POLICY

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING AND CREDIT ACCUMULATION TRANSFER

Purpose

The purpose of this policy document is to outline the processes that will be utilised by the Foundation for Professional Development (FPD) regarding the application of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in order to promote consistency and to ensure that all students are treated fairly and according to the criteria for assessment and access. This policy has been developed to align to all required regulatory frameworks.

Scope

This policy will be implemented when learners apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) (see definitions below) in order to gain admission to a higher education qualification at FPD.

Definitions and Terms

Advanced standing	The status granted to a learner for admission to studies at a higher level than the learner's prior formal studies would have allowed, including exemption where applicable.[1]
Credit Accumulation	The totalling of credits required to complete a qualification or a part-qualification. [1]
Credit accumulation and transfer (CAT) system	An arrangement whereby the diverse features of both credit accumulation and credit transfer are combined to facilitate lifelong learning and access to the workplace. [1]
Credit Transfer	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. [1]
Formal learning	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 National Qualifications Framework. [1]
Informal learning	Learning that results from daily activities related to paid or unpaid work, family or community life, or leisure, including incidental learning.
Learning programme	A purposeful and structured set of learning experiences that leads to a qualification. [1]
Lifelong learning	Learning that takes place in all contexts in life from world-wide, life-deep and lifelong perspectives. It includes learning behaviours and obtaining.

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[1] South African Qualifications Authority. 2013. National Policy for the Implementation of the Recognition of Prior Learning. Available at: https://www.saqa.org.za/docs/pol/2013/natpol_irpl.pdf

	knowledge, understanding, attitudes, values and competencies for personal growth, social and economic well-being, democratic citizenship, cultural identity, and employability.
National Qualifications Framework (NQF)	The comprehensive system, approved by the Minister: HET, for the classification, registration, publication and articulation of quality-assured national qualifications and part-qualifications. The South African NQF is a single integrated system comprising three co-ordinated Qualifications Sub-Frameworks namely for: General and Further Education and Training; Higher Education; and Trades and Occupations. [1]
NQF Act	The South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act No 67. Of 2008. [1]
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	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. [1]

Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT)

CAT is given when a student has completed modules at other Higher Education Institutions that are similar to the module/s that the student wants to enrol for at FPD. This is referred to as formal learning. In this case, the student does not have to repeat the modules and the credits will be transferred to the FPD qualification. The following principles apply to CAT at FPD:

- CAT is limited to 50% of the modules of a qualification, students must complete at least 50% of the credits in any qualification at the institution awarding the qualification.
- A student should submit one or more of the following documents together with the application form for CAT: -
  o Copies of proof of qualifications to fulfil entry requirements. If such qualification was obtained outside of South Africa, please submit the SAQA Certificate of Evaluation.
  o A motivational letter to support the application for credit transfer.
  o An academic record, provided by the institution where the qualification was completed, that provides proof of successfully completing the module/s for which credit transfer is being requested.
  o A description of the learning outcomes and assessments linked to the previously completed module/s e.g., the study guide for the module and/or course where this module was completed.
- The Selection Committee convened by the Head of School will consider and make a decision in relation to all CAT applications, as prepared by the Student Administration and Engagement Unit. The Registrar will ensure that this outcome is communicated and approved by the Academic Committee.
- All appeals in relation to CAT will be directed by the Registrar to the Academic Committee for review.

Recognition of Prior Learner (RPL)

1) RPL as a principle, endorses the value of giving recognition to knowledge and skills that have been acquired outside a formal learning programme. As a process, RPL consists of an initial application and may be a lengthy process that ascribes to the following principle: The focus is on what has been learned and not on the status of the institution, organisation or place where the learning was obtained. [1]

2) Credit is awarded for knowledge and skills acquired through experience and not for experience alone. [1]

3) Prior learning is made explicit through assessment and/or other methods that engage the fundamental development of knowledge, skills and competencies acquired. [1]

4) The percentage of students on a specific cohort of a qualification cannot exceed more than 10% of the total students in the intake, unless under exceptional circumstances. [2]

5) Previous RPL assessments will not be considered by Foundation for Professional Development.

6) RPL can be granted for matric level on the undergraduate level of study only, if a learner can provide proof of participation in higher learning and matric level evidence.[3]

Assessors at FPD will apply the following principles of assessment in relation to RPL:

Reliability: An assessment is reliable when results are reproducible across time/place and between different assessors.[3] Standardised assessment tools (e.g. rubrics) will be used to ensure reliability. Assessment tools will be objective and will not allow any bias or personal prejudices by assessors. Clear guidelines and criteria for assessment will be set out in order to eliminate any uncertainties.

Validity: Validity refers to an assessment measuring what it says it is measuring. [3] Knowledge or skills relevant to the programme will be the focus of all assessments. Tools used will be appropriate for the domain being assessed. The content assessed should be a reasonable representation of the intended learning. No students will be assessed without being fully informed first about the learning outcomes to be achieved. All the required evidence of achievement will be specified, and the relevant assessment methods will be used for the required learning outcomes.

Fairness: All prospective students will be exposed to same opportunities and resources during assessment with an aim to prevent bias.   All assessment processes will be transparently applied without interfering with any student progress.

Sufficiency: Sufficiency means that there is enough evidence to certify the student as competent. [3] Various sources of evidence and assessment activities will be used to ensure the evidence is sufficient.

Directness: Assessment should directly relate to the learning outcomes.

Authenticity: Authenticity answers the question: can evidence be credited to the learner. [3] The principal applies to student's work being their own and, in the case of group work, if the student made a fair contribution.

Currency: Currency refers to the applicability of skills, knowledge and understanding in present circumstances. [3] Knowledge acquired by the prospective student should not be more than three years old.

Flexibility: All unique circumstances of students will be taken into consideration during assessment, such as age, previous formal learning, language and learning pace.   Flexibility in respect of methods used in assessment should be exercised to accommodate unique circumstances of the individuals being assessed, in as much as it is reasonable and practical.

The RPL Process:

1) Learners are provided with information on the entry criteria/requirements to participate successfully in the programme, as well as information on RPL.

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[2] Council on Higher Education. 2004. Criteria for Programme Accreditation. Available at: http://nr-online.che.ac.za/html_documents/CHE_accreditation_criteria_Nov2004.pdf

[3] SAQA. 2001. Criteria and Guidelines for Assessment of NQF Registered standards and qualifications. Available from: https://cdn.lgseta.co.za/resources/guidelines/2.4.1%20SAQA%20Criteria%20and%20Guidelines%20for%20Assessment.pdf

2)   RPL application procedures such as the completion of a form, the payment of an application fee, as well as the submission of supporting documentation, employee testimonials and a motivation letter will be available to learners. ([See form here](#)).

3)   Measures for selection and assessment of learners for entry will be transparent and fair.

4)   An assessment of the prior learning will be conducted by assessors and moderators, if necessary.

5)   A recommendation regarding entry into the programme will be made on completion of the assessment of the application.

6)   The Selection Committee convened by the Head of School will consider and make a decision in relation to all RPL applications, as prepared by the Student Administration and Engagement Unit. The Registrar will ensure that this outcome is communicated and approved by the Academic Committee.

7)   An appeals mechanism is in place for unsuccessful applicants who would like to appeal the decision.

8)   All appeals in relation to RPL will be directed by the Registrar to the Academic Committee for review.

9)   FPD will monitor and record all applications and outcomes to meet the requirements of quality assurance for recognition of prior learning.

Accountabilities

The Academic Committee is responsible for review and approval of this policy on an annual basis. The policy is to be distributed to staff via induction and distributed to students and FPD's community via the website and other publications.