




RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998 (SDA), as amended provides an institutional framework to implement national, sector and workplace strategies to develop and improve the skills levels of the South African workforce. The Act makes provision for the establishment of the SETAs as institutional vehicles to implement the SDA and other related legislation.
- 1.2 Furthermore, the Quality Council for Trades Occupations (QCTO) has in terms of Section 26I (2) of the SDA and the Council's delegation policy delegated the quality assurance partner (QAP) functions to the Public Service Sector Education and Training Authority (PSETA).
- 1.3 The delegation was conferred to the PSETA as of 27 September 2012 and it is limited to the Public Service sector. The delegated functions are as follows:
- i. Accredit providers for the qualifications or part qualifications listed in the schedule in terms of criteria determined by the QCTO;
 - ii. Monitor the provision by providers of Learning Programmes leading to the qualifications or part qualifications in order to ensure that the criteria for accreditation contemplated in paragraph 4(a) are being complied with;
 - iii. Evaluate learner assessment and the facilitation of moderation of learner assessment by providers;
 - iv. Register assessors to undertake assessment for specified qualifications or part qualifications in terms of criteria determined by the QCTO;
 - v. Certify qualified learners in accordance with the policy determined by the Minister in terms of section 26F of the SDA;
 - vi. Maintain a comprehensive learner information management system;
 - vii. Upload learner data to the National Learner Records Database (NLRD) according to the NLRD load specifications; and
 - viii. Perform such other functions consistent with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act and the SDA as the QCTO may from time to time allocate to the SETA in writing.
- 1.4 The delegation expires once the qualifications delegated to the PSETA are reviewed and replaced by qualifications developed and registered on the

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Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF) or until the qualifications reach their registration end date and teach out periods or when the qualifications are withdrawn by the QCTO.

- 1.5 The delegation is subject to the following terms and conditions:
- i. The QCTO may review the quality management policies and procedures of the PSETA and examine the activities of the Quality Assurance Partner (QAP) department;
 - ii. The PSETA must ensure the integrity of quality assurance by exercising its delegated functions separately and independently from any provision of education and training; and
 - iii. The performance by the SETA of its delegated functions must advance the objectives of the NQF as contemplated in section 5 of the NQF Act.
 - iv. Any changes to the delegation will be communicated through the QCTO/SETA Forum where PSETA has representation.


2. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this Policy is:

- 2.1. To outline the PSETA's Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policy framework and clearly outline PSETA requirements regarding offering of RPL services by constituent Skills Development Providers (SDPs).
- 2.2. It is intended to facilitate the development of the RPL policy at the SDP level.
- 2.3. It therefore simplifies the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) RPL policy stipulations for QAPs and SDPs without departing from the core objectives and guidelines as detailed in the policy itself.

3. ABBREVIATIONS


Abbreviation	Description
AA	Accounting Authority
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COO	Chief Operating Officer
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training

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Abbreviation	Description
ETD	Education and Development Training
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NLRD	National Learner Records Database
OQSF	Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework
PSETA	Public Service Sector Education and Training Authority
QAP	Quality Assurance Partner
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
QMS	Quality Management System
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SDA	Skills Development Act
SDP	Skills Development Provider

4. DEFINITIONS


Term	Description
Accreditation	The certification, usually for a particular period, of a person, a body or an institution having the capacity to fulfil a particular function in the quality assurance system.
Assessment	The process of collecting evidence of learners' work to measure and make judgements about the competence or non-competence of specified NQF registered occupational qualifications and part qualifications.
Assessor	Means a person registered by the QAP for the purposes of conducting external assessment for occupational qualifications.
Code of Conduct	Refers to a set of conventional principles and expectations that are considered binding on any person/s or organisation/s that are registered and/or accredited by PSETA.

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Term	Description
ETD Practitioner	Refers to an individual registered as an Assessor and/or Moderator by the QAP.
Evidence Facilitator	Means practitioners who obtained unit standard 12544 – facilitate the preparation and presentation of evidence for assessments.
Extension of scope	Means the addition of qualification(s) and/or part qualifications following the Learning Programme approval processes by an accredited/programme approval Skills Development Provider to own current scope of accreditation as defined above.
External Moderation	Means the process through which internal assessment is monitored to ensure that it meets required standards and through which adjustments to marks are made where required to compensate for any differences in standards that are encountered.
Learner	An individual participating in a training programme with the purpose of achieving a qualification or part qualification.
Moderator	Means a person, who has achieved competence against moderator standard and is registered with PSETA as a qualified moderator. The PSETA constituent moderator is the latter who is registered to moderate against the PSETA part or full qualifications in line with the PSETA assessment policy.
Organisations	Refers to legally established entities which may include but not limited to, national and provincial government departments and agencies, institution/organisation, company, centre, collaborative partnership, or consultancy) established in line with relevant statutory body requirements and currently in good standing.
Part qualification	Means an assessed unit of learning that is registered on the NQF as a part qualification.

