

 ICB INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATIONS FOR BUSINESS	Policy Name:	RPL Policy and Guideline
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1. INTRODUCTION

This policy seeks to translate and customise those policies offered by SAQA and the Council for Higher Education (CHE) in order to adhere to the national imperatives of providing greater access to higher education through Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) (also referred to as 'Exemption') and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

Exemption and RPL are considered together in this policy as the ICB processes involved are closely related.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1. Exemption is a term that is used to refer to the mechanism for promoting articulation between qualifications within a sub-framework of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The purpose of Exemption is to provide for the mobility of students and enhance their chances to complete their qualifications. Exemption also provides for articulation across the sub-frameworks of the NQF to facilitate lifelong learning and access to the workplace. Only formal learning is considered for exemption.
- 2.2. Credit accumulation refers to the totalling of credits towards the completion of a registered qualification.
- 2.3. Credit transfer refers to the vertical, horizontal or diagonal relocation of credits towards a registered qualification.
- 2.4. Formal learning: credit-bearing learning, within the Higher Education Qualification Sub-Framework (HEQSF) of diploma- / degree-seeking or non-degree-seeking students within the ICB and other institutions.
- 2.5. Informal learning: learning that results from daily activities related to paid or unpaid work, family or community life, or leisure, including incidental learning.
- 2.6. Non-formal learning: planned educational interventions that are not intended to lead to the awarding of qualifications, for example, professional short courses and in-service training courses.
- 2.7. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a term that refers to the principles and processes through which the prior knowledge and skills of a person are made visible, mediated and rigorously assessed and moderated for alternative access and admission, recognition and certification, or further learning and development. RPL applies to informal and non-formal learning only. Learning resulting from formal routes will normally be recognised via exemption; however, in cases where Exemption is found not to be applicable, the RPL route may be explored.

3. PURPOSE

Through RPL and Exemption, this policy endeavours to promote access by and success for students, including those who were previously deprived of access to formal learning environments, and to align the ICB with overarching national policies. Although this policy is aimed inter alia at redress in a South African context, it may be extended to international candidates.

4. SCOPE

This policy provides a quality assurance framework for the recognition of prior informal and non-formal learning within RPL, as well as of formal learning within Exemption, except for situations where Exemption is found not to be applicable.

This regulation applies to all registered ICB academic programmes.

4.1 This regulation provides the framework within which:

- experts may evaluate applicants' prior formal, informal and non-formal learning as being sufficient preparation for the envisaged programme when measured against the learning outcomes of the particular academic programme or module(s);
- based on such evaluation of formal (where Exemption is found not to be applicable), informal and non-formal learning, applicants may be granted admission to an academic programme for which they otherwise do not meet the admission requirements (RPL for access);
- based on such evaluation of formal (where Exemption is found not to be applicable), informal and non-formal learning, applicants may be exempted from certain credits that are normally required as part of the programme (RPL for exemption); and
- based on such evaluation of formal learning, credits previously completed by the applicants may be transferred to other qualifications (Exemption for transfer).

5. PRINCIPLES

5.1 The ICB endorses the principles of a holistic Exemption and RPL approach.

- RPL seeks to achieve inclusion and to overcome a variety of barriers to access and success in higher education. RPL should be premised on overcoming possible barriers to admission to, or registration for higher education studies for those people who lack the formal prerequisites.
- RPL is more than a process of assessment. Rather, it is a specialised pedagogical process that also includes 'translation' of informal and non-formal bodies of knowledge into their formal and structured equivalents based on specified competencies. RPL will require close consideration of the associated epistemologies and specifically of the differentiation between experiential and academic knowledge, and hence of the areas and levels to which RPL can appropriately be applied. It also requires a clear understanding of the possible contribution of such informal and/or non-formal knowledge to each particular qualification type in higher education.
- The process of Exemption brings together the diverse features of credit accumulation and credit transfer to facilitate lifelong learning. It allows a student's achievements to be recognised even if the student does not achieve a formal registered qualification. All credits for an incomplete qualification may be recognised by the same or a different institution as meeting part of the requirements for a different qualification or may be recognised by a different institution as meeting part of the requirements for the same qualification.
- The process of Exemption ensures the mobility of an individual student between programmes and institutions within the constraining parameters set by the requirements of the specific curricula.
- The ICB endorses the fundamental values of the continuous development of individuals, lifelong learning and the redress of inequalities.
- The ICB endorses the value of Exemption and RPL as embodied in their purpose, viz. to increase the accessibility of higher education institutions in general, and the academic programmes of the ICB in particular, within a framework of quality

assurance. Increased accessibility in this regard refers specifically to individuals who were previously deprived of access to formal learning environments, whether as a result of systemic or other restrictions, but who can demonstrate that they have achieved a level of learning equivalent to that required for admission to the programme and that they can participate in learning opportunities at the required level.

