



# **GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) POLICY**

Block 7, Plot 66450 Private Bag BO 340, Gaborone, Botswana  
**TEL:** +267 365 7200 **FAX:** +267 395 2301  
**E-mail:** [customerservice@bqa.org.bw](mailto:customerservice@bqa.org.bw)  
**Website:** [www.bqa.org.bw](http://www.bqa.org.bw)  
**Toll Free Line:** 0800 600 934

**SMS:** (+267) 75671114  
**Twitter:** @BQA\_BWUpdates,  
**Facebook:** BotswanaQualificationsAuthority, bqa  
**Skype :** BQA\_Botswana Qualifications Authority

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	2
<b>1.0 ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS</b> .....	4
<b>2.0 GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b> .....	4
<b>3.0 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	7
<b>4.0 BACKGROUND</b> .....	8
<b>5.0 RPL POLICY IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES</b> .....	9
<b>6.0 PURPOSE</b> .....	9
<b>7.0 OBJECTIVES</b> .....	9
<b>8.0 SCOPE</b> .....	9
<b>9.0 REQUIREMENTS FOR RPL POLICY IMPLEMENTATION</b> .....	10
<b>10.0 BENEFITS OF RPL</b> .....	10
<b>11.0 CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RPL POLICY</b> .....	11
<b>12.0 KEY PERSONNEL</b> .....	13
<b>13.0 THE RPL PROCESS</b> .....	16
<b>14.0 APPENDICES</b> .....	32



**BOTSWANA**  
Qualifications Authority



# **GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY**

## REVISION HISTORY



## 1.0 ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BQA	Botswana Qualifications Authority
CAT	Credit Accumulation and Transfer
NCQF	National Credit and Qualifications Framework
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
ETP	Education and Training Provider

## 2.0 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- 2.1 **“Accreditation”** means a process of ensuring that education and training providers, and any learning programme of education and training offered, conform to any quality assurance standards set by the Authority.
- 2.2 **“Act”** The Botswana Qualifications Authority (BQA) Act No.24 of 2013.
- 2.3 **“Authority”** means the Botswana Qualifications Authority as established under Section 3 of the Act.
- 2.4 **“Credit”** means the volume of learning contained in a qualification or part qualification whereby one (1) credit is equated to ten (10) notional hours of learning.
- 2.5 **“Credit accumulation”** means the totaling of relevant credits required to complete a qualification or a part qualification.
- 2.6 **“Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) system”** means an arrangement whereby the diverse features of both credit accumulation and credit transfer are combined to facilitate lifelong learning and access to the workplace.
- 2.7 **“Credit Transfer”** means recognition for study already completed, which counts towards further study. It is a recognition based on formal arrangements which have been negotiated between ETPs and/or based on equivalence as established by compatible accreditation, qualification or credit transfer systems.
- 2.8 **“Education and Training Provider (ETP)”** means a person or BQA-accredited entity that provides or organises a learning programme of education and training, including the provision of professional development services.

2.9 **“Formal Learning”** means learning that takes place in education and training institutions, is recognised by relevant national authorities, and leads to diplomas and qualifications. Formal learning is structured according to educational arrangements such as curricula, qualifications, and teaching-learning requirements.

2.10 **“Informal learning”** is learning that occurs in daily life, in the family, in the workplace, in communities, and through interests and activities of individuals. In some cases, the term experiential learning is used to refer to informal learning that focuses on learning from experience.

2.11 **“Learning Outcomes”** are the building blocks of qualifications. Qualifications may be made up of unit standards as one form of learning outcomes, or statements of learning outcomes, as another form, or a combination of the two.

2.12 **“Non-formal Learning”** is learning that has been acquired in addition, or alternatively, to formal learning. In some cases, it is also structured according to educational and training arrangements but is more flexible. It usually takes place in community-based settings, the workplace, and through the activities of civil society organisations.

2.13 **“National Credit and Qualifications Framework, (NCQF)”** means an instrument developed under section 4 (2) (d) for the classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria, for specified levels of learning achieved.

2.14 **“Portfolio of Evidence (PoE)”** is a collection of work samples and documentation that learners submit as evidence to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and competencies against recognised learning outcomes or standards.

2.15 **“Qualification”** means a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards.

2.16 **“Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)”** is a process of identifying, assessing, and recognizing what a person already knows (knowledge) and can do (skills), despite the method of acquisition (including formal, informal, and non-formal), without taking them through the formal or additional learning process.

2.17 “**Unit Standard**” is a statement of the outcome of any learning assessed, the type and quality of evidence that represents performance worthy of an award of credits and the context in which that evidence should be demonstrated.



## 3.0 INTRODUCTION

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), previously known as Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) describes a process used by amongst others, regulatory bodies, adult learning centres, career development practitioners, employers, training institutions, colleges, and universities around the world to evaluate skills and knowledge acquired outside the classroom for the purpose of recognising competence against a given set of standards, competencies, or learning outcomes.

### 3.1 Forms of RPL include:

- 3.1.1 RPL for credit involves the formal award of credits for a qualification or part qualification that is registered on the National Credit and Qualifications Framework (NCQF). This includes credits for unit standards or specific learning outcomes, where the candidate is considered to have achieved the equivalent learning required outside a formal learning programme.
- 3.1.2 RPL for access is evoked for entry into a qualification that would not usually be permitted due to a person not meeting the stated academic entry requirements.
- 3.1.3 RPL for advanced standing at work or within a professional body (to gain credit towards a qualification, based on previous learning, work experience, or even learning from hobbies and volunteer work).

- 3.2 In the case of unit standards-based qualifications, prior learning will only be recognised for certification purposes if knowledge, skills and competencies expected of a unit standard are assessed and candidates deemed competent.
- 3.3 In the case of qualifications made up of learning outcomes (and modules or subjects), RPL will only be recognised for certification purposes if whole learning outcomes are assessed. Partial learning outcomes (or partial modules) will not be recognised.

