been completely lost (Appendix 2, p.1).

- Postgraduate studies, second degree studies, at 7-8 (7-8 level), which can result in the title of Master (MA, Masters) or without the title, obtained the completion of this level of education would be recognized in the form of the Post- Graduate Award, a Post- Graduate Certificate or Post- Graduate Diploma.

Centre for LLL offers studies programmes, taking into account the conditions in which students live, students – adults, lifelong learners. The significant proposal is "Part-Time Undergraduate degrees" studies lasting from 4 to 10 years that are carefully tailored to students individual needs then enabling them the right path to the achievement of their dream qualifications.

- Public, certified and non-certified, short and longer courses, among them an excellent Gateway Programme, which is a free offer for those wishing to find out about their opportunities to study. It is emphasized that this is a program for those wishing to develop their knowledge rooted in their own lives and helping them to examine the correlation within university studies [we read in the guide for this year's offer of the Centre for LLL: To enrol on Gateway course, no previous qualifications are required. Emphasis is placed on developing knowledge rooted in your own life experiences, and exploring how this relates to your studies (p.8)]. GP is an offer of two paths: Gateway to Higher Education and Teacher Training Gateway. Both courses last 24 weeks (or - in the intensive version; 17 weeks, which refers to the first of these options). From interviews with the participants and teachers working in those courses, as well as observation of classes taught by Steve Gascoigne, a tutor at the Gateway to HE, that is the offer evaluated extremely well and proved to be a great success – and when it comes to the needs of candidates and directions of development of the university as a place of LLL is targeted right in the bulls-eye.

Vignette – INTERVIEW – Students [I-Students-P/T-19-03]

I am so grateful for Gateway because it gave me the basics, such as, the ability to create consistent references and skills to write papers. It seems that the small things that can be learned via Gateway are important - even now I find it useful. Moreover, thanks to that course we got to know the campus better. If we were not on the Gateway it would be a certainly intimidating experience. Entrance procedures to another university are terrible, you look at the forms and you think "oh no, I can't do this". (...)

Once I went to see classes at one of the Access Courses, and there were 200 people in the hall. I thought, this will not work.

I find Gateway more intimate and comforting because people who came there were experienced by life, they have stories to share that were so encouraging. Everyone supported one another. If that wasn't for them and Steve I think that I wouldn't have made it. Gateway is not a stroll in the park, it was not easy therefore I think the idea of the access courses is very good indeed. Last time I wrote an essay was many years ago ... 18 years ago. I was under the impression that everyone in the room was in the same situation so we felt

better about it despite we all had concerns and were terrified at first.

- Certified training at level 4 and 5 (4, 5 level), providing Foundation Degree, opening – similar to Polish A level exam - possibility to study at more advanced levels of academic education.

Next step could be a distance education system based on Blended Learning, which is the form of distance learning via electronic communication and the Internet taking place in real time at the university.

The centre is now an integral part of UoW, which is responsible within the university in a great extent for: 1/ Lifelong learning at university; in a variety of forms and scopes. It is open and accessible to all potential students; 2/ Shaping the UoW status as the university of LLL (LLLU) – in respect of spreading the idea of LLL through its mission and its methodology.

Formal requirement of five years expiry from learning to be accredited

Prior learning that is to be the basis for exemption from certain classes in college at UoW, must normally take place during the five years prior to taking up the course, for which an application was made [cf.: annexe AP(C/E)L; point 2 (d)]. This limitation is related to the deterioration of knowledge and skills. In special cases, when people applying for admission after graduation have been actualising their knowledge and skills in professional field of work, this time may be extended (see: vignette Transfer Of Credit To A Part Time Degree, below).

Vignette: Document (fragment)

TRANSFER OF CREDIT TO A PART TIME DEGREE

While ***** completed this course outside the normal five years period of consideration, we feel that the synergy between this courses and our level 4 Social Studies degree, as well as *****'s evidently success, mean that the transfer of 30 credits is appropriate. We are, in effect, requesting that only one quarter of his previous studies be transferred to his new programme of study.

Moreover, since completing his HNC, *****has been employed in a number of roles that relate to module options available to him at level 4 on the Social Studies (Business major) degree. He has worked as Finance Clerk and Accounts Clerk of Coventry Sports Trust and Support Officer and Regeneration Officer at Coventry City Council.

Although ***** graduated earlier than considered normal period of 5 years , we believe that the relationship between previous and current studies in social sciences at 4 level , as well as a clear success ***** , it is sufficient to move 30 points over. As a result, we ask that only a quarter of his previous studies has been recognized in the new program of education.

In addition, since the completion of HNC ***** he was employed in various positions that correspond to modules optionally available on the four -level social science studies (in Business) . He worked as a financial officer and accounting in Coventry Sports Trust and as a clerk handling and official revitalization in the City of Coventry

Financial aspects of APL

Of great importance in achieving the objectives of UoW as a university of lifelong learning are some elements of its educational offer that are free of charge. In the UoW there are solutions in place also known as "promotional" which effectively encourage to study at a more advanced level and are available also for the participants of Gateway Programme.

Vignette – INTERVIEW – Students [I-Students-P/T-19-03]

There was a choice of two Gateway courses - one conducted in the evenings and the second one - more intensive during the day. I chose the latter one. I had to think about though, mainly due to childcare. I worked out that this requires only a few months of sacrifice and it suited me. When I looked at the other courses in different universities - they require the whole year of hard work and there are fees as well. I quickly realized I have to seize this opportunity.(...)

Don't get me wrong, but the fact that we did not have to pay for it was very important. It seems to me that people do not realize how important this is. If I had to pay, I would not go to college at all! And currently I enjoy studying social sciences full time. This is my major, but I also took up philosophy class as this is something I really like. As an adult you appreciate education when you don't have to continue it, it seems to me as you appreciate it more when it is your own choice. I have 3 children I want to be a good role model for them, showing them that education is important aspect of life, no matter what age we are.

Vignette - INTERVIEW – Students [I-Students-GP-19-03]

Indeed, if the course wasn't a free of charge I would have to think twice about it. As I do not get a full salary, and my husband does not work due to illness. If I had to pay tuition I don't think I could manage. You really have to take into account the financial situation of the family etc. I was told, I could try to get to the Gateway because it is free and so on. I was given free advice and guidance and here I am talking with you!

Generally speaking, studies are expensive. The university is considered to be among elite, and it is widely respected both in academic rankings, and on the job market, this certainly provides a good start after graduation. So "it pays off" to study there, despite all the financial requirements.

Vignette – INTERVIEW – Students [I-Students-P/T-19-03]

Student 1: I do not know much about the other universities, but I can tell you about my sisters' experience . One of them just finished university in London and believes that Warwick is also a very good one. She told me I should try to study there. I remember I had a desire to do voluntary work, but she said " No, no, stick with the Warwick" . My other sister went to Aston University and she says the same thing.

Tutor: Does graduating from another university; for example Coventry University, mean you get less job offers?

Student1: I think so, because when you graduate from Warwick, you will have a better chance of employment than from any other university that is lower in the rank. From my point of view, research opportunities that Warwick has on offer are very important. Warwick is known from the research potential. So for me it is a clear choice - I could not be in a better place. Here there are a lot of opportunities to do research projects and to receive grants. You can conduct your own research or go abroad if you want to.

