



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF
RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING IN KENYA**

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CAT	Credit Accumulation and Transfer
CBAs	Collective Bargaining Agreements
COG	Council of Governors
CDACC	Curriculum Development, Assessment and Certification Council
COTU	Central Organization of Trade Unions
CUE	Commission for University Education
DRS	Department of Refugee Affairs
DUC	Differentiated Unit Cost
FKE	Federation of Kenya Employers
KNQA	Kenya National Qualifications Authority
KNQF	Kenya National Qualifications Framework
KNFJKA	Kenya National Federation of Juakali Associations
KATTI	Kenya Association of Technical & Training Institutions
KETRB	Kenya Engineering Technology Registration Board
LMI	Labor Market Information
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
NITA	National Industrial Training Authority
NIC	National Implementation Committee
NLRD	National Learners' Records Database
PoE	Portfolio of Evidence
QAIs	Qualifications Awarding Institutions
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SSCs	Sector Skills Councils
SSACs	Sector Skills Advisory Committees
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TVETA	Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Accreditation means a procedure by which institutions offering education and training are formally recognised as having met the standards set out in various laws of Kenya.

Assessment tools are instruments that assessors will use to assess the skills and knowledge of candidates against set criteria or standards.

Coordinator means an RPL practitioner in charge of an assessment centre tasked with the RPL administrative and logistical support.

Full Qualification means a certificate showing a nationally recognised qualification level on the KNQF.

Industry means the labour market comprising employer organizations, workers organizations, professional bodies, regulatory bodies and sector skills Councils.

Level Descriptor describes the learning outcomes of a particular KNQF level.

National Qualifications Framework means the national system for the articulation, classification, registration, quality assurance, and monitoring and evaluation of national qualifications as developed in accordance with the KNQF Act.

Partial qualification/ Micro-credentials mean a certificate showing unit(s) of competency that a candidate has attained towards attaining a nationally recognised qualification.

A professional body is a membership organization of regulated experts or practitioners in an occupational field and may include the role of members of an association or society.

Qualification means a formal expression of the professional or vocational abilities of a worker that are recognized at international, national or sectoral levels as defined in the KNQF

RPL Counsellor means RPL practitioner accredited to guide the candidate about RPL procedure and requirements, and their suitability for an assessment.

RPL Assessor means an accredited RPL practitioner who carries out assessment to ascertain the claimed competencies based on evidence submitted and/or observed against set standards.

RPL Expert means a person well versed in RPL assessment process as well as the legal frameworks of RPL stakeholders.

An RPL practitioner is a person involved in the RPL assessment process.

RPL Verifier is an accredited RPL practitioner responsible for authentication of assessment process and results.

Skill gap training: training needed to help the candidate meet the required learning outcomes of the skill area and level applied for.

Statement of attainment is a document that shows the elements of a unit of competency or a specific skill that a candidate has attained which builds up to a part qualification.

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.



INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process used to identify, assess and certify a candidate's knowledge, skills and competencies regardless of when, where and how they were acquired against prescribed standards or learning outcomes. The aim is to provide societal recognition or validation for entry into a program of study, employability, up-skilling and reskilling.

The RPL system focuses on the outcomes rather than how, when or where the learning occurred. It gives a person credit for skills and knowledge acquired at school, work, home, Jua Kali sector or through clubs and hobbies.

1.2 Purpose of the Guidelines

These guidelines are designed for the planning and implementation of RPL efficiently and effectively. They aim to promote a quality assured RPL process that is fair, transparent and consistent.

1.3 RPL Process

The RPL process involves three major stages as explained below.

