



## ENERGY SECTOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING AUTHORITY

### RECOGNITION FOR PRIOR LEARNING

**19<sup>th</sup> Floor, 1066 Old Mutual Building;  
35 Prichard Street;  
Johannesburg;  
2000**

[www.eseta.org.za](http://www.eseta.org.za)

**Tel: (011) 689-5300**

**Fax:(011) 689-5341**

<b>VERSION</b>	1.0
<b>COPY NO.</b>	MASTER
<b>REVIEWED BY</b>	J.SWANEPOEL
<b>APPROVED BY</b>	F.MANKAYE

## CONTENT

PARAGRAPH	TITLE	METHOD STATEMENT	PAGE NO.
	Cover page		1
	Content		2
	Distribution List		2
	Amendments made to Procedure		3
1	Background to the RPL Practice	1	4
1.1	What is the purpose of the RPL policy	2	4
1.2	What is RPL	3	4
2	The enabling legislative context	4	5
2.1	ESETA Policy within the SAQA framework	5	6
2.2	The scope of RPL	6	6
2.3	Education & training context for RPL	7	6 - 7
2.4	Elements of an RPL Policy	10	7 - 8
3	Target groups	11	8 - 9
4	Methods	12	9 - 10
5	Support	13	10 - 12
6	Financing	14	12
7	Coordinating, managing, administration and communication	15	12 - 13
8	Conducting the assessment	16	13
8.1	Five steps to conducting RPL	17	13- 14
	RPL checklist 17	18	15 - 16
	Guideline 1. To facilitate RPL process that lead to national recognition for learners	19	16 - 17
	Guideline 2. Approaches to portfolio assessment	20	18
	Guideline 3. Financing of RPL	21	19 - 20
	Guideline 4. Costing template for RPL	22	20
	Guideline 5. Experience required by interviewer/advisor prior to the RPL process	23	21

## DISTRIBUTION LIST:

COPY No.	HOLDER	DEPARTMENT	HOLDER'S SIGNATURE	DATE RECEIVED
MASTER	C.PIETERSE	ETQA OFFICER		
001	J.SWANEOEL	ETQA MANAGER		
002	F.MANKAYE	ACTING CEO & SSP MANAGER		
003	T.MMOTLA	LEARNERSHIP MANAGER		
004	VACANT	WATERCHAMBER MANAGER		
005	N.MHKIZE	HR & MARKETING MANAGER		



## 1. Background to the RPL.

It provides a working definition of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). ESETA has taken advantage of the legislative environment to embed an approach to RPL within the implementation responsibilities of ESETA.

### 1.1 What is the purpose of developing RPL Policy.

ESETA is making preparations for facilitating and enabling the provision of training within the new skills development framework. It is anticipated that learnerships, skills programmes and other forms of training will begin to be implemented early. ESETA holds the view that RPL should play an important role in delivery of all training.

ESETA has facilitated a participatory process of the key stakeholders and role-players in the sector to develop the RPL Policy. This RPL Policy is contained in the Learnership Department Policies and Learner selection guidelines and outlines the manner in which RPL should be undertaken in the workplace. The RPL Policy will be operational with the support of RPL procedures that are developed within the workplace. The RPL Policy is intended for use by providers and workplaces within their provision role of various forms of assessment and training.

### 1.2 What is RPL

RPL is a process to help people get formal recognition for what they learnt through their experiences and for what they can do, know and understand. The RPL process enables a person to gain qualifications and credits.

***RPL is an assessment process that takes place against nationally registered unit standards and qualifications outcomes. These standards should be registered with SAQA.***

However, the process to register standards is an ongoing one and in the interim, a mechanism needs to be agreed on for RPL to continue even though standards may still be in the process of being developed and becoming registered. Guideline 1 of this document contains a proposal of such an interim mechanism.

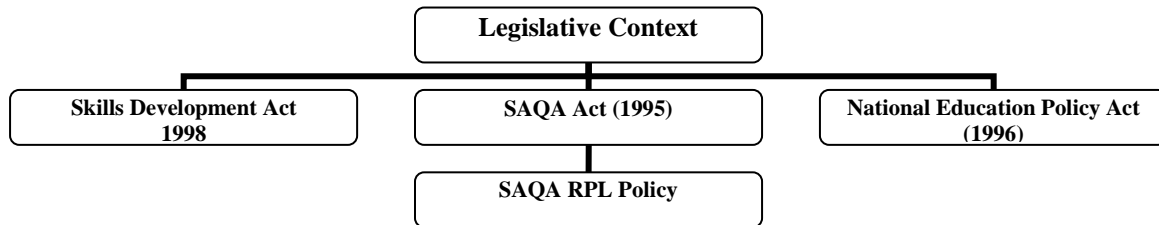
In addition to this proposal, RPL can also facilitate a candidate becoming authorized to play a particular role. This form of legal recognition will need to be consistent with the requirements of different pieces of legislation. An example of this is where the Chief Inspector in the Department of Labour stipulates certain requirements that have to be met for a person to be authorized to play a certain role. In these cases, the requirements should be used as the benchmarks during the RPL process.

The question needs to be raised about what experiences should be brought to an RPL process so as reflect gaining knowledge and skills. This effects what will be RPL'ed

*These experiences should;*

- Include those which are relevant to the workplace;
- Be from the candidate's current job but it could also be broader than the current job in which the candidate is employed;
- Enable accelerated progression in learning and career progression;
- Include informal ways of knowing things.

