RPL - RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

CONTENTS:

1. <u>INTRODUCTION:</u>

1.1.   Abbreviations:

AQP   Assessment Quality Partner

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

1.2.   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 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 occurs in an organized and structured education and training environment and 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 registered or registered as part of qualification on the NQF with a clearly defined purpose.
Professional body	A body of expert practitioners in an occupational field and includes an occupational body.
Recognized 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 that delivers learning programmes that 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.

2.   PREAMBLE:[1]

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in South Africa is critical to developing an equitable education and training system and is vital within the NQF framework. This policy aims to facilitate the implementation of RPL across all sectors of education and training. This RPL policy seeks to meet the needs of all the role players, including providers of education and training, and most importantly, the primary beneficiaries of the process, the learners.

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[1] Source documents

1 The Recognition of Prior Learning in the context of the South African National Qualifications Framework
   http://www.saqa.org.za/docs/pol/2002/rpl_sanqf.pdf

2 Criteria and Guidelines for the Implementation of the Recognition of Prior Learning **http://www.saqa.org.za/list.php?e=rpl**

This RPL policy document has as its primary audience, the Education and Training Quality Assurance Bodies (ETQAs), who must facilitate the implementation of RPL and quality assure assessment policies of their constituent providers.

2.1.   Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) defined:

[1]"*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*" (the National Standards Bodies Regulations (No 18787 of 28 March 1998, issued in terms of the SAQA Act 58 of 1995). [2]"*Thus, Recognition of prior learning is giving credit to what learners already know and can do regardless of whether this learning was achieved formally, informally or non-formally*" (2001: 43. Criteria and Guidelines for Assessment of NQF Registered Unit standards and Qualifications)

2.2.   The principles in the development and execution of RPL:

- Learning occurs in all kinds of situations – formally, informally and non-formally.
- Measurement of the learning takes place against specific learning outcomes required for a particular qualification; and
- Credits are awarded for such learning if it meets the requirements of the qualification.

2.3.   The process of recognizing prior learning is about:

- Identifying what the candidate knows and can do;
- Matching the candidate's skills, knowledge and experience to specific standards and the associated assessment criteria of a qualification.
- Assessing the candidate against those standards; and
- Crediting the candidate for skills, knowledge, and experience built up through formal, informal and non-formal learning occurred in the past.

3.   THE PURPOSE:

Many prospective learners who enroll for an accredited program have had some level of experience and learning achievements in the field of ministry. The RPL process is the mechanism to assess the relevancy of this acquired experience and learning in terms of the accredited curriculum. The RPL compare previous learning and experiences of prospective learners in whatever degree of qualification obtained against the

learning outcomes required for the specified qualification. The RPL process includes acknowledging prior formal and non-formal learning and informal learning that will be 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 workplace.

 RPL processes can include guidance and counselling and extended preparation for assessment.

4.   RPL PRINCIPLES:

There is no fundamental difference in the assessment of previously acquired skills and knowledge and the assessment of skills and knowledge acquired through a current learning program. The candidate seeking credits for previously acquired skills and knowledge must comply with all the requirements as stated in unit standards or qualifications. The difference lies in the route to the assessment.

RPL is a form of assessment, which ideally should be fully integrated into all learning programs. As such, the principles of good assessment are equally valid for RPL and all other forms of assessment. This includes taking a holistic view of the assessment process, where the context of prior achievements and the context of the person who is being assessed is considered.

Total correspondence between a qualification (or unit standard) and a candidate's prior learning is not necessary – a rough equivalence will do. RPL is more than a comparison of experience against learning outcomes for a specified qualification. It must include a comparison between learning and expertise common to a range of qualifications at a particular level of the NQF. This would mean moving away from a purely technical approach to a holistic approach.

A holistic approach, looking at equivalence in terms of complexity and depth of learning, required for a qualification that considers the nature and form of experiential learning of adults.

Learning programs of providers and institutions are not generic. Qualification descriptors and, in particular, the level descriptors for a level on the NQF provide generic descriptions of the learning expected at a specific level. When equivalence of learning is determined, it is essential to clearly understand the broad descriptor associated with the level, breadth, and depth of learning required.

