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GOVERNMENT NOTICE

SOUTH AFRICAN QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

No. 802

5 October 2012

**SOUTH AFRICAN QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
(SAQA)**

In terms of Section 13(1)(h)(iii) of the National Qualifications Framework Act (Act 67 of 2008) SAQA must develop policy and criteria, after consultation with the Quality Councils, for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

The SAQA Board approved the attached *Policy and Criteria for the Recognition of Prior Learning* for public comment.

The closing date for public comment is 15 November 2012.

Comments should be forwarded to SAQA for attention Dr. James Keevy using the following methods:

- Email: jkeevy@saqa.org.za
- Fax: 012 431 5039
- Post: PostNet Suite 248, Private Bag X06, Waterkloof, Pretoria, 0145

JOE SAMUELS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

20 September 2012

Introductory note

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act 67 of 2008 mandates the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) to develop, after consultation with the Quality Councils, a national policy for assessment, the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), and Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT).

The revised RPL policy builds on a long developmental trajectory and is grounded in extensive stakeholder consultation. SAQA initially developed policy for RPL in 2002, and Criteria and Guidelines for RPL in 2003. Both of these documents have been widely used and remain in use but now need to be updated, to align the policies with the NQF Act 67 of 2008, which replaced the SAQA Act 58 of 1995. The revised RPL policy takes cognisance of the considerable RPL-related knowledge and experience gained through practice and research across the education and training system since 2002. The updated policy follows a well-supported *National RPL Conference: Bridging and expanding existing islands of excellent practice* hosted by SAQA in February 2011, at which three themes identified by over 200 people at a preparatory workshop were addressed. This conference brought together findings from RPL-related research and practice to date, to address the three identified themes: 'Resourcing RPL', 'Effective delivery of RPL', and 'Quality assurance of RPL'. One of the conference outputs, the *Resolution and Working Document on RPL*, includes the agreed-upon actions needed for resourcing, delivery, and quality assurance of RPL based on the knowledge, experience and views discussed over the three days of the conference, by the more than 350 people present. This document forms one of the important bases for the revised RPL policy.

The revised RPL policy has been developed with support from the SAQA RPL Reference Group which includes staff representatives from the Quality Councils¹. Broader consultation with all nominees for the SAQA RPL Reference Group and organised labour also took place in the form of a

¹SAQA's RPL Reference Group comprises Mr Nigel Prinsloo (Further Education and Training Institute, FETI), Dr Bennie Anderson (Da Vinci Institute), Dr Elizabeth Smith (University of South Africa, UNISA), Mr Alan Ralphs (University of the Western Cape, UWC), Dr John van der Merwe (North West University, NWU), Mr David Dodge (Electricity Supply Commission, ESKOM), Mr Abie Dunn (Sandown Motor Holdings), Mr Varish Ganpath (Prodigy Business Services), Mr Isaac Masita (Congress of South African Trade Unions, COSATU), Dr Ronel Blom (Higher Education South Africa, HESA), Ms Malebo Mogopodi (National Union of Mineworkers, NUMSA), Ms Inger Marrian (Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority, W&R SETA), Prof Nqabomzi Gawe (Durban University of Technology, DUT), Ms Deonita Damons (Knowledge Quest), Dr Rob Sieborger (University of Cape Town, UCT), Dr Luke Mlilo (Council on Higher Education, CHE), Dr Julia Motaung (Quality Council for Trades and Occupations, QCTO), Mr Vijayen Naidoo (Umalusi, Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training).

workshop on 6 July 2012. Further consultations are planned during the public comment period to raise awareness and encourage wide participation.

Background

The NQF Act 67 of 2008 and the Acts associated with the three Quality Councils² ushered in a NQF strengthened by lessons learned from the first 15 years of implementation. The original NQF objectives of integration, access and redress, mobility and progression, and quality remain, and RPL is key for the achievement of these objectives and for the realisation of the fullest developmental potential of lifelong learning. But what is RPL?