I talk a lot with my teachers and those conducting seminars. They always help me to carry out research and it's crucial for the experience you gain there, so that later it will be easier for me to find a job. Besides, you are graduating not only with a diploma, but also with the needed experience. So, I think it gives me fair chances to get a job I want. Some people who graduate from other universities sometimes don't feel mature enough. However, you don't have to worry in Warwick, here the faculties are the first rate.

Student 2 & 3: Warwick currently proclaims itself as one of the top of 100 universities in the world. I think we are in the best possible place, because we have to deal with our duties at home too, and here we get a huge support. When we had to have classes on the main campus, we were afraid of what the staff is going to think about us because we were a lot older than students they see on a daily basis. But it turned out that they were not judgmental at all, they were very helpful instead! I wonder what to do next, but surely, nowadays, the education and the right experience counts the most.

1.3. **Accreditation of Prior (Certificate / Experiential) Learning: process and its evaluation from the perspective of students and educators**

All surveyed students shared with us their account from the very personal perspective. A biographical narrative is crucial for us, researchers, because one can see so many LLL aspects in their stories. It seems as LLL has a huge value for them. Everyone paid attention to the benefits of learning all life long, with an emphasis on "all" (with ever so consistent amazement and rediscovering the joy in learning - even in the older age). Their evaluation of APL at the UoW regarded mainly of the phenomenon of studying by people who are mature and the university itself.

Adult students - invisible people

Students who participate in APL procedures at the Centre for LLL often notice that at many universities there is no adult students (see: vignette below). They have however a somewhat good feeling of diversity from the rest of the students of UoW (in particular LLL and profile of its APL) by the fact of studying in this university already post-adolescence age. On the other hand, in light of the strength of the stereotypes associated with the image of the university as a place for students who start their journey immediately after secondary school. Surveyed students spoke about their and other older students co called 'invisibility' apparent due to the current prevalence of practices exposing young people. *Adult students are invisible, we*

are like invisible people [I-Students-P/T-19-03]. Thus, the call for a change in organizational culture of university, which seems to be falling well behind, fleshing out increasingly; in line with demographic trends and development strategies emphasizing LLL; by students at a mature age.

Vignette – INTERVIEW – Students [I-Students-P/T-19-03]

Vignette - INTERVIEW - Students [I- Students -P/T - 19-03]

Student 1: There are other universities that offer similar things, but they are not so many of them. I've done my research and it turns out that at many universities there is no adult students at all. When you look at the advertisements of universities, you always see young people rather than adults. Adult students are invisible, we are like invisible people. Warwick is belongs to an elite, it's sort of snobbish university. Diploma of Warwick is very highly valued. Usually when university is worth of something" [University of Warwick] this is perceived as a good university , and when it is " just some university" [Coventry University]for instance, then it is worse.

Tutor: At Warwick we have a bit of a problem to convince people that they can come here to study. They perceive this university a place for the outsiders whereas as Coventry as for locals. But it's Warwick that is considered an elite university really.

Adult students - people of variant classes

In some statements of students, tutors and teachers – awareness of not only the age difference but also social status is highlighted. Lifelong learners are most commonly representatives of the lower social classes, the working class and lower middle class. Mutuality of consciousness and the clarification of the difference; sometimes occurring with pain and it is difficult as the individual and social experience; as shown by our study, this difference is significantly decreasing and foster mature students of UoW to feel fully fledged, in no way worse than representatives of other social classes studying at this university. Some may see this as a well worthy and rewarding way for overcoming social inequalities indeed.

Vignette – INTERVIEW – Students
[I-Students-2+2-18-03]

Interviewer: What is your opinion about studying in college and the transition at the university, studying with younger students?

Student 1: For some, this transition is difficult. For me it was different, I could not wait to join the rest of the students. Young people were wonderful, open-minded, optimistic, and friendly. I had no problem. But maybe that's because I was already familiar with this feeling as the oldest student, so in this respect nothing has changed for me.

Student 2: I'm the youngest one on 2 + 2, but I am the oldest of the other two modules. Philosophy - and this is frustrating for me. There is one girl who has no children. We are judged by other students because we have children.

Student 3: On one of my modules people constantly asking me about being a parent. Other students even ask inappropriate questions such "do you have a favourite child among your three?" No, of course I do not have. I think they are only asking those questions because they don't have anyone else in their environment to ask and they simply curious but sometimes it seems ridiculous to me to be honest.

Student 4: I see a big difference between the College and the Warwick. Level increases drastically to start with and in the classroom I often feel as an alien. First, of all, they are much younger; they're about 20-24 years old. On one of the modules we do together, Economic Politics, I feel very self-conscious, I come from a different social class and there are clearly people from wealthy families, children of lawyers, brought up under capitalism in its purest form hence I feel less comfortable. Similarly, political theories and philosophies. Although the philosophy let me shine from time to time especially during discussions I still think they call me Marxist.

Student 3: When it comes to the transition from college to university, it helps that we have a really strong bond with each other, especially among urban college students. We have a common room where we can meet and support each other. Quite often, when you pass by, you can hear complaining or venting out other emotions. Not necessarily polite words but we do have a strong sense of community. And it helps. If there are any stressful situations we can deal with them together. I think it is also important that we have a place where we can hide from the younger students. It is very important to have the safe spot you can find a friendly soul in. The space is used by 2 + 2 students, but also others, including Gateway. That's okay, because they come from similar backgrounds, as we are, and we have a lot in common. As a result, we like being together. The sense of community is important, that tends to develop in the first two years on the course. In the case of the Gateway this probably would not work so well though, because they have classes together for only a few weeks before they enter the regular studies.

This sense of community is also important when working on essays - we help each other. In the case of the 'Gateway' perhaps you'll get to university sooner, but you won't create such a strong bond. I think it is important to establish such bonds. During the first two years of college especially, strong bonds are formed. We live together for three days a week in a space of two years. And we tend to spend even more time together outside the college too.

Student 4: You have a nice bond, but I think that some people are missing out on it because they happen to have different modules at different places, there is no chance for consistency and this causes a completely different experience on the whole.

Teacher: For many groups in college that close bond is very important and all the support received from peers.

Student 2: If it wasn't for it , I do not know if I would make it. It seems to me that you cannot participate in the course and make it without being enthusiastic. We are all aware of

the value of study, and appreciate the second chance with humbleness which most of the regular younger students may not. Hence the belief that it is worth it no matter how difficult it is.

Adult students - happy people

Considering the students opinion on the whole and without exception, studies in UoW gave them plentiful of benefits, especially in the area of personal development (interestingly enough, none of our interviewees did not count on the imminent job offers after graduation) however studying in the UoW brought them confidence, strengthened inside-out and helped to establish the purpose of further learning. Hereby, it has just actualized – declared, among others, objectives of European policies; mission of the university LLL. In addition, it made a very significant break-through in the area of empowerment and not in the sphere of readiness to sustain employment (employability); as the EU documents determines; at the same time defines LLL as a policy against the economic crisis.

