

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) POLICY FRAMEWORK IN KENYA



1st Edition

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy Framework in Kenya



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	v
PREFACE	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	viii
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS.....	x
DEFINITION OF TERMS	xi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Situational Analysis	2
1.3 Rationale	3
1.4 Legal Framework.....	3
1.5 Scope	4
1.6 Vision	5
1.7 Mission	5
1.8 Objectives	5
CHAPTER TWO: GUIDING PRINCIPLES.....	7
2.1 National Values	7
2.2 RPL Policy Statement.....	7
2.3 Benefits of the RPL Process in Kenya	8
CHAPTER THREE: POLICY PROVISIONS.....	11
3.1 Regulatory Framework	11
3.2 Institutional Framework for RPL.....	12
3.3 Stakeholder Ownership and Commitment	12
3.4 Quality Assurance and Evaluation System	13

3.5 Assessment Tools and Methodologies	14
3.6 Exemptions, Recognitions and Transfer of Credit Points	14
3.7 Financing and Sustainability	15
3.8 Collaboration, Partnerships and Linkages	16
3.9 Awareness Creation and Publicity Campaign	16
CHAPTER FOUR: INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT	17
4.1 Responsibilities of RPL Actors.....	19
CHAPTER FIVE: PROCESS OF RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) AND CREDIT POINTS	30
5.1 The RPL Process.....	30
5.2 Credit Transfer and Harmonization	30
5.3 Awareness and Publicity Campaigns	31
5.4 Counselling and Facilitation	31
5.5 Assessment and Certification	33
5.6 Nature of Evidence in RPL.....	33
5.7 Skills Gap Training.....	34
5.8 Assessment Tools and Methods in RPL.....	34
5.9 Rules of Evidence	35
5.10 Quality Assurance of the RPL	35
5.11 RPL Appeal Procedures.....	36
5.12 Complaints and Appeals	36
5.13 Fees and Charges for RPL.....	37

CHAPTER SIX: POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW	38
6.1 Implementation Arrangements	38
6.2 Policy Review	39
REFERENCES	40
RPL REGISTRATION/APPLICATION FORM	41
MEMBERS OF THE RPL TECHNICAL COMMITTEE	43

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Institutional Arrangement.....	19
Figure 2: RPL System in Kenya.....	32
Figure 3: RPL Appeal Procedure.....	36

FOREWORD



The Kenyan higher education sector has been regarded as a front runner within the East African region and indeed the rest of Africa. This is mostly so because the country has led in developing and implementing policies, standards and procedures for the management of accreditation of institutions, qualifications and Quality Assurance in the region. Currently, the Republic of Kenya is one of very few Countries in the region that has a fully-fledged national qualifications framework that brings together the Basic Education (BE), Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and University Education (UE) Sectors; in order to better coordinate and harmonize qualifications across the various sectors in this Country.

This Country, like elsewhere in Africa, has a large informal sector whose integration into the national development agenda has not been very well articulated. This policy on prior learning seeks to bring into the national database numerous skills, knowledge and competencies that are currently contributing to national development but have not been very well understood, articulated and documented. This policy is seeking to develop and implement a more flexible, efficient learner journey in recognition that not all learning takes place in formal classes and formal laboratories. As part of its mandate to supervise the development of policies on qualifications in Kenya, the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) is therefore taking the lead in developing a policy for recognizing prior learning within Kenya.

The KNQA is leading a team of like-minded institutions especially in the TVET sector to ensure that the country not only

produces this policy but that there are also standards (developed by TVETA), and assessment guides (developed by various assessment and examination bodies, already accredited by the KNQA) to fully implement this important aspect of our education system. The KNQA will continue to consult with a wide range of stakeholders to review and refine these instruments so that the country can get maximum benefits from skills that exist within the *Jua Kali* and other informal sectors of our economy.

I am delighted that, as a result of large-scale consultations, the country is now ready to roll out this policy for RPL. This represents a major milestone in the management of qualifications recognized and awarded in Kenya and opens doors for innovation and massification of education while maintaining quality. The policy opens new doors for more flexible pathways through any curriculum thus enabling greater participation in higher education by learners from a wide range of backgrounds. One hopes that this resource will also assist the higher education sector in continuing to drive RPL forward, enhancing policy and practice through critical reflection, development and collaboration. I would like to thank the KNQA for spearheading this important process in our country.

Prof. George Magoha, CBS

Cabinet Secretary

Ministry of Education, Kenya.

PREFACE



The Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) Act 22 of 2014 mandates the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) to coordinate and supervise the development of policies on national qualifications in consultation with key Stakeholders.

This Policy on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) seeks to acknowledge, with credit, learning outcomes achieved through a range of experiences including informal and non-formal learning, such as employer-provided training and assessment. A tailor-made Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (CATS) will be developed to facilitate determination of credits assignable to non-formal or informal learning acquired through productive work or life experiences.

The RPL Policy, standards and guidelines being developed for the country will provide candidates and learners with a fair and accessible process of evaluation, assessment, documentation and recognition of their acquired skills, knowledge and competencies. This policy sets forth the framework for establishing a process that acknowledges the skills, knowledge, performance outcomes and learning achieved prior to undertaking a program of study through formal, informal and non-formal learning pathways.

It is envisaged that the development of this policy will greatly contribute to improved employability, job mobility, lifelong learning, social inclusivity, self-esteem and increased productivity in Kenya.

Dr. Julius Ouma Jwan, MBS

Principal Secretary

State Department for Vocational and Technical Training
Ministry of Education, Kenya.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The RPL Process in Kenya



The structure of the colonial education system left many Kenyans with large gaps in their education, training and development, leading to inequality of opportunities, illiteracy and unemployment. Despite our concerted efforts to address these inequalities since independence in 1963, skills development outcomes in Kenya have not matched with market needs. It is because of this realization that during the enactment of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework Act No. 22 of 2014, one of the functions that were identified for the KNQA was to *“provide pathways that support the development and maintenance of flexible access to qualifications”*.

This is because, all over the world, it is now recognized that learning does not take place in the classroom alone. This RPL policy recognizes the fact that people who work in formal, informal, non-formal and even *jua kali* sectors gain knowledge, skills, expertise and attributes through practice, and should have the opportunity for the recognition of their acquired knowledge and skills against exit level outcomes as set out in the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF). This policy provides that RPL applicants can approach any training college in the country and apply for recognition of their skills. The TVETA has provided standards in line with this policy on how colleges will manage the process of RPL registration, and preparation of candidates. Any assessment and/or examination body accredited by the KNQA as set out in section 5 (1) of the KNQF act can carry out RPL assessment according to regulations and standards

set out by the KNQA and TVETA and resultant certificates registered within the KNQF, according to existing KNQF levels. Such certificates so issued will permit the learner to pursue careers in learning or even use RPL certificates to seek employment.

I wish to acknowledge the role played by the RPL Technical Team led by Stanley Maindi, Deputy Director Planning, Research, Outreach and Policy in the conceptualization and development of this Policy. I also take cognizance of all stakeholders who participated in providing their input to make this document better.