RPL involves recognition – in various forms – of non-formal and informal learning that learners of all ages may have acquired in the course of their working lives or in participation in society and community activities outside formal places of learning. RPL has differing purposes, a few of which are given here:

RPL for access

One situation in which RPL is needed, is when learners seek access to college/university or to undergraduate or postgraduate study in Higher Education, when they do not meet all the formal entrance criteria set by the institution of learning they wish to enter. In many cases, prospective learners may go through a process of mediation and preparation (sometimes referred to as ‘portfolio development’) towards assessment of their readiness to enter these courses of study.

RPL for credits

Example: workers, including community workers and those currently unemployed, could for instance have acquired skills in the workplace or are self-taught and may have few or no formal qualifications and thus could consequently be barred from certain career pathways. Some of these individuals may go through the RPL process for the purpose of “just knowing what they are worth”. In some cases, it is possible for individuals to undergo a process of preparation for testing and then assessment, at the end of which their experience is recognised with an appropriate certificate or credit.

² For Umalusi: Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training, the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Amendment Act, Act No. 50 of 2008. For the Council on Higher Education (CHE), the Higher Education Amendment Act, Act No. 39 of 2008. For the Quality Council on Trades and Occupations (QCTO), the Skills Development Amendment Act, Act No. 37 of 2008.

RPL for advancement

This applies to people already doing certain jobs and holding positions for which they have qualifications other than those currently recognised for that position. To comply with new national and internationally comparable laws and criteria, these individuals may be required legally to acquire new certification in order to continue to practice. There may be RPL preparation and assessment processes towards this certification.

There are other examples. Importantly: RPL is not simply an assessment process – it involves mediation to ensure that candidates are able to make the transition from using knowledge and skills in one type of context, to using the same knowledge and skills in a different context; mediation is also needed when knowledge and skills are recognised for particular qualifications, part-qualifications, or other specific types of credit. Effective RPL processes – whether for access, credit, or for recognition in the workplace for white or blue-collar workers – usually involve making sure that RPL candidates have access to the mediation tools required for successful transition.

RPL has existed in South Africa for over 15 years now. All public and private institutions are required to have RPL policies in place. Implementation of these policies has not always been easy or straightforward, however. In a recent Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report an apt comment is made:

“South Africa has not yet gone beyond the initial stage represented by inspirational promoters of recognition, even though it has a network of excellent specialists and exhibits scattered signs of very good practice.” (OECD 2009: 68)

That there are islands of excellent practice is a positive and commendable achievement. It is imperative that these beginnings and developments are taken further. This revised RPL policy draws on research and practice to date, to focus on the further development and resourcing of RPL; greater inclusivity regarding RPL; and the enhancement of the quality of RPL nationally.

Policy and criteria for the recognition of prior learning

Purpose

1. This revised RPL policy and its associated criteria provide for a framework for the implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) within the context of the National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF) Act 67 of 2008.

Preamble

2. This current revised RPL policy replaces the policy document “The recognition of prior learning in the context of the South African NQF” developed in 2002 by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) within the context of the SAQA Act (Act 58 of 1995).
3. The current revised RPL policy builds on the strengths of the earlier version developed in 2002, as well as on new insights gained from ongoing practice and research. It establishes the principles, framework and priorities for RPL as part of the further development and implementation of the NQF in South Africa.
4. This current revised policy seeks to position RPL in relation to the following key priority areas:
 - a) Redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities;
 - b) Access to quality learning pathways for all South Africans, including unemployed persons;
 - c) Fair recognition of knowledge and skills in the workforce in South Africa.
5. This implementation of RPL will be achieved by:
 - a) Initiating a comprehensive quality-assured and resource-driven approach to optimise the delivery of RPL services and programmes, including RPL assessments;
 - b) Ensuring quality assurance and benchmarking of RPL by designated authorities and agencies, through acknowledging the roles of SAQA

and the three Quality Councils: the Council on Higher Education (CHE); Umalusi: Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training; and the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO);

