



Recognition of
Prior Learning

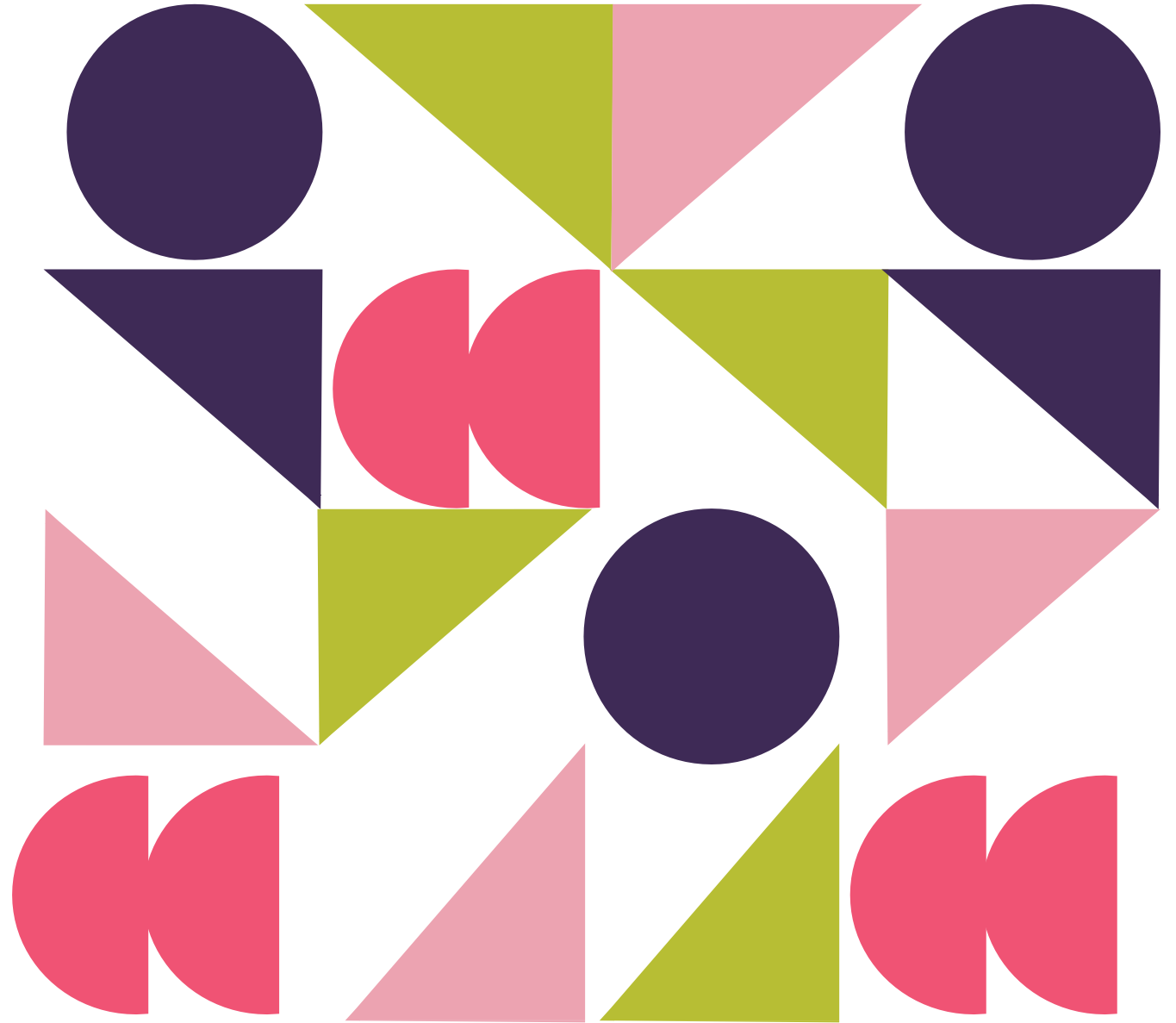
Your Learning Counts

'If you can't count it, it doesn't count': Fostering recognition culture through the development of RPL data collection processes in Irish higher education

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www.priorlearning.ie



Session Outline

1. About the Project
2. The Perennial Problem of Data
3. Defining RPL
4. From Theory to Practice
 - How & Who
 - Impact
5. Where to next?



