



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
STATE DEPARTMENT
FOR VOCATIONAL AND
TECHNICAL TRAINING



RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING
**QUALITY ASSURANCE
MANUAL-KENYA**

KENYA NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY





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A number of other Kenya stakeholders participated in the review and validation of the manual. They included regulators and Qualifications Awarding Institutions (QAIs). We acknowledge the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) for the key role of coordinating the development process of the manual.

Purpose of this manual

This manual marks an important step forward in the advancement of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in Kenya both in concept and in practice. It provides a framework that fosters greater consistency and acceptance of RPL across the country.

The main goal of this manual is to ensure that the RPL process meets accepted quality standards. Additionally, it provides a leverage to anyone interested in RPL to receive fair and equitable services. Lastly, this manual will help ensure that the RPL assessment outcomes are valued and recognised across the country.

Users of this manual

The following organisations / Institutions can use this manual.

- i) Regulatory Institutions / Agencies.
- ii) Qualifications Awarding Institutions.
- iii) Professional bodies.
- iv) Sector councils.
- v) Regulated and non-regulated trade.
- vi) Employment and career counsellors.
- vii) Businesses.
- viii) Government.

The manual may also benefit anyone working with or on behalf of applicants, candidates, students or individuals seeking:

- i) employment;
- ii) professional certifications;
- iii) trade certification;
- iv) career coaching and counselling;
- v) job promotion and change;
- vi) professional development; and
- vii) academic access or advanced standing.

People using this manual may interact with an individual directly or may work on processes and systems to assist the individual. In this context, this manual will help you to:

- i) validate RPL practices;
- ii) guide RPL policies to assure internal and external confidence within the sector;
- iii) clarify standards of advising and assessment purposes;
- iv) ensure processes are consistent and fair;
- v) advocate for appropriate training and capacity building in RPL functions;
- vi) harmonize RPL practices across jurisdictions;
- vii) enable consistent high-quality practice across Kenya which will promote mobility, employability, recognition and acceptance of RPL assessment;
- viii) review and monitor existing RPL processes for continuous improvement; and
- ix) develop new procedures to align with RPL principles and steps.

Organisation of the manual

This manual is divided into six sections.

- i) Introduction
- ii) Quality Assurance and RPL Systems and Services Guiding Principles
- iii) Steps for Quality RPL
- iv) Capacity Building – RPL integration and Collaborative Partnerships
- v) Assessment – Methods, Tools and Processes
- vi) RPL Quality Assurance Self Audit Checklist
- vii) Next steps

Each section helps the reader to consider quality elements for effective RPL practice and to determine the relevance for their own context.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 RPL in Kenya

Kenya's socio-economic growth largely depends upon the effectiveness and quality of her Human Resources Development (HRD) system. The country's development blueprints -- Vision 2030 and the Big 4 Agenda -- place great emphasis on the link between education and training and the labour market to develop a relevant and skilled workforce. These efforts notwithstanding, Kenya still faces a severe shortage of quality and relevantly skilled workforce. This is due to the miss-match between skills produced and labour market needs. However, demographic trends indicate the existence of many unrecognised skilled persons who acquired competencies through informal and non- formal means but cannot be employed.

The Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) is established under the Kenya National Qualifications Framework Act No. 22 of 2014. The mandate of the Authority is to establish and maintain the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF).

Specifically, this involves:

- i) to establish standards for recognizing qualifications obtained within and outside Kenya;
- ii) to develop a system of competence, lifelong learning and attainment of national qualifications;
- iii) to align qualifications obtained in Kenya with global benchmarks to promote national and trans-national mobility of workers;
- iv) to strengthen the national quality assurance systems for national qualifications; and
- v) to facilitate mobility and progression within education and training.

The Authority has identified Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as a critical component in helping achieve its mandate and has developed a roadmap for implementing RPL in the country.

RPL is a process used to identify, assess and certify an RPL candidate's knowledge, skills and competencies acquired in non-formal or informal learning, such as work or life experiences, against prescribed standards or learning outcomes. Currently, countries are recognizing that learning is continuous i.e. from cradle to death and does not take place in the classroom alone but in informal and non- formal settings.

RPL is a response to the challenge facing the discouraged and disadvantaged learners including the marginalized who cannot access the formal education and training pathway despite having acquired competencies through informal and non-formal ways. RPL is founded on two basic principles: what a person knows and can do is more important than where and how s/he learned it and no one should spend time, energy and resources to learn what they already know and can do.

RPL will promote a responsive and equitable education and training system that facilitates access, mobility, self-esteem, progression and fair chances to the disadvantaged, discouraged and the traditionally marginalized learners to acquire a formal qualification that matches their prior knowledge and skills. This is achieved through promotion of access to education, credit transfer or harmonization both at national and foreign levels, recognition of experiential learning and upgrading of skills or qualifications. This contributes to improving their employability, mobility, lifelong learning, social inclusion and self-esteem.

A Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy is already in place providing a framework for a responsive and equitable education and training system that facilitates access, mobility, progression and fair chances to the disadvantaged, discouraged and traditionally marginalized groups. For a long time, Kenya has implemented assessments to students and those in the labour market. Institutions such as NITA and KASNEB have offered assessment with no emphasis on where one acquired their skills / competencies but on how one exhibits their know-how. This has led to an appreciation of competency-based assessments.

With the introduction of RPL in Kenya, many individuals who have acquired competencies over time, will get an opportunity to be assessed and be awarded with relevant qualifications as per the Kenya National Qualifications Framework. This will enhance workers' life-long and life-wide learning in general; productivity, employability, career progression and self-esteem.

As Kenya implements RPL, it is increasingly important to assure process quality. Providing an RPL quality framework increases credibility thus ensuring that the RPL process outcomes can be recognised, valued and transferred across institutions and organizations.

1.1.1 RPL process: Individual perspective

Just like applying for a job, a candidate needs to know what the job requirements are and match them to their academic qualifications as well as past experience. Similarly, in RPL assessment, the candidate needs to have an understanding of what a qualification needs and align their skills, knowledge and attitudes to the parameters given. If there is a good fit, then the candidate

is encouraged to apply for the identified qualification. If there are any gaps, the candidate may be advised to either evaluate a different qualification or attend a skill upgrading activity to meet the qualification requirements.

Therefore, candidates going through an RPL process need to:

- i) identify their qualification goals;
- ii) identify what they know how to do and can do;
- iii) request advice when needed;
- iv) compare provided learning outcomes to their skill areas;
- v) provide evidence of learning to match the identified outcomes and standards;
- vi) complete any assessments; and
- vii) receive validation, recognition or credit.

1.1.2 RPL process: Practitioner perspective

A quality RPL process requires a systematic model: an approved policy framework, validated RPL tools, guides, manuals and strategies, capacity-built RPL Practitioners, registered and accredited QAIs as well as RPLP and Assessment Centers.

To ably respond to questions from candidates, RPL Practitioners must be familiar with:

- i) the KNQF (qualifications and their corresponding learning outcomes);
- ii) QAI assessment policies and procedures;
- iii) RPL Instruments – tools, guides, manuals and strategies; and occupational standards aligned to the KNQF.

RPL Practitioners make decisions about the most appropriate assessment methods, instruments, type of evidence required as guided by the Assessment Guide. They decide on any optional methods which the practitioner or individual may suggest. It is imperative to be completely clear about the purpose, outcomes, assessment criteria or other relevant information that will impact on the choice of assessment methods and tools. As with most quality assurance programs, a quality RPL practice must have a build-in ongoing monitoring and review. This includes information materials and tools, as well as the staff who perform RPL functions. A monitor and review element ensures quality management is incorporated from the start. It allows improvements to be scheduled and made according to identified priorities.

This manual asks you to consider many of the same questions that a candidate seeking services will ask. By completing the RPL Quality Assurance Self-Audit Checklist, you should be able to: answer the detailed questions individuals will be asking;

- a. provide a good idea of the RPL elements that could be promoted; and
- b. list sample RPL elements that your organization could plan to improve. These include:
 - i) Strategic planning;
 - ii) Organisational development;
 - iii) RPL policy, design and implementation;
 - iv) RPL resource development and implementation;
 - v) RPL records-keeping;
 - vi) RPL program or service evaluation; and
 - vii) Marketing plans.

1.1.3 RPL process: Employer perspective

Employers who use the RPL process may have different terms to describe a similar practice. Their approach may be part of a larger method for recruitment, hiring, training, promotion and succession planning. An employer's quality RPL process needs an efficient and effective model that will identify, recognise and value the learning of its existing prospective employees. Because employers are also practitioners, this model will need to include all the same components mentioned in Practitioner Perspective.

A quality business management system is usually focused on meeting customer needs through organizational structure, policies, procedures, processes, tools and resources. These systems include sustainability and transparency initiatives because both investor and customer satisfaction is tied to these factors. Many organizations use the ISO 9000 family of standards to embed quality assurance into the way they operate and do business. RPL Quality practice fits into this approach by promoting continuous improvement, transparency, evaluation and customer satisfaction.

1.1.4 Benefits of applying RPL in the workplace

RPL offers practical approach to hiring and promoting employees in the workplace. It offers alternate ways to recognise skills and learning as well as objective assessment. RPL can:

- i) respond to a specific need for understanding the skills and competencies required. It provides a process for assessment and documentation;
- ii) provide a return on investment of time, internal resources and external expertise; and
- iii) be integrated with other workforce development strategies such as essential skills, competency development, qualifications and credential recognition, skills training, skills maximization and succession planning.

RPL will assist employers to:

- i) recruit, develop and retain a workforce;
- ii) identify and document employee skills, knowledge and attitudes as well as training needs;
- iii) clarify learning goals and outcomes;
- iv) define, document and verify processes;
- v) evaluate workplace performance;
- vi) monitor skill currency, adaptability and multi-skilling; and
- vii) motivate employees.

RPL may also help to:

- i) assist employees to take responsibility for their learning;
- ii) reduce training costs;
- iii) develop cross-functional teams;
- iv) reduce turnover;
- v) increase productivity;
- vi) reduce absenteeism;
- vii) Reward employees for learning;
- viii) help employees earn credit for they know and can do;
- ix) identify learning needs;
- x) enhance employee confidence in their jobs and as learners; and
- xi) develop more cost-effective methods.

1.1.5 Embedding RPL in existing work procedures

Employers can make RPL part of their procedures by: making it part of the selection and hiring process;

- i) making it part of the selection and hiring process;
- ii) incorporating it in performance reviews to provide meaningful and motivational feedback;
- iii) clarifying job roles and responsibilities; and
- iv) collaborating with industry or education partners in support for employees to earn credentials.