## 4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Research (and therefore practice) in RPL has moved internationally from “RPL as an assessment only practice” to “RPL as a pedagogy in its own right”<sup>1</sup>. This migration of understanding has led to new RPL practices and approaches, which are captured in this implementation guide for RPL practice in Botswana. RPL as a pedagogy involves skilled RPL practitioners who guide and mediate the workplace learning so that the RPL candidate can incrementally learn the academic language that underpins his/her workplace practice. Through this mediation, new learning is added to the existing learning until the candidate is confident that they are ready to be assessed using assessment tools formulated in the academic world.
- 4.2 As can be seen from the brief description above, RPL functions characteristically “beyond the formal frame” (a term used to describe forms of adult education). It operates in the context of conventional education and training credentials, but it takes unconventional forms.
- 4.3 Due to the multitude of variables involved in RPL (e.g. type, level and format of qualification, experience of the RPL practitioner, RPL candidate history, reason for RPL, ETP level and experience, etc.), there can be no ‘one-size-fits-all’ model for its practice. It is up to each ETP to develop its own model, using this implementation guide and the policy to inform its practice, while maintaining assessment rigour and standards.
- 4.4 While RPL is innovative and may in some respects be unconventional, it can and must respect key values of assessment and certification. These demand sensitive, appropriate and expert concern for rigour regarding the credibility, validity and reliability of the forms of assessment and recognition granted through RPL. RPL demands good and thoughtful judgment on the part of all players, from RPL Practitioners to the accrediting authority. Transparency of processes and standards is essential to RPL.

4.5 It is against this context that these guidelines are to be understood for the effective implementation of RPL.

## 5.0 RPL POLICY IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

These guidelines refer to the practice of *RPL* towards a full or part qualification or unit standard. ETPs are required to read and interpret these implementation guidelines in conjunction with the Policy on Recognition of Prior Learning to familiarise themselves with the national approach to RPL, prior to designing their internal policies and guidelines.

## 6.0 PURPOSE

These guidelines have been developed to assist in the implementation of the RPL Policy, systems and procedures. Nonetheless, they do not prescribe how institutions should conduct RPL. Each institution is expected to adapt to its environment, challenges and requirements set by the various regulatory/professional bodies.

## 7.0 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of these guidelines are to:

- 7.1 Provide guidance and strategies for the implementation of the RPL Policy.
- 7.2 Guide the implementation of institutional RPL policies and processes.
- 7.3 Define the roles of key stakeholders in the implementation of RPL within ETPs.

## 8.0 SCOPE

These guidelines set out strategies for implementation of the RPL policy, which include, among others, its resourcing, advocacy, effective delivery, and quality assurance across the Education and Training system. It applies to;

- 8.1 All registered and accredited ETPs, RPL Centres, Workplaces, Professional Bodies, Awarding bodies, RPL practitioners and RPL candidates.
- 8.2 All qualifications and part qualifications registered on the National Credit and Qualifications Framework (NCQF).
- 8.3 Quality assurers, trade unions, employers

### **9.0 REQUIREMENTS FOR RPL POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

- 9.1 The qualification/s or part qualification/s for the implementation of RPL must be registered on the NCQF.
- 9.2 Education and Training Providers, RPL Centres, and Awarding Bodies must have trained RPL Practitioners.
- 9.3 RPL assessment design for qualifications and part qualifications shall be based on learning outcomes and unit standards, and requirements stipulated for the qualification/part qualification, as prescribed by the Authority.
- 9.4 Assessment and moderation for RPL shall be undertaken by registered and accredited assessors and moderators.
- 9.5 Mediation of the RPL process shall be undertaken by RPL practitioners.

### **10.0 BENEFITS OF RPL**

RPL benefits, amongst others, the candidates, employers and the country:

- 10.1 RPL enables candidates to access credit-bearing courses which they would be denied entry into without RPL (RPL for access).
- 10.2 Learning achievements acquired informally and non-formally are recognised towards the acquisition of credits and qualifications (RPL for credit).

- 10.3 RPL enables participants to be recognised for what they already know and can do.
- 10.4 Candidates can acquire credits and qualifications while in employment and thereby save time and money.
- 10.5 It allows people to value their learning achievements and builds their confidence and self-esteem.
- 10.6 It motivates and helps employees to take responsibility for their own learning and development.
- 10.7 It supports performance appraisal and identification of skills gaps for professional development in the workplace.
- 10.8 It is a time and cost saving measure in that knowledge and skills already acquired are not repeated.

### **11.0 CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RPL POLICY**

- 11.1 Understanding the context – it is important to understand the prevailing ecological, economic, socio-cultural, and learning environment. If RPL is taking place in a workplace, RPL practitioners may need to work with the employer to ensure their readiness to be able to support RPL candidates.
- 11.2 Support structures may have to be put in place to support the implementation of the RPL policy. Support Structures include RPL funds, information dissemination centres, guidance and counselling services and appropriate facilities to enable access and inclusion for the disadvantaged.
- 11.3 Stakeholder participation, which includes:
  - 11.3.1 Involvement of all key players for smooth implementation and scalability.

- 11.3.2 Capacitation of key players on the RPL process, purpose and benefits.
- 11.3.3 Development of mindset change strategies aimed at eliminating any possible discrimination and stigmatisation.
- 11.3.4 Profiling RPL candidates for readiness – prospective RPL candidates should be evaluated prior to RPL commencement to ensure they have the required level of prior learning in the relevant field.
- 11.3.5 Barriers should be removed to allow all candidates access.
- 11.4 Costing of RPL- Sources of funding need to be found that understand that the value of RPL to the nation and the individual may be greater than the actual cost.
- 11.5 Wherever the funding for RPL is found, it needs to provide for access to RPL services in a manner that is consistent with the government's commitment to lifelong learning and economic growth.
- 11.6 Government is responsible for the funding mechanism, including setting up of an RPL Fund and any form of Subsidy.
- 11.7 Employers should be engaged to support their employees enrolled on RPL.
- 11.8 Availing infrastructure for RPL - This includes the management structures and physical resources, which include setting up of RPL Centres and “walk-in assessment facilities” in different parts of the country in line with the set standards of registration of such facilities.
- 11.9 Advocacy for RPL: It is important to get buy-in from all relevant parties through advocacy. This shall require strategic interventions and resource support from all levels.