Vignette – INTERVIEW – Students

[I-Students-2+2-19-03]

Student 1: LLL Centre in Warwick has 30 years of experience, 2+2 is one of the oldest courses, even in England. It's based on the experience. There are no requirements in terms of previous skills. Only a short test and interview to determine whether one has a potential for studying. Students do not have any previous qualifications. I didn't have any. I left school at the age of 18, without decent A-level results. Warwick does a great job recruiting people with a potential.

[I-Students-P/T-19-03]

Student 2: Finance. The real problem was the lack of money. I used to earn money but I've dealt with it, my family is very supportive of me, so this problem has been solved. That was the main trouble. Another problem was that I have four children: the eldest son is 10 years old, daughter is 8, the next seven, and the youngest son is 2 years. I have no help in taking care of my children because my family is scattered around the world. It's just me and my mom, who works full-time. So it is a challenge and it is difficult I admit. But the real question is, whether you really want it. The more challenges I set for myself, stronger I become, so I deal with each of them. As a result I become more confident and I say to myself it was worth it. My children are OK and I think, whatever I do is also good for them. (...)

So far, I enjoy the research experience the most. It's strange, but it really gives me pleasure. I would have never expected it. I thought it would be the hardest thing to learn, to be honest. I thought it was this part of the studies, which I would struggle with the most and perhaps it's not for me or that I am not at this level. But the more I deal with this, it gives me greater joy. That's why I do it. Sometimes I would devote my time on the weekends and I think to myself, okay, just do it. I approach this on a week-to-week basis. I do not demand a lot from myself in a broader perspective, I just try to motivate myself by putting small efforts each day, step by step.

Student 1: Yes, people in my environment refer to studying as selfish act. My family also thinks so. My children are 3, 5 and 7 years. When I started college, I heard complaining,

"Why are you doing this? ". Even from people who I thought would support me. Instead they kept asking "why". I thought, If I went back to work, I would only earn a minimum rate. I had an eight years experience in nothing. Maybe some of that time would count towards time management and accounting here and there, but it could not be recognized. At the university, fortunately, you get to develop your skills in time management and work on your organizational skills, it's useful. But many people tried to stop me and it was sad for me. On the other hand, I could apply for a place for a child in kindergarten at the university, university staff can also send their children there.

I went to classes and sometimes heard "you are a member of staff, you have to sit at the front ," and I would answer , "No, I am a student , I sit in the back ". There are several such matters at the university but self-confidence and self-esteem confronted with them, work wonders.

But it is difficult to prove to those around you, that studying is well worth all your efforts.

They see , you're changing, you're growing. People are afraid of that, because thanks to confidence you are becoming more assertive and know how to say "no". "Can you take care of your children?" "No". They are so accustomed to your "yes" and they don't like the idea of you saying "no".

Chapter 2

Benefits, challenges and risks of RPL

An idea of Lifelong Learning is rooted longer in the UK than in other EU countries. An idea itself and the worked out solutions for LLL are both, 30 year old. In this perspective, every opportunity to learn from the vast experience should be eagerly utilized.

Philosophy or organizational culture formed over the years as the basis for LLL (and APL) at UOW, finds its milestones in the following approaches, typical for university and, at the same time, defining its overall profile in this field; the LLL/APL profile. Hence, in this chapter ending the report, we treat them as useful elements from the Polish perspective, the description for this profile, which is the set objective in the phase of the project concluding this report.

1. AP(C/E)L remains in the UoW an integral part of LLL and does not exist outside of it, serving it as a tool that expands the possibilities in its scope. Polish readings of the Act which form the base for recognition of achievements by the university outside the formal education creates the ground for the practice of separating validation from the studies on its basis. Specifically, universities in Poland may, in some cases, validate the effects of learning acquired outside higher education and respond to it in the form of validating qualifications, restricting however some other opportunities in regards to applicant's studies or modules. It is hard to see such solutions as the direction of good practice. They rather take the opposite turn to the intentions introducing the concept of LLL to Polish universities. Poland should strive to foster the tradition, similar to the UOW about procedures for recognizing the effects that would perceive non- formal education as a tool for extensive use of the offered by universities; many, varied and vitally flexible ways for studies that are appropriately adapted to the abilities of adults, lifelong learners.
2. The main functions of UoW, resulting from undoubtedly distinguishing status of lifelong learning (LLL) are met through permanently rooted in the university unit, which is founded 30 years ago by the Centre for Lifelong Learning. It seems that in Polish universities such units are not yet developed, although in many universities they were established. A careful analysis of the great experiences of the Centre for LLL at UOW can hold in this context the importance of education and support the development of good practice in higher education in Poland.
3. At the Centre for LLL UOW it can be felt, that prior learning is considered as a part of and also shapes an individual biography. The process of APL is supported in various ways, including, inter alia, fostering circumstances of biographical stories

(storytelling, autobiography) told during the free courses organized by the university to support the candidates of all ages. On these bases, the teachers, who often act as advisers and counsellors, try to guide applicants by providing information, encouragement so that they are aware of their own potential and skills. At the same time, they are making sure that candidates are aware of other academic requirements and issues associated with studying. Centre workers - teachers, researchers, counsellors – approach all the candidates and the students always with evident interest and openness to their life stories, which are the basis for a far-reaching individualization of their education.

Under such conditions APEL is seen not only as a "hard" procedure, but immersed in the social relationships diagnosis of a certain state, from which a student or candidate excels to a university learning. Such diagnosis therefore, are always possible, adequately to the educational needs and the life situation in which a student or candidate is currently coping with. It is worth emphasizing, that created in such way environment is standardized by a high level of customization and low levels of bureaucracy. From the practice observed in Warwick this is highly conducive to maintaining, both, positive learning environment and warm atmosphere for lifelong learner. Furthermore, it creates strong foundation for problem solving among students/candidates (e.g. problems related to level of commitment, difficulties in attending classes or issues regarding to maintaining deadlines).

4. OuW, not only through the Centre for LLL; shows considerable sensitivity to its surroundings. Its offer, specifically the content of curriculum proposed by the LLL Centre, relates to the local context and conditions in which people; future and current students; live in the region. This offer is a clear response to a post-industrial character of the region, experiencing numerous socio - economic and cultural issues. It also addresses the potential interests and needs of adults, who are struggling with the nature of these problems (unemployment, pauperization, etc.). Proposed courses of study refocus their qualifications in the direction of social sciences and social services. The answer to the nature of the recipients of the university LLL in Warwick are also different organizational forms of classes offered. The Centre for LLL offer includes i.e. part-time studies, carried out at convenient times, lasting from 4 to 10 years. Also in the context of everyday classes that take place, the flexibility is really quite simply impressive (e.g. As researchers we have witnessed a student participation in classes – a mother of small children, who actively cooperated with the teacher and the group, communicating with them by phone). Under Polish conditions, it is difficult for this kind of approach currently, despite directing the developmental strategies of universities and social policy of the country on LLL. In higher education, it is a common practice to allow a formal leave to students, who have difficulty with the completion of activities carried out in the traditional, inflexible ways, however this is usually the last resort. Some students who show a high achievement can apply for an individual study plans so they can gain their credits and pass examinations with more flexibility however, this has to be consented

with a dean. Legislative changes in Poland beg for actualization. Also at universities' internal regulations need to be looked into, to offer Real opportunities to study for working adults who barely make time for formal education but seem to report a vast achievement in the framework of informal and non-formal education, accompanying their daily work whether in companies or their own home.

