



RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

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Vision

The QCTO's vision is to **qualify** a skilled and capable workforce.

Mission

The QCTO's mission is to effectively and efficiently manage the occupational qualifications sub-framework in order to set standards, develop and quality assure national occupational qualifications for all who want a trade or occupation and, where appropriate, professions

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AQP	Assessment Quality Partner
EISA	External integrated summative assessment
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OQSF	Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework
QC	Quality Council
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SDPs	Skills Development Providers
SETAs	Sector Education and Training Authorities

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INTRODUCTION

Definition of RPL

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a set of processes that allows candidates to identify, document, be assessed, and gain recognition for their prior learning (including competencies). This may be required for different reasons and within different contexts, ranging from recognition towards a qualification, professional development, career guidance, career progression and job placement.

In terms of the SAQA definition, RPL is a process through which formal, non-formal and informal learning are measured and mediated for recognition across different contexts and certified against the requirements for credit, access, inclusion or advancement in the formal education and training system or workplace.

The aim is to make it possible to obtain formal recognition for knowledge gained throughout life, such as in workplaces and own reading or experiences. The RPL process also entails providing support to a candidate to ensure that knowledge is discovered and displayed in terms of a relevant qualification registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

Note: The concept of RPL is wider than the formal education and training system. This guideline document however concentrates on RPL in terms of qualifications and part qualifications on the OQSF sub-framework.

Qualifications and Part Qualifications on the OQSF

The qualifications and part qualifications on the Occupational Qualifications Sub-framework (OQSF) comprise Knowledge, Practical and Workplace Experience components.

The requirements for delivery and assessment for the different modules within each

component is specified in an associated curriculum for the related qualification.

Obtaining an occupational qualification or part qualification requires a formal teaching and learning environment, a practical / simulation environment (offered by accredited Skills Development Provider(s)) as well as actual workplace experience (offered by Employer(s)) and a national standardised External Integrated Summative Assessment (EISA) conducted at an accredited assessment centre.

An EISA is compulsory for the awarding of the qualification or part qualification.

RPL within the OQSF

RPL (within the OQSF) is a process by which candidates who have gained skills and knowledge through informal, non-formal or experiential learning, can be assessed, recognised and awarded credits for such learning if it meets the requirements of an NQF registered occupational qualification or part qualification.

Candidates deserve credit or acknowledgement for their competences, skills and knowledge, even if these have been gained through informal education or have been acquired in the course of their working lives or in participation in society and community activities outside formal places of learning.

RPL provides formal recognition for knowledge or skills gained on the job or as a result of other informal or unstructured learning experiences.

Candidates might seek RPL for various reasons. There are two main forms of RPL which reflect the different purposes and different processes within which RPL takes place namely:

- RPL for access
- RPL for credit

RPL for access

RPL for access provides an alternative access route into a programme of learning or a qualification for those:

- who do not meet the formal minimum requirements for admission,
- that believe they have the required knowledge, skills or experience for some of the modules of a qualification or part qualification,
- who need access to the EISA.

RPL for access may be conducted against the assessment criteria of the relevant knowledge and practical skill modules as specified in the associated curriculum for the related qualification. Workplaces may also conduct RPL processes to determine workplace competence for work experience modules as specified in the associated curriculum for the related qualification.

RPL for credit

RPL for credit provides for the formal award of credits for, or towards a qualification or part-qualification registered on the NQF.

RPL for credit may only be conducted against the assessment specifications for the relevant qualification or part qualification.

Candidates requiring RPL for credit must undergo an EISA conducted at a QCTO accredited assessment centre and normally would be required to go through an RPL process for access first.

The Assessment Quality Partner must design and implement a tool to conduct RPL assessments at external summative assessment stage to support the learners that might have difficulties to sit for formal external integrated summative assessment.

Goal and Purpose of the Guidelines

The first goal is to ensure that RPL services meet accepted quality standards. Second, that all RPL candidates everywhere receive fair and equitable services.

The purpose of these guidelines is to set the requirements for the provision of quality RPL services.

It provides guidance on the principles to be met, the steps to be followed and methods that can be used by RPL service providers (including Skills Development Providers (SDPs), Work-places, Assessment Centres and RPL Centres), for accreditation or recognition by the QCTO.

Note: Even though these guidelines are primarily intended for use within the OQSF, the principles, steps and methods are equally usable in other contexts as well.

These Guidelines also include a self-audit checklist and toolkit to be used by the RPL service providers to judge their readiness to implement processes or seek recognition or accreditation.