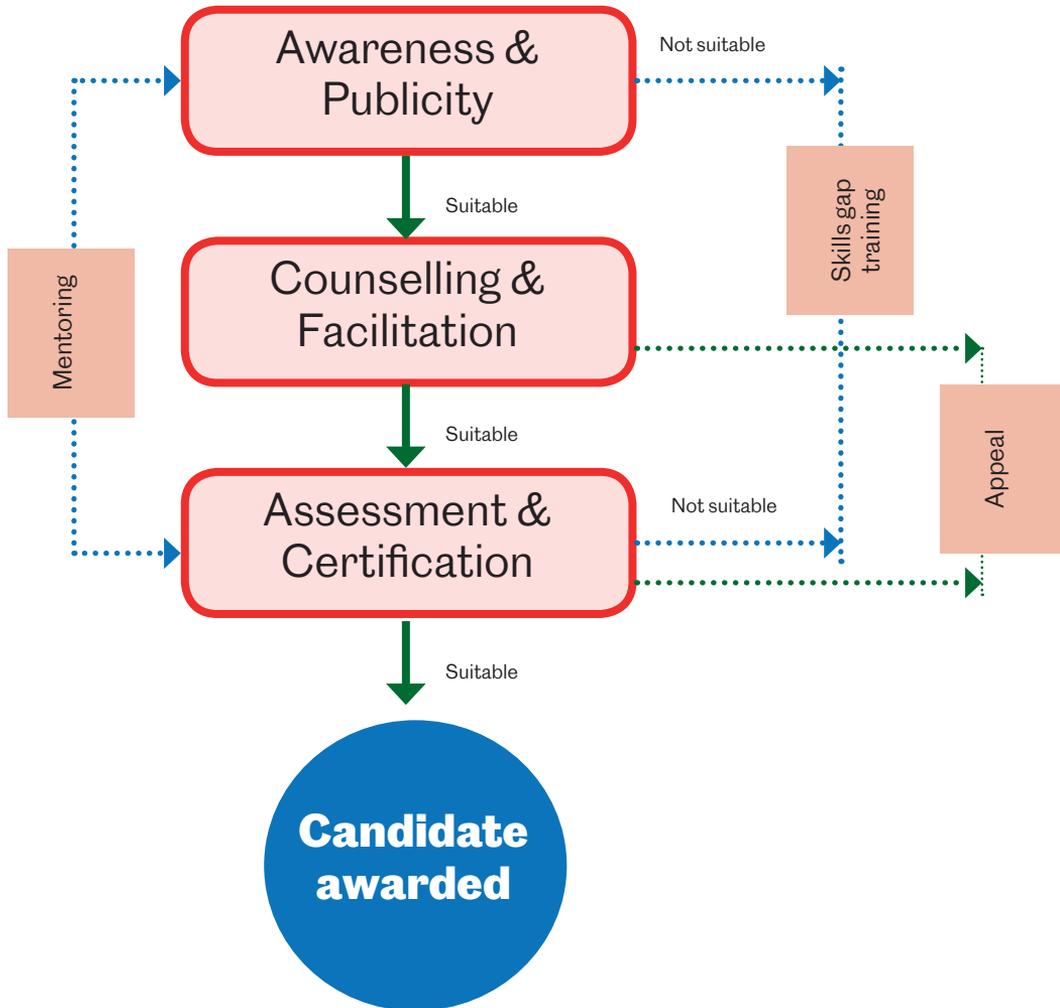
1.1.6 Promoting RPL within workplaces

Employers can promote RPL in their workplaces by:

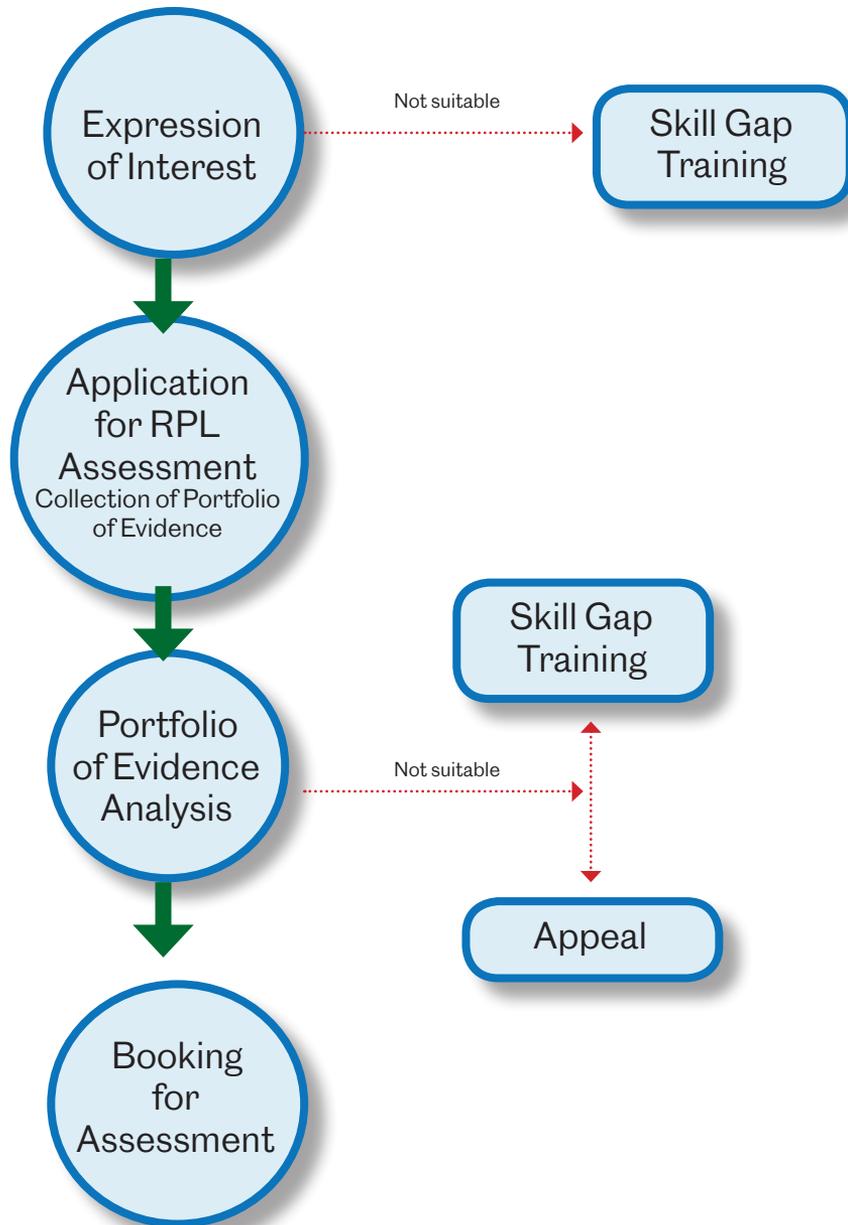
- i) mapping workplace training with training qualifications (including orientation, in-house training and sponsored courses);
- ii) identifying evidence required;
- iii) identifying existing skills and competencies of employees (creating a skills inventory)
- iv) identifying skills gaps of employees;
- v) addressing skills gaps by providing for in-house or external training;
- vi) using trained supervisor or managers to verify evidence; and
- vii) using trained workplace assessors to assess the evidence.

1.2 The RPL process in Kenya

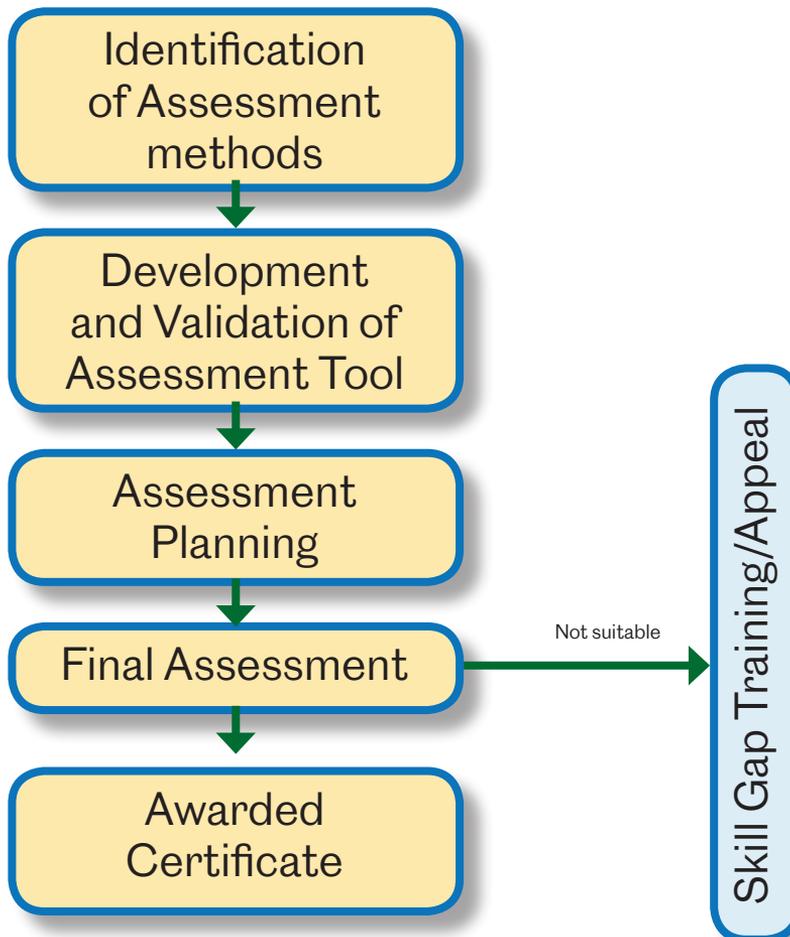
The RPL process - Simplified



Counselling Processing - Implementation guidelines



The RPL Assessment Process



1.3 Key RPL drivers

- i) Promoting social inclusion and equity for disadvantaged groups – early school leavers, retrenched workers, ethnic minorities.
- ii) Encouraging lifelong learning to address skills shortages and gaps and allow holistic development.
- iii) Providing access to higher education.
- iv) Meeting regulatory requirements of some sectors in terms of employing qualified persons.
- v) Improving efficiency & flexibility in education systems by allowing alternative learning pathways.
- vi) Enhancing migrant workers' skills portability and mobility.
- vii) Fostering employability, and thus better, decent jobs.
- viii) Contributing to transition from informal to formal economy.

1.4 The Kenya imperative for RPL

Kenya is a strong stable nation with a vibrant workforce that has diverse skills that are both recognised and unrecognised. The Kenyan workforce performs meaningful work in employment – both formal and informal, at community level and within family contexts.

Kenyans, like people around the globe, are active in the labour market. Many have acquired competencies on the job but the same have not been recognised or certified. Kenya's informal sector employs nearly 15 million people representing 83.7% of the labour force, according to 2018 estimates, compared to the 2.9 million who work in the formal sector. These 15 million Kenyans include domestic workers, cleaners, beauticians, mechanics, plumbers, masonry, carpenters and street vendors who prop up the country¹. It is appreciated that in this sector, many employees have earned their skills of trade on the job. Such persons lack the opportunity to compete for the limited but better placed opportunities within the formal sector.

It is expected that recognition of these competencies will act as a motivator and help the target beneficiaries to build on what they already know and can do thus enabling them to tap into the opportunities in work and life.

¹ <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/04/10/kenya-labor-coronavirus-pandemic-informal-workers-economic-crisis/>

1.5 RPL at the centre of public policy worldwide

RPL recognises what a person knows and can do is more important than when or where one acquired the knowledge and skills. Through this approach, RPL helps people to tap into their already existing know-how to make important decisions in life. RPL serves to validate knowledge, skills and attitudes. This in turn enhances an individual's self-confidence and sense of direction – be it in work for career planning or progression or in business for access to tenders and contracts or just a general approach in living.

RPL needs to be embedded into national policies. From Australia to South Africa to Europe and beyond, RPL is a national priority to promote the development of individuals, enhance labour mobility and contribute to social cohesion. In South Africa, RPL is an intrinsic component of the country's national policy. It is used to promote lifelong learning, strengthen the workforce and enable individuals to achieve meaningful qualifications.

RPL is a process through which non-formal and informal learning is recognised and certified against the requirements of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework. It can be used to credit access, inclusion or advancement in education, training or the workplace.

