

The Forest Industries Education and Training
Authority
(FIETA)



**Recognition of Prior Learning
(RPL)**

An AusAid- SAVET Project

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1. RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

The Forest Industries Education and Training Authority (FIETA) is committed to achieving equity in education and training and developing workable links between resources, access to training, delivery of training, participation and outcomes. Education and training is the foundation of an informed society and the key to overcoming social inequality and achieving social justice for all South African people. This assumes that education and training is not only essential to economic prosperity but it also plays a crucial role in enabling South Africans to improve the quality of their lives and to contribute to a peaceful, productive and democratic nation.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), like other forms of assessment and learning, is a social activity located in a particular social context and bound by the principles of access, redress, equity and quality. This calls for an approach that explicitly addresses the visible and invisible barriers to learning and assessment for the vast majority of South Africans. Such an approach must increasingly generate the commitment of all partners to removing these barriers and to building a system that is visible, usable and widely recognised as an effective and creative vehicle for life long learning.

To this end the FIETA believes it is important to develop an overall Policy Framework for the Recognition of Prior Learning which:

- Identifies how all knowledge can be incorporated and recognised
- Recognises local and regional diversity of South African histories and perspectives.
- Seeks appropriate advice from learners and their communities.
- Develops processes for the Recognition of Prior Learning that is appropriate to the needs of individual learners and provides them with greater choices in the South African community as a whole.
- Develops methods that provide support for each learner.
- Supports employment in all industry sectors that come under the umbrella of the FIETA.
- Promotes rewarding and active life long learning for the individual and promotes positive learning environments.

In order to realise this responsibility; the FIETA requires the support and co-operation of all partners. Education and training in South Africa is a partnership incorporating a range of participants from industry, training providers, communities, government and most importantly, the learner.

2. A DEFINITION FOR THE RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

2.1 Definition

RPL means the recognition of the skills, knowledge and capability currently held by a person, regardless of how, when and where the learning occurred. The learning may have been acquired through any combination of formal or informal training and education, work experience, community engagement or general life experience.

In order to grant RPL, the assessor must be confident that the candidate is currently competent against the agreed outcomes of the RPL which may be endorsed unit standards or learning outcomes from other programs of learning. To do this the assessor must collect evidence to convincingly show that the candidate's skills, knowledge and capability meet the endorsed unit standards or learning outcomes.

The evidence may take a variety of forms and could include certification, demonstration, references from past employers, testimonials from clients and work samples. The assessor must ensure that the evidence is authentic, valid, reliable, current and sufficient.

2.2 The RPL System

The above definition of RPL primarily addresses the assessment procedures that lead to the formal acknowledgement of a person's current skills and knowledge. RPL may also include processes, such as credit transfer from one learning institution to another and mutual recognition of qualifications issued by other public or private education and training providers.

2.2.1 Credit Transfer

Credit transfer arrangements are based upon formal agreements between different education and training institutions. These arrangements may be based on similarity of content and/or of outcomes of learning programs and curricula.

Credit transfer arrangements create formal links between qualifications issued within different parts of the South African education and training system. All aspects of credit transfer should be considered. These include qualifications issued by schools, Adult Basic Education and Training, Further Education and Training and Higher Education, and between the public and private training sectors. This will ensure a closer relation between education and training in all programs and enable a range of learning pathways, which will support life long learning.

Credit transfer arrangements are to be negotiated by the educational and training institutions involved.

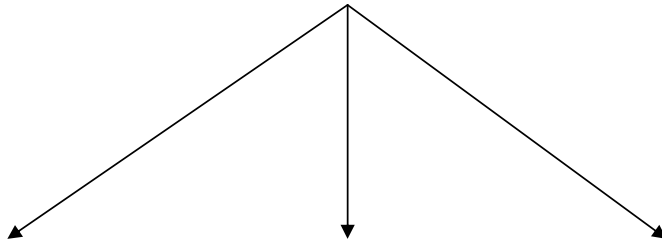
2.2.2 Mutual Recognition

Mutual Recognition occurs when, under the National Qualifications Framework, a registered education and training organisation is required to recognise qualifications issued by another accredited education and training organisation. Mutual Recognition is an automatic process, and will grow in importance as the national education and training system, and the National Qualifications Framework, is progressively acknowledged.

2.2.3 Recognition of qualifications from overseas

An RPL system would not be complete without acknowledging the importance of recognising international qualifications. Credit transfer, mutual recognition or an RPL assessment can do this.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)



Assessment

Credit Transfer

Mutual Recognition

3. THE LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR THE RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)

All legislation in South Africa derives from the Constitution. Thus, in considering the legislative framework for recognition of prior learning the Constitution needs to be reviewed and should be followed by a review of :

- Legislation and policy providing for human resource development strategies, skills development and workplace learning.
- Legislation providing for the development and delivery of education and training,
- Legislation establishing the National Qualification Framework and providing for quality assurance.

This section provides a synopsis of the key aspects of the legislation and the impact that this has on RPL. A more detailed discussion on the legislation is attached as Appendix 1.

3.1 The Constitution

The Constitution is the supreme law of the Republic of South Africa and draws its mandate from the largest public participation program in this country. One of the rights established in the Bill of Rights within the Constitution, is the right of every person to basic education and to further education, which the State, through reasonable measures, must make progressively more available and accessible. The Bill of Rights also speaks to the importance of ensuring equal access to educational institutions. Further, the Bill of Rights recognises the need to redress the results of past racially discriminatory laws and practices.

3.2 Legislation providing for the Development and Delivery of Education and Training

The National Education Policy Act outlines the legislative basis for the development of all education policy in South Africa. The legislation that follows in this section provides the legislative foundation for Further Education and Training, Higher Education and Adult Basic Education and Training in South Africa. All provider institutions fall within these bands, and the laws talk to the provider environment that is to exist in South Africa.

3.2.1 National Education Policy Act (No.27 of 1996)

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The National Education Policy Act was the first education and training law passed by the democratic Government in order to change the education and training system. The major purpose of this Act is to lay the foundation for all national education policy.

Drawing from the Constitution, the Act proclaims it necessary to adopt legislation to facilitate the democratic transformation of the national system into one which serves the rights and interests of all people of South Africa and upholds their fundamental rights"

3.2.2 Further Education and Training Act (No. 98 of 1988)

The Further Education and Training Act provides for the regulation of further education and training, including the establishment, governance and funding of public further education and training, the registration of private further education and training institutions, and the quality assurance and quality promotion of further education and training. Thus, the Act calls for the restructuring and transformation of programs and institutions to be more responsive to the needs of the economy and society. This suggests the need for FET Colleges to ensure equal access, redress and relevance.

