



MAURITIUS QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

# Recognition of Prior Learning Guidelines

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In order to launch the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in 2007, the Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA) formulated an RPL Policy to stipulate broad guidelines with regard to the RPL implementation. The policy was drafted based on international best practices as a result of various consultations and collaboration with organisations like Commonwealth of Learning (COL), UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning (UIL) and Académie de la Reunion. In essence, the policy had laid much emphasis on the various stages of the RPL Process and its benefits to stakeholders. Emphasis was also made on the quality assurance aspect of the system with the registration of RPL Facilitators and Assessors.

The Authority started the implementation of RPL at lower levels of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (Definition at Appendix 1) and has over the years built a pool of registered RPL Facilitators who were eventually solicited to implement RPL in a number of sectors. In furtherance to its function of implementing and maintaining the NQF, the MQA has been generating unit standards and developing National Qualifications in different sectors of the economy. These qualifications can be acquired through formal training or RPL. The Authority has also been engaged in a number of RPL projects in collaboration with Ministries and funding agencies with a view to harness a more dynamic and qualified manpower.

The concept of RPL has indeed witnessed a growing interest amongst employers and employees during the past few years. In order to broaden the scope of RPL and increase access to obtaining valued qualifications, the MQA has planned to conduct RPL at higher levels of NQF. In this context, feedback was sought from various stakeholders on the current RPL Policy to fix any implementation or operational issues encountered so far and to lay down building blocks of establishing a successful RPL system.

This new document builds on the strengths of the existing policy as well as insights gained from on-going practice and feedbacks as a result of a series of consultation with stakeholders. . These guidelines are geared towards lifelong learning and set a more pragmatic approach towards the development of human capital in the context of the new skill requirements of the country by providing a National Recognition of Prior Learning Framework. It aims to facilitate and enhance the recognition of knowledge, skills and competencies by harnessing the principles of inclusion and equity with the democratisation of learning.

## 2.0 National Qualifications Framework & RPL

The NQF has been the main vehicle through which RPL has been promoted in Mauritius. The Framework explicitly aims to recognize all learning achievements regardless of the specific context where they were gained, including prior learning. It does so by establishing a single national point of reference for RPL, learning outcomes, alternative pathways to qualifications and a more flexible and integrated system of qualifications. The Authority's role is to encourage the development of processes for recognising prior learning and promoting its co-ordination and harmonization. (Appendix 2)

## 3.0 Scope and Purpose of Guidelines

The objectives of these guidelines are to:

- ✓ *Provide for the development of RPL*
- ✓ *Develop common understanding of RPL including its implementation and quality assurance*
- ✓ *Provide for a generic process and a segmented approach to RPL based on the level on the NQF*

These guidelines further outline a modality through which those claiming for RPL can perform the following:

	Map data against identified qualification or unit standards	
	Assemble data (evidences, etc.) into a comprehensive portfolio	
	Be assessed	
	Achieve formal recognition for their experiential learning and work-based learning.	

The guidelines have been designed to help the applicant claiming for RPL as well as other stakeholders looking for information pertaining to the RPL process e.g. the methodology and other requirements of RPL process.

## 4.0 What is Recognition of Prior Learning

Recognition of Prior Learning is a process used to identify, assess and certify a person's knowledge, skills and competencies, regardless of how, when and where the learning occurred, against prescribed standards for a part or full qualification. (ILO, 2015)

Two types of RPL have emerged in Mauritius reflecting the different purposes.

### **RPL for Access:**

Its aims to provide an alternative route into a programme of learning for those who do not satisfy the formal entry requirement for the purpose for admission. This type of RPL is very much present as a process at the level of Post-Secondary Education level.

### **RPL for Certification:**

It aims to award the learner with either a full qualification or part of a qualification.

In the second case, the implementation of RPL rests with the MQA as per the provisions of the MQA Act 2001 which is “to recognise and validate competencies for purposes of certification obtained outside the formal education and training systems”.

In the local context, however, for the purpose of certification, RPL considers both recognition of accredited learning and recognition of prior experiential learning. As such,

*“Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the acknowledgement through evaluation of a person's skills and knowledge acquired through previous training, work or life experience, which may be used to grant credit in a module or unit standard”.*

In order to assess RPL, the result of learning is considered rather than the inputs to learning .Therefore it is the process of recognising learning that has its source in

experience and /or previous formal, non-formal and informal contexts as shown below:

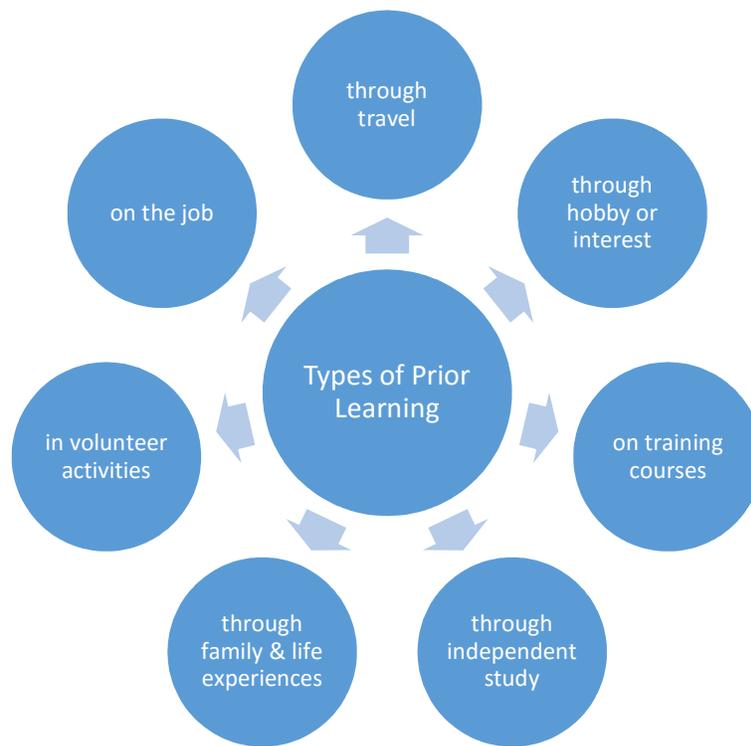


Figure 1: Types of Learning

## 5.0 National Recognition of Prior Learning

The National Recognition of Prior Learning Framework explicitly aims at providing the architecture and establishing an enabling environment that will facilitate the development and implementation of RPL. This RPL framework would, amongst others, establish a single and all-encompassing point of reference for RPL. Central to the present Mauritian RPL model, starting from its conception to its implementation, reside the different phases namely the pre-screening, facilitation and assessment stages. Though extensive experience and practice of RPL has been acquired in Mauritius, yet a co-ordinated approach is required to examine how RPL can be further developed, particularly its role in the up skilling and engaging people in education and training.

There is a call for more rigorous, robust, reliable and transparent as well as a comprehensive RPL framework. The NQF provides a basis for a more integrated approach

to RPL. It is hence acknowledged that RPL practice cannot take a “one size fits all” approach .Given the differing range of the unit standards at the different levels, different sets of RPL strategies is proposed for levels 2-3 ,levels 4-5 and for levels 6 i.e. the strategies for implementing RPL differ according NQF level at which it is being sought .These strategies are linked to the target group for which the system is aimed for thus further increasing the reliability and validity of the system and thereby enhancing trust.

Notwithstanding the above, RPL, at this stage is limited to NQF level 6.

### 5.1. Rationale for RPL

The educational and training landscape has taken a new boost with the advent of RPL. The recognition of all forms of learning outcomes outside the formal learning is a practice that makes visible and values the full range of competencies that individuals have obtained in various contexts through various means in different phases of their lives. RPL acts as a catalyst in the furtherance of lifelong learning.

### 5.2. Benefits of RPL

RPL offers an array of benefits for individuals, employers and to society as a whole as highlighted hereunder.

#### Benefits to Learners

RPL helps individual learners

- i. to ease the transition from informal and non-formal to formal learning by enabling the learners to value their achievements and to recognise the importance of their learning through experience;
- ii. to plan for further learning and personal/ career development:

#### Benefits to employers

RPL can support training and staff development strategies of employers by:

- i) Increasing motivation and interest in workplace practice on the part of the employee/learner;
- ii) Improving employee retention and preventing duplication of training.

### Benefits to Country

The country will benefit in the following ways:

- i. Improved policy decisions
- ii. Certified Skilled workforce
- iii. Optimisation on the use of human capital

### 5.3. RPL related Qualifications

Though a generic RPL process is proposed, RPL is qualification specific and each qualification has its own requirements for RPL. RPL is undertaken against a limited number of qualifications.

Each qualification has information requirements linked to their entry requirements and subject specific knowledge. RPL is usually done against a particular national unit standard-based qualification, part of qualification or group of unit standards. Conduct of RPL would be limited only against national unit standard based qualifications.

### 5.4. Eligibility to RPL

RPL conducted for the candidates from NQF level 2 to level 6 are required to satisfy the minimum RPL requirements given below:

#### **RPL at NQF Level 2-3**

- Those in long term employment with at least 3 years of experience in the relevant field, with no formal qualifications or low level qualification in the field requested.

#### **RPL at NQF Levels 4-5**

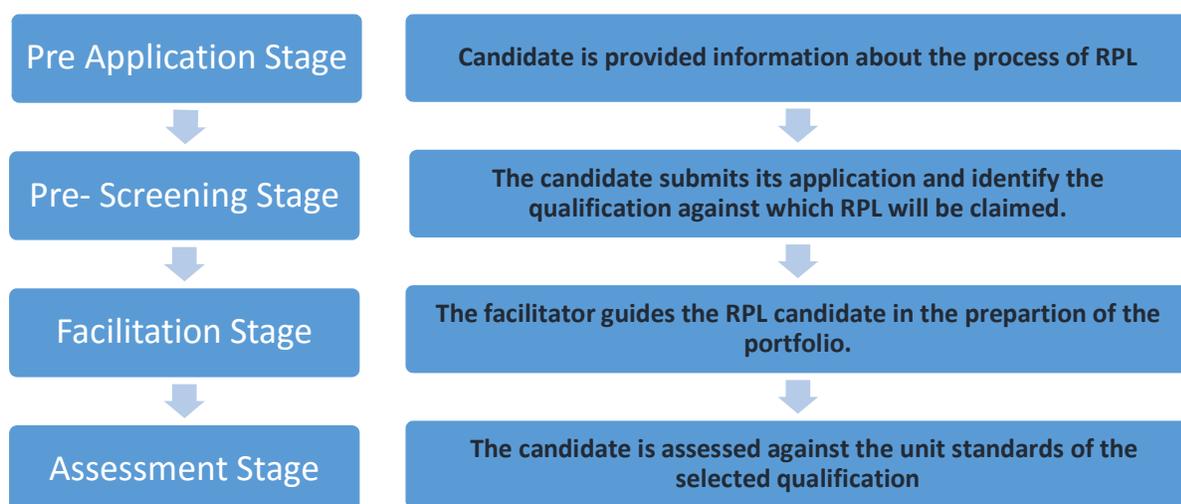
- Individuals seeking to upskill for meeting specific purposes e.g. regulatory requirements where minimum mandatory qualifications are required.
- Those employed whose highest level of educational attainment is limited to NQF level 3.
- Individuals seeking to move to a new sector and have significant work experience that would help that transition through assessment of core skills.
- The minimum industrial exposure requirement to become eligible for level 4-5 is 3 years in the relevant in the field requested.