In Europe, validating non-formal and informal learning is increasingly seen as a way of improving lifelong learning. More European countries emphasize the importance of making visible and valuing learning that takes place outside formal education and training contexts.

UNESCO advocates the adoption of RPL principles and practices by all member states in order to recognise and value all types of learning and to develop or improve structures and mechanisms to recognise all forms of learning.

In Kenya today, there is evidence of mismatch between the skills of the unemployed and those required by the employers. There is a growing need to improve the process of matching available workers' skills with available jobs.

Quality RPL services help address some of these critical labour market issues identifying the often hidden or undervalued skills, knowledge and attitudes of individuals who exist in all segments of the population. RPL helps people to develop, learn more and contribute to the workforce in many ways. Improving access to quality RPL services significantly improves the development, productivity and integration of these individuals. In that way, the outcomes of RPL can significantly enhance the strength and flexibility of Kenya's labour force.

RPL is a powerful tool that:

- i) provides access to opportunities;
- ii) increases mobility in education and employment;
- iii) motivates individuals to continue learning; and
- iv) improves a person's self-esteem.

Each of these is a critical element in what is called the social cohesion advantage, which helps to promote and support harmonious communities, where all members can thrive.

1.6 Benefits of RPL

There are numerous benefits for the variety of stakeholders using RPL. RPL can save both time and money by recognizing existing skills and reducing training time. The specific benefits for each type of stakeholder are listed below. Depending on the situation, these traits may not be exclusive to a single category.

1.6.1 Individuals

RPL helps individuals to:

- i) demonstrate what they know and can do;
- ii) clarify employment and education goals;
- iii) avoid duplicate training;
- iv) validate learning from work or life experience;
- v) gain academic credits, occupational certification or professional licensure; and
- vi) earn promotion within the workplace.

1.6.2 Post-secondary institutions

For post-secondary institutions, RPL helps them to:

- i) increase institutional efficiency by eliminating duplicate education and training;
- ii) increase student enrollment and retention;
- iii) allow for more appropriate placement of learners in programs;

- iv) meet the needs of a wider range of learners;
- v) expand learning options to provide more modular and accessible approaches;
- vi) provide an important service for business, industry and community links; and
- vii) enhance the image of the institution in the community.

1.6.3 Sector councils and industry

RPL helps sector councils and industry to:

- i) identify knowledge, skills and attitudes (competencies);
- ii) compare qualifications and competencies against occupational standards; and
- iii) create and conduct fair competency-based assessment.

1.6.4 Assessors, trainers and educators

RPL helps this group of stakeholders to:

- i) further the development of adult learning and teaching practices;
- ii) broaden understand of assessment and evaluation;
- iii) increase knowledge of RPL processes through professional development opportunities;
- iv) maintain currency in practical application of theory;
- v) increase expertise in the use of a variety of assessment tools; and
- vi) review programs and courses for continuous improvement.

1.6.5 Employers

For employers, RPL helps to:

- i) identify and document employee skills, knowledge, abilities and training needs;
- ii) recruit, develop and retain employees;
- iii) clarify competencies, job tasks, equivalent skills and knowledge; and
- iv) define, document and verify processes

1.6.6 Professional organisations, trade unions and regulatory bodies

RPL helps these stakeholders to:

- i) identify competencies;
- ii) benchmark competencies against established standards;
- iii) create and conduct fair competency-based assessments; and
- iv) improve assessment strategies that recognise international experienced and education.

1.6.7 Career counsellors

RPL helps career counsellors to:

- i) identify skills, knowledge, abilities and interests;
- ii) identify and develop employment goals;
- iii) clarify education or training needs; and
- iv) determine employment and education support required.

1.6.8 Immigrant serving agencies

With RPL, these stakeholders are able to:

- i) identify an individual's skills, knowledge, qualifications and credentials;
- ii) clarify employment goals; and
- iii) determine potential training needs.

1.6.9 Challenges

Recognition of Prior Learning has been called a disruptive idea that challenges many traditional ways of doing things. A small employer may not have an RPL system but may be performing RPL functions as part of an overall practice. This practical manual is about integrating RPL into the organizational goals, systems and process that are already in place rather than creating a separate system. If one person within an organization benefits from a review of RPL practices and identifies even small changes then a difference can be made.

Depending on the scope of practice, challenge may arise because of differences such as:

- i) RPL may be practiced as part of a larger assessment system;
- ii) the functions may be performed by only one person within a group or organization;
- iii) RPL practices are intended to support all practitioners at any level; and
- iv) roles may be known by different names.

2.0 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND RPL SYSTEMS AND SERVICES

Quality is a standard of something as measured against other things of a similar kind; the degree of excellence of something²

Implementing quality RPL can be a challenge. It requires systems with a direct and transparent way for individuals to demonstrate their competencies and to access advice when required. Quality Assurance is a planned and systematic review process. It provides confidence that acceptable standards are being met and aims for continuous improvement.

Quality in RPL is described as the establishment of and adherence to policies, processes and assessment practices that maximize individuals' opportunities to fully and accurately demonstrate relevant knowledge, skills and competencies³.

There is increasing acknowledgement that learning takes place on a continuum and that the boundaries between different forms of education and learning are porous⁴.

2.1 Policy and legal frameworks

This RPL policy framework is anchored on the following national and international legal and policy Frameworks:

² <https://languages.oup.com/google-dictionary-en/>

³ Quality in Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition, A Background Paper, Van Kleef, Canadian institute for Recognizing Learning (April 21-22, 2010)

⁴ Recognition, Validation and Accreditation of Non-formal and Informal learning in UNESCO Member States, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002326/232656e.pdf> (published in 2015 by UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning)

2.1.1 Kenya Constitution, 2010: Chapter four, articles 43 (f), 53 (b), 54 (b), 55 (a& c), 56 (b) and 57 (b) provide for the right to education for all people including those living with disability; access for youth to relevant education and training; access to employment; participation and representation of minorities and marginalized groups in governance and other spheres of life.

2.1.2 Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2019 on A Policy Framework for Reforming Education, Training and Research for Sustainable Development: Chapter 6 provides for the promotion, recognition and equation of qualifications at all levels.

2.1.3 The KNQF Act No. 22 of 2014: Section 3 provides the guiding principles for the framework which shall be, among others, promote access to and equity in education, quality and relevance of qualifications, evidence-based competence, and flexibility of access to and affordability of education, training assessment and qualifications; Section 8 (1) (a, c & k) of the Act mandates the Authority to coordinate and supervise development of policies on national qualifications, a system of national qualifications and provide for recognition of skills, knowledge, values and attitudes.

2.1.4 Engineering Technology Act No. 23 of 2016 section 16 (b, iii): provides for registration of individuals on presentation of evidence of prior learning in engineering technology.

2.1.5 The TVET Act No. 29 of 2013: Section 7 (i) provides for the establishment of a training system which meets the needs of both the formal and informal sectors as provided under this Act; Section 43 provides for certification of competencies acquired on the job.

2.1.6 The Industrial Training Act Cap 237 (Amendment 2011): The Act mandates National Industrial Training Authority (NITA) to regulate and facilitate industrial training in a rational, transparent and predictable manner.

2.1.7 Sustainable Development Goal 4: This goal advocates for inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion of lifelong learning for all.

2.1.8 The ILO 2004 recommendation on Human Resource Development: Education, Training and Lifelong Learning (No.195), calls on member states to establish a framework for recognition and certification of skills including prior learning and experiences irrespective of where and how they were acquired.

2.1.9 Agenda 2063 on the Africa we want: Africa's blueprint and master plan for transforming Africa into the global powerhouse of the future. The agenda focuses on inclusive social and economic development, continental and regional integration, democratic governance and peace & security among other issues aimed at repositioning Africa to becoming a dominant player in the global arena.

Goal number 2 aims to achieve well-educated citizens and skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation by 2063.

2.1.10 The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (2016): The Framework sets out specific actions needed to ease pressure on host countries, enhance refugees' self-reliance, expand access to third-world solutions and support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

2.1.11 Continental Education Strategy for Africa (2016-2025): Strategic objective 8 aims at expanding TVET opportunities at both secondary and tertiary levels besides strengthening linkages between the world of work, education and training systems.

2.1.12 The Kenya Vision 2030: This economic blueprint is a vehicle for accelerating transformation into a rapidly industrializing middle-income nation by the year 2030 by creating a globally competitive and adaptive human resource base to meet the requirements of a rapidly industrializing economy.

These development plans are among the many that are providing an enabling environment for RPL to help address some of the challenges faced within the labour market and the education and training sectors.

A quality RPL program ensures that an individual's learning is recognised regardless of where it was acquired. People can learn throughout their lives and they continually apply their experiences in search of new opportunities. All learning, whether formal, informal or non-formal is valuable and should be recognised. Some basic common beliefs are:

- i) no one should have to spend time, energy and resources repeating training for what they already know and can do;
- ii) qualifications and credentials achieved outside of Kenya may require validation against the Kenya National Qualification Framework, professional standards and employment expectations; and
- iii) credentials achieved in one context reflect one aspect of a person's skills, knowledge and attitudes. The use of those same skills, knowledge and attitudes in a different situation may need to be compared to the expectations of the new role to be recognised.

2.2 Guiding principles for quality RPL practices in Kenya

Guiding principles are essential for quality RPL practices in Kenya. Kenyan RPL Practitioners use a Code of Ethics where these guiding principles have been referenced to ensure the values of RPL are integrated into their practices.

These principles that apply to all aspects of RPL are:

- i) planning and development;
- ii) administration and implementation of RPL ;
- iii) quality assurance;
- iv) program maintenance; and
- v) governance.

Many existing principles related to RPL practice tend to focus on assessment of knowledge, skills and attitudes. Kenyan RPL Practitioners also consider the key component of counselling and facilitation of individuals in the formative steps and expectations of an RPL process. These principles also address the requirement for a quality system that supports the front-line activities of counselling and facilitation.

Several other countries have established principles for quality practice e.g. Ireland, Sri Lanka, Scotland, Australia, South Africa and the United Kingdom. The principles serve a variety of purposes such as:

- i) support to national qualification frameworks and standards;
- ii) transferability among education or regulatory systems (national and international); and
- iii) access to education and employment.

Canada (CLFDB,1997; CAPLA2000) and the US (CAEL, 1989, rev. 2006) have developed standards for assessing prior learning. UNESCO (2012) lists six principles in their document, Guidelines for Recognition, Validation and Accreditation of Outcomes of Non-formal and Informal Learning. The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP, 2009) developed principles and guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning.

2.2.1 Guiding principles for RPL in Kenya

The RPL Policy Framework is guided by the National Values and Principles of Government as stipulated in Article 10 and Values and Principles of Public Services (Article 232) of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010.

