

SOUTH AFRICAN SPORTS COACHING ASSOCIATION
RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) POLICY, CRITERIA AND
GUIDELINES

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Acronyms

CPD	Continuous professional development;
MoI	Memorandum of Incorporation
MOOC	Massive Online Open Course
NCD	National Coach Developer
NCEA	National Coach Education Advisor
NF	National Federation
PCD	Provincial Coach Developer
PSC	Provincial Sports Confederation
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAQA	South African Qualification Authority
SASCA	South African Sports Coaching Association
SASCOC	South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee
WADA	World Anti-Doping Agency

1. Introduction

The South African Sports Coaching Association (SASCA) is a Not-for Profit Professional Body established for the purposes of promoting the standing of sports coaching in South Africa through facilitating collaboration amongst all sport related stakeholders, including the South African Sport Organizations. SASCA will also promote lifelong learning to the membership through continuous professional development (CPD); provide value added services such as capacity building by promoting the coach developer pathway to ensure the currency and relevance with updated coach education, training resources and facilitation is prioritized. The values and ethics of sports coaching are stated in the sports coaching charter and the code of ethics, and SASCA is committed to promoting the charter within the coaching profession. SASCA works collaboratively with a number of organisations and bodies, especially the education and training institutions, and will commission research in partnership with these institutions to ensure that SASCA and its members are kept informed about, and participate in best practice development and professionalisation of coaching.

This Recognition of Prior Learning Policy, Criteria and Guidelines (The Policy) is aligned to the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) RPL Policy, 2019 and to the RPL Coordinating Policy of the Minister: Higher Education, Science and Innovation, 2016.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to guide the further development and implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in the context of the work of SASCA for coaching and coach development, and for the benefit of sports coaches and coach developers at all levels of the designation framework.

This is a comprehensive document which also guides the processes to be followed in selecting RPL assessors and moderators and assessment criteria, amongst others.

3. Scope of the Policy

This Policy comprises sections which deal with governance, terms of reference, and criteria and guidelines which support implementation of RPL in SASCA.

This Policy covers the range of eight (8) designations which have been approved by the board, as well as those coaching programmes, such as coaching levels 1,2 3 and 4, and others, which are internationally recognised by the International Olympics Committee and other international sports bodies.

4. Establishment of the RPL sub-committee of the Board

- a) The Memorandum of Incorporation (MoI) provides the board with the power to appoint board sub-committees, and to delegate to such sub-committees any of the authority of the board, and is subject to the board's MoI. If the board's MoI, or a board resolution establishing a sub-committee, does not provide otherwise, the sub-committee may include persons who are not directors of the company.
- b) The RPL sub-committee will be chaired by an independent non-executive board member, who is one of the directors. RPL specialists and practitioners and other external parties may be members of the RPL sub-committee.
- c) The members of the sub-committee shall collectively have sufficient qualifications and experience to fulfill their duties. The sub-committee members are required to keep up to date with developments impacting their relevant skill set, as well as the subject areas relevant to required skills sets needed on the sub-committee.
- d) The board shall select the members of the sub-committee from its current members and external nominations, in line with skills requirements. The sub-committee's composition is reviewed annually by the board. The board fills vacancies on the sub-committee within forty (40) business days after the vacancy arises.

5. Mandate

The sub-committee's authority is derived from the delegated authority of the board as contemplated in the board's MoI. The sub-committee has no ultimate decision-making authority; it provides oversight of the RPL function of SASCA, and makes recommendations to the board in respect of the matters within the scope of its functions, for the board's consideration and ultimate approval.

The board supports and endorses the sub-committee, which operates free of any organisational impairment, and acts in accordance with its duties and the delegated authority as recorded in this Policy.

6. Terms of reference

SASCA aims to establish sport coaching in South Africa as a blended profession by recognizing the many and varied contexts in which it operates; and assessing the related specialized knowledge, skills, attributes and values of sport coaches at varying levels. This Policy supports a planned, consulted and moderated RPL process, informed and guided by national policies.