## RPL at NQF Level 6

- Individuals seeking to upskill for meeting specific purposes e.g. regulatory requirements where minimum competency levels/ mandatory qualifications are required. (e.g. Childcare, Healthcare)
- Employers seeking to upskill staff due to, for example, new technologies/work practices (e.g. manufacturing operatives, clerical workers, and green economy skills).
- Those with qualifications at NQF levels 4/5 and above with significant work or voluntary experience minimum (3 years) who seek to upskill or transfer to new areas.
- Those that are unemployed from specific sectors such as construction and need to re-skill.

### 5.5. A generic RPL Process

The revised RPL process consists of four stages as shown below, which are generic in nature and applicable to all cases of RPL irrespective of the levels on the NQF at which it is being sought. (Appendix 3:RPL Process flowchart)



## 6.0 Pre application Stage

Given that assessment would be carried out against standards prescribed for a qualification while the RPL candidate has very often acquired a significant portion of his/her learning at workplace there is a need to establish close matching of the occupational standards with qualification standards. Occupational standards are designed by labour market whilst qualification standards focus on how and what people need to learn as well as how it will be assessed.

By including a Pre-application Stage in the existing model, persons interested in claiming for RPL are provided with all relevant information and are required to undergo a profiling exercise based on documentation submitted. At this stage, candidate investigates RPL. Emphasis should be on guidance and counselling so that RPL candidates are sufficiently informed about the RPL Process. At the end of this stage, the candidate may then decide either to proceed or not to proceed with RPL.

## 7.0 Pre-screening

The Pre-screening stage is conducted in the presence of the RPL Facilitator so that an initial assessment of the skills and competences of the candidate is effected with a view to identify correctly the qualification against which RPL will be claimed.

At the end of the Pre-screening stage, the RPL Candidate and the RPL Facilitator will have to sign a collaborative Agreement where the relevant responsibilities of each party will be spelt out with regard to the development and submission of a portfolio.

## 8.0 Facilitation

At the start of the facilitation stage, the RPL Candidate in consultation with the RPL Facilitator engages in a mutual relationship to prepare for assessment/interview by collecting and organizing documentation. The Candidate should submit an implementation plan to the Authority specifying the tentative dates, time and venue for

conduct of facilitation sessions. MQA officers will monitor the facilitation sessions on a regular basis and supports candidate through the availability of print materials, workshops, coaching etc.

### **8.1. Enlistment of RPL Facilitators**

Facilitators will henceforth be enlisted following expressions of interest and selection would be made based on a set of established criteria. In sectors where there are no facilitators, the Authority may solicit the services of practitioners from relevant institutions in the field (Appendix 3). It is recommended that assignment of an RPL facilitator be mandatory at all levels of the NQF.

### **8.2. Facilitation at NQF Levels 2-3**

It is recommended that the time allocated for facilitation at NQF Level 2 be at least 20 Hours & for NQF Level 3 be at least 30 Hours

The Facilitator will assist the candidates towards mounting the portfolio. However the portfolio can be mounted by any other person, other than the facilitator, identified by the candidate.

### **8.3. Facilitation at NQF Level 4-5**

The required time for facilitation at NQF Level 4 & NQF Level 5 would be 10 Hours.

### **8.4. Facilitation at NQF Level 6**

The required time for facilitation at NQF Level 6 would be at least 10 Hours.

For RPL at levels 4, 5 & 6 on NQF, candidates would be required to prepare their own portfolio, without the assistance of an external person, unlike RPL at NQF level 3.

Where the candidate could not complete the prescribed number of hours with the RPL facilitator during facilitation, the fees to be paid to the latter will be calculated on a pro-rata basis.

## 8.5. Summary

A summary of the requirements is proposed in the table below:

NQF Level	2-3	4-5	6
Minimum Years of experience in the field	3 years	3 years	3 years
Minimum Qualifications	No formal or NQF level 1	NQF level 3	NQF level 4 or 5
Other requirements	Regulatory requirements where minimum mandatory qualification is required		
Facilitator	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
Facilitation time /hrs	20 & 30 respectively	10 hrs	10 hrs

Table 2: RPL Requirements level wise

## 9.0 Assessment

There should be no fundamental difference between the assessment of previously acquired skills and knowledge and the assessment of skills and knowledge acquired through a current learning programme. The only difference would be in the mode of the assessment.