5.   RPL CRITERIA:

The Objective:	This document covers the process of gathering evidence and making judgments about a learner's performance in relation to standards and qualifications. It outlines the process whereby such evidence is assessed and credited.
The Scope:	The assessment of learning is a service available to all learners who have appropriate learning and skills in relation to qualifications for which this institution is accredited, regardless of where and how the learning was obtained.
The Principles of assessment:	All assessments are subject to the principles of:

- Validity
- Fairness
- Reliability
- practicability

Support structures for learners and assessors:

The Provider offers all necessary infrastructure, including administrative and record-keeping services.

Process of assessment:	RPL must be conducted according to the policies and procedures contained in this document. AQP provides an Assessment instrument guiding Assessor through the process of RPL assessment, which also serves as a record thereof.

Moderation and quality assurance:

Assessment instruments used by providers must be moderated by learning area specialists before assessments take place. A moderator must moderate completed RPL assessments at the Assessment Centre level.

Appeal process:	Procedures for appeal must be available to applicants as specified in the Provider's QMS.
Record keeping:	Providers must keep complete records of the RPL assessment process and outcome, which should also form part of the learner's portfolio.
Recording of SoRs:	All SoRs awarded based on RPL assessment must be recorded on the national learner data basis as soon as it has been verified.

6.   THE TYPES OF RPL:

The qualifications and part qualifications in the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework cover a variety of contexts. This policy recognizes that candidates might seek RPL for various reasons and depending on multiple contexts. There are two main forms of RPL that reflect the different purposes and processes within which RPL occurs.

RPL for access into a program:

Provides an alternative access route into a program of learning/qualification for those who do not meet the formal minimum requirements for admission. RPL for access applies to learning programs offered by an accredited educational institution, Skills Development provider or workplace-based training provider.

Prospective learners who have not obtained a National Senior Certificate or an NQF 4 qualification but believe that they can cope with the requirements of an NQF 5 qualification may submit a Portfolio of Evidence as set out later.

The following guidelines are to assess whether a candidate will qualify for entry into the particular NQF level as set out:

NQF 2:   Formal requirements for NQF 2 are NIL. No school or other qualification is needed. In theory, candidates do not even need to be able to read and write. No physical handicap may exclude a person. In case of mental handicaps, only on proper professional evaluation, a person may be refused.

NQF 5:   Formal requirements for NQF 5 is a matric certificate or other SAQA accredited certificate on NQF 4 level.

6.1.   RPL for credit:

To provide for the formal award of credits for, or towards a qualification or part qualification registered on the NQF. SDPs are obliged to offer all prospective learners the opportunity to do an RPL.
The outcome of an RPL process should be of equal value and quality to assessment which is done during the learning program. If the candidate is fully compliant with the requirements of a particular module, a SoR can be registered on the QCTO learner database against her/his name.

The qualifications on the OQSF sub-framework are occupational and comprise Knowledge, Practical and Workplace experience components. Therefore, these qualifications would require a formal teaching and learning environment, a practical /simulation environment, and actual workplace experience. The knowledge and skills are assessed through a formal external integrated summative assessment component. The Assessment Quality Partner (AQP) must design and implement instruments to conduct Recognition of Prior Learning at the external summative assessment stage to support the learners who might have difficulties sitting for formal external integrated summative assessment.

For both the NQF 2 and 5 qualifications, the AQP as service providers for the ACRP has developed full RPL instruments, which QCTO has approved. Providers are advised to use these instruments for the following reasons:

- The instruments guide the Provider through the RPL process systematically.
- The instruments provide a complete record with proof of compliance with procedures.
- The instrument allows the moderator to keep records of the detailed assessment process.
- The instrument allows for records of awards through RPL that must be kept as part of the candidate's portfolio of evidence.

7.   ACRP / AQP RPL MECHANISM AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS:

RPL assessment is as critical as the regular learning program assessment. The RPL assessor must understand the reasoning and processes of the RPL assessment.