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Term	Description
Primary focus	Means that activity or objective within the sector upon which an organization or body concentrates its efforts.
Programme Approval	Means secondary accreditation of organisations through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) process signed between SETAs. A provider accredited by another QAP can apply for extension of scope on unit standard/s or qualification/s falling within the primary focus of another QAP. The Provider is required to notify the primary QAP of the intention to extend scope. The primary QAP will on behalf of the Provider liaise with the secondary QAP to take the process forward.
Quality Assurance Partner	Means a body delegated by the QCTO responsible for monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of national standards or qualifications, and to which specific functions relating to the monitoring and auditing of national standards or qualifications have been assigned in terms of section 5(1) (b) (i) of the SAQA Act.
Quality Management System	Means the combination of policy, processes and procedures used to ensure that the degree of excellence specified is achieved.
Registered Qualifications	Means qualifications registered on the NQF.
RPL Advisor	Means practitioners who obtained unit standard 116587 – Develop, support and promote RPL practices.
Scope of Registration	Means the list of registered unit standards and/or qualifications for which an assessor or moderator is registered with the SETA to assess and/or moderate.
Skills Development Provider	Means a body that delivers Learning Programmes which culminate in specified NQF standards or qualifications and manages the assessment thereof.

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5. SCOPE OF APPLICATION


This Policy applies to:

- 5.1. PSETA accredited (Primary and Secondary) SDPs;
- 5.2. PSETA QAP staff members;
- 5.3. ETD Practitioners in the sector;
- 5.4. PSETA contracted external consultants where applicable;
- 5.5. Prospective learners who wish to attain credits or qualifications through RPL;
and
- 5.6. PSETA registered ETD Practitioners.

6. LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY PRESCRIPTS

- 6.1. Skills Development Act, No. 97 of 1998, as amended
- 6.2. South African Qualifications Authority Act
- 6.3. National Qualifications Framework Act, No. 67 of 2008
- 6.4. The National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (Act No. 43 of 1996, as amended)
- 6.5. QCTO Policy on Delegation to Development Quality Partners and Assessment Quality Partners
- 6.6. Protection of Personal Information Act, No.4 of 2013
- 6.7. PSETA Accreditation Policy
- 6.8. PSETA Learning Programmes Evaluation Policy
- 6.9. PSETA Appeals Policy
- 6.10. PSETA Management of Assessment Policy
- 6.11. PSETA Certification Policy
- 6.12. PSETA External Moderation Policy
- 6.13. PSETA Monitoring Policy
- 6.14. PSETA Records Management Policy
- 6.15. PSETA E-learning Policy
- 6.16. PSETA POPI Policy

The highlighted legislation is not meant to be an exhaustive list.


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7. POLICY PROVISIONS AND CONTENT

- 7.1. The PSETA shall ensure that all SDPs applying for accreditation have an RPL policy that is properly aligned to guidelines as contained in the SAQA guidelines for implementing RPL.
- 7.2. The PSETA appreciates that RPL is intended to facilitate access to education and training and accelerate the redress of past discrimination.
- 7.3. The SDPs are to at all times consider and appreciate that RPL is a form of assessment, meaning that the principles of good assessment must be applied consistently when conducting RPL.
- 7.4. The PSETA will treat RPL assessment achievements as equal and befitting achievements, and qualifying learners will be certificated in line with the approved PSETA Certification Policy.

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 8.1. The Accounting Authority (AA) grants approval of this Policy to be implemented and exercises its fiduciary duties of provisions of the Policy and Delegations of Authority.
- 8.2. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) assisted by the Chief Operating Officer (COO) is accountable for establishing and maintaining systems to manage the RPL function.
- 8.3. The QAP Manager is accountable for implementation and management of this Policy.
- 8.4. The QAP staff are responsible for implementation of this Policy and to ensure stakeholder compliance.
- 8.5. All SDPs accredited by the PSETA are required to have an RPL policy. This is to ensure that they are able to conduct RPL assessments as the need arises.

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9. PRINCIPLES

This Policy is underpinned by the NQF Act principles. RPL as a form of assessment, should be subjected to the generally accepted principles of outcome-based assessment. In relation to the RPL assessment process, the following principles are applicable:

- 9.1 **Appropriate:** the methods of assessment are suited to the outcome being assessed;
- 9.2 **Fair:** the methods of assessment do not present any barriers to achievements;
- 9.3 **Manageable:** the methods used make for easily arranged, cost effective assessments;
- 9.4 **Integrated:** the evidence collection is integrated into work or learning process where it is appropriate.
- 9.5 **Systematic:** the overall RPL assessment process is fair, effective and manageable;
- 9.6 **Open:** the RPL assessment process is transparent, and
- 9.7 **Reliable/Consistent:** the same assessor would make the same judgment again under similar circumstances.