The QCTO will use the same checklist and toolkit to evaluate applications for recognition and accreditation.

Users of the Guidelines

As stipulated above, users of these guidelines could include professional bodies, education and training institutions, employment and career counsellors, business and government.

However, the targeted users are those seeking recognition or accreditation within the context of the OQSF i.e. SDPs and Assessment Centres and RPL Centres.

SDPs (including workplaces) will mainly offer RPL services for entry into, or placement within, a specific learning programme. RPL Centres and Assessment Centres will offer RPL services to candidates seeking RPL for access to an EISA as well as those seeking RPL for credits.

Candidates are the main beneficiaries of RPL services. The benefits for them are outlined below.

Intended Benefits of RPL

Intended Benefits of RPL for Candidates

- Avoid having to spend time, energy, and resources repeating training for what they already know and can do.
- Reduction of time to obtain a recognised qualification by either obtaining a qualification or a statement of results and / or a work experience record.
- Knowledge, skills or experience gained in one environment can be recognised for a different related environment.
- Identify gaps in their knowledge and skills and therefore identify any learning that needs to occur to meet the requirements of a particular qualification or job.
- Potential fast tracking of career progression.
- Enhanced access to employment opportunities.

Intended Benefits of RPL for RPL Service Providers

- More efficient utilisation of learning resources.
- Increase institutional efficiency by eliminating duplicate education or training.
- Increase student recruitment and retention.
- Allow for more appropriate placement of learners in programs.

- Meet the needs of a wider range of learners.
- Expand learning options to provide more modular and accessible approaches.
- Provide an important service for business, industry and community.
- Enhance the image of the institution in the community.

Intended Benefits of RPL for Employers

- Reduction in the time that learners spend in learning institutions away from the workplace.
- Possibility to fast track learners in career paths.
- More efficient utilisation of staff.
- Improvement in employee morale.
- Awareness of employee's knowledge, skills and experience relevant to their occupation.

QUALITY IN RPL SERVICES

Quality Assurance and RPL Systems

Quality Assurance is a planned and systematic review process. It provides confidence that acceptable standards are being met, and aims for continuous improvement.

Quality in RPL can be described as “the establishment of and adherence to policies, processes, and assessment practices that maximize candidates’ opportunities to fully and accurately demonstrate relevant knowledge, skills and experience.”

A quality RPL system ensures that a candidate's learning is recognized regardless of where it was acquired. All learning – whether formal, informal, or non-formal – is valuable and should be recognized.

Emphasis in quality assurance with regards to RPL is on:

- standardised processes (to make sure the right players are involved at the right time)
- standardised systems (to ensure consistency)

Candidates, staff, assessors and external stakeholders should form part of on-going evaluation exercises. Candidates should be encouraged to provide feedback on the entire RPL experience on completion of the process.

Institutions need to monitor and adapt the RPL services and assessments in order to make the process more effective and efficient, and to ensure that the RPL process is in line with national standards and developmental objectives.

Key principles underpinning RPL

RPL has a social justice function it is aimed at empowering learners and enabling them to access and move through the learning process, based on their prior learning and experience.

RPL has an efficiency focus it aims to reduce the time learners have to spend in acquiring the qualification and this should lead to an improved utilisation of learning resources and an improvement in workplace efficiency.

RPL aims to convert the intrinsic value of learning acquired by candidates into an extrinsic value in the form of providing learners access to the final assessments for occupationally based qualifications.

During the RPL process, emphasis falls on outcomes of learning, not on the site of learning, which may comprise formal

training, work and life experience, indigenous knowledge and a multitude of other learning processes. This reflects a shift in learning from a lecturer-centred approach to a learner-centred approach and makes the RPL candidate a stakeholder in the RPL process.

RPL assumes that competencies, skills and knowledge learned in one sphere are transferable. This has been internationally defined in the RPL context as the application of generic cognitive skills learned in one situation, to a new situation or more simply, knowledge which can be utilised and applied in a number of different contexts.

Eight Guiding Principles for Quality RPL Services

Guiding Principles are essential and key to all aspects of quality. The eight guiding principles for quality delivery of RPL services, as outlined below, are meant to be referenced as a collective approach to practice, and not to be used as stand-alone principles.

Accessible

Information on processes and services is available, accessible and comprehensive, and responsive to applicant questions on processes, procedures, timelines, costs and opportunities.