2. The enabling legislative context



The most important laws that encourage RPL are the Skills Development Act (No. 97 of 1999), the South African Qualifications Authority Act (No. 58 of 1995), the Employment Equity Act (No. 55 of 1998) and the National Education Policy Act (No. 27 of 1996). Each of these Acts emphasizes RPL in important ways.

- ❖ *The Skills Development Act* is important for RPL in that it recognizes that learning happens through the experiences of work through its emphasis on learnerships being partly comprised of a structured work experience. It ensures that learning is accredited on the NQF, which means that RPL can provide nationally recognized learning credits.
- ❖ *The South African Qualifications Authority Act* establishes SAQA whose major purpose is to develop and implement the NQF. To achieve its objectives, the NQF has developed a set of principles one of which is about RPL. The principle says that RPL must give credit to learning that has already been acquired through life experiences and training courses that were linked to formal certificates. This is in line with the NQF's emphasis on what is learned not how it was learned.
- ❖ Furthermore, SAQA has initiated a national policy process for RPL. It processes a development and holistic approach to RPL characterized by the following elements;
- ❖ Lifelong learning is built & valued;
- ❖ Support system carry a high priority;
- ❖ The curriculum that inclusive of knowledge, skills and values that are based on experimental processes;
- ❖ Principles of good assessment are supported;

- ❖ Learner centred and a developmental is advocated;
- ❖ The integrity of the assessment systems is built;
- ❖ Learning programmes are flexible, participatory & integrated;
- ❖ Learners are involved in identifying the purposes of the RPL;
- ❖ All stakeholders benefit.

## 2.1 ESETA RPL Policy within the SAQA framework.

- The *Employment Equity Act* moves away from only recognizing formal qualifications. It introduces the idea of suitably qualified for employing or promoting a person. This means that a variety of factors must be considered, namely, formal qualifications, prior learning, relevant experience, and the capacity to acquire the ability to do the job.
- The *National Educational Policy Act* created the foundation for all national education policy. As such, it draws on every person's Constitutional right to basic education, and equal access to education institutions. It encourages lifelong learning that must be achieved through an approach that respects and builds on prior knowledge and experience of learners.

## 2.2 The scope of RPL Policy.

This section contextualizes RPL assessment in the broader learning, teaching and assessment environment of the ESETA. It then provides a framework of the scope of an RPL Policy. The remainder of this section looks each of the elements of the RPL Policy

## 2.3 Education & training context for RPL.

The RPL Policy is linked to a number of education & training activities. The Policy will require support from the quality assurance context, for example, the assessment strategy as a whole, registered assessors and appropriate assessment instruments.

In this way, RPL implementation is facilitated through the quality assurance preparedness and planning.

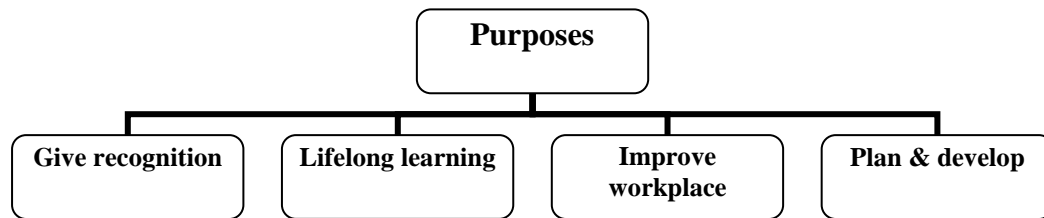
## 2.4 Elements of the RPL Policy.

*The RPL Policy should consist of a number of elements;*

- a) Purpose (s);
- b) Target groups;

- c) Assessment methods;
- d) Support;
- e) Financing;
- f) Coordinating, managing, communication and administration aspect;
- g) Quality assurance and monitoring and evaluating the entire process;
- h) Describing an RPL process.

*Each of these sections is described in detail below.*



The RPL Policy can be used for a number of purposes, and identifying the purposes is the starting point of an RPL process. The different role players in the process may have different purposes for participation. For example, employees may want to be part of an RPL assessment so as to receive credits that will assist to advance them in their career development. Employers on the other hand may only want a descriptive skills profile of the work force. Part of this clarification should involve reaching agreement about what assessment processes employers may be willing to pay for, and what they will recognize. In this situation, the choice of standards to be used should assist to clarify what the employer will be responsible for supporting. The RPL process is only completed when the purposes of the RPL have been achieved and as such, the purposes remain an important reference point for all of the RPL activities.

*RPL can be used for;*

Given recognition:

- Gain credits and qualification in formal system. In this way, learners can transfer the credits and qualifications gained in one environment to another;
- Give individual candidates a sense of self worth and built their self esteem;
- Increase individual life opportunities;
- Gain professional recognition;
- Assist an individual to meet certain legal requirements for policy (that is, to be authorized to policy);
- Assist an individual to meet certain legal requirements for practice (that is, to be authorized to policy).

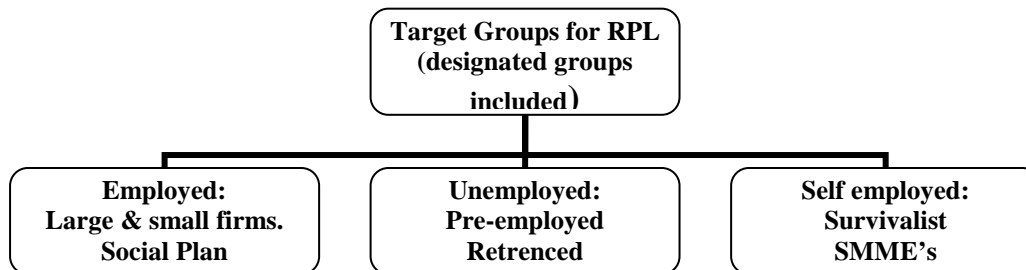
Encourage lifelong learning.

