

## Quality Assuring Non-Regulated Provision: RARPA Case Studies

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*In January 2016, NIACE and the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion  
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Learning and Work Institute is a new independent policy and research organisation dedicated to lifelong learning, full employment and inclusion.

We research what works, develop new ways of thinking and implement new approaches. Working with partners, we transform people's experiences of learning and employment. What we do benefits individuals, families, communities and the wider economy.

We bring together over 90 years of combined history and heritage from the 'National Institute of Adult Continuing Education' and the 'Centre for Economic & Social Inclusion'.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The Education and Skills Funding Agency asked Learning and Work Institute to undertake a short review of practice to help illustrate aspects of good RARPA to support the use of non-regulated provision as part of the local flexibility offer in the Adult Education Budget.

Developed in 2001-2, RARPA has been used across non-regulated provision since 2005. With greater flexibility for providers to offer non-regulated provision as part of the local flexibility offer with the Adult Education Budget (AEB) for 2017/18, RARPA guidance is being refreshed to support the progression from and outcomes of non-regulated courses and ensure RARPA links with organisational quality assurance processes.

## 1.2 Our approach

In February, Learning and Work launched a call for case studies via its website and networks for good practice from:

- 'Non-traditional' providers now using or considering using non-regulated provision with RARPA e.g. those whose provision in recent years has been mainly or entirely regulated qualifications; providers not in receipt of a Community Learning budget
- Providers using non-regulated provision with RARPA to support locally identified skills needs e.g. non-regulated provision to develop learners' skills in a particular technical or vocational context
- Providers who can demonstrate how RARPA sits within their overall quality assurance and improvement processes

Following this call, we had discussions with twenty staff in ten providers: two general further education colleges; two local authority adult learning services; two training companies specialising in employability programmes; two community-based providers; and, two specialist designated institutions. Of these, four were able to complete full case studies in the timescale. These are attached as appendices to this report.

# 2. Good practice identified

## 2.1 Managing and reviewing learner and employer expectations

Providers commonly use course information sheets to outline what learners and employers can expect from a course. There were examples of good practice where expectations were negotiated with learners—via forms like My Learning Journey or an Individual Learning Plan—or employers through pre-course interviews. Providers need to actively manage expectations so that they are realistic and do not adversely affect group learning. For example, we heard of a number of instances where short courses were regarded by employers solely as recruitment exercises to fill vacancies. In such cases, providers need to ensure that learning aims and intended outcomes are being negotiated and achieved to the benefit of all learners. One provider of employability programmes said 'talking to employers and learners is all about introducing stretch and challenge so that learning doesn't just

address group needs but also bolt-on elements' (to address individual needs). In some employer-led provision, learners are monitored on course and receive feedback from the employer as well as the tutor.

We saw examples where RARPA operates flexibly according to curriculum area and using appropriate learner-centred language for that area. For example, on course information potential learners are given answers to questions such as:

- How will I know I am progressing during the course? (ESOL)
- How will my progress be measured? (Advanced French)

Some providers allow learners to access Virtual Learning Environment or online forum to reflect on their progress. In some cases, tutors reply with their feedback forming what one provider called a 'learning community' that allowed both tutor and learner to reflect on progress.

## 2.2 Supporting tutors to deliver

The course tutor has the most contact with learners and therefore is critical to their success. High levels of expectations on tutors is linked to the quality of the support they receive. These could be categorised as:

- Support materials such a handbook or virtual learning environment
- Training and continuing professional development on the use of RARPA
- Exemplar approaches and forms that could be used in certain contexts

One college provided bespoke RARPA workshops for all tutors: one at beginning of the year, and one at the end. The focus of the initial two-hour workshop was on outcomes for learners, setting realistic expectations with learners using SMART objectives for each week or module of the programme. All tutors were expected to attend, as the process was reviewed in the light of self-assessment and the outcomes of developmental lesson observations. There was a professional dialogue prior to lessons observations to allow tutors to ask their observer to focus on something they want to develop or reinforce.