3.2.3 Adult Basic Education and Training Act (No. 52 of 2000)

The Adult Basic Education and Training Act regulates the provision of Adult Basic Education and Training, and provides for the establishment and governance of adult learning centres and for the quality assurance of Adult Basic Education and Training.

As with other education legislation, Adult Basic Education and Training is called upon to redress the effect of past discrimination and respond to the needs of the Republic of South Africa, the labor market and the community, as well as realise the potential of each learner.

3.3 Legislation establishing a National Qualifications Framework and providing for Quality Assurance

The development of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is the responsibility of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), which was established by the SAQA Act (1995), and is supported by a number of regulations. The General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act, as well as the HE....supports the SAQA Act, and specifically provides for the quality assurance of Further and Adult Basic Education and Training and Higher Education and Training.

3.3.1 South African Qualifications Authority Act (No. 58 of 1995) and related legislation

This legislation establishes the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) whose major purpose is to develop and implement the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The NQF requires that qualifications and standards must be nationally registered, and that all education and training must be quality assured. As part of this responsibility, SAQA has developed the National Learner's Data Base that will, amongst other things, record individual learning achievements, and facilitate individual recognition for qualifications attained overseas. Both of these areas of activity are important components of a complete RPL system.

Objectives and principles of the NQF

The objectives of the NQF as outlined in the Act are:

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- To create an integrated national framework for learning achievements
- To facilitate access to, and mobility and progression within education, training and career paths
- To enhance the quality of education and training
- To accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities
- To contribute to the full, personal development of each learner, and the social and economic development of the nation at large.

To achieve these objectives, the NQF has developed a set of principles for education and training, which include: integration, relevance, credibility, coherence, flexibility, standards, legitimacy, accessibility, articulation, progression, portability, RPL and guidance for learners.

RPL is a key principle of the framework and is also critical to the achievement of a number of the other principles. The RPL principle states that RPL must give credit to learning that has already been acquired through life experiences and non-formal training courses. This is in line with the NQF emphasis on *what* is learned rather than *how* it is learned. This is emphasized in Section 8(1) (a) of the regulations that outline the requirements for the registration of qualifications. Qualification shall:

Indicate in the rules governing the award of the qualification that the qualification may be achieved in whole or in part through the recognition of prior learning, which concept includes but is not limited to learning outcomes achieved through formal, informal and non-formal learning and "work experience."

Further, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) has recently issued a discussion document for public comment on recognition of prior learning, the development, implementation and quality assurance of RPL systems, programs and services by ETQAs, assessors and providers.

National standards

To achieve the above, there are national standards and qualifications that specify the outcomes and assessment criteria against which an individual can be assessed regardless of where and how learning has taken place. To ensure the registration of standards and qualifications, there are 12 National Standard Setting Bodies (which are in the 12 organising fields). The key qualifications that are required in the Forest Industries will, in the main, be within the fields of *Agriculture and Nature Conservation* and *Manufacturing, Engineering and Technology*.

Quality assurance

Quality Assurance of providers is the responsibility of the Education and Training Quality Assurance bodies (ETQAs). The criteria for the accreditation and functions of the ETQAs as well as providers of education are set out in the Regulations under the South African Qualifications Authority Act (Act No 58 of 1995) ETQAs Government Gazette No 19231 (8 September). The legislative requirements for quality assurance for general and further education and training are established under General and Further Education, and Training Quality Assurance Act No 58 of 2001, and the HEQC is responsible for quality assurance for the higher education band.

The legislation cited above recognise that there are three types of ETQAs; these include economic (SETAs and Professional ETQAs), band (GENFETQA/Umalusi and HEQC) and the social ETQAs (none are yet in place). The ETQAs are responsible for, the accreditation of providers and the promotion of quality amongst their constituent providers.

In the ETQA regulations, one of the criteria for accreditation is that the activities of the ETQA must advance the objectives of the NQF and hence in accordance with these objectives, should facilitate learner access to Recognition for Prior Learning taking. Also, the quality assurance system including the assessment systems and policies must accommodate RPL.

3.4 National Skills Development Strategy

While NEPA ensures that education and training provision is able to respond to the needs of the economy and society, the skills development strategy and its related legislation pertain primarily to the demand side of the equation.

The strategy aims to transform the labour force from a low skills base to one that is committed to high quality jobs (both in self or other forms of employment) and to encourage life-long-learning. The strategy sets itself five objectives and recognises the need to meet the dual challenges of social development and the requirement to compete in the global economy.

The objectives of the Strategy are to:

- Develop a culture of high quality life long learning.
- Foster skills development in the formal economy for productivity and employability.
- Stimulate and support skills development in small businesses.
- Promote skills development, employability and sustainable livelihoods through social development initiatives.
- Assist new entrants into employment.

The strategy is given effect through the Skills Development Act which aims to develop skills that relate to the needs and demands of the economy, society and each learner, and to do this in a manner which links with SAQA and the NQF. RPL processes developed under the Act can provide successful learners with nationally recognised certification and/or credit toward a qualification within the NQF.

The Act also aims to increase the levels of investment in education and training by the labour market and to improve the return on that investment.

Workers in their turn are encouraged to participate in learnerships and other skills programmes. One of the Act's purposes is to: assist workers to access career pathways, assist the unemployed and new entrants to the labour market to find work, and to help retrenched workers to re enter the labour market. This will enable employers to find qualified employees as well as to provide and regulate employment services.

Critically, the Act aims to improve the employment prospects of persons previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination and to redress those disadvantages through training and education.

The Skills Development Act further establishes a number of structures that are critical to workplace training and development including RPL. They include the National Skills Authority, the National Skills Fund, Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), labour centers and the Skills Development Planning Unit.

3.4.1 Skills Development Levy Act (No. 9 of 1999)

The Skills Development Levy Act facilitates the creation of a levy / grants scheme. Each employer with an annual payroll in excess of a defined amount must contribute a levy. Employers can then claim for grants from the scheme for a range of activities including the development and implementation of the workplace skills plan, learnerships, skills programmes and apprenticeship training as well as research and development in activities that assist skills development.

