



**SOUTH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
AND MANAGEMENT**

SAAPAM

POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR THE RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

Document Reference: RPL POLICY

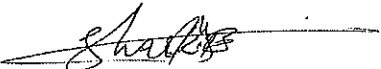
Document Type: Policy

Version: 1.0

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Name	Code of Ethics
Original Author	Prof J Molepo
Next Review Date	30 June 2027

APPROVAL AND CONTROL SCHEDULE

Approved by	Designation	Signature	Date of Approval	Copy Status
Prof K.B Shai	President		25/09/2023	

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List of Acronyms and Names

Acronym	Explanation
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAAPAM	South African Association for Public Administration and Management.
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority

Definition of Terms

Term	Definition
Access	Means provision of ease of entry to appropriate levels of education and training for all prospective applicants in a way that allows progression.
Authentic	Means evidence that must be attributed to the applicant
Certification Committee	
Currency	Means evidence that must be related to current competence.
Progression	Means ensuring that the framework of qualifications allows individuals to move through the levels of national qualifications.
Professional Body	Means anybody of expert practitioners in an occupational field; this includes an occupational body and statutory council
Professional Designation	
Qualification	Means a registered national qualification consisting of a planned combination of learning outcomes which has a defined purpose, intended to provide qualifying students with applied competence and a basis for further learning and which has been assessed in terms of graduate attributes, registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and certified and awarded by a recognised institution.
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	Means is a process through which formal, non-formal and informal learning are measured, mediated for recognition across different contexts and certified against the requirements for credit, access, inclusion or advancement in the formal education and training system or workplace.
Sufficient	Means enough appropriate evidence to meet all criteria needed to certify the applicant as competent and it proves that the performance can be repeated.
Valid	Means the evidence that relates to the specific standards and criteria to be assessed.

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1 Preamble

The South African Association for Public Administration and management (SAAPAM) accepts Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as an integral part for awarding professional designations. Also views RPL as an initiative to support transformation and open access to all professionals who are operating in the public administration and management profession.

It is acknowledged that all learning has value and SAAPAM accepts the challenge to assess prior learning and to award professional designations to promote professionalism amongst the community of practice. This is reflected in the vision and mission of SAAPAM.

The SAAPAM RPL Policy is designed to meet the objectives of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act, Act no 67 of 2008 to facilitate access to, and mobility and progression within the professional designation pathways and accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination of individual members in the awarding of professional designations. SAAPAM aims to open access to and redress past unfair discrimination in the professionalisation of the public administration professionals by creating fair procedures for recognition of Prior Learning. Therefore, SAAPAM aims to establish RPL process that is credible, quality-assured and consistent with accepted and approved principles and criteria of SAQA.

SAAPAM views RPL as a process whereby a person's prior learning is formally recognised against professional designations competencies and underlying qualifications, regardless of where and how the learning was attained. RPL acknowledges that people never cease to learn, whether learning takes place formally at an educational institution, or whether it takes place informally.

2 Background and Context

RPL in South Africa is aligned to notions of transformation; lifelong learning; and the objectives of the NQF. The RPL process is multi-dimensional. It is a process through which non-formal learning and informal learning are measured, mediated for

recognition across different contexts and certified against the requirements for credit, access, inclusion or advancement in the formal education and training system, or workplace. RPL processes can include guidance and counselling, and extended preparation for assessment. Assessment, an integral feature of all forms of RPL, does not exist in isolation from a range of other strategies that allow for different sources of knowledge and forms of learning to be compared and judged.

3 Legislative Framework

- i. The Constitution of the South African Association for Public Administration and Management;
- ii. National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act 67 of 2008;
- iii. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Coordination Policy (DHET, 2016);
- iv. National Policy and Criteria for the Implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (Amended in March 2019);
- v. Policy and Criteria for the Recognition of Professional Bodies and registration of the professional designations for the purposes of the National Qualifications Framework;
- vi. Level Descriptors for the South African National Qualifications Framework (SAQA, 2012) (and any subsequent amendments); and
- vii. National Policy and Criteria for Designing and Implementing Assessment for NQF Qualifications and Part-Qualifications and Professional Designations in South Africa (SAQA, 2014) (and any subsequent amendments).