One adult learning service provided a range of forms via line managers and online. Tutors were advised to use the most appropriate forms for the subject they taught. Clear guidance was given to tutors on the forms' use. Another provider gave mini case studies on where aspects of RARPA had been implemented well and where it had not.

In another provider, continuing professional development was organised through a virtual learning environment and workshop opportunities. New tutors received a full induction that included the college's RARPA approach. The provider's policy was to observe all tutors teaching in that academic year. Observation of teaching, learning and assessment was ungraded but reports identified areas for 'action required', 'recommendations', as well as good practice to be shared.

## 2.3 Having a curriculum focus

Most providers take a curriculum-based approach to delivering RARPA so that forms are adapted to the subject matter, and evidence of progress are closely linked classroom activities or desired outcomes.

For example, one college gave guidance on use of photographic evidence, and other non-paper based approaches such as audio recording of performances, and exhibitions of visual arts and crafts. In another provider, curriculum-based examples of practice were given in the tutor handbook.

One provider said a curriculum-based approach worked well as ‘we learn and adapt from each other’s work, but we also benefit from tutors working across curriculum areas and sharing good practice’. This would suggest that alongside a curriculum focus for RARPA, there needs to be whole organisation approach to RARPA moderation.

## 2.4 Embedding RARPA into whole organisation approaches

Good practice is to fully embed RARPA within the whole organisation quality processes. At one outstanding college, the main tool is the eCRE (electronic Course Review and Evaluation) form, which is adapted for non-regulated courses. The eCRE form is well-designed and has detailed guidance to tutors on using it. All course leaders must complete a course review and evaluation. It is regarded as their opportunity to reflect on the design and delivery of the course, highlight key strengths and suggest areas for improvement.

Moderation of RARPA is undertaken by providers largely at a curriculum level, but one adult learning service has recently introduced internal moderation on a cross-service basis. At the curriculum level, RARPA moderation is the responsibility of the Curriculum Manager (CM) who designates a tutor or tutors to act as an Internal Verifier (IV). To support the process, each CM has regular network meetings with their team of tutors. In curriculum areas where all ILPs are not reviewed, all are submitted and then sampled by the IQA (Internal Quality Assurer). Cross service moderation of all programmes is undertaken twice annually to link with the Quality Improvement process. This does not replace moderation in curriculum areas, but complements it.

In this instance, the aim is to ensure that moderation is happening across the board, picking up areas for improvement at a number of levels. At the curriculum level, the purpose is to feedback to relevant tutors. At the organisational level, it is to identify cross cutting issues across the service, and to share good practice and consistency in terms of the process. In Community Learning, tutors are nominated to attend the cross-service meeting alongside IVs. Minutes on each of the RARPA elements are produced and circulated to the curriculum managers concerned. This process also leads into the SAR and the development plan.

## 2.5 Using RARPA for short courses and tasters

Some providers find it challenging to apply RARPA to short courses or taster sessions. This can be where there is a high dependency upon standardised forms, ILPs, and on-course questionnaires. For providers who use RARPA as a process and record the various steps in an appropriate manner, there should be few challenges. For example, one college used RARPA on vocational taster sessions for female ESOL students linked to International Women’s Day.

Another employability training provider working in the hospitality industry designed a short course programme around actual job vacancies working with hotel managers to co-design and deliver elements. Learner and employer expectations were negotiated before the course started.

Preplanning and pre-course assessment is essential for one-day courses. Pre-course assessment can be undertaken at enrolment or via pre-course questionnaires before the day. In the same way assessment is done on course, new learners could be asked to upload photographs of previous work they have done on the subject. In this short survey of existing practice, there were few examples of this that were submitted.

Quality processes should not be affected by the length or intensity of course. One provider decided to sample its short courses as part of internal moderation.

