

## CHAPTER 30

### RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL), EQUIVALENCE AND STATUS

#### 30.1 DEFINITIONS

In this chapter, unless otherwise indicated –

30.1.1 “**accredited institution of higher education**” means one of the following:

- A South African public institution of higher education.
- A private provider of higher education, registered with the Registrar of Private Higher Education Institutions, in accordance with section 54(2)(a)(i) of the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No. 101 of 1997), as amended.
- An internationally accredited institution of higher education, accredited by its government as an institution of higher education, that is included in relevant handbooks (such as the International Handbook of Universities, published in association with the International Association of Universities).
- A South African college for Further Education and Training accredited as a provider with Umalusi, the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training;

30.1.2 “**advanced qualifications**” are the second or higher level of qualifications offered; they typically follow on “entry-level qualifications”;

30.1.3 “**applicant**” refers to a person who applies for or intends to apply for RPL or any other application in terms of this policy. An applicant may be a current registered student (part-time or full-time) or a potential student;

30.1.4 “**entry-level qualifications**” are the first level of qualifications on the Higher Education Qualifications Sub Framework (HEQSF), and they commence on level five (5) of the HEQSF. They include qualifications such as higher certificates, diplomas, bachelor- and professional bachelor degrees (Although these examples are provided with reference to the HEQSF framework of 2013, it is acknowledged that an interim transition period will exist where previous qualifications will also apply);

30.1.5 “**equivalence**” is an award made to grant an applicant admission to a qualification based on the fact that the applicant’s qualification is at least 70% equivalent to the prerequisite qualification for a specific programme;

30.1.6 “**equivalent qualification**” means a qualification, completed at an accredited institution of higher education, which is not identical to the admission requirements of the programme but which is evaluated to be on the same NQF Level, and of which the study content overlaps by at least 70% with that of the set admission requirement qualification;

30.1.7 “**formal learning**” means learning that occurs in an organised and structured education and training environment and that is explicitly designated as such. Formal learning leads to the awarding of a qualification or part qualification registered on the NQF;

30.1.8 “**informal learning**” means learning completed at any institutions other than “accredited institutions of higher education” or any non-credit-bearing learning completed at “accredited institutions of higher education”;

30.1.9 “**lifelong learning**” means learning that takes place in all contexts in life from a life-wide, life-deep and lifelong perspective. It includes learning behaviours and obtaining knowledge, understanding, attitudes, values and competences for personal growth, social and economic well-being, democratic citizenship, cultural identity and employability;

30.1.10 “**non-formal learning**” means learning (competencies) achieved through life and/or work experience and not via formal qualifications or credits;



- 30.1.11 **“Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)”** means the principles and processes through which the prior knowledge and skills of a person are made visible, mediated and assessed for the purposes of alternative access and admission, recognition and certification, or further learning and development;
- 30.1.12 **“prior learning”** refers to the competencies currently held by the applicant, regardless of how, when or where the learning occurred. Such competencies may be attained in a number of ways and include learning obtained through formal, informal and non-formal learning; and
- 30.1.13 **“status”** means the recognition granted to an applicant to register for a programme if the applicant is not the holder of the required admission qualification or an equivalent qualification, but is the holder of another qualification on the same NQF Level as that of the prerequisite qualification.

## **30.2 RULES**

- 30.2.1 Equivalence is an application for admission to a qualification based on the fact that the applicant's existing qualification is at least 70% similar to the prerequisite qualification, as stated in the admission requirements for that programme (see **30.1.5** and **30.1.6**).
- 30.2.2 Request to issue a qualification is an application based on an anomaly (a deviation from the norm or from expectations) that prevents the issuing of a qualification. To merit the consideration of such a request, special circumstances should prevail.
- 30.2.3 RPL for advanced admission is an application for admission where the applicant does not meet the stated admission requirements but wishes to be admitted to an advanced qualification on the basis of RPL. As part of a rigorous assessment process the applicant would need to furnish evidence of exceptional experience, depth and scope before his or her application would be considered.
- 30.2.4 RPL for entry-level admission (with an NSC or a SC) is an application for admission into an entry-level qualification where the applicant holds a Senior Certificate, National Senior Certificate or equivalent qualification that fails to meet the specific admission requirements of the intended entry-level qualification 7. Applicants need to provide evidence of significant and relevant prior learning before applications will be considered.
- 30.2.5 RPL for entry-level admission (without an NSC or a SC) is an application for admission into an entry-level qualification where the applicant does not hold a Senior Certificate, National Senior Certificate or equivalent qualification, and where application is made for RPL to be granted on the basis of work experience, prior learning and maturity. Applicants need to provide evidence of significant and relevant prior learning before applications will be considered.
- 30.2.6 Status is an application to register for a programme when the applicant does not hold the required admission qualification or an equivalent qualification, but holds another qualification on the same NQF level as that of the prerequisite qualification (see **30.1.13**).
- 30.2.7 Module/subject RPL is an application for recognition of a specific module(s)/subject(s) to obtain RPL exemption for that module(s)/subject(s).

## **30.3 RULES REGARDING THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE APPLICANT**

- 30.3.1 It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide proof/evidence of prior learning and acquired competencies when applying for RPL. Such evidence must be submitted in a language that is in accordance with the University's language policy.
- 30.3.2 Applications for RPL must be submitted at least six (6) months prior to the intended date of registration.
- 30.3.3 Applicants must adhere to the agreed target dates for submission of evidence, completion of activities, or any other actions required to successfully complete the application process.



30.3.4 Applicants who have obtained qualifications outside the Republic of South Africa must include a South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Certificate of Evaluation of qualifications presented.

#### **30.4 RULES REGARDING TUT RESPONSIBILITIES**

30.4.1 TUT is responsible for providing counselling and guidance to the applicant regarding the preparation of evidence for RPL applications.

30.4.2 TUT is responsible for processing applications in a timely, clear and transparent manner.

#### **30.5 RULES RELATED TO APPEALS BY APPLICANTS**

30.5.1 Appeals should be submitted within ten (10) working days of receipt of the decision by the applicant.

30.5.2 An applicant may appeal against a decision if s/he feels dissatisfied with the process or assessment decision.

#### **30.6 RULES RELATED TO ASSESSMENT FOR RPL**

30.6.1 Assessment for RPL must be done in compliance with the TUT policy on assessment and moderation.

30.6.2 Assessment for RPL must focus on previously acquired competencies, not on current teaching and learning practices.

30.6.3 When applications for module/subject RPL are approved, results on the academic record will be reflected as "RPL exemption" and no marks will be allocated.