This RPL process will be used as a means to redress the inequalities of the past, 'facilitating mobility, progression and access within education, training and development career paths. To this end, I call upon all Kenyans from all walks of life to take advantage of this new initiative for recognition of their qualifications.

Dr. Juma Mukhwana, PhD, HSC

Director General/ CEO

Kenya National Qualifications Authority.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
CAT	Credit Accumulation and Transfer
CDACC	Curriculum Development Assessments and Certification Council
CUE	Council for University Education
EAC	East African Community
EQAs	External Quality Assurance Agencies
ESQAC	The Education Standards Quality Assurance Council
EU	European Union
ILO	International Labour Organization
FMRATQ	Framework on Mutual Recognition of Academic and TVET Qualifications
ILC	International Labour Conference
KNQA	Kenya National Qualifications Authority
KNQF	Kenya National Qualifications Framework
KNEC	Kenya National Examination Council
KASNEB	Kenya Accountants and Secretaries National Examinations Board
LLL	Lifelong Learning
MDAs	Ministries, Departments, Agencies and SAGAs
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MIS	Management Information System
NVQF	National Vocational Qualification Framework
NITA	National Industrial Training Authority
NLRD	National Learners' Records Database
PLAR	Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition
PSRBs	Professional Statutory & Regulatory Bodies
QCF	Qualifications and Credit Framework
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RTP	Registered Training Providers
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
RVCC	Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competencies
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TVETA	Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority
CDACC	Curriculum Development and Certification Council
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Advanced standing means the status granted to a learner for admission to studies at a higher level than the learner's prior formal studies would have allowed, including exemption where applicable.

Credit Accumulation and Transfer system (CATs) means an arrangement whereby the diverse features of both credit accumulation and credit transfer are combined to facilitate lifelong learning and access to the workplace.

Credit accumulation means the totalling of credits required to complete a qualification or part qualification.

Credit is a unit of academic measurement of educational value.

Credit transfer means the vertical, horizontal or diagonal relocation of credits towards a qualification or part qualification in the same or different levels, programmes, departments or institutions.

Formal learning means learning that occurs in an organized and structured education and training environment and that is explicitly designated as such. Formal learning leads to the awarding of a qualification or part qualification registered on the KNQF.

Informal learning means learning that results from daily activities related to paid or unpaid work, family or community life, or leisure, mainly involving incidental learning.

Kenya National Qualifications Framework means the framework developed by the Authority in accordance with section 8 of the Act.

Learning programme means a purposeful and formally structured set of learning activities and experiences that collectively lead to a targeted qualification.

Lifelong learning means learning that takes place in all contexts of life: from a life-wide, life-deep and lifelong perspectives. It includes learning behaviours and obtaining knowledge, understanding, attitudes, values and competencies for personal growth, social and economic well-being, democratic citizenship, cultural identity and employability.

Non-formal learning means planned educational interventions that are not consciously intended to lead to award of a full or partial or any qualification.

Part qualification means the award of credit(s) for an assessed unit of learning as a module of employable skills sets that form part of cumulative credits of a registered qualification awardable after completing all the units of learning in a course/programme type or level.

Partial qualification means part qualification.

Portfolio means a guided collection of objects and pictures and written testimonials duly prepared by an RPL candidate as evidence in support of his or her application for RPL assessment or issuance of a partial or full qualification.

Professional body means a body or regulated experts or practitioners in an occupational field and may include a roll of members of an association or society.

Professional designation means a title or status conferred by a professional body in recognition of a person's expertise and right to practice in an occupational field using a certain rank.

Qualification is a registered national qualification within the meaning of the Act.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), also known as Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR), 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.

Resourcing of RPL means the direct and indirect mobilization of physical, infrastructural, human and financial capacity needed to build, mainstream and maintain a sustainable RPL system at both the National and County Government Levels.

RPL practitioner means a person that functions in one or more aspects of RPL provision, including policy development, advisory, portfolio building, skill course design and facilitation, assessment and moderation of RPL through administration, monitoring and evaluation and research and development.

Skills Development Provider means an institution or other entity that offers a learning programme that leads to a qualification or part qualification registered on the KNQF.

The Act means the Kenya National Qualifications Framework Act, No. 22 of 2014

Work experience means activities undertaken in the workplace, where the acquisition of skills, knowledge and attitudes are related to routine tasks, processes and outcomes of a particular occupation.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policy in Kenya is critical to the development of a responsive and equitable education and training system that facilitates access, mobility, progression and fair chances to the disadvantaged, discouraged and traditionally marginalized groups. The policy aims to recognize all persons who have acquired competency through informal and non-formal settings. The policy will therefore target different categories of individuals, learners or potential candidates in the society seeking access to certification and recognition of their competencies regardless of one's educational background, age, status in society, disability, race, religion or nationality.

Kenya has a youthful population with 75.1 % below 35 years of age (KNBS 2019). Some of these have acquired skills through apprenticeships, Jua Kali sectors, through training and most have perfected their skill but lack certification or recognition of their competences.

Kenya's socio-economic growth largely depends upon the effectiveness and quality of the country's Human Resources Development (HRD) system. The Vision 2030 and the Big 4 Agenda place great emphasis on the link between education and training and the labour market to develop relevant and skilled workforce. These efforts notwithstanding, the country still faces a severe shortage of quality and relevantly skilled workforce. This is due to the mismatch between skills produced and labour market needs. However, demographic trends indicate the existence of many unrecognized skilled persons who acquired

competencies through informal and non-formal means but cannot be certified to practice. Formal education and training faces challenges in resolving emerging issues due to the nature of its rigid systems and broad scope of courses while work-places are increasingly changing towards highly specialized, narrow skills for work.

To address these challenges, Kenya needs innovative and effective policies and programmes that will produce more quality and relevantly skilled workers. There is also need for formal recognition of re-skilling and up-skilling amongst an already existing workforce. It is therefore timely for the KNQF to recognize and support certification of skills, including prior learning and previous experience, irrespective of which learning settings or in what country the skills were acquired. This is in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which have set targets for skill acquisition for employability, decent jobs and promotion of entrepreneurship skills.

1.2 Situational Analysis

In Kenya, the National Industrial Training Authority (NITA) has been implementing some level of RPL assessment since 1959. The scope covered certain local and overseas training schemes for artisan trade tests, craft and technician certificate courses, identified leadership courses and various apprenticeships for workers already engaged in Industry. Industrial education and training has traditionally occurred at levels 2, 3 and 4 of the current Kenya National Qualification Framework (KNQF). However, this initiative is unable to address the increasing demand by many Kenyans that require recognition or certification for either upskilling or certification for recognition of learning acquired, informally, non-formally, experientially or

formally. This has remained an impediment to the development and utilization of human capital.