### 3. Further support required

This short term piece of work provided a useful snapshot of current practice in terms of RARPA. It is hard to point to good practice as a whole. Many providers spoken to were able to point to aspects of good practice in terms of RARPA. But, across the piece, there were also a number of gaps that may merit further investigation given the encouragement to use non-regulated provision as part of the local flexibility offer in AEB.

These could be summarised as:

- How starting points are arrived at through discussion with learners and (potential) employers
- The role of careers information advice and guidance in relation to RARPA
- The use of paperless and curriculum-friendly approaches to recording progress and achievement
- The use of virtual learning environments and online forums to support learner reflection on progress and out-of-class interaction with tutors
- How RARPA is used on short courses and taster sessions

# RARPA CASE STUDY 1: WAVERLEY TRAINING SERVICES

## THE PROVIDER

Waverley Training Services (WTS) offers training and apprenticeships throughout Surrey and the surrounding borders of Hampshire, Berkshire and Sussex. WTS is a not-for-surplus division of Waverley Borough Council and based in Farnham, Surrey. The main focus of its activity is work-based training qualifications and apprenticeships. However, WTS also offers bespoke courses for employers with whom it has close working relationships.

The approach at WTS is to analyse local demographics area and agree on target sectors. The current focus is on retail, hospitality and construction. There are currently just over 400 learners on class-room bases courses and study programmes, and 330 people on apprenticeships. The majority of learners are on sub-contracted provision with three other local training providers. A recent inspection of this provision has highlighted the need for improvements in initial assessment, target setting and monitoring of progress. WTS has added the written part of the initial assessment for English as this was an area we did not previously check beyond application form details to see the level of handwriting and free style writing.

For the bespoke, employer-responsive provision, the focus is on short courses and interventions either for people currently in the labour market or clients referred by Job Centre Plus. Such courses are often designed and delivered with employers who have identified recruitment needs in their businesses. Typical course length is 2-3 weeks and most courses do not lead to regulated qualifications.

WTS has used RARPA since 2012.

## APPROACH TO RARPA

Although RARPA is used with a minority of courses it is fully integrated into the wider quality systems at WTS. The first stage is to have a long assessment of need discussion with the employer. This results in a 'wish list' of desired outcomes for the learning programme. The design of the course is based on the actual job learners (will) undertake. Each potential course participant received a pre-course interview and initial assessment, which identifies their existing skills and what they want from the course (related to the course objectives). Exactly the same processes are used in direct-delivery and sub-contracted provision.



**Unemployed 19+  
Short Course  
LEARNERS  
HANDBOOK**

For example, with one large employer in the hospitality industry (a hotel chain) the learning programme was designed around actual job vacancies that existed. Training took place on site and used hotel managers to co-design and deliver elements. For the employer, such courses can often be regarded as an 'extended interview' so it is important a) to ensure that the learners' expectations and desired learning outcomes are being met, and b) that those learning outcomes are clearly defined. The opportunity of achieving a job outcome is a key motivating factor for learners. (Job outcome rates for such courses are at around 90% either immediately after the course, or subsequently.)

Talking to employers and learners is all about introducing stretch and challenge so that learning doesn't just address group needs but also bolt-on elements (to address individual needs). Both teachers and learners sign the ILP / Agreement. In terms of formative assessment, feedback is given on any piece of submitted work. Each learner has a regular mini one-to-one session with the tutor.

Learners are monitored on course and receive feedback from the employer as well as the tutor. They undertake regular skills and 'knowledge tests' where students assess their progress in their own words. At the end of the course, learners are guaranteed a job interview with feedback. WTS stays in touch with past learners and employers to offer follow up provision.

