SACPCMP POLICY ON RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

CBE	The Council for the Built Environment
IPDM	Initial Professional Development Modules
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SACPCMP	The South African Council for the Project and Construction Management Professions
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority

Definitions

Informal Learning	According to the SAQA *National Policy for the Implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)* **informal learning** is "Learning that results from daily activities related to paid or unpaid work, family or community life, or leisure".
Learning Outcomes	According to the SAQA *National Policy for the Implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)* **learning outcomes** are "The contextually demonstrated end-products of specific learning processes, which include knowledge, skills and values".
Meta-Assessment	This a term borrowed from the education quality assurance field which describes the function of evaluating evaluation itself. However, for the purpose of RPL **meta-assessment** refers to the overall assessment and synthesis of an applicant's knowledge as evidence of learning based on the learning outcomes of relevant qualifications.
Non-formal Learning	According to the SAQA *National Policy for the Implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)* **non-formal learning** is the "Planned learning activities, not explicitly designated as learning towards the achievement of a qualification or part-qualification; often associated with learning that results in improved workplace practice".
Registered Person	Is defined in the Act as a person registered under the categories referred to in section 18 of the Act.
The Act	In this policy 'the Act' refers to the founding legislation of the Council which is the Project and Construction Management Professions Act 48 0f 2000.

1. Introduction

The South African Council for the Project and Construction Management Professions (SACPCMP) is established through the Project and Construction Management Professions Act 48 of 2000, hereafter referred to as 'the Act' to provide for the registration of professionals. According to Section 1 (xiv) of the Act, registration is defined as assessment of competency of applicants for the purpose of registration under the act and entering the names of the applicants who qualify into a register.

The South Africa Qualifications Authority (SAQA) in its *National Policy for the Implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)* defines RPL as "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". Furthermore, RPL provides alternative access into a programme of learning or professional designation.

2. Legislative and Policy Framework

In Section 19 of the Act which refers to the powers of the SACPCMP in relation to registration sub-section (4) states that prior learning is "the previous learning and experience of a learner, howsoever obtained, against the learning outcomes required for a specified qualification and the acceptance for the purposes of qualification of that which meets those requirements". RPL is the means through which the SACPCMP seeks to obtain evidence of prior learning through the acknowledgement of, amongst others, non-formal and informal learning for the purpose of registration, and by so doing attempt to address visible and invisible barriers that exist regarding access to the processions under the ambit of the SACPCMP.

This policy draws on SAQA's *National Policy for the Implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning* (RPL) and *Policy and Criteria for Recognising a Professional Body and Registering a Professional Designation for the Purposes of the National Qualification Framework Act* (Act 67 of 2008) as well as the Council for the Built Environment's (CBE) *Policy Framework on Recognition of Prior Learning in the Built Environment*.

3. Policy Prescripts

3.1. RPL Criteria

Clear criteria and guidelines against which applicants for RPL will be evaluated must be published for a period that will be determined by the SACPCMP. These criteria stipulate the requirements for applicants to be eligible for RPL for access into a specific designation.

3.2. Application for RPL

Provision has been made for persons who do not have the relevant formal qualifications but have some substantial knowledge and experience in the field of a specific category. This also includes applicants who have non-built environment related qualifications or qualifications that are not recognised for registration in a specific category.

According to Section 11 (a) and 19(1)(a) and (b):

    i.   A person must apply in the prescribed application form for registration accompanied by the prescribed fee. In terms of RPL the applicant will be required to apply for RPL before being recommended for registration in a particular category and designation.

3.2.1. Prescribed Application Form
The SACPCMP prescribed application form is digitally available on its registration platform.

As part of the application, applicants will be required to sign and adhere to a Code of Conduct. If an applicant is found to be in breach of this Code of Conduct will result in a penalty against the applicant as determined by the SACPCMP.