1.3 Rationale

Learning is an individual's life in Kenya and most developing countries, is majorly through non-formal and informal means, whether at work, at home, or elsewhere. However, the current formal education system in Kenya is not geared to recognizing skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning, hence an impediment to the development and utilization of human capital. The broad RPL policy for Kenya recognizes learning acquired, informally, non-formally, experientially or formally, and gives it currency as measured through laid down descriptors in the KNQF. The policy seeks to recognize informal education and training undertaken within the country regardless of how the learning was achieved.

This is done by relating informal training, life experience and work experience to a set of clearly defined workplace outcomes. The purpose of this is to allow the applicant access upskilling opportunities in formal set ups, especially candidates who have previously been denied access to formal training opportunities by the current system; or have been unable to prove formal education because of other challenges.

The RPL therefore aims at mitigating barriers and establishing functional and credible systems for recognition of knowledge, skills and competences. This will act as a vehicle for lifelong learning with support systems that promote integrity and quality.

1.4 Legal Framework

This RPL policy is anchored on the following legal Frameworks:

- i. International Labour Organization (ILO) recommendations

- (No 195) on the importance of recognizing skills, prior learning and previous experiences irrespective of the countries where they are acquired;
- ii. Section 8 (1) (a), (c) and (k) of the KNQF Act no.22 of 2014 which mandates the Authority to co-ordinate and supervise the development of policies on national qualifications, develop a system for assessment of national qualifications and provide for the recognition of attainment or competencies including skills, knowledge, attitudes and values;
 - iii. **Technical and Vocational, Education and Training (TVET) Act No 29 of 2013** that is mandated to set Standards for the implementation of the Policy;
 - iv. **Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2019:** on Realizing Quality, Relevant and Inclusive Education and Training for Sustainable Development;
 - v. **Sustainable Development Goal No. 4** on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all;
 - vi. **Continental Education Strategy for Africa** (CESA 2016-25), a strategic framework aiming at achieving a prosperous and peaceful Africa.

1.5 Scope

This RPL Policy provides for the role of KNQA in coordinating the development of RPL policies and practices across all sub-Sectors of the KNQF, in collaboration with Regulators, Registered Training Providers (RTPs), QAIs, skills development providers, workplace, managers of skill assessment sites, recognized

professional bodies, employer and employee organizations, volunteers, other RPL practitioners and learners.

This Policy applies to:

- a) Regulators, education institutions and skills development providers, workplaces, recognised professional bodies, RPL practitioners and RPL candidates;
- b) All qualifications, part qualifications and professional designations registered on the KNQF.

1.6 Vision

A globally recognized and competitive Education and Training system for Promotion of Lifelong Learning.

1.7 Mission

To establish and implement RPL system aimed at promoting Lifelong Learning for improved employability, mobility and self-esteem.

1.8 Objectives

Provide a framework for recognition of all competencies gained on the job or as a result of informal or unstructured learning experiences.

The specific objectives are to:

- i. Enable the national coordination of RPL that will focus on research, support, awareness and publicity, advocacy and the mainstreaming of RPL in the Kenyan Education and Training System;
- ii. Enable potential candidates to attain appropriate recognition of the knowledge and skills required for personal development and the employment market;
- iii. Guide the development and implementation of RPL

- policy, including its resourcing, effective delivery and quality assurance;
- iv. Provide the basis for national guidelines and priorities for implementing RPL, and for effective monitoring and evaluation of the practices against these priorities;
 - v. Support expanded engagements in RPL by Government agencies, employers and employees' organizations, public and private providers, and RPL practitioners and other stakeholders across all the education and training sectors in Kenya;
 - vi. Meet the global standards for achieving inclusive and equitable education to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all for sustainable development.

CHAPTER TWO

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This policy will be guided by the following principles:

2.1 National Values

The RPL Policy will be guided by the National Values and Principles of Governance as stipulated in Article 10 of the Constitution of Kenya as follows;

i) Confidentiality

All information regarding RPL Assessment of an individual will be treated with confidentiality. Assessors shall have the responsibility to maintain and respect confidentiality.

ii) Non- Discrimination

All applicants for Recognition of Prior Learning shall access all services without discrimination.

iii) Inclusivity and Participation

This principle acknowledges the role of participation of all stakeholders and consultation in promoting RPL process

iv) Collaboration

The Kenya National Qualifications Authority will coordinate and seek partnerships and collaboration with all actors offering RPL services.

v) Sustainability

The Kenya National Qualifications Authority will promote RPL through multi-sectoral collaboration to ensure sustainability.

2.2 RPL Policy Statement

This Policy Framework is committed to providing all RPL candidates and potential candidates with a fair and accessible

process for recognition of their respective prior learning. The process acknowledges the skills, knowledge, performance outcomes and learning achieved outside the formal education and training system such as employer-provided training, learning and assessment pathways (Credit Transfer) and informal or experiential learning.

2.3 Benefits of the RPL Process in Kenya

a). Benefits to the candidate

- i. Personal development by gaining credits towards a qualification;
- ii. Progression into learning programmes;
- iii. Seeking admission into colleges;
- iv. Employment, promotion and a salary enhancement in an organization;
- v. Changing a career path;
- vi. Necessity to abide by a new regulation to conserve employment;
- vii. Promotes self-esteem of students.

b). Training Institutions Participating in RPL

- i. Widen access to a broader range of learners;
- ii. Support transitions and inform student choice;
- iii. Support meaningful partnerships with employers and the community;
- iv. Provides more flexible entry routes at different levels;
- v. Support career development planning, employability skills and graduate attributes and lifelong learning.

c). Benefits to Employers and Professional Bodies

- i. Increased employee retention;
- ii. Reduce recruitment and training costs;
- iii. Support workforce development planning and targeting of training/ continuing professional development;
- iv. Aid in recruitment and career advancement decisions;
- v. Increase the motivation of employees and career advancement decisions;
- vi. Increase the motivation of employees and enhance workplace/ professional practice;
- vii. Support legislative requirements for a qualified workforce;
- viii. Plan for upskilling of labour force.

d). Benefits to National and County Governments

- i. Address the needs of all types of learners, especially the marginalized and asylum seekers;
- ii. Support economic growth and the workforce development agenda;
- iii. Support social inclusion; lifelong learning and widening participation;
- iv. Support creative use of the KNQF in developing flexible, efficient learning pathways;
- v. Promote learning and personal and professional development as an inherent part of the business activity of employers;
- vi. Enhance collaboration between sectors;

- vii. Inform the government on skill inventory for future planning.

e). Expected outputs from RPL

This RPL Policy shall therefore be used to achieve the following:

- i. **Accessibility:** Provides an alternative access route into a qualification or part qualification for those who do not have the formal requirements for admission to accredited education institution, Skills Development provider or workplace-based training provider;
- ii. **For credit:** Provides for the formal award of credits for, or towards a qualification or part-qualification registered on the KNQF.

CHAPTER THREE

POLICY PROVISIONS

3.1 Regulatory Framework

3.1.1 Policy Statement

KNQA shall ensure that RPL system is an integral part of a country's national policies on education and training, employment, poverty reduction, development and migration.

