QCTO Recognition
of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy

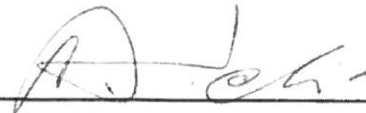# 09 September 2021

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Description
AQP	Assessment Quality Partner
DoL	Department of Labour
EISA	External Integrated Summative Assessment for occupational qualifications and part-qualifications registered on the OQSF
ERRP	South African Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan
FISA	Final Integrated Supervised Assessment for historically registered qualifications, I including provider based qualifications, as well as final assessment for occupational Skills Programmes
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAMB	National Artisan Moderation Body
NLRD	National Learners Records Database
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OQSF	Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework
QC	Quality Council
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
QP	Quality Partner
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SDPs	Skills Development Providers
SETAs	Sector Education and Training Authorities
SOR	Statement of Results

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Term	Description
Access	Opportunity to pursue education and training, including relevant qualification and part-qualifications, for all prospective learners, including access to a qualification or part-qualification and access to the final summative assessment for certification.
Accountability	All relevant role-players must be able to provide evidence of the development and moderation of assessment tasks and processes, and these tasks and processes are aligned with SAQA's National Policy for Designing and Implementing Assessment.
Accredited Provider	Means a legally established institution (public or private) that has been recognised, usually for a particular period of time, by a Quality Council (QC) or its appointed agent, as having the capacity or provisional capacity to offer a qualification or part-qualification registered on the NQF at the required standard.
Advanced standing	The status granted to a learner for admission to study at a higher level that the learner's prior formal studies would have allowed, including exemption where applicable.
Assessment	Means the process used to identify, gather and interpret information against the required competencies in a qualification or part-qualification or occupational skills programme in order to make a judgement about a learner's achievement.
Assessment Centre	A legally established institution (public or private) that has been recognised(accredited), usually for a particular period of time, by the QCTO, as having the capacity or provisional capacity to assess a qualification or part-qualification registered on the NQF at the required standard.
Assessment Criteria	The standards used to guide the recognition of learning and assess learnerachievement and/or evaluate and certify competence.

Assessor	A person able to conduct high-quality internal and external assessment for specific qualifications, part-qualifications, or professional designations or occupational Skills Programmes. Appropriately qualified lecturers, teachers, educators, trainers, examiners, moderators, chief markers, markers, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL/ARPL) specialists, and Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) officials are all examples of assessors. For ARPL, Assessors and Moderators must be registered with NAMB.
Bias	Assessment practices that hinder or advantage particular learners or groups of learners. An absence of bias is sought, where all learners and educators are treated with equal respect and consideration regardless of social, economic, cultural, faith-based, ethnic, gender or other differences, and where disabled learners and educators are given appropriate support.
Certificate	Means a document indication formal recognition by the QCTO of an occupational qualification, part-qualification or occupational skills programme awarded to a successful learner.
Competence	The ability to put into practice in the relevant context of the learning outcomes acquired in obtaining a qualification, part-qualification or occupational skills programme.
Credibility	A respected process or product which results from a fair, valid, and reliable validation process designed to enhance the quality of a qualification, part-qualification, professional designation, or occupational skills programme.
Credits	The volume of learning required for a qualification or part-qualification, quantified as the number of notional study hours required for achieving the learning outcomes specified for the qualification or part-qualification. As a guide, one credit (1) is equated to ten (10) notional hours of learning.
Credit accumulation and transfer (CAT)	Means the practice of accumulation credits from one or more cognate learning programmes in an institution and transferring those credits to be recognized towards a qualification/part-qualification or occupational skills programme in the same or different institution.
Credit accumulation	The totaling of credits required to complete a qualification, part-qualification or occupational skills programme.
Credit matrix	Means a system in which learning outcomes can be arranged and compared in levels of increasing complexity based on agreed groupings of credits, such as in modules/subjects or part-qualifications.
Credit transfer	The vertical, horizontal or diagonal relocation of credits towards a qualification or part-qualification on the same or different NQF Sub-Framework.
Diagnostic assessment	Assessment conducted before teaching or training starts, for the purposes of identifying learners' strengths and weaknesses, in order to use the associated information for the purposes of creating suitable learning environments. An RPL candidate must complete a diagnostic assessment prior to the RPL process in order to establish whether he-she is indeed a suitable candidate for this process.