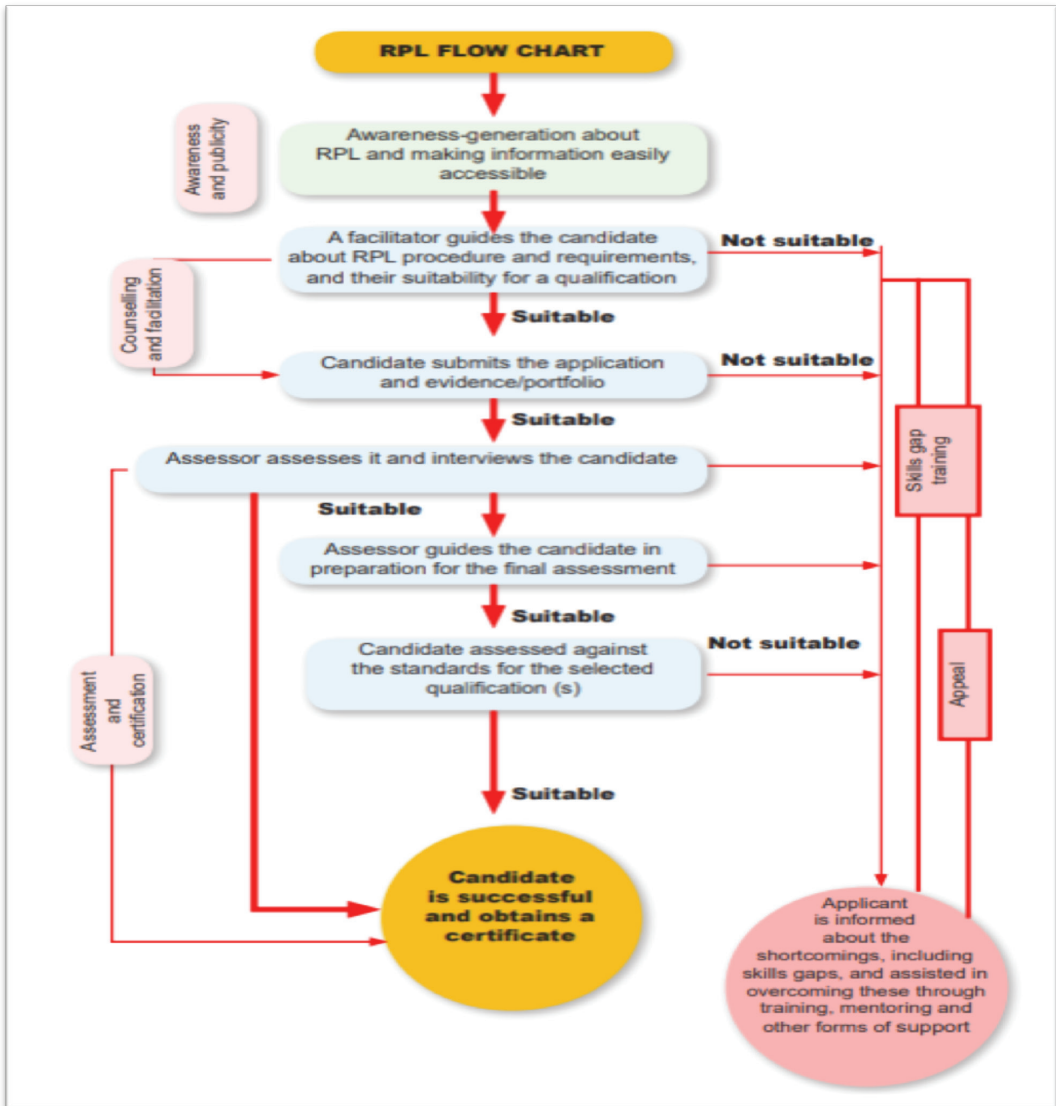


Figure 1.1: The RPL Process

1.3.1 Awareness and Publicity

This stage entails building awareness and interest in RPL in potential candidates, employers, and other stakeholders. The implementing agencies and providers play a key role in this stage. They publicize the RPL process, its benefits, whom to contact, estimated costs, timeframe, eligibility requirements and assistance available. This publicity and awareness-building occurs on different

platforms, including websites, social networking, information sessions at workplaces and education institutions, fairs and the media.

1.3.2 Counselling and Facilitation

In this stage, applicants interested in RPL obtain detailed information and orientation from counsellors appointed by QAI. The QAI should ensure that the RPL Counsellor is conversant with the language of the catchment area. The RPL Counsellor assesses candidates' suitability for a specific qualification (full, partial and statement of attainment), and provides information about learning outcomes and competency standards required for the qualification and the nature of evidence required.

The RPL candidate also obtains an application form and documents detailing the RPL process and requirements. The RPL Counsellor and the information should help a candidate decide whether or not to apply for RPL, for which qualification and at what level.

1.3.2.1 RPL Counselling

This step informs a candidate regarding registration application, portfolio of evidence, financial requirements and assessment.

This occurs at an accredited assessment centre as set out in the QAI's guidelines. Candidate shall be:

- i. Provided with information about the RPL benefits, the procedure, the costs, the support available, and the eligibility requirements;
- ii. Required to show proof of knowledge of the content or skills area as well as competency, RPL practices and procedures, and
- iii. Booked for an assessment in an accredited Assessment Center.

