KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SOUTH AFRICA (KMSA) RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) POLICY AND PROCESS

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ACRONYMS

NLRD	National Learners Records Data Base
NQF	National Qualification Framework
POE	Portfolio of Evidence
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY

DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Applicant	A Knowledge Management professional seeking an assessment by KMSA
Assessment	A process of gathering and discussing information from the applicant in order to develop a deep understanding of what is known and understood
Interview Process	A standardised structure used by a panel to ask a set of predetermined questions, in a specific order and score answers
KMSA Board	A structure which jointly are responsible for the activities of KMSA
KMSA Board Member	A member elected to assist in the supervision of KMSA
KMSA Member	A Knowledge Management professional with a KMSA annual active membership
KMSA Non-Member	A Knowledge Management professional without a KMSA annual active membership
KM Professional Designation	A title or status conferred by KMSA in recognition of a person's expertise and/or right to practice
KMSA Secretariat	An entity involving multiple individuals executing daily administrative tasks on behalf of KMSA
Panel	A group of individuals with varying expertise tasked to provide input and opinion is required for an evaluation and make recommendations
Professional Body	An organisation with individual members practicing a profession or occupation in which the organisation maintains an oversight of the knowledge, skills, conduct and practice of that profession or occupation
Profession Designation Committee	A structure responsible for examining the application and supporting documentation to determine if the applicant holds the necessary and required qualifications
Portfolio of Evidence	A showcase of your skills and accomplishments, tailored for the specific designation that one is applying for
Professional Pipeline	A hierarchy of related qualifications and/or professional designations that allow for vertical progression within a profession
Recognition of Prior Learning	The principles and processes through which the prior knowledge and skills of a person are made visible, mediated and assessed for the purposes of alternative access and admission, recognition and certification, or further learning and development

SAQA	The Authority established by the National Qualifications Framework Act (Act 67 of 2008)
Qualification	A qualification or part qualification registered on the NQF
Assessment	The process of gathering and weighing evidence in order to determine whether applicants have demonstrated the required knowledge, skills and competence against prescribed qualification assessment criteria.
Evidence	The process by which applicants produce and organise evidence for the purpose of assessment.
Formal learning	Learning that occurs in an organised and structured education and training environment and that is explicitly designated as such. Formal learning leads to the awarding of a qualification or part qualification registered on the NQF.
Informal learning	Learning that results from daily activities related to paid or unpaid work, family or community life, or leisure, including incidental learning.
Assessor	Assessor in the employ of an organisational employer provider, who conducts assessments primarily for that employer as part of organisational performance management.
Non-formal learning	Planned educational interventions that are not intended to lead to awarding of qualifications or part qualifications, i.e. webinar, conference, mentoring, coaching, etc.
National Qualifications Framework	A comprehensive system approved by the Minister of Higher Education and Training for the classification, registration, publication and articulation of quality-assured national qualifications.
Professional designation	A title or status conferred by a professional body in recognition of a person's expertise and/or right to practice in an occupational field.
Recognition of Prior Learning	The principles and processes through which the prior knowledge and skills of a person are made visible, mediated and assessed for the purposes of alternative access and admission, recognition and certification, or further learning and development.

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY	KMSA Knowledge Management South Africa

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1.   A professional designation is an affirmation that a person possesses the learning, skill and experience required by their discipline or function.

1.2.   KMSA seeks to establish the acknowledgement of the Knowledge Management discipline in both Public and Private sectors in South Africa, as well as the acceptance of Knowledge Management practitioners as professionals.

1.3.   KMSA accepts Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as an integral part of initiatives to support transformation of the education and training system in South Africa; and as such will assist Knowledge Management practitioners in achieving needed certification and tertiary qualifications through Prior Learning, where applicable.

1.4.   RPL is the principle and process through which prior knowledge or skills of a person are highlighted and assessed for the purposes of access to further learning and development; and admission to certification and eventual qualification. As a principle, it recognises knowledge and skills that have been acquired outside a formal learning programme. The process of determining an individual's capability levels (prior learning) encompasses a variety of evaluation and assessment practices.

1.5.   Using the principles of RPL, KMSA shall award designation based on the prior learning assessment in line with processes and standards outlined in this policy.

2. OBJECTIVES

2.1   The objectives are as follows:

2.1.1.   KMSA endeavours to utilise the RPL frame of reference in allowing members to obtain Knowledge Management-related Professional Designations. The following tasks will be performed for each RPL application:

2.1.2.   Identify what the applicant's knowledge and capabilities , regardless of whether this learning or capability was achieved formally, non-formally or informally or.

2.1.3.   Match the applicant's skills, knowledge and experience to specific standards and the associated assessment criteria. These criteria may be adjusted from time to time to maintain appropriateness and knowledge applicable to the discipline.

2.1.4.   Assess the applicant against criteria in clause 2.1.3.

2.1.5.   Credit the applicant for skills, knowledge and experience built up through formal, informal and non-formal learning, obtained in the past.

3. PURPOSE

3.1. The RPL policy afford an individual, who does not meet the academic or qualification criteria, the opportunity to obtain the KMSA Professional designation.

3.2. Consequently, the professional designation is awarded through the assessment of the relevant experience, acquired competencies through experience and learnings (including relevant courses, etc.), as well as other related educational credits, thereby ensuring transparency and consistency to all RPL application request.