- The ICB endorses the importance of articulation between programmes of different institutions through Exemption.
- The ICB endorses the importance of providing appropriate information to Exemption and RPL applicants and assessors.
- The ICB endorses that the application of Exemption and RPL must allow for context-appropriate procedures in different academic environments.
- The ICB endorses that all Exemption and RPL applicants must be treated with fairness and justice.
- The ICB endorses that assessment instruments and procedures used for Exemption and RPL must be valid and reliable.
- The ICB endorses that Exemption and RPL processes and procedures must be reasonably practicable.

6. PROVISIONS

Recognition of prior formal, informal and non-formal learning is valid for one application year. Suppose an applicant does not register for the particular application year. In that case, he/she will have to apply anew for another application year, and the evaluation of the re-application will be conducted in the context of the circumstances prevailing at that time.

6.1. In the case of Exemption for transfer and RPL for exemption:

- Exemption and credit transfer may only be granted on a per-module basis, i.e. a complete module of an academic programme is the smallest learning unit for which credits may be exempted or transferred.
- The time since the learning was completed may be taken into account, since learning that occurred too long ago may not be relevant at the time of application.
- Exemption from a module(s), as RPL, can be granted on the strength of short course(s) outside the HEQSF (in other words, non-credit-bearing) completed by the applicant, on condition that the course contents, duration and assessment of the short course are at least equivalent to that of the module(s).
- Each credit exempted or transferred, must correspond to ten notional study hours.

6.2. In the case of RPL for access:

- For applications for admission to programmes, statutory and/or programme-specific admission requirements may be waived based on prior learning.
- The assessment of prior learning for RPL and Exemption must always meet standards that correspond with normal learning assessment at the ICB (i.e. not higher or lower).
- A variety of assessments of prior formal, informal and non-formal learning may be used. These assessments may include, but are not restricted to:
 - An assessment of learning portfolios (for example, the student submits a set of documents and/or other proof to illustrate his / her prior informal learning).
 - Supplementary work, to the satisfaction of the ICB, prior to admission (for example admission to an academic programme is granted on

- condition that the student has completed supplementary work within a prescribed period).
 - o Formal learning in the form of parts or the whole of academic programmes that were followed at other institutions (for example, university of technology diplomas or degrees).
- Admission to an academic programme may be subject to supplementary work during the academic programme (for example a student is admitted to a programme on condition that he/she will complete supplementary work during the programme). In these cases, the student is required to complete all the supplementary work before he/she may be awarded the relevant qualification.

7. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of the Academic Board of the ICB and the relevant person(s) within Operations.

The Academic Board must formulate and document a set of Exemption / RPL procedures that meet the following requirements:

- The procedures must comply with this policy
- The procedures are subject to approval by the Academic Director
- The procedures must include mechanisms to provide feedback to applicants, handled with the necessary administrative support and uniformly between all departments
- The procedures must include reasonable and clear parameters relating to the costs of services provided in respect of Exemption / RPL application, guidance and assessment procedures, to be determined annually (the costs associated with Exemption / RPL are for the account of the applicant and are paid to the ICB before an application will be considered)
- The procedures must include guidelines for applicants regarding the requirements of assessment instruments (for example the guidelines for learning portfolios, and ways in which tests, examinations, interviews and other assessment opportunities are conducted)
- The procedures must include guidelines for the process according to which unsuccessful applicants may lodge an appeal

Applications for Exemption / RPL must be submitted to the ICB using the ICB's online application tool.

The receiving Administrator sends his / her decision on the Exemption / RPL application to the Academic Board. On sign-off from the Board, the Administrator is responsible for:

- Informing the applicant of the decision
- Recording the decision as a decision of the Academic Board on the student's internal record. RPL for credit is recorded as exemptions, while Exemption for credit is recorded as an exemption

8. RELATED POLICIES

- Assessment Policy

9. GUIDELINE FOR APPLICATIONS

If you have studied similar courses previously, or have relevant work experience, you can apply for RPL/Exemption. Applications must be based on **NQF registered** qualifications/part qualifications and need to be submitted with the following documentation:

- proof of provider accreditation (some examples are: DHET, Seta's QAP, Umalusi, CHE)
- NQF level
- SAQA qualification registration number.