Dynamic assessment	Assessment practices in which mediation, learning, testing, frequent feedback to learners and systematic monitoring of changes in learning are explicit parts of the learning context. The goal of dynamic assessment is to see whether, by how much and in what ways those being assessed change as a result of being presented with opportunities to learn.
Educator	An inclusive term referring to teachers, lecturers, facilitators, assessors, moderators, and others teaching, educating, training, facilitating, assessing, or enabling learning in learning contexts across the board.
e-learning	A mode of teaching and learning that makes use of technology-mediated features.

Entry requirements	Means the minimum academic knowledge and practical competencies, and or work experience that a learner must have completed to be able to be admitted for a qualification, and or part-qualification. This may include recognition of other forms of prior learning such as non-formal and informal learning and work experience deemed as comparable for entry. In the South African context, entry requirements also take into account the broad socio-political issues of access. The entry requirement for the EISA or FISA is a Statement of Results, internally issued by the issuing authority.
Evaluation of learning	A process involving gathering evidence and making informed judgements about a learning programme, or module or component of a learning programme; or its curriculum, learning materials or assessment; or its impact on learners or society. Evaluation involves making a judgement about the worth, merit or impact of learning or a programme of learning.
Examiner	A qualified and competent person appointed to develop, administer, and oversee a formal assessment, including a person appointed to develop assessment instruments (such as exam papers, marking guidelines, and others). An examiner may be an educator.
External Integrated Summative Assessment	A final external assessment developed by a qualified and competent person or body not directly involved in the development and/or delivery of the learning being assessed. The EISA is a final assessment which integrates the knowledge, practical and/or work experience to assess the competence of a learner against the stated exit level outcomes of an occupational qualification or part-qualification.
Fairness	Learners are assessed on what they know and have been taught; where questions are set in relation to the cognitive and affective curriculum coveredin the teaching and learning; in the case of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) there has been preparation for the competent mediation of the required knowledge, and other competencies, and there is no bias towards any learners on the basis of social class, ethnicity, gender or disability.
Feedback	Specific reporting from the educator to the learner or between learners, on how they have performed in an assessment activity, regardless of the level offormality of the assessment activity. Feedback specifies what was done well,and why, and provided clear guidance regarding what is missing or still needs development in learners' texts, performances or demonstrations, in order toenhance learning.
Final Integrated Supervised Assessment	Means a supervised final assessment for which assessment processes, tools, and results are recorded towards the achievement of a historically registered qualification (including provider-based qualifications) or occupational skills programme, conducted under examination conditions with an invigilator/assessor/moderator. These final assessments are decentralized.
Formal assessment	Assessment for which assessment processes, tools, and results are recordedtowards achievement of a qualification, part-qualification, professional Designation or occupational skills programme.
Formal learning	Learning that occurs in an organised and structured education and training environment and that is explicitly designated as such. Formal learning leadsto the awarding of a qualification or part-qualification or occupational skills programme.

Formative assessment in RPL	A range of continuous assessment procedures used to recognise the competence of a learner towards learning and teaching still to be done (gap training). The results of formative assessments can prepare a candidate for a summative assessment.
Informal assessment	Any judgements made or feedback given in the course of teaching and learning activities. Informal assessments may be in written form but are notusually recorded.
Informal learning	Learning that results from daily activities related to paid or unpaid work, family or community life, or leisure, including incidental learning.
Integrated assessment	Assessment which involves all the differing types of assessment tasks required for a particular qualification, professional designation, or occupational skills programme, such as written assessment of theory and practical demonstration of competence.
Integrity	Honesty and transparency in every part of the assessment process, includingthat assessment questions must be based on work actually covered; learnersmust at all times be honest about what they offer to be assessed; markers must strive to understand what is offered by learners for assessment, and to grade it fairly at all times; and moderators must moderate a sample ofexamples against a fair range of cases.
Internal assessment	Any assessment conducted internally by a provider of learning. It is assessment conducted by a person, institution or body directly involved in the development and/or delivery of the learning being assessed.
Internal Summative Assessment	A final formal summative assessment conducted at the end of each module by the SDP to evaluate learning achievements relating to particular components of occupational qualifications, part-qualifications or skills programmes. These results are formally recorded and result in the issuing of the Statement of Results for entrance to the EISA (occupational qualifications and part-qualifications) and occupational skills programmes.
Learner	An inclusive term referring to anyone learning, including pupils, students, apprentices, interns, learners in learnerships, people doing training, and people learning non-formally and informally as well as people enrolled for particular qualifications, and people learning in contact, distance, and self-study contexts at all levels in the system.
Learning	The acquisition of knowledge, understanding, values, skills, competence and/or experience.
Learning Outcomes	The contextually demonstrated end-products of specific learning processes, which include knowledge, skills and values.
Learning pathway	Sequencing of qualifications that allows learners to move vertically, diagonally, and in some cases horizontally, through NQF levels giving learners recognition for full or partially completed qualifications or part-qualifications. Learning pathways can also lead to professional designations, when learning pathways include periods of structured work experience overand above qualifications.
Level descriptor	A statement describing learning achievement at a particular level of the NQF that provides a broad indication of the types of learning outcomes and assessment criteria that are appropriate to a qualification or part-qualification at that level.

