



POLICY

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING AND CREDIT ACCUMULSTION AND TRANSFER

1. 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) and credit accumulation and transfer in order to promote consistency and to ensure that all students are treated fair and according to the criteria for assessment and access. This policy has been developed to align to all required regulatory frameworks.

2. Scope

This policy will be implemented to help learners who seek access to the institution with an aim to cover all the learning activities, concepts, learning outcomes; either formal or informal which has been accumulated by learners from other institution and this information will be considered in order to help them regain admission to a relevant higher education qualification at the FPD. 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.

3. Definitions and Terms

- 3.1. **"Advanced standing"** means the status granted to a learner for admission to studies at a higher level than the learners' prior formal studies would have allowed, including exemption where applicable.
- 3.2. **"Credit Accumulation"** means the totaling of credits required to complete a qualification or a part-qualification
- 3.3. **"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.
- 3.4. **"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.
- 3.5. **"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 National Qualifications Framework (NQF).
- 3.6. **"Informal learning"** means learning that results from daily activities related to paid or unpaid work, family or community life, or leisure, including incidental learning.
- 3.7. **"Learning programme"** means a purposeful and structured set of learning experiences that leads to a qualification.

- 3.8. **“Lifelong learning”** means learning that takes place in all contexts in life from world-wide, life-deep and lifelong perspective. It includes learning behaviours and obtaining knowledge, understanding, attitudes, values and competencies for personal growth, social and economic well-being, democratic citizenship, cultural identity and employability.
- 3.9. **“National Qualifications Framework (NQF)”** means a comprehensive system approved by the Minister of Higher Education and Training for the classification, registration, publication and articulation of quality assured national qualifications.
- 3.10. **“NQF Act”** means the South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act No 67. Of 2008.

4. Applicable Legislation

- 4.1. The Foundation for Professional Development has taken into consideration the following South African legislation in the development of its Policy on Recognition of Prior Learning as it pertains to nursing qualifications:
- 4.1.1. The National Policy for the Implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (SAQA) which replaces the Recognition of Prior Learning in the context of the South African NQF (SAQA, 2002) within the context of the SAQA Act (Act 58 of 1995).
- 4.1.2. The aforementioned policy is located within the broader context of the Human Resource Development Strategy and the National Skills Development Strategy as well as consideration of the National Development Plan 2030.
- 4.1.3. This policy seeks to position recognition of prior learning (RPL) in relation to the overarching priorities of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).
- 4.1.4. The implementation of the National RPL policy will be achieved by:
- 4.1.4.1. Advancing the comprehensive, quality-assured and resource-drive approach to optimise the delivery of recognition of prior learning, services and programmes, including RPL assessment.
- 4.1.4.2. Ensuring quality assurance and benchmarking of recognition of prior learning overseen by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the three (3) Quality Councils.
- 4.1.4.3. Recognising that barriers to implementation; such as; limited incentives, lack of resources to develop and sustain services at affordable prices; lack of trained RPL personnel, inadequate support systems such as administrative systems that are able to grant credits for part qualifications and admission systems without robust alternative access routes; and institutional resistance and lack of capacity must be addressed.
- 4.1.4.4. Recognising different kinds of RPL and purposes for RPL in relation to different contexts and classifications of knowledge, skills, competencies and part-qualifications in the national learning system.
- 4.1.4.5. National Qualification Framework (NQF) Act, (Act 67 of 2008), that mandates SAQA to develop national policies for assessment, RPL and credit accumulation, in consultation with other quality councils.

5. Overview of the Policy on Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Accumulation and Transfer within the Context of the FPD

- 5.1. **“Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)”** means the principles and processes through which 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; and a variety of formative and summative assessment practices” (SAQA Regulation 452, No. 18787: March 1998).

5.2. “**Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT)**” means the arrangement whereby the diverse features of both credit accumulations and credit transfer are combined to facilitate lifelong learning and access to the workplace. The purpose of CAT is to provide for mobility of students and enhance their chances to successfully complete their qualifications. CAT also provides for articulation across the sub-frameworks of the NQF in order to facilitate lifelong learning and access to the workplace.

6. Objectives of RPL

- 6.1. These objectives are in line with the South African legislation and are stipulated as follows:
- 6.1.1. To provide access opportunities to higher education for those individuals who were previously disadvantaged.
 - 6.1.2. To provide progression opportunities within higher education.
 - 6.1.3. To formally recognize the expertise and skills acquired from experiences within various sectors.
 - 6.1.4. To develop competencies by facilitating access to specialised education and training programmes in the various fields.