National RPL in Higher Education Project



Competitive funding from Ireland's
Higher Education Authority

14 HEIs

Universities

Technological
Universities

Institutes of
Technology

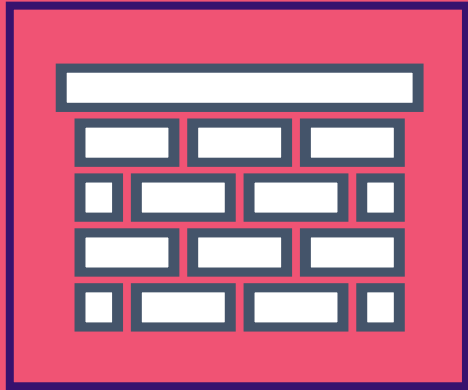
3 Operating Systems

Banner
(10 of 14)

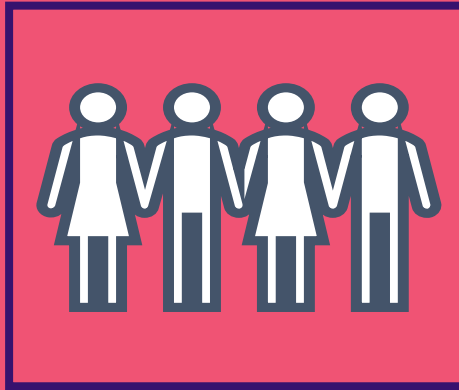
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Purpose of the National RPL in Higher Education Project