3.1.2 Strategies

- i. Define the RPL Scope/Sub- Frameworks to cover;
- ii. Integrate RPL policy in Legal &Regulatory frameworks for education and training in Kenya;
- iii. Entrench RPL in the national employment policy, and make it a priority in education and training policy;
- iv. Integrate RPL into existing KNQF policies and strategies for recognition of skills and qualifications;
- v. Explore what sectoral approaches would be relevant (allowing a sector to design its own RPL process);
- vi. Integrate RPL into relevant sectoral, economic and development policy, including migration policy;
- vii. Match occupational and qualification standards;
- viii. Synchronize national regulation with regional and global regulation if needed.

3.2 Institutional Framework for RPL

3.2.1 Policy Statement

KNQA shall promote collaboration with stakeholders and Institutions carrying out RPL and build their capacity to promote the quality of RPL processes.

3.2.2 Strategies

- i. Define the role of RPL Actors;
- ii. Assess the capacity of the existing RPL Actors;
- iii. Build capacity of RPL professionals;
- iv. Build and strengthen the capacity of existing institutions;
- v. Set up exclusive RPL units within the institutions;
- vi. Develop KNQA RPL Management Information System (MIS) and link it with National Education Management Information System (NEMIS);
- vii. Establish inter departmental committees to coordinate inter-sectoral RPL activities.

3.3 Stakeholder Ownership and Commitment

3.3.1 Policy Statement

KNQA shall establish a coordination mechanism to ensure active participation of all stakeholders.

3.3.2 Strategies

- i. Identify & build awareness and publicity of RPL system;
- ii. Support tri-partite RPL cooperation and collaboration;
- iii. Establish RPL stakeholder's database;

- iv. Establish intergovernmental forum(s) for both the County and National Government on administration and management of RPL processes;
- v. Build capacity of all stakeholders on RPL;
- vi. Establish collaboration, linkages and partnerships on RPL and evaluation of the implementation of the RPL system.

3.4 Quality Assurance and Evaluation System

3.4.1 Policy Statement

Qualifications shall be in modular and competency-based, with clearly defined standards or learning outcomes. The KNQA in collaboration with industry and other stakeholders shall develop national occupational standards for RPL.

3.4.2 Strategies

- i. Develop modules for occupational standards depending on the qualification;
- ii. Design assessment methodologies around profiles of applicants that are likely to use the system, including those from disadvantaged groups;
- iii. Establish sectoral standardized RPL processes and methods;
- iv. Conduct an oversight to ascertain the quality of assessment;
- v. Develop continuous RPL training programme for professionals;
- vi. Develop an RPL administrative and management information system;
- vii. Establish an M&E system to regularly revise RPL

processes and methods.

3.5 Assessment Tools and Methodologies

3.5.1 Policy Statement

KNQA shall ensure appropriate tools are developed depending on the qualification assessed for certification. The assessment shall uphold integrity and credible evidence for certification.

3.5.2 Strategies

- i. Develop assessment tools;
- ii. Combine the portfolio method with a trade test;
- iii. Provide upskilling opportunities for RPL candidates;
- iv. Develop and disseminate case studies and assessment tools used in successful RPL programmes;
- v. Develop a test bank (i.e. set of random questions) to be used by RPL assessors as and when required, according to demand. The tests can be administered orally or written;
- vi. Use of ICT for e-RPL or say, “e-portfolio” providing extensive support to candidates.

3.6 Exemptions, Recognitions and Transfer of Credit Points

3.6.1 Policy Statement

Exemptions and Recognitions shall be either in terms of named courses or a specified number of credits. Learners shall transfer their credit points from one programme to another or from one accepting institution to another. RPL shall be used for access into a program when the specified prerequisites of a formal course of education have not been undertaken.

3.6.2 Strategies

- i. Submit transcripts from previous program areas;
- ii. Specify credit for designated units or competencies; or
- iii. Award credit on the basis of a combination of credit transfer plus an individual RPL assessment of work and life experience;
- iv. Determine appropriate evidence to support the claim of prior learning.

3.7 Financing and Sustainability

3.7.1 Policy Statement

KNQA shall promote resource mobilization for sustainable and successful implementation of RPL.

3.7.2 Strategies

- i. Conduct cost-benefit analysis to define the scope of the RPL system;
- ii. Establish a sustainable cost-sharing Funding model;
- iii. Standardize assessment fees for prior learning as appropriate in comparison/ relation to a full-time module or full learning programme;
- iv. Establish guidelines on chargeable fees for training, examinations, assessment and certification for RPL;
- v. Develop a resource mobilization strategy to make RPL affordable;
- vi. Enhance partnerships and collaborations with key stakeholders;
- vii. Ensure inclusivity by establishing subsidies for applicants from disadvantaged groups.

3.8 Collaboration, Partnerships and Linkages

3.8.1 Policy Statement

KNQA shall promote partnerships collaboration and linkages with all actors and stakeholders in the provision and support of RPL in Kenya.

3.8.2 Strategies

- i. Promote multi-sectorial linkages and collaboration, including with County Governments;
- ii. Promote intra and inter-regional cooperation and cross-border collaboration in the provision of recognition and certification.

3.9 Awareness Creation and Publicity Campaign

3.9.1 Policy Statement

KNQA shall promote countrywide awareness and publicity campaigns.

3.9.2 Strategies

- i. Dissemination of the policy to all the stakeholders;
- ii. Setting up RPL structures at the regional and the grassroots level;
- iii. Training human resource (Initiators, Facilitators, Assessors, Verifiers, Moderators);
- iv. Organize Campaigns to popularize the RPL among the public;
- v. RPL piloting;
- vi. National Roll out of RPL.

CHAPTER FOUR

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT

Kenya is in the process of establishing a sustainable institutional arrangement on delivery of assessment, certification and recognition of the RPL. The arrangement is a collaborative state- and stakeholder- driven approach through which the interests and needs of RPL Actors will be realized.

The arrangement shall comprise:

i. Ministry of Education and Other Line Ministries

These will be charged with the responsibility of developing the overarching national policies for the coordination, funding and clarification of roles and responsibilities for education and training. The Ministerial RPL Policy is a strategic national policy that is designed to:

- a. Provide for the roles of key stakeholders, coordination and funding of RPL;
- b. Strengthen enabling policy environment for the implementation of RPL across the entire system for education, training, development and work;
- c. Provide a high-level framework for RPL implementation.

ii. The Kenya National Qualifications Authority

KNQA will oversee national coordination of RPL, through RPL Policy and guidelines aligned to the Ministerial RPL Policy. The KNQA shall constitute RPL Sub-committees to advise the Council and contribute to improved national coordination of RPL activities and practices.

iii. TVET Funding Board

TVET Board will be responsible for the funding and resourcing of RPL. The board will develop and implement sustainable mechanisms for funding RPL in the country.

iv. Education and Training Institutions and Skill Providers

These include; Public and Private Universities, National Polytechnics, Technical Vocational Colleges, Vocational Training Colleges and other training providers accredited by the relevant regulators as assessment and certification centers.

v. Regulatory Bodies

They will be charged with the responsibility of overseeing their respective sectors. These include accreditation of assessment centers, supervision and certification of RPL process.

vi. Qualification Awarding Institutions (QAI)

Are accredited by the KNQA to award qualification standards in Kenya. These include; KNEC, TVET CDACC, KASNEB, NITA among others. Only qualification registered by the KNQA will be assessed under the RPL process.

