

Policy Document ETQA4 : RPL



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Policy Overview

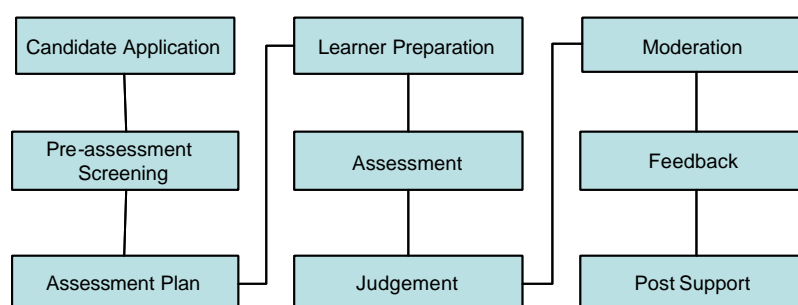
Policy Purpose To inform providers, ETD staff and THETA constituents of the policy and principles of THETA's approach to RPL

- Legal Basis**
- SAQA Act
 - ETQA Regulations
 - SAQA RPL Policy (*Gazette 23186 – 4 March 2002*)
 - SAQA: RPL Implementation Guide
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Terminology All terminology used in this policy bears the implicit meaning as stated in the policy document: **ETQA0: Glossary of Terms and Acronyms**

RPL Policy Statement All providers conducting RPL assessments for certification purposes, must be accredited¹, make use of THETA registered assessors² and THETA approved assessment guides³.

All RPL practices for certification purposes on THETA unit standards and/or skills programmes must follow the broad, generic process of RPL as described in the **SAQA Policy Document**:



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¹ For accreditation details, refer to ETQA1 Policy Document "Provider Accreditation & Management"

² For assessor registration, refer to ETQA3 Policy Document "Assessor Registration & Management"

³ For assessment design & guide requirements, refer to ETQA Criteria & Guidelines

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Policy Overview, Continued

Supporting Documentation The following document resources support the operational implementation of the policy:

Document Number	Document Name
A	Assessor Registration Form
B	Programme Evaluation Checklist
CG3	Criteria & Guidelines – Assessment Strategy Design
C	Criteria & Guidelines – Assessment Guide Template
CG4	Criteria & Guidelines – Assessment Design

Appeals

The Appeals Policy⁴ is applicable to any disputes resulting out of:

1. Accreditation of providers,
2. Registration of assessors and/or moderators
- 3. Evaluation of learning programmes**
4. Monitoring and auditing of providers,
- 5. Monitoring & Auditing of Employers**
6. Certification of learners.
7. Provision of accredited providers
8. Use of the THETA Logo
9. Standard setting & review

For full details of appeal within the context of RPL, please refer to the Appeals Policy.

⁴ For Appeal details, refer to ETQA5 Policy Document "Appeals"

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ETQA Operational Principles

RPL Definition

THETA ETQA adopts the following policy definition of RPL as referred to in the *NSB Regulations No 18787*:

“RPL is the comparison of the previous learning and experience of a learner howsoever obtained against the learning outcomes of a specific qualification, and the acceptance thereof for purposes of certification”

The above definition holds the following implications:

- That a comparison of contextualized competence be done against the unit standards requirements in a holistic way,
 - That recognition is done for learning and experience, not one or the other only, and
 - That the process is focused on the learner and his/her current competence, not historical evidence only
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ETQA Verification

Prior to conducting RPL assessments, an evaluation and approval of the RPL resources must be conducted by the ETQA.

In the verification of the provider’s RPL practice⁵, particular emphasis will be placed on the following:

- ETD Staff competence and preparation
 - RPL purpose and process of evidence gathering
 - RPL evidence requirements and instruments
 - Documented product & process evidence
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⁵ For details on ETQA Verification and Programme Evaluation, refer to ETQA2 Policy Document “Programme Evaluation & Management, and ETQA7 Policy Document “Monitoring & Auditing”

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ETQA Operational Principles, Continued

Process & Procedures

The following process of verifying and quality assurance of RPL will be followed within THETA, as described in the SAQA Policy Implementation Guide:

	Process	Procedure	Resource	Tools	Who
Application Process					
1	Prepare RPL Evidence Requirements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identify scope of RPL services Document RPL strategy documents Complete RPL Self Assessment Questionnaire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> THETA RPL Portfolio Document Self Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> THETA Web-site 	Provider
2	Submit to ETQA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Compile RPL Evidence Requirements Portfolio as per ETQA Requirements Submit Portfolio to ETQA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> THETA Portfolio Document THETA Approval Application Document 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> THETA Web-site 	Provider
Evaluation Process					
3	Evaluate RPL Portfolio of Evidence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Receive and process RPL Portfolio Check completeness of RPL Portfolio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication Log 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self Assessment 	THETA Personal Assistant
4	Process RPL Portfolio	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate RPL Portfolio Approve Portfolio where applicable Provide feedback to provider regarding outstanding evidence Collect additional evidence where required Approve portfolio Consolidate RPL to accreditation scope 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> THETA Evaluation Document 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> THETA Database 	Quality Assuror/ Programme Admin.
5	Communicate RPL Portfolio Status	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Approval Report Forward to provider electronically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> THETA Approval Report 		Programme Administrator

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Provider Operational Principles

NQF Principles Alignment

The purpose of RPL as envisaged by THETA within the provider environment is as follows:

- To provide access to further learning through the recognition of prior learning within the context of required learning
- To provide redress through the recognition of prior learning for certification and recognition purposes.

All principles of the NQF as described in the SAQA Act must be evident in the Provider's RPL practices

RPL Holistic & Developmental Approach

The THETA ETQA maintains a *holistic and developmental* approach to RPL, with the following principles as the basis to this approach:

1. The emphasis in any provider RPL process must be on the preparation and advising of the learner within;
 - the social context rather than unit standard context only,
 - with clear consideration of barriers,
 - informal learning background, and
 - wider expertise of the learner.
 2. RPL practices must be learner-centered and developmental – the learner must be credited for what they do know, not penalized for what they don't know.
 3. RPL will have a clear workplace focus, and will serve as an entry point to further learning, and shall not be intended as an end result only.
 4. RPL will only be recognized for certification purposes if whole unit standards are assessed. Portions of experience will not be recognized in isolation of the total skill described in the unit standard.
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Provider Operational Principles, Continued

RPL Process & Procedure

The following serves as a guideline to providers on the process stages that must be shown in the provider RPL process

No	Stage	Activity	Resources Required ⁶
1	Candidate Application	1. Candidate identifies competence areas for RPL purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ RPL Application Form
2	Pre-assessment Screening	2. Evidence Facilitator meets candidate to establish scope, purpose and viability of assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pre-assessment briefing document ▪ Unit Standards ▪ Self Assessment Record
3	Assessment Plan	3. Facilitator identifies unit standards for assessment 4. Candidate performs self assessment against unit standards 5. Establish evidence requirements 6. Establish assessment approach, tools & mechanisms 7. Set dates & times of assessment	
4	Learner Preparation	8. Identify types and sources of evidence 9. Provide guidance to learner in assessment & evidence principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessment Guide ▪ Portfolio Guide
5	Assessment	10. Candidate submits portfolio, or 11. Undergoes assessment activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessment Guide / Instruments
6	Judgement	12. Assessor makes judgement on evidence, and / or 13. Calls for additional evidence, and 14. Makes a competence & developmental needs judgement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessment Guide ▪ Recording Sheets
7	Moderation	15. Moderator moderates assessment 16. Provide feedback to assessor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Moderation Report
8	Feedback	17. Provide feedback to learner – credits awarded or not	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessment Guide ▪ Recording Sheets

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⁶ All resources listed here are supplied by the Provider, not the THETA ETQA

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Provider Operational Principles, Continued

Continued ... RPL Process & Procedure

9	Post Assessment Support	18. Submit results to ETQA for certification, or 19. Identify and channel learner into development / training path	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Declaration of Competence ▪ Recording Sheets
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RPL Accreditation Criteria

In terms of the **THETA ETQA Accreditation Policy**:

“A provider may operate within a defined partnership, or on its own, depending on its capacity to design, deliver and assess learning provision”

The THETA ETQA regards RPL as a method of assessment, which culminates in qualifications and standards as per the ETQA Regulations, and therefore sees RPL as an extension from the SAQA Requirements⁷ for accreditation.