In this context, the following five guiding principles (as adapted from the Kenya RPL Policy Framework) will be applicable:

Guiding Principle	What to do
<p>a) Confidentiality: all information regarding RPL assessment of an individual should not be divulged to other unauthorized entities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Take steps to protect information – passwords for electronic files, locking hard-copy files securely. ii) Create thorough policies and confidentiality agreements. iii) Ensure that you understand the law on data protection. iv) Do not spread incorrect or untrue allegations about others that can damage reputations beyond repair and / or have long-term negative effects on peoples’ lives. v) Passing on information that you have heard from a third party is bad. Sharing information that you have been told in confidence by someone is much worse. vi) Do as you would be done by.
<p>b) Non-discrimination: all applicants for RPL shall access all services impartially</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Respect cultural differences. ii) Be professional in conduct and speech. iii) Refuse to initiate, participate or condone discrimination and harassment. iv) Avoid culturally offensive humor. v) Familiarize and understand RPL Code of Conduct. vi) Be proactive - report incidents of inappropriate, discriminatory, harassing or abusive behavior.
<p>c) Inclusivity and participation: this principle acknowledges participation of all stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Be aware of unconscious bias. ii) Promote equity to all stakeholders. iii) Model inclusive language. iv) Empathize. v) Create safe spaces. vi) Be accessible – the infrastructure.
<p>d) Collaboration: the KNQA will coordinate and seek partnerships and linkages with all RPL stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Effectively and clearly communicate agreed goals / expectations / intentions. ii) Build cohesion. iii) Foster a creative environment. iv) Know one another. v) Leverage on member strengths. vi) Listen and learn to compromise. vii) Overcome challenges and solve problems without assigning blame. viii) Be open-minded.
<p>e) Sustainability: the KNQA will promote RPL through multi-sectoral approach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Capacity building. ii) Efficient use of resources. iii) Taking responsibility and learning from RPL related outcomes. iv) Encouraging best practices at all times.

2.3 Six steps for quality RPL (as adapted from the Canadian QA manual)

A quality RPL process has many elements designed to ensure that an individual's learning and skills are acknowledged, valued, assessed and recognised. The process assists individuals to access employment opportunities or education and training and to fulfill their potential. It encourages all stakeholders to work together to help applicants achieve their goals. The process considers the Guiding Principles during each step that is taken.

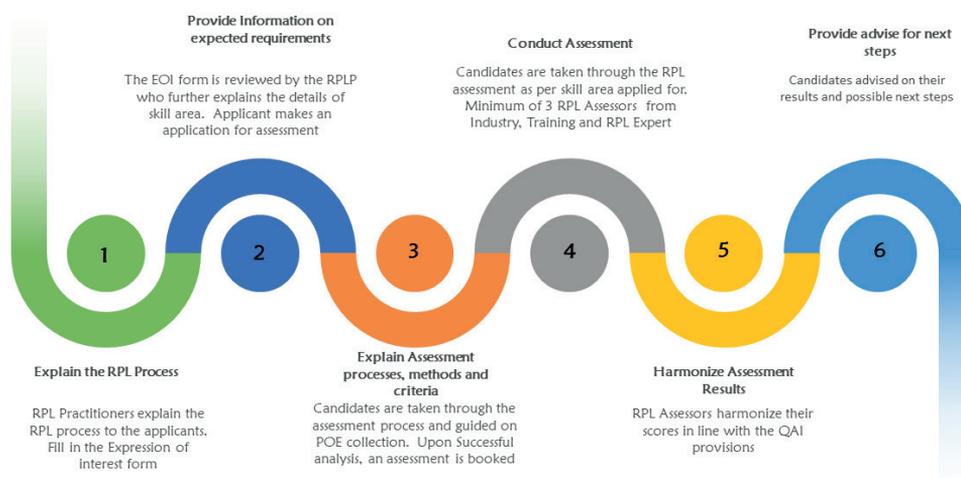
A quality RPL process includes:

- i) effective awareness and sensitisation activities;
- ii) development of RPL Policy Framework and accompanying support – RPL Instruments;
- iii) validation of the developed documents, tools, guides, manuals and strategies by external stakeholders;
- iv) building capacity of RPLPs;
- v) information sharing about the RPL process – what to expect and what not to;
- vi) step-by-step guidance to the RPL candidates;
- vii) documenting of the request by filling and processing application forms;
- viii) guidance on collection of the required evidence and how the same should be presented; and
- ix) RPL decisions that are credible, transparent and can be reviewed and verified.

A quality RPL process includes a number of steps. You may choose to include any, all or a combination of the elements in these steps. Your institution may use a different name for a step, however, the information or activity shall be similar to the model presented here.

2.3.1 Six steps for quality RPL

Each of the six statements describes what an RPL Practitioner needs to do in a Quality RPL process. Below each statement is the corresponding action for an individual who uses RPL.



2.3.1.1: Explain the RPL process (Counselling and facilitation phase)

Interactions with RPL can be made either physically or electronically through the RPL IMS. An Expression of Interest (EOI) is filled out by an interested party who is then taken through the RPL process to enable them make a decision on whether to proceed with the process or not. The applicant is taken through the following steps. The RPL Counsellor discusses with the candidate on their area of interest to examine their readiness for assessment;

- The RPL Counsellor discusses with the candidate on their area of interest to examine their readiness for assessment;
- The applicant is taken through the RPL Process – the application, cost implication, timelines, roles and responsibilities of the different RPLOs, portfolio of evidence collection, the actual assessment and certification.
- If applicant is okay with the explanation, then they proceed and make an application for assessment.
- Applicant is given contact information in case they need to further clarify what was explained.

2.3.1.2: Provide information on expected requirements (Counselling and facilitation phase)

Once an applicant shows interest in proceeding with the assessment, they are guided on filling in an application form. During this process, the following information is shared. More information on the qualification applied for – level and the accompanying learning outcomes.

- i) More information on the qualification applied for – level and the accompanying learning outcomes.
- ii) Explanation and guidance on portfolio of evidence collection – where one does not have the POE, the RPLP should guide on how to develop evidence.
- iii) The POE is analyzed for compliance to the learning outcomes. If done successfully, the candidate is booked for the final assessment.
- iv) The candidate is advised on when and where the assessment will be conducted and what is involved.

2.3.1.3: Explain assessment and processes, methods and criteria (Assessment phase)

Upon presenting themselves for assessment, the candidate are taken through the process in line with the QAI procedure. The following points are important in this phase. Each assessment must have a minimum of three RPL assessors representing Industry, Training and an RPL Expert.

- i) Each assessment must have a minimum of three RPL assessors representing Industry, Training and an RPL Expert.
- ii) The RPL assessors from Industry and Training will score the candidate while the RPL Expert provides quality assurance of the process as well as mediation if need arises.
- iii) The candidate should be assessed in the language they are comfortable with – this information will have been provided by the RPL Counsellor from the counselling and facilitation phase.
- iv) Where a candidate has a disability, the Assessment Center must ensure the right infrastructure as well as personnel to handle the candidate are in place.

2.3.1.4: Conduct assessment (Assessment Phase)

The final assessment is carried out based on the tools developed and validated during the preparation by the Assessment Centers. In this preparation, the RPL Assessment Guide should be used to guide the process as well as to ensure consistency and objectivity of the process. The RPL Practitioners shall be subject matter experts;

- a) be registered and accredited by the respective QAI;
 - i) must have undergone the Training on RPL Assessment
 - ii) demonstrate knowledge of adult learning principles

- b) report on the process; and
- c) provide constructive feedback for both the candidates, the process and the institution.

2.3.1.5: Harmonise assessment results

Once the assessment is completed, the RPL Assessors will harmonize the results based on the scores by the RPL Assessor from Industry and Training. The RPL Expert will mediate where the variance is more than the points agreed upon by each QAI. An RPL Verifier will also sample the results and check for compliance to the RPL Process. The possible outcomes from the RPL process are either Competent or Not competent.

2.3.1.6: Provide results and advice for next steps

Individuals review their assessment results with an RPL Practitioner. Depending on the outcome of the assessment, they may plan next steps, identify new goals, prepare for another assessment and / or celebrate their success. Some options for next steps to work toward their goals may include:

- a) Possible alternatives
 - i) Skill upgrading;
 - ii) Different qualification; and
 - iii) Appeal if not happy with the results.
- b) Certificate is issued to the successful candidates. The certificate is digitally registered with KNQA as part of the Learners database.
- c) Learning difference or gap training;
- d) Independent learning / study, including on-the-job activities where possible;
- e) Preparing additional RPL activity; and
- f) Seek opportunity to appeal an unsuccessful assessment.

2.4 QUALITY ASSURANCE WITHIN RPL PROCESS

2.4.1 Registration and accreditation of QAIs

- i) All QAIs participating in RPL assessment must be legally mandated to offer qualifications.
- ii) Any QAI shall apply to the KNQA to have their institution registered and accredited as a QAI that can offer RPL assessment.

2.4.2 Registration and accreditation of qualifications)

All QAIs must register and accredit their qualifications before assessing candidates in the skill areas.

2.4.3 Registration and accreditation of RPLPi)

- i) All RPL Practitioners must be registered and accredited by a relevant QAI / Regulator before participating in the assessment process.
- ii) The RPL Practitioner must continuously develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes in RPL as part of the CPD requirement.
- iii) The RPL Practitioner must renew their RPL Practicing license / certificate in line with the QAI / Regulator requirements.

2.4.4 Registration and accreditation of assessment centres

- i) All Assessment centers must be registered and accredited in line with the QAIs requirements.
- ii) All personnel at the Assessment center that participate in the RPL process must be registered and accredited in line with QAI requirements

2.4.5 RPL instruments

- i) RPL Standards, tools, guides, manuals and strategies shall be developed to guide the RPL process.
- ii) The developed tools must be validated – either internally or externally as per National Implementation Committee advisory.
- iii) The RPL instruments can be tailored to fit each institution without changing the original intended use / wording of the instrument.
- iv) The RPL instruments shall be uploaded on the KNQA website for ease of access.
- v) The RPL instruments shall be reviewed on a need to basis.

2.4.6 Counselling and facilitation phase

- i) RPL Practitioner must be a subject matter expert.
- ii) RPL Practitioner must have undergone the RPL Training of Trainers to understand the approach to RPL Assessment.
- iii) The RPL Practitioner shall explain to both the applicant and

candidate on the requirements of the RPL Process – costing, the process, POE collection, the assessment, certification and options if one is not successful.

- iv) The RPL Practitioner shall guide the candidate on how to effectively collect their POE and prepare for the assessment.
- v) The RPL Practitioner shall feed the information into the RPL IMS system.
- vi) The RPL Practitioner shall inform the RPL Assessors of any unique requirement by the candidate – disability and / or preferred language, need for day care services as candidates are assessed.

2.4.7 Assessment phase

- i) The RPL Assessors shall conduct the assessment in a friendly manner and where need be in the language that the candidate is comfortable with.
- ii) All assessment must have a minimum of three RPL Assessors – one from the Industry, one from Training and an RPL Expert.
- iii) Only the RPL Assessors from Industry and Training will score the candidate.
- iv) The scores will be uploaded into the RPL IMS system as per the QAI policy.
- v) The RPL Expert must ensure quality of the RPL assessment as it happens.
- vi) The RPL Expert will harmonize the final scores from the Industry and Training Assessor. Where there is a major variance, the respective QAI policy / procedure shall apply.

2.4.8 Certification phase

- i) Successful candidates will be awarded their qualification via a certificate.
- ii) A digital certificate of the candidate will be uploaded into the KNQA learners' database via the RPL IMS.

2.4.9 Monitoring and evaluation

- i) An RPL Verifier will sample the assessments to check for quality assurance once the process is complete.

- ii) A report of the assessment shall be shared with the respective QAI for continuous improvement purposes.
- iii) Regulators shall be encouraged to check the RPL process for quality assurance and share their findings in reports to various QAIs as well as KNQA.

3.0 NEXT STEPS

After completing the Quality Assurance in RPL Self-Audit Checklist in this manual, you may have identified some areas of practice that could be further developed or improved. Following accepted quality management proactive, use the questions in the table below to reflect on your current practice. Use the Notes / Plans column to record your responses and to plan your next steps as you continue your journey toward Quality RPL practice.