- 11.10 Employers should make sure their employees are informed and made aware of provisions for RPL.
- 11.11 Communities of Practice - There is a need for a structured, deliberate use of communities of practice.
- 11.12 Quality assurance of RPL - QA systems should be designed to provide guidance on adherence, policies, standards, processes, and associated practices.

### 12.0 KEY PERSONNEL

Some key roles of RPL personnel may overlap in some contexts, and the same person may play multiple roles. It is key to note that the RPL assessor and the RPL moderator cannot be the same person (for the same batch of candidates).

Key role players in the RPL process are:

#### 12.1 RPL administrator

Typically, this practitioner may:

- 12.1.1 Handle general RPL enquiries.
- 12.1.2 Carry out initial screening to ensure candidates meet minimum entry criteria.
- 12.1.3 Process candidate feedback.
- 12.1.4 Ensure assessors, advisors and moderators are scheduled.
- 12.1.5 Prepare the workplace to ensure it can be used for the RPL assessment.
- 12.1.6 Receive and store portfolios of evidence.
- 12.1.7 Book the portfolio out to an assessor.

12.1.8 Upload results to the National Learner Records Database.

12.1.9 Report on RPL activities.

12.2 RPL advisor/evidence collection facilitator

12.2.1 Pre-screen the potential candidate for assessment readiness.

12.2.2 Identify areas for mediation prior to the commencement of the assessment.

12.2.3 Prepare the candidates for the process.

12.2.4 Sign an assessment contract with the candidate.

12.2.5 Facilitate evidence collection (including doing observations, completing checklists and using video cameras to record evidence).

12.2.6 Coordinate the processing of a candidate's appeals against the assessment results.

12.3 Assessor

12.3.1 Develops assessment instruments that cover all the learning outcomes.

12.3.2 Compiles an assessment plan.

12.3.3 Assesses evidence submitted by the candidate, makes decisions and records results.

12.3.4 Gives feedback to candidates.

12.3.5 Compiles assessment reports and prepares for moderation.

12.4 Internal moderator

12.4.1 Compiles a moderation plan indicating all moderation activities.

12.4.2 Meets with assessors to review the process.

12.4.3 Moderate assessment tools prior to use.

12.4.4 Verifies the assessment process and judgments.

12.4.5 Compiles a moderator's report.

### 12.5 External Moderator/Verifier

12.5.1 Ensure that assessment materials developed adequately cover stipulated competences and assessment tasks are at a suitable level of difficulty (moderation of the RPL assessment instruments).

12.5.2 Ensures that assessment instruments developed are valid and reliable.

12.5.3 Moderates internal assessment and moderation processes and procedures.

12.5.4 Ensures that the assessment decisions have been made objectively, fairly and consistently.

12.5.5 Ensures that assessment and internal moderation/verification records are accurate and complete.

12.5.6 Produces an external moderation report with recommendations for improvement.

### 12.6 Candidate

2.6.1 Recognise when they are ready for assessment.

- 2.6.2 Identify opportunities to collect evidence for each unit standard or learning outcome.
- 2.6.3 Arrange observations by supervisors/ advisors, where practical.
- 2.6.4 Collect witness testimony where it will add value to the assessment process.
- 2.6.5 Make provisional judgments on their own evidence in terms of currency, sufficiency, and validity.
- 2.6.6 Request for formal assessment.

### 13.0 THE RPL PROCESS

#### 13.1 Principles guiding RPL

The following principles inform the RPL process:

- 13.1.1 Access and Inclusion - RPL should allow for access and equity for candidates at all levels of the NCQF and across all sub-frameworks. Inclusion should primarily ensure that no candidates are denied access based on gender, race, religion, ethnicity, disability, geography, origin or social status. Implementors should make deliberate strategies to target and involve marginalised and disadvantaged groups in the process.
- 13.1.2 The focus of the RPL process is on the learning outcomes of what has been learned, regardless of where or how learning has occurred.
- 13.1.3 RPL is candidate-centred and developmental.
- 13.1.4 Credit is awarded for demonstrable knowledge, skills and competencies acquired, not for the experience on the job.
- 13.1.5 Mentorship and mediation are essential aspects of the RPL process.

13.1.6 Principles applied to conventional/traditional assessments (transparency, fairness, validity, reliability, practicability, consistency) also apply to RPL assessments.

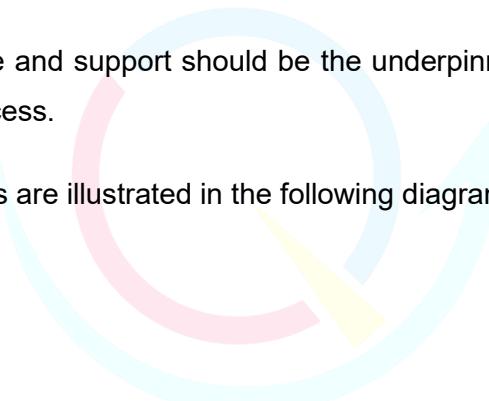
### 13.2 Steps in the typical RPL process

13.2.1 RPL process steps would typically apply to RPL for credit scenarios but may be adapted for RPL for access and other situations and contexts.

