



POLICY ON RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)

CONTENT

DEFINITIONS

PREAMBLE

CONTEXTUALISING RPL

PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE

PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION

ASSESSMENT

EVIDENCE

THE FFPSA APPROACH

REMEDATION

REVIEW PERIOD

DEFINITIONS

The definitions in this section have been sourced from SAQA's National Policy for the Implementation of the Recognition of Prior Learning.

- a. **“Formal learning”** means learning that occurs in an organised and structured education and training environment and that is explicitly designated as such. Formal learning leads to the awarding of a qualification or part qualification registered on the NQF.
- b. **“Informal learning”** means learning that results from daily activities related to paid or unpaid work, family or community life, or leisure, including incidental learning.
- c. **“Non-formal learning”** means planned educational interventions that are not intended to lead to awarding of qualifications or part qualifications.
- d. **“Part qualification”** means an assessed unit of learning that is registered as part of a qualification.
- e. **“Qualification”** means a registered national qualification.
- f. **“Recognition of prior learning”** means the principles and processes through which the prior knowledge and skills of a person are made visible, mediated and assessed for the purposes of alternative access and admission, recognition and certification, or further learning and development.

PREAMBLE

The FFPSA Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy must be read together with the South African Qualifications Authority's Policy on the Recognition of Prior Learning. The RPL in South Africa is critical to the development of an equitable education and training system. To this end, a policy to develop and facilitate implementation of RPL across all sectors of education and training, including professional bodies, is critical. A RPL policy of a professional body should meet the needs of all the role players, most importantly the main beneficiaries – that is, the professional. The FFPSA is committed to promote and implement a RPL policy that will meet the needs of its members and, in a broad sense, assist them to contribute meaningfully towards the economy of South Africa.

CONTEXTUALISING RPL

RPL means the comparison of the previous learning and experience of a learner, howsoever obtained, against the learning outcomes required for a specified qualification or part qualification and the acceptance for purposes of qualification of that which meets the requirements. It is important to note that the RPL candidate's claim on prior knowledge and skills must be made visible, mediated and assessed for the purposes of alternative access and admission, recognition and certification, or further learning and development.

Why apply for RPL?

Individuals who have acquired learning through non-formal education such as work experience, self-study, volunteer activities and other life experience, can be assessed against a qualification and subsequently awarded a professional designation.

Who can apply for RPL?

- Candidates who have at least the requisite verifiable experience that is current as determined by the Board of the FFPSA; and
- Candidates have acquired skills and knowledge through one or more of the following:

- formal study
- work experience
- informal study for recreational or personal interest
- company-based training
- industry-based training
- working with experts in the field
- life experience

At what level should the learning be?

At the level of the modules or unit standards for which RPL candidates are applying for credit or the underlying qualification or part qualification for the designation that you are applying for.

What will be assessed?

Learning will be assessed - what you know and what you can do. RPL is based on the belief that adults acquire knowledge and skills through experience. The quality (standard or level) of the learning and the quantity of experience (years of experience) is important.

Learning will be assessed to establish whether the RPL candidates possess:

- foundational competence – that is, their understanding of what they are doing and why they are doing it;
- practical competence – their ability to perform a set of tasks;
- reflexive competence – their ability to integrate and connect their knowledge and skills so that they learn from their actions and are able to adapt to changes and unforeseen circumstances; and
- applied competence – how they demonstrate the application of their knowledge and skills

How does FFPSA consider credit for RPL?

RPL shall be conducted by a panel of experts based on a submission of a portfolio of evidence defined later in this document.

The RPL panel shall take into consideration the following:

- Work experience of the RPL candidate related to the curriculum against which assessment is taking place.
- Skills required for the work in terms of outcomes reached.
- Successes achieved in terms of testimonials from supervisors.
- Informal and non-formal training with reference to hours and standards.

The criteria are grounded in the principles of the NQF system, one of which is that 10 notional hours = 1 credit. The panel will also differentiate between core and fundamental subjects to determine what extra studies may need to be completed in order to fulfil the requirements.

What are the principles to be considered in the RPL process?