5. The University with LLL status is working effectively to break the generational differences and - what is very significant socially class, distinctions and social inequalities. Lifelong-learners represent mostly lower social classes (working class, lower middle class) and group's margins (women who have small children, the unemployed, people at retirement age, pensioners). Our research highlights, that this open to all differences approach of faculty members and the students clearly decreases previously mentioned distinctions and lessen the gap between classes. Candidates who come from lower social class do not study separately in the Centre for LLL UOW, instead they mingle with others and become full-fledged students. UOW's implemented action in this area act as invaluable reward and trademark for overcoming social inequalities. In Poland still the poorest students seem to have no choice but to overpay for college or private universities, because of the thresholds associated with earlier achievements for instance, lack of GCSE/A-levels at lower mark). Those thresholds are not only holding some students back but also create enclaves and reinforce social inequalities.
6. Comprehension of the AP(C/E)L at Warwick refers to the "exemption" from some of the university duties that would bring the same results already achieved by learner outside the university. This is an important rhetoric difference towards Polish solutions, promoted by law. According to which as a result of similar outcomes gained in informal and non-formal to the ones gained within formal education, a prospective candidate may apply for a "validation" of his/her non-formal or informal learning outcomes. This difference significantly shapes two profiles of the recognition of prior learning present in the UoW and in the Polish law. The UoW – *via* Centre for LLL offering adult learners a lot of flexible ways of studies – in the AP(C/E)L regulations emphasises exemptions which are rarely performed procedures (2-4 cases a year). In Poland, where we have no centres for LLL or other forms of adult-friendly studies, which would be better than contemporarily existing extramural studies¹⁷, validation is emphasised. The problem is that validation does not mean LLL. Although the LLL is their strategic mission, Polish universities serving their validations could be probably less focused on the creation of flexible conditions which would be comfortable enough for adult students, both those who are recruited for their

¹⁷ One may say that in the past twenty years, extramural studies in Poland unfortunately lost their features letting us to describe the universities offering them as *the LLL institutions*. Before, studies similar to the 2+2 arrangement could be offered by HE institutions. Today, although the classes for extramural students are organized in the weekends, their studies ("extramural/non-daily studies") last exactly as long as other studies addressed to the daily students and they offer no organisational flexibility. There are no facilities such as those that are served by the Centre for LLL at the UoW.

studies on the RPL basis and those who are recruited in traditional way. Definitely, our research analysis lets us to conclude that in Poland we have to loudly articulate the role of RPL as a tool for LLL. *The Lifelong Learning first* should become the label of Polish universities' practices. These practices have to be rooted in the understanding that *via* RPL they are able to obtain a significant but only a small part of the LLLU reality. Such reality is shaped mostly by individual, flexible approaches to adult students, the lifelong learners who need open frames of studies first. Little can be heard in Polish debates that RPL is a secondary development in relation to the expansion of LLL programmes, a solution of the needs of LLL students rather than a stand-alone procedure.

7. Accreditation for learning based on experience refers in Warwick; especially in the work of teachers and counsellors Centre for LLL ; to the concept of experience, strictly associated with learning (learning is in this perspective as the result of conscious experience). Therefore, candidates for students must demonstrate (in prepared and presentable portfolio, together with the account of reflection on learning in form of reflective journals for instance) that the level of achievement is equivalent to the level of studies that they want to take up, or whether they would like to continue under individual study plan. This approach is clearly represented by teachers and students of UoW, which, inter alia, we have seen during viewed classes and their work, focusing our attention on careful analysis of the educational experience. We will definitely want to learn from this approach.
8. UOW is currently facing; expressed by the surveyed students; need to change the organizational culture of the university. This change is grounded in the demographic transformation and the growing number of older students who feel worse in the unit, which stubbornly governs the obsolete social structure of university unwritten rule (the times when it was only considered for youngsters) The university, both, of Warwick and University of Gdansk, or others; need urgent rebirth of mentality, as well as space, allowing for smooth transition for older students.
9. The research so far has highlighted ample of benefits to students, lifelong learners. These are deeply rooted in the area of empowerment, rather than in the employability domain as the EU documents imply, when defining LLL as a policy against the economic crisis. From the experience of UoW we learn that it is worthwhile facing all the challenges that lifelong learning universities are presenting to us. These are there, simply, for people, for their empowerment and for the better shape in society and consequently, a better quality of life.
10. The University of Warwick is among the hundred best rated and prestigious universities in the world and at the top ten UK universities. The context of this success, which is developed through practice of learning throughout life (and serving APL) is, on one side, the question of profit associated with LLL (how much money universities get to educate older people in your area?) and on the other, the issue about rates of tuition. Generally speaking, studies in Warwick are still considered

expensive (almost all surveyed students pointed out to the difficulties with meeting the financial requirements of the university), despite of material aids being offered to poorer, non-traditional students. Students can get support from a Hardship Fund – they do not pay this back (most of the students who use this fund are 2+2 students). They can also receive support from the Students Union and the Alumni. In spite of this, the implementation of the concept of LLL university open to people regardless of their socio-economic status seems still to be ahead of us.

APPENDIX 1***List of the strategic researched documents***

Lp.	Document	Description/Comments
1.	ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR (CERTIFIED/EXPERIENTIAL) LEARNING	Document describing Policy and Procedures for the Accreditation of Prior Learning
2.	APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING	Form for the Applicant for the AP(C/E)L
3.	TRANSFER OF CREDIT TO A PART TIME DEGREE	Official letter of Director of the Centre for LLL UoW – version 1
4.	TRANSFER OF CREDIT TO A PART TIME DEGREE	Official letter of Director of the Centre for LLL UoW – version 2

APPENDIX 2

Selected RPL documents (copies)

Appendix 2.1

Document on the website:

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/aro/dar/quality/categories/courseapproval/apel/>

AP(C/E)L: Accreditation of Prior (Certified/Experiential) Learning

The University has adopted a policy that allows applicants' prior learning, whether certified or experiential, to be used as partial credit towards some courses, where appropriate.

Policy and Procedures for the Accreditation of Prior Learning

1. Definitions

APL: Accreditation of Prior Learning

A generic term covering the exemption of a student from a module or modules on taught courses at the University on the basis of prior achievement of the relevant learning outcome, whether certificated or by experiential learning.

APCL: Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning

Applicants may apply for exemptions from modules on taught courses at the University based on evidence of learning formally assessed through certificated awards. The University expects that such applications will only be granted following a satisfactory mapping of learning outcomes for the modules for which exemption is sought and course aims against such prior certificated learning. This might require an applicant to provide a portfolio of evidence.

APEL: Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning

Applicants may apply for exemptions from modules on taught courses at the University based on evidence of learning arising from professional experience and related study or training which may not be formally certificated. This might require an applicant to provide a portfolio of evidence.

2. Policy

(a) There is no obligation for any department to consider requests for AP(E)L if it considers such requests inappropriate to the nature of provision offered. Departments wishing to consider applications should do so in accordance with the University's policy, as set out in this document.

(b) The Chair of the Board of Undergraduate or Graduate Studies will accept applications for the accreditation of prior learning from candidates citing prior certificated learning from Warwick or other institutions. All applications should normally be submitted prior to

admission or re-admission¹ to a course of study; retrospective applications will not be considered².