The assessment is carried out by a chosen awarding body which will determine comparability of learning against Unit Standards.

### 9.1. Awarding Bodies

The Awarding body should ensure that no distinction, other than for data analysis, is made between qualifications awarded through the formal and RPL routes.

The Awarding body should explore a range of assessment methods, depending on the sector, qualification and NQF Level, to assess learning outcomes achieved by RPL Candidates

The Awarding body should conduct RPL Assessment on a regular basis thrice a year and same is communicated to the Authority for onward communication to candidates.

Guidelines should be drafted and published for the conduct of RPL Assessment to ensure reliability, fairness and transparency. The RPL assessors may be appointed by the awarding body to constitute a Jury and they should show professional judgement in assessing the value of experience vis-à-vis formal learning. Training of RPL Assessors should be conducted by the Awarding Body in collaboration with the Authority

## 9.2. Assessment Methods

RPL recognizes that learning has been acquired in a variety of learning situations and life experiences. Therefore, a number of methods exist which allow for flexible and effective assessment of learning. These methods include:

### 9.2.1 Portfolio Assessments

A portfolio is a detailed document in which the candidate articulate and provide proof (documentation/verification) of his/her prior learning and is mounted with the help of a facilitator as applicable. The portfolio is submitted for assessment by panel of assessors who are knowledgeable of the learning outcomes of the particular qualification against which RPL is claimed.

The MQA undertakes to provide thorough guidance to RPL candidates by enrolling them on a Portfolio Development course.

Credit is granted for the learning gained out of experience instead of experience itself. The process of portfolio development is a useful self-assessment tool that can assist candidate in making effective decisions and choices.

Portfolio submission should be done within three to six months following the assignment of facilitator. The RPL facilitator should submit a monthly report of the progress of portfolio development for all candidates under his/her custody to the MQA.

It is recommended that all candidates, irrespective of NQF level at which RPL is being sought, should develop a portfolio of evidence of training and relevant work-related achievements. The portfolio should provide a comprehensive record of all technical and soft skills acquisition, work experience and all work-related achievements such as

promotion to leadership or supervisory roles. The Portfolio document should be accompanied by a RPL claim form.

The portfolio itself should contain evidence in two broad categories: Official documents and Supporting documents. (Appendix 4)

**Supporting documents** may be

- Details of any workplace or similar training programmes, signed by the trainer or supervisor;

#### Official Documents

- Job descriptions
- Details of work and training history
- Certificates from formal training courses

- Written statements attesting to work experience and skills development signed by supervisors and employers;
- Performance appraisal documents;
- Information on any leadership, supervisory and soft skills developmental roles held by the candidate;
- Details of any additional roles undertaken such as the establishment of workplace safety and quality improvement policies;
- Photographs of work sites, equipment used and products made by the candidate ;
- Logs of work activities.

While retaining evidence of the acquisition of technical skills may be the priority, documentation of soft skills should not be overlooked. Soft skills are commonly regarded as the everyday skills beyond the technical expertise and knowledge required to perform in a given role. These skills include

- Interpersonal, communication and customer service skills
- Capability to create networks and to work in teams
- Problem solving skills
- Research and analytical skills
- Time management skills
- Capability to learn and adapt.

## 9.2.2 Challenge Processes

These are methods of assessment that may be developed to measure a candidate prior learning as it relates to the learning outcomes of a specific qualification. The methods include:

- **Challenge Examinations (i.e. oral/written tests, projects, assignments,)**

These are tests, projects or assignments based on the unit standards of a specific qualification, which have been designed to assess learning. If the candidate believe that she/he have prior learning that is equivalent to a particular qualification, she/he will be provided with a qualification outline and have access to appropriate texts and other learning materials to prepare for these challenge examination(s). A candidate will be required to demonstrate through the challenge examinations that he/she has equivalent learning. If the candidate is successful in the challenge processes, he/she will be granted credit for the whole or part of the qualification.

- **Interview**

RPL assessment at any level on the NQF comprises of a component of interview. Once the portfolio received, the candidate is interviewed. The interview is normally of a 30-45 mins duration and has as objectives to clarify issues raised in documentary evidence presented and/or to review scope and depth of learning. Interview is particularly useful in areas where judgement and values are important and is based on applied competence/knowledge rather than being theoretical.

- **Skill Demonstrations (i.e. practical examinations, skill demonstrations, product assessments and simulations)**

This method involves practical examinations, skill demonstrations and simulations in which the candidate actually demonstrates his/her prior learning as it relates to the learning outcomes of a course(s). In this situation, candidates are provided with course outlines and performance checklists, in addition to texts and other course resources. Candidates are assessed on the specific learning outcomes and performance standards.

If candidate is successful in the challenge processes he/she is granted credit.

It is important to note that the challenge process for a particular qualification may include a combination of challenge examinations (i.e. oral/written tests, projects and assignments) and skill demonstration methods. Thus specific RPL strategies are proposed for the different NQF level that will allow an individual to demonstrate prior learning in the best way possible.

### 9.3. Assessment at NQF Levels 2-3

Candidate claiming for RPL at NQF Level 2 or 3 should be thoroughly briefed prior to the assessment, and may be required to submit a Portfolio in the prescribed format and undergo an interview. The candidate may also be subject to a challenge process that would consist of workplace assessment, skill demonstration for formal recognition.