The RPL counsellor shall:

- i. Ensure that counselling is candidate-centered;
- ii. Ensure that the candidate is provided with adequate time to collect, prepare and present evidence for assessment;
- iii. Offer clear guidance to candidates in a language they comprehend;
- iv. Guide candidate on standards of assessment as per their interests/needs;
- v. Guide candidate on collection and presentation of a portfolio of evidence
- vi. Guide a candidate in deciding whether to apply for assessment, qualification and level.
In case of skill gap(s), the RPL counsellor advises the candidate on bridging them.

Evidence required for RPL assessment may include but is not limited to:

- i. Interview-professional conversation;
- ii. Observation and questioning, including workplace visits;
- iii. Portfolio of evidence, which may include completed assessment items from previous studies;
- iv. Assessment tasks or challenge tests (oral, written or practical); and
- v. Authentication of evidence by supervisor or employer.

The assessment of the Portfolio of Evidence shall be valid and reliable to ensure the integrity of the qualification and RPL system.

The presented evidence shall be:

- i. **Valid:** covers key competencies of a qualification;
- ii. **Sufficient:** allows RPL Practitioner to make decisions on the level of competency;
- iii. **Current:** contemporary; and
- iv. **Authentic:** examples of the candidate's own work.

1.3.3 Submission of Application

A candidate shall submit a filled application form along with the prescribed fees as guided by the DUC, to an accredited assessment Center

1.3.4 Assessment and Certification

This stage involves three steps namely:

- i. Portfolio of Evidence Assessment
- ii. Final Assessment
- iii. Award of Certificate

First, the candidate's application is sent to an assessor, who screens the application and the evidence. Thereafter, the assessor interviews the candidate and, if required, guides him or her on improving the evidence. Once the assessor is satisfied, the candidate will be advised on the nature of the final assessment (test). If the assessor is unsatisfied, the candidate will be informed about the shortcomings and advised on overcoming them (for example, collecting additional evidence or upgrading the knowledge and skills). In RPL, 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.

1.3.4.1 Portfolio of Evidence Review and Feedback

The RPL assessor examines the POE submitted for a specific competence and provides feedback on the suitability and adequacy of the POE in line with the prescribed standards.

1.3.4.2 Registration and Assessment Notification

Candidates who meet all entry requirements shall apply for final assessment and feedback provided.

1.3.4.3 Final Assessment

The assessment panel shall comprise three (3) RPL Practitioners with recognised values and field experience. The panel shall include an industry practitioner, a relevant subject trainer and an RPL expert. The practitioners should not have been involved in the counselling process for the same candidate.

Tasks/Practical Observations

Priority should be given to candidate's context for practical skills, testing, and on-the-job assessment/observation.

RPL Fees and Charges

Fees and charges shall be determined by the RPL Differentiated Unit Cost (DUC) Model.

1.3.5 Accreditation of RPL Players

RPL players shall be accredited in line with relevant provision of laws and regulations governing the RPL process.

1.3.6 Eligibility Criteria for RPL Assessment

- i. Candidates can be assessed at any KNQF level.
- ii. Qualifications will be subject to the KNQF level descriptors.



CHAPTER TWO

GUIDELINES FOR RPL STAKEHOLDERS

Different persons, organizations and institutions shall effectively implement the RPL process. Each of them will perform their roles as per the guidelines stated below:

2.1 The Ministry

- i. Formulate the National RPL policy;
- ii. Establish the National RPL Advisory Committee; and
- iii. Develop RPL Resource Mobilization strategy.

2.1.1 National Advisory Committee

a) Shall comprise of;

- i. Principal Secretary, State Department for Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET);
- ii. Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA)
- iii. Technical, Vocational Education and Training Curriculum Development, Assessment and Certification Council (TVET CDACC)
- iv. National Industrial Training Authority (NITA)
- v. Kenya National Federation of Juakali Associations (KNFJKA)
- vi. Department of Refugee Services (DRS)
- vii. Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE)
- viii. Kenya Engineering Technology Registration Board (KETRB)
- ix. State Department for Youth Affairs
- x. Central Organization of Trade Unions (COTU)
- xi. Representative Ministry of Labor and Social Protection
- xii. Representative from Development Partners (consider whether full time or co-option on need basis)

- xiii. Kenya Association of Technical Training Institutions (KATTI)
 - xiv. Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA)
 - xv. Commission for University Education (CUE)
 - xvi. Council of Governors (COG)
- b) The committee is responsible to the Ministry and shall provide overall direction and oversight the Implementation of RPL.