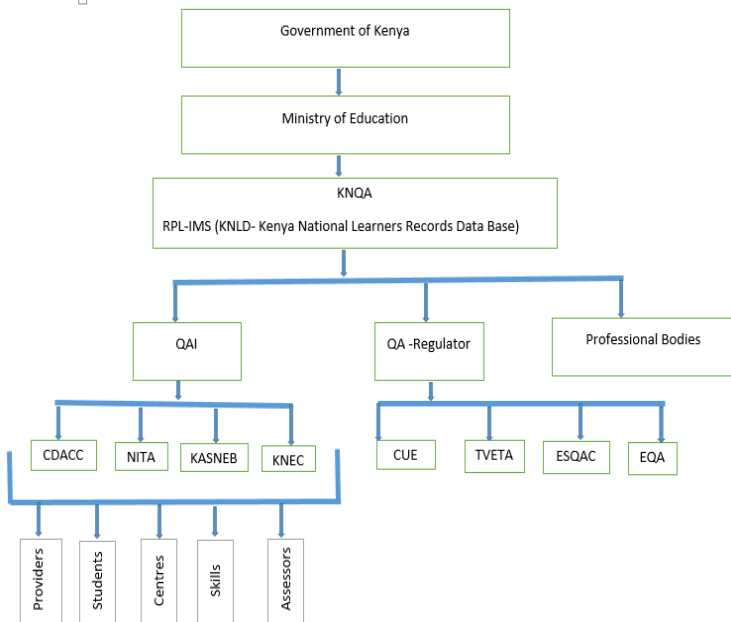


Figure 1: Institutional Arrangement

4.1 Responsibilities of RPL Actors

4.1.1 Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies

Kenya has many Professional bodies which include: Engineers Board of Kenya, Institute of certified public accountants, Institute of Human Resource Management, Kenya Medical practitioner and Dentist Board, Institution of Engineers of Kenya, Media Council of Kenya, Marketing Society of Kenya, Kenya Institute of Supplies Management, Law Society of Kenya.

These are recognised by the KNQA for developing and implementing quality qualification standards for the country. These will prepare applicants for assessment and application for RPL (where the law permits).

4.1.2 The Kenya National Qualification Authority (KNQA)

The Constitution of Kenya 2010 obligates the government of Kenya to ensure that no Kenyan shall lack access to education and decent living among others. This is set out in the Bill of Rights Chapter 10 and article 62 sub article (1) which guarantees the right of every person to education and training. Education and training are important because they grant qualification to learners of which leads to employment and hence decent living as indicated in the bill of rights. The KNQA was established under the Kenya National Qualification Framework Act No. 22 of 2014 to establish standards for recognizing qualification obtained in Kenya and outside Kenya. The functions of the authority are set out in section 8 sub-section 1 of the Act and include among others the following:

- i. Coordinate and supervise the development of policies on national qualifications;
- ii. Develop a system for assessment of national qualifications;
- iii. Set standards and benchmarks for qualifications and competencies including skills, knowledge, attitudes and values;
- iv. Provide for the recognition of attainment or competencies including skills, knowledge, attitudes and values;
- v. Establish standards for harmonization and recognition of national and foreign qualifications;

Pursuant to the functions, KNQA shall perform the following roles:

- i. Develop and review the national policy and criteria for RPL in consultation with the relevant stakeholders;

- ii. Coordinating and monitoring the RPL process, creating awareness of the RPL process to potential candidates through the use of leaflets, printed and digital media and the website;
- iii. Recognition and Accreditation of QAIs and registering of the qualifications that they award and the requirements of KNQA. All qualifications that will be assessed for RPL must be registered by the KNQA;
- iv. Collaborating with QAIs, to recognize qualifications or part qualifications obtained through RPL process;
- v. Overseeing the national coordination of RPL, including RPL-related research as required for further implementation and development of the KNQF, professionalization of RPL practices and practitioners, strategic management of RPL projects, support and advice, monitoring and evaluation, and advocacy and marketing of RPL.

4.1.3 The Regulators

These include TVETA, CUE, ESQAC and (EQA) established by various Acts of Parliament to play a role in accrediting training institutions and programs. In Kenya EQAs are both training as well as enforcing compliance with the standards set in the National Institutions and assuring the quality Qualification Framework. In this regard, each regulator in consultation with relevant stakeholders shall undertake to perform the following roles:

- i. Accredite Training providers to participate in RPL, train and build their capacity
- ii. Develop, standards and guidelines on RPL for training institutions, taking into account the relevant national

- KNQA policies;
- iii. Collaborate with KNQA, the education sector and QAIs and professional bodies to advance the development of RPL in Kenya;
 - iv. Support and monitor the training of RPL advisors, facilitators, assessors, moderators, and administrators;
 - v. Monitor providers that offer RPL in their sectors, in accordance with criteria established for this purpose;
 - vi. Ensure consistency in the application of RPL policies by providers and delegated bodies in their sectors (where relevant);
 - vii. Support the coordinated development of generic RPL toolkits and instruments relevant to the particular context for their sectors, wherever appropriate and possible;
 - viii. Monitor the RPL admission rates of providers and make this information public in an appropriate format, while maintaining the strictest confidentiality with respect to individual candidates and individual institutions;
 - ix. Ensure that no distinction, other than for data analysis, is made between qualifications awarded through conventional and RPL routes;
 - x. Develop and maintain an information management system that is compatible with the National Learners Records Database (NLRD) and other relevant government information management systems, and submit the relevant data to KNQA;
 - xi. Conduct and oversee RPL-related research in their respective Sub-sector in collaboration with KNQA;
 - xii. Monitor and evaluate the implementation of RPL within

training institutions that they oversee to ensure that the process meets National Standards. The following information shall guide the M&E process:

- a) Data on numbers of candidates who enrolled, dropped-out, appeared in the assessment and passed the RPL;
- b) Candidates' views about RPL processes
- c) Views of successful candidates about career progression, improvements in performance, self-esteem, and remunerations and ease of access to further education;
- d) Employers' views as to improvements in performance at work;
- e) Views from higher education institutions about the performance of students entering through the RPL route versus the formal pathway;
- f) Those stakeholders who are interested or disinterested in RPL and why;
- g) Views of assessors concerning the RPL process;
- h) Regulators will file annual returns of their findings in the KNQA RPL MIS.