Lifelong learning	Learning that takes place in all contexts in life – formally, non-formally and informally. It includes learning behaviours and obtaining knowledge, understanding, attitudes, values and competencies for personal growth, social and economic well-being, democratic citizenship, cultural identity and employability.
Monitoring and Evaluation	Oversight of the NQF by the appointed structures so as to ensure the advancement of the NQF objectives as a system of co-operation, co-ordination and collaboration for education, training, development and work.
Moderation	In RPL assessment means internal and external verification that an RPL assessment system is credible and that assessors and learners/candidates behave in an ethical way; and that the RPL assessments are fair, valid, reliable and practicable.
Moderator	A person who has been appointed in accordance with established criteria to ensure that the assessment process and procedure is fair, valid, reliable and unbiased.
National Learners' Records Database (NLRD)	The electronic management information system of the NQF, under the authority of SAQA, which contains records of qualifications, part-qualifications, learner achievements, recognised professional bodies, professional designations and all related information such as registrations and accreditations.
National Qualifications Framework (NQF)	A comprehensive system approved by the Minister of Higher Education, Training and Science and Technology, for the classification, registration, publication and articulation of quality-assured national qualifications and part-qualifications. The South African NQF is a single integrated system comprising three coordinated qualification sub-frameworks for General and Further Education and Training, Higher Education, and Trades and Occupations.
National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act	Means the National Qualifications Framework Act (No. 67 of 2008), and any subsequent amendments of the NQF Act.
Non-formal learning	Planned learning activities not explicitly designated as learning towards the achievement of a qualification or part-qualification; it is often associated with learning that results in improved workplace practice.
Occupational Qualification	The SDA defines an occupational qualification as a "qualification associated with a trade, occupation or profession resulting from work-based learning and consisting of knowledge unit standards, practical unit standards and work experience unit standards." An Occupational Qualification means a qualification associated with a trade, occupation or profession developed and quality assured under the auspices of the QCTO and consisting of knowledge/theory and application (practical skills/ work experience/simulated work experience) components and an External Integrated Summative Assessment.
Occupational Standards	Means statements of work performance that reflect the ability to successfully execute the functions of an occupation.
Part Qualification	An assessed unit of learning with a clearly defined purpose that is, or will be, registered as part of a full qualification on the NQF.

Portfolio Development	An accumulation of the collection of multiple forms of evidence that is seen to represent a candidate's learning. This collection is often referred to as a Portfolio of Evidence.
Professional Body	Anybody of expert practitioners in an occupational field; this includes an occupational body and statutory council.
Quality	Meeting the requirements of nationally agreed outcomes and performance/assessment criteria, thus facilitating both provision and monitoring.
Quality Assurance	The process of ensuring that specified standards or requirements for teaching, learning, education administration, assessment and the recording of achievements have been met.
Qualification	A registered national qualification consisting of a planned combination of learning outcomes which has a defined purpose or purposes, intended to provide qualifying learners with applied competence and a basis for further learning and which has been assessed in terms of exit level outcomes, registered on the National Qualifications Framework and certified and awarded by a recognised body.
Quality Council (QC)	One of the three Councils tasks with developing and managing the Sub-Frameworks of the NQF in order to ensure that agreed quality standards are met, namely the Council on Higher Education (CHE) for the Higher EducationQualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF); Umalusi for the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework (GFETQSF); and the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) for the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF).
QCTO	The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations established in terms of the Skills Development Act No. 97 or 1998.
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	The principles and processes through which the prior knowledge and skills of a person are made visible, mediated and assessed for the purposes of alternative access and admission, recognition and certification, or further learning and development.
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Candidate	This refers to the person seeking Recognition of Prior Learning. In order to apply for RPL, a candidate has to be at least 23 years of age orolder with at least the same number of years' work or proven community experience as the duration of the qualification, part-qualification or occupational skills programme.
Recognition of Prior Learning (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.
Resourcing of RPL	The direct and indirect physical, infrastructural, human and financial capacity needed to build and maintain a mainstream and sustainable national RPL system.
Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA)	Means a Sector Education and Training Authority established in terms of section 9(1) of the Skills Development Act to perform functions set out in section 10 of this Act.
Sensitivity to Language	Sensitivity to ensure that language does not become a barrier to learning; especially for qualifications at NQF levels 1 and 2.
South African Qualifications Authority(SAQA)	The statutory authority established in terms of the SAQA Act (Act 58 of 1995), and continuing in terms of the NQF Act (Act 67 of 2008), which oversees the further development and implementation of the NQF, the achievement of the objectives of the NQF, and the co-ordination of the three Sub-Frameworks.