Question	Notes
Where am I on the steps to RPL?	
At which stage is my organization now on the journey?	
Where do I / we want to be in two years? five years?	
What are the priorities for improvement purposes?	
Which priorities are targeted for this year? Next year? Later?	
What information do I need? What support do I need?	
What professional development would help me / my organization?	
Where can I find appropriate resources?	

ANNEX 1

SUPPORT FOR RPL PRACTICE

Implementation of RPL services may encounter hurdles such as administrative challenges, too much paperwork, inadequate information, lack of collaboration among stakeholders and lack of funding. The good news is that progress is being made in overcoming some challenges. Examples are being shared among practitioners using RPL as well as those who are starting the process.

Some thought on how to do this:

Support for advising

- i) Provide appropriate training.
- ii) Provide guidance documents to help RPL Counsellors identify applicant's skills.
- iii) Use formative assessment, which draws more attention to identifying and documenting learning progress and gives feedback to individuals.
- iv) Simplify procedures and integrate them with other procedures.
- v) Provide information guides – offer information, guidance and counselling services to clarify RPL procedures. Individuals, then become more aware of their own competencies, more motivated to learn more, as well as to have their learning outcomes recognised.
- vi) Integrate RPL processes with existing systems.
- vii) Provide opportunities for sharing of practices and experiences.

Support for assessing

- i) Provide appropriate training.
- ii) Set criteria for feedback and assessment.
- iii) Appropriate training can help to identify efficient assessment methods.
- iv) Create resources and tools for RPL Practitioners.
- v) Prevent tendency to over assess.
- vi) Facilitate RPL implementation by putting in place effective administrative process e.g. for receiving applications, organizing assessment and providing feedback on outcomes.

- vii) Facilitate RPL by creating policies and procedures for recording results, awarding qualifications and developing appeal processes.

Supporting the system

- i) Develop procedures that identify, document, assess, recognise and accredit competencies or learning outcomes. Give due consideration to experiential learning, self-directed learning and other forms that are outside of formal education and training.
- ii) Consider competency-based and / or outcomes-based approaches.
- iii) Identify or create a portal of RPL related resources.
- iv) Establish mechanisms to adopt credible, quality RPL procedures, standards and instruments as well as for awarding qualifications.
- v) Communicate opportunities and benefits to stakeholders.
- vi) Develop sustainable, cost-sharing mechanisms with multi-stakeholder partnerships.
- vii) Conduct cost-benefit analyses to develop evidence on the benefits of RPL for individuals, groups, organizations, institutions and society as a whole.
- viii) Seek sufficient financial resources to build the basic infrastructure of an RPL system.
- ix) Develop networks or communities of practice for sharing.
- x) Develop linkages between community-based groups, workplaces, regulatory bodies and education.
- xi) Build the RPL infrastructure at local levels so that it is available where people live, work and learn. Make RPL part of existing communities.
- xii) Build a business plan for phased implementation of RPL programs and processes.
- xiii) Communicate, promote and market the value of RPL.
- xiv) Communicate RPL to senior administration for awareness and buy-in.
- xv) Link RPL practices to vision, values and mission.
- xvi) Create a system of monitoring, evaluating and data collection to meet standards.

ANNEX 2

CAPACITY BUILDING – RPL INTEGRATION AND COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

To integrate RPL within an organization effectively, it requires planning and collaboration by all those who may have contact with individuals seeking recognition for their learning. The organization needs to consider the impact of policies and procedures for the RPL process. It must also ensure that appropriate support for RPL is in place and maintained. There is often a need to work with partner agencies, community groups, institutions and organizations to get agreement on the process and support for the outcome. Ideally, all potential stakeholders need to be working together in a collaborative RPL process partnership.

Organisation and development

While quality assured RPL processes may seem evident, being certain about quality requires planning and organization. Part of RPL planning is to define and allocate resources, both human and material for process implementation. While planning time may initially add to work or take away other duties, it is a worthy investment. Planning can ultimately return time to the organization. For example, by using RPL, you may ultimately spend less one-on-one time with clients.

Existing mainstream or regular systems should be used as much as possible, so that the workflow can be equivalent. Good planning includes action plans with timelines. Action plans can result from using the Self-Audit Checklists.

Linking RPL to the Mission and Values of an organisation

RPL represents 'people first' approach to human resource development. Therefore, when an organization is already committed to enhancing the growth and development of its workforce, it can be an easy link to match RPL to its mission and values. However, when organizations want to improve their workplace practices and provide for the on-going development of their employees, then RPL principles and practices provide an excellent, systematic way forward. They do this by clarifying workplace expectations with detailed job descriptions or a set of workplace competencies and offering a firm start to employee development. In addition, they provides a useful framework for

the on-going assessment of workers looking for promotion or placement into training programs.

Administrative procedures: Examples of good practice communication

- i) RPL messages should be clear, simple, consistent and fully integrated into all media and presentations.
- ii) RPL information should include an overview, policies, processes, FAQs, fees, contact information and a glossary.
- iii) Communication strategies should include distribution of information to all internal and external stakeholders.
- iv) Promotion and marketing of RPL programs should strategically align with the organization's overall marketing strategy.
- v) RPL advisory services should be organised to help individuals make suitable decisions about RPL.
- vi) RPL advisory should provide guidance or referral to other agencies as needed.
- vii) Post-assessment guidance should be provided to RPL individuals.

Staff development

- i) Develop strategies to standardize support and training for all staff.
- ii) Promote the value of RPL training.
- iii) Provide training in RPL advising and assessing functions. Also train staff who may have functions related to RPL processes.
- iv) Monitor and evaluate RPL implementation, processes and training to ensure quality practice.
- v) Provide for RPL mentoring opportunities among staff.
- vi) Recognise the achievements of staff and encourage recognition on their HR records.

Systems coordination

- i) Ensure RPL functions are well-defined.
- ii) Establish RPL functions as part of a staff member's job description (e.g. facilitating, administration, coordinating).
- iii) Create an RPL plan for priority areas, including timelines for development and implementation.

- iv) Promote handy access to RPL related resources (e.g. online repository or other central space).
- v) Create and maintain formal RPL reporting methods or activity tracking to measure achievements.
- vi) Identify and gather key data that will help to measure success. Do this prior to implementation of RPL services and review the requirements on an ongoing basis.
- vii) Establish policies for key processes to assist with consistency, fairness and reliability.

Resources and costs

- i) Establish budgets for RPL related training, development and process implementation.
- ii) Research and allocate both ongoing and new resources to meet demand for RPL services.
- iii) Research and identify funding opportunities that will support new RPL projects and initiatives.
- iv) Develop strategies to support changes in staff workload related to RPL services.
- v) Provide resources for staff involved in awareness, advising, assessing and systems development, including maintenance and improvement.
- vi) Develop strategies to support changes in staff workload related to RPL services.
- vii) Identify required resources for systems improvements and develop proposals or requests for support

Evaluate effectiveness

- i) Review all services related to RPL to determine level of services for established RPL standards.
- ii) Recommend improvements, renewal or expansion of RPL services based on that review.

ANNEX 3

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

A quality RPL process needs the full engagement and cooperation of all partners and stakeholders. They will collaborate to develop realistic solutions around the issues of labour shortage or skills mismatches.

Multi-stakeholder collaboration

Recognition of Prior Learning can present complex challenges. A collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach to RPL may be the best way to develop solutions that are innovative, realistic and sustainable. The key to success and optimum impact of quality RPL is cooperation among a broad spectrum of stakeholders in jurisdictions from across Kenya.

Key stakeholders may include:

- i) individuals – candidates, applicants, learners, employees;
- ii) community groups;
- iii) regulatory authorities;
- iv) trade unions;
- v) professional associations;
- vi) educational institutions;
- vii) Immigrant serving agencies;
- viii) youth employment agencies;
- ix) employers and employer organizations;
- x) sector councils; and
- xi) Government departments.

By inviting members from the stakeholder list, you could help to keep unemployed youths and existing workers in a region. Working together you may create innovative approaches to RPL, job creation, mentorship and training.

Multi-stakeholder groups could:

- i) share information;
- ii) review licensing, certification, academic, credit and job requirements;
- iii) develop alternate routes to licensing, certification, academic credit and jobs;
- iv) identify and eliminate unnecessary barriers;
- v) identify critical issues and suggest process changes;
- vi) pursue partnership opportunities;
- vii) develop collaborative programs and supports;
- viii) act in an advisory capacity; and
- ix) sustain momentum for change.

Industry assessors

When embedding RPL into human resources practices, industry RPLP could offer valuable and timely expertise to another group that uses RPL. Workplace assessors are currently in industry practice and can offer concrete suggestions, for example, with the integration of internationally educated individuals to the Kenyan workplace. They may also be able to assist with the assessments. An organization can improve its learning culture through RPL practices. Using measurable performance criteria, it could demonstrate the effectiveness of a skill recognition or training program. Measurable improvements will prove Return on Investment (ROI) requirements for the organization.

Measurable improvements may include:

- i) reduction in loss time accidents;
- ii) fewer injuries;
- iii) increased production;
- iv) improvement in product quality; and
- v) less down-time for equipment.

Capacity building

Quality RPL processes provide training for all those with any connection to an individual who may benefit from RPL. Training promotes an understanding of the value of the whole RPL process, including specific RPL functions. Training develops in-house expertise. RPL functions such as RPL Counselling or Assessing may be performed within the practitioner role or as part of another job description. It is also conceivable that all three RPL functions are performed by one person within a community group or organization.

Training for RPL practitioners, coordinators and verifiers

RPL Practices have evolved over the last 30 years with stakeholders developing competencies they see as most relevant to the field. Those competencies are described under three main functions – counselling & facilitation, Assessment & Certification and Administration.

The competencies needed for these three functions along with self-assessment forms can be found at <http://capla.ca/plar-practitioner-competencies-listingand-self-assessment-forms/> Practitioners are encouraged to download, review and complete the self-assessment so they can identify, plan for and take appropriate training. The three functions are inter-related. They require considerable cooperation and among the roles to create a successful and quality RPL system. The competencies listed include both core and specific competencies. In some cases, all three functions may be performed by one person, though not on the same candidate or organization.

Core competency areas include: application of RPL philosophy and knowledge;

- i) application of RPL philosophy and knowledge;
- ii) client-centered approach or focus;
- iii) advocacy; and
- iv) professionalism.

RPL counsellor

Functions may be performed by a career counsellor, supervisor, manager, instructor, academic advisor or training leader. The functions of an RPL counsellor are highlighted in the RPL Practitioners Guide.

RPL assessor

Functions should be performed by subject matter experts, regardless of context. The responsibilities of an RPL Assessor are highlighted in the RPL Practitioners Guide.

RPL coordinator

Functions may be performed by an executive director, a registrar, a department or division manager or other authority role. The functions of an RPL Administrator are highlighted in the RPL Practitioners Guide.

Mentoring

Currently, most RPL professional development occurs through mentoring. Professional development in this area is not widely funded or recognised. Regular RPL learning events and activities should be organised / offered by QAIs and other RPL networks.

ANNEX 4

EMBEDDING RPL INTO HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTICE

RPL can form a foundation for quality HR practice by creating a skills recognition and development program for employees. Such programs:

- i) validate and recognise existing knowledge and skills;
- ii) do not duplicate existing training;
- iii) assist with re-skilling to meet industry changes (e.g. new products or new processes);
- iv) allow employees to advance to the next level of training and skills;
- v) celebrate employee achievements;
- vi) can be cost-effective for the company; and
- vii) may address the challenge of lay-offs through skills identification and career counselling.