### **QUALITY ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT**

WTS course leaders attend CPD day for sub-contractors to ensure alignment of processes. RARPA is integrated into in-house CPD, internal moderation, and the self-assessment process. Each learner receives a *Short Course Learners Handbook* that includes reference to the RARPA process. For each learner there is a 'Teaching, Learning and Assessment Plan' that:

- Reviews progress since the last meeting and previous targets
- Sets learning and assessment tasks before the next meeting
- Lists the tasks to be completed by the tutor before the next meeting

'Information, Advice and Guidance' is integrated into the ILP, which states:

*'IAG is at the heart of ensuring learners continue to access the most appropriate future career pathways and potential for further training / development. This is our starting point to ensure we know your future career aims and goals, to adjust your learning and the programme, and to give you ongoing relevant information, advice and guidance throughout the programme.'*

All staff are enrolled on a IAG level 2 course as agreed with the Matrix audit.

## **SUMMARY OF SALIENT POINTS**

- Detailed pre-course needs assessment focussed on employment needs and job outcomes
- Analysis of starting points with learners
- Integration of information, advice and guidance into short courses

All materials quoted © Waverley Training Solutions. Contact Susan Freke, Study Programme and Short Courses Manager

# RARPA CASE STUDY 2: CHICHESTER COLLEGE

## THE PROVIDER

Chichester College is a large general further education college offering a wide range of vocational and academic courses and apprenticeship programmes to over 15,000 learners per annum. The college offers the majority of its provision on its two main sites located in Chichester and Brinsbury, near Pulborough.

At its last inspection in March 2014, inspectors judged the college's overall effectiveness to be outstanding. Inspectors reported that 'managers make extensive use of feedback from learners and employers to ensure that the courses offered help learners gain qualifications and/or employment'. In its report and in a subsequent good practice study, Ofsted commented on the college's approach to learner centred assessment.

Although the vast majority of provision leads to regulated qualifications, the college also has around 700 enrolments (500 learners) per year on about 70 community learning courses which use the RARPA approach. Across an extensive range of programmes that includes modern languages, hospitality, cookery, arts and crafts, course information advertises: "Continuous classroom assessment based on Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA)." However, RARPA is not advertised as being used on some short courses (such as weekend programmes).

The college works closely with other local providers such as the University of the Third Age (U3A) and Aspire (West Sussex County Council) so as not to duplicate provision. U3A members get involved in volunteer support with 16-18 students help maths and English.

The college has a well-embedded approach to RARPA having used it for 15 years.

## APPROACH TO RARPA

Although RARPA is used with a minority of courses, it is fully integrated into the college's quality assurance and improvement processes.

Curriculum leaders say, "We use RARPA because learners deserve to have an outstanding service from us. We aim to provide consistency and compliance across the piece." This means a consistent approach to RARPA across different curriculum areas.

The main means of achieving this is focussing on the tutors. There are two workshops for all tutors: one at beginning of the year, and one at the end of learning programmes.

The focus of the initial two-hour workshop is on outcomes for learners, setting realistic expectations with learners using SMART objectives for each week or module of the programme. All tutors are expected to attend, as the process is tweaked slightly each year and the workshop acts as a usual professional updating on the approach.

RARPA forms are completed before being collated and reviewed by the curriculum leader for Community Learning. She checks that forms are fit for purpose, and evidence of

development from previous years. This review process triggers other interventions such as developmental lesson observations or peer support.

Schemes of work outline specific objectives and methods of verification on a weekly basis.

FORM A

**Chichester**  
college

RECORD OF PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT      YEAR       Sheet:  of

COURSE CODE:       COURSE TITLE:

Topic	Specific Objectives: <small>(Lecturer to set a minimum of one objective per week. Remember an objective is what you want the learner to achieve!)</small>	Methods of Verification:
<b>Week One – 20/9/16</b> <b>Introduction</b> 1. Introduction & Admin – Form C Learner Expectations. 2. Issue Computer Log-ins 3. Basic camera operation 4. Exposure: shutter speed and comensation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction – get to know one another.</li> <li>• Discuss the characteristics of a good picture.</li> <li>• Use Basic Camera controls – switching on, Program/Auto exposure modes, playback.</li> <li>• Adjust exposure: ISO, Shutter speed &amp; aperture (basic understanding).</li> <li>• Identify correct, over and under-exposed images.</li> <li>• Use Program exposure mode.</li> <li>• Use Exposure Compensation.</li> <li>• Use Shutter Priority exposure mode.</li> <li>• Experiment with shutter speed (produce ghosts, motion blur, frozen motion, abstract effects).</li> <li>• Select appropriate shutter speed for the subject.</li> </ul>	Q&A, Observation, Quality of images produced.
<b>Week Two - 27/9/16</b> <b>Shutter Speed</b> <b>Photographic Terminology</b> <b>Loading images into Photoshop</b> <b>Basic Image Manipulation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of HW (any student images)</li> <li>• Download &amp; View Images in Photoshop</li> <li>• Use basic adjustments – levels, hue/saturation.</li> <li>• Use correct Photographic Terminology (handout)</li> <li>• Embed understanding of exposure.</li> <li>• Focus lock</li> <li>• Panning</li> </ul>	Review of Homework, Q&A, Observation, Quality of images produced.

Use of photographic evidence, and other non-paper based approaches such as audio recording of performances, and exhibitions of visual arts and crafts, are actively encouraged.

As well as outline ‘what I hope to learn on the course’, learners are asked to write about ‘what I have achieved as a result of attending the course’ and ‘what I might do next.’

## What do you want to achieve from your course?

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

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

## What I hope to learn:

(Please complete this in class today)

## QUALITY ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

At different points in the year, there is a whole-college approach to undertaking learner surveys which includes suggestions from Community Learning students. This survey asks learners about the RARPA process and their involvement in it. Feedback from the surveys helps a) improve the general approach, and b) identify any tutor support needs.

From this point on, RARPA falls within the whole-college quality processes. The main tool is the eCRE (electronic Course Review and Evaluation) form, which is adapted for Community Learning courses.

The eCRE form is well-designed and has detailed guidance to tutors on using it. All course leaders must complete a course review and evaluation. It is regarded as their opportunity to reflect on the design and delivery of the course, highlight key strengths and suggest areas for improvement.

Whilst on course, learners' progress is monitored on a weekly basis. If they are marked absent, this triggers a follow up email to identify any concerns. Learners are then offered to the opportunity to be updated.

Week 1 Objective 1	Week 2 Objective 2	Week 3 Objective 3	Week 4 Objective 4	Week 5 Objective 5	Week 6 Objective 6	Week 7 Objective 7	Week 8 Objective 8	Week 9 Objective 9	Week 10 Objective 10	Individual Learner Achievement
Use Basic Camera controls. Use Program Exposure mode. Use exposure compensation.	Use Basic Photoshop adjustments. Use Shutter Priority Exposure Mode to vary shutter speed. Experiment with shutter speed.	Control aperture to vary depth of field. Experiment with depth of field.	Analyse and then apply basic (simplified) rules of composition to create more interesting images.	Use various selection tools in Photoshop. Apply selection knowledge & skills to create montages.	Select and set appropriate resolution and ISO settings. Analyse and apply knowledge of fore/mid/background to student's own images.	Select correct white balance. Experiment with White / Colour Balance settings. Experiment with off-camera flash to produce creative effects.	Safely use professional studio flash lighting to create portraits.	Experiment with light writing and light painting.	Score a minimum of 50% in End of course Quiz	
Y	Y	Y	ABS	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Distinction
Y	ABS (hols)	Y	Y	ABS	ABS	ABS	ABS	ABS	ABS	left course – personal reasons
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Distinction
Y	ABS	Y	Y	Y	ABS	Y	Y	Y	ABS	Pass
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Pass
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Merit
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	ABS	Y	ABS	Y	Distinction
Y	Y	Y	ABS	Y	ABS	ABS	ABS	ABS	ABS	Left Course – personal reasons
Y	Y	ABS (hols)	Y	ABS	Y	Y	Y	Y	ABS	Merit

Course leaders are asked to provide judgements and evidence for 3 key areas:

- Outcomes for learners
- Quality of Provision
- Course Leadership

**Outcome for Learners** covers such areas of the quality of work produced, and whether all learning aspirations have been met.