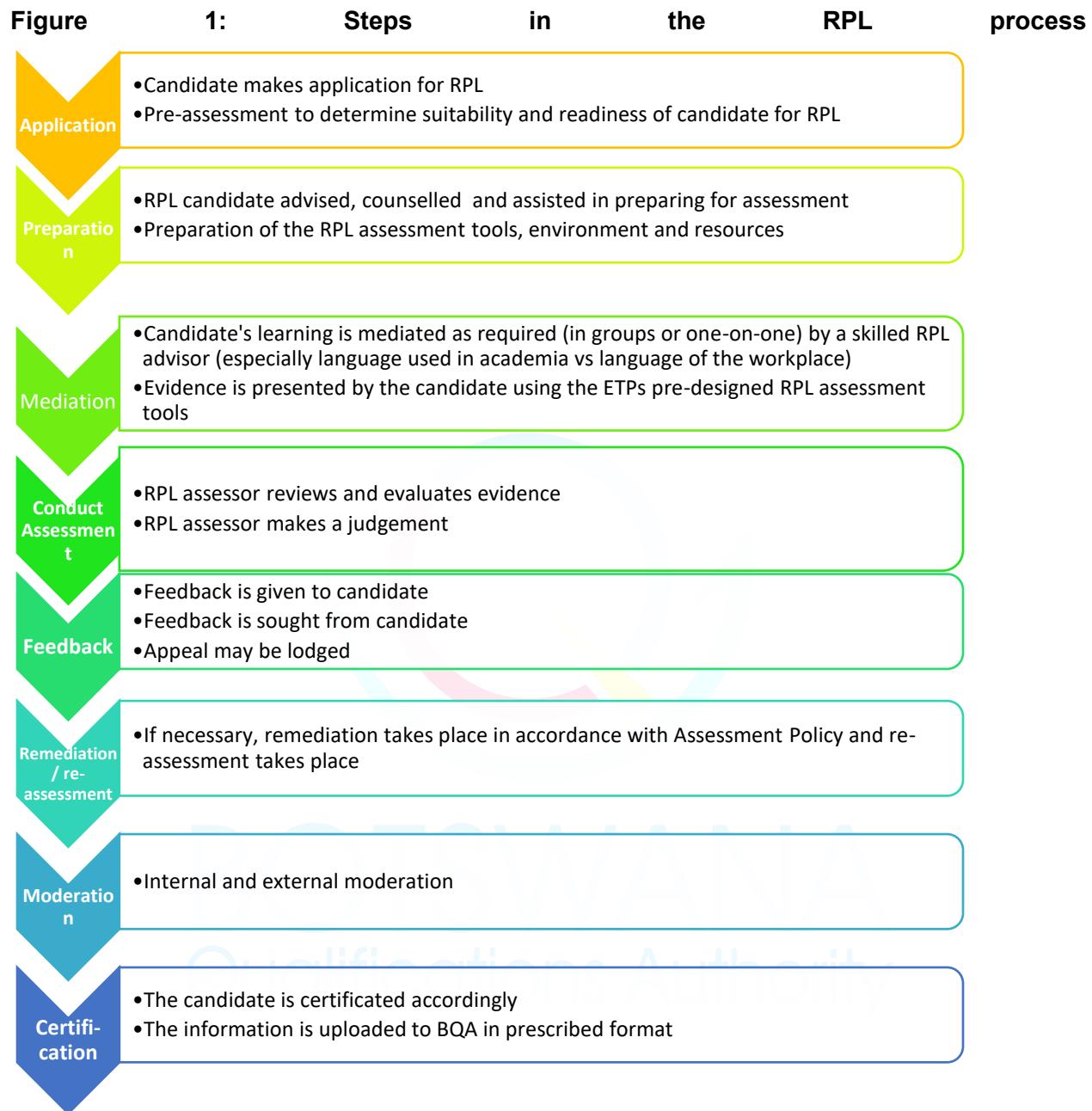
13.2.2 Before initiating the application process, RPL providers should make sure that information about RPL and the application process is provided to applicants.

13.2.3 Guidance and support should be the underpinning principle in facilitating the RPL process.

13.2.4 The steps are illustrated in the following diagram.



**BOTSWANA**  
Qualifications Authority



### 13.3 RPL application process

13.3.1 Application procedures for RPL should be designed in a way that is both inviting, intelligible and clarifying. RPL centres, ETPs engaging in RPL, RPL practitioners and other appropriate educational centres should be able to explain and administer the applications. The application procedure must include information (written, audio or video) which sets out the process, the responsibilities of all concerned including the applicant, a realistic assessment of the benefits to the applicant and any costs involved. The application procedures might be linked to the advocacy programme.

13.3.2 The candidate applies to the accredited RPL Centre or ETP to embark on an RPL process. (Note that if the candidate is employed, it could be an employer who nominates the candidate to be RPL-ed). The nomination or application form is submitted to the RPL advisor along with a CV, proof of the highest school leaving certificate (if available) and a certified copy of the candidate's ID.

13.3.3 The candidate undergoes counselling and a pre-assessment to determine her/his suitability for the RPL requested and her/his readiness for RPL. (Note: part of the RPL pre-assessment form is generic and part of it is qualification or skills programme specifically).

See appendices for:

RPL 001: RPL application form

RPL 002: RPL pre-assessment form template

13.3.4 If the candidate is approved as an RPL candidate<sup>2</sup>, they are scheduled to attend a preparation process. (Note: the RPL candidate has the final say in whether they continue with RPL after they have been through the advisory process. The RPL advisor may only offer advice and guidance.)

### 13.4 RPL preparation process

13.4.1 Provision must be made in advance of implementation for counselling by RPL Practitioners or suitable lecturers or assessors (prior to the availability of trained RPL Practitioners). Provision must also be made for the assessment of the RPL portfolio by an appropriately qualified assessor. The assessor is likely to be trained in counselling and may be a qualified RPL Practitioner<sup>3</sup> as well as a subject specialist.

13.4.2 The candidate is required to undergo preparation prior to the RPL assessment. A workshop/preparation date is scheduled where the RPL process is explained, and the candidate is advised of her/his rights in respect of the RPL process and requirements. This can be either one-on-one or in groups. (Note: if a group session is held, all candidates should be RPL-ing for the same qualification or skills programme).

**BOTSWANA**  
Qualifications Authority

<sup>2</sup> Even if the ETP determines that the RPL candidate is not ready for RPL all they can do is advise the candidate accordingly. It is still the candidates' choice to proceed or not.

<sup>3</sup> At this stage there is no separate RPL assessor or RPL practitioner qualification in Botswana so practitioners will be trained by the BQA or ETP informally during the transition stage

13.4.3 The RPL assessment plan is agreed to and signed by the candidate and RPL advisor during the preparatory session. The RPL assessor can also act as the advisor, but *only* the registered RPL Assessor may conduct the actual assessment and make an assessment decision.

13.4.4 Mentoring is an important part of the RPL process. At this stage, the roles of the RPL advisor/ assessor include:

- a) **Informing** the candidate about the qualification or unit standard requirements.
- b) **Supporting** and **guiding** the candidate in the collection of evidence.
- c) Helping the candidate **plan** for the assessment.
- d) **Informing** the candidate about the arrangements surrounding the assessment.
- e) **Counselling** candidates.
- f) **Communicating** assessment methodologies and details to the candidate in writing as soon as possible after receipt of application.