Skills Development Providers	A legally established institution (public or private) that has been accredited, usually for a particular period of time, by the QCTO, as having the capacity to offer a qualification or part-qualification registered on the NQF at the required standard. The SDA defines a skills development provider as a provider of occupational learning.
Skills Programme	Chapter 5 of the SDA, Act 97 of 1998 defines a skills programme as a "skills programme that is occupationally based and when completed will constitute/ contribute a credit towards a qualification registered on the NQF.
Standard	Means the criteria, norms and model that are prescribed.
Stakeholder	In the NQF context means any entity responsible for the implementation of the NQF.
Summative Assessment	Assessment conducted at the end of sections of learning, at the end of a whole learning programme, or at any point in the learning programme, to evaluate learning related to a particular qualification, part-qualification or occupational skills programme.
Statement of Results	A statement of all learning for which a learner is enrolled or which the learner has completed that is issued by an authorised issuing organisation.
Transparency	The extent to which the assessment criteria and processes are known, visible to, and understood by learners and the various role-players in the assessment process.
Validation	Any assessment-related activity or practice which relates to the credibility of the assessment by confirming that the assessment is assessing what it is meant to assess.
Validity	The extent to which the assessment measures what it has been developed to measure. Validity is about the appropriateness, usefulness and meaningfulness of assessment procedures, methods, instruments, and materials. Assessment is valid when assessment tasks actually test the knowledge and skills required for defined competencies and learning outcomes.
Work Experience	Exposure and interactions gained through being in the workplace.
Workplace-based Learning	The learning achieved through exposure and interactions required to practice, gained while integrating the knowledge, skills and attitudes required in the workplace.

1   PREAMBLE

1.1   RPL is a practice that gives value and recognition to a person's previous learning, regardless of how and where that learning was acquired. The OQSF is especially a context in which RPL can be practiced due to the nature of occupational qualifications. In many cases, workers are required to perform a range of activities in the workplace – but do not have a formal qualification. Workers are often disadvantaged and denied access to workplaces or promotion opportunities in favour of individuals that have formal academic qualifications.

1.2   Worker demands and reasons for wanting RPL are to meet the following human developmental challenges:
- Social justice
- Access to education and training
- Validation of knowledge
- Personal and social empowerment
- Improving the education and training system
- Job opportunities

1.3   Recognition of Prior Learning is therefore critical to ensure that workers can receive formal recognition for skills and knowledge that have been developed in a range of different ways. RPL practices for the OQSF should be implemented that are practical and user-friendly for all RPL candidates to follow.

1.4   South Africa is currently undergoing a renewed drive to develop a skilled nation more focused way than in the past. Therefore, RPL must be conducted in a more concentrated way, together with the identification of real development pathways and real employment benefits that would contribute to this country's economic reform and development.

1.5   Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process by which individuals who had 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 qualification or part qualification. Individuals deserve credit for their knowledge, competencies, and skills even if these have been gained through informal education or have been acquired in their working lives or 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.

2   PURPOSE

2.1   The QCTO policy for implementing Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) provides for the implementation of RPL for qualifications on the Occupational Qualifications Sub-framework (OQSF) and skills programmes.

2.2   The purpose of this Policy is to ensure:

2.2.1 The advancement of a comprehensive, quality-assured and resource-driven approach to optimise the delivery of RPL services and programmes, including RPL assessments;

2.2.2 The quality assurance and benchmarking of RPL overseen by SAQA and the three Quality Councils;

2.2.3 That a shared understanding of RPL within a broader lifelong learning context is understood;

2.2.4 The implementation of RPL processes and tools across all economic sectors for uniformity with Quality Partners, playing an active role in the "resourcing of RPL".