- Gain credits that can help further learning. This encourages lifelong learning so as to benefit the individual and the employer;
- Assist with developing career paths for each candidate;
- Shows that learning can benefit life opportunities.

Planning & development.

- Identified the training gaps in learning;
- Motivate individuals in their learning & work contexts;
- Assist to implement the Employment Equity and Skills Development Plans;
- Assist with identifying further skills needs;
- Structure linkages and work opportunities, e.g. re-grading, access training, develop learner records, open up opportunities for gaining a qualification;
- Compare learning in the international context;
- Improve the strategy alignment of the workplace;
- Broaden national skills base.

### 3. Target Groups



Drawing from SSP, the ESETA has identified five target groups. These are;

- Current employees;
- Pre-employed persons;
- Unemployed;
- Designated groups that mean, black people (African, Coloured and Indian) woman and people with disabilities as described in the Employment Equity Act.
- Self employed & SMME more broadly.

For the purpose of RPL only, these target groups are gathered together in three categories because of the likely similarities of the RPL process. The categories are employed; unemployed and self employed and are described below.

### ***Employed.***

This group includes employees in companies of various sizes and working under a wide variety of conditions so that the RPL in each of these could mean different things. In companies with few employees, resourcing for the RPL process might be an issue as might want the RPL to assist to identify learning and career opportunities. In this context, employer might provide the resources for the RPL as part of the retrenchment package. In general, the RPL process might usefully be linked to other planning activities such as work re-organization process, skills audits, and so on.

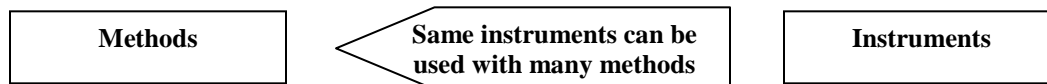
### ***Un-employed.***

This group includes retrenched workers, adults who have never been formally employed as well as the pre-employed. In these cases, it's likely that primary purpose of the RPL would be to assist to identify learning in relation employment or job creation opportunities. This target group would have acquired their learning form a variety of formal and non-formal contexts and the RPL should accommodate this diversity.

### ***Self-employed.***

This group includes single-person entities and SMME's of variety types, and includes survivalist operations. The RPL process would need to link to identify learning which is appropriate for income generating opportunities. This target group may consist of individuals who work in small, relatively isolated contexts and would benefit from broader exposure to the opportunities available.

## **4. Methods.**



As RPL is about assessment, the assessment methods used must be consistent with the assessment strategy. This can include a number of aspects, for example, that the methods must meet the requirements for reliability, validity, fairness, appropriateness and relevance.

Methods should also not bias or favour any group of candidates, and that the assessment will take place against unit standard outcomes or qualifications outcomes.

The process for conducting the RPL assessment can best be spelt out in detailed assessment guides.

The assessment methods spell out what a candidate is required to do. As with all assessment, the methods selected must be appropriate for kind of knowledge being tested. For example, practical knowledge should be tested practically.

For RPL, there are four assessment methods, namely;

- Practical assessment;
- Oral assessment;
- Written assessment;
- Portfolio assessment (an approach to portfolio assessment is in Guideline 2).

An assessment method needs to be made specific through the use of assessment instruments. The instruments are the design of the 'questions' to be asked. In other words, if the methods is written, then the instruments could be a multiple-choice test or an essay. It is extremely important that the instrument is able

to gather the appropriate evidence for the outcomes that are being assessed. (Guideline 6 suggests a framework for developing RPL assessment instruments).

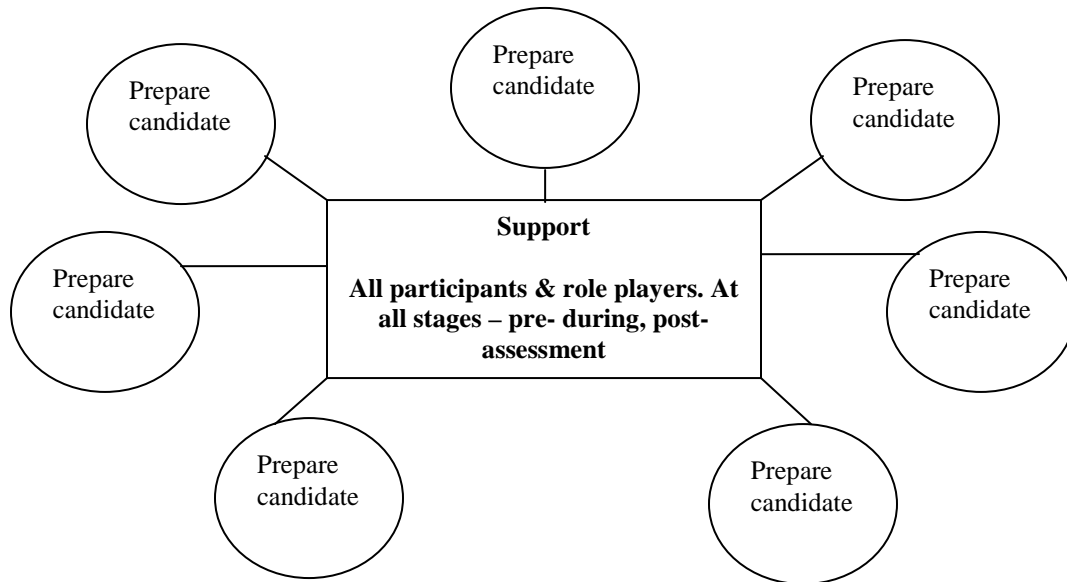
Some examples of assessment instrument are listed below. It is worth noting that some instruments can be used with a number of methods, for example, a test could be practical or written. Examples of assessment instruments are (this is not an exhaustive list);

- Simulation;
- Project;
- Test;
- Assignment or essay;
- Multiple choice test;
- Interview or discussion;
- Presentation;
- Challenge;
- Job performance assessment (JPA).