The following dimensions of human Resource management link to skills recognition.

Staffing

- i) Job analysis and redesign.
- ii) Attraction, branding and recruitment.
- iii) Selection and induction.
- iv) Managing turnover.
- v) Encouraging diversity.
- vi) Performance management and reward.
- vii) Performance appraisal.
- viii) Promotion.
- ix) Remuneration.

Human resources development

- i) Skills audits.
- ii) Career planning, engagement and retention.

- iii) Re-skilling and up-skilling.
- iv) Learning and development.
- v) Management development and succession planning.

Employee relations

- i) Wellness.Labour flexibility and work/life balance.

ANNEX 5

ASSESSMENT – METHODS, TOOLS AND PROCESSES

Fair, valid and reliable assessment is essential to any quality RPL program. It is critical that all those involved in the assessment – candidates, RPL Practitioners and other stakeholders have confidence in the process. They must know beyond a reasonable doubt that candidates who receive qualifications / awards truly do have the competencies they claim.

Quality assurance in RPL practice has been discussed throughout this manual. Quality in RPL involves systems, functions, people, networks, collaborative partnerships and a will to assist all stakeholders to achieve their goals. Assessment methods, tools and processes are key components to the achievement of Quality Assurance in RPL.

Assessment methods

RPL is used for a wide range of purposes around the world. It helps candidates to:

- i) earn professional licenses and certificates;
- ii) gain access to education and training programs;
- iii) receive advanced placement or credit recognition in a course or program;
- iv) acquire academic credentials more quickly and cost effectively; and
- v) get employment.

Summative assessment

There are outcomes of a summative assessment. That is an assessment completed against a standard, learning outcome or other benchmark that leads to an 'end-point' goal. High stakes assessment such as those for professional licenses, degrees and certificates are summative. In high stakes summative assessments, a poor or faulty assessment can have dire consequences for the candidate, the organization and the society at large. Organizations invest significant time and money to ensure that the outcomes of the assessment process meet all the technical, professional and legal requirements associated with reliable assessment.

Formative assessment

RPL is also used for formative assessment purposes. This assessment is used to gather information about the candidate to: guide and enhance self-understanding; identify interests and goals;

- i) guide and enhance self-understanding;
- ii) identify interests and goals;
- iii) clarify strengths and limitations;
- iv) determine options for future work or study; and
- v) determine personal development.

Formative assessments are usually not high stakes assessments. They are often used by RPL counsellors, immigrant serving agencies and other support programs to help individuals determine their needs for education, training or employment path. It is also used to help individuals to clarify their skills and knowledge as they look into the standards associated with a particular credential, qualification or job. It can help them to prepare for interviews or assessments.

Formative and summative assessments go hand in hand. Indeed, the outcomes of a summative assessment can also be used for formative purposes, to guide further reflection or decision making. A person who earns a degree in a particular field, for example, may wish to pursue further study or work towards a professional license. They can plan ways to build on the knowledge, skills and abilities developed as part of the degree program.

Assessment tools

Candidates should be able to receive recognition, qualification and credit for their knowledge regardless of how, when or where it was acquired. RPL Practitioners should select appropriate assessment tools to make best use of the limited resources and available expertise. It is imperative to note that assessment instruments used for graduation from a program are generally not suitable for RPL purposes. Select a method most applicable for the type of learning being assessed. The list of examples listed below is not exhaustive, but rather a sampling of common assessment methods.

Observation / demonstrations

In this method, candidates are assessed against the assessment criteria as they perform tasks. They are observed in either a 'natural' setting e.g. work or community or in a simulated situation e.g. role play by a trained RPL Practitioner.

Interviews

Interviews allow candidates to describe in detail what they know and can do, how they have solved problems and responded to contingencies, etc. In summative assessments, interviews are most often used in conjunction with other assessment methods.

Self-assessments

Allow candidates to match specific knowledge, skills and attitudes against established criteria. They are helpful for candidates and RPL Practitioners to find a starting point from which to establish competence. They will later gather evidence or proof of that learning.

Evidence collection

This is a collection of proof of learning. It will demonstrate an individual's knowledge, skills and attitudes. Examples include logbooks, notations, product samples or skills passport.

Portfolios A portfolio is generally a more formal and organised collection of evidence developed by an individual. It may be paper-based or digital. It is used by individuals to reflect on and verify their knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Written examinations

These assessment tools require candidates to respond to a series of specific questions, often in the form of essays, short answers or multiple-choice test items. They are used most often to assess knowledge about a specific subject.

Credential or qualification evaluation

In this process, a candidate's education and training credentials or professional qualifications are evaluated to determine authenticity and relevance to Kenyan standards. The process compares credential documents to Kenyan standards for a course, program, professional license or employment expectations. Since there is great variability in the nature of education and training programs around the world, the evaluation of credential and qualifications earned outside of Kenya requires great care.

Assessment criteria

All quality RPL programs require outcomes or competency statement that are easy to understand. The descriptions and criteria are used by candidates and the RPL Practitioners to guide the assessment process. These criteria serve as the 'road map' to help the candidates determine how well their skills, knowledge and attitudes match the expected standards. These also help to identify gaps or learning differences. They identify relevant sources and types of evidence expected.

RPL Counsellors can use the statements to support learners and to liaise with RPL Assessors, subject matter experts who are involved in the RPL process. The RPL Assessors use the descriptors and criteria during assessment to determine how well RPL candidates meet the criteria. Descriptors and criteria also serve as valuable tools to give specific and motivational feedback at the end of the assessment process. Descriptors and criteria may vary for different contexts.

Learning outcomes

These reflect the learning expectations of a course or program. They are most often developed and used in education and training programs. Learning outcomes describe what the learner should know and be able to do at the end of a course or program.

Occupational standards

They describe performance expectations at work and are therefore closely linked to particular occupations. Often, they include descriptions of the knowledge and skills required to perform effectively.

Competencies

Defined as observable skills, knowledge and attitudes that are required for successful job performance. Learning outcomes, occupational standards and competencies each require the development of clear assessment criteria. The criteria must be readily observed, measured and understood by learners and RPL Practitioners alike. Well written statements include an action verb plus the accomplishment of something specific. Sometimes, they also include a reason for the accomplishment.

In quality RPL programs, the learning outcomes, occupational standards or competencies are used to create self-assessments for learners. This will help them to understand what will be assessed. Self-assessments can be part of the initial advising steps to determine if there is sufficient prior learning to move forward. Such statements are also used to establish 'rubrics' or scoring tools for setting evaluation priorities for the assessment process. Organisations are encouraged to develop guides that include these statements of standards, competencies or outcomes and specific criteria. The guides may also include step-by-step explanations of the assessment process, flexible options to prove learning, self-assessment checklists, scoring rubrics. Some will identify next steps after the assessment has been completed.

Assessment and accountability

Assessment methods and processes need to consider already well-established assessment standards. Organizations around the world use the American Psychological Association's guidelines and standards for testing and assessment⁵.

- i) **Validity:** assessment procedures, methods, instruments and materials measure what is intended to be assessed (knowledge, understanding, subject content, skill, information, behaviors, etc.)
- ii) **Reliability:** reliability in assessment is about consistency. Consistency refers to the same judgments being made in the same or similar contexts each time a particular assessment of specified stated intentions is administered.
- iii) **Fairness:** assessment should not in any way hinder or advantage a candidate.

5 The Standards for educational and Psychological Testing available at <http://www.apa.org/science/programs/testing/standards.aspx> :

Additional considerations from past research (Day & Zakos; Van Kleef et al) regarding good assessment methods include technical requirements⁶

- i) **Validity:** does the assessment tool measure what is intended to be assessed?
- ii) **Reliability:** would the result be replicated if the same process were used on a different occasion or using different RPL Assessors?
- iii) **Currency:** is the assessed learning current and directly relevant to the desired outcomes of the RPL process?
- iv) **Sufficiency:** is there sufficient evidence to make a fair and valid decision regarding the outcome of the assessment?
- v) **Fit for purpose:** does the assessment tool and process reflect the context and desired outcomes of the assessment process?

Quality RPL processes also need to:

- i) ensure confidentiality of candidates and the information they give during assessment;
- ii) be fair, that is, without bias or pre-judgement;
- iii) be cost-effective, with the ability of the candidate and the organization to cover all costs;
- iv) provide useful and motivational feedback to individuals at the conclusion of the assessment process whether the candidate meets the assessment criteria or not. If individuals do not meet the criteria, then provide clear guidance to enable them to address their learning gaps; and
- v) include an appeal mechanism.

⁶ For more information on development of these statements please refer to Higher education quality Council of Ontario, learning outcomes webinar series <http://www.heqco.ca/en-ca/research/learningOutcomes/Pages/home.aspx>

Red river College, learning Outcomes Performance Support <http://www.rrc.ca/learningOutcomeSupport/>
The Standards for educational and Psychological Testing available at <http://www.apa.org/science/programs/testing/standards.aspx>

ANNEX 6

POST-ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE

Quality RPL process and programs include specific feedback on assessment. Specific feedback provides information that helps individuals move toward to their next goal. For example, in the case of partial or unsuccessful assessment, candidates should be given specific information on the criteria they did not meet. Then they can prepare for re-assessment (by self-study, additional education, training or work assignments). Or they can choose an alternate path.

When individuals have successful assessment, they should be given details about their result and the form of recognition they will receive. Feedback on success helps candidates decide on their next steps towards their original goal or whether to choose an alternate path.

ANNEX 7

REVIEW AND EVALUATION

Quality assurance should be embedded into the RPL system in much the same way as with other quality management systems. It need to be developed as part of the process with specific criteria against which the program will be reviewed and evaluated. An RPL system with such embedded accountability will ensure that the integrity and quality of assessment are protected.

Monitoring and evaluation

Evaluation of RPL services is essential. Based on the concept of continuous improvement, there is need to review all organizational systems that relate to the provision of RPL services (e.g. communication, technology, assessor materials). When monitoring and review is built from the start, your organization makes sure that quality assurance is part of the whole RPL system. This will allow for the improvements to be scheduled and made according to identified priorities.

The following key components of ongoing monitoring and review, are also needed for long-term sustainability.Policies

- a) Procedures
- b) Tools
 - i. Information materials
 - ii. Forms for intake, guidance, preparation
 - iii. Assessment and follow up
- a) Resources
- b) Feedback from:
 - i. candidates using RPL;
 - ii. staff who provide functional services – RPL Practitioners;
 - iii. employers and industry; and
 - iv. collaborative partners.

RPL quality assurance self-audit checklist

How does your organization match up with Quality RPL Practices?

- i) **Employers:** the right mix of skills in your business will impact the product or service you provide. Human resource practices that use

quality RPL processes can help you to recruit, hire and keep skilled staff.

- ii) **Sector councils:** can use Quality RPL principles and practices to support industry in their search for qualified employees.
- iii) **Industry and professionals:** can use quality RPL processes to ensure that qualified candidates meet occupational standards and competencies. RPL can be efficient and effective for both organizations and individuals regarding transferability and recognition.
- iv) **Career counsellors and immigrant serving agencies:** can use these RPL principles and practices to guide candidates towards appropriate goals in ways that reduce unnecessary 'hoop jumping'.
- v) **Educational institutions and training organisations:** can use quality RPL practices to appropriately place learners in programs and eliminate duplication of learning.
- vi) **Government:** can use quality RPL principles to support policy development and guide funding proposals.
- vii) **Non-regulated professionals and industry:** can use quality RPL principles and practices to coordinate training or professional development of those who are currently working or seek to work in that occupation.