Reliable / Consistent

Assessment processes are well grounded to ensure that the same results will be achieved by a candidate if being assessed by a different assessor, or at a different time or place.

- Definitions and appropriate responses are documented and clear to assessors.

Fair and Respectful

- Processes and procedures are unbiased and trustworthy (credible)
 - there are optional ways to prove learning.
- Processes and procedures are not cumbersome.
- An appeal mechanism is provided.
- Processes reduce barriers by:
 - being non-discriminatory, culturally appropriate and inclusive,
 - using plain language to ensure all communication is clear,
 - valuing uniqueness of the candidate,
 - avoiding unfair exclusion and
 - avoiding favouritism.

Valid

Processes, procedures and methods of assessment are reasonable and lead to the identification of acquired knowledge, skills and experience, as stipulated for the relevant qualification or part qualification, and nothing more or less than that.

Flexible

- assessment methods are time and cost efficient.
- A variety of effective assessment options are available.
- Re-assessment is possible

Rigorous

- RPL assessment methods are extremely thorough and:
 - fit for purpose,
 - reflect a consistent level of higher cognitive challenge,
 - appropriate for the related NQF Level,

- have equivalent standing to assessment methods used in the qualification,
- are conducted by subject matter experts.

Transparent

- Information on processes and services uses explicit and plain language to be understood by all.
- Policies, processes, and criteria are complete, fully disclosed and accurate, e.g.:
 - process steps are clear and simple to follow,
 - reasons are given for any action needed to complete the process,
 - methods of assessment and learning criteria are clearly stated and
 - results of RPL assessment are provided, including gaps and achievements.

Professional

- All staff involved in RPL services receive initial and ongoing training for their RPL functions. (e.g. advising, assessment, development and systems administration or other related services).
- Networks are established between different RPL service providers (including workplaces and SDPs).

Processes Essential to Quality RPL Services

A quality RPL process has many elements designed to ensure that a candidate's learning and skills are acknowledged, valued, assessed, and recognized.

In addition, SAQA also highlights the importance of candidate guidance and support, the preparation of evidence and the development of an appropriate combination of further teaching and learning, mentoring and assessment approaches, as part of the RPL process.

Quality RPL services require processes for:

- step-by-step advice and guidance:
 - that clearly sets out the process from start to finish and advising on services provided by trained personnel,
 - on requirements for forms and documentation to be submitted,
 - on the evidence a candidate must provide for RPL assessment,
 - the requirements and assessment criteria for each module in the knowledge, practical skills and work experience components of the related qualification,
- the evaluation of self-assessments and portfolios of evidence,
- the identification of “gaps” and “gap training”,
 - conducting RPL assessments,
 - the provision of results,
 - appeals procedures.

A quality RPL provisioning process should therefore include steps to ensure that all of the above mentioned aspects of the process are catered for. In addition, the Guiding Principles should be considered during each step that is taken.

A quality RPL process, in essence, always involves the five steps outlined alongside.

STEP 1.

Explain the RPL process

Candidate determines whether RPL is relevant and appropriate to their needs

STEP 2.

Provide information on expected requirements and self assessments

Candidate decides if he/she is eligible to proceed with RPL application

STEP 3.

Evaluate Application and Self-assessment

Candidate completes self-assessment and prepares for evaluation of prior learning

STEP 4.

Assist for Preparation for Assessment and Conduct Assessment

Candidate prepares and complete the required assessment

STEP 5.

Provide Assessment Results

Candidate receives official results and feedback on assessment

Step 1 explain the RPL Process

Information is provided to help candidates understand what RPL is and the process to be followed. The aim is to help candidates determine whether RPL services offered are relevant and appropriate to their needs.

The information must:

- Be clearly written and shows each step in the RPL process (as it relates to the candidate).
- Be available in print and / or electronic form.
- State costs and time-lines.
- Describe roles and responsibilities of the staff involved in the RPL process and the type of support that can be expected.
- Specify the occupations and qualifications for which RPL services are provided.
- Provide contact information of staff.

Candidates need to:

- Complete a self-assessment and application form.
- Match their own knowledge, skills, and experience that are equal or similar to the occupational standards, set assessment criteria or learning outcomes.
- Reflect on and identify learning from experience and gather concrete evidence.

Step 2 Provide information on expected requirements and self-assessments

Candidates need to compare their knowledge, skills, and experience to the requirements specified in the curriculum of relevant qualification or part qualification.

The aim is to help candidates decide if they are eligible to proceed with an application for RPL assessment.

