

# POLICIES FOR RECOGNITION PRIOR LEARNING FOR SACPCMP

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In terms of the Regulations under the South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995 Act No. 58 of 1995, Government Gazette No 6140, No. R542, the definition for the recognition of prior learning is as follows:

*“Recognition of Prior Learning” means the comparison of the previous learning and experience of a learner howsoever obtained against the learning outcomes required for a specified qualification, and the acceptance for purposes of qualification of that which meets the requirements.”*

SETQAA accepts recognition of prior learning as a key principle of the National Qualifications Framework particularly in as far as accelerated learning and ensuring redress of past inequities are concerned. SETQAA however does not confine the use of recognition of prior learning to these instances alone.

## 2. PURPOSE

To determine the process of recognizing prior learning by;

- **Identifying** what the applicant knows and can do
- **Matching** the applicants skills, knowledge and experience to specific standards and the associated assessment criteria for registration with the SACPCMP
- **Assessing** the applicant against those criteria
- **Crediting** the applicant for skills, knowledge and experience built up through formal, informal and non-formal learning that occurred in the past.

## 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The broad principle is that previous learning – acquired informally, non-formally, experientially or formally – can and should be recognized and given currency within formal education and training frameworks. (Judy Harris; RPL: Power, Pedagogy and Possibility; 2000)
- 3.2 RPL is used to relate informal training, life experience and work experience, to a set of clearly defined workplace outcomes. The purpose of this is to allow the applicant

access to wider career and workplace training opportunities, especially to those candidates who have previously been denied access to formal training opportunities.

#### **4. PRINCIPLE OF RPL ASSESSMENT**

RPL assessment is based on the following principles:

- Compliance with the objectives of the NQF
- Grounded in sound education and training theory
- International comparability
- Adequate human and financial resources
- Aligned to the notion of integrative assessment
- Compliance with SAQA guidelines and criteria for assessment
- Public availability and scrutiny of credit transfer provisions;
- Allows access to all individuals regardless of gender, race or disability
- A consistent approach to the granting of credit
- RPL process provides opportunities for RPL but will not hold out false promises

#### **5. ACTIVITIES AND THREADS RELATED TO RPL ASSESSMENT**

Activities and threads related to the RPL assessment process are discussed below.

- Learning that has occurred should be awarded a credit and not for experience alone. The length of time and years of experience are not calculated and assessed but it is the learning, specific skills, competencies and knowledge acquired, that is assessed and credit bearing.
- Credit should be awarded only for relevant levels of learning as determined in the unit standards and qualifications and by the relevant sector and its quality assurance processes.
- Credit should be awarded only for learning that has a balance between theory and practical application and the learner can transfer knowledge and skills to a different context.
- Appropriate subject matter/academic experts and assessors must make the determination of competence levels and of credit awards, when decisions are made regarding RPL assessment and certification.
- Two kinds of expertise are needed to determine on the one hand, how much the learner knows and how well and on the other hand to preserve quality assurance by determining whether the credit can be given, how much, for which outcomes as defined in the unit standards and/or qualifications, at what level, and additional learning if required.

- Accredited learning should be carefully documented and incorporated in the database of learners to avoid giving credit twice for the same learning.
- Accessibility and availability of policies and procedures applied to assessment, including provision for appeal, to ensure care is taken of not misleading learners and thereby encourage unrealistic expectations.
- SETQAA will determine the appropriateness of fees charged for the development of RPL assessment instruments as well as the RPL assessment itself (where inculcated by the SSETA) and would base such amounts on services performed in the process and not determined by the amount of credit awarded.
- RPL assessors used should receive adequate training for the functions they perform, and there should be provision for their continued professional development
- The RPL assessment process should be regularly monitored, reviewed, evaluated and revised to reflect changes according to changed/reviewed standards and qualifications.
- RPL assessments at level 4 will be quality assured by conduct of a Final Integrated Summative Assessment developed and assessed externally.

By adhering to these standards, SETQAA will ensure that RPL becomes a rigorous and defensible process, providing a sense of reliability, equality and fairness, providing a common understanding and communication among all stakeholders, establishing an ethical code of conduct for the RPL assessor and improving mobility for the RPL assessor and portability of the learner.

## **6. BENEFITS TO THE CANDIDATE**

The RPL assessment process has certain beneficiaries. One of the beneficiaries is the candidate itself. The benefits to the candidate are as follows:

- A fair and transparent process;
- Prior knowledge of the standards and criteria which will be used in the assessment and accreditation processes;
- Prior knowledge of the learning outcomes to be met;
- Exposed to competent, trained educators and assessors skilled in working with diverse groups who want them to succeed and who explore innovative methods to assist them to do so;
- An approach that balance subject knowledge and critical cross field outcomes with skills, competencies and practical knowledge;
- Assessment methods that are flexible appropriate to the subject and tailored the needs of the learner;
- Offered an opportunity to have prior learning evaluated and assessed for academic credit towards credentials within a reasonable period of time;
- Transfer credits gained by means of the RPL process.

