



MINISTRY OF
EDUCATION

GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING IN KENYA

June, 2021

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CAT	Credit Accumulation and Transfer
KNQA	Kenya National Qualifications Authority
KNQF	Kenya National Qualifications Framework
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
NLRD	National Applicants' Records Database
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

DEFINITION OF TERMS

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

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

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

Full Qualification means award of credits for assessed units as defined in the KNQF.

RPL Advisor/Counsellor means RPL practitioner accredited to guide the candidate about RPL procedure and requirements, and their suitability for an assessment. *Note:* Advisor and Counsellor will be used interchangeably in this document.

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.

RPL practitioner is a person involved in RPL assessment process.

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

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 the monitoring and evaluation of national qualifications as developed in accordance with KNQF Act.

Partial qualification means the award of credit(s) for an assessed unit as defined in the KNQF.

Professional body means a membership organization of regulated experts or practitioners in an occupational field and may include a roll 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

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 means a document (like a Certificate) that shows the modules/units of competency that a learner has completed or a candidate has successfully attained as part of partial qualification as defined in the KNQF.

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

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 for 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, at work, at home, Jua Kali sector or through clubs and hobbies.

1.2 Purpose of the Guidelines

These guidelines are designed for planning and implementation of RPL in an efficient and effective manner. 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.

1.3.1 Awareness and publicity

This stage entails building awareness and interest about 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 takes place on different platforms, including websites, social networking, information sessions at workplaces and education institutions, fairs and the media.

1.3.2 Facilitation

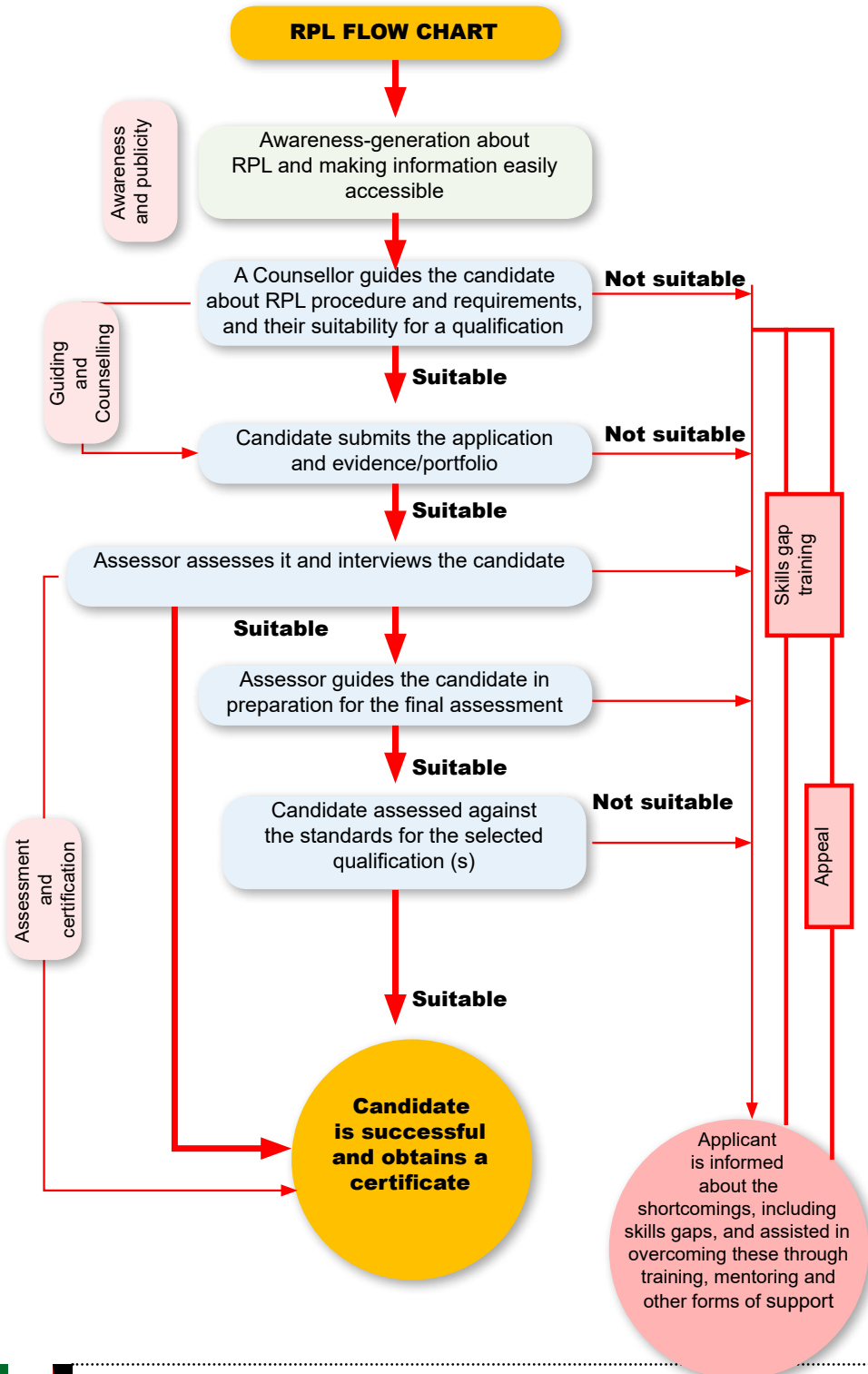
In this stage, applicants interested in RPL obtain detailed information and orientation from facilitators appointed by an RPL provider. The facilitators assess candidates' suitability for a specific qualification (full or part), provide the necessary information about learning outcomes and competency standards required for the qualification and the nature of evidence required. The applicant also obtains an application form and documents detailing the RPL process and its requirements. The RPL facilitator and the information should help a candidate to decide whether or not to apply for RPL, and for which qualification and at what level.