RPL service providers need to:

- Specify the related assessment criteria and work experience requirements per module as per the related curriculum.
- Develop application forms and self-assessment tools for candidates.
- Develop a diagnostic assessment instrument to evaluate applications.
- Provide clear guidelines on requirements of evidence.

Step 3 Evaluate Application and Self-assessment

The candidate needs to submit an application for RPL and submit some documentation and proof of prior knowledge skills or experience.

The aim is to help candidates prepare for the actual RPL assessment by identifying any gaps in relation to knowledge skills and experience.

RPL service providers will need to:

- Evaluate the self-assessment form and evidence.
- Conduct a verification interview to determine whether the applicant understood the content of the self-assessment.
- Identify alternative qualifications and gaps and develop a learning and development plan, i.e.
 - “New Start” There is no component in which the applicant is competent and he / she must complete the full learning process.
 - “Fast Track” Applicant is competent in some of the components and can proceed on a shortened

learning programme to do only the components where he / she does not meet the requirements.

- "Finishing School" The applicant is competent in most of the components and can complete a short, self-study, coaching and mentorship process before applying for the EISA.
- "Finalisation" The applicant is competent in all the component areas and can apply for the EISA.
- Make arrangements for gap training and assessment preparation.

Candidates will have to be ready to explain how their knowledge, skills and experience (KSE's) meet the criteria, and may need to complete written or performance tests and / or collect additional evidence.

Step 4 Assist for Preparation for Assessment and Conduct Assessment

Candidates complete their learning and development plan and prove their learning, skills or experience during a formal assessment process.

If the assessment is for access to or placement within a learning programme the assessment will be conducted against the criteria and standards in the related curricula.

If the RPL assessment is for credits, it will be conducted against the EISA criteria for the qualification at an accredited assessment centre.

RPL service providers must:

- Provide the applicant with a full set of learning materials.
- Provide on-going support to the applicant during the preparation phase.
- Ensure that that the candidate is well informed of all requirements and arrangements for the final assessment.

- Develop appropriate assessment instruments fit for RPL processes.
- Develop assessment exemplars.
- Ensure that all assessments are properly recorded.

Candidates may need to -

- complete some gap training.
- prepare for the formal assessment process.

In the case of RPL for access to the EISA, RPL service providers must:

- Complete a portfolio of evidence including (application form, RPL self-assessment and evaluation template, candidate evaluation / interview checklist, appeals form, access recommendation and statement of results).

Step 5 Provide Assessment Results

RPL service providers discuss official results of the assessment with the candidate including options if unsuccessful (appeals procedure).

RPL service providers must:

- Discuss the results and next steps (including appeals processes) with the applicant.
- Obtain feedback from the applicant on his / her experience of the entire RPL experience.

Submit the results to the QCTO stating that it was a RPL process. (This is a requirement for statistical purposes on the provision and implementation of RPL).

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OF RPL FOR CREDIT AND ACCESS TO EISA

RPL for credit provides for the formal award of credits for, or towards a qualification or part-qualification registered on the NQF.

RPL for access to External Integrated Summative Assessment (EISA) entails a process of all evaluating and recognising all the required knowledge, skills and experience required for the qualification.

In order to apply for an EISA, an applicant must submit to the accredited assessment centre:

- An application form
- Proof that the applicant has completed all the curriculum components required for the qualification; and
- Proof of compliance with any medical or legal requirement applicable to the relevant occupation.

An applicant who has completed an RPL process may substitute a portfolio of evidence in place of the proofs listed above.

Such a portfolio should include:

- Application form
- Candidate evaluation / interview checklist
- Curriculum content overview

- Evaluation criteria for
 - Knowledge
 - Practical
 - Workplace observation / experience
- Practical skills checklist
- Assessment / evaluation report
- Appeals form
- Access recommendation
- Statement of results

All of the above must be prepared by an accredited RPL Centre.

Note: Annexure C contains an example of a template that can be used for self-assessment, proof of evidence and candidate assessment interview.

THREE PERSPECTIVES ON THE FIVE STEPS

	CANDIDATE PERSPECTIVE	RPL PROVIDER PERSPECTIVE	EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVE
1	Get information about RPL services	Explain the RPL process	Provide detailed information about work experience requirements
2	Compare knowledge, skills and experience (KSE) to qualification requirements	Provide information on expected requirements for the qualification	Provide detailed information on work activities to be signed off
3	Gather and prepare evidence of learning for evaluation and complete gap training	Evaluate application and identify gaps or recommend the candidate for External Integrated Summative Assessment (EISA)	N/A
4	Receive application outcomes/results and plan next steps	Conduct training for gap closure OR issue a Statement of Results to candidate to register for EISA and link candidate with an assessment centre for EISA	N/A
5	Sit for External Integrated Summative Assessment (EISA) Receive assessment results and plan next steps	Provide assessment results	N/A

APPEAL PROCESS

If not satisfied with the results, candidate will request information on appeals process from the provider.