- c) Recognising that barriers to implementation exist, such as: limited incentives; lack of resources including lack of trained RPL personnel; inadequate supporting systems such as administrative systems that are unable to grant credits for part-qualifications, and admission systems without robust alternative access routes; institutional resistance and lack of capacity; and over-subscription in some sectors;
- d) Recognising different kinds of RPL and purposes for RPL in relation to different contexts and classifications of knowledge, skills competencies, qualifications and part-qualifications in the national learning system;
- e) Providing support for a national co-ordinating mechanism to assist the Quality Councils, institutions of learning, and RPL practitioners to deal with barriers, accessing government funding, building capacity and expanding RPL provisioning in a comprehensive RPL system.

Scope

6. This current revised RPL policy constitutes an overarching framework for SAQA's role in co-ordinating the development of RPL policies and practices across all sub-frameworks of the NQF, in collaboration with the three Quality Councils; accredited education and training providers; workplaces and other assessment sites; recognised professional bodies; and RPL practitioners.
7. This policy and its criteria apply to:
 - a) Quality Councils; accredited education and training providers; workplaces and other assessment sites; recognised professional bodies, and RPL practitioners;
 - b) All qualifications, part-qualifications and professional designations registered on the NQF and offered in South Africa.

Glossary of terms

8. “Credit accumulation” means the totalling of credits required to complete a qualification or a part-qualification.
9. “Credit transfer” means the vertical, horizontal or diagonal relocation of credits towards a qualification or part-qualification on the same or different level, usually between different programmes, departments or institutions.
10. “Credit accumulation and transfer (CAT) system” means an arrangement whereby the diverse features of both credit accumulation and credit transfer are combined to facilitate lifelong learning and access to the workplace.
11. “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.
12. “Informal learning” means learning that results from daily activities related to paid or unpaid work, family or community life, or leisure.
13. “Lifelong learning” means learning that takes place in all contexts in life from a life-wide, life-deep and lifelong perspective. It includes learning behaviours and obtaining knowledge; understanding; attitudes; values and competences for personal growth, social and economic well-being, democratic citizenship, cultural identity and employability.
14. “*National Co-ordinating Mechanism for RPL*” means a national facility empowered to co-ordinate, research, support, advocate and oversee the mainstreaming of RPL.
15. “National Qualifications Framework (NQF)” means a comprehensive system approved by the Minister of Higher Education and Training for the classification, co-ordination, registration, and publication of articulated and quality-assured national qualifications and part-qualifications. The South African NQF is a single integrated system comprising three co-ordinated qualifications sub-frameworks for: General and Further Education and Training; Higher Education; and Trades and Occupations.
16. “NQF Act” means the South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act No. 67 of 2008.

17. “Non-formal learning” means learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning towards a qualification or part-qualification; it is often associated with learning that results in improved workplace practice, but does not necessarily lead to the awarding of credits.
18. “Part-qualification” means an assessed unit of learning that is registered or to be registered as part of a qualification on the NQF with a clearly defined purpose.
19. “Provider” means an entity that offers any education programme or trade and occupational learning programme that leads to a qualification or part-qualification registered on the NQF.
20. “Professional body” means any body of expert practitioners in an occupational field, and includes an occupational body.
21. “Professional designation” means a title or status conferred by a professional body in recognition of a person’s expertise and/or right to practice in an occupational field.
22. “Qualification” means a planned combination of learning outcomes which has a defined purpose or purposes, intended to provide qualifying learners with applied competence and a basis for further learning and which has been assessed in terms of exit level outcomes, registered on the NQF and certified and awarded by a recognised body.
23. “Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)” means the principles and processes through which the prior knowledge and/or skills of a person are made visible and are assessed for the purposes of certification, alternative access and admission, and further learning and development. As a principle, it endorses the value of giving recognition to knowledge and skills that have been acquired outside a formal learning programme. As a process, it consists of a range of educational and training activities and services through which the principle of RPL is applied and learners are supported in different contexts as they go through the RPL process. These activities and services include the provision of RPL-related information; advising, coaching, and administration services; alternative access programmes; integrated curriculum design; and a variety of formative and summative assessment practices.