1.3.3 Assessment and certification

This stage involves a number of steps: application screening, guidance to the candidate by an assessor in building evidence and portfolio, assessment and 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 how to improve the evidence. Once the assessor is satisfied, the candidate will be advised on the nature of final assessment (test). If the assessor is not satisfied, the candidate will be informed about the shortcomings and advised on how to overcome 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 RPL Flow chart



1.3.5 RPL counselling

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

This takes place at an accredited assessment center as set out in the QAI's guidelines.

Candidate shall be:

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

The RPL process shall: Be applicant-centered; Offer clear guidance to applicants; Guide applicants seeking credit; Guide applicants to present evidence of their learning; and

- Guide applicants to present evidence of formal, non-formal and informal learning.

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

- Interview-professional conversation; Observation and questioning including workplace visits; Portfolio of work, which may include completed assessment items from previous study; Assessment tasks or challenge test (oral, written or practical); and
- 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:

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

1.3.6 Submission of application

A candidate shall submit a filled application form along with the prescribed fee, to an accredited assessment Center.

1.3.7 Guiding

During this process, candidates interested in RPL obtain detailed information and orientation from RPL Counsellors. The RPL Counsellors assess the candidate's suitability for a specific qualification, provide necessary information about learning outcomes and competency standards required for qualification and the nature of evidence required. The candidate also obtains an application form and documents detailing the RPL process and its requirements. The information provided at this stage should help a candidate to decide to apply for RPL, and for which qualification and at what level.

1.3.8 Interview conversation areas

The RPL counsellor's interview shall be conducted in person. The RPL Counsellor will review the evidence provided and match skills with the units in the qualification.

1.3.9 Registration and admission notification

Candidates who meet all entry requirements shall apply for registration and admission for assessment.

1.3.10 Final assessment

The assessment panel shall comprise of RPL Practitioners with recognized values and experience in their fields. The panel shall comprise of a minimum of three assessors drawn from industry, training and an RPL expert.

1.3.11 Tasks/practical observations

Practical skills testing, on-the-job assessment/observation may be undertaken by the RPL Assessor at the candidate's convenient accredited assessment center.

1.3.12 RPL Fees and charges

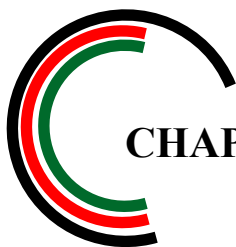
Fees and charges shall be determined through a differentiated unit cost of assessment through a sector-wide stakeholder consultation. This will guide QAIs in determining fees and charges.

1.3.13 Accreditation of RPL players

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

1.3.14 Eligibility criteria for RPL assessment

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



CHAPTER TWO

GUIDELINES FOR RPL STAKEHOLDERS

The effective implementation of the RPL process shall be performed by different persons, organizations and institutions. Each of them will perform their roles in accordance with the guidelines stated here below:

2.1 The Ministry

- Formulate national RPL policies;
- Establish the National RPL Advisory Committee; and
- Mobilize resources for RPL implementation.