1. Embed & streamline RPL policies & processes

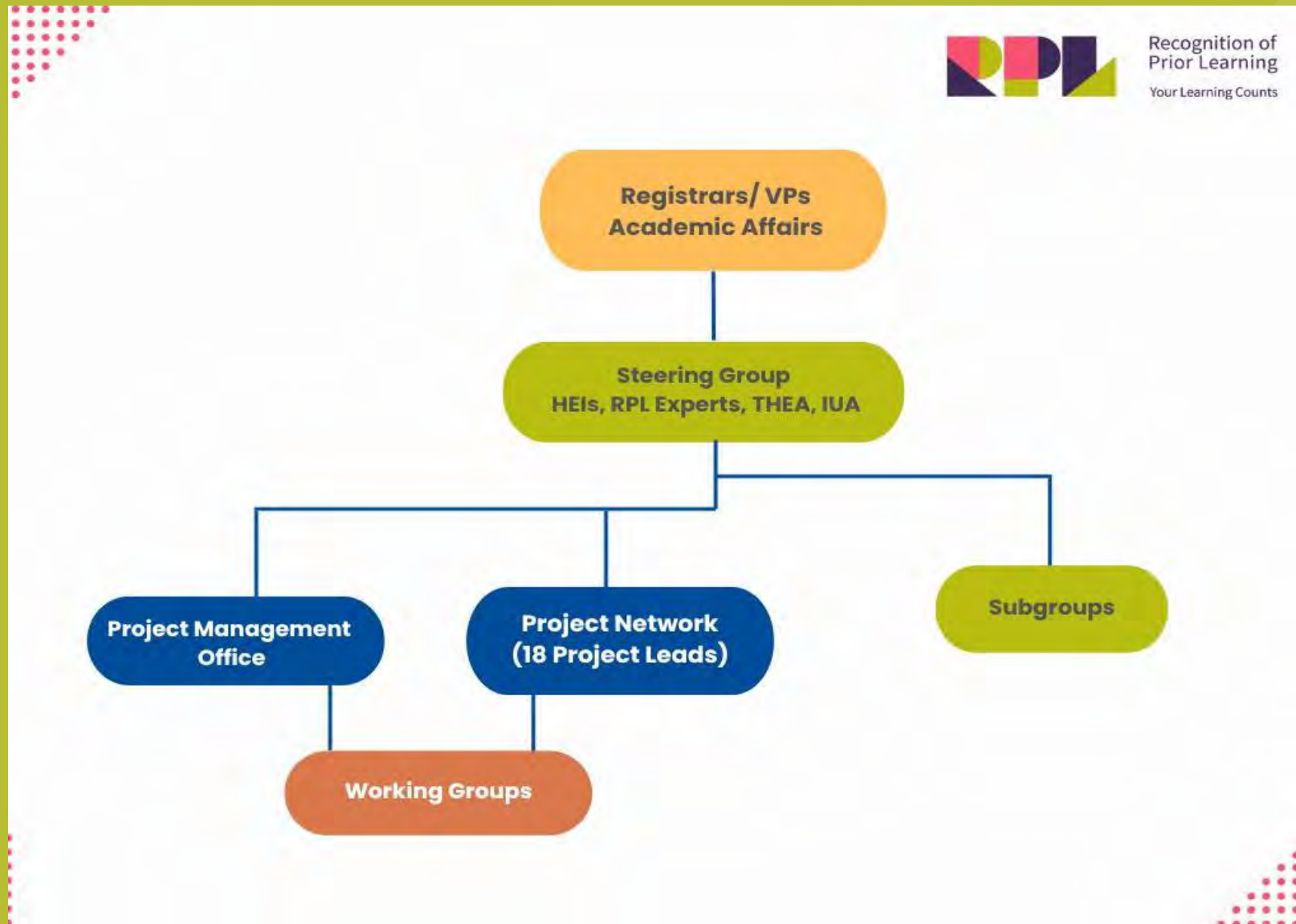


2. Enhance sector's capacity to deliver RPL



3. Partner & promote RPL with employers

Project Structure



Value

- Increased learner access
- A fair and consistent evaluation of prior learning as a route into higher education
- Addressing lifelong learning, talent development and retention, upskilling/reskilling (the value to our employer)

Vision

- Cross-sector commitment to increase the numbers of learners benefitting from RPL
- Building partnership and collaboration to create an RPL approach that is effective, efficient and consistent across the sector.

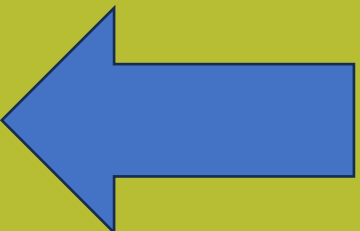


**CULTURAL
CHANGE!**

A 3D white figure is sitting on a red chair, looking thoughtful with one hand on its head. To the left, a large green circle contains the text "The Perennial Problem of Data".

The Perennial
Problem of Data

BE MINDFUL OF THINGS BELOW THE ORGANIZATIONS SURFACE



RPL Institutional Action Plan Template

#	Outcome area	RPL Outcome
1		Senior-management leadership
2	Institutional Culture	Institutional structures to support RPL
3		Internal & external promotion of RPL
4	Enterprise partnerships	RPL for Enterprise (access & progression)
5	Institutional Procedures	Enhancement of RPL procedures
6		Recording RPL data
7	Institutional Policy	Policy consistent with Pilot RPL in HE Framework
8	Targeted initiatives	Enhancing staff capacity (professional development & training)
9		Other targeted initiatives

Defining RPL in Policy & Data

A Pilot Framework for the Recognition of Prior Learning in Higher Education



SUMMARY

Purpose of Framework: The Framework's main aim is to support higher education institutions in Ireland to develop a shared understanding of RPL and to achieve coherence and consistency in policy and practice.

Definition of RPL:

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process by which prior learning is formally valued. It is a means by which prior learning is identified, assessed, and recognised by an educational institution as part of its programmes, courses, and/or modules on Ireland's National Framework of Qualifications. This makes it possible for an individual to build on learning achieved and to be rewarded for it.

RPL acknowledges the varied means by which learning happens and provides additional pathways to and through higher education. It is a key component of lifelong learning and makes higher education more accessible and flexible.

The Framework shows that RPL is underpinned by two core values:

1. **Learner-centredness:** The learner is central to the RPL process. A wide range of learners may wish to apply for RPL: RPL is for everyone.
2. **Quality assurance:** The RPL process is embedded in the quality assurance procedures of each higher education institution and is aligned with the National Framework of Qualifications.

The RPL process typically includes five stages. These are:

A. Information	B. Identification	C. Documentation	D. Assessment	E. Certification
The learner obtains information about what is possible and how the RPL process works.	The learner explores their prior learning with a view to making an RPL application.	The learner undertakes a reflective process and gathers relevant materials to substantiate their application.	The learner's application is assessed. A range of assessment mechanisms may be used (e.g. portfolios, interviews, essays, examinations, etc.).	If the application is successful, the learner will receive formal recognition or certification, which will lead to one or more of the following outcomes:

Pilot Technical Definition of RPL in Higher Education



Examples & Data Collection Template

Appendix 4: Data-collection template

Higher Education Institution (HEI):

[Insert HEI name]

Institutional RPL activity: Headcount	Prior Learning Type			Total	Row identifier
	Formal	Experiential	Combination		
Entry	0	0	0	0	Row A
Credit/Exemptions	0	0	0	0	Row B
Advanced entry	0	0	0	0	Row C
Full Awards*	0	0	0	0	Row D
Total	0	0	0	0	

* Complete Row D only if full awards are available through RPL in the relevant HEI.