3.5 Employment Equity Act (No. 55 of 1988)

The major purposes of the Employment Equity Act are to do away with unfair employment practices and to ensure redress. The Act aims to create opportunities for mobility in the workplace. It is also important for those individuals that are unemployed and wish to access the labour market, as it attempts to remove unnecessary barriers to accessing employment.

The Act supports RPL by moving away from only recognising formal qualifications. The Act states that an individual should be promoted or employed if they are "suitably qualified". This means that they could hold formal qualifications, or prior learning and relevant experience, and the ability to acquire within a reasonable period of time the capacity to do the job. An employer must consider all these factors when determining whether someone is suitably qualified for a job, and RPL initiatives enable the employer to do so.

3.6 Human resource development strategy

The laws and policies discussed above all contribute to the Human Resource Development strategy. The strategic objectives of the human resource development strategy are to:

- Improve the foundations for human development
- Improve the supply of skills
- Increase employed participation in life long learning
- Support employment growth through innovation and research
- Ensure that the four strategic objectives are linked

The Human Resource Development Strategy has set itself some very overarching and exhaustive goals beginning with improvement in the human development index for South Africa, reduction in inequality and a higher position in the international competitiveness table.

The strategy highlights the imperatives related to changes in the South African economy, which is becoming more service and knowledge based each year with far reaching implications for South Africa's largely low skilled work force. Thus the development of the capabilities of people is a key challenge in the attainment of socio-economic development, as does the failure of industry to invest in South African people through training.

The strategy also recognises that citizens need knowledge and skills and democratic values and that nationhood and productive citizenship are interdependent. As the Constitution enshrines, everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected. For this reason the strategy puts to the fore those who have suffered from discrimination in the past are put to the front in terms of identified national priorities.

3.5 Conclusion

What emerges strongly from the policy and legislative context is the need to ensure access, redress and equity, and the possibilities provided by the legislation to ensure that this can take place. Within these strategies RPL emerges as a key mechanism for taking many of these priorities forward.

Recognition of Prior Learning provides a foundation for an education system that promotes active participation, skills development, as well as a nation of citizens committed to life long learning. It does this by ensuring that adult learners who are outside of the formal education and training system are given the opportunity to have their previous contribution and skills acknowledged, and to develop these skills further. Thus, RPL is an important tool for acknowledging the inherent dignity of all South Africans. Further RPL facilitates access and progression within the labour market in an inclusive manner.

Critically, RPL allows for the development of the nation's skill base in a manner that minimises duplication and is therefore cost effective.

The FIETA supports the emphasis of these policies, and the strategic priorities emerging from the NSDS. This support is seen in the FIETA strategic plan (as set out in the SSP), which highlights the importance of the workplace as an active learning environment. Within this the FIETA promotes the importance of workers accessing opportunities to acquire new skills, and that new entrants are able to access opportunities for work experience and employment. This carries with it an emphasis on the need to prioritise the development of literacy as a key way of redressing past inequalities, including the promotion of gender equality and the advancement of the status of women.

The FIETA will play a substantial role in the new framework through the accreditation of providers, as well as the design and support of skills programmes and learnerships that meet the needs identified in the Sector Skills Plan. The FIETA will resource these activities through the SETA grant system, as well as through additional resources allocated by the National Skills Fund. It will also support this strategy through partnerships - with employers, workers, training providers and all other stakeholders both government and non-government - to improve the employability of the industry's labour force.

Further, the FIETA is committed to an RPL policy that enables the education process to contribute to the full personal development of each student, and to the moral, social cultural political and economic development of South Africa.

FIETAs RPL policy will ensure that there is an integrated approach to education and training, and that the RPL policy will be directed toward recognising the aptitudes, abilities, interests, prior knowledge and experience of students.

In summary, the FIETA recognises and supports the manner in which the policy and legislative environment supports RPL. Based on this analysis of the imperatives that

emerge from the legislation, a number of principles emerge. These are highlighted below and are explored further in the remainder of this document.

These are: Empowerment, Quality, Reliability, Flexibility, Fairness, Accessibility, Support

4. THE RATIONALE FOR A POLICY ON THE RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

"Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine, that a child of farm workers can become the president of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another." (Mandela 1994:194)

4.1 Introduction

The FIETA recognises that there is a range of social and economic trends informing education and training in South Africa that are reflected in the principles extracted from the legislation. These include:

- The imperative to redress past discrimination and to provide for access and equity
- The demographic changes to the workplace, including health related issues such as HIV/Aids and tuberculosis and youth unemployment
- South Africa's role in an increasingly global economy
- The rise of new technologies and the service industries in the national and international economy and the demand for new skills
- The huge gulf in economic well-being in South Africa
- The high level of unemployment and underemployment
- The high level of violence and crime

These developments underscore the necessity of equitable access to education and training if greater social equality is to be achieved. It emphasises the need for recognising the knowledge and skills that individuals have acquired in different ways, and the need to ensure that this recognition process relates to a broader process of ensuring individuals access further learning. Implicit in this is the recognition that the RPL process ensures that individuals do not need to duplicate their existing knowledge and skills in programmes but rather can access targeted education and training programmes. In this way, RPL plays a central role in ensuring life long learning, a concept central to both individual development and the ability of individuals to meet the needs of a continually changing economy.

4.2 Life Long Learning

Internationally, national economies are restructuring themselves in ways that react to technological, social and economic change to best take advantage of these changes. A universal objective has been to give greater weight to the skills knowledge and dispositions embodied in individuals and these include both workplace and civic skills. This commitment is embodied in international commitments to "lifelong learning".

Lifelong learning recognises "that not only the settings of formal education, but also the less formal settings of the home, the workplace, the community and society at large contribute to learning"

(Centre for Educational Research and Innovation 8:1998)

Lifelong learning involves recognition that learning takes place in many settings both formal and informal, and a long-term view that takes the whole course of an individual's life into consideration. The FIETA recognises that there are both economic and social imperatives to life long learning. Skills training for improving employability and competitiveness are important, but at the same time the importance of learning personal development and citizenship is also recognised.

Successful participation in lifelong learning may be said to display four characteristics.

- Individuals are motivated to learn on a continuing basis.
- They are equipped with the necessary skills to engage in self-directed learning.
- They have access to opportunities for learning on a continuing basis.
- They have financial and cultural incentives to participate.

4.2.1 *Motivated to learn on a continuing basis.*

Most adult learners within the FIETA's industry sectors may have had very negative prior experience of assessment at school and at work and may see very little benefit in pursuing further learning opportunities or educational qualifications. Lack of self-confidence, coupled with negative or discriminatory educational experiences all have an impact on the decision to proceed with RPL.