3.2.2. Fees and Charges

In terms of Section 12 of Act 48 of 2000, the Council may, with regard to the fees and charges which are payable to the Council, determine:
    i.   Application fees
    ii.   Registration fees
    iii.   Annual fees or portion thereof, in respect of a part of a year.
    iv.   The date on which the fee or charge is payable
    v.   The fees payable for an appeal in terms of section 24(1) or
    vi.   Any other fee or charge it considers necessary

The Council may grant exemption from payment of application fees, registration fees, annual fees, charges, or a portion thereof referred to above on a case-by-case basis and after application by the relevant applicant.

All the approved fees related to registration including RPL are gazetted annually, and these are the fees which will be applied for RPL for the relevant period of validity.

3.3. Competency Frameworks

According to Section 13 (d) of the Project and Construction Management Profession Act, 48 of 2000, the Council may consult with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) or any Body established by it and the voluntary associations, to determine competency standards for the purpose of registration.

A Competency Standards Framework for each category must be gazetted and implemented for a period determined by the Council, against which applicants must be assessed for the purpose of registration.

The Competency Standards Frameworks are designed to describe the knowledge, skills and attitudes that a person must have in order to be deemed competent and registered as a professional in a specific category. The RPL process aims to establish the knowledge base of an applicant before access to registration is granted and a full competency assessment undertaken for the purpose of registration.

3.4. Recognition of Educational Achievement

The RPL process is designed to assess the amount of knowledge applicants possess and credit them for their knowledge base. This may include the acknowledgment of the educational achievement of applicants obtained through formal qualifications, which fall outside of the Registration Criteria.

The recognition of educational qualifications must be conducted in accordance with the SACPCMP's *Criteria and Process for the Recognition of Educational Qualifications*.

Furthermore, RPL applicants have the following options for the individual assessment of whether they satisfy the educational requirements of a specific designation:

i.   Accredited Examinations at the exit level of the accredited qualifications, part qualifications or short-learning programmes, set by accredited higher education providers, accredited training providers or accredited examining bodies.

ii. Assessment of evidence presented by the applicant of prior learning against specified criteria.

iii. Evidence of work experience against specified criteria.

iv. Evaluation of formal educational qualification

For RPL applicants who have obtained formal qualifications that are not recognised by the SACPCMP for the purpose of registration or that are not built environment related, an educational evaluation will be undertaken through the SACPCMP's *Criteria and Process for the Recognition of Educational Qualifications*.

3.4.1. Criteria for Recognising Formal Qualifications for the purpose of RPL

In order for the Council to recognise any educational qualification for the purpose of RPL, which has been obtained in the Republic of South Africa:

 i. It must be a full or part qualification or unit standard
 ii. Registered on the NQF
 iii. Obtained from an accredited educational institution, this means that:
  a) It is accredited by the Council for Higher Education (CHE) if it is an academic qualification.
  b) It is accredited by the Quality Council for Trades and Occupation (QCTO) if it is an occupational qualification.

With regards to a foreign qualification has been evaluated by SAQA and evaluation certificate has been obtained.

3.5. RPL Structure and Assessment

The structure of and process of assessment for RPL must include:

 i. Applicant-support before, during and after the RPL process
 ii. Preparation for any processes undertaken for the purpose of RPL (including guidance and support in preparation of evidence of relevant prior learning)
 iii. Mediation of knowledge obtained informally, non-formally and formally
 iv. Provision of feedback after assessments

The SACPCMP assessment methodology/tools for RPL are outlined in the SACPCMP Competency Assessment Framework with the relevant level of achievement requirements.

Applicants who successfully complete the RPL process will be awarded an RPL certificate which will grant them access to a specific registration category and designation.

Applicants who have achieved below the required level of achievement (within a stipulated threshold) will be provisionally approved on condition that they undertake the process described in sub-section 3.5.2.

3.5.1. Phases of RPL Assessment

Assessment for RPL will be undertaken in two (2) phases:

	Comparison of experience against accredited or recognised learning programmes
i. Phase 1	Careful study of the relevant qualification and/or the unit standards and an indication of why the applicant believes, on the strength of his/her experience, that a particular learning programme can be successfully credited via the RPL process. This may not be limited to learning requirements but can include any other requirements stipulated in the published RPL Criteria. This phase will determine, based on the above, whether an applicant will achieve successful entry to the RPL process.