See appendices for:

RPL 003: Preparation for RPL session outline

13.4.5 Note that the candidates will be given the following at the preparation for RPL session:

- a) Portfolio of evidence with all administration documents and assessment tools. (ETP-specific)

- b) Copies of assessment contract (one they hand in and one they keep). (ETP-specific)
- c) Copy of RPL candidate registration form to complete. (ETP-specific)
- d) Copies of the slides used in the preparatory session. (ETP-specific)

Note that RPL candidates whose RPL is not initiated by the employer may need assistance negotiating time off work for the RPL process. This is the role of the ETP or BQA in the case of BQA-initiated projects.

### 13.5 RPL mediation

13.5.1 Mediation is a critical part of the RPL process. RPL candidates often do not have the underpinning theory for their practice, and they often have difficulty articulating the theory using the terminology required in the qualification. If their qualification awarded is to be the same as the candidate who attended class, then the RPL candidate needs an opportunity to learn the language of the academy prior to completing the assessment. This will also empower them to answer the questions in the RPL assessment tool. This mediation can take various forms, and the agency of the candidate must be considered when agreeing on the format of the mediation. The following examples illustrate this:

- a) A senior bank employee with high levels of literacy may be seeking RPL for a relatively high-level banking qualification. The qualification requires traditional candidates to be able to do research and write comprehensive notes, therefore the mediation could take the form of a list of references and some guidelines on research and academic writing and broad concepts only prior to the actual RPL assessment.

b) A farm worker with limited levels of literacy may be seeking RPL for part of an entry level qualification so that he can start a cooperative and acquire funding. The funder has indicated that the applicants must have some certification showing basic understanding of agricultural practices. This part qualification requires traditional classroom candidates to demonstrate their skills but to follow instructions using the proper names for the various agricultural implements and an ability to name parts of insects using the correct Latin terminology. This mediation is likely to take place verbally, through discussion and explanation as to how it relates to the practice in the fields. The mediation may also involve group discussion so that confidence with video recording and self-esteem can be built up prior to the observation (which may be daunting if not practised beforehand).

### 13.6 RPL assessment process

#### 13.6.1 The same outcomes must be assessed for RPL candidates as for 'classroom' candidates. What may vary are:

- a) The order of the assessment outcomes (typically, traditional learning assessment will start with a big picture and end with the day-to-day workplace application, whereas RPL candidate assessments tend to start with the day-to-day application and work towards the big picture). Assessment tools need to reflect this, although both are integrated.
- b) RPL is typically assessed using a portfolio of evidence. Typically, RPL candidates prefer specific case studies and projects to help them showcase their learning (supplemented by real-world artifacts, reference letters and workplace observations where possible).

- c) The RPL assessment tools must not be designed in such a way to prejudice the candidate who is unable to access artifacts for submission (many such documents may be confidential and many RPL candidates do not have access to them due to seniority etc.)
- d) Each ETP or RPL Centre will have their own format for the RPL assessment portfolio of evidence.

13.6.2 Remember, we must assess applied competence, which is made up of:

- a) Practical competence - the demonstrated ability to perform a set of tasks and actions in authentic contexts (performance).
- b) Foundational competence - the demonstrated understanding of what we are doing and why we are doing it (knowledge).
- c) Reflexive competence - the demonstrated ability to integrate our performances with our understanding so that we can adapt to changed circumstances and explain the reason behind these adaptations.

13.6.3 This applied competence must be assessed in an integrated manner (integrated assessment refers to the practice of assessing more than one outcome at a time – to make the assessments more realistic).

13.6.4 The candidate is required to prove to the assessor that they are competent. Competence is defined as the demonstrated ability to perform a set of tasks competently against knowledge, skills and attitudes, values or behaviour in a real-life working situation.

Some assessment may take place using a portfolio of evidence. A “portfolio” may be seen as a file containing a paper evidence trail, but it is not necessarily this. It may be any collection of evidence, including a display or a demonstration. The RPL Practitioner will need to guide candidates to understanding what constitutes adequate evidence and how to present it optimally.

### 13.7 Feedback

13.7.1 Stakeholders who will need to be informed of the assessment outcome include:

- a) The RPL candidate.
- b) The employer (but generally only if the company is paying for the assessment—if the candidate is self-funding, then ETPs do not usually have an obligation to report results to the employer).
- c) The internal moderator (usually as a schedule that forms part of the assessment report).
- d) ETP's administration department (so that the results are captured for reporting to the BQA).

13.7.2 Assessors must take care to protect the confidentiality of the candidate's results. Assessors should not disclose the assessment outcome to other candidates or unauthorised role-players without the candidate's permission.

13.7.3 Candidate feedback will be one of the following, where the candidate:

- a) Meets all the criteria in relation to a unit standard (i.e. they are fully competent); OR

- b) Clearly does not meet the criteria in a unit standard (i.e. they are fully not-yet-competent); OR
- c) Meets some, but not all, criteria and more evidence is required before a final judgement is possible.

13.7.4 Occasionally, feedback may be given verbally by the assessor directly to the candidate. If this is done, the assessor must follow the ETP's procedure for the delivery of verbal feedback. This will usually include collecting evidence that the candidate received and understood the feedback (usually, this is done by getting the candidate to sign a feedback acknowledgement form).

13.7.5 When giving verbal feedback, keep the following in mind:

Confidentiality	Don't give the candidate verbal feedback in an open plan office or where others can overhear what is being said.
The sequence of feedback	Usually, it is a good idea to start with something positive, then move into the areas that need improvement and then end with something positive.
The timing of the feedback	Candidates should not be expected to wait too long for feedback. Most ETPs have a maximum time period within which they undertake to get back to candidates with feedback.
Stick to the outcomes	Assessors should only give feedback about the strength and weakness of the candidate's performance in relation to the unit standard outcomes. Extraneous variables should not be discussed (unless they have direct bearing on future

	assessments). Just focus on the sufficiency of the evidence collected in relation to the outcomes.
Be constructive	Use the feedback to encourage and uplift the candidate – not everyone is competent the first time around and if the feedback is delivered in an unconstructive manner, then the candidate may not remediate.
Be sensitive	Consider the impact of what the feedback may mean to candidates of different cultural groups, age, gender, etc. and be sensitive when presenting the results.
Consider the candidate's needs	The candidate's needs may be varied – e.g. don't give feedback at the end of a long shift, or without an appointment or after a crisis.
Provide enough information to make further decisions	Further decisions could include the awarding of credit, redirecting candidates to further learning or guiding candidates to further application or re-assessment.
Ask the candidate for their feedback on the assessment process	This allows assessors and ETPs to improve their processes.
Give the candidate an opportunity to ask questions	This will help them with future assessments to understand what they did well and what needs improving.

