

7. Who carries out RPL assessments, and what do they need to know?

Those assessing learners through an RPL process must at the very least meet the same requirements and good practice standards that are needed for any assessment carried out in the same field or discipline. In other words, they should have the relevant subject matter expertise, technical assessment knowledge, and familiarity with the outcomes and standards. If there are formal requirements in relation to particular outcomes or standards (such as registration as an assessor with a particular ETQA), they must also meet these.

Assessors working with RPL should also have some understanding of the general concept of RPL. Most importantly, they should understand the context in which they are carrying out RPL assessments - for example, what constitutes 'equivalent' knowledge and experience in relation to the formalised learning outcomes in their field? What is the purpose of RPL in this context? Do the learner expectations and consequences of the RPL exercise match the purpose? What are the costs, and what are the barriers in a particular RPL project?

Assessors who are going to focus on RPL assessments should achieve the Unit Standard 'Develop, support and promote RPL practices' (SAQA 116587), which states:

This unit standard aims to recognize the expertise of people who have a deep understanding of outcomes-based assessment in general, and of the complexities concerning the initiation and implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policies and practices in particular. Such people are able to promote an awareness of RPL-related issues and provide RPL advice and support, at systems and strategic level, to a range of people/bodies, including assessors, moderators, evidence facilitators, assessment designers, teachers, trainers, managers, organisations, institutions, companies and enterprises.

People credited with this unit standard are able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of the conceptual underpinnings and purposes of the recognition of prior learning,
- Investigate current RPL practice and opportunities in an organisation or sector,
- Develop RPL policies, procedures and plans for an organisation,
- Provide RPL advice and support, and
- Promote RPL practices.

You will find the complete Unit Standard under Useful Guidelines on the main page of The NQF and RPL.

[Answer to FAQ 7 The NQF and RPL, the NQF Gateway]