



Recognition of Prior Learning for Career Development Practitioners



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Abbreviations	
SACDA	South African Career Development Association
CDP	Career Development Practitioner
CIO	Career Information Officer
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
NQF Act	The South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act No. 67 of 2008
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
HPCSA	Health Professions Council of South Africa
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SACSSP	South African Council for Social Service Professions
SABPP	South African Board for People Practices
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
POE	Portfolio of Evidence

1. Policy statement

The NQF Act, Act 67 of 2008, provides for the recognition of professional bodies by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). The Policy for Recognising a Professional Body and Registering a Professional Designation for the Purposes of the NQF Act, Act 67 of 2008 (SAQA, 2011), requires professional bodies to have a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policy in place as part of the criteria for SAQA recognition.

The Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2016) is designed to provide clarity on the minimum competencies required to perform effectively as a CDP within a particular category. Registration of CDPs by SACDA is aligned with the competency standard outlined in the DHET competency framework.

2. Policy purpose

Applicants who have acquired non-formal and informal learning through channels such as job training, work experience, self-study, volunteer activity and other experience, may be assessed for admission to a professional designation if found to meet minimum competencies required to perform as a CDP within a particular registration category.

3. Scope of policy

The following principles apply to the RPL mechanism for CDPs in South Africa:

- 3.1 The criteria for assessing RPL must be applied consistently and equitably to all applications.
- 3.2 Any RPL granted to an applicant must be defensible in ensuring the applicant has at least the minimum competencies required to perform effectively as a CDP within a particular category.

4. Definitions

National Qualifications Framework: The NQF is a comprehensive system approved by the Minister of Higher Education and Training for the classification, registration, publication and articulation of quality-assured national qualifications.

Portfolio of Evidence: A POE is a document aimed at assisting a candidate to plan, prepare, compile and present the necessary evidence to be considered for a professional designation.

Professional Designation: 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. A professional designation is a 'warrant of competence' and speaks to criteria of competencies, values, attitudes, ethics and ongoing professional development required to practice in an occupational field.

Progression Pathway: Is a hierarchy of two or more related qualifications and/or professional designations that allow for vertical progression or articulation within a profession.

Recognition of Prior Learning: RPL in the case of conferring a professional designation means the principles and processes through which competencies, values, attitudes and ethics of a person are made visible, mediated and assessed for the purposes of alternative access other than via formal studies and qualifications towards a professional designation.

RPL Practitioner: Is a person that functions in one or more aspects of RPL provision, including policy development, advising, portfolio course design and facilitation, assessment and moderation, administration, monitoring and evaluation, research and development.

5. How to apply for RPL

Candidates must:

- 5.1 Submit RPL POE for specific category of professional designation.
- 5.2 Pay RPL application fee.

6. What will be assessed

RPL is based on the understanding that individuals acquire competencies through everyday learning. Where formal learning does not directly exist or is not accessible for some, an assessment of non-formal and informal learning is made to ensure the applicant meets the minimum

competencies required to perform effectively within that professional designation. Applicants with at least a minimum of two (2) years' work experience in providing career education, information, advice or guidance may approach SACDA to enquire about the RPL process.

7. How learning will be assessed

- 7.1 On receipt of an application together with supporting documents, the application will be screened for completeness by a designated SACDA staff member, who may be assisted if necessary by a peer assessor who is a member of the assessing committee. After screening, the following actions may be taken:
 - 7.1.1 Refer the application for assessment; or
 - 7.1.2 Request further information from the applicant; or
 - 7.1.3 In cases where the applicant fails to provide the requested information, refer the application to the Registration Committee and recommend refusal of the application.
- 7.2 Once the application is complete, the assessor will review and prepare a summative report and recommendation which will be moderated prior to submission to the Registration Committee.
- 7.3 The Registration Committee will then take a decision on whether:
 - 7.3.1 The applicant has provided evidence of competence against the prescribed standard and should be recommended for admission to the Registrar; or
 - 7.3.2 The applicant has not provided evidence of competence against particular criteria in the prescribed standards for the reasons stated.
- 7.4 Where an applicant for candidacy does not provide evidence of competence against any part or parts of the prescribed standards, the application may be deferred by the assessing committee for a period not exceeding twelve months if it is considered feasible for the candidate to obtain evidence of satisfying outstanding requirements in that time.
- 7.5 The period of twelve months commences on the date of the communication informing the applicant of the deferment and reasons for deferment.
- 7.6 No further fee is payable if the required evidence is submitted within the twelve-month period.
- 7.7 If the period of deferral is exceeded, the applicant must make a new complete application, pay the prescribed fee and provide evidence of competence against all requirements.