## 7. ROLE OF THE RPL ADVISOR, ASSESSOR AND MODERATOR

The RPL advisor must be a subject matter expert and knows what competence will be assessed in the unit standard and/or qualification. S/he is responsible to support the learners through the RPL process, beginning with preliminary counselling and information sharing, up to including the presence of a trained advisor/mentor/coach before the assessment and the right to appeal. RPL advising could be on the following:

- Advise on qualifications/unit standards and assessment criteria;
- Advice on building and structuring of Portfolio of Evidence;
- Explanation of the assessment criteria for qualification/unit standard;
- Explanation of different assessment methods that could be used to do RPL;
- Explanation of how to develop and present evidence against qualifications/unit standards;
- Explanation on cross-referencing;
- Submission of evidence to panel of assessors, proposing to consist of:
  - Subject matter expert(s) and academic experts
  - Assessor(s)
  - Internal moderator
  - Work Supervisor(s) (optional)
  - Union representative (optional)
  - Management representative

RPL assessors must be a subject matter expert and are responsible for the following:

- Reviewing of evidence against assessment criteria;
- Identification of gaps/areas for further training/progression/assessment;
- Feedback on review process;
- Planning of the assessment where insufficient evidence has been presented in consultation with learner;
- Assessment of the learner;
- Making judgments.

## 8. PROPOSED ELIGIBLE CANDIDATES FOR RPL

The following candidates could be eligible to apply for RPL:

- 8.1 Adult Learners/School leavers with working experience:** those working adults who have work-related skills and competencies, but who are either under qualified for their positions or have a personal need to upgrade/attain relevant qualifications.

**8.2 Employees:** those organisations that would like to use the RPL process for the benefits of implementing their employment equity plans could send employees that could gain credit through RPL;

- Training of line managers to communicate the importance and relevance of learning and develop internal RPL promotional programmes;
- Integrating RPL with staff training and development policies and to facilitate the professional development and career-pathing of employees;
- RPL could contribute to significant increases in productivity and enable employers to “audit” their staff and to plan for more effective human resource development;
- RPL could contribute to a positive institutional morale and give substance to the concept of life-long learning since it allows employees to acquire “qualified status”, to market themselves more effectively.

**8.3 Learners with incomplete schooling:** large number of potential learners with incomplete FET/Matric Certificates with varying levels of academic skills and/or relevant learning

through experience. These learners can be assessed, receive guidance and career path planning to be considered; the assessment panel must determine what type of up study needs to be done in the form of an extended curriculum to ensure that their levels of competency are equal to the required NQF level.

## 9 DEFINITIONS

9.1 **Assessment** is the process of gathering and weighing evidence in order to determine whether the applicants for registration have demonstrated the prescribed criteria for registration with the SACPCMP. The generic assessor standard registered by SAQA entitled ‘Plan and conduct assessment of learning outcomes’ outlines the process in detail.

9.2 **Moderation** is the process of ensuring that assessments have been conducted in line with agreed practices, and are fair, reliable and valid. The generic assessor standard registered by SAQA entitled ‘Moderate assessment’ outlines the process in detail.

9.3 **Evidence** is the process by which applicants produce and organise evidence for the purpose of assessment. Guidelines are provided for the content of this portfolio of evidence for each category type of registration.

9.4 **Registered constituent assessor and moderator** means a person who is registered by a relevant ETQA in accordance with criteria established for this purpose by SAQA to measure the achievement of specified National Qualifications Framework standards or qualifications and recognized by SACPCMP.

9.5 **Registered Assessor / Reviewer** means a person who is accredited and registered with the SACPCMP for the purpose of reviewing the applicants who wish to RPL’d. The reviewers must be qualified at a level higher than the relevant applicants registration or equivalent recognized by the SACPCMP Registration Committee.

## 10 REGISTRATION CATEGORIES

- Candidate construction manager
- Professional construction manager
- Candidate construction project manager
- Professional construction project manager

10.1 Note: All applicants for registration under RPL process will be assessed at all outcome levels. (No credit for past Matric results)

## 11 APPENDIX A & B

Examples of determining the complexity of a construction project and their rating are described in the appendix A & B. and can be used as a guideline for the assessment of the applicants category of registration.

## 12 METHODS OF ASSESSMENT OF APPLICANTS

- Oral assessment.
- Demonstration
- Written
- Projects / Case Studies
- Further documentation i.e. proof of experience, further development courses, examples work done, etc.