When learners know there are clear learning pathways that provide access to, and mobility and progression within education, training and career paths, they are more inclined to improve their skills and knowledge. This should be coupled with strategies that support learners to avoid repeating their previous experiences. Such improvements may increase their employment opportunities or provide them with skills that enable each individual to pursue community or personal interests.

4.2.2 *Equipped to engage in self-directed learning.*

The provision of vocational training under apartheid was characterised by unequal access to learning opportunities based upon race, the division between doing a task and holding the technical knowledge, and an unequal allocation of funding between historically white institutions, and historically black institutions. Students from certain institutions were given preferential treatment in access to further educational opportunities and in the labour market.

In many cases therefore, people may hold skills and knowledge and may be able to demonstrate ability, but this may never have been previously acknowledged or recognised. This is a great loss to the FIETA's industry sectors, one that can be remedied through the Recognition of Prior Learning.

RPL can also be a way of developing critical cross field outcomes related to the personal development of each learner. The RPL process can serve as a way of embedding these learning outcomes in the participant.

4.2.3 Access to opportunities

As has been established, many Africans under Apartheid were denied access to education at all stages of their life. RPL will provide more opportunities to people by providing access to education and training, to career paths and to other life enhancing opportunities. Once a person previous learning is recognised within the National Qualifications Framework, they are able to make choices about pathways through education and training, work and careers, which build upon their previous experience

Those seeking admission into higher education and to obtain access into a learning program, advanced standing for a course or to obtain credits towards a qualification can use RPL. Other purposes are to seek entry into a particular field of employment or professional life, for promotional purposes or self-development.

4.2.4 Incentives to participate

People learn many things outside the formal education and systems. This learning, no matter where, how and when it was obtained deserves recognition and this, in itself, is an incentive to participate. Opportunities for training and advancement, especially in relation to scarce skills, or to reverse the current, skewed, under representation of Africans, women and disabled maybe a sufficient incentive.

RPL should provide learners with evidence to help prove their claim for competency and this can be used to seek further education, employment and opportunity. Many people may even be prepared to pay a fee for an RPL service.

But others, after many years of non-recognition or discriminatory experiences of assessment processes will require further incentives. The context of RPL assessments will prove important under these circumstances. An opportunity to participate during community development initiatives may be both personally and socially rewarding with the added bonus of an RPL outcome.

Some will be too poor to be able to afford to participate in learning during different periods of their lives, and in this case recompense for costs incurred may be appropriate.

For employers, RPL may be seen as an imposition or a distraction from their core business. South African employers have a poor record in investment in training. However, "without skills development, their business will be restricted in terms of growth, productivity and efficiency, not to mention in terms of workplace commitment and culture. The Skills Development Levy and the consequently availability of grants to support skill development are tangible incentives for employers, as is participating in the creation of a sound economic and democratic environment for the new South Africa.

4. 2. 5 Skills for Participation in Active Citizenship

A full understanding of lifelong learning cautions against meeting the 'needs' of business and economic well being, to the detriment of human or worker perspective of vocational education and training. This perspective takes into account the social role of work in people's lives: the close connections between work and identity, work and community, and the contribution of work to community social infrastructure and so to the economic development of marginalised groups.

Lifelong learning

"Represents a new balance between the traditional missions of education and training - personal development: social and cultural and democratic advancement - and the economic imperatives of the labour market set in training by globalisation, technological and demographic change"

(Hassan m Butler 2000:11)

Citizenship not only includes the right to vote and be consulted but it also must mean the right to contribute to and engage in making decisions that effect ones community. This means building the capacity of people to engage on active decision making and in the community roles and functions that flow from them.

Citizenship skills are critical in helping South African to confront and overcome the inherent and deep-rooted problems of poverty and social inequality, HIV/Aids, tuberculosis and other health problems that are exacerbated by a lack of information and resources. Citizenship skills build the participation of the whole community, ensuring that South African democracy will continue to be active and engaged.

4.3 Conclusion

The FIETA envisages a broad role for education and training, one that performs both social and economic factors. The reconstruction and development of South Africa requires the redevelopment and nurturing of the talent of all peoples.

The FIETA has a constitutional obligation to widen access to education and training opportunities on an affordable basis.

This includes:

- Validating all forms of knowledge; giving value to workers knowledge regardless of the purpose of knowledge and skills.
- Personal, social and economic empowerment.
- Improving the education and training system: democratising and transforming education in South Africa from the old to the new.
- Skill development and job opportunities.

Recognition of Prior Learning policy is the foundation for the realisation by the FIETA of these responsibilities within a framework of lifelong learning for the people within its industry sectors.

5. PRINCIPLES FOR THE RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

As stated, assessment is critical to the process of recognising prior learning. Thus it is important to consider the principles that inform assessment, and then to specifically locate the principles of Recognition of Prior Learning within the broader assessment context. The principles of assessment, as stated in the unit standards that are required to be a registered assessor, include:

- **Appropriateness:** the method of assessment is suited to the performance being assessed
- **Fairness:** The method of assessment does not present any barriers to achievements, which are not related to the evidence
- **Manageability:** The methods used make for easily arranged, cost-effective assessments that do not unduly interfere with learning
- **Integration into work or learning:** Evidence collection is integrated into the work or learning process where this is appropriate and feasible
- **Validity:** The assessment focuses on the requirements laid down in the standard; ie fit for purpose
- **Direct:** The activities in the assessment mirror the conditions of actual performance as closely as possible
- **Authenticity:** The assessor is satisfied that the work being assessed is attributable to the person being assessed
- **Sufficient:** The evidence collected establishes that all criteria have been met and that performance to the required standard can be repeated consistently
- **Systematic:** Planning and recording is sufficiently rigorous to ensure that assessment is fair
- **Open:** Learners can contribute to the planning and accumulation of evidence. Assessment candidates understand the assessment process and the criteria that apply
- **Consistent:** The same assessor would make the same judgement again in similar circumstances

Thus where RPL takes the form of an assessment it should be guided by the principles outlined above. However. Specifically the key principles that should guide the RPL process include:

Empowerment

RPL processes will provide for the recognition of prior learning no matter how when or where they have been acquired.

RPL encourages participation in education and training, skills development and national capacity building

RPL promotes dignity, confidence and educational opportunity. It will be learner centered and developmental.

Quality

RPL is informed by national standards and principles.

RPL processes and procedures shall comply with assessment guidelines in the unit standards and regulations.

