MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
STATE DEPARTMENT
FOR VOCATIONAL AND
TECHNICAL TRAINING

Recognition of Prior Learning
Guide for Regulatory Bodies
2021

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CUE	Commission for University Education
ILC	International Labour Conference
KNQA	Kenya National Qualifications Authority
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
NITA	National Industrial Training Authority
NLRD	National Learners' Records Database
PSRB	Professional Statutory & Regulatory Body
QA	Quality Assurance
QAIs	Qualification Awarding Institutions
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TVETA	Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) developed the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy Framework in Kenya and Guidelines for its implementation in 2020. To launch RPL in Kenya, the Authority developed guides for use in the execution of RPL. The guides were developed based on international best practice; consultation and collaboration with organisations like International Labour Organization (ILO), Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan) and International Rescue Committee (IRC).

This guide builds on the strengths of the existing policy, implementation guidelines as well as RPL Standards and is designed to help regulatory bodies in implementing good quality assurance practices. The guide aims to facilitate and enhance the recognition of knowledge, skills and competencies by steering the application of standards and guidelines in RPL Assessment, to help in the development of adequate internal Quality Assurance (QA) mechanisms that fit international best practice. It also enhances adherence to policies, processes, and assessment practices that maximise individuals' opportunities to demonstrate relevant knowledge, skills and competencies fully and accurately.

1.1 What is Recognition of Prior learning?

RPL is the process used to identify, assess and certify a candidate's competencies regardless of when, where and how they were acquired against prescribed standards or learning outcomes.

1.2 Benefits of RPL to Candidates

RPL helps individual learners to:

a) ease the transition from informal and non-formal to formal learning by enabling the learners to value their achievements and to recognise the importance of their learning through experience; and

b) plan for further learning and personal/ career development.

1.3 Benefits of RPL to Employers

RPL can support training and staff development strategies of employers by:

a) having their competencies recognised and certified, hence increased motivation and interest in workplace practice on the part of the employee/learner;

b) improving links between employers and training, education and QAIs;

c) improving employee retention; and

d) preventing duplication of training.

1.4 Benefits of RPL to the Country

RPL can benefit the Country in the following ways.

a) Improved policy decisions.
b) Certified skilled workforce.
c) Enhanced democracy and citizenship.
d) Optimisation on the use of human capital.

1.5 Benefits of RPL to Regulators

a) Meeting policy and regulatory needs.
b) Promotion of access and equity.

2.0 WHO IS A REGULATORY BODY IN THE CONTEXT OF RPL?

A regulatory body is an organization established by various Acts of Parliament shall enhance and ensure quality assurance in the RPL process in line with KNQF to play a role in accrediting Training Institutions, Assessment Centres and Programs. They also enforce compliance with the standards set in the RPL Assessment Centres and assure the quality of the entire RPL Process. Regulatory bodies also set the minimum standards of practice for many professions from the RPL system.

2.1 Who can offer RPL services?

RPL services in Kenya can be offered by education and training providers, industry, regulatory and licensing bodies, immigrant-serving agencies, professional organizations, employers, employment and career counsellors, and a wide range of other organizations.

2.2 Who can qualify to be RPL regulatory body?

a) Organizations established by an Act of Parliament to regulate education and training (External Quality Assurance Agencies (EQA)):
  - Commission for University Education (CUE) - for University education.
  - Educational Standards and Quality Assurance Council (ESQAC) - for Basic Education.
  - Technical and Vocational Education Training Authority (TVETA) - for TVET training.
  - National Industrial Training Authority (NITA) - for Industrial Sector.
  - National Polytechnics

b) A professional body/ Association which regulates an industry or profession.

2.3 Roles of regulatory bodies

Regulatory bodies in consultation with relevant stakeholders shall undertake to perform the following roles.

a) Accredit training service providers to participate in RPL, train and build their capacity.

b) License, register and accredit programmes, institutions and trainers.

c) Develop standards and guidelines on RPL for assessment centres, taking into account the relevant national regulations.

d) Collaborate with KNQA, the education sector, QAIs and other professional bodies to advance the development of RPL in Kenya.

e) Support and monitor the training of RPL advisors, facilitators, assessors, moderators, and administrators.

f) Monitor providers that offer RPL in their sectors, in accordance with the criteria established for this purpose.

g) Ensure consistency in the application of RPL policies by providers and delegated bodies in their sectors (where relevant).

h) Support the coordinated development of generic RPL toolkits and instruments relevant to the particular context for their sectors, wherever appropriate and possible.

i) 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.

j) Ensure that no distinction, other than for data analysis, is made between qualifications awarded through conventional and RPL routes.

k) Integrate internal information management system to RPL IMS and National Learners Records Database (KNLRD) and other relevant government information management systems, and submit the relevant data to KNQA.

l) Conduct and oversee RPL-related research in their respective Sub-sector in collaboration with KNQA.

m) Assure quality and relevance in programmes of training among other functions.