2.2 Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA)

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

2.3 Regulators

- Accredite RPL assessment centers;
- Accredite and build capacity of RPL Practitioners;
- Ensure quality and relevance of the RPL process; Develop standards on RPL assessment for their respective sectors, taking into account the RPL Policy;
- Monitor and evaluate the implementation of RPL within the specific sector they over-

see; Collaborate with KNQA and other stakeholders to advance the development of RPL; Foster close working relationships with professional bodies in and across the sector where appropriate, to facilitate RPL; Facilitate and monitor enabling agreements to increase RPL provisioning in their sectors; Support and monitor the training of RPL Practitioners and administrators in their sectors; Monitor providers that offer RPL in their sectors, in accordance with criteria established for this purpose; Ensure consistency in the application of RPL policy by providers and delegated bodies in their sectors; and Conduct and oversee RPL-related research in the related sector in collaboration with KNQA and other stakeholders.

2.4 Professional bodies

- Comply with the KNQF Act for the recognition of professional bodies and the registration of professional qualifications;
- Recognize qualifications awarded through RPL as an integral requirement for attainments of professional designations as stipulated in the KNQF Act on the Recognition of Professional Bodies and the Registration of Professional Designations;
- Collaborate with KNQA, the Regulators and the relevant providers to promote a quality RPL process; and
- Build capacity to initiate and support RPL provision in accordance with the RPL Policy Framework.

2.5 Qualification Awarding Institutions (QAI)

- Accredite, register and build capacity of RPL Practitioners; Develop standardized RPL assessment tools;
 - Develop RPL assessment guidelines in line with RPL policy framework and regulator standards; Organize validation of the RPL assessment tools and guidelines;
 - Develop, review and disseminate guidelines for preparation of assessment process and preparing the materials in liaison with other stakeholders; Provide guidelines for RPL assessments and appeals; Coordinate RPL assessment processes; Update assessment data bank of trainees; Award statement of attainment, partial or full qualification; and
 - Develop and maintain an information management system that is compatible with the National Applicants Records Database (NLRD) and other relevant government information management systems.
- ### 2.6 Registered assessment centers and statutory bodies
- Provide RPL practitioners to participate in the RPL process in line with their mandate; Participate in external assessment and verification of candidates; Provide opportunities for skills gap training;
 - Provide opportunities as assessment centers;
 - Establish RPL management committee;
 - Manage candidates' records; Register with relevant regulators; Integrate RPL Policy into existing institutional frameworks; Implement the RPL framework and provide feedback to stakeholders; Provide equipment for assessment;
 - Maintain candidate records; and
 - Encourage mainstreaming of gender and special needs practices in the RPL assessment process.

2.6 Candidates/applicants

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

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

2.7 RPL coordinators

These are professionals appointed to be in charge of the assessment process. They shall:

- Notify the candidate regarding the assessment process by the RPL Assessment Panel; Pre-test the equipment and tools for assessment; Provide appropriate mediation tools for up skilling; and
- Provide security for assessment materials.

2.8 RPL counsellors

The counsellors shall:

- Be a subject matter expert;
- Guide the candidate on how to apply for the relevant skill area, level and competency as per the learning outcomes;
- Advise on portfolio of evidence collection;
- Verify portfolio of evidence for relevance, currency, completeness and adherence;
- Recommend skills and knowledge gap training;
- Assess the portfolio of evidence for comprehensiveness, currency, validity and authenticity;
- Identify gaps – skills or evidence related;
- Interview the candidate to ascertain:
 - Authenticity of the Portfolio of evidence (PoE); and Gauge the currency of the PoE.
- Prepare them for final assessment
 - Possible assessment outcomes;
 - Psychological preparedness;
 - Financial implications;
 - Social implications;
 - Reasons why they are to be assessed;
 - Benefits to accrue from the recognition and outcomes of the assessment;
 - Opportunity for reassessment;
 - Skills upgrading opportunities; and

- The appeals procedure in case one is not comfortable with outcomes.Recommend candidate for:
 - Final (full or partial assessment);
 - Skills upgrading;
 - Assessment at a lower or higher level; and
 - Assessment for a different trade area.
- Forward documentation to the RPL Assessor once they meet the expected requirement for assessment; and
- Advise the assessment center and the RPL practitioners on the requirements for the vulnerable and special needs persons being assessed.