2.2.5 That RPL be an integral part of every training programme in the case of those learners with previous knowledge and experience;

2.2.6 That RPL practices should be based on experience, reflection and knowledge;

2.2.7 That SETAs actively implement RPL projects to assist RPL candidates in obtaining a registered qualification.

2.2.8 That RPL becomes a seamless process for the implementation and achievement of RPL;

2.2.9 That potential candidate attain recognition of the appropriate knowledge and skills required for personal development and the employment market; credit is awarded for knowledge and skills acquired through experience and not for experience alone. If found lacking in either of these, the RPL candidate must receive gap training;

2.2.10 That the roles and functions of employers, public and private providers, and RPL practitioners in the provision of RPL across the education and training system are recognised; and that

2.2.11 That RPL candidates receive support and guidance throughout the RPL process, and assessments must be flexible and developmental when gap training is identified.

2.3 The RPL process can enable the Department of Employment and Labour (DoE&L) to realise the principles of "closing thewage gap" and ensuring equity in the workplace and society. RPL offers the potential for reducing the costs of delivering education and training and through RPL practices widening access and redressing previous and continuing disadvantages.

2.4 The models of RPL should attempt to reconcile learner-centredness procedures and assessments with rigorous standards and quality assurance systems for the awarding of qualification or part qualification.

3 LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

3.1 The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) was established in 2010 in terms of Section 26G of the Skills Development Act of 1998 as a juristic person. In Section 27(h) (ii), QCTO must develop and implement Policy and criteria for Assessment, Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Accumulation and Transfer for the qualifications and part qualification on the sub-framework.

3.2 This Policy provides for the implementation of RPL within the context of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act, no. 67 of 2008 (and any subsequent amendments of the NQF Act). The QCTO acknowledges that Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a fundamental tenet of the NQF and provides access, progression, support, and career guidance for learners at all levels of informal education and training and workplaces.

3.3 The QCTO's RPL Policy is aligned to *SAQA's National Policy, and Criteria for the Implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (Amended March 2019)* and must be read in conjunction with the

QCTO's RPL Policy (June 2021), the QCTO's OQSF Policy (2021), the QCTO's Assessment Policy (June 2021).

3.4 The *RPL Coordination Policy* elaborates and holds SAQA and the Quality Councils (QCs) accountable to perform their roles concerning RPL as stated in the NQF Act.

3.5 The White Paper for Post-School Education (November 2013) explicitly states that Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) remains an integral approach to redressing past injustices and recognising competence gained through practical workplace learning and experience. It further states that RPL will be applied more widely, especially for young adults who wish to access programmes in post-school institutions.

3.6 This policy seeks to position RPL in relation to the overarching national policies, principles and priorities of the NQF in South Africa.

4 SCOPE AND APPLICATION

4.1 This Policy constitutes an overarching quality assurance framework for the provisioning of RPL, and to be implemented by all Quality Partners, SETAs, all accredited Skills Development Providers (public and private), workplaces and accredited assessment centres, statutory professional bodies, RPL practitioners, RPL candidates and all other entities that implement the NQF and RPL in the country. It applies to all occupational qualifications, part qualifications, occupational skills programmes, trades and professional designations registered on the OQSF.

4.2 Qualifications and part-qualifications registered on the NQF may be awarded in whole or in part through RPL. Processes followed must be credible, quality assured and consistent with accepted and approved principles and criteria of SAQA, the QCTO and the Institution concerned.

4.3 RPL is undertaken and awarded holistically. A holistic approach includes the principles and processes through which a person's prior knowledge and skills are made visible, mediated, and assessed and requires the involvement of the full range of stakeholders within this space.

5 POLICY STATEMENT

5.1 RPL within the OQSF

5.1.1 Candidates may seek RPL for various reasons, depending on multiple contexts. Two primary forms of RPL reflect the different purposes and the different processes within which RPL takes place:

   a) *RPL for access*: To provide an alternative access route into a programme of learning, qualification, part-qualification, professional designation, employment and career progression; for those who do not meet the formal minimum requirements for admission.
   b) *RPL for credit*: To provide for the awarding of credits for or towards a qualification or part qualification registered on the NQF, as well as occupational skills programmes.

   In both cases, RPL processes may occur at a diagnostic, formative, or summative point or in-curricular to create opportunities for advanced standing or recognition in the workplace.

5.1.2 Within the context of the OQSF, the recognition of prior learning is the evaluation and acknowledgement of the knowledge and skills that a candidate has gained to enable access either to:
   a) Qualifications on the OQSF.

b) The External Integrated Summative Assessment.

5.1.3 Each entity advocating RPL as a mechanism for obtaining access and/or entrance to the EISA should:

a) Develop and publish clear criteria and guidelines against which application for RPL for access to qualification and entrance to the EISA will be evaluated, with standardisation in the sub-sectors where possible.

b) Develop and publish guidelines for the RPL process and mechanism to be used and appeals against RPL summative decisions.