An RPL Quality Assurance Audit is an assessment of RPL services against minimum standards for implementing a quality RPL service. The RPL Quality Assurance Self-Audit Checklists will allow you to quickly align the RPL services your organization provides.

The following **RPL Quality Assurance Self-Audit Checklists** will help you get started.

- i) Guiding principles
- ii) six steps for quality RPL
- iii) Quality RPL systems

ANNEX 8

RPL QUALITY ASSURANCE GUIDING PRINCIPLES SELF-AUDIT CHECKLIST

- i) Read the questions in the Guiding Principle Column.
- ii) Check the appropriate response column for your organization – Yes / No / In process
- iii) Record, in the evidence column, an example of evidence that proves your organization’s status in response to the question. You may choose to use the evidence column to make any notes.
- iv) If a response to a question is truly ‘not applicable’ to your organization, then put N/A under the column. Remember to record a reason under the evidence column.

Blank lines have been included for you to customize the audit with your own questions or additional comments.

Guiding Principles	Yes	No	In Process	Notes / evidence
Accessible				
Does our process provide detailed information and advice for each step of the RPL process? Is that information freely available and online?				
Does our process include:				
Explanation of each fee?				
Timeline involved?				
Who conducts counselling and facilitation?				
Description of what assessment is?				
How assessment results are provided?				
Post-assessment guidance in the form of next steps?				
Education / training needed or recommendation of alternate career path?				
If employment is the ultimate goal, does our process provide information on job expectations?				
Do we provide online self-assessment to improve information and access? Include, if applicable, pre-migration information.				
Consistent				
Are our assessment results the same regardless of who the trained RPL Practitioners are?				
Does our process provide clear assessment criteria with accompanying scoring grids, charts or rubrics?				
Does our process provide a mechanism that both individuals and assessors can follow?				
Fair				
Does our process recognise that ‘same’ treatment is not necessarily ‘fair’ treatment?				
Does our process consider candidate’s unique circumstances?				

Have we ensured our RPL methods are not more onerous than methods used for program graduates, entry-to practice candidates or other candidates?				
Does our process ensure timeframes for assessment and any necessary re-assessment are consistent with any existing standards for currency of practice?				
Do we pro-rate registration fees and offer payment plans?				
If an exam is part of the assessment, is there more than one offering per year?				
Does our process allow for use of translators for some assessments?				
Respectful				
Do our processes ensure that candidates have equivalent opportunity to engage?				
Do our processes ensure that barriers are removed?				
Valid				
Does our process accept a variety of language assessments?				
Do we develop and use cross-cultural awareness and skills among RPL practitioners to ensure cultural competence?				
Do we use tools and processes that test what they are intended to test?				
Flexible				
Does our process provide applicants with more than one opportunity to demonstrate knowledge, skills and attitudes?				
Does our process consider information from a variety of sources, contexts and situations (i.e. professional references, letters of validation, performance reviews, demonstrations, self-assessment, artifacts, workshops, etc.)?				
Rigorous				
Are our RPL assessment tools and methods at an equivalent level to that of non-RPL individuals?				
Do the tools and methods evaluate stated competencies, standards and outcomes?				
Transparent				
Is our information written in plain language?				
Does our process fully inform applicants of how the assessment process works?				
Does our process provide applicants with details of their results, including learning gaps, differences and achievements?				
Does our process explain options to unsuccessful candidates?				
Professionally Supported				
Do we conduct regular review of RPL policies and procedures?				
Do we ask for the perspective of the candidates who use RPL?				
Do we ensure all staff involved with RPL practices receive initial and continuing training?				

Assessing your responses

By completing this self-audit checklist, you will have gained some information about quality RPL practices in Kenya. We suggest you look at the areas where you have answered 'No' and think about whether these are areas you would benefit from some changes or additions to your RPL practices. If you have answered 'Yes' or 'In Process' to some questions, you are doing well at some aspects of your RPL practices but could likely improve in others.

ANNEX 9

SIX STEPS FOR QUALITY RPL SELF-AUDIT CHECKLIST

- i) Read the questions in the six steps for quality RPL column.
- ii) Check the appropriate response column from your organization – Yes / No / In Process.
- iii) Consider and note the related Guiding Principle(s).
- iv) Record in the evidence column, an example of evidence that proves your organization’s status in response to the question. You may also choose to use the evidence column to make any notes.
- v) If a response to a question is truly ‘not applicable’ to your organization, then put N/A under the NO column. Remember to record a reason under the evidence column.
- vi) Blank lines have been included for you to customize the audit with your own audit questions or comments.

Six Steps for Quality RPL	Yes	No	In Process	Which Guiding Principle will be Considered here	Notes / evidence
i) Explain the RPL process – does our process:					
Provide clear information in both print and digital media?					
Clearly describe each step of the RPL process (e.g. costs, timelines, responsibilities)?					
Provide clear information on standards, competencies, job tasks or learning outcomes?					
Provide contact information?					
ii) Provide Information Expected Requirements – does our process:					
Provide for appropriate RPL Practitioner training?					
Provide advisory services to candidates?					
Assist in goal identification?					
Provide resources for self-reflection and self-assessment of learning and experiences?					
Assist in identification and articulation of learning compared to occupational standards, job descriptions, competencies, course of program learning outcomes or related goals?					
iii) Explain Assessment Processes, Methods and Criteria – does our process:					
Identify specific learning required for job, licensure, course or program?					
Provide a detailed self-assessment checklist to identify candidate learning equivalent to job competencies, licensure standards or course and program outcomes?					
Provide information to assist in identification of sources and strength of evidence of learning or how to prove learning to the required competencies, standards or outcomes?					

Provide specific information on documentation, evidence collection, skill demonstration, interview, examinations, cases studies, product samples expected?					
Provide knowledge and skill practices opportunities that simulate actual assessment situations?					
Provide networking contact opportunities with subject matter expert?					
Provide criteria as to how the evidence or proof will be assessed?					
Provide assistance to the individual to learn how to promote and present their knowledge, skills and abilities.					
v) iv) Conduct Assessment – does our process:					
Provide for appropriate assessor function training for RPL Assessors, subject matter experts, supervisors?					
Accommodate differences in learning and abilities?					
Assist in goal identification?					
Validate authenticity of evidence?					
Validate assessment results to ensure inter-rater reliability?					
vi) Provide Assessment Results – does our process:					
Provide a report that includes detailed constructive feedback on both success and areas where improvements are needed to the candidate?					
Notify the candidate of official assessment results?					
Provide successful results in the form of academic credit, license certification, job advancement or employment recommendation?					
Document successful RPL assessment results?					
Report unsuccessful results along with an explanation of incomplete evidence, learning differences or gaps that are still needed to meet criteria?					
vii) Provide Advice for Next Steps – does our process:					
Extend an offer to meet with the candidate after assessment to:					
Review outcomes of assessment?					
Identify new goals?					
Enroll in education, training, mentoring program, independent study or other process?					
Prepare for another assessment?					
Celebrate success?					

Assessing your responses

By completing this self-audit checklist, you will have gained some information about quality RPL practices in Kenya. We suggest you look at the areas where

you have answered 'No' and think about whether these are areas you would benefit from some changes or additions to your RPL practices. If you have answered 'Yes' or 'In Process' to some questions, you are doing well in some aspects of your RPL practices but could likely improve in others.

Industry leaders, regulatory bodies, immigrant serving agencies, career counsellors and others are increasingly aware on the Return on Investment (ROI), when helping adults achieve their goals for employment or education, faster and at a lower cost. These leaders recognise that the development to quality RPL systems can positively impact:

- i) economic development – which depends on a skilled workforce to attract employers to a community;
- ii) workforce development and skills supply which recognises the importance of skills in the employability of residents; and
- iii) education and training – which benefits by helping learners complete goals, having programs recognised in the community, opening new opportunities for lifelong learning.

ANNEX 10

QUALITY RPL SYSTEMS SELF-AUDIT CHECKLIST

- i) Read the questions in the six steps for quality RPL column.
- ii) Check the appropriate response column from your organization – Yes / No / In Process.
- iii) Consider and note the related Guiding Principle(s).
- iv) Record in the evidence column, an example of evidence that proves your organization’s status in response to the question. You may also choose to use the evidence column to make any notes.
- v) If a response to a question is truly ‘not applicable’ to your organization, then put N/A under the NO column. Remember to record a reason under the evidence column.
- vi) Blank lines have been included for you to customize the audit with your own audit questions or comments

RPL Quality System Consideration – do we?	Yes	No	In Process	Which Guiding Principle will be Considered here	Notes / evidence
Information for Individuals, Public, External Stakeholders, Internal Stakeholders					
Identify and explain time limitations?					
Explain the RPL process?					
Outline registration / application requirements?					
Explain withdrawals and refunds?					
Provide for appropriate RPL Practitioners training?					
Have a policy that allows additional time to complete?					
Define applicant support and counselling services?					
Explain the process and support available to help individuals identify their relevant learning?					
Explain assessment methods and options					
Systems and processes Development and Continuous Review					
Define responsibilities for the RPL Process – awareness, counselling and facilitation, assessment and certification, develop and make available policies and procedures on our process?					
Explain applicant / candidate rights and responsibilities.					
Develop and ensure awareness of required forms?					
Have an appeal process?					
Develop a record of achievement or transcript standard.					

Define data collection and reporting mechanisms?					
Set policies for privacy concerns and release of information to internal / external parties?					
Evaluate and continuously improve processes and practices?					
Management					
Support all those using RPL in their work?					
Ensure provision of training and professional development (in RPL assessment, counselling and facilitation and other areas as needed)?					
Provide data analysis regarding intake, process and results of individuals?					
Provide report of RPL interests, processes, results and challenges and opportunities to candidates, internal staff or external stakeholders as appropriate?					
Administration & Forms: Data Collection; Data Analysis; Reports					
Identify and develop required forms for process and reporting?					
Ensure filing and retention of candidate and composite information as required?					
Communication for Colleagues; Internal System, External Stakeholders					
Identify and explain RPL related roles and responsibilities of all colleagues?					
Identify and explain value of RPL with external stakeholders?					

Assessing your responses

By completing this self-audit checklist, you will have gained some information about quality RPL practices in Kenya. We suggest you look at the areas where you have answered 'No' and think about whether these are areas you would benefit from some changes or additions to your RPL practices. If you have answered 'Yes' or 'In Process' to some questions, you are doing well at some aspects of your RPL practices but could likely improve in others.

ANNEX 11

RPL QUALITY PROCEDURE CHECKLIST

- i) Read the questions in the six steps for quality RPL column.
- ii) Check the appropriate response column from your organization – ‘Yes’ / ‘No’ / ‘In Process’. Base this on your current RPL practice.
- iii) Consider and note the related Guiding Principle(s).
- iv) Record in the evidence column, an example of evidence that proves your organization’s status in response to the question. You may also choose to use the evidence column to make any notes.
- v) If a response to a question is truly ‘not applicable’ to your organization, then put ‘N/A’ under the ‘NO’ column. Remember to record a reason under the evidence column.
- vi) Blank lines have been included for you to customize the audit with your own audit questions or comments.

