Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

A QCTO PERSPECTIVE
24 February 2011

Dugmore Mphuthing
Acknowledgement

• QCTO welcomes the SAQA initiative to convene a national conference on RPL in that:
  - It tacitly recognises the need for a response, across the board to the NSDS 3 challenge for an operational response to RPL implementation.
- It recognises the need to build upon and consolidate “existing islands of practice”
- It signals an aspiration and challenges all partners and role players in NQF implementation to work collaboratively and cooperatively.
The role of QCTO

- The QCTO is mandated by NQF legislation (NQF Act 2008 and Skills Development Amendment Act 2008) to develop and assure the quality of occupational standards and qualifications at all levels of the NQF.
- The QCTO is required to promote the objectives of the NQF.
- Liaise with SAQA, other quality councils and professional bodies with regard to standards and qualifications.
The NQF Act 2008

- Re-affirms the objectives of the NQF to:
  - Facilitate Access to, and mobility and progression within, education, training and career paths
  - Enhance the quality of education and training
  - Accelerate redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities
  - Create a single integrated national framework for learning achievements

These objectives are “designed to contribute to the full personal development of each learner ..........”
The Skills Development Act, Act 14 of 2008

- Provides for the establishment of the QCTO
- Provides for the Recognition of Prior Learning
  - 26D (2) (c) with respect to access to trade tests
  - 26J (m) with respect to RPL for occupational Qualifications.
A Historical Note

· Central to the adoption of the NQF (SAQA Act 1995) was a vision of Organised Labour to win recognition for workers’ competencies gained in the workplace.
· Government has explicitly recognised the role of RPL as a tool for social transformation.
· There has been relatively little commitment, until now, by way of policy or resources to drive a national initiative for RPL implementation.
QCTO’s focus

Acceleration of redress:

- Developing qualifications that acknowledge different types of learning (i.e., knowledge, practical and work-based components).
- Adopting assessment methodologies that integrate different knowledge types (summative) and identify gaps (formative).
- Advocacy and capacity building in workplaces and career advisory initiatives.
QCTO’s focus (cont.)

Facilitation of Access:
- Integration of Foundational Learning into the structure of qualifications to mitigate the impact of learning deficits in the knowledge component of qualifications.
- Collaboration with other sub-frameworks and institutions to enhance flexibility of curriculum delivery, especially with regard to the knowledge and practical components.
Challenges to Implementation

Advocacy
- Lack of a coherent policy and strategy
- Lack of resources
- Lack of human resource capacity

Quality Assurance
- Uneven commitment to RPL on the part of QA agencies
- Lip service to compliance with regulations where these exist
Challenges to Implementation

Policy and Statutory conflicts:
- Sectoral (sub-framework) hegemony
- Creeping “professionalisation”
- Articulation barriers
- Inter-institutional barriers (CAT)

Convergence between policy and implementation:
- Inadequate feedback
- Inadequate or no research
Development Quality Partners (DQPs)

- People / groups request delegation from QCTO to develop specific occupations (linked to OFO)
- QCTO ensures their credentials with interested community. Prescribes process for development.

Once DQP agreed by community:

- DQP must fund and convene process
- DQP must appoint Registered Facilitator
- DQP must appoint Expert Practitioners to undertake development process, and verify with community,
- Submit three documents to QCTO for registration
Processes

- **Assessment Quality Partners (AQPs)**
  - AQPs agreed by DQP community and recommended to QCTO;
  - QCTO establishes that they are ‘fit for purpose’ (including interrogates their financial model)
  - AQPs responsible for developing and overseeing the External Summative Assessments of the occupation (e.g. trade tests, panels, etc.) and recommending assessment centres to QCTO. National Artisan Moderating Body (NAMB) responsible for trades. NAMB is component of DHET.
  - AQP recommends certification to QCTO
With respect to advocacy QCTO will:

- Collaborate with SAQA and the other QCs to provide an occupation focused Careers Advice node.
- Collaborate, through the DHET, with sectoral bodies (e.g., SETAs and Professional Bodies) to leverage enhanced advocacy and resources.
- Build capacity through the system by engaging with NQF implementing agencies and encouraging new players to participate as DQPs and AQPs where appropriate.
- Initiate and/or support ongoing research into the impact of advocacy initiatives to inform future strategy.
QCTO’s Response

With respect to Quality Assurance QCTO will:

- Through its Qualifications and Curriculum design ensure that RPL is embedded
- Ensure a broad spectrum of “expertise” in the composition of DQPs
- Ensure adequate capacity for RPL implementation amongst AQPs
- That provider and workplace accreditation is contingent on effective RPL practice
- Drive a culture of flexible assessment practice and access to summative assessment
QCTO’s Response

With respect to Policy and Statutory conflicts QCTO will:

- Initiate and/or collaborate with partners to research where contradictions exist and what their systemic impact is
- Collaborate with partners to mitigate the possibility of “turf skirmishes”
- Collaborate with SAQA to discourage proliferation of professional bodies in the same sector and that those that are recognised do not engage in exclusionary practices to the detriment of RPL
With respect to Policy and implementation convergence, QCTO will:

- Through continuous monitoring and evaluation of providers and workplaces ensure the delivery of RPL through internal (formative) assessment practices
- Monitor and evaluate AQPs and include RPL delivery as a performance indicator
- Conduct research as part of a continuous improvement strategy
19 of the 50 RPL abstracts received apply to workplace RPL

Some of the sectors covered include:
- Manufacturing and Engineering (2)
- Chemical industry (1)
- Mining industry (1)
- Wholesale and Retail (1)
- Materials handling equipment (1)
QCTO believes that:

- It is in the Occupational Sector that the greatest impact of effective RPL delivery will be felt.
- There are “Islands of Excellent Practice” to be bridged and this SAQA initiative is overdue.
- Collaboration amongst the key partners in NQF implementation and research will foster mutual respect and ensure quality in RPL implementation.
- With effective RPL delivery, the objectives of the NQF will be that much closer to realisation.