7. Principles of Assessment as it applies to Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

- 7.1. The assessors at the Foundation for Professional Development will apply the following principles of assessment:
- 7.1.1. **Reliability:** Correct/relevant assessment tools will be used for production of similar outcomes that the tools are set out for.
 - 7.1.2. **Validity:** Correct knowledge or skills that need to be assessed will be the main focus of assessment.
 - 7.1.3. **Sufficiency:** Enough evidence will be acquired during assessment and assessment will be done comprehensively.
 - 7.1.4. **Directness:** Assessment should only focus on identified learning outcomes.
 - 7.1.5. **Authenticity:** Assessment will focus on the prospective student's own work and credit will be given when due.
 - 7.1.6. **Quality:** the prospective student has demonstrated an acceptable standard in the relevant field.
 - 7.1.7. **Currency:** Knowledge acquired by the prospective student is recent knowledge and may not be less than three years old.

8. Principles of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

- 8.1. The following generic principles will be considered by FPD:
- 8.1.1. **Fairness:** All prospective students will be exposed to same opportunities, and resources during assessment with an aim to prevent bias. All assessment processes shall be transparently applied without interfering with any student progress.
 - 8.1.2. **Appropriateness:** Assessment procedures, methods and tools used for all assessment will be appropriate and will assess what they are designed to assess, be it knowledge or skill(s). 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 indicated, and the relevant assessment methods will be used for the required learning outcomes.
 - 8.1.3. **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.
 - 8.1.4. **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 ambiguities.
 - 8.1.5. **Cost-effectiveness:** Students will be financially responsible for all RPL costs; therefore, all cost-effective methods and tools will be utilized by the institution in terms of time and resources. Students will be advised accordingly and given the option to undergo the full

educational programme should it be observed that the RPL evaluation process finances are greater or equivalent to those of the educational programme. Student will be timeously informed in order to afford them the opportunity to make an informed decision.

- 8.2. FPD will ensure that the cost of the RPL process does not exceed that of the educational programme that the student wants to study for.
- 8.3. RPL may be used to grant access to a qualification programme, or advanced standing/exemption from modules or courses constitutive of a particular qualification.
- 8.4. In higher education, exemption from modules or courses does not translate to credits being awarded for those modules or courses. No credits should therefore be awarded for the modules or courses that a student is exempted from doing on the basis of RPL.
- 8.5. A student who, on the basis of RPL, is granted exemption from doing some modules or courses in a qualification programme will complete the qualification with a total number of credits that is less than the normally required number of credits for the qualification in question. RPL creates such an exception, and the student concerned should not be compelled to do more modules or courses to make up for the difference in the total number of credits.
- 8.6. Full qualifications on the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) cannot be awarded solely on the basis of RPL. Similarly, exemption based on RPL should be limited to not more than 50% of the modules or courses of the qualification programme in question. This means that no student should be exempted from more than 50% of the modules or courses required for any particular higher education qualification.
- 8.7. Not more than 10% of a cohort of students in a higher education programme should be admitted through an RPL process.

9. The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Process

9.1. **Guidelines for Access:** The Foundation for Professional Development will:

- 9.1.1. advise learners regarding RPL and provide support to learners of the value of prior learning and of the steps in the process involved for making an application;
- 9.1.2. provide appropriate information to learners on the entry criteria/requirements to successfully participate in the programme. RPL information leaflets and RPL application procedures will be made available to learners;
- 9.1.3. specify the entry criteria which form the basis for successful participation for the relevant qualification;
- 9.1.4. include RPL information in all programme material;
- 9.1.5. establish an application procedure to assist learners to apply on the basis of prior learning experiences and to attach supporting evidence of prior learning experiences;
- 9.1.6. include the minimum acceptable criteria for the evaluation of the learner for successful participation, such as a minimum of five (5) years' relevant life experience; a clear demonstration of the capacity to succeed; standard of overall application and individual commitment of the learner
- 9.1.7. carry out the assessment of the prior learning in the application by assessors and moderators.
- 9.1.8. ensure that their arrangements for selecting and assessing learners for entry are transparent and fair;
- 9.1.9. on completion of the assessment of the application, make recommendation regarding entry into the programme;
- 9.1.10. have an appeals mechanism in place for all prospective applicants in the event of a learner making an appeal; and
- 9.1.11. monitor and record the application and its outcome to meet requirements of quality assurance elements for recognition of prior learning for entry.