(c) (i) The Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (CATS) will be the primary means of calculating the extent of exemption to be permitted. Where the prior learning and/or experience was at an institution other than Warwick, the proportion of a course for which applications for AP(E)L may be considered is as follows:

Total credit value of course	Proportion for which AP(E)L may be granted
Less than or equal to 360 credits at undergraduate level (FHEQ levels 4, 5 or 6 (previously known as levels C, I or H) [Applications for AP(E)L in respect of courses consisting of more than 360 credits at undergraduate level will be considered by AQSC, or by the Chair of AQSC acting on its behalf]	33%, or as approved by AQSC for a particular course (where above 33%)
360 credits at H level where applicants seek to top-up from a Foundation Degree to an Honours Degree or equivalent top-up approved by AQSC	66%
An integrated masters course consisting of 480 credits, at least 120 of which are at FHEQ level 7 (previously known as level M)	33%, or as approved by AQSC for a particular course (where above 33%)
Less than or equal to 180 credits at FHEQ level 7 (previously known as level M)	33%, or as approved by AQSC for a particular course (where above 33%)
Over 180 credits at FHEQ level 7 (previously known as level M)	50%

(ii) Where prior learning was at Warwick and the programme³ for which AP(C)L is being applied for is the same as (or a direct replacement for) the programme on which the prior learning was originally undertaken, an application for APL may be considered for up to 100% of the credit value of the prior learning.

(iii) Where the prior learning was at Warwick on any other course or programme, the proportion of the course for which APL may be considered will normally not exceed 50%.

(d) The prior learning which is used to provide a case for exemption should normally have taken place within five years preceding commencement of the course to which the APL will be applied.

(e) Students registered for a Postgraduate Award or Certificate should normally apply to use the credit they have obtained towards a Postgraduate Diploma or Master's degree before their performance is considered by a Board of Examiners. In such cases only the higher or highest award will be conferred by the University.

(f) Where applicants wish to gain credit and exemption on the basis of a Warwick course for which they have received a University certificate, it is not expected that the certificate will be returned, but the student transcript will indicate that the highest award incorporates any other awards for which APL has been granted.

(g) The University will accept certain professional qualifications as specified in Annexe 1 to this document for exemption from modules on specific courses.

(h) The University is aware of the need to be mindful of the implications of granting applications for AP(E)L where professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements affect University provision and where the impact of granting requests for AP(E)L could thus be disproportionately significant. It is the University's view that the 5 year rule for prior certificated learning and the requirement to map previously certificated learning against intended future learning outcomes should provide adequate checks and balances.

(i) Prior learning (other than covered by c(ii) above) accredited in line with this policy will not be graded. Student transcripts will record 'pass' for any element of a course for which prior learning is accredited.

(j) Special arrangements apply for the accumulation of Warwick Postgraduate Awards toward a Master's degree, where this is provided for in the course regulations for the particular Master's degree:

(i) A maximum period of 3 years is allowed to elapse between a student initially registering for any two Postgraduate Awards or other units of study which it is intended to accumulate toward the relevant Master's degree.

(ii) A maximum period of study of eight years is allowed for CPD-oriented Master's courses, it being noted that in all cases where the maximum period of study for the individual course is shorter than eight years, the maximum period stated in the individual course regulations is to be applied.

(iii) Each Master's course to which these special arrangements apply should be approved with clearly defined progression stages identified for achieving the credit threshold for Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma and Master's.

¹the inclusion of readmission in this clause is to cover the situation where a student returns to the University to complete a qualification he/she had originally registered for but had not completed, leaving either with an intermediate exit qualification or no formal award.

²with the exception of Master's courses in Warwick Medical School and the Institute of Education where Course Directors may exercise discretion to prevent the differential treatment of a student who has registered for such a course at the outset of their studies rather than registering for modules one by one.

³A programme consists of a course leading to a degree or a directly associated diploma, certificate or award within the same subject area.

3. Procedure for consideration of requests for AP(E)L

This procedure should be used for applications not falling under points 2(g) or 2(j) of the Policy set out at 2. above.

Applications for exemption must set out clearly how prior learning achievement meets the specified learning outcomes at the appropriate level of those modules for which credit transfer is proposed.

(a) Prior to admission to the course, unless covered by 2(b) above, the applicant should submit to the Admissions Service Manager (Undergraduate Admissions) (undergraduate courses) or Assistant Registrar, Student Records(postgraduate courses), information on the prior learning concerned. The information submitted should normally include:

(i) Confirmation from the awarding institution of the level of the course in accordance with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications; the date of completion and the modules taken (e.g. a transcript).

(ii) Information from the awarding institution on the learning outcomes achieved, (for example, by means of a course/module specification) and details of the curriculum on the basis of which accreditation of prior learning is proposed.

(iii) If the application is for APEL, information on the applicant's relevant professional background, including employment and any relevant training courses or other study undertaken.

(iv) A description of how the applicant's qualification or professional experience relates to the learning outcomes and curriculum of the modules from which exemption is requested, including extracts from the module documentation of the department concerned.

(b) The department may also ask the applicant to complete a piece of written work or to follow an APEL module where this has been developed by the relevant department.

(c) At least two members of the department concerned should be involved in the consideration of the AP(E)L application, including the Admissions Officer, Course Director, or departmental Director of Undergraduate/Graduate Studies. The department should consider each application and forward the paperwork submitted by the applicant together with the departmental recommendation to the Assistant Registrar, Undergraduate Admissions or the Assistant Registrar, Graduate School, for consideration by the Chair of the Board of Undergraduate or Graduate Studies or his/her representative. The departmental recommendation should specify clearly the modules for which exemptions are recommended and the total credit volume concerned.

(d) A letter will be sent by the Undergraduate Admissions Office or Graduate School to the applicant informing them of the result of their application.

(e) The course fees and the period of study will be adjusted to take account of the credit transfer approved.

(f) For requests covered by point 2(g) above, the department concerned should send a recommendation for exemption, together with a copy of a certificate or transcript demonstrating achievement of the qualification concerned within the appropriate timescale, to the Undergraduate Admissions Office or Graduate School. A revised offer letter will be issued where appropriate.

(g) For requests covered by point 2 (j) above, different arrangements apply. The Course Director should confirm that the prior learning has retained its currency and that the learning outcomes of the module(s) have remained broadly similar to when the student completed the module(s).

Appendix 1

The University will accept the following qualifications for exemption from the modules on the courses specified below. The principles regarding the maximum period of study and the timescale for completion of the prior learning concerned will apply.