4 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- i. Regulate SAAPAM internal processes and procedures for awarding professional designations through RPL;
- ii. Provide guidelines to the association and external candidates on the principles and processes that serve as a basis for awarding RPL;
- iii. Develop designation articulation pathways to facilitate access to and mobility and progression; and
- iv. Accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in creating opportunities for to be registered as members of the Association.

- v. encourage the provision of alternative access routes into professional designations through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL);

5 Scope/ Applicability

This policy is applicable to:

- i. SAAPAM members and staff;
- ii. RPL candidates; and
- iii. All professional designations within the parameters of the SAAPAM.

6 Objectives

The objectives are to:

- i. meet the requirements of the SAAPAM Constitution, in so far as to give credibility to those persons presenting evidence of prior learning in public administration and management and for awarding professional designations for the various categories of membership;
- ii. facilitate recognition of competency for awarding designations to applicants who do not meet the stipulated criteria;
- iii. broaden the entry routes into the association and to enhance professional competence of members; and
- iv. comply, where applicable, with the SAQA Policy and Criteria for the recognition of professional bodies and registration of professional designations for the purposes of the National Qualifications Framework.

7 Principles

- i. Through the recognition of prior learning, the SAAPAM will consider all relevant learning, irrespective of mode or place of learning;
- ii. Prior experiential learning may be awarded based on demonstrated learning which shows that a candidate has achieved specified designation competencies;
- iii. Participation in the RPL process is voluntary for applicants and a non-refundable application and assessment fees are payable for RPL;

- iv. Processes and practices for the implementation of RPL will be clearly stated and documented and available to all potential applicants.
- v. This will be in line RPL information (including SAAPAM RPL policy, criteria, guidelines, codes of conduct, ethics, assessment, moderation, RPL fees, as well as appeals policies) will be made available to the applicant.
- vi. SAAPAM does not accept any form of RPL evaluation undertaken by any other institution.
- vii. Any recognition of prior learning granted is aligned to active membership and specific professional designation.
- viii. Quality assurance processes guarantee the integrity and credibility of all aspects of the RPL process.
- ix. If the applicant is not satisfied with the outcome of any stage of the RPL process, s/he can appeal the process.
- x. Once approved the applicant becomes a member of SAAPAM and the Code of Conduct of SAAPAM shall apply.

8 RPL Application and Assessment Process

Step 1 - Submission of Application form and required documents to SAAPAM Administration Office.

Step 2 - SAAPAM will invoice the applicant.

Step 3 - Payment of invoice to be confirmed with SAAPAM Administration office.

Step 4 - Application is evaluated by the Committee to determine if the applicant meets the minimum entry requirements for RPL.

Step 5 – If the application is not successful, the applicant will be informed of the outcome and the appeal process;

Step 6: Application outcomes of successful applicants will be presented to the National Board for approval;

Step 7 - If the application is approved the applicant will be informed of assessment results after the approval by the Board and moderation is completed.

9 Roles and Responsibilities for the Implementation of RPL

9.1 The National Board

The national Board shall:

- i. establish RPL Committee (referred as Certification Committee);
- ii. establish RPL A appeal's Committee;
- iii. develop and make available to RPL candidates an RPL information leaflets and application procedures;
- iv. advise and provide support to RPL candidates of the value of prior learning and of the steps in the process involved for making an application;
- v. establish an application procedure to assist RPL candidates to apply on the basis of prior learning experiences and to attach supporting evidence of prior learning experiences;
- vi. ensure that the arrangements for selecting and assessing applications for RPL are transparent and fair;

- vii. monitor and record the application and its outcome to meet requirements of quality assurance elements for recognition of prior learning for awarding professional designations;
- viii. have the prerogative to approve/disapprove an application for professional designation after having satisfied itself that the applicant meets all the requirements to be awarded a designation based on the criteria; and
- ix. shall have the prerogative to revoke the professional designation if a member fails to comply with the SAAPAM code of Conduct and other related policies.