24. "Resourcing of RPL" means the direct and indirect physical, infrastructural, human and financial capacity needed to build a mainstream and sustainable RPL system.
25. "RPL practitioner" means a person who is a member of the *RPL Practitioner Association* supported by the *National Co-ordinating Mechanism for RPL* in accordance with criteria established for this purpose.

Understandings of RPL: common principles

26. The idea of RPL is aligned to three key elements of South African national policy discourse since 1994: transformation, accreditation and lifelong learning and the NQF.
27. The RPL process is a multi-dimensional one, a process through which non-formal and informal learning are measured, mediated for recognition across different contexts, transitioned, accredited and certified against the requirements for credit, access, inclusion or advancement in the formal education and training system, or workplace. RPL processes can include guidance and counselling, and extended preparation for assessment.
28. Assessment, an integral feature of all forms of RPL, does not exist in isolation from a range of other strategies that bring different sources of knowledge and forms of learning into a shared discursive space where comparisons and judgements can be made.
29. RPL is multi-contextual and how it takes place differs from context to context. RPL may be developed and implemented differently for the purposes of personal development, further learning and advancement in the workplace, recognised within the three sub-frameworks of the NQF. Furthermore, it may be conducted by a variety of methods using a combination of teaching-learning, mentoring and/or assessment approaches, as appropriate. The purposes and contexts determine the practices and outcomes of RPL in each case.
30. RPL may be carried out at any level of learning and at any NQF level.
31. There are different forms of RPL, which reflect the different purposes, the different processes and the different NQF levels within which RPL takes place.

32. RPL may lead to the awarding of credits towards a qualification or part-qualification at a diagnostic, formative or summative point, or in-curriculum to create opportunities for advanced standing. In general, the awarding of credits may result in a transcript, where the assessment is summative, or in certification. RPL for credit takes place against the learning outcomes and/or assessment criteria and knowledge and/or skill statements required and specified for a qualification or part-qualification.
33. The following principles are important elements of an holistic approach to RPL:
- a) The focus is on what has been learned and not on the status of the institution, organisation or place where the learning was obtained;
 - b) Credit is awarded for knowledge and skills acquired through experience and not for experience alone;
 - c) Learning is made explicit through assessment and/or other methods that engage the intrinsic development of knowledge, skills and competencies acquired;
 - d) Candidate guidance and support, the preparation of evidence and the development of an appropriate combination of teaching-learning, mentoring and assessment approaches are core to RPL practice;
 - e) Notwithstanding all the features listed here, RPL is generally considered to be a developmental process, and not an end in itself.

Recognition of Prior Learning in the context of the National Qualifications Framework in South Africa

34. The NQF in South Africa is a comprehensive system approved by the Minister of Higher Education and Training for the classification, co-ordination, registration, and publication of articulated and quality-assured national qualifications and part-qualifications. It was established under the SAQA Act (Act 58 of 1995) and continues under the NQF Act (Act 67 of 2008) which came into effect on 1 June 2009.
35. The objectives of the NQF are to:
- a) Create a single integrated national framework for learning achievements;
 - b) Facilitate access to, and mobility and progression within, education, training and career paths;