Qualification	Exemption	Total credit volume
Membership of a Royal College.	Module(s) on the MClinSci, MSc Child Health, MSc Community Gynaecology and MSc Health Information Science, MSc Diabetes, MSc Diabetes (Paediatrics), MSc Health Sciences, MMed Medical Education (and, where appropriate, other degrees in WMS as approved from time to time by the Chair of AQSC), to be determined by the Course Director	Up to 40 credits (either two modules of 20 credits or one of 30 credits) at FHEQ level 7 (previously level M)
National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) (formerly National College for School Leadership): National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) Additional 4,000-5,000 piece of written work required.	Two modules on the MA Educational Leadership and Management or the MA Educational Innovation	60 credits at FHEQ level 7 (previously level M)
National College of School Leadership: Leadership	One module on the MA Educational	30 credits at

<p>Pathways and Leading from the Middle</p> <p>National College for Teaching and Leadership: National Professional Qualification for Middle Leadership (NPQML)</p> <p>National College for Teaching and Leadership: National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership (NPQSL)</p> <p>Additional 4,000-5,000 piece of written work required.</p>	<p>Leadership and Management or the MA Educational Innovation</p>	<p>FHEQ level 7 (previously level M)</p>
<p>University of Warwick PGCE (only for 2007-08 to 2010-11 cohorts)</p>	<p>Two modules on the appropriate Institute of Education MA/MSc course</p>	<p>60 credits at FHEQ level 7 (previously level M)</p>
<p>University of Warwick PGCE (only for cohorts from 2011-12 onwards)</p>	<p>Three modules on the MA Educational Innovation (with or without a specialism) course</p>	<p>60 credits at FHEQ level 7 (previously level M) and 30 credits at level 6 (previously level H)</p>
<p>Diploma of Higher Education in Early Childhood Care and Education (Singapore) [validated course taught by Kinderland Learning Centre (KLC) – Route B]</p> <p>Diploma of Higher Education in Early Childhood Care and Education (Singapore) [validated course taught by Kinderland Learning Centre (KLC) or other Singaporean government approved providers] and successful completion of the bridging programme [Route A]</p>	<p>Permits direct entry to third stage of part-time BA (Hons) Early Childhood Care and Education (Singapore)</p>	<p>240 credits at FHEQ levels 4 and 5 (previously levels C and I)</p>
<p>(a) Up to three mandatory units at FHEQ level 4 of a Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector endorsed by Standards Verification UK</p> <p>(b) One optional unit at FHEQ level 4 of a Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector</p>	<p>(a) Up to three mandatory units at FHEQ level 4 of the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector</p>	<p>Up to 60 credits at FHEQ level 4 (previously known as level C)</p>

endorsed by Standards Verification UK, or an additional 3,000-4,000-word piece of written work, as determined by the Director of Academic Studies, Centre for Lifelong Learning	(b) One optional unit at FHEQ level 4 of the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector	
Successful completion of the Teach First PGCE Programme with 60 Credits at FHEQ level 7	60 credits at level FHEQ 7 of the MA Educational Leadership (Teach First)	60 credits at FHEQ level 7 (previously level M)
PMI Green Belt Course	WMG module ES91L Process Improvement Using Six Sigma	10 credits at FHEQ level 7 (previously level M)
120 credits at FHEQ level 4 (previously level C) of the MEng delivered by Taylor's University College, Malaysia	Permits direct entry to the second year of the BEng or MEng	120 credits at FHEQ level 4 (previously level C)
240 credits at FHEQ levels 4 and 5 (previously levels C and I) of the MEng delivered by Taylor's University College, Malaysia	Permits direct entry to the third year of the MEng	240 credits at FHEQ levels 4 and 5 (previously levels C and I)
Successful completion of Phase I (Medical Sciences) course at International Medical University, Malaysia (for entry students must also have a first degree at an acceptable level in an accepted subject, as approved by the Director of Admissions for the MBChB)	Permits direct entry to Phase II of the MBChB course	Phase I of MBChB course
Associate of the Higher Education Academy (AHEA)	50% of the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic and Professional Practice	30 credits FHEQ level 7 (previously known as M level)
Successful completion of the Postgraduate Certificate in Strategic Leadership (Fire and Rescue Executive Leadership Programme)	Four modules at PG Cert level on the Postgraduate Diploma Public Leadership and Management (IB9D80, IB9E00, IB9D00, IB9W60) (please note change below for cohort 5 onwards)	60 credits at FHEQ level 7 (previously level M)
Successful completion of the Postgraduate Certificate in Strategic Leadership	For cohort 5 onwards: Three modules at PG Cert level on the Postgraduate	45 credits at FHEQ level 7

	Diploma in Public Leadership & Management	(previously level M)
Successful completion of the Postgraduate Award in Strategic Leadership (Network Rail)	Two elective modules on the MBA programme (any variant) (to include the module "Strategy and Practice")	30 credits at FHEQ level 7 (previously level M)
Successful completion of modules offered on the PGCert, PG Diploma and MA in Career Education, Information and Guidance in Higher Education and the PG Cert, PG Diploma and MA in Management of Student Work Experience at the University of Reading. This applies only to students transferring from the University of Reading to the University of Warwick on 1 August 2010, registered on the courses listed above.	<p>Modules completed at the University of Reading provided that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Director of Academic Studies, Centre for Lifelong Learning, receives certified evidence from the University of Reading that the modules have been completed; the modules are equivalent to approved modules to be delivered by Warwick with effect from 1 August 2010. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No more than 160 credits in total at FHEQ level 7 (previously level M). All students successfully completing the courses at Warwick will be eligible to receive a Warwick award (where an equivalent award has not already been conferred by the University of Reading) Grades awarded by the

		University of Reading to students on the courses listed will be transferred.
Successful completion of a Warwick Institute of Education Master's degree or an equivalent from another institution.	Doctor of Education (EdD) programme Year 1 modules (i.e. three taught modules from the Warwick Institute of Education MA programme) and (graduates from WIE Master's programmes only) Year 2 'Foundation Research Methods' module.	90 (120 for graduates from WIE Master's programmes only) credits at FHEQ level 7 (previously level M)
Successful completion of the first three years of a four year B.Tech delivered by the Institute of Technology and Management University (ITM) India, (from a list of B.Tech courses specified in the agreement between the University and ITM).	Permits direct entry to the third year of the MEng	Up to 240 credits (at FHEQ levels 4 and 5)
Successful completion of the Sector Endorsed/SureStart Recognised Early Years Foundation Degree	Permits direct entry to the third year of the BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Education Studies	240 credits at FHEQ levels 4 and 5

Approved by Senate July '07; minor amendments approved by BGS Feb 2009, AQSC June 2009, AQSC Nov 2009, AQSC March 2010, AQSC June 2010, AQSC November 2010, BGS June 2011 and BGS (CA) October 2013., BUGS November 2013

AP(E)L form

Contact Us

Teaching Quality, First floor Academic Office, University House, e-mail: quality@warwick.ac.uk

Page contact: [Teaching Quality](#) Last revised: Mon 16 Mar 2015

Jargonbuster

APL: Accreditation of Prior Learning

APEL: Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning

APCL: Accreditation of Prior Certified Learning

Appendix 2.2



APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING

Student/Applicant should complete this form and then submit it to their department for approval. Once approved and signed the department should scan it and send it via email to *****, Administrative Officer Student Records (D.Brandist@warwick.ac.uk).

2. Name:

Date of Birth:

University of Warwick student ID number:

only if you have been or are currently a student at Warwick

3. University of Warwick course for which an application has been submitted: English and Cultural Study

3. Qualifications/examinations taken and relevant supporting experience: N. B. Certificate supplied separately

Completion Date	Course and Institution	Subjects examined	Results	Level	Credit volume
29 July 2014	Foundation Certificate in English Literature Oxford University Department of Continuing Education	English Literature	66 (2.1)	4	120

4. Qualifications currently being undertaken and anticipated completion date:

Completion Date	Course and Institution	Subjects examined	Level	Credit volume

5. Please comment on the following areas:

- (a) How the learning set out above articulates with the learning outcomes for the course for which an application has been submitted:

The foundation Certificate equates to the first year of the University of Oxford English Literature Degree. Topic covered are: Literary Theory, Literary Criticism, Shakespeare, Victorian Literature, Victorian Poetry, Modernism, Renaissance Poetry and Renaissance Drama.