For all exemptions applied for, qualifications must have been obtained **within the last 5 years** i.e., "current" per SAQA requirements or if qualifications are older than 5 years, they must still be NQF registered together **with current relevant work experience**.

9.1. How to apply:

- Register and update your contact details on the ICB student portal (www.icb.org.za) and quote the ICB number on the RPL guideline.
- Pay the RPL application fee to the ICB.
- Email the following documents (in PDF format) to the ICB and tick each to show that all documents are attached.

Documents required for review:	Tick
Registered on the ICB student portal and provide ICB number	
Copy of your payment deposit slip/proof of payment	
A copy of this letter, with the acceptance section below, signed (Only submit section 9 or pages 5&6.)	
Official copies of your previous course results (transcript of results), obtained from a registered/accredited training provider Note: Foreign qualifications need a SAQA "Certificate of Evaluation" included.	
A detailed CV explaining your work experience and including references from relevant jobs	
A copy of your ID book	
A letter from your Manager confirming work experience (if applicable)	

9.2. Review Process:

Once the ICB's RPL/Exemption Review Board has reviewed your application, which can take up to 6 weeks, they will write to you with their decision. You could receive specific subject exemptions or even a full qualification exemption. Feedback will be given by learning area (subject) and the result could be any of the following;

- **Full Exemption granted**
If the ICB recognises your previous studies and grants you credit for equivalent subjects, you will need to pay an exemption fee per subject granted.
- **Exemption not granted**
If the ICB does not feel that your previous qualification(s) or work experience match part or all of the learning outcomes of the subjects you are applying for.
- **Conditional exemption granted**
This means you don't qualify for the full exemption but can submit more evidence without having to write an exam. You will, however, be required to complete a Portfolio of Evidence (PoE) assessment provided by the ICB to prove your competency in a particular subject. You will need to pay an RPL fee for each subject.

Once we have received your proof of payment, we will send you an email to access the RPL PoE. The PoE will be available for you to complete via the MACCI digital portal for each subject granted and submit it by the "Due Date." You must do all the assessments in the Portfolios and then upload them back to the ICB via the MACCI portal for final assessment. We will review them and let you know the outcome 7-8 weeks after the due date stated on the PoE label. The completion of an RPL PoE is regarded as an assessment entry and all the policies and procedures with regards to ICB assessments apply.

If you are assessed as 'exempt', you will get full exemption for that particular learning area. If you are 'unsuccessful', you'll need to register in order to study the learning areas and enter for the assessments/exams.

9.3. Compulsory Student Registration:

In order to accept any exemptions granted, you will need to be a registered learner of the ICB. If you are not yet an ICB learner, you will need to pay the annual student registration fee. Thereafter, if you continue as a learner, the registration fee will be payable each calendar year.

9.4. Conditions:

- The above fees and exemption opportunities are valid for six (6) months from the date of this letter. If you have not accepted and paid for these exemptions within six (6) months, you will need to contact us. **Please note:** if the fees change within the six (6) month period, learners will be liable to pay the balance of the new fees.
- Qualification Certificates are only issued once a full qualification is obtained.
- No certificates are issued for exempted learning areas/subjects.
- No refunds for Exemption Fees will be given under any circumstances. It is the student's responsibility to fully understand the process and implications before accepting these exemptions.
- **Please ensure that you submit all your documentation upfront because the ICB Board will base their decision on this alone.** Any additional documentation submitted after the initial application will require the process to **start from the beginning and another application fee will be due.**
- Payment of annual student registration fee is for STUDENT REGISTRATION (no certificate issued.)

For queries, please contact: support@icb.org.za and put 'Exemptions' in the subject line.

Acceptance by Learner:

I hereby accept that I have read, understood and agree to the above RPL/Exemption policy and guideline and the conditions thereof . I further acknowledge that I have read, understand and agree to the ICB's assessment policy .	
I hereby choose to apply for exemptions in the following qualification programme: (Tick ONE only)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Financial Accounting Programme (FAP)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Business Management Programme (BMP)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Office Administration Programme (OAP)
Name:	
Signature:	
Date:	

Note: You must ONLY submit section 9 or pages 5&6 with your RPL/Exemption application.