2.2 Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA)

- i. Develop and manage the National Qualification Framework;
- ii. Develop, coordinate and supervise the RPL implementation process;
- iii. Implement the RPL process through the National Implementation Committee (NIC);
- iv. Accredite QAIs;
- v. Register qualifications and graduates;
- vi. Maintain a database of all qualifications awarded through RPL;
- vii. Facilitate credit accumulation, transfers and exemptions;
- viii. Develop national standards for RPL assessment;
- ix. Develop a national Management Information System for RPL;
- x. Provide the recognition of attainment of competencies through RPL including skills, knowledge, attitudes and values;
- xi. Conduct research and outreach on RPL process in collaboration with other stakeholders;
- xii. Build capacity of institutions implementing the RPL process; and
- xiii. Promote mainstreaming of gender and special needs practices in the RPL process.

2.2.1 National Implementation Committee

- a) Shall comprise of;
- i. Representative of the PS, State Department for Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET);
 - ii. Representative of the PS Ministry of Labour and Social Protection;
 - iii. Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA);
 - iv. Technical Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA);
 - v. Technical Vocational Education and Training Curriculum Development, Assessment and Certification Council (TVET CDACC);
 - vi. National Industrial Training Authority (NITA);
 - vii. Kenya National Federation of Juakali Associations (KNFJKA);
 - viii. Department of Refugee Services (DRS);

- ix. Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE);
- x. Kenya Engineering Technology Registration Board (KETRB);
- xi. Council of Governors;
- xii. State Department for Youth Affairs;
- xiii. Central Organization of Trade Unions (COTU);
- xiv. Representative from Development Partners;
- xv. Kenya Association of Technical Training Institutions (KATTI) ; and
- xvi. Commission for University Education (CUE).

b) The committee is responsible to KNQA and shall coordinate the implementation of RPL.

2.3 Regulators

- i. Ensure quality and relevance of the RPL process;
- ii. Develop standards on RPL assessment for their respective sectors, taking into account the RPL Policy;
- iii. Monitor and evaluate the implementation of RPL within the specific sector they oversee;
- iv. Collaborate with KNQA and other stakeholders to advance the development of RPL;
- v. Foster close working relationships with professional bodies in and across the sector, where appropriate, to facilitate RPL;
- vi. Facilitate and monitor enabling agreements to increase RPL provisioning in their sectors;
- vii. Support and monitor the implementation of RPL Practitioners and administrators in their sectors;
- viii. Monitor providers that offer RPL in their sectors, as per criteria established for this purpose;
- ix. Ensure consistency in the application of RPL policy by providers and delegated bodies in their sectors; and
- x. Conduct and oversee RPL related research in the related sector in collaboration with KNQA and other stakeholders.

2.4 Professional Bodies

- i. Comply with the KNQF Act for the recognition of professional bodies and the registration of professional qualifications;
- ii. Recognise qualifications awarded through RPL as an integral requirement for

- attainment of professional designations as stipulated in the KNQF Act on the Recognition of Professional Bodies and the Registration of Professional Designations;
- iii. Collaborate with KNQA, the Regulators and the relevant providers to promote a quality RPL process; and
 - iv. Build capacity to initiate and support RPL provision as per the RPL Policy Framework.

2.5 Qualification Awarding Institutions (QAIs)

- i. Accredite, register and build capacity of RPL Practitioners;
- ii. Accredite RPL assessment centres;
- iii. Develop standardized RPL assessment tools;
- iv. Develop RPL assessment guidelines in line with RPL policy framework and regulator standards;
- v. Organize validation of the RPL assessment tools and guidelines;
- vi. Develop, review and disseminate guidelines for the preparation of the assessment process and preparing the materials in liaison with other stakeholders;
- vii. Provide guidelines for RPL assessments and appeals;
- viii. Coordinate RPL assessment processes; update assessment data bank of graduands; award statement of attainment, partial or full qualification; and
- ix. Develop and maintain an information management system compatible with the National learners Records Database (NLRD) and other relevant government information management systems.