Be aware that the candidate has the right to appeal the assessment decision	Explain to them how they can appeal (this should have been explained upfront during the assessment contracting stage – but some candidates will need reminding).
Record the outcome of the interaction	Keep a record of the agreements reached and key elements of the feedback – using the ETPs QMS and documents.
Next steps	<p>Inform the candidate about the next steps. If the candidate has to remediate (provide additional evidence), what is the procedure for them to do so? Will there be a cost? What is it? What is the deadline for submission? What exactly needs to be remediated?</p> <p>If they are fully competent, what happens next (internal moderation? When will they get their certificates? etc.)</p>

### 13.8 Remediation

13.8.1 Usually, an ETP will have a ruling on remediation and the number of times a candidate or candidates can remediate using the same assessment activities and tools. Candidates who need additional remediation should possibly be encouraged to attend training to bridge their gaps.

13.8.2 With remediation, the candidate is given feedback (see section above) and asked if they wish to remediate. Where gaps are large, it may be advisable to suggest they attend training, as further not-yet-competent results may affect their self-esteem. But where gaps are small, remediation may be an option. The assessor will check when the candidate would like to resubmit and make a note on the assessment plan.

13.8.3 If observations need to be arranged, the assessor will do this as well.

Assessment of just the areas that were NYC will then be re-assessed (not the whole unit standard again).

### 13.9 RPL Moderation Process

Moderation is a process of reviewing the assessment process.

#### 13.9.1 Internal moderation

a) Internal moderation is conducted by a moderator within the ETP who is registered with BQA for the qualification or part qualification being assessed<sup>4</sup>.

b) When a batch of assessments is ready for moderation, the moderator will plan the moderation by compiling a moderation plan. This will involve:

i. Meeting with the assessor.

ii. Reviewing the assessment plans.

iii. Setting a date to conduct moderation.

iv. Selecting a sample to moderate.

c) Once moderation has been completed a moderation report will be compiled.

Note that moderation may also be concurrent with the assessment. This involves the moderator watching and moderating while an assessor is assessing a candidate. The advantages of this are that moderation happens at the same time as assessment so the results that are given to candidates are not subject to moderation upholding the results. But this practice can be time consuming. It is useful for new assessors though.

d) Moderators may choose to:

- i. Uphold the results because the process was sound and the assessment principles were adhered to OR
- ii. Not uphold, pending some action on the part of the assessors.

e) Remedial action will be detailed in the moderation report.

### 13.10 Certification Process

13.10.1 Candidates successfully RPL-ed against the relevant qualification/part qualification must be certificated according to the ETP processes. The information is uploaded to the BQA database to keep a record of the outcome and for the collection of RPL statistics.

13.10.2 The certificate issued for an RPL candidate will be identical to that issued to a candidate who attended classes for the same part qualification or qualification. There will be no mention of RPL on the certificate, but the ETP must indicate on the BQA upload that the qualification / part qualification was earned through RPL. This is for statistical tracking only.

### 13.11 Appeals

13.11.1 A candidate may appeal against the RPL process or decisions on the grounds of unfairness or discrimination.

13.11.2 The appeals process should be in line with the requirement of the RPL

---

<sup>4</sup> At present there is no moderator unit standard to train moderators in Botswana so in the transitional stage the BQA may allow experienced assessors to act as moderators to fulfil this requirement

policy.

13.11.3 To reduce appeals RPL assessors should provide enough details of the learning outcomes shortfalls to unsuccessful applicants.



### 14.0 APPENDICES

- 14.1 RPL 001: Sample Application form
- 14.2 RPL 002: Sample Pre-assessment form
- 14.3 RPL 003: Sample Preparation for assessment session outline
- 14.4 RPL 004: Example RPL sites to do list and action plan



# GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY

## RPL 001: RPL application form

Please complete this form in block letters with a black pen.

Submit via email to \_\_\_\_\_ or deliver to: \_\_\_\_\_

### SECTION A: Qualification selection

### SECTION B: Fees

**Cash up front fee**  **BPXX**  **Employer funded**

### SECTION C: Personal details

Surname											Initial			Title (e.g. Mr.,				
First Name:																		
(max 3)																		
Date of Birth:	D	D	M	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Age:	:	Years	Gender:	M	Male	F	Female		
ID / Passport Number:												Botswana Citizen:	Y	Yes	N	No		
If not a resident, what is your residency status?																		
Residential Address:																		
Postal Address:											Code							

## GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY

										Code		
Tel (work):												
Facsimile :												
E-mail:						Tel (home):						
										Cellular:		
										Home language:		

### SECTION D: Employment details

Are you currently employed?

Y

Yes

N

No

Current Occupation (job title):

Employer:

Employer

Telephone:

Employer Supervisor/Manager

Name:

Employer Supervisor/Manager

E-mail:

Employer Supervisor/Manager

Postal Address:

Is the company paying for you?

Yes

No

Must the company be invoiced?

Yes

No

Code:

### SECTION E: Payment details

Person responsible for payment:

## GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY

Postal address (if different):				
Physical address (if different):				
Telephone :				
Is your employer sponsoring your training?:	Y	N	No	Employer order number:
Accounts department contact person:			Tel:	
Company VAT Number:				
<input type="checkbox"/> I enclose proof of direct deposit to: <input type="checkbox"/> Please tick if you need an invoice to be sent to you.				
<b>BANKING DETAILS for payments to XXXX</b> A/C Name: Bank: Branch: A/C No.:				

### SECTION F: Acceptance of terms and conditions

I, (full name) \_\_\_\_\_ ID number \_\_\_\_\_

State that the above information is true to the best of my knowledge. In signing this enrolment form, I accept the terms and conditions of payment and understand the roles and responsibilities of myself and the service provider. Where my employer will be sponsoring me, the relevant supervisor also understands and agrees to the terms and conditions of this agreement. These terms and conditions can be found at the bottom of this page.

## GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY

Candidate signature:		Date :	D	D	M	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			
Employer name & title:					Date :		D	D	M	M	Y	Y	Y	Y
Employer signature:					Date :		D	D	M	M	Y	Y	Y	Y

<b>OFFICE USE ONLY</b>													
Booked/confirmed:				D	D	M	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Paid by candidate				D	D	M	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Date:				D	D	M	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Rec No:				E	En g.	A	Ts	Other:					
Proof				E	En g.	A	Ts	Other:					
Invoiced				E	En g.	A	Ts	Other:					
INV no				E	En g.	A	Ts	Other:					

### Terms and conditions:

1. No refunds will be made after the first day has been attended. Cancellations within one week of the scheduled workshop date will incur a BPXX administration fee. Cancellations in excess of one week before the scheduled workshop will incur a BP500 administration fee.
2. The candidate acknowledges that they understand that **no training materials or content** will be expected from XXXX when enrolling to obtain the qualification through RPL.
3. XXX reserves the right not to register candidates (right of admission is reserved). Should this happen, your full fee will be refunded.

## RPL 002: RPL Pre-assessment Form For <name of qualification>

### Notes to the RPL Advisor

- 1 Purpose of this document** The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines to the administrator in screening and selecting the appropriate candidates for the RPL assessment against the <name of qualification>
  
- 2 How to use this document**
  1. This document is used to review candidate application forms, and/or conduct a structured interview with the candidate.
  2. All candidate credentials / responses must be recorded, and the RPL advisor / interviewer must sign the form on completion of the screening activity or interview.
  3. On completion of the selection sheet, the RPL advisor is required to make a judgement on the suitability of the candidate for RPL assessment purposes on the relevant unit standards.
  4. The decision on RPL suitability must be communicated to potential RPL candidates.
  5. Unsuccessful candidates must be informed of the reasons of non-suitability, and alternative training and development options discussed with them.
  
- 3 Partial or full RPL access** Based on the outcome of this screening document, candidates can either be allowed to enrol for full RPL or further investigation can be undertaken with an aim of advising the candidate of a more suitable course of action. The key differences are:
  1. Full RPL candidates comfortably meet all the criteria and are able to enrol to complete the full qualification through RPL. No additional evaluation of these candidates is necessary unless the RPL advisor

is concerned about the extent of the candidate's workplace experience.

2. Partial RPL candidates do not meet all the RPL criteria. With these candidates the RPL advisor must ensure that the candidate is aware of this and further questioning must take place. This can be done face-to-face or telephonically.

### **Note to the RPL advisor / :**

Candidates must qualify on all criteria listed to be regarded as a suitable candidate for RPL assessment for this full skills programme.

Some candidates will be able to RPL all the unit standards while others may only be able to be RPL-ed for selected unit standards.

It is up to the RPL advisor to advise the candidate accordingly. Their route to achieve the selected skills programme may be a blended solution of partial training and partial RPL – which might have a time and cost implication for both the Candidate and the ETP.

### **Candidate Details**

1 **Candidate name**

and surname

\_\_\_\_\_

2 **Candidate ID**

number

BOTSWANA  
Qualifications Authority

\_\_\_\_\_

3 **Candidate's**

**current position in**  
**organisation**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Candidate selection criteria to be considered:**

1	<b>Selection Criteria</b>	<b>Met Requirements</b>	<b>Not met Requirements</b>	<b>Comments</b>
				<b>Comments</b>
1.	The candidate has completed the application form in full			
2.	The candidate submitted a comprehensive CV detailing sufficient workplace experience to support their application.			
3.	The candidate has a minimum ... <i>literacy, numeracy and communication skills – evident in the quality of their CV and other application documents. (depends on qualification requirements)</i>			
4.	Candidate has at least a XXX formal qualification (depends on qualification)			
5.	The candidate is employed and has access to support, documents and processes which they may require for evidence in their PoE.			
6.	Candidate's CV shows sufficient prior exposure to the working environment.			
7.	The candidate has access to information about plants, growing, fertilisation, use of tools, etc.			

8.	The candidate has had prior workplace exposure in all or some of the following:			List the areas these will be probed later on																
				<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 80%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: center;">Y/N</td> </tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </table>		Y/N														
	Y/N																			
9.	Candidate has attended formal or non-formal training in any of the above listed disciplines.			List the training – where it is formal ask for certificates:																
10.	Candidate has evidence of attending some professional development interventions.																			
11.	Candidate has access to, and has been working in an environment that uses -----																			
12.	Probe any disability that may have impact on the RPL process																			

7 | Probe the following areas. The LOs are provided as a guide.

Probe if the candidate feels they have sufficient experience to be assessed without training. Tick where the candidate feels they are ready to be assessed.

Unit standard	Specific Outcomes - Do you regard yourself as capable of:	Yes	No
<i>Qualification specific</i>			

## GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY

### Candidate Suitability

	Yes	No
In my opinion, the candidate is suitable for selection as a RPL assessment candidate:		

### Special needs of the candidate

---

---

### Comments and recommendations

---

---

---



	Yes	No
In my opinion, the candidate is suitable for selection as a PARTIAL RPL assessment candidate. I recommend they be allowed to attempt RPL. However, the candidate will have to be given support and guidance in the following unit standards:		

Unit Standard or Learning Outcomes	Recommended support:
	<i>Qualification specific</i>

### RPL Advisor / Details

1 Interviewer name and surname

---

2 Date of interview

---

3 Signature of  
Interviewer

---

### RPL 003: Preparation for RPL session outline

- What is RPL?
- The BQA education environment
- Unit standards and qualification outcomes – how to read/use them
- What you need to know about being assessed
- Structure of the portfolio and contracting
- Administration section
- Next steps