The evidence that the candidate generates in the assessment must be verified (or checked) so as to establish to what extent the candidate's evidence matches the outcomes.

This is done by matching the candidates' achievements to the assessment criteria. For example, this can be done through observation with the assessor using a making template or checklist. As such, assessment is a process of making judgment.

## 5. Support.



The principle underpinning the approach to support is that it should be available for the entire RPL process – from when there is an expression of interest to feedback to the candidates and operationalizing the linkage after the assessment. It should also be available to all the participants in the process – candidates, stakeholders on a RPL, assessors, verifiers, moderators, advisors/mentors.

Support can take many forms and will tend to be customized to the requirements of the different target groups. Support may be provided by the ESETA, by workplaces and by providers and could cover a number of aspects, for example;

- 1) Ensuring that candidates are adequately prepared;
- 2) Preparation about the assessment criteria (unit standards), and assessment methods and instruments (for candidates and assessors);
- 3) Ensuring that the feedback to the candidates is meaningful;
- 4) Ensuring that candidates experience the RPL process as affirming and developmental;
- 5) Provincial assistance to candidates in appeals and disputes;
- 6) Financial and other logistical support, for example, transport to the venue and time to prepare;
- 7) Counseling especially in relation to career and learning opportunities;
- 8) Language support at all stages of the RPL process;
- 9) Sound, two-way and transparent communication and information dissemination system;
- 10) Ensuring that the linkages are conceptualized;
- 11) Capacity building of all role players where necessary.

***The ESETA may be best placed to facilitate or ensure the availability of some types of support.***

The ESETA support might include;

- a) Assessor training on RPL assessment methods and instruments. However, assessors who are ETD practitioners are unlikely to need additional training but assessors who are technical practitioners are likely to require some specific development about RPL assessment.
- b) Facilitate the design and development of assessment instruments, perhaps as exemplars, for use by a number of providers or workplaces.
- c) Develop assessment guides that early specify the RPL process.
- d) Financial support for employed candidates is assumed to be the responsibility of the employer so that the ESETA might provide support, or access support, to unemployed candidates from SMME's and development projects.
- e) Ensure that the capacity of the stakeholders & role-players in the RPL process is developed – employers, labour, providers, assessors, advisors and moderators.
- f) Facilitate the building of partnerships between providers and workplaces.
- g) Avail information about potential links of the RPL process to career development and labour market opportunities.
- h) Develop a generic communication and marketing strategy about RPL.
- i) Facilitate, through the monitoring and evaluating function that the assessor reports are fed into the ongoing work of developing the learning standards in the SGB's.

***Matching the learners with their support needs.***

This table begins to map the support requirements of each target group. It may be useful to consider how this would apply in your context. Providers may want to give special consideration of their role in availing support to participants.

Target groups	Support requirements for RPL process
Employed	Learners – understand what the RPL might do and what it may not do, for example, no down-grading, to understand the results, scheduling of the

	assessment and preparation for the assessment
	Assessor – to know all aspects of the work being assessed and therefore to apply the methods appropriately
<b>Unemployed</b>	Learner – information about RPL, work and learning opportunities, resources (financial, logistical), understanding the feedback from the RPL assessment and helping to link to potential opportunities, counseling
	Assessor – to understand the experiences of where learning has taken place
<b>Self employed</b>	Learner – information about RPL, scheduling the RPL after working hours, choosing standards which link to work opportunities
	Assessor – to understand the operational conditions of candidates

## 6. Financing.

There is a strong argument to be made that the employer should pay for the RPL assessment for employees as the workplace can gain immediate benefit. However, employer would also need to consider candidates wages and benefits during the preparation and during the assessment process. Some of this might be covered by workplace agreements for paid education & training leave. Employer might also assist to meet costs of the social target groups involved with the company.

Through accessing the National Skills Fund (NSF), the ESETA might assist the unemployed and self-employed in SMME's for the assessment process. It might also meet the expenses of certification, and for making strategy that these groups. (Guideline 3 looks at the ESETA Grants Policy as guiding financing of RPL).

The ESETA has made a start by identifying a reasonably comprehensive list of items which carry costs in an RPL process. This can be used as a basis for making decisions about how costs are met whether by SETA, candidates, employer or any other source. (Guideline 4 proposes items for a costing template).

## 7 Coordinating, managing, communication and administration.

There are a number of participants and interest in an RPL process. For example, there would be potential candidates, employer, trade unions, assessors, providers, moderators, communities, the public at large, and so on. For this reason, some clarity should be reached at the start of the process on what roles might play, how decisions are arrived at an how information can be communicated consistently and transparently. In addition, the RPL process may be conducted within a partnership of a workplace/employer with a training provider.

In general, the RPL process should be jointly managed by the major role players in the process and should include candidate's representation. This structure should be empowered to make decisions, design and plan the RPL process, it should also control the budget and be empowered to appoint or nominate assessors. This structure might also identify the support needs of the various role players for participation in the RPL process. Any appeals to the RPL should be coordinated at this level.