- c) Enhance the quality of education and training;
 - d) Accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities;
 - e) Contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the nation at large.
36. SAQA is mandated to oversee the further development and implementation of the NQF and understands it as a system of communication, co-ordination, and collaboration that enables progression between education, training, development and work. SAQA also understands the NQF to be a mechanism to drive systemic integration; it is a relational device. RPL is key for this integration and to enable articulation. In advancing the NQF objectives, SAQA embraces inclusivity and social justice, diversity, and environmental sustainability; RPL has an important role to play in realising these principles.
37. The NQF as an integrated framework overseen by SAQA is made up of three co-ordinated sub-frameworks, each overseen by a Quality Council that needs to provide for RPL:
- a) Higher Education Qualifications sub-framework overseen by the Council on Higher Education;
 - b) General and Further Education and Training Qualifications sub-framework overseen by Umalusi;
 - c) Occupational Qualifications sub-framework overseen by the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations.
38. In terms of Section 13[h] of the NQF Act, and notwithstanding the provisions of any other Act, SAQA is required to develop and implement policy and criteria, after consultation with the Quality Councils, for assessment, RPL and credit accumulation and transfer.
39. All qualifications and part-qualifications registered on the NQF may be awarded in whole or in part through RPL. Processes followed must be credible, quality assured and acceptable to the associated Quality Council. In this regard, all qualifications and part-qualifications registered on the NQF must include provision for alternative entry level requirements to enable candidates to be admitted to study towards the qualification or part-qualification through RPL.
40. Enabling agreements must be put in place among key stakeholders to enhance the implementation of RPL practices and services and effective progression in and across different learning and qualification pathways.

41. No distinction, other than for data analysis, must be made between records of learner credits and achievements for qualifications and/or part-qualifications awarded as a result of RPL processes and those obtained via conventional means.
42. Data relating to RPL achievements must be recorded and submitted to SAQA as required for the purposes of monitoring access and redress successes over time. This data must be maintained under strict conditions of confidentiality, and may not be shared with any individuals not directly involved in the recording of the data.
43. In the period leading up to the establishment of the *RPL Practitioner Association*, an RPL practitioner is an institutionally recognised practitioner of RPL. Six types of RPL practitioners are envisaged: Advisor, Facilitator, Assessor, Administrator, Moderator, and Co-ordinator. The professional requirements for an RPL practitioner that will lead to the awarding of a professional designation will be determined by the *RPL Practitioner Association*.

Objectives

44. The aims of this RPL policy and its criteria are to advance the objectives of the NQF through:
 - a) Developing shared understanding of RPL within a broader lifelong learning framework;
 - b) Providing an expanded scope for an holistic model and approach to RPL, inclusive of the provision of a full range of RPL services and programmes, by all providers in the system;
 - c) Providing a national framework for further development and implementation of RPL, including resourcing, effective delivery models and quality assurance;
 - d) Facilitating the formulation of sector and institutional RPL policies;
 - e) Setting guidelines for gathering, documenting and reporting on RPL-related practices and data;
 - f) Enabling potential candidates to attain recognition of the appropriate knowledge and skills required for personal development and the employment market;
 - g) Demonstrably changing the lives of RPL candidates, including blue and white collar workers and learners of all ages, including

- unemployed people and other marginalised groups, as important beneficiaries of RPL services;
- h) Recognising the role and functions of employers in the education and training system;
 - i) Recognising the role and functions of public and private providers in the education and training system;
 - j) Recognising the role and functions of RPL practitioners in the education and training system;
 - k) Supporting the establishment of a *National Co-ordinating Mechanism for RPL* that will focus on research, support, advocacy and the mainstreaming of RPL;
 - l) Researching national and international RPL best practice.

Policy priorities for RPL

45. Resourcing of RPL

- a) Resourcing of RPL denotes the direct and indirect physical, infrastructural, human and financial capacity needed to build a sustainable and mainstream learning system. Providing equitable access to RPL opportunities serves government's commitment to redress imbalances that still exist in our highly unequal society and in the labour market specifically;
- b) The provision of quality RPL programmes and services is costly for providers and learners alike, but in principle these services should generate savings of cost and time to providers and learners alike, and so should not be more expensive than formal education and training provision;
- c) Government and other forms of subsidisation of RPL programmes and services should be explored where possible. In this regard, the provision of context-specific RPL instruments needs to be subsidised for RPL providers. Given the considerable extent and importance of work being done in the private provision of RPL in the country, RPL provision in the private sector needs to be further encouraged;
- d) Access to RPL cannot become a private good for the few who can afford it. Fees for RPL need to be harmonised across private providers; similar RPL services in the public sector also need to be consistently priced and funded;
- e) The sharing of facilities, staff and expertise across the RPL system and education and training institutions in a sustainable way is strongly encouraged;