2.6 Registered Assessment Centres and Statutory Bodies

- i. Provide RPL practitioners to participate in the RPL process in line with their mandate;
- ii. Participate in external assessment and verification of candidates;
- iii. Provide opportunities for skills gap training;
- iv. Provide opportunities as assessment centres;
- v. Establish RPL management committee;
- vi. Register with relevant regulators;
- vii. Integrate RPL Policy into existing institutional frameworks;
- viii. Implement the RPL framework and provide feedback to stakeholders;
- ix. Provide equipment for assessment;
- x. Maintain candidate records; and
- xi. Encourage mainstreaming of gender and special needs practices in the RPL

assessment process.

2.7 Candidates/Applicants

These are persons who have registered for assessment. They shall:

- i. Discuss and agree on the assessment plan with assessors;
- ii. Produce sufficient evidence of current competencies and prior achievements (where applicable);
- iii. Prepare their profiles and portfolios to meet the regulators of the RPL process;
- iv. Prepare and make themselves available for assessment;
- v. Adhere to assessment rules and regulations;
- vi. Follow appeals procedure when necessary;
- vii. Be entitled to fundamental rights such as:
 - a) The right to fair and transparent processes;
 - b) Have a clear understanding of the outcomes to be met, assessment standards, criteria and the certification processes;
 - c) Candidate-centered assessment; and
 - d) The right to appeal a decision.

2.8 RPL Coordinators

A Coordinator is an RPL practitioner in charge of an assessment centre tasked with the RPL administrative and logistical support.

They shall:

- i. Coordinate the assessment process;
- ii. Develop assessment programme;
- iii. Notify the candidates on the availability of RPL tools and equipment;
- iv. Pre-test the equipment and tools for assessment;
- v. Provide security for assessment materials; and
- vi. Prepare RPL data, records and reports.

2.9 RPL Counsellors

The counsellors shall:

- i. Be a subject matter expert;
- ii. Guide the candidate on how to apply for the relevant skill area, level and competency as per the learning outcomes;
- iii. Advise on portfolio of evidence collection;

- iv. Verify portfolio of evidence for relevance, currency, completeness and adherence;
- v. Assess the portfolio of evidence for comprehensiveness, currency, validity and authenticity;
- vi. Identify gaps – skills or evidence related;
- vii. Interview the candidate to ascertain:
 - a) Authenticity of the Portfolio of Evidence (PoE);
 - b) Gauge the currency of the PoE.
- viii. Prepare them for final assessment
 - a) Possible assessment outcomes;
 - b) Psychological preparedness;
 - c) Financial implications;
 - d) Social implications;
 - e) Reasons why they are to be assessed;
 - f) Benefits to accrue from the recognition and outcomes of the assessment;
 - g) Opportunity for reassessment;
 - h) Skills upgrading opportunities; and
 - i) The appeals procedure in case one is not comfortable with outcomes.
- ix. Recommend candidate for:
 - a) Final (full, partial or elements of units of competency) assessment;
 - b) Skills upgrading;
 - c) Assessment at a lower or higher level; and
 - d) Assessment for a different trade area.
- x. Forward documentation to the RPL Assessor once they meet the expected requirement for assessment; and
- xi. Advise the assessment center and the RPL practitioners on the requirements for assessing vulnerable and special needs persons.

2.10 RPL Assessors

The assessors shall;

- i. Be a subject matter expert;
- ii. Pre-test each assessment tool to ensure it is valid, reliable and consistent;
- iii. Administer the assessment tool within the time and resources available;
- iv. Assess one applicant or a group of applicants;
- v. Organize for external assessment; and
- vi. Award and grade the achievement of each candidate as per the QAI requirements.

2.11 RPL Experts

They are appointed by QAIs and shall:

- i. Ensure the RPL assessment process meets the required standards;
- ii. Assessment is conducted within the legal frameworks; and
- iii. Solve any discrepancies during the assessment process.

2.12 RPL Verifiers

QAIs appoint the verifiers and shall be responsible for verifying the assessment process and results.

The verifier shall:

- i. Be a subject matter expert;
- ii. Sample, at least 10% of the candidates, declared successful by an assessor;
- iii. Use the sample to carry out a rapid assessment by a different assessor;
- iv. Analyse the overall percentages awarded by various assessors;
- v. In the event of significant variation, the verifier shall investigate and make a suitable recommendation to the QAIs;
- vi. Generate a report on the verification process; and
- vii. Submit the report to the assessing institution and Qualification Awarding Institution.