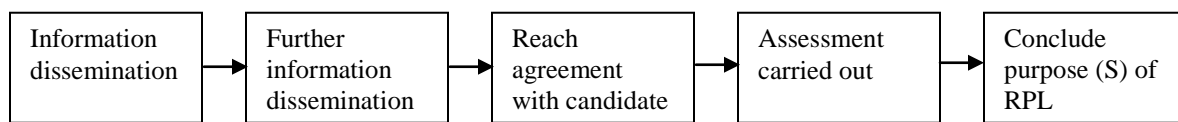
The communication strategy should contain information about what RPL is, what it is intended to do, that is, the likely purposes, methods, what a candidate might expect during the process and as result of the RPL. In addition, the communication strategy should contain customized and focused communication events so that potential candidates from the selected target groups are informed about the assessment guides.

The RPL assessment should be quality assured as with all other assessments and as such be subjected to quality assurance in general i.e. assessors must be trained and registered, providers accredited, established monitoring & evaluation processes, record & information keeping systems. The ESETA may want to consider whether assessors & moderators should receive special and extra training for RPL and hence be duly registered. In addition, RPL advisors & evidence facilitators would need to be trained and registered.

## 8. Conducting the assessment.

This section unpacks the steps and stages of the RPL process. This is supported with an RPL implementation checklist in the final section following.

### 8.1 Five steps to conducting RPL.



These steps elaborate on the specifics of conducting an RPL assessment. It builds on and assumes that;

- The management and coordinating structures are in place;
- The required ETQA and support systems are by and large operational;
- Finances are available;
- Assessors, moderators & advisors are trained and where required, registered, and,
- Agreement has been reached about the purpose s and intentions of the RPL project in general.

#### *Information dissemination – advocacy.*

The RPL project can be initiated at a number of levels – a workplace, throughout all the plants of a company, linked to a development project, the ESETA in the implementation of learnerships etc. The project must initiate a communication strategy on what RPL is, and what the possible purposes/benefits might be for all participants – candidates, employer, community, etc. It should be explain, in fairly broad terms, what a candidate can expect during the process.

#### *Further information dissemination.*

This step is a continuation of the communication strategy but customized to particular vulnerable groups and/or the target groups identified for the RPL. For example, a target group of the unemployed would have an emphasis in career counseling so that candidates experiences are linked to work and learning opportunities.

#### *Reach agreement with candidate.*

In this step, the RPL advisor interviews the candidate and must ensure that the candidate understands and agrees to all aspects of the RPL assessment. Candidates must also be informed of their right to support

during this step. In organized environments this is likely to be a trade union member. This step includes the following;

- The RPL advisor interviews the candidate (Guideline 5 considers the experience (s) that are required to undertake this assessment);
- The RPL advisor develops a checklist or record of the candidates experience;
- The candidate agree on the purpose(s) of the RPL;
- Similarly, assessment paths are identified and agreed on;
- Unit standards and or qualifications to be assessed against are identified and agreed on;
- Assessment methods are agreed on;
- Support strategies and methods are agreed on.

This steps ends when the candidate formally accepts the assessment path.

***The assessment is carried out.***

The steps involve the following;

- The candidate shows their evidence for the unit standards they are being assessed;
- The assessor matches the candidates' evidence with the unit standards – in other words the assessor is verifying the assessment evidence. The assessor uses a making checklist or memo.
- The assessor analysis the matching;
- The assessor makes a judgment and a recommendation in writing. This verified internally and moderated where necessary. This ends with the ESETA providing the candidate with the result.
- The assessor monitors the standards and provides feedback on them to the ETQA.

***The entire process should be monitored so that the process achieves what it intendeds to. A systematic evaluation of all aspects should be planned and carried out.***

***Conducting the purpose of the RPL.***

***The step essentially records, reports, operationalizes the purposes and deals with any appeals about the outcome of the RPL. This involves;***

- The assessor provides feedback and advice to the candidate on linkages;
- The ETQA & RPL provider update the learner records;
- Any appeals of the results are dealt with at the appropriate level and through the coordination structure;
- The advisor assists the candidate to initiate links (purposes of the RPL);
- The ETQA ensures that all legal requirements are met;
- The ETQA will issue certificates where appropriate

***RPL implementation checklist***

The RPL implementation checklist is intended to serve as a planning template for the RPL activities. It spells out what preparations need to be made for each of the implementation steps described above.

Steps	Y	N	Further actions
<b>Information dissemination</b> a) Sector wide strategy developed; b) Content developed; c) Medium decided e.g. leaflet, radio, t-shirt d) Distribution plan; e) Language (s) to be used; f) Time frame; g) Budget.			
<b>Target information</b> a) Target groups identified; b) Content development/refined; c) Distribution plan; d) Medium; e) Language (s); f) Timeframe; g) Budget.			
<b>Agreement with candidate</b> <i>Preparation for candidate process</i> a) Advisors identified & trained; b) Assessors trained & registered; c) Methods & instruments prepared; d) Locally identified; e) Standards/qualifications availability; f) Work and/or learning opportunities identified; g) Support mechanisms developed; h) Budget; i) Consider all legal requirements.			
<b>Process with candidate</b> a) Conduct interview; b) Candidate advised of support for this process; c) Support availed if required; d) Map learning/career options; e) Outline assessment process; f) Advice on appeal procedures; g) Finalize agreement.			
<b>Assessment carried out</b> a) Instruments developed; b) Assessment reports developed; c) Role player support available; d) Venues prepared; e) Logistics prepared;			
<b>Conclusion</b> a) Record keeping system; b) Method to feedback to candidates established; c) Method to feedback to ETQA established;			

d) Linkages prepared e.g. training;			
e) Certificates prepared;			
f) Award ceremony;			
g) Appeal mechanism prepared.			

