

Understanding RPL

How does RPL work ?

This fact sheet provides some information on the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in South Africa.

What is RPL ?

The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is defined as:
"The principles and processes through which the prior knowledge and skills of a person are made visible, mediated and assessed for the purpose of alternative access and admission, recognition and certification, or further learning and development"
 – National RPL Policy, 2019.

Simply put:

RPL is a way for you to get recognition for the skills and knowledge you already have, even if you did not get them in a classroom setting through a formal education or training process.

Who offers RPL ?

Providers of Education and Training in South Africa including Schools, Colleges, Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), Skills providers, Higher Education Institutions, etc.

Who benefits from RPL ?

Anyone with skills and knowledge, no matter how and where these were obtained. This includes people with work experience but no formal qualifications.

Benefits of RPL.

One can access employment opportunities, career advancement, further studies and RPL supports personal growth.



Forms of RPL and their purpose

RPL for access

- Provides an alternative pathway to access the External Integrated Summative Assessments (EISA) for trade tests
- Provides alternative access route into a qualification following successful completion of an RPL process, if you do not meet minimum admission requirements
- Provides alternative access route to employment if you do not have the requisite qualifications for a job, and you have experience and have completed an RPL process successfully
- Provides alternative access route to a Professional Designation, after an RPL process

RPL for credit

- Applies when a learner changes their study programme or qualification / department / institution and allows for the awarding of credits towards completion of programme
- Can be used to obtain advanced standing or exemption from specific modules or courses within a qualification after an RPL process
- Used to facilitate the awarding of credits with the aim of granting a full qualification

Some facts about RPL

Accredited education and training providers/institutions are responsible for facilitating RPL and conducting assessments amongst other tasks in line with the national RPL Policy.

Education and training providers/institutions record learning achievements via an RPL route, and this information is submitted to SAQA

SAQA's records show that between 1996 and 2023:

42 890 learners achieved one or more qualifications through RPL

50% female and 50% male learners achieved qualifications through RPL



34% of learning achievements via an RPL route were at NQF level 4.

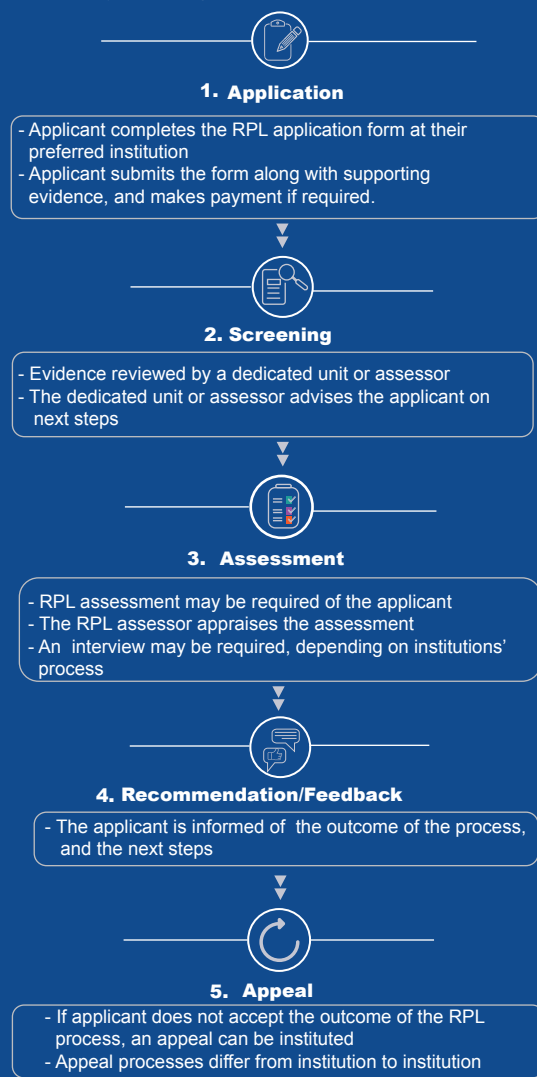


65% of RPL achievements via RPL are by Black African people, 21% by Whites, 8% by Coloureds and 5% by Indians/Asians.

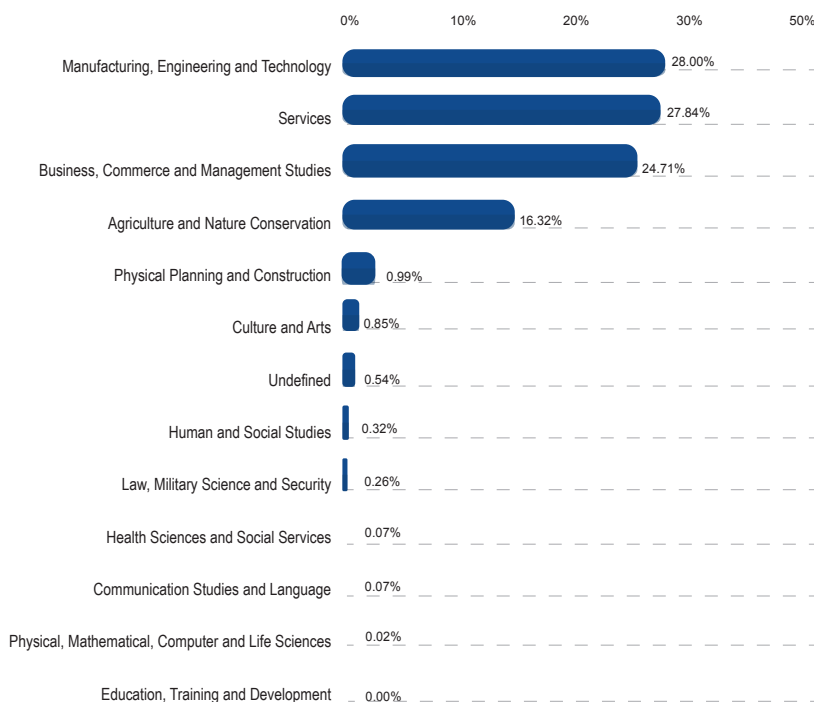


258 unique qualifications were achieved through RPL.

The RPL process varies from institution to institution, but the generic steps followed include



Achievements through RPL by NQF Field:1996 to 2023



SAQA provides a policy framework for RPL and maintains records of the learners : <https://shorturl.at/erY15>