Supplementary Information: Credit/Exemptions		Row identifier
Number of modules	0	Supplements
Sum of ECTS	0	Row B
Number of applications	0	

Summary description of example	Data to be included in HEIs' RPL reporting?	Where to enter data in the data-collection template?
Rationale in practice		
i. Learners who are granted credit or exemption, advanced entry, or award based on RPL	Yes	Rows B, C, D*
ii. Entry requirements assessed via RPL, including cohorts or groups of learners	Yes	Row A
iii. Learners who gain programme entry <i>and</i> credits/exemptions through RPL	Yes – activity is recorded <u>twice</u>	Row A AND Row B
Some examples to support application of the technical definition in practice		
a. Learners who enter via the mature-student entry route	No	Not applicable
b. Learners who enter via the Mature Applicant entry route <i>and</i> gain credits or exemptions, advanced entry, or award via RPL	Yes	Rows B, C
c. Learners who enter from Further Education and Training (FET)	No	Not applicable
d. Learners who enter from Further Education and Training (FET) <i>and</i> gain credits or exemptions, advanced entry, or award via RPL	Yes	Rows B, C
e. Learners who transfer internally between programmes via RPL	Yes (in most cases)	Rows B, C
f. Learners who transfer between institutions (nationally or internationally) via RPL	Yes	Rows B, C
g. Learners who undertake a module on a standalone basis and later undertake a full award within the same HEI	No	Not applicable
h. Learners who gain an exemption from undertaking planned placements or work-based learning via RPL	Yes	Row B
i. Learners who re-register after availing of an exit award & go through an RPL process	Yes	Row B, C
j. Learners who achieve re-admission through an RPL process	Yes	Row A, B, C
k. Learners who achieve credit achieved via Erasmus or Junior Year Abroad (JYA) & go through an RPL process	Yes	Row B
l. Learners who undertake joint, dual, or collaborative programmes & go through an RPL process	Yes	Row B