***Guideline 1 – To facilitate RPL processes that lead to national recognition for learners.***

These guidelines have been developed because of a number of factors. Firstly, there is an awareness of the need for RPL processes to take place, and in some cases for them to continue and expand. There is also an understanding of the importance of these RPL processes enabling that are successful to be awarded credits for unit standards and qualifications that are registered on the National Qualifications Framework. However, there is the recognition that in many area of learning new standards and qualifications have not yet been developed, although there are many interim standards and qualifications on the NQF.

***These guidelines suggest a process that allows ESETA to assist companies to achieve the goal of national recognition for prior learning.***

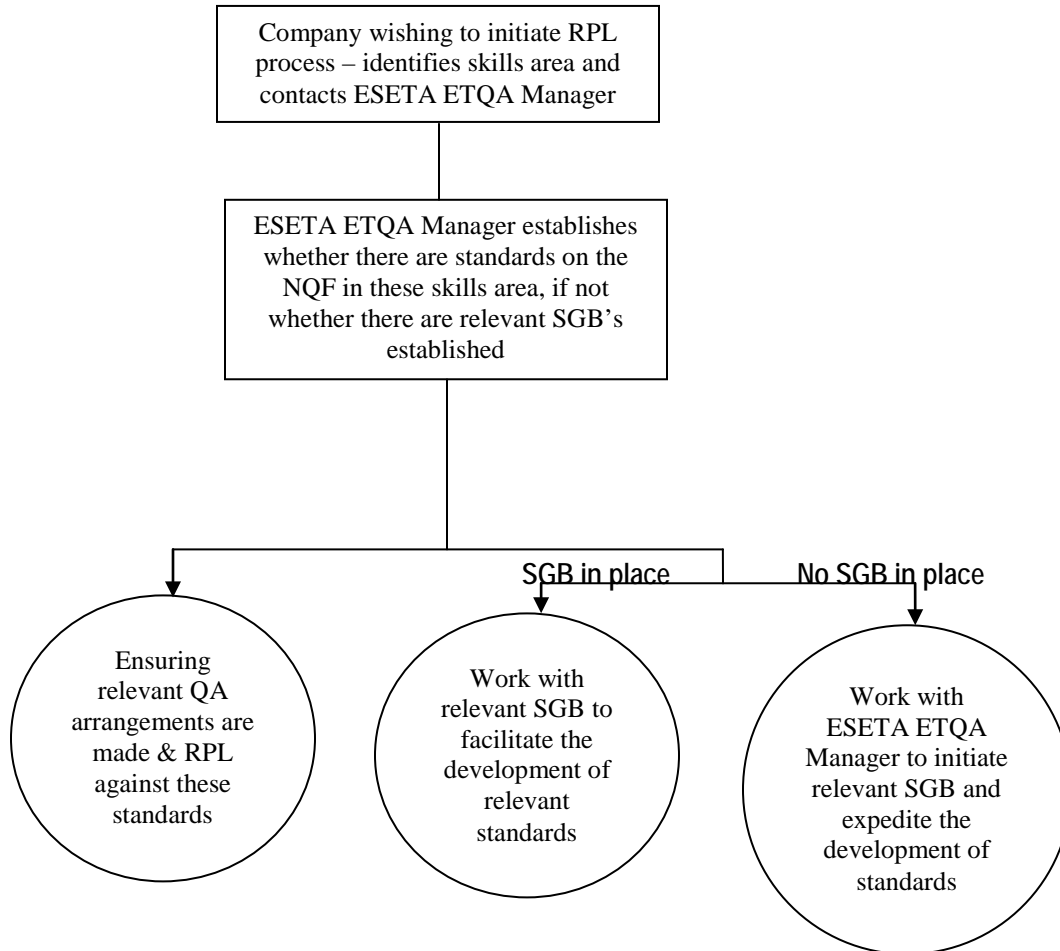
***The process to follows:***

- a) If a company wishes to embark upon an RPL process they should identify the skill areas in which they wish to RPL learners, for example administration or understanding the energy sector.
- b) Having identified these areas the company should inform the ESETA ETQA manager of the company's intention to conduct an RPL process and the skill area that they wish to assess.
- c) The ETQA Manager will then survey the standards that are registered on the NQF on either the interim basis or as part of the new standards and qualifications registered on the NQF.
- d) The company will then be informed whether the relevant standards that are registered on the NQF and in which areas there may be gaps with regard to the registration of standards.

***Flowing from this analysis there are three options.***

- 1) For those areas that are already standards, arrangements will need to be made to ensure the appropriate quality assurance processes are in place to enable learners to receive credits for the RPL assessment that take place against these standards.
- 2) Where there is are no standards the ETQA Manager of ESETA will determine whether there are any relevant SGB's that may be in a position to develop the relevant standards, where this is possible the appropriate linkages will be made.
- 3) Where there is no SGB the company will be advised about the possibility of establishing an SGB, and the ETQA manager will assist to expedite this process.