In relation to the RPL assessment evidence, the following principles are applicable:

- 9.8 **Valid:** the evidence focuses on the requirements laid down in the relevant standard and assessment criteria
- 9.9 **Current:** the evidence is sufficient proof that the candidate is able to perform the assessment outcomes at the time the assessor declares the candidate competent;
- 9.10 **Authentic:** the assessor is satisfied that the evidence is attributable to the person being assessed; and
- 9.11 **Sufficient:** the evidence collected establishes that all criteria have been met and that performance to the required standard can be repeated consistently in the future.

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10. ETD PRACTITIONERS

All RPL policies should be explicit on the need for appropriate training of staff that will be dealing with the RPL process. The quality and integrity of RPL assessments depends on the availability of properly trained personnel. Training will enable RPL advisors, evidence facilitators, assessors, moderators and administrative personnel to provide a holistic, learner-centred service that is in line with the objectives of the NQF and related policies. The following practitioners are critical to the RPL process:

- 10.1 RPL Advisors
- 10.2 Evidence Facilitators
- 10.3 Assessors
- 10.4 Moderators

11. SUPPORT MECHANISM

- 11.1 Candidates applying for or seeking RPL should be supported accordingly. The support should form part of the pre-assessment advice and counselling.
- 11.2 The support offered to an RPL candidate should not be dissimilar from that which is offered to learners being assessed following the normal assessment route.
- 11.3 The SDP offering RPL should ensure that people rendering support and advice services are trained ETD practitioners with experience relevant to what the candidate is seeking RPL on.
- 11.4 The support services should seek to address the invisible barriers to successful RPL assessment. Through properly conducted evidence facilitation, advice and other support services, including assistance in dealing with personal, social and technical barriers to assessment and preparation of evidence, candidates are able to see how to use the process of RPL to achieve their personal, educational and career goals.
- 11.5 In relation to fees for RPL services, this should not become a barrier to RPL.
- 11.6 The providers of RPL should create an enabling environment by developing and implementing proper policies and allocating resources.
- 11.7 The cost of RPL services should not exceed that of a full-time programme. The providers of RPL are encouraged to have flexible payment options.

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12. MODERATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

The PSETA will conduct quality assurance of learner achievements obtained through the RPL assessment. The PSETA will conduct external moderation to ensure the quality of the assessments and moderation conducted by the SDPs. In the verification of the SDPs RPL practices, attention will be channelled to the following:


- 12.1 Availability of qualified ETD practitioners;
- 12.2 Provider RPL policy, procedures and tools; and
- 12.3 The portfolios of evidence.

13. RECORDS MANAGEMENT

- 13.1. The accredited SDPs are required to maintain records in a manner that will ensure that long-term evidential records are retained in accordance with the National Archives of South Africa Act.
- 13.2. The records kept or to be kept must be of value in terms of general SDP business operations, governance, decision making and accountability.
- 13.3. The records can be kept on or off-site and access to them must be controlled, and where possible a responsible person must be identified.
- 13.4. The documents must be maintained in both the soft and hard copies.
- 13.5. A clear and unambiguous disposal arrangement must be documented and followed when any archived documents are to be disposed of.
- 13.6. SDPs are to retain documents for a minimum of five (5) years after which they can be destroyed. The records of the documents destroyed must be kept.
- 13.7. Some or part of the documents may require to be maintained for life. Such documents can be kept beyond the five (5) year period.
- 13.8. The PSETA will monitor the archiving system of each SDP during site visits.
- 13.9. PSETA will maintain and manage all records in line with the PSETA Records Management Policy.

14. NON-COMPLIANCE

- 14.1 Non-compliance with this Policy or any applicable regulatory requirements through any deliberate or negligent act or omission, including allowing any staff, either expressly or impliedly, not to comply with this Policy or any

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applicable regulatory requirements, will be considered serious and be dealt with in terms of PSETA's disciplinary policies and procedures.

- 14.2 Non-compliance with this Policy or any applicable regulatory requirements through any deliberate or negligent act or omission by SDPs, Assessors, Moderators or learners, will be considered serious and be dealt with in terms of the contractual agreement between PSETA and the party and/or the relevant code of conduct.

15. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

This Policy comes into effect on the date of signature and the relevant owner shall ensure that it is communicated to staff using various modes, not limited to email, intranet, workshops etc. However, this shall not have any bearing on the effective date for implementation.

16. MONITORING, REVIEW AND UPDATING OF THE POLICY

This Policy has to be reviewed and the outcome of such process may either require the author to maintain the status quo or update/amend it.

17. APPROVAL OF THE POLICY

The Policy shall be approved by the AA and signed by the Chairperson subsequent to the Resolution taken.