5.1.4 Ensure that RPL information (including policies, guidelines, criteria, codes of conduct, ethics, assessment, moderation, RPL fees, in line with QCTO's RPL Policy) is visible on their respective websites.

5.2   Assessment in the RPL process

5.2.1 Assessment, an integral feature of all forms of RPL, does not exist in isolation from a range of other strategies that allow for different sources of knowledge and forms of learning to be compared and judged. Where credits are awarded, it must be based on the assessed evidence of the knowledge and skills acquired informally and non-formally.

5.2.2 RPL assessment should:

a) Adhere to fair, valid and reliable practices;

b) Acknowledge different sources of assessing knowledge and skills demonstrated in real-time within a contextualised environment;

c) Apply the assessment principles as outlined in the National Policy and Criteria for Designing and Implementing Assessment for NQF Qualifications and Part-Qualifications and Professional Designations in South Africa, as well as QCTO's Assessment Policy for qualifications and part qualifications registered on the OQSF; and

d) Ensure all learner results via RPL are moderated before a Statement of Results (SoR) is issued to gain entrance to the EISA.

5.2.3 The External Integrated Summative Assessment covers all components of a qualification, part-qualification registered on the OQSF. The Final Supervised Assessment encompasses all elements of an occupational Skills Programme.

The purpose of the final assessment before certification is to:

a) Ensure consistency and credibility of the assessment of occupational qualifications, part-qualifications and occupational skills programmes.

b) Ensure the use of nationally standardised assessment instruments according to occupational standards.

5.2.4 To address past social injustice issues, RPL may target candidates who may not be fluent in the mainstream language used. Some occupations do not necessarily need one to be fluent in the mainstream language. This would necessitate support for the candidate in a familiar language.

The aim is to ensure that candidates:

a) Are not disadvantaged from enrolling for RPL because they are unable to express their knowledge and skills in the mainstream language used;

c) Are assisted by translators and interpreters where necessary; and that

d) Portfolios are translated, transcribed and professionally presented.

5.3 Underlying principles and processes for the implementation of RPL

5.3.1 RPL may be carried out at any level of learning and any NQF level and is a dynamic assessment by nature.

5.3.2 RPL processes should be mediated: Knowledge and skills obtained non-formally, informally and formally, and RPL practitioners must moderate the types and levels of knowledge and skills required for recognition to enable this recognition.

5.3.3 The RPL process is multi-dimensional. It is a process through which non-formal, informal and formal learning can be measured and mediated against learning outcomes for recognition within and across different contexts.

5.3.4 The RPL process must:

a) Be fair, reliable, valid, ethical and transparent.

b) Be consistent across time, place, role players and respond to a sectoral demand-led model.

c) Use methodologies that are fit-for-purpose and reflect a consistent level of higher cognitive challenge.

d) Avoid unfair exclusion.

e) Determine whether the learner is an RPL candidate upon completion of a diagnostic assessment.

f) Empower potential learners by correctly placing them informal and non-formal training programmes at a level that will be to their maximum advantage.

g) Ensure candidate support before, during and after the RPL process.

h) Recognise the diversity of knowledge, skills and learning styles and provide holistic and flexible assessment during the process.

i) Provide educational opportunities for life-long learning.

j) Meet the quality standards of a particular qualification or part qualification.

k) Impress upon candidates that there is no RPL without learning.

l) Ensure identified gaps are closed using gap training.

m) Ensure that assessment practices include evidence of knowledge, practical and work experience.

5.3.5 Monitoring, evaluation and verification are essential elements in the ongoing development of the RPL process concerning the quality of assessment. This process is ongoing, and monitoring the quality of the entire RPL process is as important as monitoring the outcomes of the RPL assessment.

6 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The implementation of RPL requires the involvement of the key stakeholders with clear roles and responsibilities.

6.1 Roles and Responsibilities of Quality Partners/SETAs:

6.1.1 The direct and indirect physical, infrastructural, human, and financial capacity is needed to build and sustain RPL programmes and services within the national learning system.

6.1.2 Resources and opportunities must be provided for equitable access to RPL programmes and services in a manner that is consistent with the government's commitment to redress imbalances

that still exist in our vastly unequal society and specifically in the labour market, with a particular focus on implementing RPL for qualifications and occupational skills programmes that will provide impetus to South Africa's Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP).

6.1.3   Collaborate with the National Co-ordinating Mechanism for RPL, SAQA and the QCTO to mitigate RPL implementation barriers and advance the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of RPL.