4. POLICY APPLICATION

4.1. The policy applies to KMSA members and those applying for KMSA Professional Designation.

5. POLICY CONTENT

5.1. Policy Principles

5.1.1. KMSA has adopted the following principles which underpin all assessments related to the RPL process. These principles including specific standards, which provide a sense of reliability, equality and fairness, as well as a common understanding among all parties.

5.1.2. The RPL assessment shall focus on what has been learned; not on the status of the institution, organisation or place where the learning was obtained.

5.1.3. Credit shall be awarded for acquired knowledge and skills based on the number of years of experience, with specific focus on the acquired learning, specific skills and competencies. The competency acquired shall be evaluated and will influence the awarding of credit, striking a balance between theory and practical application.

5.1.4. Credit shall be awarded only for relevant levels of learning, as determined by the applicable qualification and experience. Relevant assessment criteria and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) quality assurance process will also influence the award of credit. An examination may be used to bring members of a new profession on board; and people who have been doing the work for a period of time are registered after successful completion of such an examination.

5.1.5. Final decisions on every RPL assessment will be made by the Profession Designation Committee.

5.1.6. The applicant shall provide acceptable proof, including required evidence, of competence that he/she acquired through presented Prior Learning.

5.1.7.   All accredited learning, acknowledged for RPL, shall be strictly documented and maintained in the KMSA Membership database.

6.   RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING - PROCESS FLOW

6.1.   RPL Application and Assessment

6.1.1.   Processes followed shall be credible, quality assured and consistent with accepted and approved principles, SAQA criteria and regulations.

6.1.2.   The applicant applies to be evaluated for the KMSA designation on the basis of the number of years of experience practicing in KM.

6.1.3.   The internal assessor and the applicant express the learning in specific outcomes that are relevant and appropriate for the whole or part qualification credits required; and identify any learning gaps in terms of knowledge, skills and competence.

6.1.4.   The applicant collects a Portfolio of Evidence (POE) or Logbook and attends to any learning gaps, examples of instances of the learning gaps.

6.1.5.   The internal assessor assesses the applicant's proof / evidence provided, knowledge, skills and competence against the national standards and assessment criteria as outlined in the qualification or part qualification; and Issues Statements of Results for the Knowledge and Practical Skill learning components in which the applicant demonstrated competence.

6.1.6.   The internal assessor submits a report with recommendations concerning the applicant's competence and readiness for external assessment to the KMSA Secretariat for process verification and decision validation.

6.1.7.   The Profession Designation Committee evaluate the evidence presented, along with the applicant's knowledge and skills, against KMSA qualification assessment criteria.   The Profession Designation Committee declares the applicant "competent" or "not yet competent".

6.1.8.   RPL Assessments will be subject to the following principles:

a.   The application of NQF principles.

b.   The application of the principles of credible assessment.

c.   The application of the principles of the collection of and quality of the evidence.

d.   The use of various methods and instruments mentioned.

e.   The application of the assessment process outlined.

f.   The application of moderation requirements.

6.1.9.   Methods may include:

    a.   Portfolios: Further documentation i.e. proof of experience, work done, further development courses, etc.;

    b.   Demonstration of learning outcomes underpinning a particular skill/set of skills;

    c.   Interviews & Oral assessment; and

    d.   Written assessment & Projects / Case Studies.

6.1.10.   The Profession Designation Committee completes the required documentation indicating whether the applicant should be awarded credits/qualification.

    a.   RPL credits should only be awarded where the applicant can demonstrate his/her ability to apply foundational (theoretical) and practical competence in various contexts.

    b.   Credits are awarded only for demonstrated competence, not exclusively for work experience.

    c.   Credits must be awarded only for learning that is relevant to the content and learning outcomes of the KMSA Professional Designation Committee for which the credit is applied.

    d.   Credit must be consistent with the achievement level required by a particular KMSA Professional designation.

    e.   Credit must be awarded for learning that has foundational (theoretical), practical and reflexive applications that are appropriate to the learning programme.

6.1.11.   The KMSA Secretariat receives the applicant's information and results from KMSA Professional Designation Committee

6.1.12.   KMSA Secretariat certifies the applicant and submits the information to SAQA for uploading onto the National Learners Records Database (NLRD)

6.2.   Appeal

6.2.1.   Any applicant wishing to appeal against either the assessment or accreditation decision must follow the appeals procedure as laid out below.

6.2.2.   If the applicant is not satisfied with the KMSA Professional Designation Committee's decision, this must be discussed with the Assessor in order to work out a mutually satisfactory solution.

6.2.3.   If the applicant is not satisfied with the result of (6.1.11.) above, he/she must complete the Appeal Form, stating reasons for the appeal. This form is forwarded to the KMSA Secretariat.

6.2.4.   The KMSA Secretariat will arrange for a meeting or discussion with the applicant and the Assessor within 14 working days of receiving the Appeal Form.

6.2.5.   A KMSA Moderator will moderate the assessment and decide on one of the following options:

a. To uphold the assessment decision.
b. To re-assess the applicant, him/herself.
c. To ask the KMSA Professional Designation Committee to re-assess the applicant, whilst the Moderator is present.
d. The outcome will be recorded in writing and kept with the applicant's records.

6.2.6.   If the applicant is not satisfied with the results in (6.2.5.) above, the applicant can appeal to the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO), for an External Moderator to re-assess the applicant or for the KMSA Professional Designation Committee's to reassess the applicant with a representative of the QCTO present. This will depend on QCTO policies and procedures.

6.2.7.   Upon receipt of the QCTO outcome, KMSA Professional Designation Committee may reconsider the application.