2.13 Employers' Organizations

For effective implementation of RPL, Employers Organizations shall:

- i. Participate in design and implementation of RPL policy, systems and guidelines;
- ii. Promote entrenchment of RPL into the existing human resource policies and collective bargaining agreements (CBAs);
- iii. Carry out advocacy initiatives on RPL;
- iv. Sensitize and develop capacity of Employers on RPL;
- v. Provide linkage with Industry, identification of industry experts for RPL; and
- vi. Monitor, Evaluate and provide feedback on RPL from an industry perspective.

2.14 Workers' Organizations

- i. Create awareness of RPL and its potential benefits and build positive attitudes among the workers;
- ii. Integrate RPL into the employment policy;
- iii. Ensure through advocacy and policy shifts that education and training match the needs of the labor market;
- iv. Ensure active participation of employers and workers in the planning, implementation

- and evaluation of RPL, not only for quality but also for recognition of its benefits; and
- v. Bargain with employers for up-skilling and reskilling of employees.

2.15 Industry/Employer

- i. Carry out Labour Market Information Surveys (LMIS);
- ii. Participate in development of Occupational Standards through Sector Skills Councils (SSCs);
- iii. Participate in development of Occupational Standards through Sector Skills Advisory Committees (SSACs);
- iv. Participate in policy formation for the RPL process and system;
- v. Provide expert workers to participate in occupational standards and learning outcomes development as well as the assessment process;
- vi. Contribute to the development and acquisition of training materials;
- vii. Participate in external assessment of applicants;
- viii. Provide opportunities for industry training and experience;
- ix. Participate in the verification of the assessment of applicants;
- x. Entrench RPL into existing human resource policies;
- xi. Sensitize and encourage employees to apply for RPL assessment;
- xii. Identify employees' skills for RPL application;
- xiii. Assist employees in identifying appropriate training and assessment opportunities;
and
- xiv. Financially support RPL-oriented assessments.

ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION

3.1 Assessment Procedure

In Kenya, assessment for Recognition of Prior Learning is conducted to formally acknowledge candidate competencies regardless of how, where and when they were acquired.

The procedure involves:

- i. **Invitation:** The assessment centre invites applications from the general public, and individuals respond by submitting an expression of interest to an assessment centre or alternatively an individual expressing interest to a centre for assessment;
- ii. **Counselling:** The counsellor guides the candidate about the RPL procedure and requirements. The candidate formally applies for the assessment and submits a Portfolio of Evidence for assessment;
- iii. **Interview:** The candidate is interviewed to determine his/her readiness for assessment and is oriented to the qualification and units of competency to be assessed;
- iv. Registration of assessment;
- v. The assessor carries out assessment planning;
- vi. **Assessment:** Assessment is conducted in line with learning outcomes as stipulated in RPL assessment guidelines;
- vii. **Verification:** The verifier ascertains that the assessment process is fair, valid and gives a true reflection of assessment outcomes; and
- viii. **Certification:** The QAIs shall award the successful candidate a full or partial qualification certificate or a statement of attainment.

3.2 RPL Portfolio of Evidence

Portfolio of Evidence (PoE) shall align with learning outcomes and Occupational Standards requirements, guidelines for PoE collection, RPL standards and assessment guidelines.

3.3 Administration, Recording and Reporting Requirements

- i. Assessment records must be securely retained and produced when required and, where possible retain the actual piece(s) of work completed by the candidate for a period determined by QAI/Assessment Center from time to time;
- ii. The completed evidence criteria may be sufficient where it is not possible to retain the candidate's actual work;
- iii. Assessment tools should have provision for feedback to the candidate; and
- iv. Assessment tools must be designed to comply with internal and external processes and procedures for the administration, recording and reporting of assessment outcomes.

3.4 Information on the RPL Assessment Process

The information shall be made available by KNQA and other stakeholders using different modes in accordance with the RPL Communication Strategy.

3.5 Assessment Verification

A quality assurance process shall be carried out by competent regulators, professional bodies or Quality Assurance agencies to ensure the set standards are applied and maintained in conducting assessments.

It is done at two levels:

- i. Internally (by the QAIs/Assessment Centers); and
- ii. Externally (by Quality Assurance agencies).