Ollscoil
Teicneolaíochta
an Atlantaigh

Atlantic
Technological
University

RPL TESTER Pilot at ATU



RPL TESTER Pilot at ATU

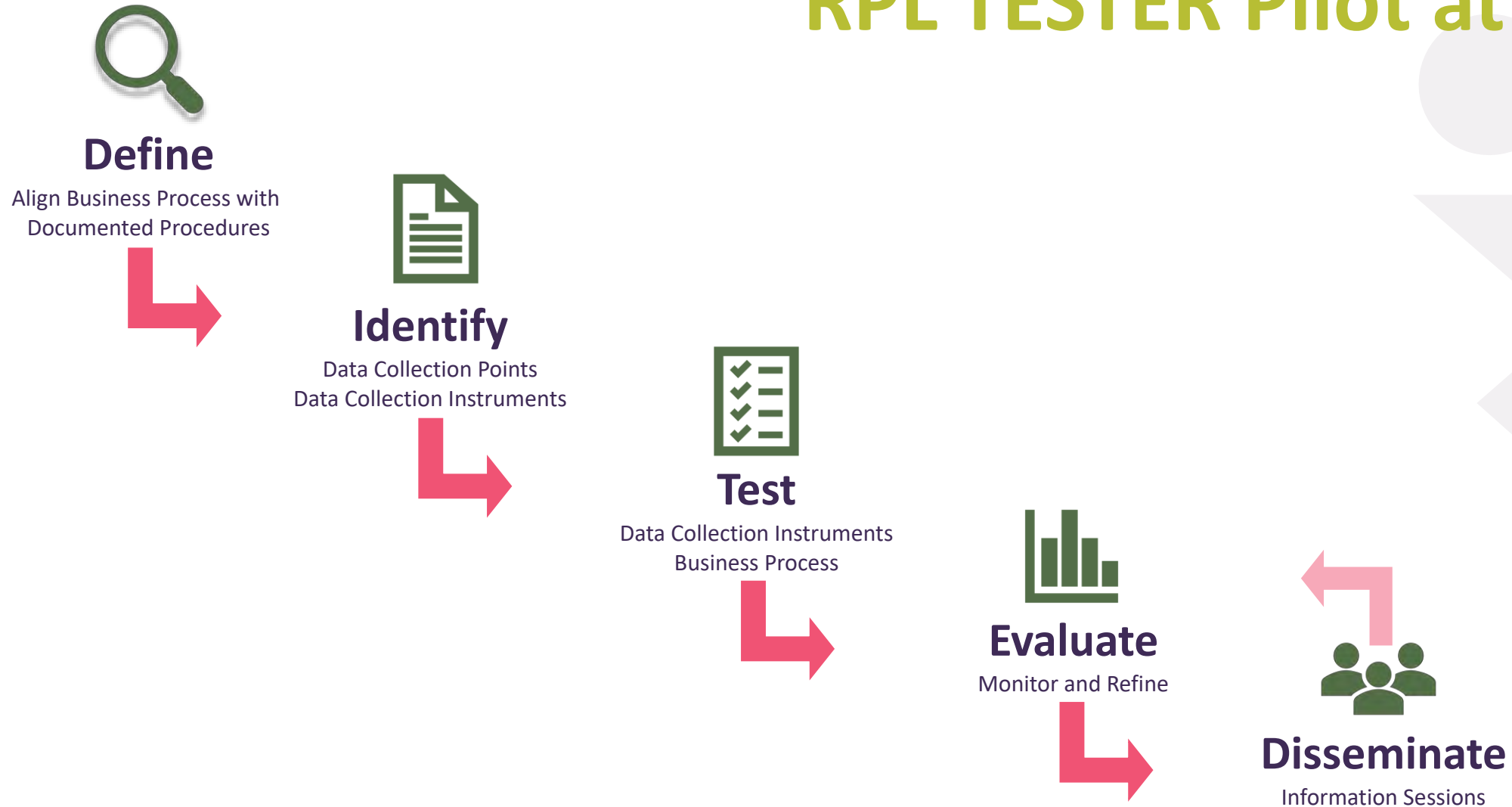
Atlantic Technological University

- Academic Affairs (User Acceptance Testing, Business Process Mapping, Pilot Implementation)
 - Assistant Registrar
 - RPL Coordinator
 - Quality Team
 - Systems Integration Manager
- Head of Department (Implementation, Data Collection)
- Senior Administrators (Implementation, Data Entry)
 - Admissions
 - Faculty Office
 - Examinations

External Partners

- National Project Director (Technical Definition, User Requirements Specification)
- EduCampus (Software Patch Development, Business Process Analysis)

RPL TESTER Pilot at ATU



RPL TESTER Pilot at ATU

- **System User Requirements** defined by Technical Definition & Data Collection Template
- **Software Patch** applied to Development Site
- **Testing** completed for all test scenarios
- **Software deployed** to live system

Reporting

A report per term with the totals as per the table below.

Higher Education Institution: [Insert HEI name]

Headcount per RPL 'route'	Prior Learning Type			Total
	Formal	Experiential	Combination	
Admission				0
Advanced entry				0
Exemptions				0
Award				0
Total	0	0	0	0

Test Case Assigned to	Result	JIRA ID
TS	Passed	
Christine	Passed	
TS	Passed	
Christine	Passed	
TS	Passed	
Christine	Passed	
TS	Passed	
Christine	Passed	