*This process can be represented diagrammatically as follows;*

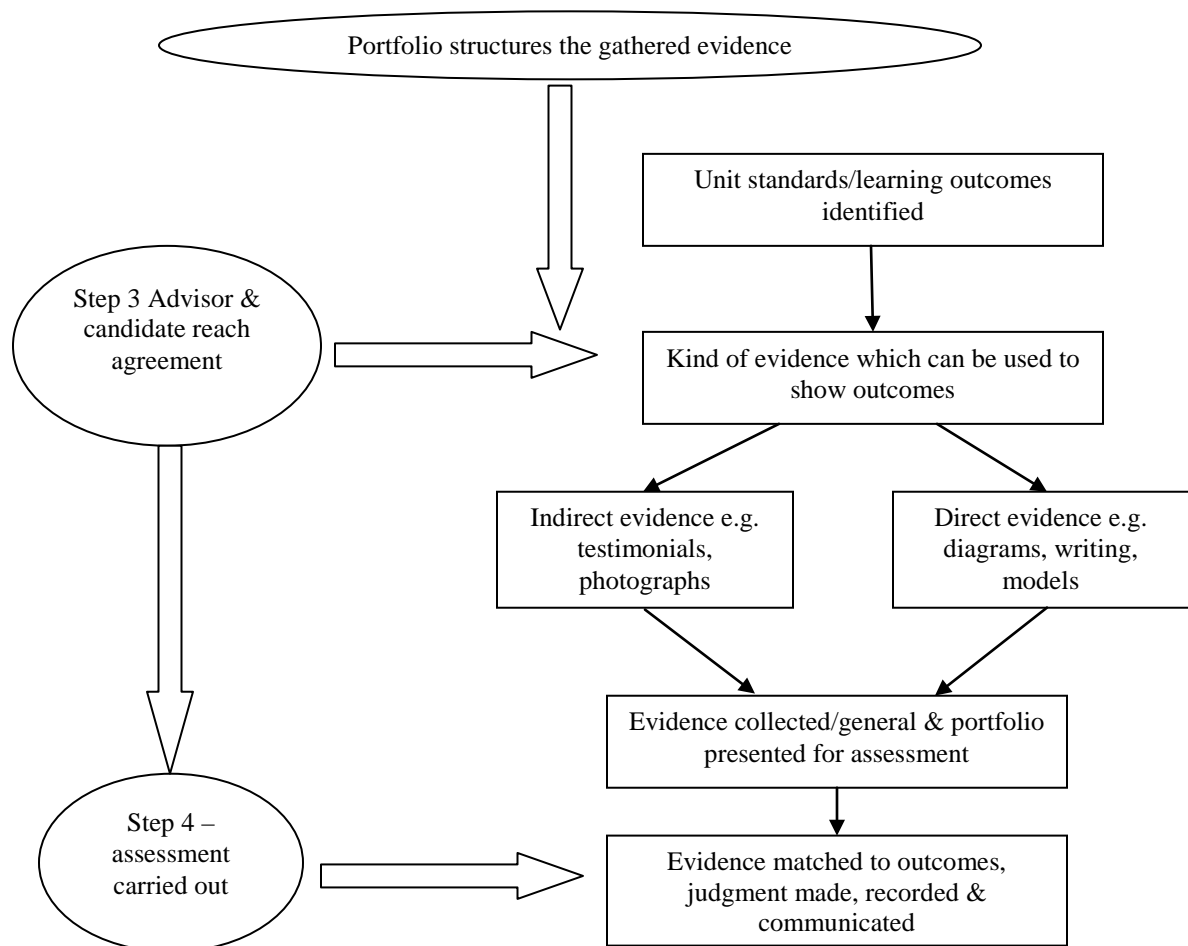


*This guideline suggests a process and role for the portfolio method of assessment.*

A portfolio can be an informal compilation of all evidence that is presented for the assessment. As such, it is a folder containing the evidence, the assessment process, the judgment itself, and feedback to the candidate, and any follow-up actions that requires.

However, a portfolio might be more designed and be an explicit method that guides or informs the candidate. For example, the unit standards and the outcomes may be provided and candidates are informed of the kind of evidence that they should present. In effect, this gives candidates developmental support for gathering or generating evidence. Candidates would then go away and over time gather the evidence for assessment.

This type of portfolio can work well when the candidates work generates the kind of evidence that the assessment requires. So, for example, circuit diagrams that have been designed and sketched as part of their work can be offered as evidence in the portfolio. If models are built and if too large for direct inclusion, they could be photographed as evidence for the portfolio.

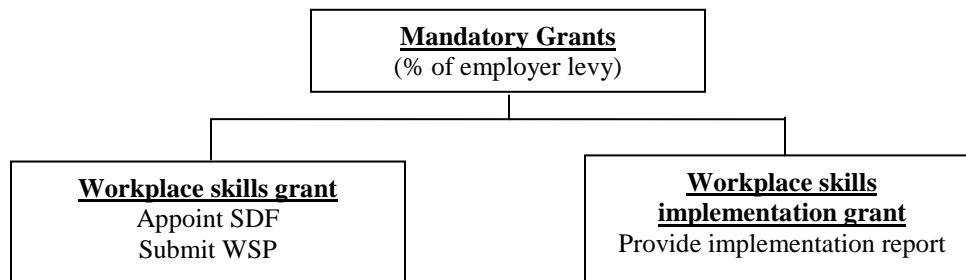


This Guideline looks at the Grants policy of the ESETA as a basis for accessing finances for RPL assessment. For greater detail, the ESETA Grant Policy should be accessed directly.

*There are two types of grants;*

*a) The mandatory grants:*

These are calculated as a percentage of the levy paid by the employer. They must be paid by the ESETA provided that the employer submits the application correctly on time. There two mandatory grants, namely, the workplace skills grant (appointing a skills development facilitator & submitting a workplace skills plan) and the workplace skills implementation grant (providing an implementation report).