**BOTSWANA**  
Qualifications Authority

**RPL 004: Example RPL sites to do list and action plan**

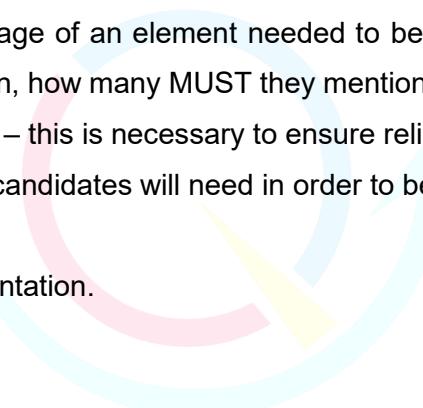
**Key terminology**

Portfolio of evidence (PoE)	The document your candidate writes their answers in
Assessment guide (AG)	The marking memo – it is confidential and candidates DO NOT see it
Evidence Summary Sheets (ESS)	One per unit standard – where you record your assessment decisions
Resources	For example: can include bricks and cement (bricklayers); goats (small stockers); children and toys (ECD); a game vehicle (tourism) and wax and fabric (textiles)
Pre-assessment	The pre-screening document – to see which candidates can RPL which unit standards (full or partial qualification)
Mediation	The process you follow to help the candidates understand the terminology in the unit standards. You can ONLY tell them what is in the unit standards. DO NOT mediate to the PoE questions. Follow the unit standards

**To do list - all**

1. Check your inhouse training and assessment policy – add the statement: “we will use the rules and procedures outlined in the draft BQA RPL and CAT policy for the RPL pilot project.”
2. Check the PoE questions align with the ESS;

3. Check there is enough space for the candidate to write their answers in the lines left for knowledge and assignments in the PoE. Increase it where necessary.
4. Update the 'preparation for RPL' presentation to include your qualification's information and unit standards
5. Read all the questions and the AG to make sure you are 100% comfortable with the questions and the kind of information you are hoping to get from your candidates.
6. All assessors to agree on the percentage of an element needed to be found competent (e.g. if there are 10 things they could mention about HIV AIDS infection, how many MUST they mention in order for you all to find them competent?). Add this to the AG so you all have a record – this is necessary to ensure reliability and fairness.
7. Make a list of ALL the resources your candidates will need in order to be RPL-ed for every question.
8. Practice with the video camera;
9. Practice the preparation for RPL presentation.
10. Practice the mediation session.



**BOTSWANA**  
Qualifications Authority

**Action Plan**

Task	Comments	By whom	By when	Tick when complete
Set a tentative date and schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You need one day to do the pre-assessments</li> <li>• You need at least 3 days to prepare and mediate</li> <li>• You will need about 3 days to collect workplace evidence</li> <li>• You will need a week to assess the evidence</li> <li>• You will need a few days to do any remediation and re-assessment</li> </ul>			
Identify possible candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell them about the project</li> <li>• Do the pre-assessment</li> <li>• Finalise list</li> </ul>			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Congratulate them and tell them the next steps and timing</li> </ul>			
Confirm the candidates	<p>Tell them to bring two copies of their ID plus their CV, their job description, relevant certificates (especially first aid) and a summary of their company to their preparation for RPL session</p> <p>Confirm the dates with them in writing and keep them 'hot' with constant communication</p>			
Confirm the TWO venues	<p>The preparation and mediation classroom</p> <p>The practical workplace venue</p>			
Confirm all resources are available at the venue/s	<p>And make a plan to supplement if they are not all available</p>			
Do the printing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Per candidate: 1 x PoE in a file with a copy of all the unit standards at the back; 1 x ESS; 1 x preparation for RPL slides; 1 x pre-assessment form</li> </ul>			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Per assessor &amp; RPL adviser: 1 x AG, spare ESS (in case you make a mistake), all the unit standards in the AG in case you need to refer to them</li> </ul>			
Arrange stationery & equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clipboard per RPL adviser;</li> <li>• Video camera per assessment team;</li> <li>• PC per assessor;</li> <li>• Data projector for the preparation for RPL session (and maybe for mediation)</li> <li>• 1 x plastic folder per candidate (to put the CD into);</li> <li>• 1 CD per candidate (to save their observation and put into their portfolio for moderator to watch);</li> <li>• One black permanent marker (to write name on CD);</li> <li>• 1 x purple (first assessment) and red pen (second assessment) per assessor</li> </ul>			

Draw up your observation schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decide on the order of candidates</li> <li>• Decide who is RPL advising each candidate</li> <li>• Decide who will use the video camera</li> </ul>			
Preparation for RPL	<p>Decide WHO is going to do it</p> <p>Make it simple as you can</p> <p>You have slides and will need the data projector</p> <p>Hand out all candidate materials</p>			
BQA hook on forms	<p>Take in BQA hook on forms</p> <p>Copy and send to BQA</p>			
Do the mediation	<p>Decide WHO is going to do it</p> <p>Follow your mediation plan</p>			
Candidates do the knowledge and assignments	<p>They should do this BEFORE the observation ideally so that you can assess and probe where NYC – but if it is not possible you can let them work on this while others are being observed. It depends on your time and resources</p>			

Do the observations and video the candidate and what they do and say	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure video is on the candidate</li> <li>• Make sure video is charged in between</li> <li>• Download candidate observation to your PC – save the file with the candidate name and video number e.g. &lt;Smith video 1&gt; make sure you have saved it BEFORE you delete it from the memory stick</li> <li>• Transfer each person to CD and place into their PoE at some stage</li> </ul>			
Arrange time to assess	<p>Once all the PoEs are complete you need to assess</p> <p>Each assessor needs a PC and earphones</p> <p>Each assessor needs the ESS and AG</p> <p>Tell Karen and BQA when this is happening and we will come and assist – IDEALLY we will come and do 2 (or more) pilot projects together in ONE venue -so we can move around and learn from each other</p>			

Give feedback	To each candidate from the ESS  Where NYC – arrange to collect additional evidence			
Re-assess where necessary	This is remediation  Save video for moderator <Smith video 2 REM>			
Moderation	Will be concurrent with assessment or post-assessment			
Give final feedback	Orally off ESS  Final feedback letter in your usual format  Upload results to BQA  Certificate in usual way			