- (b) Dates between which the learning took place: September 2012 to June 2014
- (c) Mode of learning (e.g. course attendance; distance learning): Weekly 2 hour seminar. Six assignments per year. Three examinations at end of each year. Shakespeare summer school week with assignment. Three day school per year.

6. Claims for Accreditation of Experiential Learning ONLY

The University will require evidence of relevant previous experience. Please provide below a list of such evidence which can be made available for consideration by the University.

Qualifications obtained >5 years prior to the anticipated start date of the Warwick course for which an application is being considered will not normally be taken into account.

APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR (EXPERIENTIAL) LEARNING

- (a) Comparison of prior learning with existing component modules of the course for which the application has been made.
- (b) How previous learning fits with course aims.
- (c) The level of work (as set out in the in FHEQ) relative to the course for which the application has been made.

FOR DEPARTMENTAL USE ONLY:

Recommendation: I have mapped previous learning/experience* against learning outcomes and course aims of the intended course of study and confirm that upon completion of the course of study the candidate will have met all aims and outcomes. I therefore recommend/do not recommend* that this application for AP(E)L be granted.

Course affected	Level (FHEQ)	Module(s) from which exemption recommended	Module code	Credit volume affected

Signature:

(Admissions Tutor)

Signature: Date:

(Course leader/Director of Studies)

FOR UNIVERSITY USE ONLY:

I approve/do not approve* this recommendation for accreditation of prior learning.

Signature:.....

Date:.....

(Chair, Board of Undergraduate/Graduate Studies, or his/her representative*)

Student advised of outcome:.....

Date:

(Signature of signatory of letter)

(*Delete as appropriate)

Appendix 2.3

TRANSFER OF CREDIT TO A PART TIME DEGREE

Student name: *****

Student number: 1328753

Degree: Social Study

Date: 25th March 2014

Dear *****

Could I please request that 30 credits at level 4 be transferred to a part time BA in Social Studies for *****.

This request for credit transfer is made retrospectively because ***** was only offered a place on the part –time degree at the beginning of October. At interview, I informed him that we would offer him a place to begin with immediate effect and that I would make a request for APL after he had begun his studies. I let him know that a credit transfer might now be awarded, due to the length of time between his previous study and his decision to restart his degree studies.

*****completed a Higher National Certificate with Distinction in Business at North Warwickshire and Hinckley College in 2004. *****completed 120 credits at level 4, achieving an overall Distinction for the course. As the attached transcript for many of this modules testifies, he performed at a consistently high level throughout his studies.

The Social Studies degree allows part time students to take modules from a wide range of departments across the university – including Sociology, Business, Philosophy, Politics , Economics and Lifelong Learning. The course ***** completed shares much in common with modules offered by the Business School, as well as by the Sociology department. Two instances where there in congruence in learning outcomes and aims are outlined below:

HNC Units	Warwick Modules
Managing Financial Resources (20 credits at Level 4)	WBS - IB132 Foundation of Finance (12/15 credits at Level 4)
<p>This unit is designed to give learners a broad understanding of the way in which finance is managed within a business organisation. Learners will learn how to evaluate the different sources of finance, compare the ways in which these are used and will learn how to use financial information to make decision. Included will be consideration of decisions relating to pricing and investment, as well as budgeting. Finally, learners will learn techniques for the evaluation of financial performance.</p> <p>The unit aim is to provide learners with an understanding of where and how to access sources of finance for business, and the skills to use financial information for decision making.</p> <p>On successful completion of this unit a learner will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Understand the sources of finance available to a business 6. Understand the implications of finance as a resource within business 7. Be able to make financial decisions based on financial information 8. Be able to evaluate the financial performance of a business. 	<p>The module aims: to introduce you to the key concepts of Finance in a way that builds sound intuition from the outset, without sacrificing rigour; to prepare the foundations for more advanced study of Finance by encouraging you to develop a critical understanding of the main theories and models of Finance (and the assumptions that underpin them); to provide you with structured opportunities to practise using the key tools and techniques of Finance; to encourage you to read the financial press and to make links with what you are learning in the classroom.</p>

Research Project (20 credits at Level 4)	SO115 – Understanding Social Research (15 credits at Level 4 – revised module)
<p>This unit is designed to introduce learners to the techniques and methods of research. The unit addresses a variety of research methodologies, including the opportunity to carry out interventionist or action research.</p> <p>Learners will be required to produce a project report based on independent research into an area of professional business practice interests them and will add to their professional development.</p> <p>The study should use both primary and secondary sources of information, and should be an exploration of a current major issue. The study undertaken should build on knowledge, skills and understanding that have been achieved in other units. Tutor approval should be sought before commencing study.</p> <p>To achieve this unit a learner must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a research proposal relating to a specified area of business • Conduct research using primary and secondary sources of information • Carry out the research project into a specified area of business • Present and evaluate the findings with regard to the initial proposal. 	<p>To develop ability to evaluate and interpret social research reports, monographs and journal articles, and</p> <p>To introduce students to a range of studies which apply quantitative methods in different ways.</p> <p>Evaluate the appropriateness of different social research methods to range of area of social research.</p> <p>Communicate the principles behind research design and research methods, and the way that these have informed sociological studies in a range of sociological fields.</p> <p>Demonstrate understanding of existing academic research in a range of subject areas and using a range of methodological approaches.</p> <p>Ability to apply understanding of research design principles to research design and analysis.</p>

While ***** completed this course outside the normal five years period of consideration, we feel that the synergy between this courses and our level 4 Social Studies degree, as well as *****'s evidently success, mean that the transfer of 30 credits is appropriate. We are, in effect, requesting that only one quarter of his previous studies be transferred to his new programme of study.

Moreover, since completing his HNC, *****has been employed in a number of roles that relate to module options available to him at level 4 on the Social Studies (Business major) degree. He has worked as Finance Clerk and Accounts Clerk of Coventry Sports Trust and Support Officer and Regeneration Officer at Coventry City Council. ***** recently was appointed to a post within the Business School at University of Warwick. *****'s new role as "CareersPlus and Corporate Relation Coordinator" provides further opportunities for him to develop knowledge and skill relevant to level 4 Social Studies work, especially optional modules offered by WBS including IB132 Foundations in Finance and IB133 Foundations of Accounting. Among the Duties and Responsibilities for the post are:

Finance:

1. Undertake relevant finance related administration for CareersPlus and Corporate Relations budgets of approx. £300k eg; maintaining overview of CareersPlus and Corporate Relations budgets and alerting CareersPlus and Corporate Relations management to any potential overspends and liaison with external suppliers
2. Liaise with the WBS Assistant Deans / Programme Manager & other budget holders/WBS Finance Office regarding appropriate SAP coding/approval for expenditure allocated other WBS budget codes.
3. Raise purchase requisitions for payment authorisation e.g. for study materials, hospitality and travel.
4. Organise payment of contributing faculty including processing invoices from visiting lecturers, consultants and coacher for CareersPlus and Corporate Relations.