The RPL project of SASCA is overseen by a RPL sub-committee, which is supported in implementing the RPL programme, by a RPL working group and an implementation team. Both the sub-committee and the working group will:

- a) Espouse the assessment criteria of credibility, transparency, relevance, currency, validity, sufficiency;
- b) Reflect the primary functions, competencies, knowledge and experience which make up the skills sets as outlined in the *Long Term Coach Development* (SASCOC, 2012) and the *SA Coaching Framework* (SASCOC, 2011);
- c) Use the criteria developed and approved per designation by SASCA, as the standard per designation;
- d) Be guided by the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the underpinning NQF-registered qualifications, the SAQA level descriptors, or equivalents stated in the designation criteria, and other coaching programmes, such as coaching levels 1,2,3 and 4;
- e) Be guided by the RPL Co-ordination Policy published by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation in March 2016, and the SAQA RPL Policy, 2019.
- f) Acknowledge the rights and responsibilities of both applicants/candidates and the National Federations (NFs) and/or the Provincial Sports Confederations (PSCs) or other sports bodies;
- g) Utilize transparent assessment, moderation and awards criteria and procedures; ensure clear record-keeping and adopt a user –friendly approach;
- h) Where applicable, ensure that a *declaration of conflict of interest* and a *confidentiality clause* is signed by RPL assessors or moderators prior to commencement of each RPL assessment;
- i) Should a panel be used, either for assessment or for moderation, select these people within the guidelines stated below in this Policy; and
- j) Ensure that the NF or the PSC or a nominated competent person/s must be involved in the assessment and endorsement of RPL applications.

7. Role of the National Federation, or Provincial Sports Confederation or Sports Council

The coach or coach developer is a member of a NF, PSC or sports body. As such the NF, PSC or sports body may be directly associated with the development of their coaches. This Policy allows for the NF, PSC or sports body to be the final signatory on a RPL Candidate's application form, as a show of support for the coach or coach developer.

This person can be the Chairperson or General-Secretary of the NF, PSC, or sports body, or a designated competent person.

Independent and cross-cutting- (across different sporting codes)- coaches and coach developers or voluntary coaches, may submit their applications without the signature of the NF or PSC, and may request the signature of a more senior coach in the sports code, to co-sign their application.

8. Roles and functions of the SASCA RPL sub-committee

The sub-committee, supported by the working group and other RPL and sports coaching specialists such as National Coach Education Advisors (NCEAs), or national and provincial Coach Developers or other RPL specialists must ensure that:

- a) A RPL policy, criteria and implementation guidelines are developed and submitted to the SASCA board for approval;
- b) Annually review RPL-related documents in accordance with lessons learnt from implementation, practice, current national and international best practice, and research findings;
- c) Ensure that all RPL-related documents and templates are reviewed and updated to provide efficient and effective implementation;
- d) Recommend the RPL implementation plan to the SASCA board for approval, through which all RPL projects are coordinated and implemented;
- e) Ensure that fit-for-purpose assessment tools and methods for RPL for each coaching designation are developed and implemented;
- f) Support the working group to establish RPL assessment and moderation panels if these are required;
- g) Receive reports from the working group, assessors/assessment panels and moderators/moderation panels, NCEAs, NCDs, PCDs, about the quality assurance aspects of the RPL project: e.g. consistency across sport and domains, geographical location and available resources;
- h) Receive timeous status reports after each assessment session from the working group, and compile a consolidated report for the SASCA Board;
- i) Make recommendations to the SASCA Board for the awarding of a designation achieved through RPL; and
- j) Ensure that the RPL candidates receive the outcome of their RPL assessment within 30 days of the first RPL assessment session.

9. Guidelines for selection of panels:

The RPL sub-committee, working with the working group, will ensure that the assessor/s or assessment panel and the moderator/s or moderation panel are allocated per RPL session or RPL project. The guidelines used will be:

9.1 Composition of an assessment panel (if required)

- a) NF/PSC- Sports Coaching Head of the specific sport code of which the candidate is a member;
- b) NF/PSC nominated competent person who must be a RPL practitioner; and
- c) A NCEA or NCD or PCD, or an independent RPL facilitator.

9.2 Composition of the Moderation panel (if required)

One NCEA or NCD or PCD and one other independent moderator can be appointed to the moderation panel.

9.3 Profile of people in the assessment process

- a) A nominated NF, PSC or sports body delegate who is the appointed coaching lead can be appointed as the designated person to assess the application against the designation and the criteria for the designation;
- b) A NCEA or NCD or PCD who has been awarded such a designation can be appointed the designated person to assess or be a member of an assessment panel.

9.4 Profile of people in the moderation process

The Moderator/s who considers the recommendation from the assessor/s or assessment panel can be a NF, PSC or sports body-nominated person, or a SASCA approved NCEA or NCD, or an independent RPL specialist.

10. Assessment Criteria

10.1 The assessment of a candidate for a designation will be based on the criteria for the designation. Candidates must note the following verification will be done:

- a) A verification of all certificates of in-house training which you have received during your coaching career.
- b) A verification of all certificates of formal qualifications achieved through schooling, colleges or higher education institutions, or other institutions such as international coaching organisations.
- c) The assessment of workplace-based evidence, through site visits or field work.