9.2 RPL Candidate

- i. Apply to the SAAPAM by completing a prescribed form;
- ii. Pay a non-refundable fee of as stipulated;
- iii. Submit a Portfolio of Evidence (PoE) which include amongst others:
 - Transcript of training from a previous educational institution.
 - Curriculum Vitae/Testimonials/reference letter from previous or current employers.
 - Assessment results or any relevant documentation that supports the RPL claim.
- iv. Members can appeal if they are not satisfied with the decision of the Board for not granting the designation through RPL.
- v. The designation awarded through RPL becomes valid if the member complies with all the SAAPAM requirements for membership.

9.3 The Executive Director

The Office of the Executive Director shall:

- i. coordinate meetings of the Committee;
- ii. Provide secretariat and technical support to the Committee;
- iii. Screen all applications for completeness and compliance with the criteria and circulate documents to the Committee 7 days before the meeting; and
- iv. Liaise with the applicants about the outcome of their applications.

9.4 The Certification Committee

The National Board may delegate some of its roles and responsibilities relating to RPL to the RPL Committee. Furthermore, the committee shall:

- i. Analyse the documents of the prospective members, taking into consideration the competencies of the professional designations that the applicant wants RPL for.
- ii. Compare the completed training/skills/ knowledge against the prescribed minimum requirements of the specific designation that the student wants to be awarded.
- iii. The Certification Committee will render their service voluntarily to SAAPAM. The Committee will meet four times a year prior to the sittings of the National Board to deal with the applications for RPL.
- iv. Make recommendations to the National Board for approval.

9.5 Composition of the RPL Committee

- i. Chaired by the member of the National Board
- ii. Deputy Chairperson – elected by the National Board
- iii. Not more than 4 members representative of the 9 provincial chapters
- iv. Representatives from the public sector
- v. Additional members can be co-opted based on the technical expertise required

9.6 The role of the RPL Appeals Committee:

- i. The role of the RPL Committee is limited to considering whether procedural fairness has prevailed in the consideration of the candidate's application for RPL;
- ii. An appeal will not be a re-hearing or a general review of the application.
- iii. The consideration of the RPL Appeal Committee will be confined to the issues raised in the grounds of the appeal and will not consider fresh evidence in support of the appellant's application.
- iv. The decision of the RPL Appeal Committee shall be final.

10 Minimum Criteria

- i. For candidates who do not meet the criteria to be awarded a professional designation, SAAPAM recognises that there are various ways to demonstrate competency of acquired learning and experience;
- ii. Therefore, SAAPAM provides for RPL procedures to obtain a professional designation. All RPL routes are measured against the competency outcomes and assessment criteria;
- iii. The prospective applicant must submit a portfolio of evidence of his/her educational achievements and previous work experience in support of the application. The Portfolio of Evidence should comprise of:
 - A comprehensive CV;
 - Details of relevant work experience or job description indicating dates and places where experience was obtained;
 - List of relevant training courses attended - including name of provider, name of course, attendance dates and what was learned;
 - Certified copies of all qualifications: foreign qualifications must be evaluated through SAQA verification services and provide SAQA e-Certificate of evaluation;
 - A testimonial from the previous employer/supervisor or any other relevant documentation;
 - Evidence of presentation of papers in local and international conferences and publication of more than 5 papers in a recognised journal; and
 - Attend the panel interview arranged by SAAPAM where necessary.

11 RPL Application and Assessment Process

Step 1: Submission of Application form and required documents to SAAPAM Administration Office.

Step 2: SAAPAM will invoice the applicant.

Step 3: Payment of invoice to be confirmed with SAAPAM Administration office.

Step 4: Application is evaluated by the Committee to determine if the applicant meets the minimum entry requirements for RPL.

Step 5: Recommendations of the Committees assessment outcomes will be presented to the Board for approval.

Step 6: After approval by the Board, RPL candidates will be informed of assessment results.

Step 7: Unsuccessful candidates may appeal the decision of the Board with 14 days of receipt of the written outcome from SAAPAM.

12 Review of the Policy

This Policy shall be reviewed every three years.

13 Policy Dissemination and Implementation

Once approved by the National Board, the Policy will be placed on the SAAPAM intranet. In addition, the need to make information about the RPL processes at SAAPAM will be widely available to possible applicants, by means of brochures and information available on the SAAPAM website.