**Quality of Provision** includes records of developmental lesson observations / visits, progression to higher level programmes or qualification courses signposted, advice and guidance, feedback on learners' work, and to what extent course design has met the needs of the participants.

**Course Leadership** looks at whether additional, challenging targets for more able learners have been set, any health and safety issues, gaps in learner achievements, learner satisfaction, any additional visits/trips/tours to enhance the delivery of the course, promotion of a health and well-being, and volunteering opportunities.

There is a professional dialogue prior to **lessons observations** to allow lecturers to ask their observer to focus on something they want to develop or want reassurance they are approaching something in the right way. At the end of the year, the college looks at all the observation forms from ACL classes and see if there are any emerging themes, which are

picked up in the RARPA training session at the start of the next academic year.

## Adult and Community Learning

### Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA)

#### Course Documentation

- This Document must be kept with your Course File at all times.
- The *Record of Progress & Achievement Form* should be completed at each class meeting. See FORM A
- Specific Objectives and Methods of Verification should be set at an appropriate level for the course and for the learners attending the course.
- Specific Objectives and Methods of Verification are to be clearly defined prior to the first week of the course, although these can be modified in the light of information received from learners.
- Please complete *Learner Achievement against Progress/Outcome* by recording: Y = yes or N= no for each Learner. See FORM B
- Please ask each learner to complete the *Learner Expectation Form* at the start of the course and return to each learner on the last week of the course to complete the back page. See FORM C

### SUMMARY OF SALIENT POINTS

- RARPA approach used on a wide range of courses within a culture of quality improvement and excellence
- High levels of expectation on and support for tutors at all stages of the process
- Strong links between RARPA and other quality processes such as the eCRE form
- RARPA is evaluated and reviewed on a yearly basis

All materials quoted © Chichester College. Contact Helen Loftus, Assistant Principal, Enterprise and Adults.

# RARPA CASE STUDY 3: DERBY ADULT LEARNING SERVICE

## THE PROVIDER

Derby City Council Adult Learning Service (DALs) is the council's provider of adult learning programmes and apprenticeship provision. There is a wide range of courses in 24 centres across the city. Across the full year there are about 4,500 learners, around 3,000 of whom are on courses that use RARPA. These are in such areas as: ESOL, Health and Well-being, Languages, ICT, Retail, Leisure, the Arts, and Family Learning.

At its last inspection in January 2016, Ofsted said 'assessment and feedback to learners are highly effective at developing their skills of self-evaluation' as well as the quality of in-house careers guidance and destinations data.

## APPROACH TO RARPA

RARPA operates flexibly according to curriculum area and using appropriate learner-centred language. For example, on course information potential learners are given answers to questions such as:

How will I know I am progressing during the course? (ESOL)

How will my progress be measured? (Advanced French)

In terms of assessment, learners are given examples of what to expect, such as:

*'Towards the end of each session you will use a DerbyLearn forum to record what you have done in class and comment on how you think you got on. Before the next session your tutor will reply with their feedback. This is a very good method of recording your own progress, reflecting on the session and a great way to receive motivation from your tutor. (ICT Skills for Work or Leisure)'*

In most courses, the focus on continuous assessment is stressed at the outset as well as which qualifications are being taken or could be worked towards in future. Progression to volunteering opportunities is also highlighted on each information page, as well as the impact of learning on health and well-being.

Once on course, learners use their Individual Learning Plans to record in detail the progress they have made in each lesson. (Ofsted also commented on this adding that this 'supports the growing confidence and self-reflection skills of learners.') There is a focus on identifying starting points accurately to ensure that strategies are in place to support progress in a timely manner. There is a non-prescriptive approach to the use of ILP formats.