User Acceptance Testing



RPL TESTER Pilot at ATU

Define Business Process with Documented Procedures

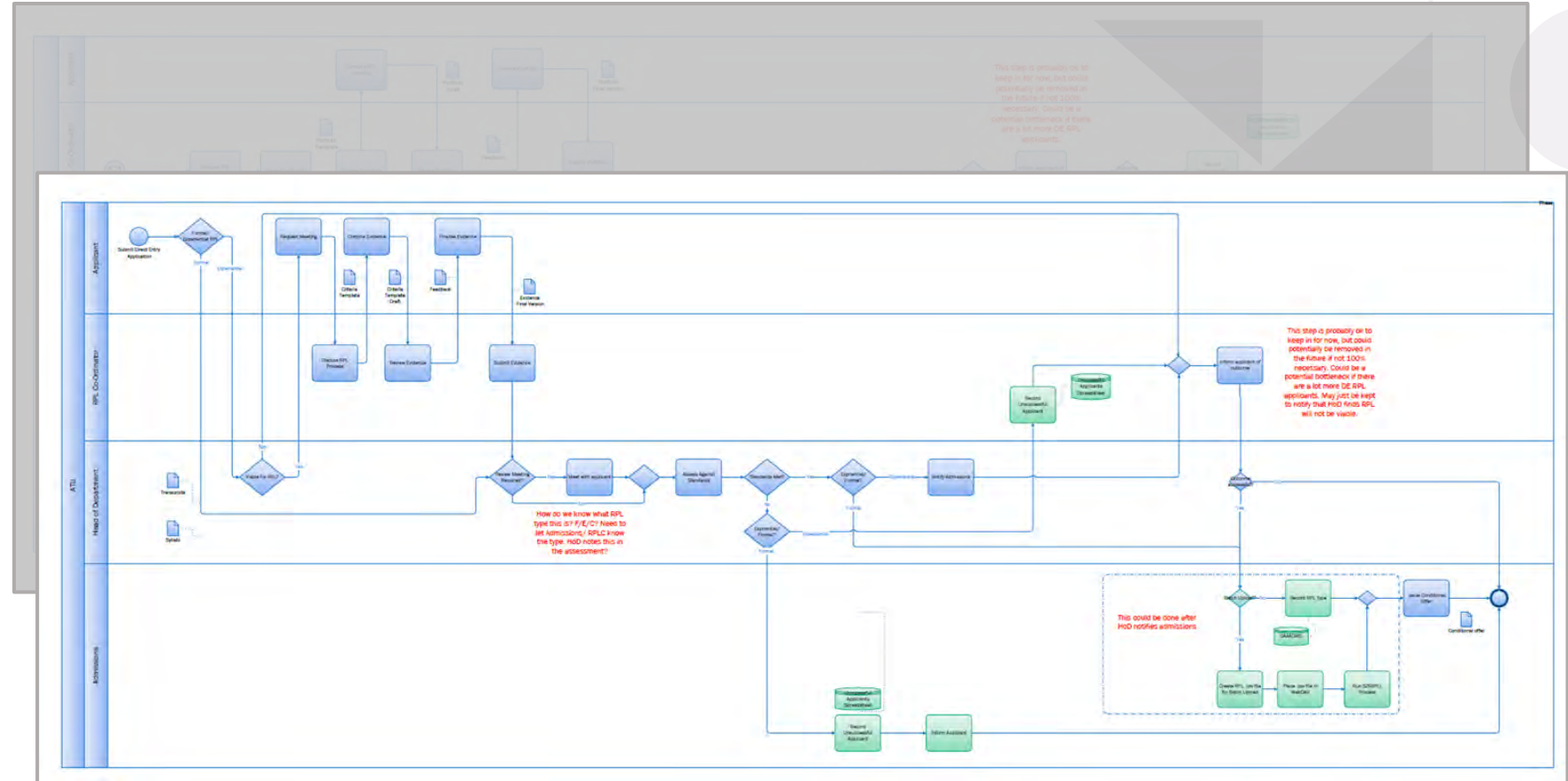
Atlantic Technological University
Doc: N/AQAE/16
Rev: 10/16

Procedure for the Assessment of Prior Certified/Prior Experiential Learning

Document Area	Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement
Document Function/Owner	Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar
Author	Quality Assurance & Enhancement Team aqet@atu.ie
Required Approval	Academic Standards Committee of the Academic Council

Issued Document Location

Internal Staff Portal / Hub	Yes
Internal Student Portal / Hub	Yes
ATU Website	Yes
Issue Date	To be completed by document controller





RPL TESTER Pilot at ATU

Identify Data Collection Points & Data Collection Instruments

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
Application for Exemption based on Prior Certified Learning

ATU Recognition of Prior Learning

Please ensure to read all instructions on next page before completing this form.