### 9.4. Assessment at NQF Levels 4-5 & Level 6

Conducting RPL at higher NQF levels makes mapping more difficult, and as such a complete testing of all the specified unit standards may be the best way to achieve recognition for experience. This may apply especially where there is significant theoretical underpinning for the workplace skills.

For the purpose of RPL at NQF level higher than 3, candidate submitting portfolio would be subject to interview followed by a challenge process that may consist of examination or demonstration of practical skills, etc.

At NQF levels 4-5 and level 6, assessment would be done through challenge exam (i.e. that an individual can demonstrate their knowledge through examination without formal classroom learning)/assignments/skills demonstrations/skills audits. Where individuals do not meet the relevant standards through RPL they would be required to participate fully in training programmes.

In addition, there may be many soft skills that people have acquired through work and community/voluntary experience (but do not have those competencies documented or certified) that are useful across sectors. Such skills which include project management skills, organisational skills, communications skills, administration skills, IT skills, sales and marketing skills etc., should also be considered for assessment through RPL.

A system of RPL to support literacy, numeracy, and ICT should develop progression options at NQF Level 4 to facilitate the development of core and generic skills and contribute to access, transfer and progression.

## 9.5. Role of Assessor

The assessor must :

- Plan and prepare an assessment
- Prepare applicant for assessment
- Conduct assessment and document evidence
- Evaluate evidence and make assessment judgements
- Provide feedback to relevant parties
- Review assessment

While performing the above, the assessor will

- Identify and solve problems using critical and creative thinking: planning for contingencies, applicants with special needs, problems that arise during assessment, suggesting changes to assessment.
- Work effectively in a team using critical and creative thinking: working with applicants and other relevant parties during assessment, as well as post-assessment.
- Organize and manage oneself and ones activities: planning, preparing, conducting and recording the assessment.
- Collect, analyse, organize and critically evaluate information: gather, evaluate and judge evidence and the assessment process.
- Communicate effectively: communicate during assessment, and provide feedback.
- Demonstrate the world as a set of related systems: understanding the impact of assessment on individuals and organisations.
- Be culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts: plan, conduct and give feedback on assessments in a culturally sensitive manner.

## 9.6. Assessment characteristics

The assessment methods highlighted earlier are based on the following guiding principles:-

- **Acceptability:** Match between learning outcome being demonstrated and evidence
- **Sufficiency:** Breadth and depth of evidence – evidence of reflection
- **Authenticity:** Is the evidence really the learner's own effort?
- **Currency:** Is the competency currently valid?

The evaluation grids for RPL assessment would be developed by the awarding body and would be based on a clustering of Unit Standards.

## 9.7. Roles of members of Jury

The role of the members of the jury is to:

- Reading of Portfolios prior to Assessment
- Preparation of questions to be asked to candidates
- Interview of candidates
- Comment on evaluation and performance
- Decision on attainment of candidate

## 9.8. RPL Assessment outcome

Once the assessment completed the deliberation would take the form of:

- Comments on evaluation and performance
- Decision on competencies acquired/not acquired
- Conditions and reasons for acquisition

Decision would then be made by the Jury.

## 10.0 Remedial options

Where the RPL candidate has not been able to demonstrate some or all unit standards of a full qualification through RPL, the candidate may be advised on alternative routes.

RPL candidates awarded only a Record of Learning can undergo RPL Assessment against those unit standards not yet achieved subject to following an approved/accredited course or acquiring relevant amount of working experience as applicable. Following favourable outcome of the assessment, the candidate may be awarded the full qualification.

## 11.0 Appeal Procedure for RPL

The RPL candidate can make an appeal to the MQA or awarding body with respect to the outcome of the RPL assessment if he /she is not satisfied with same within 21 days after having been notified of the results of the assessment.

## 12.0 Quality Assurance of RPL

Quality Assurance is paramount in the development of RPL. In order to ensure credibility, consistency and reliability of RPL, it is important to have a proper quality assurance in place. The quality assurance aspects of each stage of the RPL process is embedded in this new RPL guidelines. These aspects pertain to the guidance and counselling, facilitation and support, capacity building and enlistment of RPL facilitators, assessment modalities and monitoring and evaluation.

Moreso, Awarding bodies have responsibility to set standards for RPL assessment and in this context to oversee any arrangements for Quality Assurance, specific to RPL.

## 13.0 Cost of RPL

The costs of RPL would depend on a range of factors such as the assessment methods used (e.g. portfolio assessment vs. challenge exam), and the scale and maturity of the RPL system. The fees below provide examples of a range of the different costs/fees that would be applicable. It should be noted that fees for RPL do not necessarily reflect total RPL costs. Total costs would include developing systems, training staff, and facilitation, dealing with queries, processing applications, verification, guidance or other support structures.

### 13.1 Application Fees

The RPL Application Fees will need to be subsequently adjusted in line with the level of the qualification on the NQF at which RPL is requested, and number of hours spent at facilitation stage as follows:

NQF Level	Facilitation Time/Hours	Application Fees /Rs
Level 2	20	2000
Level 3	30	2500
Level 4	10	3000
Level 5	10	3500
Level 6	10	4000

### 13.2 Assessment Fees

An assessment fee, as agreed by the awarding body, will be applicable. Same will be communicated to the candidate by MQA and the amount transferred to the awarding body upon submission of the completed portfolio and candidate proceeding for assessment.