7.1.   Accompanying Documents

The following documents form part of the RPL assessment process:

I.   National Policy for the Implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) within the context of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act 67 of 2008.

II.   The ACRP RPL policy document

The following will only be provided after Payment for process has been received

III.   The RPL Application Forms for NQF2 and NQF5 – receive only after Payment for process has been received

IV.   The RPL Assessment Workbooks NQF2 and NQF5- receive only after Payment for proves has been received

7.2. The RPL assessment instruments

Both the NQF 2 and NQF 5 qualifications focus on specific outcomes whereby a Christian Religious Practitioner and/or Professional can fulfil their ministerial calling. The RPL process to assess the candidate's competencies through the assessment processes as set out hereafter.

The RPL process must identify the candidates' ministerial functions that they will fulfil or want to be RPL-assessed on. These ministerial functions are represented through the Exit Level Outcomes (ELOs) of the candidate's curricula. These ELOs are also what will be assessed in the EISA. This means that the candidate needs to be assessed on selected components only and not on the full program.

The RPL assessment schedule guides the Assessor in distinguishing which components (modules) of the curriculum need to be assessed. The candidate to provide evidence of knowledge and/or practical skills achieved in the identified modules.

- The RPL assessment should focus on the Internal Assessment Criteria (IAC) of the relevant modules.
- A candidate need not be assessed on all the relevant modules pertaining to a particular ELO.
- For each module successfully assessed through RPL, a SoR may be rewarded. This means that the candidate may be exempted from doing that component of the learning program.
- Note that different modules (especially Knowledge Modules) may be relevant to different ELOs.
- Therefore, the assessment schedule guides the Assessor to identify which modules and their IAC have to be assessed through RPL.

7.3. The RPL policy document

The policy document summarises the policy and procedures based on the RPL Policy Document issued by the ACRP under the mandate of [2]The National Qualifications Framework and the ACRP.

7.4. The RPL Application Forms

The Application forms outline the necessary procedures and requirements that a candidate should follow. Criteria such as documentation required, modules applying for, the fees' structure, etc., are included. The forms outline the requirements of the qualifications according to the Exit Level Outcome and its associated assessment criteria—the applicant to identify which of the associated assessment criteria and apply accordingly.

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[2] (NQF) Act 67 of 2008 (2: 2013. National Policy for the Implementation of the Recognition of Prior Learning).

- The application form gives an overview of the qualification of the relevant level in terms of the functions and purpose of the occupation.
- A list of Exit Level Outcomes with its respective Associated Assessment Criteria.
- The applicant then has to indicate which Associated Assessment Criteria they want to be RPL assessed for.

On receipt of the application, the RPL assessor, based on the associated assessment criteria which the applicant indicated, must then list which of the Exit Level Outcome will have to be taken into account in the process of assessing the applicant.

7.5.   The RPL Assessment Schedule

This document includes specific procedures to be followed in assessing the applicant as it is prescribed in this policy document. The Assessor and Moderator have access to comments and will affirm that the correct steps were taken. The RPL Assessment Schedule serves as a record for internal and external moderation regarding the process and will function as evidence in a dispute. It must be kept as part of the applicant's portfolio of evidence and all supporting evidence that he/she will produce for RPL.

Steps to follow:

Step 1 (Application): The general Application form to be completed (Contains all information, fees, student info, modules applying for).

The form to be accompanied by a **full Curriculum Virtue** (CV) and **proof of application payment** (Annexure 2), copies of the student's qualification certificate, copy of the Students Identity document or passport, a letter from the student's church/ministry institution, as confirmation that the student is in ministry (see Section 5 of the application form). This letter is not required if the application is facilitated through an Intermediary Institution.

Step 2 (Pre-Screening): A Pre-Screening in the form of a pre-arranged consultation with the student will take place. The purpose of the consultation is to determine if it is worthwhile for the student to make a formal application. The RPL Assessor will make their recommendations based on the outcome of the consultation.

Step 3 (Evaluation) After the evaluation is completed, the student to pay the assessment fee and must complete the applicable assessment schedule (include motivation + evidence for each of the module's KM 1-13, PM 1-16, WM 1-5)

### 7.6.	The Evaluation process:

The completed assessment schedule must be referred to the RPL Assessor for evaluation.