2.9 RPL Assessors

The assessors shall;

- Be a subject matter expert;
- Pre-test each assessment tool to ensure it is valid, reliable and consistent;Administer the assessment tool within the time and resources available;Assess one or group of applicants;Organize for external assessment; and
- Award and grade the achievement of each candidate in accordance with the QAI requirements.

2.10 RPL experts

They are appointed by QAIs and shall:Ensure the RPL assessment process meets the required standards;

- Assessment is conducted within the legal frameworks; and
- Solve any discrepancies during the assessment process.

2.11 RPL Verifiers

The verifiers are appointed by QAIs and shall be responsible for verification of assessment process and results.

The verifier shall:

- Be a subject matter expert;
- Sample not less than 5% of the candidates declared successful by an assessor;Use the sample to carry out rapid assessment by a different assessor;Analyze the overall percentages awarded by various assessors;In the event of significant variation, the verifier shall investigate and make a suitable recommendation to the QAIs;Generate a report on verification process; andSubmit the report to the assessing institution and qualification awarding institution.

2.12 Employers

For effective implementation of RPL, employers shall:

- Entrench RPL Policy into the existing employer regulations and human resource policy;
- Sensitize and encourage employees to apply for RPL assessment;

- Identify employees' skills for RPL application;
 - Assist employees to identify appropriate training and assessment opportunities; and
 - Financially support RPL-oriented assessments.
- 2.11 Workers' Organizations**
- Create awareness on RPL, its potential benefits, and build positive attitudes among the workers; Integrate RPL into the employment policy;
 - Ensure through advocacy and policy shifts that education and training matches the needs of the labor market;
 - Ensure active participation of employers and workers in the planning, implementation and evaluation of RPL, not only for quality but also recognition of its benefits; and Bargain with employers for up-skilling and reskilling of employees.

2.13 Industry

- Participate in development of Occupational Standards through Sector Skills Advisory Committees (SSACs);
- Participate in policy formation for the RPL process and system; Provide expert workers to participate in occupational standards and learning outcomes development as well as the assessment process; Contribute in the development and acquisition of training materials; Participate in external assessment of applicants; Provide opportunities for industry training and experience; and Participate in verification of assessment of applicants.



CHAPTER THREE

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:

- **Invitation:** Assessment center invites applications from the general public and individuals respond by submitting an expression of interest to an assessment center or alternatively an individual expresses interest to a center for assessment; **Counselling/Advising:** The counsellor guides the candidate about RPL procedure and requirements. The candidate formally applies for the assessment and submits Portfolio of Evidence for assessment;
- **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; **Registration of assessment;**
- The assessor carries out assessment planning;
- **Assessment:** Assessment is conducted in line with learning outcomes as stipulated in RPL assessment guidelines;
- **Verification:** The verifier ascertains that the assessment process is fair, valid and gives a true reflection of assessment outcomes; and
- **Certification:** The QAIs award qualification to the successful candidate.

3.4 RPL Portfolio of Evidence

Portfolio of Evidence shall be in line with learning outcomes and Occupational Standards Requirements, guidelines for PoE collection, RPL standards and assessment guidelines.

3.5 Administration, recording and reporting requirements

- 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;
- The completed evidence criteria may be sufficient where it is not possible to retain the candidate's actual work;
- Assessment tools should have provision for feedback to the candidate; and

- Assessment tools must be designed to comply with internal and external processes and procedures for administration, recording and reporting of assessment outcome.

3.6 Information on RPL assessment process

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

3.7 Assessment verification

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

It is done at two levels:

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

3.8 Internal verification process

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

- Developing a schedule for verification activities;Examining assessment tools;Conducting meetings with the assessors to review assessment tools;Developing a sampling plan and selecting a representative sample;Observing assessors conducting assessment and giving feedback;Examining the assessment documents for selected candidates;Confirming the authenticity of the candidates' evidence;Reviewing assessor's judgment of the candidate;Conducting assessment of the selected candidates and providing feedback; and
- Completing the required internal verification documentation and submitting to the assessment center for onward transmission to the Council.

3.9 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 as per 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:

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

3.10 Notification about the achieved results

Where a candidate is assessed and declared competent, a statement of attainment, partial or full qualification will be awarded.