## 14.0 Administration and Management of RPL

### 14.1 Communication and Guidance

The potential of RPL should be communicated to adult learners. RPL policies and procedures should be clearly articulated by education and training providers and easily accessible to interested parties. Information/communication resources should be pooled and co-ordinated where RPL initiatives are advanced on a sectoral basis. Employer representative organisations such as Building and Construction Engineering Companies Associations (BACECA), Association des Hôteliers set Restaurateurs de l'île Maurice (AHRIM), Business Mauritius and Unions etc. should also disseminate information on RPL to employees.

Information and guidelines targeted at learners and employers need to be developed. RPL Web based information targeted at assisting people to develop career pathways have a role in promoting RPL as a potential option to candidates with experience .

In order to provide information about learning opportunities for adults, there must be relevant information from education providers available.

### 14.2 Co-ordination and Implementation

While there are a significant number of stakeholders, the main driver of RPL has been the MQA. The development of RPL at NQF levels 2-6 will require input from all stakeholders ranging from non-governments organisations to employers with regard to informing and directing individuals towards RPL. Awarding bodies [Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD),Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE)],Funding organisations e.g. UNDP and National Empowerment Foundation(NEF )should facilitate the development of RPL within identified sectors and help building platforms to further drive the RPL initiatives . Additionally, any action in this regard would have to take place on a relatively small scale initially with a view to evaluating the potential for scalability.

### 14.3 Intake and Monitoring of RPL

A targeted, sectoral and project based approach to delivering RPL should be adopted where appropriate to meet specific needs. This would be part of an integrated approach to skills/competency profiling, identification of qualification needs, RPL assessments and programme/module design. Intake of RPL Candidates will be limited to thrice yearly namely: Jan/Feb, April /May and August /September .Candidates will be given a three month period to complete the Portfolio and subsequently once the portfolio is finalised assessment may be organised on a similar thrice yearly basis. The three months may, upon agreement with all parties involved in the RPL process, be extended.

During the initial three months period for the preparation of the portfolio candidates will be monitored on a monthly basis. MQA will provide the venue for such monitoring exercises or same may take place at agreed venue whereby the MQA may visit the RPL candidate. Only upon a favourable monitoring report submitted by the facilitator to the MQA, the candidate may be enrolled for assessment.

## 15.0 References

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### Appendix 1: Definitions and Terminologies

#### Accredited Learning

Any learning that takes place in a formal set up through an accredited course.

#### Assessment

Collecting and evaluating evidence against specified criteria to establish the level of performance.

#### RPL Assessor

A person who evaluates the assessment evidence presented by learners.

#### Award

Conferment of a qualification following successful formal assessment.

#### Credits

Values assigned to a module/unit standard or a qualification that represents the notional learning time required to meet the performance requirements and standards of the module/unit standard or qualification. One credit is equivalent to 10 hours of notional learning, out of which one third of the time is devoted to theory, one third of the time devoted to practical and one third for self- learning.

#### Candidate

Candidate is the person who is claiming RPL against a qualification and is therefore not enrolled in a formal programme, as opposed to 'learner', who is assumed to be involved in a formal education or training programme.

#### Competence

The ability to do something well.

#### Experiential Learning

The process of learning through work and life experience.

#### Facilitator

A person responsible for leading or coordinating the work of a RPL candidate for the purpose of portfolio development.

### **Formal learning**

Structured learning that is largely directed by professional educators and trainers within dedicated learning systems.

### **Generic Skills/ Essential Skills/ Key Skills**

Skills which are not specific to work in any particular occupation or industry, but are important for work, education and life generally, e.g. communication skills, mathematical skills, computer literacy, interpersonal competence and analytical skills.

### **Informal learning**

Learning that has a less formal structure and sequence and is usually outside organisations that have education or training as their core business.

### **Learning and/or Training Outcomes**

Statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do as a result of both formal and informal learning and which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence.

### **Lifelong learning**

All learning activities undertaken throughout life ,which result in improving knowledge, know-how skills ,competences and /or identification for personal social and /or professional reasons (source :CEDEFOP 2011 )

### **Moderation**

A term that broadly covers processes used for assuring the consistency of with the required standard across a number of assessors or assessing bodies.

### **Moderator**

Independent person who has acknowledged expertise to confirm that results reflect intended standards.

### **Module**

A small, self-contained teaching/learning component of a course/programme that is integral to that course/programme.

### **Monitoring**

On-going observation of indicators of compliance against set standards.

### **National Qualifications Framework**

Collectively, all nationally registered qualifications and their associated unit standards, the defined and logical relationships between them.

### **Performance criteria**

Statements against which the attainment of elements of competence/outcomes of learning is measured. They describe the type and quality of evidence that must be considered by an assessor towards awarding credits for a module/unit standard.

### **Portfolio**

A portfolio is a detailed document in which the candidate articulate and provide proof (documentation/verification) of his/her prior learning and is mounted with the help of a facilitator as applicable

### **Programme of study**

A structured pathway of learning or training designed to equip a person with the knowledge, skills understanding, attitudes, behaviour and competencies relevant to requirements for the award of a module/unit standard or qualification.