RPL will lead to the issuing of statement of attainment or a qualification under the National Qualifications Framework.

RPL will be part of the quality assurance mechanisms of education and training providers and subject to continuous improvement 'within those systems as we learn and gain from our experience.

Reliability

RPL will consistently measure the performance and achievement of the learner. It will cover the range of skills and knowledge needed to demonstrate competency.

RPL will involve the evaluation of sufficient evidence to enable judgments to be made as to whether competency has been achieved.

Assessment practices will be monitored and reviewed to ensure that there is consistency in the interpretation of evidence.

Assessor will be competent in terms of the unit standards for assessors. They will also be registered as assessors.

Fairness

RPL must be equitable to all groups of learners. It "will not discriminate on the bases of age, race, sex, disability and employment status.

RPL will take into account cultural and linguistic needs and recognise the need for flexible approaches to language and literacy, to learning and to knowledge and application.

Opportunities shall be provided for learners to challenge assessments and provision made for re-assessment.

Flexibility

RPL will be available in a range of environment for a range of reasons.

A variety of assessment methods will be available and the use of any particular method/s will be negotiated with the learner taking into account their confidence, needs and situation.

RPL will challenge national qualifications and standards to be more inclusive of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that are produced in communities outside of formal learning institutions at the same time facilitating access to registered standards and qualifications.

Accessibility

RPL will be available to all those who request it and will be voluntary. It will be offered to all applicants on enrolment in all learnerships upon commencement.

RPL will be structured to minimize the time and cost to the applicant.

RPL will be supported by appropriately costed and funded opportunities in educational and training institutions, the community and the workforce to enable maximum opportunity for access to RPL.

Support

RPL shall be primarily focused upon learner needs.

RPL assessment will be participatory. The process of assessment will be developed jointly between the assessor and the assessed.

RPL shall provide adequate information and support to enable the applicants to gather reliable evidence to support their claim for the recognition of prior learning.

6. IMPLEMENTING RPL POLICY

'Our vision is of a South Africa in which all people have access to lifelong education and training opportunities, which will in turn contribute towards improving the quality of life and building a peaceful, prosperous and democratic society.' (Vision Statement of the Department of Education)

This policy for the Recognition of Prior Learning is an active policy. This section will address how the FEITA, in co-operation with its partners, will rise to the challenge of implementation. It does this through exploring the implications of the principles and the issues that need to be considered arising out of these principles.

Difficulties associated with the implementation of RPL, such as the question of costs and resources, should not obscure the potential benefits to students and providers alike. Many of the practical problems of implementation will be overcome when there is an effective interchange of information and when appropriate data collection, evaluation and research is undertaken to support continuous improvement of RPL practice, processes and procedures.

The importance of a clear understanding of RPL, with agreed upon principles and an implementation policy is highlighted by the perceptions that exist for some about RPL. For example, the different purposes of RPL can cause a range of problems. RPL may have been used by employers to do skills audit rather than provide workers with opportunities. Teachers and educators may express a lack of faith in the authenticity of the skills required in informal contexts or "on the job", or believe RPL undesirable in that it denies candidates formal learning opportunities. RPL has been found by some to be an overly rigorous process that discourages candidates from applying for RPL. A learner may be required to locate and understand unit standards, for which they have no skill or training. They may be required to collect and present evidence in written form when this may not address real competence and may undermine the confidence of the learner not just in the process but also in themselves. Another common perception is of a requirement to present such a large amount of evidence it is easier to do the training. Industry often expresses concerns in processes with a perceived lack of rigor. No participant has any faith in the rigor of "tick and flick" exercises sometimes confused with RPL.

All of these issues highlight the need for an effective implementation strategy to ensure quality RPL. The critical issues for implementation are considered for the remainder of this chapter.

6.1 Empowerment

RPL processes will provide for the recognition of prior learning no matter how when or where they have been acquired.

RPL encourages participation in education and training, skills development and national capacity building

RPL promotes dignity, confidence and educational opportunity. It will be learner centered and developmental.

Recognition of Prior Learning should be a system of open access that supports new possibilities rather than extending the status quo. In this respect, everyone should have the opportunity for assessment.

The process should recognise that there will be a range of individual differences in candidates including people in employment, people who are unemployed and underemployed, out of school youth, rural women, people in small, medium and macro enterprises and large international corporations. Thus the process will need to be inclusive, and consider factors such as language and levels of literacy and numeracy.

In addition, as RPL is voluntary it is important that individuals' fears and concerns are put to rest, and the individuals are supported to participate effectively in an RPL process. As part of this process, unit standards should be made accessible to individuals wishing to participate in RPL processes.

Finally the process should allow for consultation in the development of RPL arrangements, and this should be inclusive of all potential participants; learners, teachers, assessors, community groups', industry, education and training providers. This should allow for formal agreement between parties to a program.

6.2 Quality

RPL is informed by national standards and principles.

RPL processes and procedures shall comply with assessment guidelines in the unit standards and regulations.

RPL will lead to the issuing of statement of attainment or a qualification under the National Qualifications Framework.

RPL will be part of the quality assurance mechanisms of education and training providers and subject to continuous improvement 'within those systems as we learn and gain from our experience.

The SAQA concept of RPL recognises that quality represents two things: consistency of standards across the range of applications of assessment, and assessment that is relevant and responsive to the curriculum or learning programs, and to the workplace or other contexts of the assessment.

As *unit standards* are developed for the FIETA's industry sectors they will form the benchmarks for the measurement of RPL. However, in many areas unit standards do not yet exist. This must be recognised so that a learner is not disadvantaged by the progress of implementation in parts of the system. Fortunately, many education and training programmes are outcomes based, and if properly designed and focused on outcomes for a workplace, community or other context, the outcomes that result from the assessment results, will not differ markedly from the outcomes of unit standards when they are developed.

Additional transition arrangements also need to be in place for qualifications earned by learners to be recognised as the unit standards framework is developed. This will reduce unnecessary duplication during the transition period and build trust and co-operation between partners in the system.

Further, there is a need to utilise these standards in a manner that provides for flexibility, and to ensure that even once there are standards in place that these are monitored so as to seek continuous improvement in the standards.

As stated previously, *quality assessment* should conform to the principles of assessment stated in the unit standards. This is critical to ensure that RPL is credible and can facilitate national recognition.

This will be supported by the SAQA quality assurance mechanisms that can facilitate consistency and credibility of the credits that are awarded to the individual.