A range of forms are available from line managers and the staff pages (resources section) of the DALs website. Tutors are advised to use the most appropriate forms for the subject they teach. Clear guidance is given to tutors on their use. If a learner returns to take a subsequent course the previous ILP will be given to the new tutor so there is 'a learner history to hand' (*Tutor Handbook*).



	Learner to complete this section	Tutor to complete this section
Date	Today I have learned	Tutor comments/review
	Learner comments - How do you think you got on today? How well do you think you understood the topics? Do you have any questions from today's session?	Targets agreed with learner for next session

**Example of ILP section.**

## QUALITY ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

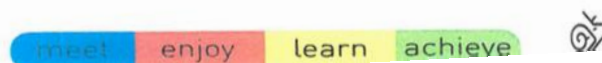
RARPA is fully integrated into the service's quality systems. Moderation of RARPA has been undertaken for a number of years at the curriculum level, but recently internal moderation has also been introduced on a cross-service basis.

At the curriculum level, RARPA moderation is the responsibility of the Curriculum Manager (CM) who designates a tutor or tutors to act as an Internal Verifier (IV). The moderation process at this level varies depending on the curriculum area as it is felt that the process needs to be appropriate to the curriculum need. For example, in areas where there are high levels of learner turnover (such as ESOL) the ILP is immediately submitted to the IV on leaving the course, or completing the Own Learning Goal (OLG).

In ESOL, two tutors are responsible for internal verification so that 100% of ILPs are covered. The focus is to: 'check we have a robust system in place to internally check that sufficient and robust goals are achieved for the number of hours in class.' In courses for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, moderation takes place at the end of short courses, and for courses longer than one term an interim moderation will take place in the first term. This is based on the elements of the RARPA process:

To support the process, each CM has regular network meetings with their team of tutors. In curriculum areas where all ILPs are not reviewed, all are submitted and then sampled by the IQA (Internal Quality Assurer).

<b>INTERIM RARPA INTERNAL MODERATION</b>			
Course Title	LLDD Reading and Writing Improvers	Course number	LSJR N20112
Tutor name		Course Dates	13/9/16 – 4/7/17
RARPA elements	Evidence	Sufficient Yes/No	Comments
1 Aims appropriate to individual learners or groups of learners (clearly stated learning aims)	Tutor has set out clear assessment criteria - appropriate to the course and LLDD learners	yes	
2 Initial assessment to establish the learners' starting points	All learners are included in a checklist after their I.A s are completed.	yes	Comprehensive IA for all learners– establishing level and including additional support needed.
3 Identification of appropriately challenging learning objectives: initial, renegotiated and revised	Evidence included through ILPs and assessment criteria.	yes	Advised tutor to date when targets/goals are met and new ones established.



### Exemplar of interim internal moderation form

Leaders believe a curriculum-based approach works ‘because it is appropriate to the curriculum area. We learn and adapt from each other’s work, but we also benefit from tutors working across curriculum areas and sharing good practice’.

Cross service moderation of all programmes is undertaken twice annually to link with the Quality Improvement process. This does not replace moderation in curriculum areas. Moderation is undertaken separately for Skills (Own Learning Goals) and Community Learning provision.

The aim is to ensure that moderation is happening across the board, picking up areas for improvement at a number of levels. At the curriculum level, the purpose is to feedback to relevant tutors. At the organisational level, it is to identify cross cutting issues across the service, and to share good practice. In Community Learning, tutors are nominated to attend the cross-service meeting alongside IVs. Minutes on each of the RARPA elements are produced and circulated to the curriculum managers concerned. This process also leads into the SAR and the development plan.



## DALS Quality Improvement Framework

### SUMMARY OF SALIENT POINTS

- RARPA processes are tailored to address curriculum lead with a high degree of professional autonomy
- Teachers are supported in their practice and moderation takes place at the curriculum level to allow the sharing of good practice
- Cross-service moderation shares approaches across curriculum areas and links into the organisation's overarching quality improvement framework

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# RARPA CASE STUDY 4: THURROCK ADULT COMMUNITY COLLEGE

## THE PROVIDER

Thurrock Adult Community College (TACC) is the adult learning service for Thurrock Borough Council, a unitary authority situated between London and Essex. There is a total of 2000 learners currently enrolled at TACC. Of these, there are about 1200 on community learning provision and 1000 on qualification bearing courses: predominately English, Maths and ESOL, and vocational areas such as childcare, health and social care.