RPL Quality Procedure Consideration – do we?	Yes	No	In Process	Which Guiding Principle will be Considered here	Notes / evidence
Place RPL needs of the individual requesting RPL first?					
Emphasize acquired skills and abilities vs learning differences or gaps?					
Actively promote access?					
Provide flexibility & accommodation for all individuals regardless of gender, ethnicity, or disability?					
Provide clear information for RPL applicants and indicate that there are no guarantees of the recognition the applicant hopes for licensure, certification, advance credit or employment?					
Include clearly stated processes to conduct an appeal?					
Place value on all learning, regardless of where it was acquired?					
Consider relevant learning from all life experiences?					
Ensure that assessment processes and tools measure an individual’s knowledge, skills and attitudes against the set criteria?					
Allow for criteria and standards to be set with the involvement and approval of relevant stakeholders as necessary?					
Ensure inclusion of and access to clearly stated criteria (competencies, outcomes, standards) against which the applicant will be assessed?					

Allow for involvement of the applicant in making decisions?					
Provide information about assessment choices?					
Ensure that assessment tools and processes have been tested and found to be consistent over a period of time?					
Ensure assessment practices objectively focus on acquired knowledge, skills and judgment?					
Ensure that the processes result in recognition of valued learning?					
Objectively determine the degree to which the learning has application and makes this explicit to the applicant?					
Keep records of evidence that those performing RPL functions have received appropriate RPL training?					
Encourage involvement in the professional organizations that are developing RPL locally, provincially and nationally for continuous upgrading and insight?					
Allow for articulation agreements between education institutions intra-provincially and inter-provincially?					
Allow for national standards that form the basis for assessment criteria and make portability of recognition between organizations and jurisdictions possible?					

Assessing your responses

By completing this self-audit checklist, you will have gained some information about quality RPL practices in Kenya. We suggest you look at the areas where you have answered 'No' and think about whether these are areas you would benefit from some changes or additions to your RPL practices. If you have answered 'Yes' or 'In Process' to some questions, you are doing well at some aspects of your RPL practices but could likely improve in others.

APPENDIX 12

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

A major challenge for stakeholders is the vocabulary used in RPL across Kenya and around the world. One word may have different meaning for various groups. Plus, a variety of terms may be used to describe one idea.

This glossary helps readers to understand terms related to RPL, as used throughout this manual.

Academic Credential	A document that is evidence of learning based on completion of a program of study. Degrees, diplomas and certificates are examples of academic credentials.
Accreditation	Granting of official documents to confirm standards set by a professional authority have been met.
Accrediting Body	A designated authority legally entitled to accredit a program. Some accrediting bodies may be mandated by legislation or by regulatory bodies.
Advanced Standing	A student with successful RPL may be granted admission or placement in an academic course or program.
Apprenticeship	A workplace-based training program with classroom and workplace studies. It requires supervised on-the-job training, where the apprentice learns the knowledge, skills, tools, and materials of an occupation.
Assessment	
Candidate	A person who seeks recognition of prior learning (RPL). Depending on the sector or service, an organization may use other terms for this person, e.g. applicant, candidate, client, learner, employee.
Competency-based Assessment	A measure of an individual's ability to perform tasks according to an expected level or standard.
Continuous Improvement	Ongoing effort to improve products, services, or processes. Methods consider client needs and constantly evaluate for efficiency, effectiveness and flexibility.
Direct Evidence	See Primary Evidence.
Evaluation	A decision about how well an individual's learning and competencies meet an established standard.
Evidence	Documents provided to prove learning. Some examples include artifacts, examination results, skill demonstrations, and academic transcripts.
F A Q	Frequently Asked Questions.
Experiential Learning	Learning acquired through doing. Can be acquired in formal, informal, and non-formal education, work, and life experience.
Formal Learning	
Gap Filling	Learning differences or gaps may be identified during RPL. The person may meet most criteria but is missing some critical outcomes. Individuals may then "fill the gap" through study, work experience, mentorship, or coursework. An organization may then complete the individual's RPL after the new learning has been verified.
Indirect Evidence	See Secondary Evidence.

Informal Learning	
Inter-rater Reliability	Degree of agreement or consistency among raters or assessors who are using the same measurement criteria.
K S A	Knowledge, Skills and Abilities.
Learning Outcome	Statement that identifies what the learner will know and be able to do by the end of a course or program.
Licensure	A designation to legally practice in a particular profession or trade.
Life-long Learning	
Life-wide Learning	Learning comes from a variety of forms and situations. e.g. work, home, study, community, and personal activities.
Non-Formal Learning	Structured learning situations which do not have the level of curriculum, syllabus, accreditation and certification associated with formal learning.
Non-Regulated Occupation	A profession or trade that has no legal requirement or restrictions for practice. No certification is required.
Occupational Standard	The level for performance of tasks and knowledge to demonstrate competency in an occupation. These standards are set by a trade or profession. They may apply to organizations or individuals.
Portfolio	A paper-based or electronic collection of evidence that confirms an individual's knowledge, skills and abilities.
Primary Evidence	An artifact, a document, a recording, or other source of information produced by the individual. May also be known as Direct evidence E.g. journals, artwork, brochures, reports, products, skill demonstration, presentation, essays.
Profession	People engaged in a career or occupation. May be regulated and non-regulated.
Professional Association	A group of people who represent the interests of one occupation. Membership is voluntary and based on qualifications to practice the occupation.
Qualification	Skills and knowledge required for entry into an occupation, an educational program, or to practise a profession.
Qualifications Framework	Shows the outcomes and criteria expected for specific sectors in education or professions. It is a single, comprehensive document. The framework is used to coordinate and compare qualifications across labour markets and related organizations.
Quality	Has the trait of high grade or excellence.
Quality Assurance (QA)	A system for ensuring that acceptable standards are met in the development and delivery of processes, information, and services. QA methods seek continuous improvement.
Recognition	Formal acceptance of an individual's credentials or learning from work experience. Academic recognition is the granting of full or partial credit, or may allow admission to a program. Occupational recognition validates competency and may grant entry to a trade, profession or job.
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	RPL encompasses acknowledgement, assessment and certification of previously unrecognised skills and knowledge a candidate has achieved outside the formal education and training system. Further, RPL considers a person's prior skills and experiences, no matter where these were learnt.
Regulated Occupation	An occupation controlled by government and managed by a regulatory body. About 20 % of jobs are in regulated occupations. These include regulated professions (e.g. nursing) and skilled trades (e.g. plumbing).
Regulatory Body	An organization with the legal authority to issue licences to practise an occupation. Regulatory bodies set the minimum standards of practice for many professions.
Secondary Evidence	An artifact, a document, a recording, or other source of information produced about the individual). May also be known as Indirect evidence. E.g. transcript, letter of verification, newsletter articles.

ANNEX 13

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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Advanced Standing	A student with successful RPL may be granted admission or placement in an academic course or program.
Apprenticeship	A workplace-based training program with classroom and workplace studies. It requires supervised on-the-job training, where the apprentice learns the knowledge, skills, tools, and materials of an occupation.
Assessment	
Candidate	A person who seeks recognition of prior learning (RPL). Depending on the sector or service, an organization may use other terms for this person, e.g. applicant, candidate, client, learner, employee.
Competency-based Assessment	A measure of an individual's ability to perform tasks according to an expected level or standard.
Continuous Improvement	Ongoing effort to improve products, services, or processes. Methods consider client needs and constantly evaluate for efficiency, effectiveness and flexibility.
Direct Evidence	See Primary Evidence.
Evaluation	A decision about how well an individual's learning and competencies meet an established standard.
Evidence	Documents provided to prove learning. Some examples include artifacts, examination results, skill demonstrations, and academic transcripts.
F A Q	Frequently Asked Questions.
Experiential Learning	Learning acquired through doing. Can be acquired in formal, informal, and non-formal education, work, and life experience.
Formal Learning	

Gap Filling	Learning differences or gaps may be identified during RPL. The person may meet most criteria but is missing some critical outcomes. Individuals may then “fill the gap” through study, work experience, mentorship, or coursework. An organization may then complete the individual’s RPL after the new learning has been verified.
Indirect Evidence	See Secondary Evidence.
Informal Learning	
Inter-rater Reliability	Degree of agreement or consistency among raters or assessors who are using the same measurement criteria.
K S A	Knowledge, Skills and Abilities.
Learning Outcome	Statement that identifies what the learner will know and be able to do by the end of a course or program.
Licensure	A designation to legally practice in a particular profession or trade.
Life-long Learning	
Life-wide Learning	Learning comes from a variety of forms and situations. e.g. work, home, study, community, and personal activities.
Non-Formal Learning	Structured learning situations which do not have the level of curriculum, syllabus, accreditation and certification associated with formal learning.
Non-Regulated Occupation	A profession or trade that has no legal requirement or restrictions for practice. No certification is required.
Occupational Standard	The level for performance of tasks and knowledge to demonstrate competency in an occupation. These standards are set by a trade or profession. They may apply to organizations or individuals.
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Primary Evidence	An artifact, a document, a recording, or other source of information produced by the individual. May also be known as Direct evidence E.g. journals, artwork, brochures, reports, products, skill demonstration, presentation, essays.
Profession	People engaged in a career or occupation. May be regulated and non-regulated.
Professional Association	A group of people who represent the interests of one occupation. Membership is voluntary and based on qualifications to practice the occupation.
Qualification	Skills and knowledge required for entry into an occupation, an educational program, or to practise a profession.
Qualifications Framework	Shows the outcomes and criteria expected for specific sectors in education or professions. It is a single, comprehensive document. The framework is used to coordinate and compare qualifications across labour markets and related organizations.
Quality	Has the trait of high grade or excellence.
Quality Assurance (QA)	A system for ensuring that acceptable standards are met in the development and delivery of processes, information, and services. QA methods seek continuous improvement.

Recognition	Formal acceptance of an individual’s credentials or learning from work experience. Academic recognition is the granting of full or partial credit, or may allow admission to a program. Occupational recognition validates competency and may grant entry to a trade, profession or job.
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	RPL encompasses acknowledgement, assessment and certification of previously unrecognised skills and knowledge a candidate has achieved outside the formal education and training system. Further, RPL considers a person’s prior skills and experiences, no matter where these were learnt.
Regulated Occupation	An occupation controlled by government and managed by a regulatory body. About 20 % of jobs are in regulated occupations. These include regulated professions (e.g. nursing) and skilled trades (e.g. plumbing).
Regulatory Body	An organization with the legal authority to issue licences to practise an occupation. Regulatory bodies set the minimum standards of practice for many professions.
Secondary Evidence	An artifact, a document, a recording, or other source of information produced about the individual). May also be known as Indirect evidence. E.g. transcript, letter of verification, newsletter articles.
Sector Council	A committee from business, labour, education, and other occupational groups within an industry. Representatives work together to identify what is needed for success in the labour market.
Stakeholders	Individuals, groups, or organizations, or groups who can affect, or are affected by, RPL systems, policies or procedures. They may be internal or external to the situation.
Substantial Difference	The difference between a foreign qualification and a Canadian qualification that is so significant it can prevent someone from succeeding in education, research or employment. An international agreement called The Lisbon Recognition Convention requires: “Foreign qualifications shall be recognised unless there is a substantial difference between the foreign qualification, for which recognition is sought, and the corresponding qualification of the host country”. http://www.eurorecognition.eu/emanual/Chapter%2010/introduction.aspx)
Substantial Equivalence	Implies reasonable confidence that individuals possess the academic background needed to enter a program of study or to apply for licensure.
Trade	An occupation that requires one or more years of learning: at a college or university, in apprenticeship, training on-the-job, or a combination of these requirements. A licence or certificate may be required to practise the trade.
Verification	Organizations confirm if an individual’s academic credentials are authentic. There are also central agencies that are authorized to verify credentials.



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