Further, there is a need to encourage networking, communication and discussion on developments in RPL as a way of continually improving the quality of RPL processes.

A key aspect to consider in relation to quality RPL, is the mass delivery of RPL. This is a huge challenge for South Africa, as there is a huge pressure for mass RPL processes. However, there is a need to ensure that the RPL process adheres to the quality principles outlined in this document. This suggests that there will remain a requirement for individual support if we wish to deliver worthwhile outcomes for participants and for industry.

6.3 Reliability

RPL will consistently measure the performance and achievement of the learner. It will cover the range of skills and knowledge needed to demonstrate competency.

RPL will involve the evaluation of sufficient evidence to enable judgments to be made as to whether competency has been achieved.

Assessment practices will be monitored and reviewed to ensure that there is consistency in the interpretation of evidence.

Assessor will be competent in terms of the unit standards for assessors. They will also be registered as assessors.

The professional quality of the teaching force in RPL will need to be developed, and there will need to be a focused staff development plan on RPL that will be incorporated into the SETA implementation plan. This will build on existing FIETA work and will prioritise adult educators, assessors, and staff that have a good understanding of RPL, and are trained to ensure that the RPL assessors are Anti-biased and sensitive to issues such as language and culture. This development work is primarily being done through in-service training.

The type of methods used will influence both the quality of the outcomes that can be obtained and the potential outcomes for the learner. In general, assessment of RPL needs to be balanced and to use a range of methods and types of evidence. This implies the need to consider where the RPL is taking place: whether a workplace, an educational institution or within an alternative program or community context. The methods should be properly moderated to maintain confidence that diversity of methodology will indeed measure the same outcomes.

Processes for the verification of evidence that involve moderation and continuous improvement drawing upon assessment reports and data collection will assist in the continued development of responsive assessment models.

The RPL process should be located within the broader policies and planning processes for the accreditation of training providers and the registration of assessors and moderators with the ETQA. This includes the requirement for a clear strategy that clearly described the functions of assessment, facilitation and advising to ensure clarity and the avoidance of any potential conflict of interest.

6.4 Flexibility

RPL will be available in a range of environments for a range of reasons.

A variety of assessment methods will be available and the use of any particular method/s will be negotiated with the learner taking into account their confidence, needs and situation.

RPL will challenge national qualifications and standards to be more inclusive of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that are produced in communities outside of formal learning institutions at the same time facilitating access to registered standards and qualifications.

Models developed for the implementation of RPL should encompass a range of environments, each developing and strengthening the required commitment and partnership.

Pilot projects will be identified that encompass the range of potential environments for RPL such as: Skill development and work place assessment, Social development initiatives, Community based assessment, Vocational training in schools, and Assessment upon application by an individual.

Further, RPL has important implications for the design and delivery of courses and issues such as support and resource based learning need to be considered in learning programmes that have RPL as an access point.

6.5 Fairness

RPL must be equitable to all groups of learners. It "will not discriminate on the bases of age, race, sex, disability and employment status.

RPL will take into account cultural and linguistic needs and recognise the need for flexible approaches to language and literacy, to learning and to knowledge and application.

Opportunities shall be provided for learners to challenge assessments and provision made for re-assessment.

RPL is an integral and indeed basic foundation of the development of learning pathways that meet the needs of specific target groups. Such target groups include those disadvantaged by the legacy of apartheid, such as black people (Africans, 'Coloureds', Indians), women and people with disabilities. RPL must take into account issues of literacy, language, poverty, unemployment and the underemployment, and specific issues for rural communities who may face extremely high levels of unemployment and little opportunity.

A particular issue that is critical to the FIETA is the issue of illiteracy. Literacy, interpreted broadly, involves the integration of listening, reading writing, language and critical thinking. It incorporates numeracy. It includes the cultural knowledge that enables a speaker, writer, or reader to recognise and use language appropriate to different social situations. For South Africa, the goal is actual literacy that allows people to use language to enhance their capacity to think, create and question in order to participate effectively in society. The high numbers of people that cannot read and write suggest methodologies such as oral assessment.

RPL also needs to address the diversity of language used in the home and the communities of South Africa. RPL assessment must incorporate assessment that will

overcome disadvantages resulting from different kinds of mismatches between home languages and the languages of teaching and learning. As stated, the right to choose the language of teaching and learning is vested in the individual under the Constitution, and RPL must be inclusive of the multicultural, multilingual nature of the South African community.

There is often a perceived clash between the culture and values of local communities and the culture and values inherent in the training provided. Local priorities perceive that training is part of a needs based, problem solving approach that is directly applicable and addresses acute community need, and the credentials may not be so important. Older rural workers may have different needs, different literacy needs, different practices, values and perceptions of training than their younger counterparts, either metropolitan or rural. These cultural differences affect the appropriateness of the assessment methodology and context.

RPL must provide equity of access for unemployed, workers seeking a career change, and young people seeking a qualification prior to employment. Social development initiatives could be used to provide access to RPL opportunities for these people with the long-term aim of providing the unemployed and the underemployed with a combination of skills development initiatives in order to bridge the gap to sustainable employment opportunities. Informal employment also remains crucial to providing some income to those rendered jobless by the formal sector, and RPL initiatives should be geared to enabling individuals to access this sector.

For individuals that are not employed, there may need to be funding arrangements put in place for those who want to be assessed or want to have access to training but do not have jobs.

RPL processes need to accommodate those who have never worked before, and who cannot specify an occupation, and this suggests the need for support and guidance to be put in place. Also, as part of the support strategy, there is a need to build support for training opportunities post RPL as well.

6.6 Accessibility

RPL will be available to all those who request it and will be voluntary. It will be offered to all applicants on enrolment in all learnerships upon commencement.

RPL will be structured to minimize the time and cost to the applicant.

RPL will be supported by appropriately costed and funded opportunities in educational and training institutions, the community and the workforce to enable maximum opportunity for access to RPL.

Sufficient access to RPL and further education and training should be ensured for all learners and this may mean targeting specific groups, such as women, people from rural communities, older learners, and people with disabilities. This suggests the need for admission procedures and systems that are user friendly and inclusive, and for flexible and responsive models that address regional needs, workplace and community needs.

This also includes the need for an information strategy about RPL policies and procedures. This can include a wide range of media and contexts.

There is also a need for support groups of learners and for learners in order to assist people through the process and grow their confidence in the process, and all

individuals should have equal access to opportunities for advice, support, time and resources.