4.1.4 Education Training Institutions and Skills Development Providers

These are institutions and organizations accredited by relevant regulators to undertake RPL process. They therefore require to:

- i. Seek accreditation by the relevant Qualification Awarding institutions;
- ii. Seek accreditation from TVETA for the institution and QS that they want to facilitate in RPL;
- iii. Prepare and counsel applicants who want to enrol and

- participate in RPL;
- iv. Progressively develop and enhance the capacity to implement RPL in accordance with this policy and the specific RPL guidelines of the Sub-framework(s) within which their qualifications are offered;
 - v. Collaborate with KNQA and the Qualification Awarding institutions to advance the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of RPL;
 - vi. Ensure and enforce that they have the necessary staff capacity to deliver quality RPL services and programmes;
 - vii. Ensure effective planning and funding for RPL administrative and logistical systems to support all programmes and services;
 - viii. Put systems and procedures in place to incentivize and support the registration and continuing professional development of RPL practitioners;
 - ix. Provide advice, counselling and support after RPL processes;
 - x. Establish an appeal process for RPL candidates to engage with RPL-related judgements;
 - xi. Ensure an equitable fee structure for all RPL programmes and services including those programmes and services that involve the assessment of experiential learning for credit against existing formal qualifications or part qualifications;
 - xii. Develop an information management system that meets the requirements of the relevant Quality Council, the NLRD, and other relevant government information management systems.

4.1.5 Qualification Awarding Institutions

Various acts of Parliament have established certain institutions and agencies to award qualifications and issue certificates to qualified candidates. Some of these include; KNEC for Basic education, TVET CDACC, KMTC Board, KASNEB and NITA among others. In Kenya Universities are authorized to award qualifications and issue certificates in accordance with the university Act no.42 of 2012

All private and public Qualification Awarding institutions awarding full and/ or partial qualifications shall be required to comply with KNQA policies and guidelines.

Each agency or institution awarding qualifications or issuing certificates will undertake to perform the following roles;

- i. Apply for accreditation by KNQA;
- ii. Accredite RPL assessment centres;
- iii. Coordinate RPL process in the respective assessment centres;
- iv. Ensure that Qualifications that they assess are registered in the KNQF;
- v. Shall submit lists of all RPL graduates to the KNQA;
- vi. Shall abide by the policies and standards set by the KNQA.

4.1.6 Recognized Professional Bodies

Recognized Professional bodies undertake the following roles:

- i. Comply with the national KNQA Policy and Criteria for the Recognition of Professional Bodies and the Registration of Professional Qualifications;
- ii. Include an RPL route as an integral requirement for attainments of its professional Qualifications as stipulated

in the KNQA Policy and Criteria for the Recognition of Professional Bodies and the Registration of Professional Qualifications;

- iii. Collaborate with KNQA, the Regulators and the relevant providers to promote and advance quality RPL provisioning in the sector;
- iv. Progressively develop and enhance its capacity to initiate and support RPL provision in accordance with this policy;
- v. Adhere to the requirements set out in this policy and as determined by the relevant bodies and governance structures, including Regulators, a workplace and a professional body;
- vi. Meet professional requirements, including the participation in continuing professional development activities, to be developed by the community of RPL practitioners, relevant bodies and governance structures through the national coordination of RPL as set out in this policy.

4.1.7 RPL Candidates

The target group for RPL candidature will be drawn from informal and non-formal sectors and includes persons who would wish to acquire a qualification, upskill to get a higher qualification or migrate to a different job or increase productivity in their self-employment. Candidates will apply for and be prepared and counselled to be assessed in Qualifications accredited recommended by the KNQA. They will be required to prepare a profile of themselves and their work and be certified by QAIs.

4.1.7.1 RPL Responsibility of Candidates

- i. Shall identify his/her prior learning needs and show that it matches the learning outcomes for the desired qualification;
- ii. Candidates shall apply for recognition of prior learning by completing their profile and products in the RPL MIS;
- iii. Accept co-responsibility as an equal partner in the RPL process;
- iv. Expect to be treated without unfair discrimination;
- v. Respect the processes and procedures of institutions and workplaces.

4.1.8 RPL Initiator/ Advisor

QAIs shall appoint an Initiator/ Advisor (in charge of Assessment Centre) and guides/advises candidates on the RPL process. The role of the initiator/ Advisor shall be to meet with the applicant to ascertain the following:

- i. Validity and the level of award of certificate for the possibility of credit transfer;
- ii. Completeness and comprehensiveness of the applicant's portfolio;
- iii. Relevance of documentation of experience and prior learning obtained;
- iv. Specific requirements of the applicant (for example special needs, disabilities or learning difficulties);
- v. Pre-evaluate the applicant's portfolio and make recommendations to the QAIs for the acceptance or rejection of the application.

4.1.9 RPL Coordinator

QAIs shall appoint an RPL process team headed by a coordinator for overseeing the entire RPL process including:

- i. To consider the recommendations of the initiators on acceptance or rejection of the application;
- ii. Review and validate the elements of the portfolio against set criteria;
- iii. Make recommendations to the QAIs for the acceptance or rejection of the application;
- iv. Identify the unit standards used and to be used for the RPL process;
- v. Evaluate the scope of RPL process;
- vi. Evaluate the certificate attained if applicable against unit standards of the qualification;
- vii. Nominate and assign at least two and at most four assessors registered by KNQA and/or by the relevant professional bodies where necessary;
- viii. Draw up a list of candidates to be assessed for each competency in the qualification for which the prior learning is sought;
- ix. Identify assessment centres with relevant facilities and resources for each candidate;
- x. Set a date for assessment of each candidate in accordance with QAI calendar;
- xi. Appoint assessors and moderators to carry out assessment and moderation at each centre;
- xii. Advise the QAIs on major issues that need resolution.

4.1.10 RPL Assessor

RPL Assessor shall be appointed by QAIs to:

- i. Determine the criteria for entry or learning outcomes that have to be met for specific credit;
- ii. Assess the evidence against the criteria defined;
- iii. Confirm the outcome of the assessment made;
- iv. Report findings and recommendations to the QAI which shall in turn make annual returns to the KNQA through the coordinator.

4.1.11 RPL Moderator/ Verifier

RPL Moderator/ Verifier shall be appointed by QAIs. The role of the moderator is to:

- i. Verify the assessment to establish fairness and equity in the process;
- ii. Ensure that academic and administrative activities are followed and implemented according to the policy;
- iii. Ensure that assessor's decisions are uniform in interpreting and applying the standards set out in the qualification specification;
- iv. Report findings and recommendations to the QAIs through the coordinator.

CHAPTER FIVE

PROCESS OF RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) AND CREDIT POINTS

5.1 The RPL Process

The RPL processes in Kenya will be simplified and will heavily rely on ICT to facilitate entry adoption and use. In Kenya the process will have two core processes:

- i. Facilitating inclusive counselling of candidates;
- ii. Assessment extending to release of the results;

These core processes will be supported by awareness and publicity, quality assurance, appeals and skills gap training mechanisms. This policy proposes the flowchart depicted here under Figure 2 for the RPL process as validated by qualifications sector stakeholders in Kenya.