The provider will supply the candidate with a brochure on appeals process and guide the candidate on how to complete the appeals form and submit it.

ASSESSMENT FORMS, METHODS AND TOOLS

Assessment methods, tools, and processes are key components to the achievement of Quality Assurance in RPL.

Assessment can be diagnostic, informal, formal, formative or summative. In the RPL process both may be applied for different purposes.

Initial / Diagnostic assessment usually takes place at the start and is used to identify the current learning needs in order to provide appropriate support.

Informal assessment is on-going integrated, and flexible. It is varied and may be recorded by the learner and the tutor / assessor. It can include self-assessment or verbal feedback given by the assessor. It can be formative or summative or both.

Formal assessment is structured and usually takes place in clearly stated conditions, e.g. the completion of a practical task, or a presentation. It may be undertaken by the whole group or by an individual. It is usually summative in nature and may be assessed externally.

Formative assessment is developmental, supportive and encouraging and on-going throughout the course. It is used to give feedback and support to the learner on progress to date and to inform the learner and tutor of action to be taken in order to maintain or improve performance.

During RPL all these forms of assessment can be used to gather information about

the candidate's prior learning and in the evaluation of the RPL application (step3) in order to:

- guide and enhance self-understanding,
- identify gaps,
- clarify strengths and limitations or
- determine options for assessment.

Summative assessment is used for making a judgement about achievement. This is carried out when a learner is ready to be assessed at the end of a programme of learning.

During RPL it can be used to determine competence against different knowledge, practical skills or work experience modules to allow for access to or exemptions in a learning programme.

Both formative and summative assessments can be used by SDPs or workplaces in accordance with the criteria specified in the relevant curricula.

An External Integrated Summative Assessment (EISA) will be conducted at an QCTO accredited assessment centre against national assessment standards.

Assessment Tools and Methods

Candidates should be able to receive validation, recognition, and credit for their learning regardless of how, when, or where it was achieved. Assessors should select appropriate assessment tools to make best use of limited resources and available expertise.

Methods

Methods, tools and instruments used for assessment during structured learning processes are not always suitable to be used for RPL processes and assessments.

Methods should be applicable for the type of learning being assessed and be used flexibly for RPL purposes. Some methods are outlined below, but should not be seen as exhaustive.

Observation or Demonstrations

In this method, candidates are assessed against the assessment criteria as they perform tasks. They are observed in either a “natural” setting, e.g., work or community, or in a simulated situation, e.g., role play.

Interviews

Interviews allow candidates to describe in detail what they know and can do, how they have solved problems, and responded to contingencies, etc. In summative assessments, interviews are most often used in conjunction with other assessment methods.

Self-assessments

Self-assessments allow a candidate to match specific knowledge, skills, and abilities against established criteria. They are helpful for candidates, advisors, and assessors to find a starting point from which to establish competence. They will later gather evidence or proof of that learning.

Evidence collection

This is a collection of proof of learning. It will demonstrate a candidate’s knowledge, skills, and experience. Examples include log books, notations, product samples, or a skills passport.

Portfolios

A portfolio is generally a more formal and organized collection of evidence developed by a candidate. It may be paper based or digital. It is used by candidates to reflect on and verify their knowledge, skill, and abilities.

Written examinations

These assessment tools require candidates to respond to a series of specific questions, often in the form of essays, short-answer or multiple choice tests. They are used most often to assess knowledge about a specific subject.

Credential or qualification evaluation

In this process, a candidate’s education and training credentials, or professional qualifications are evaluated by SAQA to determine authenticity and relevance to an Occupational qualification. The process

compares the credential documents to relevant qualifications. Since there is great variability in the nature of education and training programs around the world, the evaluation of credentials and qualifications earned outside of South Africa requires great care and has to follow the processes as determined by SAQA.

Tools

Assessment tools refer to both the instruments and the procedures for gathering and interpreting evidence:

- Instruments the specific questions or activities developed from the selected assessment methods to be used for the assessment. (A profile of acceptable performance and the decision-making rules for the assessor may also be included).
- Procedures the information or instructions given to the candidate and / or the assessor regarding conditions under which the assessment should be conducted and recorded.