## 13 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGIES FOR RPL

RPL assessment methodologies should be:

- Accessible and appropriate for the learning which is being assessed;
- Appropriate for the ways that the learning is used;
- Appropriate for the level and context of the assessment;
- Transparent, valid, fair, reliable;
- Open selection process;
- Accessible and understandable, as free from jargon as possible

- Allow people to demonstrate their knowledge and skills and not put barriers in their way;
- Not be biased against particular groups of people;
- Cost-effective;
- Linked with appropriate support for learners.

### **Methods for collecting evidence**

All assessment methodologies have strengths and weaknesses and none should be used alone and in isolation. The selection of an appropriate assessment methodology is an important part of preparation for assessment. The selection will be guided by the nature of the competence to be assessed and must clearly be appropriate to the skills and knowledge being assessed. Negotiations with the potential learner about their preferences are an essential part of the assessment process.

## 14 THE RPL MODEL FOR SACPCMP REGISTRATION OF APPLICANTS

### PHASE I - Candidate Application

BENCHMARK INFORMATION  
INFORMATION ABOUT RPL  
APPLICATION FORM



### PHASE II - ASSESSMENT

INTERVIEW: RANGE OF "OTHER EVIDENCE"  
ASSESSMENT  
DECISION MAKING/OUTCOME OF RPL ASSESSMENT



### PHASE III - REVIEW

OUTCOME  
APPEAL/REVIEW  
FEEDBACK TO APPLICANT

## 15 REGISTRATION ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA WITH THE SACPCMP

Type Registration	% Mark Accepted
Professional Construction Manager	80%
Candidate Construction Manager	60%
Professional Construction Project Manager	80%
Candidate Construction Project Manger	60%

**Appendix A**

**Crawford-Ishikura Factor Table for Evaluating Roles (CIFTER)**

Project Management Complexity Factor	Descriptor and Points			
1. Stability of the overall project context	Very high (1)	High (2)	Moderate (3)	Low (4)
2. Number of distinct disciplines, methods, or approaches involved in performing the project	Low (1)	Moderate (2)	High (3)	Very high (4)
3. Magnitude of legal, social, or environmental implications from performing the project	Low (1)	Moderate (2)	High (3)	Very high (4)
4. Overall expected financial impact (positive or negative) on the project's stakeholders	Low (1)	Moderate (2)	High (3)	Very high (4)
5. Strategic importance of the project to the organization or organizations involved	Very low (1)	Low (2)	Moderate (3)	High (4)
6. Stakeholder cohesion regarding the characteristics of the product of the project	High (1)	Moderate (2)	Low (3)	Very low (4)
7. Number and variety of interfaces between the project and other organizational entities	Very low (1)	Low (2)	Moderate (3)	High (4)

**Appendix B**  
**Detail on CIFTER Ratings**  
(Informative)

In order to illustrate the use of the Crawford / Ishikura Factor Table for Evaluating Roles (CIFTER), a sample project is listed from a construction environment

Sample Project	Project Management Complexity Factor							Total Score
	1. Stability	2. No. Of Methods	3. Implications	4. Financial Impact	5. Strategic Importance	6. Stakeholder Cohesion	7. Project Interfaces	
A	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
B	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	15
C	3	2	3	2	4	3	3	20
D	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
E	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	13
F	4	2	4	3	3	3	3	22
G	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	9
H	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	13
I	3	3	2	2	3	4	3	20

**Example Contract for determining project complexity.**

- Engineering and Construction project: construction management of the renovation of a 30-storey hotel for an international hotel chain.

Factor	Rating	Discussion
1. Stability	3	Moderate — project duration is quite long and there is likelihood of turnover among key stakeholders; owner's co-ordinator has little power to make decisions
2. Number of methods	3	High — relatively complex project involving core disciplines such as engineering, plumbing, and HVAC, as well as specialists in interior design, landscape design, and artwork installations
3. Implications	2	Moderate — mostly environmental as the site is relatively large; neighbouring plots may be affected
4. Financial impact	2	Moderate — financial impact on the chain is limited, but this is a major project for the prime contractor
5. Strategic importance	3	Moderate — important first step in the chain's plans to establish foothold in rapidly developing region
6. Stakeholder cohesion	4	Very low — while basic specifications have been agreed, there are many details to be worked out and many conflicting requirements
7. Project interfaces	3	Moderate — project is fairly large and involves many specialties

**1. LIST OF SOURCES**

- COSATU (2000). *Recognition of Prior Learning* (Learning and work series); COSATU, Supported by GTZ: Johannesburg.
- GAPPS standards
- Criteria and Guidelines for the Implementation of the Recognition of Prior Learning (SAQA 2002)