9.2. **The Role of the student:** A prospective student requesting recognition of prior learning should:

- 9.2.1. Apply in writing to the Registrar
- 9.2.2. A non-refundable fee of as stipulated in the Student Guide should be paid into the bank of the Institution and proof of payment should be submitted with the application.
- 9.2.3. The prospective student/s should also submit one or the following documents together with the application form: -
 - 9.2.3.1. Transcript of training from a previous educational institution.
 - 9.2.3.2. Testimonials/reference letter from previous or current employers
 - 9.2.3.3. Assessment results or any relevant documentation that supports the credit claim.

9.3. The role of the Registrar: The role and function of the Registrar of the FPD as it pertains to recognition of prior learning includes:

- 9.3.1. To analyse the documents of the prospective student/s, taking into consideration the requirements of the course that the candidate wants RPL for.
- 9.3.2. To compare the completed training against the prescribed minimum requirements of the specific qualification that the student wants to register for.
- 9.3.3. To compare the completed training and outline where the candidate has to start in accordance to the Institution standards, curriculum and block program.

9.4. On completion of analysis of documents by the Registrar:

- 9.4.1. The prospective candidate will be allowed to register for the course applied for.
- 9.4.2. The prospective candidate will receive in writing, the outcome of the process and the following relevant information:
 - 9.4.2.1. Commencement dates
 - 9.4.2.2. All information on course fees
 - 9.4.2.3. All student support and induction information as stipulated in the supporting policies
- 9.4.3. The registrar will inform the relevant Academic Coordinator in writing of the following aspects:
 - 9.4.3.1. The decision and process followed for RPL for the prospective candidate.
 - 9.4.3.2. Recommendation for enrolment of the prospective candidate as a student.
 - 9.4.3.3. Recommendation for assessment if required

9.5. The Role of the institution: FPD will ensure that the following is in place in respect of RPL:

- 9.5.1. Trained assessors and moderators in accordance with the Policy on Assessment and Moderation and any stipulations to conduct RPL assessments.
- 9.5.2. Methods, tools and processes for RPL assessment.
- 9.5.3. RPL information to prospective candidates.
- 9.5.4. A conducive environment with adequate RPL resources

10. Principles of CAT

- 10.1. Credit accumulation is the totaling of credits towards the completion of a qualification. Credit transfer is the vertical, horizontal or diagonal relocation of credits towards a qualification.
- 10.2. The process of CAT brings together the diverse features of credit accumulation and credit transfer in order to facilitate lifelong learning. It allows a student's achievements to be recognised even if the student does not achieve a qualification. Any or all credits for an incomplete qualification may be recognised by the same or a different institution as meeting part of the requirements for a different qualification or may be recognised by a different institution as meeting part of the requirements for the same qualification.
- 10.3. The process of CAT ensures the mobility of an individual student between programmes and institutions within the constraining parameters set by the requirements of the specific curricula.
- 10.4. A maximum of 50% of the credits of a completed qualification may be transferred to another qualification. This policy prescript seeks to protect the integrity of qualifications by ensuring that the exception does not become the norm.
- 10.5. Credits obtained from studies that do not lead to a qualification (for example, non-degree studies comprising of modules or courses that are part of a programme which normally leads to qualifications registered on the HEQSF) should count for the credit accumulation and transfer mechanism towards relevant qualifications in the same or different institutions.
- 10.6. The same set of credits cannot be transferred to more than one qualification within FPD, so that credits are not duplicated.

11. The Credit Accumulation and Transfer process

- 11.1. Applicants must complete the Credit Transfer Application Form and attach certified copies of their academic transcripts.
- 11.2. The Head of School will receive the application to verify if the credits will be granted.
- 11.3. The Head of School will submit the application and decision to the Academic Committee for approval.
- 11.4. The Registrar will be informed accordingly.
- 11.5. Credit transfer will exempt the learner from attending tuition for the relevant modules and credits will be awarded for these modules to the applicant.

12. Related policies and procedures

12.1. The following policies and procedures are related to this policy:

- 12.1.1. Policy on Student Selection, Admission and Enrolment
- 12.1.2. Policy on Assessment
- 12.1.3. Policy on Moderation
- 12.1.4. Policy on Student and Academic Grievances

13. Accountabilities

The Academic Committee is responsible for review and approval of this policy. The policy is to be implemented via induction and training of staff and distribution to students and FPD's community via the website and other publications.

References

- The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act (Act 108 of 1996);
- South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act (Act 58 of 1995);
- Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997);
- National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996);
- Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (Act 12 of 2012);
- Ministry of Education: National Plan for Higher Education in South Africa: February 2001;
- Ministry of Education: Higher Education Qualification Framework: August 2005;
- Minimum Admission Requirements: Government Gazette, No. 27961, August 2005.