

AGRICULTURAL TRAINING INSTITUTES RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) POLICY

DIRECTORATE: SECTORAL COLLEGES



agriculture,
forestry & fisheries

Department:
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1. INTRODUCTION

Historically, Higher Education institutions gave access to an elite few, focusing mainly on school leavers with good matric passes (*viz* exemptions). In light of the access and admission policies guidelines, laid down by SAQA, the use of the matriculation pass may only be used as a guideline and not a reason for refusal of admission into a learning programme. Hence, the need arises for the recognition of relevant prior learning as a tool for access into the Agricultural Training institutess (ATIs).

2. PURPOSE

Although access is the primary objective for the RPL Policy the following objectives are important:

- 2.1 To assess the competencies (skills and knowledge) that a candidate may have in place enabling him/her to enter the higher education sector, despite not meeting the formal entrance requirements of the institution.
- 2.2 To assess the competencies (skills and knowledge) that a candidate may have in place enabling him/her to enter into a learning programme at a NQF level higher than the qualification already obtained by the candidate, *i.e.* Diploma in Agriculture.
- 2.3 To assess the competencies (skills and knowledge) that a candidate may have in place so that he/she may be awarded credits for any part of a learning programme that he/she is to enter at the institution.
- 2.4 To assess the competencies (skills and knowledge) that a candidate may have in place so that he/she may obtain course exemption for credits obtained from another institution.

3. ABBREVIATIONS

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|-----|------|-----------------------------------|
| 3.1 | ATIs | Agricultural Training institutess |
| 3.2 | NQF | National Qualifications Framework |
| 3.3 | RPL | Recognition of Prior Learning |

4. PROCEDURES

In order to achieve the objectives of the RPL policy, procedures for the objective appraisal of RPL submissions must be implemented. Steps in the procedure are as follows.

- 4.1 A written request for RPL must be submitted in writing to the Head of Academics (i.e. Vice-Principal: Academic Affairs).
- 4.2 A meeting with relevant staff and the Head of Academics will be arranged to assess the potential for RPL success.
- 4.3 If the possibility of success is high, an assessment plan is agreed on with the candidate (i.e. forms of assessment, as well as a proposed date and venue for assessment).
- 4.4 The request will be submitted to Agricultural Training institutess RPL committee who will appoint an assessor(s).
- 4.5 The competencies of candidates will be assessed according to the following criteria:
 - 4.1.1 **Relevance** or applicability of learning experiences to objectives of the institution's programme.
 - 4.1.2 **Validity:** Is there a sound relationship between the prior learning and the requirements of the institutions programme?
 - 4.1.3 **Quality:** Is the prior learning at an acceptable level – does it conform to the outcomes of the institution's programme?
 - 4.1.4 **Transferability:** Can the learner interpret what he/she has learnt and transfer/apply it to other situations?
 - 4.1.5 Can the claimed prior learning be **verified by authentic and relevant documentation/evidence (portfolio)?**
 - 4.1.6 Is the prior learning still **valid and applicable?**
5. Further evidence may be required by the assessors and must be provided by the candidate.
6. If the RPL process is unsuccessful, the candidate may appeal to the Principal of ATI, who will forward it to an independent assessor, as appointed by the ATI.

5. FORMS OF RPL

The following forms of RPL may be used (not exclusive):

- 5.1 Assessment Instruments (Challenge examination)
- 5.2 Portfolio of Evidence
- 5.3 Interview (oral)
- 5.4 Recognition of formal learning at another Institution

6. RULES AND PRINCIPLES

The following rules/principles apply:

- 6.1 To obtain course exemption, 80% of the syllabus or curriculum will have to be covered.
- 6.2 To obtain a qualification from ATI at least 50% of credits have to be obtained at ATI through the normal learning process (refer to 4 below).
- 6.3 Credits awarded are only valid for 5 years, after which the credits will be forfeited if the candidate has not completed at least another 120 credits towards the qualification through the normal learning process.
- 6.4 Any credits obtained through the RPL process may not be acknowledged at another Institution.
- 6.5 ATIs will not issue qualifications on RPL alone, but may give access to the qualification, *e.g.* a person may gain direct access into the Diploma in Agriculture, but the candidate will not be issued with a Higher Certificate in Agriculture (refer to 1 above).
- 6.6 The applicable fee must be paid prior to any assessment being conducted.