### **Qualification**

The formal recognition of the achievement of the required number and range of credits and other requirements at specific levels as determined by the awarding body. Qualifications obtained locally are based on the NQF.

### **NQF Qualification Levels**

The ten levels of the National Qualifications Framework, each defined in terms of progressive stages of achievement/outcomes and complexity skills applicable

### **Quality Assurance**

Formal evaluation, monitoring and auditing processes to confirm that systems and processes are in place to ensure that educational/training provision meets the stated standards.

### **Record of Learning**

A transcript of the learning achievement based on the qualifications awarded for each learner.

### **Recognition of Qualification**

A formal acceptance by a competent Authority of an educational or professional qualification.

### **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**

The acknowledgement through evaluation of a person's skills and knowledge acquired through previous training, work or life experience, which may be used to grant credit in a module or unit standard.

### **Registered Training Institution**

Any institution operating in Mauritius that has, as its purpose, the provision of formal education/training and has been issued a registration certificate by the MQA for a specified period of time.

### **Registration**

The process for ensuring that a training institution, following a formal evaluation against set criteria is able to provide a sound and stable learning environment.

### **Sector**

A defined portion of social, economic or educational activity.

### **Training Institution**

A training provider which is responsible for developing and dispensing knowledge, understanding skills and competencies through any mode.

### **Unit Standard**

A registered statement of the learning outcomes, the type and quality of evidence that represents performance worthy of the award of credits, and the contexts in which that evidence should be demonstrated.