As a member of staff at the university, ***** will be using Warwick Learning Account Vouchers to fund his studies.

From our perspective *****'s previous qualifications and work experiences make him eligible for this transfer of credit.

Many thanks

Dr *****

Director of part time degree and 2+2 programmes
Centre for Lifelong Learning

Appendix 2.4

TRANSFER OF CREDIT TO A PART TIME DEGREE

Student name: *****

Student number: *****

Degree: Social Study

Date: 10th September 2013

Dear *****

Could I please request that 90 credits at level 4 be transferred to a part time BA in Social Studies for *****

***** completed 120 credits at level 4, 120 credits at level 5 and 20 credits at level 6 of a BA in Financial Economics at Coventry University between 2016 and 2009. The modules she studied have much the same coverage as level 4 modules on the Social Studies degree.

Many thanks

Dr *****

Director of part time degrees
Centre for Livelong learning

APPENDIX 3

Andrew Hay, University of Warwick: *Thoughts on Life Long Learning Experiences* (a “2+2” student’s essay)

I had always had a desire to return to education but I always had doubts about it. It was the doubts that kept me on the building site. That and the comfort of a regular wage in an environment that I understood. My doubts were probably similar to those that a lot of adult learners feel when they’re deciding whether to take the plunge and re-enter the world of education. I wondered whether I’d be able to perform academically. I wondered how I’d survive financially. I was anxious about what I’d get out of it and whether I’d choose the right course. The thing that has affected me the most has taken me a bit by surprise. I didn’t expect the course to change my outlook so profoundly. And I didn’t anticipate the sense of social dislocation that this would make me feel.

My course began at Solihull College. The course was coordinated by the College in conjunction with Warwick University as part of their widening educational participation agenda. The course (2+2 in Social Studies) was designed to ease students back into the educational environment by incorporating academic skills into the study programme. The core elements of the course were spread over two year as opposed to one. This allowed for the course to be taught at a slower pace and created room in which students’ were taught academic skills. Personally, I found this approach extremely useful as I hadn’t progressed beyond the level of GCSE in my own academic life. I had no idea how to engage with and produce academic material at this level and so without this aspect of the course, I’d have been completely lost.

However, it was the content of the course that took me by surprise. I was convinced to enrol on the 2+2 because it offered a range of subjects that would allow me to get a feel for a number of different subjects before choosing which to specialise in. As I had no specific end goal established, and due to the fact that I was anxious about what subject would suit my interests and abilities best, this was perfect. The core subjects that we studied for the first two years were: Sociological Perspectives, Social Research Methods, Social Policy and Politics. The titles of these subjects said very little to me at the time. I just knew that the thought of these subjects sparked a bit of interest in me. The fact that the 2+2 offered a direct route to Warwick University was the decisive factor when I chose this particular pathway. I was intrigued about the politics element of the course, but I associated the word itself with boredom. It turns out that I didn’t even know what the word politics meant.

As I became invested in the content of the course I realised that it made sense to me. Whether this was good fortune or whether I’d have told myself this story no matter what degree I’d enrolled on, I don’t know. All I do know is that as I progressed I felt like my thoughts being labelled and organised and as new ideas were introduced to me I could see things through fresh eyes. It distanced me from the familiar and changed the way I process information. I could see things that had been invisible to me up until this point. I found out that politics is everywhere and that we’re all connected to it whether we acknowledge it or not. I wanted everybody to know. The trouble is that when you want to tell your friends about invisible forces that control the world they think your insane at best and a gullible left wing student at worst. This was my first experience of learning to deal with the dislocation that occurs when the way you think becomes detached from what people have learnt to

expect you to think. It quickly became apparent to me that a lot of social interaction is like a dance. If you start dancing to a different beat, you begin to tread on people's toes and they get irritated.

Aside from learning to manage the contact point between my evolving perspective and my social life, I was enjoying the course. My marks got progressively better over the first two years and I became confident that I could do well if I put the effort in. I had made some good friends at Solihull but I was looking forward to continuing my education on the main Warwick campus. I realised that the expectations would be raised once I entered this phase of the degree but I felt prepared to take the challenge on. I had decided to major in politics.

I have just completed my first year on the main campus and it has been tough. The modules are tailored towards cultivating academic excellence and students are expected to be much more self-motivated. There is a much greater sense of anonymity here compared to Solihull and as an adult learner, your face stands out a lot more in relation to the other students who have predominantly progressed directly from studying their A levels at secondary school. This did assault my ego a little bit. There's something a bit deflating about realising you're at the same academic level as people who are 18 years younger than you. You also can't help thinking that some of the students are wondering why there is a middle aged man in the class. It made me feel extremely self-conscious.

This sense of self-consciousness was exacerbated by the fact that there was a lack of regional accents in a lot of the seminar groups I attended. I have a heavy regional accent (In comparison to most of the other students in my seminar groups) and it made me aware that as well as being a different age group to me, a lot of the students were also from a different social class. I know that this shouldn't matter, and it embarrasses me to say it, but I found this intimidating. The students that spoke seemed to be able to articulate their thoughts in a way that I struggled to match. I got over this and made sure that I contributed to the seminar discussions as much as I could. I eventually realised that just because someone has got an impressive vocabulary, it doesn't mean they're not talking rubbish. That isn't to say that a lot of these students weren't extraordinarily intelligent. They were, and that contributed to my sense of intimidation.

I recently attended a public lecture in the Social Science department. I listened as a prominent academic spoke about 'whiteness' and the walls that it represented to 'people of colour' in the academy. The lecture went on to argue how woman also meet similar barriers within the institutional frameworks of society. This exclusionary framework was attributed to the historical dominance of white men who had shaped modern formations of society in their own image. I agreed with much of what she said, but apparently, these walls were invisible to white men and so my opinions about the subject were immediately downgraded. I felt inadvertently categorised as an outsider. Everyone nodded when they were supposed to nod and I suspected that my concerns about my own sense of exclusion would be considered to be a failing on my part if I vocalised them. I didn't want to nod along to everything and, even if I was accepted, I knew that I didn't want to belong to this. At that moment I felt like I'd locked myself out of the house and forgotten to take the key. I felt like I'd slipped into the crack between the tectonic plates of academic life and my previous existence. I didn't feel like I fully belonged to either.

The content of the modules at Warwick has challenged me but I've managed to keep up and give a decent account of myself so far. I feel like my academic skills are being stretched and advanced at a quicker rate than before but I'm still enjoying it and my curiosity hasn't reached its threshold yet. Everything I learn makes me realise that there is a lot to still find

out. I find it equally comforting and frustrating to know that you can never know it all. Above all, I'm certain that coming back into education was the right thing for me to do. I'm beginning to realise that this feeling of being in between competing orbits of thought has shown me that there is a need to challenge educational cultures that create such gaps. I can see that the main reason that such a gap can exist is because there is a lack of dialogue between the two camps due to social fragmentation. I know that this is a complex area of study but it is something that my experiences have made me greatly interested in. Feeling dislocated is helping me to develop ideas about what I should do next.

∞