Assessment and Accountability

Assessment methods and tools need to consider already well-established assessment standards, i.e.

Validity: Assessment procedures, methods, instruments and materials measure what is intended to be assessed (knowledge, understanding, subject content, skill, information, behaviours, etc.).

Reliability: Reliability in assessment is about consistency. Consistency refers to the same judgments being made in the same, or similar, contexts each time a particular assessment for specified stated intentions is administered.

Fairness: Assessment should not in any way hinder or advantage an individual.

ANNEXURE A: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Access	An entry to education and training of a particular qualification or part qualification or entry to a final external summative assessment.
Assessment	The process of collecting evidence of learner's work to measure and make judgements about the competence or non-competence of specified National Qualifications Framework occupational standards or qualifications and part qualifications.
Assessor	A person who is registered by the relevant AQP in accordance with established criteria to conduct internal and / or external assessments for registered occupational qualifications and part qualifications.
Candidate	A person whose performance is being assessed by an assessor registered with a relevant institution.
Credit	The value given within a learning programme for achieved learning.
Informal learning	Learning that results from daily activities related to paid or unpaid work, family or community life or leisure.
Formal learning	Learning that occurs in an organised and structured education and training environment and that is explicitly designated as such. Formal learning leads to the awarding of a qualification or part qualification registered on the NQF.
Learning outcomes	A statement of measurable learning that describes what a candidate should know and / or be able to do as a result of learning.
Learning	The acquisition of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in a particular occupation or trade.
Monitoring	A continuous process of the review of quality that can be conducted internally and / or externally to recommend quality improvements.
Part Qualification	An assessed unit of learning that is registered or to be registered as part of qualification on the NQF with a clearly defined purpose.
Recognised Prior Learning (RPL)	Principles and processes through which the prior knowledge and / or skills of a person are made visible and are assessed for the purposes of certification, alternative access and admission and future learning and development.
RPL practitioner	A person that functions in one or more aspects of RPL provision, including policy development, advising, portfolio course design and facilitation, assessment and moderation, administration, monitoring and evaluation, research and development.
Skills Development Providers	A body which delivers learning programmes which culminate in specified registered NQF occupational standards and qualifications and part qualifications, and manages the internal assessment thereof.
Work experience	Activities undertaken in the workplace, where acquisition of skills, knowledge and attitudes are related to tasks, processes and outcomes of a particular occupation.

ANNEXURE B: SELF-AUDIT CHECKLIST AND TOOLKIT TO OFFER RPL SERVICES

Readiness in terms of Guiding Principles for Quality Provision

The guiding principles are stipulated as: Accessible, Transparent, Fair and Respectful, Valid, Reliable / Consistent, Flexible, Rigorous and Professional.

For each of the eight principles for quality provision:

1. Read the questions in the *Questions* column.
2. Check the response column and indicate: *Yes / No / In Process*.
3. Record, in the *Notes / Evidence* column, an example of evidence that proves your status in response to the question, or make a note in terms of the question.
4. If a response to a question is truly “not applicable” to you, then write “n/a” under the *No* column and remember to record a reason under the *Notes / Evidence* column.
5. Blank lines have been included for you to customize the audit with your own additional questions or comment

ACCESSIBLE				
QUESTIONS	YES	NO	IN PROCESS	NOTES / EVIDENCE
Does our process provide detailed information and advice for each step of the RPL the process?				
Is information freely available and also online?				
Does our process include an explanation of:				
• The fees involved?				
• The timeline involved and timeframes for assessment and any necessary re-assessment?				
• Who conducts advising and assessing functions?				
• What assessments are? (a description)				
• How assessment results are provided?				
Do we provide online self-assessment to improve information and access?				

TRANSPARENT

QUESTION	YES	NO	IN PROCESS	NOTES / EVIDENCE
Is our information written in plain language?				
Does our process fully inform applicants of how the assessment process works?				
Does our process provide applicants with details of their results, including learning gaps, differences, and achievements?				
Does our process explain options for unsuccessful candidates?				
Does our process include post-assessment guidance in the form of next steps?				