	Meta-Assessment
ii. Phase 2	Assessment tools that operate on the "meta-assessment" level rather than on the more detailed learning assessment level will be utilised, constructed using the Exit Level Outcomes and Associated Assessment Criteria in qualification documents. The purpose of this phase is to determine an acceptable level of expertise.

3.5.2. Provisions for gaps in RPL Applicant knowledge and skills

If after the RPL assessment it is established that there are gaps in the knowledge and skills of an applicant, the applicant will be required to undertake specific Initial Professional Development Modules (IPDM) which are deemed as being desirable to meet the category of registration for which the applicant is being recommended. The IPDM are developmental programmes that bridge the gaps identified and are tailored around each applicant's identified developmental area, which is dependent on their assessment outcome.

The applicants will be required to undergo an examination on each module, as determined by the Council, passing which they will receive a certificate of competence and be allowed to proceed to the professional registration process.

4. PAJA Imperatives

To give effect to the right to administrative action that is lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair and to the right to written reasons for administrative action as contemplated in section 33 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

4.1. Procedurally Fair Administrative Action

(1) Administrative action which materially and adversely affects the rights or legitimate expectations of any person must be procedurally fair.

(2) A fair administrative procedure depends on the circumstances of each case.

In order to give effect to the right to procedurally fair administrative action, an administrator (SACPCMP), must:

    i. give a person adequate notice of the nature and purpose of the proposed administrative action.

    ii. Provide a reasonable opportunity to make representations.

    iii. Provide a clear statement of the administrative action.

    iv. Provide adequate notice of any right of review or internal appeal, where applicable; and

    v. Provide adequate notice of the right to request reasons for the administrative action to give effect to the right to procedurally fair administrative action.

In order to give effect to the right to procedurally fair administrative action, an administrator (SACPCMP) may, in his or her or its discretion, also give a person

    vi. The opportunity to obtain assistance and, in serious or complex cases, legal representation.

    vii. The opportunity to present and dispute information and arguments; and

    viii. The opportunity to appear in person.

If it is reasonable and justifiable in the circumstances, an administrator (SACPCMP) may depart from any of the requirements referred to above. In determining whether a departure is reasonable and justifiable, an administrator (SACPCMP) must consider all relevant factors, including:

ix.   the objects of the empowering provision.

x.   the nature and purpose of, and the need to take, the administrative action.

xi.   the likely effect of the administrative action.

xii.   the urgency of taking the administrative action or the urgency of the matter; and

xiii.   the need to promote an efficient administration and good governance.

Where an administrator (SACPCMP) is empowered by any empowering provision to follow a procedure which is fair, the administrator may act in accordance with that different procedure.

An administrator (SACPCMP) must convene an internal tribunal to hear a case convened by a person aggrieved and seeking relief for just administrative action. The tribunal shall follow the same procedure as that of a case of against a professional for misconduct.

4.2.   Remedies of Administrative Action

The tribunal, in proceedings for review, may grant any order that is just and equitable, including orders directing the administrator (SACPCMP):

i.   to give reasons; or

ii.   to act in the manner the tribunal requires.

iii.   prohibiting the administrator from acting in a particular manner.

iv.   setting aside the administrative action and

v.   remitting the matter for reconsideration by the administrator, with or without directions; or

vi.   in exceptional cases, substituting or varying the administrative action or correcting a defect resulting from the administrative action; or

vii.   directing the administrator or any other party to the proceedings to pay compensation.

viii.   declaring the rights of the parties in respect of any matter to which the administrative action relates.

ix.   granting a temporary interdictor or temporary relief or

x.   as to costs.

5. Version Control

5.1. Maintenance of the Policy

The current policy will be reviewed every five (5) years and will be scheduled. Unscheduled reviews will be triggered by the following:

    i.   Legislation changes
    ii.   Benchmarking (changes in benchmarks or new benchmarks)
    iii.   Changes in technology

5.2. Dissemination

The policy will be made available to SACPCMP stakeholders and the general public on the SACPCMP website after publishing in the Government Gazette. It will be disseminated externally upon request.