The costs involved in RPL are to a range of institutions and workplaces. These include: Design and development costs, Materials and equipment costs, Training of staff and accrediting of assessors, Administrative costs, Marketing material and expenses, Day to day running costs; and Individual costs for the applicant. Special attention should be applied to all education and training providers to ensure they have the capacity, through partnerships or otherwise, to resource RPL.

Cost to providers, to industry and to individuals has to be weighed up against the cost of not redressing past inequities, and of not building relevant skills to grow industry. Learnerships and other skills development programs funded by the Skills Development Levy are one way of progressing RPL in the workforce, but in order to make RPL opportunities accessible to the whole community they will need to be integrated into a range of other programs and environments. Opportunities to incorporate RPL into a range of programs throughout the community can be explored and cost effective models for implementation developed.

Given the financial constraints faced by many institutions, the question of cost recovery and cost minimisation is very important. In the first instance education and training providers will need to be audited to ascertain the equipment and resources available for particular outcomes. Secondly, partnerships with local industry and the university sector could be explore the provide access to the necessary equipment and technology required for effective assessment of prior learning. This suggests the need to draw upon a range of resources within the Departments of Education and Labour, public education and training providers, our external partners, as well as from the learners themselves.

Cost effective approaches assume that there is a sharing of resources through regional and sectoral co-operation and partnerships between industry and education and training providers.

6.7 Support

RPL shall be primarily focused upon learner needs.

RPL assessment will be participatory. The process of assessment will be developed jointly between the assessor and the assessed.

RPL shall provide adequate information and support to enable the applicants to gather reliable evidence to support their claim for the recognition of prior learning.

The process of educating and informing, and of supporting learners and their partners in education through the RPL process is critical. Learners and their assessors must be empowered and this can happen through:

Pre-assessment advice and counseling. Advice and support to assist learners to make choices about available programs, career and work related opportunities, as well as other personal and social applications of RPL. Support programs for assistance and support with preparation for assessment.

Educational planning, analysis and removal of barriers for the learner in terms of time, place, access, information, method, literacy, so that the candidate has maximum opportunity to succeed in achieving their goals.

Structured preparation for assessment. Facilitation in the presentation of assessment evidence.

Post assessment educational planning services as well as support services for candidates not yet competent.

7. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The FIETA SSP provides the strategic priorities for the sector. Specifically, it targets the numbers of individuals that are required at the different levels on the NQF. The SSP states that to achieve these targets RPL will be critical. For example, Forestry states that "the RPL process should then yield at least about 18 000 qualifications at the end of the cycle." Furniture suggests that there is a need to ensure that 29 000 employees in this sub-sector must have at least a level 1 on the NQF, and they suggest that RPL will be critical to achieving this target. Wood products also highlight the need for RPL to achieve their targets in terms of level 1 qualification. RPL targets are not clearly specified in pulp and paper, however across the sector the need for RPL to address large numbers of people is clear.

The remainder of this chapter highlights the key objectives for FIETA in terms of RPL, and these are listed as per each principle and implementation area:

Empowerment

RPL processes will provide for the recognition of prior learning no matter how when or where they have been acquired.

- The FIETA supports the development of provision of RPL for the workplace, community and individuals as appropriate to context and need.

RPL encourages participation in education and training, skills development and national capacity building

- The FIETA will contribute to the development of national policies and procedures, for RPL, credit transfer, mutual recognition and overseas skills recognition.
- The FIETA supports the development of pathways and articulation arrangement with other education and training agencies.
- The FIETA supports the clarification and standardisation of terminology. Consistency in the use of language will promote communication and reduce confusion between, sectors, provinces and institutions of industry and education.
- The FIETA supports the development of partnerships with organisations and industry appropriate to the context and the need.

RPL promotes dignity, confidence and educational opportunity. It will be learner centered and developmental.

- The FIETA supports the development of material to inform learners of how to access RPL, seek their feedback from each RPL assessment and use this feedback to strengthen and modify the system.

Quality

RPL is informed by national standards and principles

- ❑ The FIETA will participate in the design development and implementation of a National framework, including close liaison with SAQA and Umalusi.
- ❑ The FIETA supports negotiation of transitional arrangements for the recognition of statements of attainment and qualifications where national unit standards are still in development.
- ❑ The FIETA supports the development of portfolios for learners to ensure a seamless move to the new system as standards and qualifications are registered on the NQF

RPL processes and procedures shall comply with assessment guidelines in the unit standards and regulations.

- ❑ Develop FIETA approved assessment guidelines including assessment of unit standards, and quality assurance requirements for assessment and RPL.

RPL will lead to the issuing of statement of attainment or a qualification under the National Qualifications Framework.

- ❑ The FIETA supports the establishment of feedback mechanisms for the application of unit standards in assessment.
- ❑ The FIETA supports the documentation and sharing of good practice models for unit standards assessment.

RPL will be part of the quality assurance mechanisms of education and training providers and subject to continuous improvement 'within those systems as we learn and gain from our experience

- ❑ The FIETA supports the integration of RPL assessment into public and private provider quality management programs.

Flexibility

RPL will be available in a range of environments for a range of reasons.

- ❑ The FIETA supports the development and piloting of RPL processes in a range of contexts including:
 - Workplace skills assessment and training.
 - Infrastructure projects.
 - Developing SMME in a community.
 - Implementation of vocational program into Further Education and Training.
 - Assessment as part of an ABET program.

A variety of assessment methods will be available and the use of any particular method/s will be negotiated with the learner taking into account their confidence, needs and situation.

- The FIETA supports the incorporation RPL into all curricula and learning programs.

RPL will challenge national qualifications and standards to be more inclusive of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that are produced in communities outside of formal learning institutions at the same time facilitating access to registered standards and qualifications.

- The FIETA will encourage networking, communication and discussion on developments in Recognition of Prior Learning:
 - Between the provinces
 - Between sectors: Adult Basic Education and Training, Further Education and Training and Higher Education and Private Providers
 - At the overall Forest Industry and Industry Sector levels.

Reliability

RPL will consistently measure the performance and achievement of the learner. It will cover the range of skills and knowledge needed to demonstrate competency.

- The FIETA will verify and moderate assessment, using data from actual RPL outcomes and learner feedback.
- The FIETA will analyse the data for the purpose of continuous improvement of RPL practice and models.

RPL will involve the evaluation of sufficient evidence to enable judgments to be made as to whether competency has been achieved.