FAIR AND RESPECTFUL

QUESTIONS	YES	NO	IN PROCESS	NOTES / EVIDENCE
Does our process recognize that 'same' treatment is not necessarily 'fair' treatment?				
Have we ensured that our RPL processes are not more onerous than methods used for students already enrolled for occupational qualifications?				
Does our process consider a candidate's unique circumstances?				
Does our process allow for the use of translators for some assessments?				
Are our fees affordable and do we provide payment options?				
Do we have an appeals mechanism?				
Do our processes ensure that candidates have equivalent opportunity to engage?				
Do our processes ensure that barriers are removed?				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there more than one assessment per year? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the standards against which assessment will happen clear? 				

VALID				
QUESTIONS	YES	NO	IN PROCESS	NOTES / EVIDENCE
Do we use tools and methods that test acquired knowledge, skills and experience as stipulated for the relevant qualification or part qualification?				
Do we use tools that have been translated into plain language?				
Does our process accept a variety of assessments to accommodate applicants with a language or writing disposition?				

RELIABLE / CONSISTENT				
QUESTIONS	YES	NO	IN PROCESS	NOTES / EVIDENCE
Will our assessment results be the same regardless of who the trained assessor is?				
Do our processes provide clear assessment criteria with accompanying scoring grids, charts, or rubrics?				

FLEXIBLE				
QUESTIONS	YES	NO	IN PROCESS	NOTES / EVIDENCE
Do our processes provide applicants with more than one opportunity to demonstrate knowledge, skills and abilities?				
Do our processes consider evidence from a variety of sources?				
Do our processes allow for re-assessment?				

RIGOROUS				
QUESTIONS	YES	NO	IN PROCESS	NOTES / EVIDENCE
Are our assessment tools and methods at an equivalent level to that of non-RPL candidates?				
Do the tools and methods evaluate stated competencies, standards, and outcomes?				
Do our tools and methods test all required knowledge, skills and experience as stipulated for the relevant modules of qualification or part qualification?				
Do our tools and methods test all required knowledge, skills and experience as stipulated for the relevant modules of qualification or part qualification?				

PROFESSIONAL

QUESTIONS	YES	NO	IN PROCESS	NOTES / EVIDENCE
Do we conduct regular reviews of RPL policies and procedures?				
Do we ask for the perspective of candidates who use RPL?				
Do we ensure all staff involved with RPL practices receives initial and continuing training?				
Do we continuously update ourselves on the content of the relevant curricula?				

Readiness in terms of the Five Steps for the Provision of Quality RPL Services

The five steps are:

Explain the RPL process; Provide information on expected requirements and self-assessment; Evaluate application and self-assessment; Prepare for and conduct assessment; Provide assessment results.

For each of the five steps above:

1. Read the questions in the *Question* column
2. Check the response column and indicate: *Yes / No / In Process*.

3. Consider and note the related Guiding Principle(s).
4. Record, in the *Evidence* column, an example of evidence that proves your status in response to the question. You may also choose to use the *Evidence* column to make any notes.
5. If a response to a question is truly “not applicable” to you, then write “n/a” under the *No* column and remember to record a reason under the *Notes / Evidence* column.
6. Blank lines have been included for you to customize the audit with your own additional questions or comments.

1. EXPLAIN THE RPL PROCESS – DOES OUR PROCESS:

QUESTIONS	YES	NO	IN PROCESS	WHICH GUIDING PRINCIPLES WOULD YOU CONSIDER HERE?	NOTES / EVIDENCE
Provide clear information in both print and digital media?					
Clearly describe each step of the RPL process?					
State the cost and timelines?					
Describe the roles and responsibilities of the staff involved in the RPL process and the type of support that can be expected?					
Specify the occupations and qualifications for which RPL services are provided?					
Provide contact information of staff?					

2. PROVIDE INFORMATION ON EXPECTED REQUIREMENTS AND SELF-ASSESSMENT – DOES OUR PROCESS:

QUESTIONS	YES	NO	IN PROCESS	WHICH GUIDING PRINCIPLES WOULD YOU CONSIDER HERE?	NOTES / EVIDENCE
Specify the assessment criteria and work experience requirements per module of the related curriculum?					
Provide detailed self-assessment checklists (based on the curriculum) against which learning and experiences can be reflected?					
Provide information to assist in identification and presentation of sources of evidence (documentation, skill demonstration, interviews, examinations, case studies or product samples) that could prove prior learning?					
Provide RPL application forms and application processes?					
Provide for diagnostic assessment instruments for the evaluation of self-assessments					

3. EVALUATE APPLICATION AND SELF ASSESSMENT – DOES OUR PROCESS:

QUESTIONS	YES	NO	IN PROCESS	WHICH GUIDING PRINCIPLES WOULD YOU CONSIDER HERE?	NOTES / EVIDENCE
Provide for a verification interview to validate the authenticity of evidence presented as part of the self-assessment?					
Provide for feedback on additional evidence required?					
Provide for the establishment of learning and development plans?					