5.2 Credit Transfer and Harmonization

To be awarded a qualification on KNQF a candidate must accumulate a certain number of credit points. Provisionally, one credit point represents 10 notion hours of learning in class, practical lesson or self-study.

The number of credits assigned depends on the number of hours per unit of learning. Full accumulation of all the credit points of each qualification is the factor that will demonstrate satisfactory completion of a course/programme. This factor is also what will be used to determine equivalencies between the qualifications of the same type and level.

5.3 Awareness and Publicity Campaigns

This process will build awareness and interest about RPL in potential candidates, employers, and other stakeholders. The Kenya National Qualifications Authority and other stakeholders will play a key role in publicizing RPL, its benefits, whom to contact, as well as the process, estimated costs, timeframe, eligibility requirements and assistance available. The publicity and awareness building will take place on different platforms, including websites, social networking, information sessions at workplaces and educational institutions, fairs, and the media.

5.4 Counselling and Facilitation

During this process, candidates interested in the RPL will obtain detailed information and orientation from facilitators appointed by an RPL QAIs and facilitating institutions. Candidates will upload their profile on an online system, including their portfolio. The facilitators will assess candidates' suitability for a specific qualification (full or part), provide the necessary information about learning outcomes and competency standards required for the qualification and the nature of evidence required. The candidate will obtain an application form and documents detailing the RPL process and its requirements. The RPL facilitators and information received should help a candidate in deciding whether to apply for RPL and for which qualification and at what level.

The figure below demonstrates the RPL process.

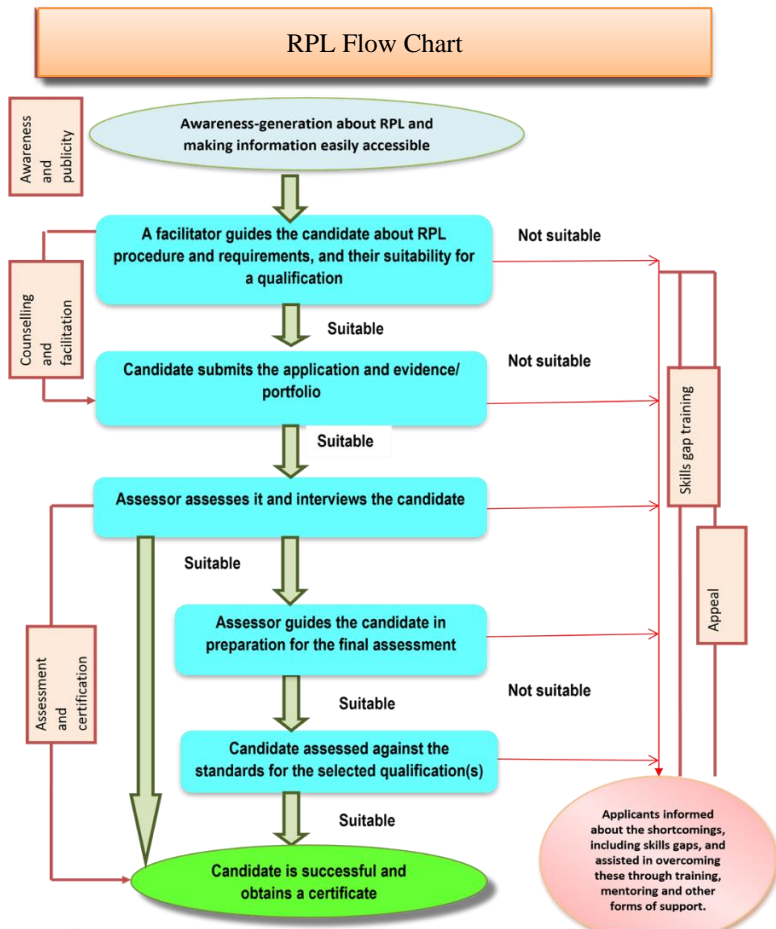


Figure 2: RPL System in Kenya

5.5 Assessment and Certification

This is a key RPL process and involves the following steps:

- i. Application screening;
- ii. Guidance of the candidate by an assessor in building evidence and portfolio;
- iii. Assessment;
- iv. Award of certificate;
- v. Registering the certificate into the KNQF;

First, the candidate's application will be sent to an assessor, who screens the application and the evidence. Thereafter, the assessor will interview the candidate and, if required, guides him or her on how to improve the evidence. Once the assessor is satisfied, the candidate will be advised as to the nature of final assessment (test). If the assessor is not satisfied, the candidate will be told of the shortcomings and advised on how to overcome (for example, collecting additional evidence or upgrading the knowledge and skills). The objective of assessment is not only to award a qualification but also to steer candidates' personal and professional progress, and to provide them with the tools to do that. The portfolio method which will be used in this process will use a collection of evidence prepared by candidates in support of their claim of meeting the requisite skills and competencies of a formal qualification to assess an RPL candidate.

5.6 Nature of Evidence in RPL

The nature of evidence recommended includes certificates and awards

- i. Letters of recommendation where applicable;
- ii. Sample(s) of candidate's work and products;

- iii. Videos and/or photographs of work activities;
- iv. Skills logbooks;
- v. Details of formal training, records of seminars, conferences and workshops attended; resume and performance appraisals;
- vi. Testimonials from current or previous employers and customers;
- vii. Job descriptions.

5.7 Skills Gap Training

It is the provision for skills upgrading programmes so that candidates can fill skills gaps and meet desired standards. This shall be done using mediation tools to assist learners in navigating from workplace learning to academic knowledge. It shall be applied where the candidate portfolio fails to meet the set criteria.

5.8 Assessment Tools and Methods in RPL

The assessment tools and methods should be:

- i. Valid (assesses the desired competencies);
- ii. Reliable and consistent (various assessors using the same assessment tools and methods will arrive at similar scores/results);
- iii. Transparent (all candidates, assessors and moderators being aware, and in advance, of each tool, each method and each standard to be applied during RPL assessment);
- iv. Equitable and flexible (candidates' special needs being considered – suitable time, place and method of assessment being selected in conjunction with each type and nature of the need);

- v. Manageable and achievable (the assessment should be possible within the time and resources available);
- vi. Fair (allowing for appeal within the RPL process itself).

5.9 Rules of Evidence

Moreover, evidence-gathering will need to comply with the rules of evidence, which require it to be:

- i. Valid (covers key competences of a qualification);
- ii. Enough (allows assessors to make decisions on the level of competency);
- iii. Current (contemporary in terms of “age” and spread in the productive industry);
- iv. Authentic (examples of the candidate’s own work).

5.10 Quality Assurance of the RPL

To ensure the credibility and consistency of RPL certification, regulators (such as TVETA, CUE, ESQAC) and the KNQA will specify the quality assurance mechanisms. These shall include:

- i. Establishing common standards
- ii. Ensuring the availability of competent RPL practitioners
- iii. Collaborating with employers’ and workers’ organizations and other relevant stakeholders
- iv. Developing assessment tools and methodologies
- v. Accrediting RPL centres
- vi. Moderating assessments
- vii. Monitoring and evaluation frameworks
- viii. Independent auditing of the entire RPL process:
 - a) Disseminating results and getting feedback
 - b) Organizing conferences to deliberate on the policy

5.11 RPL Appeal Procedures

This policy prescribes a simple appeal process whereby candidates will ask for a review of the decision(s) made at any stage of the RPL process as depicted here under.