## Appendix 2: National Qualifications Framework

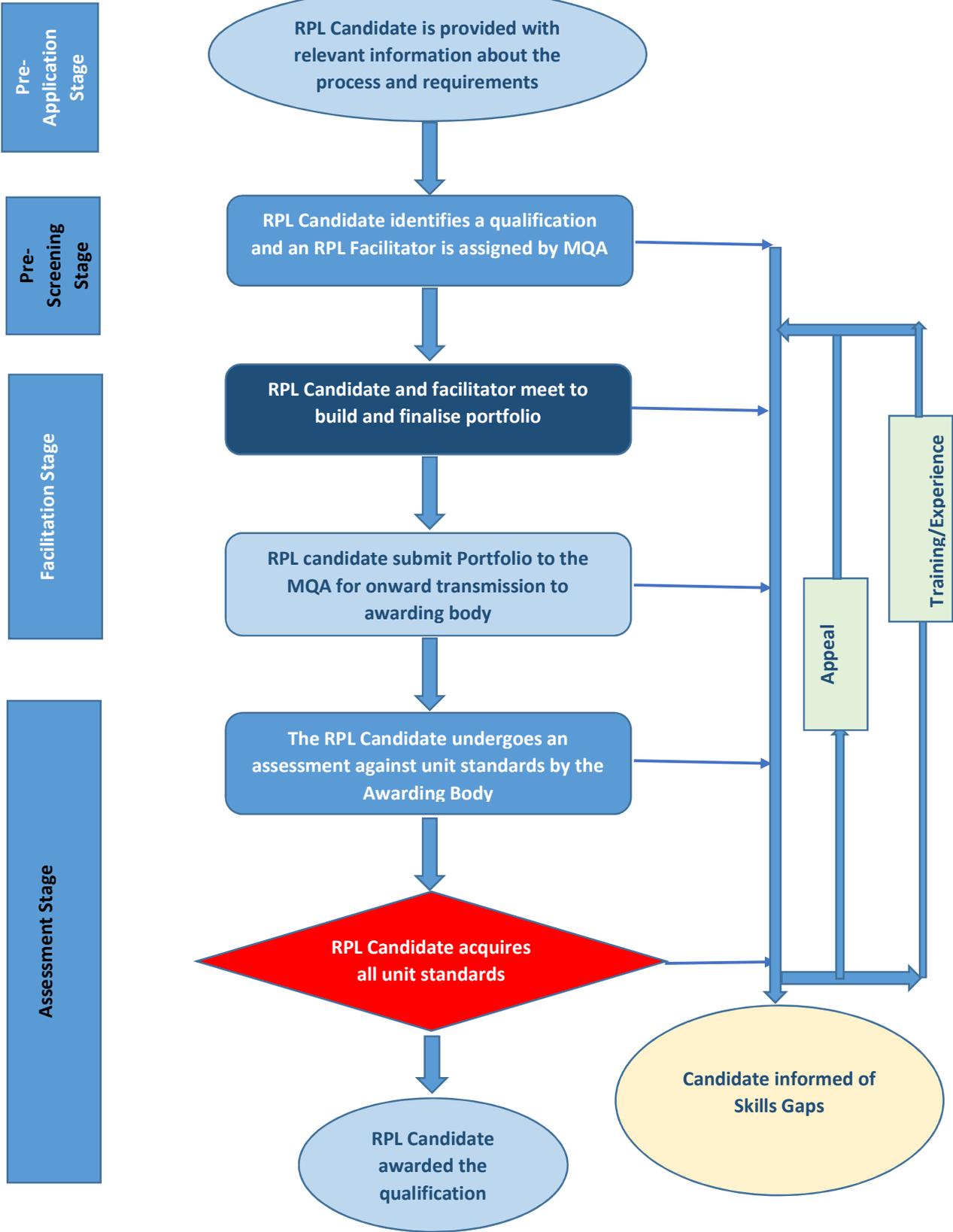


MAURITIUS QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

### THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

LEVEL	PRIMARY / SECONDARY EDUCATION	TVET / WORKPLACE	TERTIARY EDUCATION	LEVEL
10			<b>Doctorate</b>	10
9			<b>Masters Degrees eg MA, MSc, M Phil</b>	9
8			<b>Post-Graduate Certificate, Post-Graduate Diploma</b>	8
7			<b>Bachelor degree with Honours, Conversion Programmes</b>	7
6			<b>Bachelor (Ordinary Degree)</b>	6
6		<b>Diploma</b>	<b>Diploma</b>	6
5	<b>HSC / GCE 'A' Level / BAC / IBAC</b>	<b>Certificate</b>	<b>Certificate</b>	5
4				4
3	<b>SC / GCE 'O' Level</b>			3
2				2
1	<b>Certificate of Primary Education</b>			1

### Appendix 3: RPL Process Flow Chart



## Appendix 4: RPL Facilitators

### 1. Criteria for enlistment as RPL Facilitator

Any person can act as RPL facilitator provided that s/he:

- Possess relevant academic/Technical/Vocational/Professional qualification issued by a recognized institution
- Possess relevant working experience in the field in which s/he intends to act as RPL Facilitator
- Followed the RPL Facilitator's Training Programme
- Has strong communication abilities
- Has good interview skills
- Has good listening skills

### 2. Role of RPL facilitators

RPL facilitators shall:

- Explain the RPL process to the applicant, i.e. elaborate on the purpose, the procedure and the process as well as the benefits associated with RPL;
- Inform the applicant about the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the concept of lifelong learning;
- Identify and advise on types of evidences (evidences can be a recommendation letter from employer, pay slip, existing work-based practices, pictures or videos, etc);
- Provide assistance to the applicant in the development of a portfolio by identifying relevant learning experience;
- Identify relevant unit standards pertaining to the learning experience;
- Advise the applicant whether the prior learning is likely to be at the level at which it is sought;
- Provide clarifications to the applicant on skills and competences required to achieve a particular unit standard;
- Inform the applicant on the criteria for his/her assessment and prepare the applicant for the assessment;
- Meet the candidate for a minimum of 10 hours during the facilitation process;

- Provide feedback on meetings to the Mauritius Qualifications Authority;
- Provide a detailed scheduling of meetings with RPL candidate;
- Ascertain that the venue and time for meeting the RPL candidate is appropriate to all parties.

### 3. Qualities of RPL Facilitators

The Facilitator should:

- Have strong communication abilities,
- Have good interview skills,
- Be able to make applicants reflect on experience to identify knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviour, real life situations and experience in non-formal and informal contexts,
- Be able to do notional levelling or mapping in relation to Unit Standards and Qualifications.

### 4. Training of RPL Facilitators

Capacity building exercise for Facilitators is important given their roles and responsibilities for an ideal RPL Facilitation process. The working relationship developed thereon is critical to success of the RPL process. Any training programme should emphasise on the role of the facilitator where he/she needs to guide the candidate in the development of a portfolio of evidences. In essence, the facilitator needs to have the knowledge and skills required to ensure that the candidate knows how to generate the evidence of learning required.

To support concepts and to impart techniques of facilitation, role play has to be employed as an effective training method by the facilitators. Through training facilitators should be exposed to listening and questioning techniques and opportunity to explore the underlying conditions necessary for effective facilitation such as empathy, non-judgemental attitude and unconditional positive regard are essential. Training session should be geared to enable participants to build up self-confidence to conduct RPL Facilitation.

## Appendix 5: List of evidences that RPL candidate may include in a Portfolio

### Work – Professional

- Resume
- Thank you notes, letters of recommendation
- Testimonials
- List of professional references
- Personality type assessments and/or Strengths Finder assessments
- Past reviews
- Work samples from current and previous jobs (non-proprietary)
- Class projects and educational development
- Processes or procedures created
- Sample forms or templates created
- Evidence of specific soft skills (writing, leadership, communication, conflict resolution)
- Evidence of specific technical skills (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, website development, databases, event planning)

### Education and Training

- Training attended
- Course descriptions of training completed next to the certificates of completion
- Workshops, seminars, conferences attended
- Qualifications
- Certifications
- Licenses
- Awards you've received
- Academic honours
- Internships
- Transcripts

## Activities and Volunteer Work

- Non-profit / Charity work (personal or corporate sponsored)
- Volunteer work
- Photos from events you coordinated
- Leadership office held in professional/community organizations or on related boards
- Community service project participation
- Proof of professional affiliations and leadership roles held

## Personal – Interests (if appropriate)

- Special training or independent (self-taught) learning
- Learning a new skill (e.g. website development)
- Learning a foreign language
- Writing skills (e.g. Showcase blog posts on a certain career topic or special interest you have, if appropriate.)
- Personal or professional mission statement
- Public speaking opportunities
- Flyers or newsletters you've designed or written articles for
- Research Projects
- Travel or Vacation Planning Projects

**Please refer any queries in writing to:**

**The Acting Director**

**Mauritius Qualifications Authority**

**Attention: The Manager, Framework Services**

**Pont Fer**

**Phoenix**

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