6.1.4   A focus on RPL for returning-to-learning youth and adults needs to be encouraged and resourced in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders in the labour market and the national learning system.

6.1.5   Put systems and procedures in place to incentivise and support the professional development of RPL practitioners.

6.1.6   Quality Partners (QPs) may use approved Assessment Quality Partners (AQPs) successful RPL processes that have already been implemented in employing an MoU.

6.2   Roles and responsibilities of SAQA:

6.2.1   Providing over-arching leadership to the Quality Councils (QCs) for implementing their aligned RPL policies.

6.2.2   Receiving relevant data on RPL, including learning achievements via RPL, for uploading onto the NLRD.

6.3   Roles and Responsibilities of Employers:

6.3.1   Develop and implement organisational RPL policies and improve human resource support for RPL.

6.3.2   Encourage staff to engage in RPL for recognition in the workplace.

6.4   Roles and Responsibilities of accredited Skills Development Providers, Assessment Centres (including accredited Trade Test Centres), conducting RPL:

6.4.1   Skills Development Providers and Assessment Centres offering RPL must be accredited by the QCTO and ensure that they have the necessary staff capacity to deliver quality RPL services and programmes.

6.4.2   Establish articulation policies that clearly make possible learning and work pathways, RPL, and Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT).

6.4.3   Progressively develop and enhance capacity to implement RPL under the Ministerial RPL Policy; SAQA's 2019 Amended RPL Policy and Criteria; and the RPL, CAT and Assessment Policies of the QCTO.

6.4.4   Ensure an RPL information management system is used that meets the requirements of the QCTO, the NLRD and other Government information management systems.

6.4.5   Issue the RPL candidate with a Statement of Results (SoR) which indicates the candidate's competency in the achievement of all modules in all components of the qualification or part qualification. This is an admission requirement to the final External Integrated Summative Assessment (EISA), which must be completed successfully to be certified.

6.4.6   Provide advice, counselling, and support services to assist RPL candidates before, during, and

after RPL processes.

6.4.7 Establish an appeal process for RPL candidates to engage with RPL-related judgements.

6.4.8 Ensure an equitable fee structure for all RPL programmes and services, including those programmes and services that involve assessing workplace-based learning for credit against existing formal qualifications or part qualifications.

6.4.9 Collaborate with SAQA, SETAs, NAMB and the QCTO to advance the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of RPL.

6.4.10 Delivery of RPL should take cognisance of lessons learned to date from practice to enable a less bureaucratic system, considering research in this regard.

6.4.11 RPL in educational institutions needs to be expanded with targets set.

6.4.12 RPL as a tool for transformation should benefit all languages, not only the dominant languages. Mechanisms should be put in place to accommodate such individuals to ensure effective delivery.

6.5 Roles and Responsibilities of recognised Professional Bodies:

6.5.1 Be recognised by the QCTO as a Quality Partner.

6.5.2 Collaborate with SAQA, the QCTO, the National Co-ordinating Mechanism for RPL, and the relevant accredited institutions to incentivise and advance quality RPL provisioning in the sector.

6.5.3 Include an RPL route as an essential requirement for the attainment of professional designations.

6.5.4 Progressively develop and enhance their capacity to initiate and support RPL provision with the legislative and regulatory framework of this Policy.

6.6 Roles and Responsibilities of RPL practitioners:

6.6.1 Must be highly knowledgeable about the purpose, aim and acceptable processes of RPL and a holistic Subject Matter Expert.

6.6.2 Adhering to the requirements as set out in SAQA's 2019 Amended RPL Policy and Criteria, and the QCTO's RPL Policy, and as determined by the relevant bodies and governance structures, which may include a Quality Partner, workplace, statutory professional body, and the National Co-Ordinating Mechanism for RPL.

6.6.3 Undertaking Continuous Professional Development (CPD) as RPL practitioners and meeting the professional requirements.

6.7 Roles and Responsibilities of RPL candidates:

6.7.1 The candidate must be approved as an RPL candidate using a diagnostic assessment.

6.7.2 Identifying, gathering, and interpreting information according to the criteria outlined by the entity undertaking the RPL assessment. In this regard, they should be:
   a) Advised regarding potential RPL routes and be guided and supported to prepare evidence of relevant prior learning;
   b) Assisted with their preparation for assessment;
   c) Provided with feedback after an assessment; and

d) Advised, guided and supported to fill gaps where the RPL assessment shows gaps in candidates' knowledge and skills.