## APPROACH TO RARPA

TACC has been using the RARPA approach since 2005 and it is well-embedded in the college's quality systems. In its *Learning Handbook*, a resource for tutors, RARPA is described as:

*'a highly flexible, non-bureaucratic, learner-centred approach to learning which is applicable in any learning setting for learning of any duration from very short single events to 2-year full time programmes.'*

The cycle is presented in the following way, emphasising the importance of 'challenge' and talking about 'next steps' with learners.



Alongside the RARPA approach, tutors are asked to capture the ‘wider benefits of learning’ including any unintended outcomes (such as improved health and well-being).

The main method for supporting tutors in the use of RARPA in their work is through the *Learning Handbook*, a paper-based and online support manual. College leaders see the *Handbook* as a continual work in progress being updated by good practice. The digital publication is supported by materials (and forms) on the ‘TACC Zone’, a virtual learning environment (VLE) accessible to staff and learners. Learners are signposted towards independent learning via the VLE.

Excerpt from the Individual Learning Plan:

**Your Learning Journey**

<b>Think about the learning you have done over the years:</b>	
What was the <b>best</b> learning experience you have had?	
What is the <b>worst</b> learning experience you have had?	
<b>Achievements so far: for example –</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- GCSE/O Level/National Test/ Functional Skills</li> <li>- Work related courses/qualifications</li> <li>- NVQ / NOCN</li> </ul>	

The *Handbook* stresses the importance of the ‘lifelong learning journey’ and the importance of next steps. Each stage of the RARPA process is described in detail with examples and case studies of where things have worked well (and where they haven’t). Case studies are taken from a range of provision including arts and crafts courses, and employability programmes.

**Example**

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

Excerpt from *Learning Handbook*

Scheme of Work forms directly reference the RARPA process and encourage tutors to record their own approach. Tutors are encouraged to recognise early success in learners' work, use paperless approaches in assessing and recording progress, and carry out thorough reviews based on both individual and group outcomes. There is guidance on the use of ILPs, formative and summative assessment techniques, and how the VLE can be used as a common area for submitting assignments, recording feedback, and learner reflection on progress.

## QUALITY ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

TACC views RARPA as enabling '*practitioners and managers to identify areas for improvement without relying on external judgement or assessment. It supports sound judgements about the effectiveness of their provision and how it meets the needs of their learners. Through self-assessment and quality assurance arrangements, RARPA contributes to the raising of standards and enhancing the learning experience for all learners.*'

The *Learning Handbook* states that TACC:

*'takes a holistic view of quality and self-assesses all aspects of the College. Teaching, learning and assessment are the subject of Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework (CIF). The College uses the CIF for its own self-assessment but also goes further because the CIF does not include any criteria for customer service or for services and departments supporting teaching, learning and assessment.'*

How RARPA links with other quality assurance processes like the self-assessment report and quality improvement plans is clearly described. Moderation takes place at the level of curriculum areas, although college leaders have access to ILPs through the VLE.

Continuing professional development takes place through the VLE and workshop opportunities. New tutors receive a full induction that includes the college's RARPA approach. The college's policy is to observe all tutors currently teaching in the academic year. Observation of teaching, learning and assessment is ungraded but reports identify areas for 'action required', 'recommendations', as well as good practice to be shared.

## SUMMARY OF SALIENT POINTS

- Detailed support for tutors through a *Learning Handbook*, using paper-based and online support materials
- Access to a virtual learning environment for both staff and learners to reflect and record progress
- RARPA embedded into organisational quality assurance processes

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