- 7.8 In terms of section 7.4, an applicant may apply for an additional time extension prior to the expiry of the initial twelve-month deferral period, stating the grounds for applying for an additional time extension. The Registration Committee will assess the application and may extend the deferral for a further twelve months if it is considered feasible for the candidate to obtain evidence of satisfying outstanding requirements in that time or if personal circumstances of the applicant justifies a further extension.
- 7.9 An applicant may on submission of new evidence after a deferment be granted a further deferment of up to twelve months.
- 7.10 An applicant may benefit only once by the concession in 7.8 or 7.9.
- 7.11 In providing evidence after a deferment, an applicant is not required to provide new evidence against the requirements already satisfied.
- 7.12 When an application for candidacy is deferred or refused, the persons assessing the application and the moderator must identify the outcomes that have been satisfied and formulate a deficiency statement, that is, written reasons for deferment of the application or refusal of registration in terms of the prescribed standards applicable in the particular case.
- 7.13 After completion of the process defined in sections 7.4 to 7.12, the Registration Committee receives the original application, collated reports from the professional review, reports of experienced assessors and referees and must make a determination as follows:
- 7.13.1 Make a decision to admit an applicant who has demonstrated competence against the prescribed standards; or
 - 7.13.2 Defer consideration of the application in terms of section 7.12, stating reasons for the deferral; or
 - 7.13.3 Refer the application back for consideration by the parties appropriate to the case; or
 - 7.13.4 Require an applicant to undertake an additional assessment or assessments. Further assessments may include, but are not restricted to, oral presentations.
- 7.14 The relevant moderator must moderate all recommendations from the assessor's summative report or extended experience appraisal. An additional moderator must further moderate recommendations to refuse admission, forwarding these to the Registration Committee.
- 7.15 When an application for has been refused, the applicant may submit a new application for registration as soon as evidence of competence against all

7.16 identified deficient outcomes is available. Provided that the new application is made within five years, and a record of professional development has been maintained, credit for competence recognised against specific outcomes stands.

8. Language used to assess applicant

The medium of instruction used to conduct the assessment is english but in instances where an applicant is unable to read or write english, the applicant may employ the services of a translator.

9. At what level should learning be

Learning should be at the entry-level for CDPs as per the DHET-approved Competency Framework.

10. Who can apply for RPL

10.1 Applicants who have at least the requisite verifiable experience that is current as determined by SACDA: and

10.2 Applicants who have acquired skills and knowledge through one or a combination of the following paths:

- a. Formal study;
- b. Work experience;
- c. Non-formal study;
- d. Informal learning; and/or
- e. Industry-based training.

11. How SACDA considers credit for RPL

11.1 SACDA will appoint a panel of experts who will consider the submitted POE.

11.2 The RPL Panel shall take into account the following:

- a. Work experience of the applicant related to the curriculum against which assessment is taking place.
- b. Skills required for the work to be completed by the practitioner.
- c. Success achieved as evident in reference letters.
- d. Informal and non-formal training with reference to hours and standards.

12. Criteria for evidence

The POE submitted must meet the following criteria:

12.1 Current: means evidence of approximately the preceding five (5) years will be relevant.

12.2 Valid: means that evidence needs to be valid and relevant for the assessment.

12.3 Authentic: means that the evidence used must be the original work of the applicant.

12.4 Reliable: means the evidence used must be consistently good in quality and be trusted.

13. Policy effective date and review

Once approved by the Board of SACDA, this policy will serve from the date of approval for a period of three (3) years after which it will be reviewed and re-approved by the Board if necessary. The policy may be reviewed on an adhoc basis, should the need arise.

Approved by signature of the Chief Executive Officer and the Chairperson on 25 June 2019.

More information can be requested from info@sacda.org.za.