3.5.1 Internal Verification Process

These are assessment processes within the assessment centers carried out by the RPL Practitioners. It involves:

- i. Developing a schedule for verification activities;
- ii. Examining assessment tools;
- iii. Conducting meetings with the assessors to review assessment tools;
- iv. Developing a sampling plan and selecting a representative sample;
- v. Observing assessors conducting assessments and giving feedback;
- vi. Examining the assessment documents for selected candidates;
- vii. Confirming the authenticity of the candidates' evidence;
- viii. Reviewing the assessor's judgment of the candidate;
- ix. Conducting an assessment of the selected candidates and providing feedback; and

- x. Completing the required internal verification documentation and submitting it to the assessment centre for onward transmission to the Council.

3.5.2 External Verification Process

This is a quality assurance process carried out by regulators/ professional bodies/employers to ensure that the assessment center maintains quality in its assessment process in accordance with the set standards. It is carried out by an accredited external verifier (accredited by regulators). It involves obtaining verification schedule from the assessment center. It shall include:

- i. Developing a sampling plan to select a representative sample and collecting documentary evidence;
- ii. Examining assessment tools;
- iii. Examining documentation maintained by assessors and internal verifiers and providing feedback; and
- iv. Completing the required external verification documentation and submitting to the center for onward transmission to the qualification awarding institution.

3.6 Notification about the Achieved Results

Where a candidate is assessed and declared competent, a statement of attainment, partial or full qualification, will be awarded QAIs shall award qualifications as well as provide feedback on the performance of the unsuccessful candidates and register all qualifications awarded through the RPL process with the KNQA.

3.7 Appeal Procedures

Candidates unsatisfied with the assessment outcome may appeal for review within 30 days of the release of results. Appeal forms shall be obtained from the relevant QAIs. Appeals will be determined by the RPL Appeals committee in accordance with the QAI policy. The decision of the Qualifications Awarding Institutions (QAIs) shall be final. The appeals shall be conducted according to the procedure shown in Figure 3.1 below.