The following principles inform the FFPSA RPL process:

- The focus of the RPL process is on what has been learned, not on the status of the institution, the type of organisation or the place where learning was obtained.
- RPL is learner-centred and developmental; the candidate must not be penalised for what he/she does not know or can do. RPL recognises gaps in learning and makes recommendations or offers remediation to address these gaps.
- Credit is awarded on the knowledge, skills and competencies acquired through experience and not for experience alone.
- The relevant knowledge, skills and competencies obtained through experience must be made visible through the RPL process, through appropriate assessment or other methods.
- Mentoring is an essential aspect of the RPL process. The candidate must be provided with the appropriate advice, guidance and support at all stages of the process which

should recognise the diversity of learners and their experience: at the initial enquiry stage; for and during the preparation of evidence; for further learning that may be necessary to fill any knowledge or skills gaps; and when advising the learner of the outcomes of the process.

PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE

PORTFOLIO PURPOSE & DESCRIPTION

A portfolio is a collection of written documents, audio or video tape recordings, references, certificates or other items. It is arranged to indicate:

- The work that the candidate has covered, hours of study and level of training;
- Evidence that the candidate's competence (acquired skills) meets these criteria;

Evidence included in a portfolio must be arranged and labelled in such a way that the assessor can:

- clearly identify the courses that the candidate has completed, or the experience he/she gained, and
- assess the evidence against such assessment criteria.

ASSESSMENT OF THE PORTFOLIO

Within three months of submitting the portfolio:

- The assessor will verify the evidence presented;
- The assessor may contact the applicant to ask for further evidence, to clarify anything and/or to conduct an oral assessment;
- The assessor will provide a written assessor report to FFPSA; The assessment results will be moderated; and
- If assessed as competent, the applicant will be recommended for the award of the professional designation as meeting the requirements of the underlying qualification.

PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT

The FFPSA undertakes to strictly adhere to the principles of assessment as enunciated in the SAQA document. These principles also apply to the RPL process:

- Validity
- Reliability
- Integrity
- Transparency
- Accountability
- Fairness
- Absence of bias
- Sensitivity of language
- Credibility concerning the supportive administrative procedures
- Assessment range

PORTFOLIO EVIDENCE

Evidence Types

What is the evidence trying to “prove”?	What type of evidence will “prove” the required competence
Evidence must reflect competence in the following categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Foundational competence</i> (the demonstrated understanding of what we are doing and why)• <i>Practical competence</i> (the demonstrated ability to perform a set of tasks)• <i>Reflexive competence</i> (the demonstrated ability to learn from our action and adapt to changes or unforeseen circumstances).	Evidence types must include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Knowledge Evidence</i> (proving your knowledge and understanding of the theoretical components)• <i>Process Evidence</i> (illustrating the method or process followed in achieving the outcome, thereby “proving” ability to apply the theory principles)• <i>Product Evidence</i> (an example of the completed task, “proving” competence of performing the task in a theoretical framework).

THE FFPSA APPROACH

Each case will be dealt with on its own merits and must be accompanied by a verified Portfolio of Evidence supporting the RPL application in line with the FFPSA RPL Policy. The FFPSA will employ a RPL practitioner to assist the professional body with the assessment of the portfolios of evidence.

REMEDICATION

The RPL Panel has a ruling on remediation and the number of times a RPL candidate can remediate using the same assessment activities and tools. At FFPSA the first assessment and two remedial assessments are allowed before assessment tools can be changed. Candidates who need additional remediation should possibly be encouraged to attend training to bridge their gaps.

In the case of remediation, the candidate is given feedback and asked if they wish to remediate. Where the gaps are significant, it may be advisable to rather suggest they attend training as further not-yet-competent results may affect their self-esteem. However where gaps are small, remediation may be an option.

Importantly, the RPL candidate should not be subjected to a more onerous assessment practice than a learner attending training for the same purpose. If the 'pass mark' is e.g. 50%, then the RPL candidate cannot be expected to get more than this.

REVIEW PERIOD

The policy document to be reviewed every five years and/or when there are changes in the South African regulatory environment.