- f) RPL candidates' 'opportunity costs' (such as loss of income while engaged in RPL processes) need to be examined thoroughly in order to compensate candidates and/or relevant sponsors.

46. Effective delivery of RPL

- a) Delivery of RPL should take cognisance of lessons learned to date, in research and practice;
- b) Within sectors, areas with an absence of RPL or low take-up of RPL need to be addressed as a matter of urgency;
- c) A focus on RPL for returning-to-learning youth and adults needs to be encouraged and resourced in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders in the labour market and the national learning system;
- d) RPL in the workplace and in education institutions needs to be taken to scale.

47. Quality assurance of RPL

- a) Quality assurance of RPL is manifested by the establishment of and adherence to policies, standards, processes, and associated practices that ensure that the knowledge, skills and values of learners are recognised and validated so that they can successfully engage in further learning that contributes meaningfully to their educational and/or employment goals;
- b) In the quality assurance of RPL, standardisation can only take place between similar types of RPL. An effort must be made to allow standardised practices to grow within sectors, as one approach does not necessarily work across different contexts;
- c) The concept of quality in RPL needs to include quality indicators such as acceptability to stakeholders, fitness for purpose, transparency, and fair outcomes;
- d) The measurement of comparability is complex but attempts to find ways of assessing it need to continue;
- e) Quality assurance of RPL must be undertaken with the explicit intention to protect the integrity of the processes and outcomes concerned.

48. National co-ordination of RPL

- a) National co-ordination of RPL in South Africa involves a state- and stakeholder-driven approach to RPL through which the interests and RPL needs of workers, industry, public and private providers, civil

- society, organised labour, the unemployed and the State are prioritised;
- b) An independent *National Co-ordinating Mechanism for RPLs* is required;
 - c) The main functions of the proposed *National Co-ordinating Mechanism for RPL* will be in the following areas:
 - i. *Research*: Conduct, co-ordinate and disseminate RPL-related research and information;
 - ii. *Professionalisation*: Initiate and encourage the training and continuing professional development of RPL practices and practitioners; and guide and support the professionalisation of RPL practices within the education and training system by supporting the *RPL Practitioner Association*;
 - iii. *Co-ordination*: Identify and initiate strategic RPL projects that effect systemic shifts and address systemic barriers such as for artisan development and capacity-building projects;
 - iv. *Support and advice*: Conduct formative, ongoing, and summative monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of RPL policy; oversee and ensure the dissemination of best local and international RPL practice, including successful models, toolkits and guidelines;
 - v. *Advocacy*: Arrange a biennial conference on RPL inclusive of a full range of RPL practitioners and researchers, and learner representation.
 - d) The *National Co-ordinating Mechanism for RPL* should include an Advisory Committee consisting of, amongst others, representatives from the Department of Higher Education and Training, SAQA, the Quality Councils, the National Artisan Moderating Body (NAMB), RPL practitioners, public and private providers, professional bodies, organised labour and other stakeholders.

Criteria for the implementation of RPL

49. Criteria for SAQA:

- a) Develop policy and criteria, after consultation with the Quality Councils, for assessment, RPL and CAT;

- b) Undertake RPL-related research, monitoring and support work as required for the further implementation and development of the NQF.