*b) The discretionary grants:*

The SETA must pay these. They are cash grants and not a percentage of the levy paid. Five per cent of the total levy paid by employers is allocated to a discretionary account managed by the SETA. It is supplemented by funds left over from unclaimed WSP grants or from any other source.

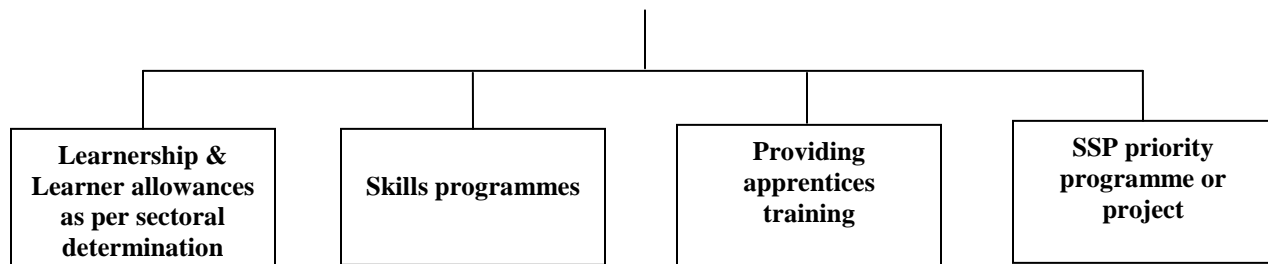
These grants can be claimed by employers, organized labour, accredited providers, SMME's & NGO's within the scope of the sector.

There are four discretionary grants and whilst the ESETA Grant Policy does not specifically mention RPL, these grants might reasonably be accessed for RPL as part of the implementation process.

These grants are towards the costs of;

- Learnership & learner allowance as per the sectoral determination;
- Skills programmes;
- Providing apprentices training;
- A programmes or project that helps implement the Sector Skills Plan.

**Discretionary Grants**  
(5% levy + unclaimed WSP  
Grants + other sources)



The ESETA has developed criteria for disbursing the discretionary grants. These carry a strong redress and access concern that is in line with the ESETA approach to RPL. The criteria include: provision of ABET, bursary scheme for designated groups, social upliftment & development projects, training for unemployed and pre-employed persons.

#### ***Guideline 4 – Costing Template for RPL.***

This Guideline identifies the terms in an RPL process that have financial implications. It attempts to be a comprehensive listing. These costs may be met by the provider, the workplace, the SETA or even a candidate. This breakdown is intended to assist with the planning processes for RPL and could form the basis for deciding on how these costs might be met.

- a) Communication;
- b) Consumables required for the assessment process as an average cost of the materials per learner;
- c) Capital costs;
- d) Use of the facility: the provider
  - cost per day per learner
  - The workplace for the venue
- e) Personnel & person hours
  - ETS practitioners
  - Assessors
  - RPL advisor
  - Moderator
  - Time off for candidates
- f) Assessment instruments
- g) Certification
- h) Administration

Preparation, travel & assessment time

There are some items that are excluded when costing RPL, the most expensive being the training needs that the RPL assessment may have identified. In this case, candidates go on training programmes to fill these gaps and so achieve learning credits. This cost is calculated within the training environment and would include learner support materials, accommodation and meals.

#### ***Guideline 5 – Experience required by interviewer/advisor prior to the RPL process.***

*This role can be played by one person or a team of people; however, it is advised that the person/s should have the following skills and knowledge:*

- Assessment processes and methods;
- Ability to help compile a learner profile;
- RPL specific processes and methods;
- Possible learning and career pathways;
- Candidates context – work or social;
- Interviewing & facilitative questioning skills;
- Ability to speak the language of the candidate will be an advantage.

There are a number of unit standards either registered with SAQA or being developed that assist to indicate the kinds of exposure that RPL personnel should have. For example, unit standards for the designer of assessment, evidence facilitator, RPL advisor and moderator.

***Guideline 6 – Criteria for developing RPL Instruments.***

*This guide provides assessment designers with criteria for RPL assessment instruments:*

The assessment instruments should be able to ***'unlock the stumbling blocks'*** to successful assessment. This means that the instrument should, for example, not be word based for candidates who struggle with reading because in this case, literacy is the stumbling block. The instrument should gather evidence about what the candidate knows, not what they do not know.

The assessment instrument should identify the gaps in the candidates learning. This enables the candidates to go on a training course or to rotate at their work environment. In this way, the instrument serves as identify a training/learning need.

The instruments must build the appropriate evidence as the only basis for the assessment. Candidates may present indirect evidence (letters from employers, photographs, etc) for assessment. This must always be verified. The only basis for making assessment judgments is the candidate's evidence. This also assists to manage any bias and unspoken assumptions.

Different target groups will have different needs in terms of their circumstances and where they acquire their learning. Candidates use technical language and procedures will differ for 'untrained or informally trained' persons from those who have been trained formally. These categories assist with instrument design because the need also determines the stumbling block of the candidates. The instrument should be designed to the level of the candidate without the standard being compromised.

Candidates should not in principle be excluded from being assessed against the unit standards of their choice. The RPL advisor & candidate should reach an agreement about the standards and then the assessment instrument should be designed accordingly.

Assessors must be properly trained for RPL assessment as they play a special and very important role when they design and when they apply the assessment instruments. RPL assessment must be taken to be part of how 'ordinary' assessment is taking place, and also being quality assured in relation to unit standards and focus areas. This means that the assessment instrument itself is verified perhaps by another assessor, and then submitted for moderation.