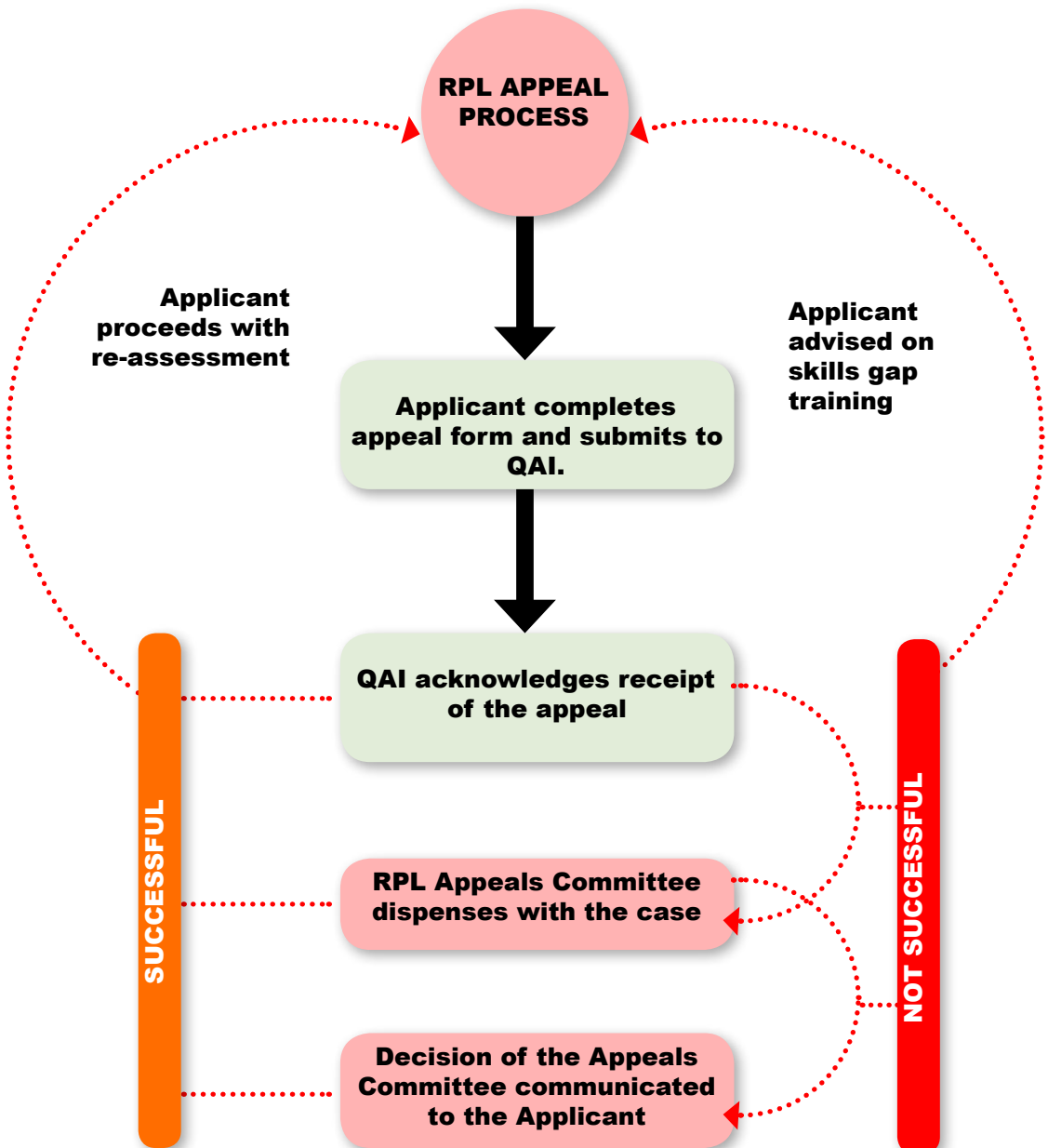
- QAIs shall award qualifications as well as provide feedback on the performance to the unsuccessful candidates; and
- Register all qualifications awarded through the RPL process with the KNQA.

3.11 Appeal procedures

Candidates not satisfied 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 undertaken in accordance with the QAIs policy.

The decision of the Qualifications Awarding Institutions (QAI) shall be final. The appeals shall be conducted according to the procedure shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Appeals procedure







978-9914-40-566-8

ISBN 978-9914-40-566-8



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