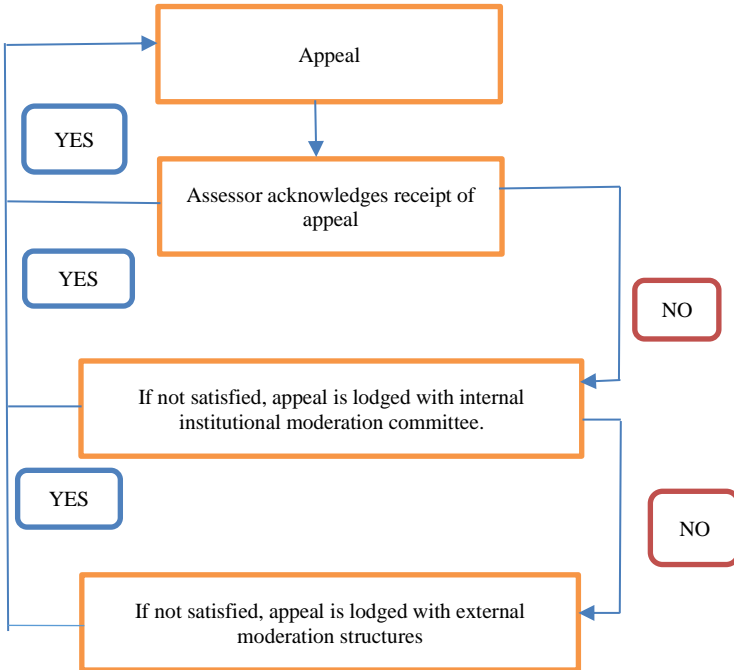


Figure 3: RPL Appeal Procedure

5.12 Complaints and Appeals

- i. A candidate will have a right to know that this procedure shall be followed in the event of a complaint or need for appeal arising
- ii. The QAIs shall be handling complaints and appeals arising from the RPL process as the need arises.

- iii. Complaints about the RPL and assessment process by candidates or any stakeholder shall be lodged within three months and concluded within three months from the date of receipt by QAIs or an authorized agent of QAIs.

5.13 Fees and Charges for RPL

The cost of RPL is based on the needs of the Candidate and the number of units of competency for which they are seeking recognition. As such, the cost will vary from application to application. The Qualification Awarding Institutions (QAIs) in conjunction with stakeholders shall develop a differentiated Unit cost of Assessment to inform the total cost payable for an RPL application and advise the Candidate before proceeding with the RPL assessment process. The fees chargeable will ensure sustainability of the RPL process and shall cover charges for KNQA, QAIs, Regulators and Assessment Centres.

CHAPTER SIX

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

6.1 Implementation Arrangements

The purpose of the RPL Policy is to provide for the implementation of RPL within the context of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) Act no. 22 of 2014.

The policy focuses on recognizing learning acquired, informally, non-formally, experientially and formally. The aim is to promote Lifelong Learning for improved employability, mobility and self-esteem. The implementation of this policy is tailored on a multi sectoral approach involving various education sub-sectors, line ministries, Agencies, partners, professional bodies and Regulators.

The above listed Actors will be responsible for co-ordination, supervision, assessment, Certification and Resource mobilization.

The implementation of the policy will include:

- i. Development of RPL Strategy;
- ii. Dissemination of the policy to all the stakeholders;
- iii. Setting up RPL structures at the regional and the grassroots level;
- iv. Training human resource (Initiators, Facilitators, Assessors, Verifiers, Moderators);
- v. RPL piloting;
- vi. National Roll out of RPL.

The policy shall be integrated in the Legal &Regulatory frameworks for education and training in Kenya. KNQA will

coordinate and manage the National RPL Process in collaboration with key stakeholders.

6.2 Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed after five (5) years or as the need arises following predetermined guidelines. This RPL Policy Framework comes into effect on the date of its publication in the Government Gazette

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RPL REGISTRATION/APPLICATION FORM

APPLICATION FOR RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)

APPLICATION NO: RPL851-F01

Please write in BLOCK LETTERS.

PERSONAL DETAILS:

I AM APPLYING AS A:(tick appropriate box)

- NEW STUDENT (NEW APPLICANT)
- CURRENTLY ENROLLED STUDENT
- INTERNATIONAL ONSHORE STUDENT

NAME OF INST.										
FIRST NAME		FAMILY NAME								
STUDENT ID		MOBILE NO.								
EMAIL										

COURSE DETAILS:

COURSE TITLE	
COURSE CODE	

CLAIM FOR RPL

OTHER LEARNING – (e.g. Paid Work)

Includes non-formal learning and experience that relates to the unit(s) of competency for which recognition is being sought.

Please attach a statement linking your experience to the unit/s concerned. Only include information that is relevant to this application.

MEMBERS OF THE RPL TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Stanley Maindi	Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA)
Emis Njeru	National Council for Nomadic Education in Kenya
Peter Njiru	The National Industrial Training Authority (NITA)
Dr. Koki Muli	The National Industrial Training Authority (NITA)
Edward Mburu	Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority
Prof Mellitus Wanyama	Kabarak University
Evelyn Anupi	Ministry of Education
David Gatimu	TVET Curriculum Development, Assessment & Certification Council
Samuel Wanyonyi	Private Sector
Alfrick Biegon	Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA)

TECHNICAL ADVISOR

Dr. Juma Mukhwana
Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA)

KNQF Level	General and Further Education and Training Sub-Framework		Notional hours (minimum)
10	Doctorate Degree		3600 after KNQA level 9
9	Master's degree		2400 after KNQA level 7
8	Post-Graduate Diploma	Professional Bachelor's Degree	Professional Master Craft Person 1200 after KNQA level 7 or 6000 after KNQA level 2
7	Bachelor's Degree		Master Crafts Person –I or Management Professional or HND or CPA III 4800 after KNQA 2 or 2400 after KNQA level 6
6		National Diploma	Master Crafts Person –II/ Professional Diploma or CPA II 2400 after level 2 or 1200 after KNQA level 5
5		National Craft Certificate National Vocational Certificate-IV	Master Craft Person III or CPA I 1200 after KNQA level 2 or 600 after level 4
4		National Vocational Certificate- III/Artisan Certificate	National Skills Certificate –I GTT-1 600 after KNQA level 2 or 300 after level 3
3		National Vocational Certificate-II	National Skills Certificate -II /GTT – II) 300 after KNQA level 2
2	Secondary Certificate	National Vocational Certificate- I	National Skills Certificate -III /Government Trade Test (GTT-III) Depending to skills acquisition or Level 1
1	Primary Certificate		Basic Skills/Skills for Life Birth Certificate

For more information, please contact:

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