10.2 Should RPL be required, when a coach has coached at a level higher than what they are currently recognised for, their prior learning, knowledge and experience will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- a) **Relevance:** Are the knowledge, skills, competence and experience applicable to the designation level for which the candidate is applying when considered against the approved designation criteria and using the elements of the level descriptor as a guide?
- b) **Validity:** Are the prior knowledge, experience, competence, skills, etc. valid in terms of the desired designation, the requirements for the designation, the sport code in which the candidate coaches, and other elements required by the NF/PSC?
- c) **Quality/ sufficiency:** Does the candidate's prior learning, knowledge, experience, skills, competence etc. align to the requirements set out in the designation criteria? It is useful

to use the elements of the level descriptors to guide the candidate as to the level at which the designation and concomitant knowledge etc. is pitched.

- d) **Transferability and application:** Can the candidate interpret what they have learned, and apply it in diverse contexts? Can the candidate answer WHAT IF questions about their learning experiences?
- e) **Authenticity:** Can the candidate support their prior learning, knowledge, experience, skills, competence by verified evidence?
- f) **Currency:** Is the candidate's prior learning, experience, knowledge, skills, competence up to date, valid, applicable when aligned to the criteria described in the desired designation? The candidate can use the elements of the applicable level descriptor to guide their response; as well as current coaching requirements of their NF/PSC.

11. Suggested forms of evidence

Evidence submitted by a candidate for a RPL process, must be aligned to, and demonstrate knowledge, skill and competence against the approved criteria per designation. It is important to note that the designations are aligned to the elements of the NQF level descriptors, and serve as a guide to the candidate as to the level at which the information in the portfolio of evidence should be pitched. Candidates may cluster components/elements of any of the level descriptors together for their specific purposes and address them as a cluster. Suggested forms include:

- a) Visual evidence such as a video, power point presentation or other visual formats
- b) written documents
- c) reports
- d) on-site and field work
- e) Schedules/rosters/timetables etc. personally drawn up by the candidate
- f) Training programmes, session plans which have been completed individually or as part of a team. If the candidate is a member of a (project) team, they should outline in detail their specific role in the project
- g) Case studies
- h) Any training / assessment/ ethical conduct materials which the candidate has compiled
- i) Any relevant training videos etc.

12. Requirements for RPL working group members and panels

Working group and RPL panels appointed to conduct RPL must fulfill the following requirements:

- a) Be well acquainted with the SASCA RPL context and industry needs in terms of the SASCA RPL criteria for the 8 sports coaching designations.

- b) Bring professionalism and specialist knowledge in RPL practices, assessment and moderation of candidates, and apply this to the RPL process, and when motivating assessment or moderation decisions.
- c) Understand the rights of RPL candidates and the appeals process.
- d) Demonstrate motivation, encouragement, sensitivity and respect to all candidates; and demonstrate consistency in assessment or moderation outcomes.
- e) Demonstrate a professional demeanour in all panel discussions.
- f) Contribute, enhance and share expertise in discussions of candidate's evaluations.
- g) Make detailed notes about the candidate's portfolio of evidence in whatever format it is presented.
- h) Compile a legible signed assessment or moderation report for each candidate and submit both within 5 days of the end of the RPL sessions.
- i) Display professionalism through commitment to:
 - i. be present for all assessment or moderation sessions on that particular day in the interests of fairness and consistency;
 - ii. attend a briefing session 30 minutes prior to the starting time of the first candidate during which each panel member will share with the group which question/s he/she would like to ask candidates during the session;
 - iii. disclose any possible conflict of interest; and
 - iv. respect the professional opinions of the other panel members;
- j) Understand that, in the interests of fairness to candidates, assessment outcomes should reflect a balance between generic skills, competencies and experience, and sport-specific skills, competencies and experience.
- k) Where there is a dispute amongst the panel members, the final decision rests with the RPL Chair.

13. Requirements for the candidate

In order to be assessed through RPL, the following information should be understood:

- a) A candidate's prior knowledge, skills and current competencies will be assessed based on their own area of responsibility by a process of RPL, should the candidate not have the underpinning academic qualification.
- b) If any gaps are identified in the candidate's knowledge or competence, they will be assisted to make up any shortfalls in their training or portfolio, and may reapply for assessment.
- c) Once the RPL assessment has been successfully completed, the candidate will receive a formal letter from the Chairperson of the SASCA board, with the outcome of the RPL process, declaring the person competent and awarded the designation.