To be completed by Student

Surname	
Forename	
Student Number	
Programme Title	
Year	
Module Title	
Official Copy of Transcripts Attached	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Module Descriptor of Prior Learning Attached	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

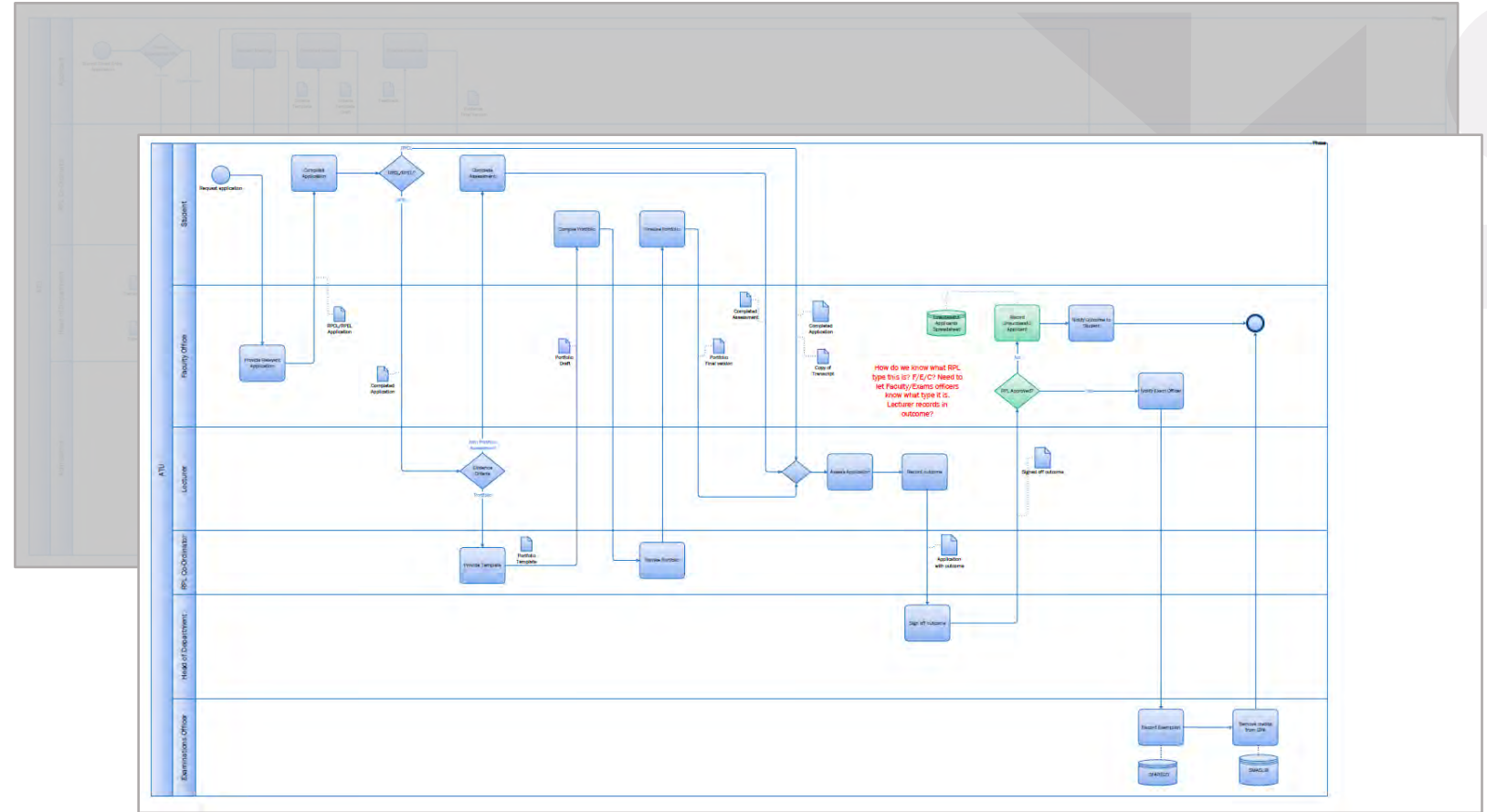
To be completed by Lecturer (Assessor)

Award Exemption	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Reason for decision	
Lecturer Name	
Lecturer Signature	
Date	

To be completed by Head of Department

Award Exemption	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Reason for decision	
Head of Dept Name	
Signature	
Date	

To be completed by Department Admin			To be completed by Exams Office		
Student Notified	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Exemption Recorded (SFAREGS)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Credits Removed from GPA (SMASLIE)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
RPL Unit Notified	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Name		Date	
Exams Office Notified	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>				
Name					
Date					



RPL TESTER Pilot at ATU



Systematic Process for Pilot

Test & Evaluation

Phased Implementation



Communication & Consultation

Agreement in Principle

Collaborative Approach

Mindful of Change Management

Factors for Success

Impact of RPL TESTER Project at ATU

Coherent & Consistent approach for all RPL Activity across Multi-Campus University.