As per the THETA ETQA Accreditation Portfolio of Evidence⁸ requirements (Criteria 5 - 7), any provider who wishes to provider RPL services within the THETA primary focus, must show evidence of the following:

- A clear RPL strategy
- A Quality Management support infrastructure
- Sufficient resources to conduct RPL: physical, administrative, human and financial

RPL Capacity: Provider Evidence Requirements

The THETA ETQA will therefore *require evidence* that the provider Quality Management System and operational practice supports RPL in the following areas:

1. Policy and Environment
2. Process and Methods
3. Staff Training and Registration
4. Learner Service and Support

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⁷ SAQA “Criteria & Guidelines for providers”

⁸ THETA ETQA Provider Accreditation Phase B

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Provider Operational Principles, Continued

Continued ... RPL Provider Requirements

1	Institutional Policy & Environment supports good RPL practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information regarding RPL policy and practice is available, communicated and promoted accurately Admission is accessible and unbiased, and admission pre-requisites are transparent and accessible Learner support is provided, and access to the RPL role players facilitated Administrative control measures for recording and reporting purposes are established
2	Processes and Methods maintains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RPL Purpose and process of assessment and appeal clearly defined Assessment plan and evidence requirements clearly outlined Form and quality of support clarified Further developmental options clearly outlined Instruments validated and approved Moderation interventions specified
3	RPL support staff are suitably trained and registered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RPL Advisors, assessors and moderators trained and certified as per the Provider Assessment Policy RPL Advisor, assessor and moderator roles clearly defined The function of advising and assessing should not be performed by the same person, and RPL Advisors' knowledge of and familiarity with the policy and practice of RPL is verified in the moderation of the RPL assessment
4	Clear learner support and service is provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The RPL process clearly and formally includes: Learner preparation Evidence Facilitation Further development Access

Important:

- The above principles are an *extracted summary* from the **SAQA RPL Policy and Implementation Guides**, and serves to highlight certain elements only.
- Please refer to the SAQA documents in full.

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RPL Assessment: Learner Evidence Requirements	<p>The evidence required of the learner in the RPL Process⁹ must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relate to reliability, validity, authenticity, sufficiency and currency. ▪ Identify and document potential barriers and alternatives ▪ Show that a balance of <i>product, process, knowledge and historical</i> evidence is maintained
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Provider Evidence for Verification	<p>The THETA ETQA requires the following evidence for verification of the RPL strategy within the provider environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RPL Policy and process¹⁰ • ETD Staff induction / training to RPL • RPL role players – roles and competence evidence • RPL Assessment Guide – Plan, Preparation, Recording and Evaluation • RPL Instruments and evidence requirements • RPL Reporting Systems
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Quality Assurance	<p>External Moderation and evaluation of Provider RPL strategy and practice will take place at different stages in the provider RPL process:</p>
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Quality Indicators	Description
ETQA Reports on Validation Audits. Monitoring and external moderation & verifications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Validation Audits 2. Monitoring Reports 3. External Moderation of provider assessment / RPL practice 4. Verification of provider RPL practice

⁹ THETA ETQA Criteria & Guidelines for assessment design, Programme Evaluation Checklist

¹⁰ Refer Provider QMS Guide – RPL Guide

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Policy Maintenance

Policy Review / Continuous Improvement An annual review will be done of the policy and position stated herein by the ETQA Manager, and recommendations will be reviewed, documented and implemented.

The nature of the review will be to determine:

- Capacity building requirements
 - Material development requirements
 - Possible improvements required in policy, resources, unit standards and staff expertise
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Non-Conformance

The following actions will be regarded as a non-conformance:

Provider:

- Disregard of the SAQA prescribed RPL process and related learner support
- Disregard of the evidence requirements as described in the THETA ETQA policy and Criteria & Guidelines documents

RPL practices in contradiction to this policy and poor evidence requirements shall result in suspension of certification rights of the provider¹¹, and a Conditional Compliance requirement to re-assess learners¹²

ETQA:

- Failure to evaluate the provider evidence for verification for RPL purposes as per the RPL and Programme Evaluation Policies
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¹¹ De-accreditation of providers – ETQA1 Accreditation Policy

¹² Audit Findings : Monitoring & Auditing Policy

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