3.0 PROFESSIONAL BODIES/ ASSOCIATIONS

A Professional Body / Association is an organisation with individual members practicing a profession or occupation in which the organisation maintains an oversight of the knowledge, skills, conduct and practice of that profession or occupation.

3.1 What are the roles of professional bodies/associations?

a) Set standards for professional competencies heavily focused on protecting the public interest.

b) Provide courses on specific areas of expertise.

c) Mandate and provide compulsory professional development.

d) Publish a professional journal and conduct research.

e) Facilitate fellowship among members.

f) Lobby to influence legislative and administrative functions.

4.0 QUALITY IN RPL

Quality is a standard of how good something is as measured against similar things. Quality in RPL refers to the establishment of and adherence to policies, processes, and assessment practices that maximise individuals' opportunities to demonstrate relevant knowledge, skills and competencies fully and accurately regardless of how and where it was acquired.

4.1 Quality Assurance in RPL

Quality Assurance of RPL Systems and Services is a planned and systematic review operation of the entire RPL process and system. The goal is to ensure that acceptable standards are being met and aims for continuous improvement of an RPL system that offers quality and integrity to the labour market.
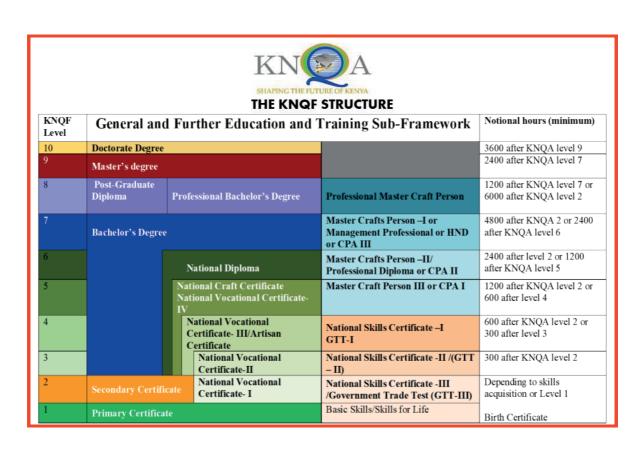
4.2 What are the guiding principles for quality RPL practice?

These nine principles are meant to be referenced as a collective approach to practice, and not to be used as stand-alone principles. Accessible processes provide information, advice and access by being:

Guiding Principle	
a) Accessible: processes provide information, advise and access by being:	i. Responsive to applicant questions. ii. Cost-efficient for both applicant and organisation. iii. Timely in both frequency of assessment and gap filling options. iv. Adult learner-centred, voluntary, available and inclusive of all abilities and differences .
b) Consistent	i. Decision makers (RPL Practitioners, Co-ordinator and Verifier) work together to be consistent with criteria, training, tools, procedures and outcomes. ii. Definitions must be agreed across sectors to allow for transferability.
c) Fair	i. Processes are unbiased and recognise a wide range of ways people learn. Therefore, applicants are allowed optional ways to learn. ii. An appeal mechanism is provided. iii. Policies and procedures of the organisation align with RPL principles.
d) Respectful: processes reduce barrier by:	i. Being non-discriminatory, culturally appropriate and inclusive. ii. Value uniqueness of the individual. iii. Using plain language to ensure all communications are clear.
e) Valid	i. Assessment methods align with expected measure of achievement (e.g. competencies, learning outcomes or goals).
f) Flexible	i. Assessment methods are time and cost efficient. ii. A variety of effective assessment options are available.
g) Rigorous: RPL assessment methods:	i. Reflect the purpose for the required learning. ii. Have equivalent expectations to traditional assessment methods. iii. Are conducted by subject matter experts. iv. Meet requirements of work performance criteria / learning outcomes.
h) Transparent: information uses explicit and plain language to be understood by all stakeholders. Policies, processes and criterial are complete, fully disclosed and accurate.	i. Process steps are clear and simple to follow. ii. Reasons are given for any action needed to complete the process. iii. Methods of assessment and learning criteria are clearly stated. iv. Results of RPL assessment are provided, including gaps and achievements.
i) Professionally Supported	a) All staff involved in the RPL process receive initial and ongoing g training for their RPL functions.

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REFERENCES

1) KNQF Act no. 22 of 2014.
2) KNQF Regulations 2018.
3) Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy Framework (2020).
4) Guidelines for the Implementation of Recognition of Prior learning in Kenya, 2020.
5) NITA Standards for Implementing RPL in the Industrial Sector.
6) TVETA Standards for Implementing RPL in the TVET Sector.
7) National Standards for Assessing National Qualifications.
8) ILO (2015). World Employment Social Outlook. Geneva.

THE KNQF STRUCTURE

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-I	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