6.7.3 Accepting co-responsibility and fair treatment as an equal partner in the RPL process.

6.7.4 Respecting and adhering to the procedures of the entities involved.

6.7.5 Candidates should be encouraged to provide feedback on the entire RPL experience upon completion of the process.

6.8 Roles and Responsibilities of the QCTO:

6.8.1 Develop Policy on RPL for its sector, considering the relevant national SAQA policies and the broader context of the OQSF and related policies.

6.8.2 Working with accredited institutions to ensure the development and implementation of the QCTO's RPL Policy.

6.8.3 Monitor and evaluate the implementation of RPL, including:

a) Developing and implementing standardised approaches within the sub-sectors of the OQSF, where possible;

b) Supporting the training and monitoring of RPL practitioners, including facilitators, assessors, moderators, and administrators in the RPL process.

c) Ensuring consistency across RPL institutions/practitioners in similar contexts;

d) Supporting the coordinated development of RPL toolkits and instruments relevant for particular contexts, as appropriate; Monitoring the RPL admission and achievement rates for institutions (RPL providers) while maintaining the strictest confidentiality regarding individual RPL candidates and institutions;as well as

e) Ensuring that achievement via RPL are certified and that there is no distinction, other than for data analysis, between qualifications, part-qualifications and occupational skills programmes awarded via conventional and RPL routes, respectively. Certificates issued for RPL achievement must not specify that the achievement was obtained through RPL. For there to be no distinction between learners achieving a qualification obtained via conventional means and resulting from RPL, all qualifying learners need to complete the External Integrated Summative Assessment (EISA). Admission to the EISA is using a Statement ofResults (SoR).

6.8.4 Advocating RPL as a means for access and/or credit (certification of the qualification upon successful completion of the EISA).

6.8.5 Fostering close working relationships with statutory professional bodies in and across the OQSF as appropriate to facilitate the implementation of RPL.

6.8.6 Developing and maintaining information management systems compatible with the NLRD and other relevant government information management systems and submitting the data to SAQA.

6.8.7 Conducting and overseeing RPL-related research in the OQSF in collaboration with SAQA.

6.8.8 Collaborating with SAQA, NAMB, the Sector Education and Training Authorities, Quality Partners, and other role players in developing RPL in their sectors.

6.8.9 Approve Quality Partners' (QPs), Skills Development Providers (SDPs) and Assessment Centres (including Trade Test Centres) RPL processes and mechanisms prior to implementation.

6.8.10 Facilitate and monitor enabling agreements to increase RPL provisioning.

6.8.11 Monitor institutions that offer RPL following criteria established for this purpose.

6.8.12 The QCTO will do quality assurance of RPL according to adherence to RPL policies, guidelines, standards, processes, and associated practices in collaboration with its Quality Partners. Quality assurance of RPL must be undertaken with the explicit intention to protect the integrity of the processes and outcomes concerned.

6.8.13 The concept of quality in RPL must adhere to generally agreed quality assurance principles, including qualified personnel, fitness for purpose, transparency, and fair outcomes.

6.8.14 Quality assurance of RPL must be undertaken with the explicit intention to protect the integrity of the processes and outcomes concerned. Quality assurance of RPL is manifested by the establishment and adherence to policies, standards, procedures and associated practices that ensure that the knowledge, skills, and values of learners are recognized and validated so that learners can successfully engage in further learning that contributes meaningfully to their educational and/or employment goals.

7   COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

7.1   Learners' complaints about the RPL assessment process should be lodged at the accredited Institution conducting the RPL assessment.

7.2   The procedure is to be decided by the accredited Institution, but the candidate has a right to know what procedure is to be followed.

7.3   The notice of an appeal must state the grounds on which the applicant is seeking the appeal.

7.4   Where an appeal/complaint cannot be addressed to the satisfaction of all parties concerned, then the matter must be referred to the QCTO. The QCTO will decide what recourse is required to settle the matter, and the QCTO's decision is regarded as conclusive.

8   REPORTING

8.1   Institutions conducting RPL must provide quarterly reports on learner achievements via RPL in the format required by the NLRD to the QCTO.

8.2   The QCTO must report to SAQA on RPL implementation across the relevant accredited institution base quarterly for inclusion in the documentation to the NQF Chief Executive Officers' Committee.

8.3   The above reporting is required to monitor access and redress indicators over time. This data must be maintained under strict conditions of confidentiality and may not be shared with any individuals not directly involved in recording the data.

9   NON-COMPLIANCE WITH POLICY

Non-compliance with the provisions of this Policy shall be dealt with following the QCTO's

disciplinary process.

10   POLICY REVIEW

This policy may be reviewed every two years or when necessary.