



## RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) POLICY

### AIM

The aim of this policy is to establish guidelines for the criteria for the implementation of an organisational RPL strategy at the Style Design College.

### VISION

Within the vision of Style Design College of increasing the accessibility of higher education to the public the College is dedicated to recognising prior learning within a framework of quality assurance. The College has adopted the principles formulated by the South African Qualifications Authority which include the policy that there should be no repetition of learning outcomes achieved through formal, non-formal and informal learning. The Style Design College RPL policy will strive to recognize equivalence rather than effect an exact match between experience and academic learning.

### MISSION

The implementation and management of recognition of prior learning at Style Design College will embrace the values and strategic objectives as stated in the institution's mission statement.

In the Colleges mission to providing Recognition of prior learning for all staff, students already at the institution, and future applicants Style Design College defines RPL as the following:

Recognition of prior learning is the process of assessing and accrediting the acquired knowledge and/or capabilities of a person, gained in formal, informal or non-formal learning, against a set of outcomes in a formal course of study or against a set of workplace or social competencies.

### OBJECTIVES

Style Design College acknowledges the following important objectives of RPL:

- i. **Student Placement**  
To determine, by means of assessment, an appropriate level of access to a learning or teaching programme for an individual
- ii. **Accelerated status**  
To grant an individual access to a learning programme at an NQF level that is higher than a qualification already obtained
- iii. **Accelerated stance**  
To award credits for a part of a learning programme for which an individual is registered on the basis of RPL.
- iv. **Creditation**

To award transferable credits, within the bounds of specified restrictions for learning that meets the requirements of a module as a whole or partially meets the requirements for a learning programme or a qualification.

## **PRINCIPLES**

In accordance with the values set out in its Strategic Framework, Style Design College endorses the following principles for RPL:

- i. Providing affordable access, quality flexible assessment, student support and feedback to candidates
- ii. Fairness and objectivity for all applicants
- iii. Validity and reliability of assessment instruments and procedures
- iv. That, in all instances, acknowledgement is granted to proven learning, and not to experience per se
- v. That the assessment of learning for the purposes of RPL must always meet standards that correspond with normal learning assessment at Style Design College.
- vi. To provide a rigorous and transparent assessment and moderating process to protect the integrity of academic standards
- vii. That RPL processes and procedures should always honour the integrity of standards, qualifications and programmes
- viii. That the principle of adaptability/flexibility is applied in the application of ARPL policy in the different academic environments (faculties, programmes and departments)
- ix. That recognition of prior learning is granted for a maximum of three years. If an applicant therefore does not make use of the recognition granted by the College within three years, the applicant must re-apply.
- x. That, in the case of an application for the recognition of learning outcomes, credits may be granted for whole modules only and not for parts of modules. A full learning module is therefore the smallest learning unit for which credit will be granted by Style Design College within RPL. Faculties will use their own discretion when making decisions in cases in which more than learning modules are involved (for example, learning outcomes across modules).

## **RPL PROCEDURE**

The process of assessing and accrediting prior learning must be carefully balanced between academic assessment and student support.

- i. Prior learning must be assessed against the requirements of formal training programmes, in accordance with National criteria and standards.
- ii. The RPL assessment process must only be carried out by academic specialists in the relevant fields in conjunction with trained RPL assessors.
- iii. Assessment of a candidate's prior learning cannot be assessed by a single assessor, but must be examined by an assessment panel.
- iv. If the applicant is unsuccessful in their RPL application Style Design College will offer structured feedback reflecting the panel's recommendations for possible top-up training.
- v. Once (RPL) learners have been declared competent and ready to enter formal training at a certain level, reasonable student support opportunities must be made available to enable them to bridge the gap between non-formal and formal learning.

## **RPL PROCESS**

### **Pre-Assessment and Application Process**

- i. Pre-application counseling of applicant
- ii. RPL application process advice and mentoring in RPL procedures

- iii. RPL application pre-screened for completeness
- iv. Application screened and evaluated for viability
- v. Prepare candidate for assessment
- vi. Candidate informed of recommendations, assessment procedures, evidence required and costs (***Outcomes letter***)

#### **Assessment Process**

- i. Evidence submitted by candidate (e.g. a portfolio, challenge exam answer script, work-based project)
- ii. Evidence assessed by panel of assessors (At least one relevant lecturer, one RPL trained assessor and where relevant, representatives from industry or professional bodies)
- iii. Where relevant, panel interview with candidate and/or site visit, demonstration, etc
- iv. Recommended placement of candidate or recommended top-up training strategies
- v. Recommended placement of candidate submitted to organisational decision-makers for verification and ratification College Tuition Committees Final approval and signing off by Managing Director.
- vi. Candidate notified of the outcome (***Assessment Feedback letter***)