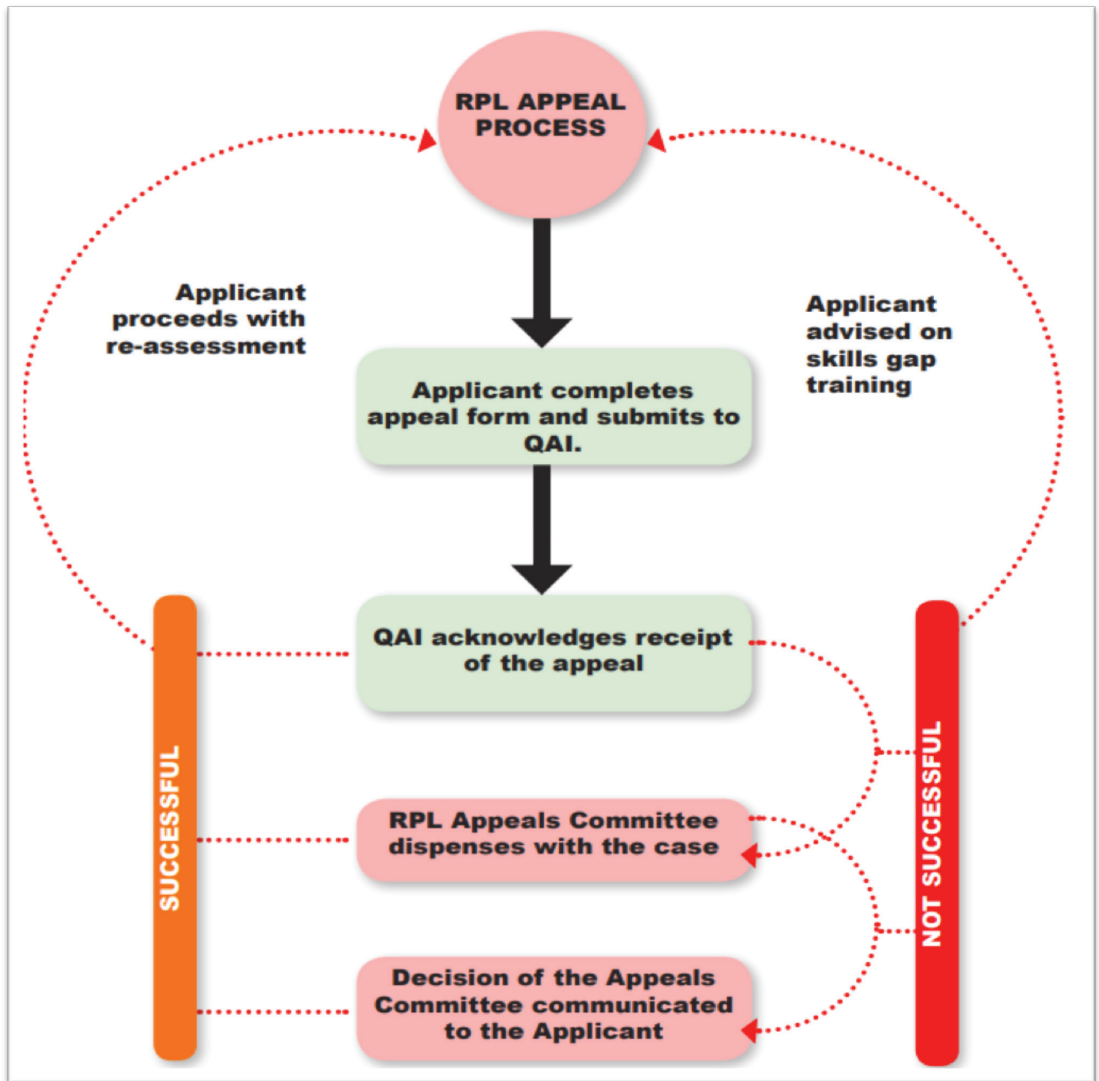


Figure 3.1: Appeals Procedure

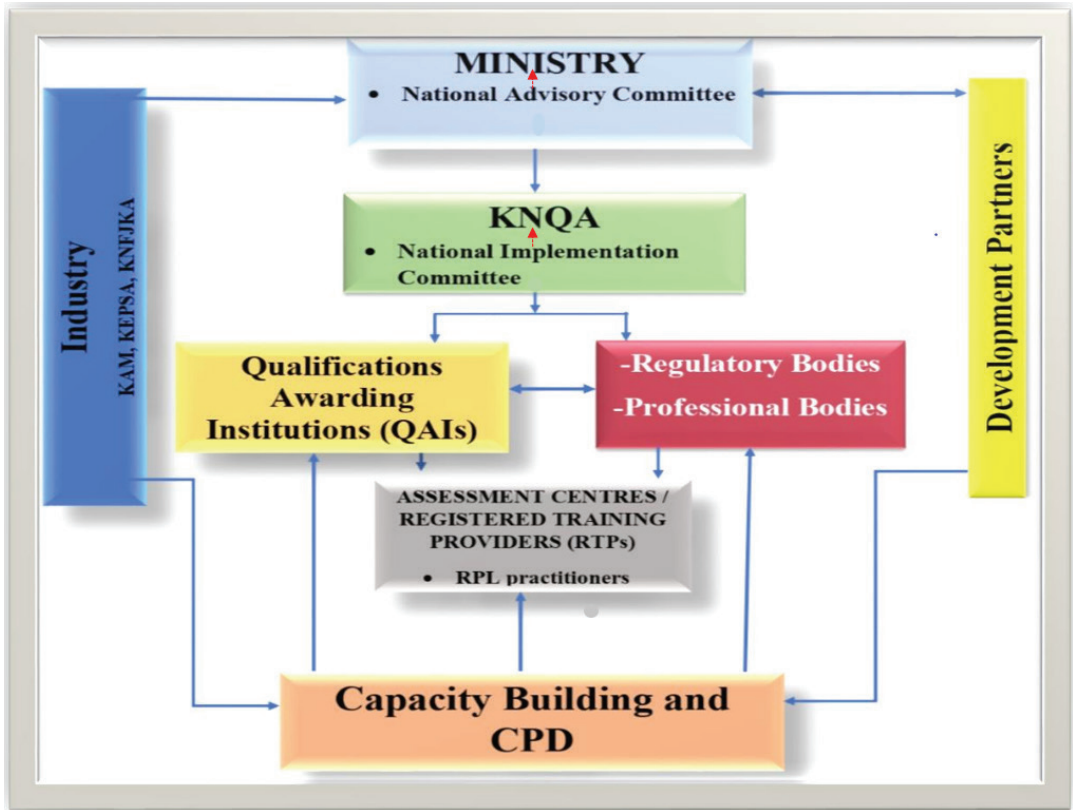


Figure 3.2: Institutional Structure for Recognition of Prior Learning