- The FIETA will investigate partnerships with workplace trainers and assessors.
- The FIETA will encourage providers to identify and resource different assessment models and the evidence required as well as encourage providers to investigate partnerships with workplace trainers and assessors.

Assessment practices will be monitored and reviewed to ensure that there is consistency in the interpretation of evidence.

- The FIETA supports the identification of monitoring and moderation processes within provider organisations.

Assessors will be competent in terms of the unit standards for assessors. They will also be registered as assessors.

- Identify the number of staff to be registered, training to support registration, costs and ongoing professional development.

- The FIETA supports the development of a staff development assessor program.

Fairness

RPL must be equitable to all groups of learners. It "will not discriminate on the bases of age, race, sex, disability and employment status.

- The FIETA will encourage the incorporation of equity and access principles and procedures into all aspects of staff development, training, RPL and assessment planning, delivery and administration.
- The FIETA will support the development of specific curricula, learning programs and assessment activities appropriate to the needs of particular groups of learners.

RPL will take into account cultural and linguistic needs and recognise the need for flexible approaches to language and literacy, to learning and to knowledge and application.

- The FIETA will create links with Adult Basic Education and Training Learning Centres and develop integrated systems to assess and support literacy development and pathways for learners.

Opportunities shall be provided for learners to challenge assessments and provisions made for re-assessment.

- The FIETA will encourage the development of processes for learner appeals within each provider organisation or RPL program.
- The FIETA will support the establishment of post-assessment educational planning services as well as support services for candidates not yet competent.

Accessibility

RPL will be available to all those who request it and will be voluntary. It will be offered to all applicants on enrolment in all learnerships upon commencement.

- The FIETA supports the incorporation of RPL into all learnership programs. Adult Basic Education and Training, learning programs and community development activities and infrastructure programs as appropriate.

RPL will be structured to minimize the time and cost to the applicant.

- The FIETA will encourage removal of barriers for the learner in terms of time, place, access, information, method, and literacy so that the candidate has maximum opportunity to succeed in achieving their goals.

RPL will be supported by appropriately costed and funded opportunities in educational and training institutions, the community and the workforce to enable maximum opportunity for access to RPL

- The FIETA will address cost issues, including an audit of resources at a provider level incorporating human resources, equipment and technology to support RPL models across the full range of industry sectors and their environments, the development of teaching and learning resources, and assessment materials.
- The FIETA will support resource development plans at a national, provincial and provider level incorporating:
 - In service and professional training required
 - Staffing issues and levels
 - Available equipment and technology
 - Plans for equipment and technology access/partnerships
 - The range of methodologies and support materials available
 - New materials required
- The FIETA will explore how the grant scheme can be utilised to support RPL

Support

RPL shall be primarily focused upon learner needs

- The FIETA will document and distribute widely models and case studied on RPL arrangements that are already operating successfully between educational sectors and in industry and the community.

RPL assessment will be participatory. The process of assessment will be developed jointly between the assessor and the assessed.

- The FIETA will encourage the establishment of pre-assessment advice and counseling opportunities including support programs for assistance and support with preparation for assessment.

RPL shall provide adequate information and support to enable the applicants to gather reliable evidence to support their claim for the recognition of prior learning.

- The FIETA will support projects on RPL. Including training of staff, development of assessment processes, cost effectiveness of recognition of prior learning.
- The FIETA will exchange information with all stake holders and encourage the exchange of information, including data obtained from research and from monitoring and review, to gain a better understanding of RPL

ACRONYMS

| | |
|------|---|
| ETQA | Education and Training Quality Assurance |
| FET | Further Education and Training |
| NQF | National Qualifications Framework |
| RPL | Recognition of Prior Learning |
| SAQA | South African Qualifications Authority |
| SETA | Sector Education and Training Authorities |
| SMME | Small Medium and Macro Enterprises |

GLOSSARY

Accreditation

Approval by SAQA to operate as a training provider or as an Education and Training Quality-Agency

Adult Basic Education and Training

Education designed for people who did not get basic schooling when they were children

Assessment

The process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about a learner's achievement in order to assist the learners development and improve the process of learning and teaching; and evaluate and certify competence in order to issue certification.

Certification

The documented issue of a qualification, or a statement of attainment of part of a qualification, under the National Qualifications Framework

Credit Transfer

Credit transfer arrangements are based upon formal agreements between education and training institutions. These arrangements may be based on similarity of content and/or of outcomes of learning programs and curricula.

Further Education and Training

All learning and training programs leading to qualifications from levels 2 to 4 of the National Qualifications Framework

General Education and Training

All learning and training programs leading to a qualification from level 1 of the National Qualifications Framework

Higher Education

All learning programs, leading to qualifications higher than Grade 12 or its equivalent, in terms of the NQF, including tertiary education.

Learner

Any person receiving education and or being assessed in an educational program such as an RPL program, at an educational institution, workplace, or other learning environment,

Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning involves recognition that learning takes place in many settings both formal and informal, and a long-term view that takes the whole course of an

individual's life into consideration. Skills training for improving employability and competitiveness are important, but at the same time the importance of learning to personal development and citizenship is also recognised.

Literacy

Literacy involves the integration of listening, reading writing, language and critical thinking. It incorporates numeracy. It includes the cultural knowledge that enables a speaker, writer, or reader to recognise and use language appropriate to different social situations. The goal is actual literacy that allows people to use language to enhance their capacity to think, create and question in order to participate effectively in society.

Moderation

The collection and sharing of data and experience in order to monitor and continuously improve a process. Moderation ensures that assessments have been conducted in line with agreed practices and are valid, fair and reliable.

Mutual Recognition

Mutual Recognition is when under the National Qualifications Framework a registered education and training organisation is required to recognise qualifications issued by another registered training organisation. Mutual Recognition is an automatic process

Quality Management System

An administrative system that is documented monitored and improved on a continuous cycle in order to fulfill the requirements of learners and other partners in education.

Recognition of Prior Learning

RPL means recognition of the skills, knowledge and capability currently held by a person, regardless of how, when and where the learning occurred. The learning may have been acquired through any combination of formal or informal training and education, work experience, community engagement or general life experience.

In order to grant RPL, the assessor must be confident that the candidate is currently competent against the agreed outcomes of the RPL which may be endorsed unit standards or learning outcomes from other programs of learning. The evidence may take a variety of forms and could include certification, demonstration, references from past employers, testimonials from clients and work samples. The assessor must ensure that the evidence is authentic, valid, reliable, current and sufficient.