50. Criteria for Quality Councils:

- a) Develop a policy on RPL for their sectors, taking into account the relevant national SAQA policies, and the broader context of their specific sub-frameworks and related policies;
- b) Facilitate the implementation of RPL within the specific sub-framework they oversee, including the development and implementation of standardised approaches where appropriate;
- c) Collaborate with SAQA, the *National Co-ordinating Mechanism for RPL*, NAMB, the Sector Education and Training Authorities, and other role-players to advance the development of RPL in their sectors;
- d) Foster close working relationships with professional bodies in the sector where appropriate, to facilitate RPL;
- e) Set up enabling agreements to increase RPL provisioning in their sectors;
- f) Support and monitor the training of RPL advisors, facilitators, assessors, moderators, and administrators in their sectors;
- g) Monitor providers that offer RPL in their sectors, in accordance with criteria established for this purpose;
- h) Ensure consistency in the application of RPL policies by providers and delegated bodies in their sectors (where relevant);
- i) Support the co-ordinated development of generic RPL toolkits and instruments relevant to the particular context for their sectors, wherever appropriate and possible;
- j) Monitor the RPL admission rates of providers and make this information public in an appropriate format, while maintaining the strictest confidentiality with respect to individual learners and individual institutions;
- k) Ensure that no distinction, other than for data analysis, is made between qualifications awarded through conventional and RPL routes;
- l) Develop and maintain an information management system that is compatible with the National Learners Records Database (NLRD) and other relevant government information management systems;
- m) Conduct and oversee RPL-related research in the sector in collaboration with the *National Co-ordinating Mechanism for RPL*.

51. Criteria for providers:

- a) Be accredited by the relevant Quality Council(s);
- b) In the case of private providers that offer qualifications located in the Higher Education and General and Further Education and Training sub-frameworks, registration with either the Department of Higher Education and Training or the Department of Basic Education, respectively, is also required;
- c) Progressively develop and enhance capacity to implement RPL in accordance with this policy and the specific RPL policy of the sub-framework(s) within which their qualifications are offered;
- d) Collaborate with SAQA, NAMB, the Quality Councils and the *National Co-ordinating Mechanism for RPL* to advance the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of RPL;
- e) Ensure that they have the necessary staff capacity to deliver quality RPL services and programmes;
- f) Ensure effective planning and funding for RPL administrative and logistical systems to support all programmes and services;
- g) Put systems and procedures in place to incentivise/incentivize and support the registration and continued professional development of RPL practitioners;
- h) Provide advice, counselling and support services to assist RPL candidates prior to, during, and after RPL processes;
- i) Establish an appeal process for RPL candidates to engage with RPL-related judgements;
- j) Ensure an equitable fee structure for all RPL programmes and services including those programmes and services that involve the assessment of experiential learning for credit against existing formal qualifications or part-qualifications;
- k) Develop an information management system that meets the requirements of the relevant Quality Council, the NLRD, and other relevant government information management systems.

52. Criteria for recognised professional bodies:

- a) Comply with the national SAQA policy and criteria for the recognition of professional bodies and the registration of professional designations;
- b) Include an RPL route as an integral requirement for attainments of its professional designations;
- c) Collaborate with SAQA, the Quality Councils, the *National Co-ordinating Mechanism for RPL* and the relevant providers to incentivise and advance quality RPL provisioning in the sector;

- d) Progressively develop and enhance its capacity to initiate and support RPL provision in accordance with this policy.

53. Criteria for RPL practitioners:

- a) Hold the same or higher qualification than the qualification the RPL candidate wishes to acquire;
- b) Meet the criteria to be awarded a professional designation as will be determined by the *RPL Practitioner Association*, including:
 - i. Be registered as an assessor, workplace assessor and/or moderator with the relevant body where appropriate;
 - ii. Complete specific RPL-related continuing professional development activities;
 - iii. Adhere to a code of conduct.

54. Until the *National Co-ordinating Mechanism for RPL* and the *RPL Practitioner Association* are in place, existing, fully quality-assured RPL processes acceptable to institutions of learning, workplaces and community organisations must continue.

End of document

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