Embedding RPL in the Culture of ATU.

Establish **Business Intelligence Processes** to Analyse RPL Activity across ATU, to Identify & Address gaps in RPL Activity.

Process for **Quantifying RPL** Activity to inform Policy and Resourcing.

Increased RPL Activity.

Seven other **HEIs** now embarking on the **Process for Data Collection**

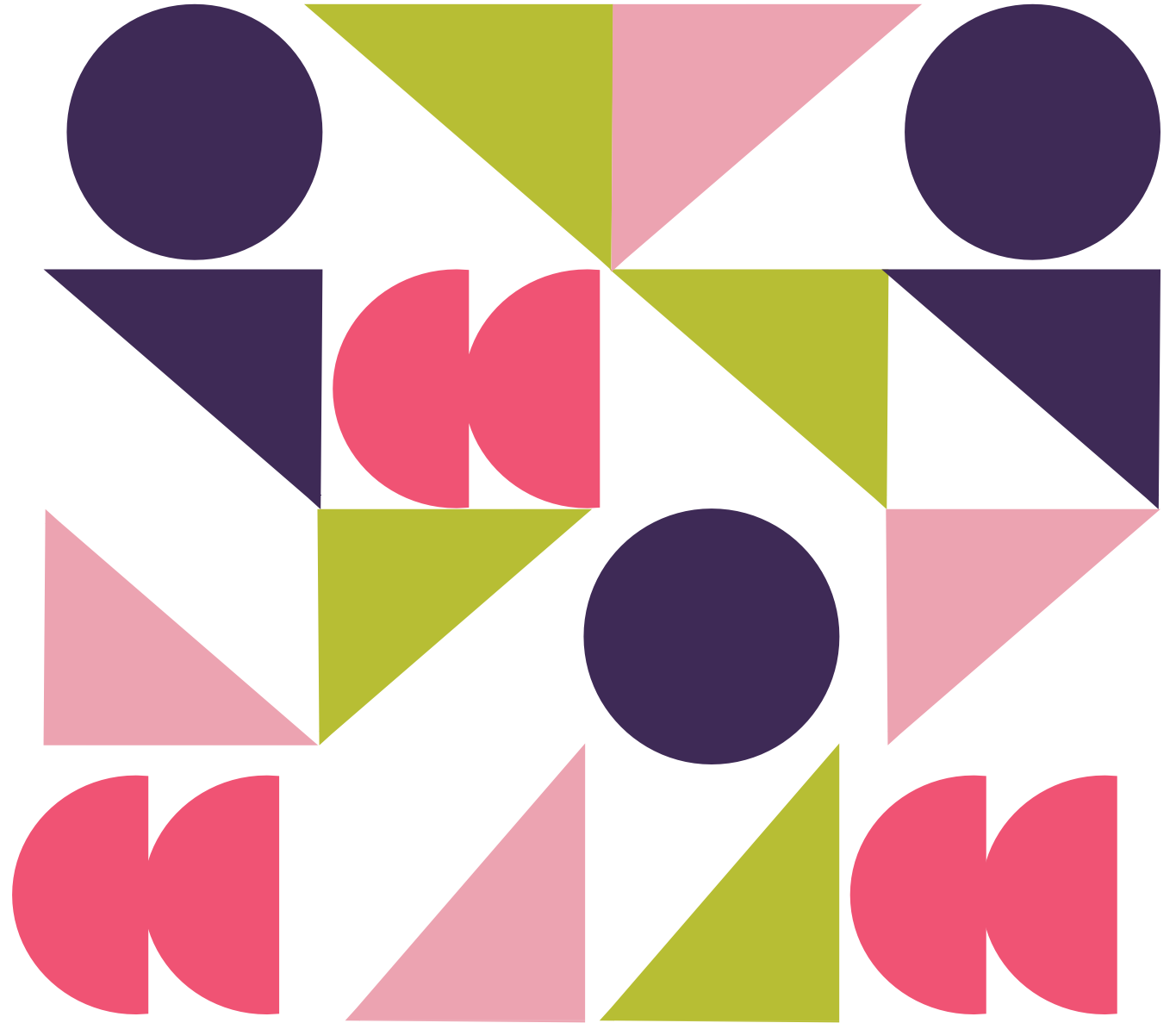


RPL Success at ATU



Recognition of
Prior Learning
Your Learning Counts

Questions?



Human
Capital
Initiative