4. ASSIST IN PREPARATION FOR ASSESSMENT AND CONDUCT ASSESSMENT – DOES OUR PROCESS:

QUESTIONS	YES	NO	IN PROCESS	WHICH GUIDING PRINCIPLES WOULD YOU CONSIDER HERE?	NOTES / EVIDENCE
Provide for the provision of learning material to enable applicants to prepare for the assessment?					
Provide for on-going support to the applicant during the preparation phase?					
Establish networking opportunities with SDPs and workplaces to offer “gap” training?					
Provide assistance to candidates to promote and present their knowledge, skills and abilities?					
Provide information on assessment time frames?					
Provide for the development of assessment instruments?					
Provide or appropriate RPL assessment training for assessors?					
Offer flexible assessment options to accommodate applicants with differences in learning abilities and language preferences?					
Validate assessment results to ensure inter-rater reliability?					

5. PROVIDE ASSESSMENT RESULTS – DOES OUR PROCESS:

QUESTIONS	YES	NO	IN PROCESS	WHICH GUID- ING PRINCIPLES WOULD YOU CONSIDER HERE?	NOTES / EVIDENCE
Provide constructive feedback on both successes and areas where improvements are needed?					
Obtain feedback from applicants on their experience of the RPL process?					
Document successful RPL assessment results and provide feedback to the QCTO?					

ANNEXURE C: EXAMPLE OF A TEMPLATE THAT CAN BE USED FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT, PROOF OF EVIDENCE AND CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT INTERVIEW.

During Step 2 the RPL service provider will complete the first 3 columns.

During Step 3 the applicant will conduct the self-assessment by completing columns 4-7.

During Step 4 the RPL service provider will evaluate the self-assessment and complete columns 8 and 9.

The completed form with attached documents (column 6) will form part of the portfolio of evidence if application for RPL is for credits

KNOWLEDGE MODULE DETAILS

FOR COMPLETION BY RPL SERVICE PROVIDER		COMPLETION BY CANDIDATE		COMPLETION RPL ASSESSOR		
MODULES	TOPICS	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	RPL APPLICABLE	EVIDENCE	OBJECTIVES MET	COMMENTS
			Yes	Document	Description	Yes/No
			No			

PRACTICAL MODULE DETAILS

FOR COMPLETION BY RPL SERVICE PROVIDER		COMPLETION BY CANDIDATE			COMPLETION RPL ASSESSOR	
MODULES	TOPICS	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	RPL APPLICABLE	EVIDENCE	OBJECTIVES MET	COMMENTS
			Yes No	Document	Description	Yes/No

WORK EXPERIENCE DETAILS

FOR COMPLETION BY RPL SERVICE PROVIDER		COMPLETION BY CANDIDATE			COMPLETION RPL ASSESSOR	
MODULES	TOPICS	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	RPL APPLICABLE	EVIDENCE	OBJECTIVES MET	COMMENTS
			Yes No	Document	Description	Yes/No

**WHAT IS
RPL?
RECOGNITION OF
PRIOR LEARNING
(RPL)**

01

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is an assessment process.

02

It involves assessment of an individual.

03

Who has gained skills and knowledge?

04

Through informal, non-formal experiential learning.

05

Individual is assessed, learning is recognised by awarding credits should they meet the requirements of the NQF Registered Qualifications or Part Qualifications.

**WHY
RPL?**



It is a formal Recognition for knowledge/skills gained on the Job and as a result it offers informal/unstructured learning experiences.

It is redressing past injustices and recognising competence through practical work experiences.



WHERE IS IT APPLICABLE?



Occupational
Qualifications



Part
Qualifications



Trades

WHO CAN IMPLEMENT RPL?



Assessment
Quality Partners
(AQPs)



RPL
Practitioners



Skills
Development
Providers
accredited by
the QCTO



Assessment
Centres
accredited by
the QCTO



Trade Test
Centres
accredited
by the QCTO



SETAs

THE ROLE OF QCTO IN RELATION TO RPL

Monitor and evaluate
implementation
of RPL



Foster
professional
bodies to
facilitate RPL

Ensure
consistency in the
implementation of
RPL policy



Monitor and
record RPL
admission rates



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