The candidate will be expected to do the following:

Provide a completed RPL Online application form, endorsed by a NF, PSC or other sports body, containing:

- a) A certified copy of their ID.
- b) Updated Curriculum Vitae (max length 3 pages).
- c) Copies of the most recent First Aid certificate.
- d) Certificates of formal qualifications or certified transcripts.
- e) Certified copies of all certificates of all programmes attended during the candidate's involvement with coaching.
- f) A copy of the marked assignment for Anti-doping and the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) certificate.
- g) Copy of the job description if employed in a fulltime position; or the job description as a part-time/volunteer as a sports coach; or a list of responsibilities if the candidate is a volunteer. This must be signed by the NF or PSC or designated delegate, or sports body, with his/her contact details.
- h) A suitable visual presentation if required, as outlined in the suggested forms of evidence.
- i) Workplace evidence, or practical evidence, such as a visual presentation, (power point presentation, video, Massive Online Open Course (MOOC), slides).
- j) A one-page summary of how the candidate has personally contributed to the development of coaching in their NF, PSC or sports organisation.

14. Rights of the RPL candidate

SASCA protects the following rights of RPL candidates:

- a) The right to the information required in order to make informed decisions about her/his further learning/career pathway;
- b) The right to be served in her/his mother tongue or the right to an interpreter/translator where this need can be reasonably catered for by the assessing organization/NF/PSC or institution;
- c) The right to access up front the standards and criteria which will be used in the assessment process;
- d) The right to access up front the learning outcomes against which she/he will be assessed;
- e) The right to have access to competent trained educators and assessors who balance adequate subject knowledge and soft skills (critical cross field outcomes) with skills, competencies and practical knowledge and are skilled in working with diverse groups of adult candidates;

- f) The right to be assessed by assessment methods which are flexible, appropriate to the designation and tailored to the needs of SASCA, and the designation being applied for by the candidate;
- g) The right to have prior learning evaluated and assessed within a reasonable period of time;
- h) The right to confidentiality regarding evidence submitted and the assessment outcome;
- i) The right to expect *fair, valid and transparent* assessment processes;
- j) The right to negotiate the use of suitable assessment tools if her/his personal circumstances demand it (e.g. learners with disabilities or who are illiterate);
- k) The right to appeal.

15. Appeals Process

Should a RPL candidate be dissatisfied with the credibility and validity or outcome of the RPL process, the candidate may lodge an appeal in writing to the Chairperson of the RPL sub-committee, within 7 days after receiving the disputed outcome. If the candidate is not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, the candidate may appeal in writing to the Chairperson of SASCA board, within 5 days of receiving the disputed outcome.

The decision of the SASCA board on the matter will be final.

16. Timelines, venues and assessment dates

These will be forwarded to the candidate by SASCA

17. Meeting Procedures

17.1 Frequency

The RPL sub-committee of the board will meet, as a minimum, every two (2) months. It may be required to meet monthly when large numbers of applications and recommendations have to be considered for recommendation to the board for approval.

17.2 Attendance

Sub-committee members shall attend all scheduled meetings, including meetings called on an *ad hoc* basis for special matters, unless prior apology, with reasons, has been submitted to the Chair of the sub-committee. Sub-committee members may attend meetings in person or via electronic means. If the elected Chair of the sub-committee is absent from a meeting, the members present shall elect a member amongst them to act as Chair for that meeting.

17.3 Agenda and Minutes

- a) The sub-committee shall establish an annual work plan for each year to ensure that all relevant matters are covered by the agenda of the meetings planned for the year.

- b) A detailed agenda together with supporting documentation, shall be circulated, at least *seven (7) working days* prior to each scheduled meeting to the members of the sub-committee and other invitees (where applicable).
- c) Sub-committee members are required to be fully prepared for meetings in order to provide appropriate and constructive input on matters for discussion.
- d) The minutes of meetings shall be completed as soon as possible after the meeting and circulated to the Chair for review thereof. The minutes must be formally approved by the sub-committee at its next scheduled meeting or via email communication.
- e) Minutes of the meeting signed by the Chair are sufficient evidence that the matters referred to therein have been fully discussed and agreed, whether by way of a formal meeting or otherwise.

18. Declaration of interests

At the commencement of each meeting, all sub-committee members should declare whether they have any conflict of interest in respect of any matter on the agenda. Such conflict should be recorded in the minutes and conflict of interest register (where applicable). The sub-committee should discuss the conflict and decide upon its severity, impact and determine the appropriate management of such. Depending on the outcome, when that agenda item arises, the member should be recused from the meeting for the duration of that matter being discussed.

19. Quorum and Voting

The required quorum for meetings shall be *indicated by (50% plus 1) or a specific number of members*. If there is no quorum at a meeting, its members may proceed with the meeting to discuss items on the agenda without making any decisions on such items, or may postpone the meeting to an agreed alternative date and time. Each sub-committee member shall have 1 (one) vote.

Approval of the RPL Policy, criteria and guidelines

This Policy was approved by the board on 5 August 2020 and will be due for review annually.