The following three outcomes to be used as a result:

- Accepted
- Not accepted
- Conditional acceptance. Conditional acceptance must be stipulated through an oral exam, assessment, multiple questionnaires etc.

### 7.7.	Conduct moderation of assessment:

The completed RPL assessments to be moderated by a moderator at the assessment centre level (External moderator/AQP). The Moderator to be supplied with all relevant documentation: Application form, full assessment schedule and all relevant supporting evidence.

### 7.8.	Communication of results:

All SoRs awarded based on RPL assessment must be recorded on the national learner data basis as soon as it had been verified. The SoR's to be loaded on the QCTO Database.

### 7.9.	Note on assessment results:

- ➢ The applicant is assessed according to the Curriculum structure, and SoRs are awarded per Knowledge Module, Practical Module and Workplace Module. This means that RPL assessments are done on the same level and standard as assessment in a complete learning program.
- ➢ Should the applicant comply *fully* according to the results and confirmation from the Assessor and Moderator, and SoR may be awarded accordingly, and the applicant may sit for the EISA. However, the Provider should assist the applicant in preparing for the EISA (see 4.1 above).
- ➢ Should the applicant only comply with *some* modules, an SoR may be awarded for the approved modules. The applicant must do additional work to become fully compliant.
- ➢ Should the applicant lack compliance within *certain parts* of modules, arrangements should be made to assist the applicant in becoming compliant, be it Knowledge Topics (KT and their IAC) and/or Practical Skills (PS and their IAC) or Workplace Experience (WE and their SE).

> ➢ Should the applicant not comply *at all* in some Modules, the applicant should enrol with an SDP to obtain SoRs in these modules.

> ➢ Applicants who have been in ministry for some time and can produce proof thereof may receive Workplace Module credits (a deduction of the time specified in the Curriculum for WM). They may still have to produce proof of doing the prescribed WE and produce the supporting evidence (SE) before being awarded an SoR for a particular WM.

8. DETAILED RPL ASSESSMENT PROCESS:

8.1. Prepare for assessment:

The Assessor determines which KM's, PM's and WM's the applicant must be assessed on. This is done by listing the Knowledge Modules, Practical Modules and Workplace Modules applicable to the identified ELOs that were decided that the applicant will be RPL assessed on.

8.2. Do RPL assessment:

RPL Assessment is done of the applicant's portfolio of documentation and personal assessment for the applicable modules towards the awarding of SoRs.

The process of recognizing prior achievements is about:

8.3. Directorate, Quality, Assurance and Development

Criteria and Guidelines for Assessment of NQF Registered Unit standards and Qualifications

- ❖ Identifying what the learner knows and can do,
- ❖ Matching the learner's skills, knowledge and experience to specific,
- ❖ standards and the associated criteria,
- ❖ Assessing the learner against those standards.

Crediting the learner for skills, knowledge and experience built up through formal/informal/non-formal learning occurred in the past.

9. Supporting Documents

9.1. RPL Application Form NQF5

9.2. RPL Application Form NQF2

9.3. RPL Assessment Workbook for NQF5

9.4. RPL Assessment Workbook for NQF2

10.   Requirements in preparation of the RPL and process:

Step 1: The general Application form to be completed (Contain all information, fees, student info, modules applying for). Must be accompanied by full CV and proof of payment for the application fee.

Step 2: (Pre-Screening): A Pre-Screening in the form of a pre-arranged consultation with the student will take place. The purpose of the consultation is to determine if it is worth the while for the student to make a formal application. The RPL Assessor will make their recommendations based on the outcome of the consultation.

Step 3: (Evaluation) After the Evaluation is completed, the student to pay the assessment fee and must complete the applicable assessment schedule (include motivation + evidence for each of the module's KM 1-13, PM 1-16, WM 1-5)

10.1 Fees applicable to RPL:

- Application Fee: R 800-00
- Assessment Fees: R 200-00

These fees are non-refundable in case applications are unsuccessful.