



RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSMENT

GLOSSARY

Recognition of prior learning (RPL)

Credit and acknowledgement of the competencies – or a portion of the competencies – required through previous learning and experience for a specific qualification.

Outcomes

The competencies required to function in the category applied for.

Specific outcomes

The detailed, measurable, verifiable skills, abilities and values that must be demonstrated.

Assessment policy and method

The institutional requirements regarding assessment, as well as methods to be used viz. tests, assignments, portfolios, etc.

Assessment criteria

Essential evidence that a candidate has achieved an outcome

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the process of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as sanctioned by the South African Council for the Architectural Profession (SACAP) is to assess previously acquired skills and knowledge of a candidate applying for professional registration in one of the four categories identified in the Architectural Profession Act (Act 44 of 2000) and/or to register as a candidate in any of those categories and/or to write the Professional Practice Examination leading to registration. This document contains assessment guidelines and requirements for both applicants and assessors, as well as an assessment framework and pro forma report.

ASSESSMENT PHILOSOPHY AND OUTCOMES

The fundamental philosophy on which the assessment is based is that practitioners in all four categories essentially share the same professional landscape and social responsibilities. They are

exposed to exactly the same technological, environmental, legislative and socio-economic parameters and constraints, although arguably to different degrees depending on the complexity of the project and circumstances.

For example, a professional architect and a professional senior architectural technologist should probably have the same knowledge of urban design, which is not a requirement for a professional architectural draughtsperson at all. Or a professional architect must be familiar with the structural concepts associated with high-rise buildings, a professional senior architectural technologist with medium-rise buildings and a professional architectural draughtsperson with single and double-storey buildings only.

At the same time it should be emphasised that there is considerable overlap between the four categories, and that the competencies required can never be as neatly packaged as documentation might suggest.

Architecture can be defined as the art and science of building. “The art and science of designing and building open areas, communities and other artificial constructions or environments, usually with some regard to aesthetic effects”¹. For the purpose of the RPL process, the essential skills and knowledge required to practise architecture in a sustainable, socially responsible and financially viable way were clustered into a range of ten specific outcomes:

Office practice, legal aspects and ethics	Outcome # 1
Computer applications	2
Contextual and urban relationships	3
Architectural history, theory and precedent	4
Architectural design	5
Environmental relationships	6
Contract documentation and administration	7
Building structures	8
Construction technology	9
Building services and related technologies	10

¹ Bartuska, T.J. and Young, G.L. (editors). 1994. *The built environment: creative enquiry into design and planning*. Menlo Park, Ca.: Crisp, p.138)

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

1. INTRODUCTION

This document is intended to guide both applicants and assessors through the preparatory and assessment phases of the RPL process established by SACAP for evaluating applicants for the purpose of registration in one of the four categories of the Architectural Profession Act (Act 44 of 2000).

The four categories are:

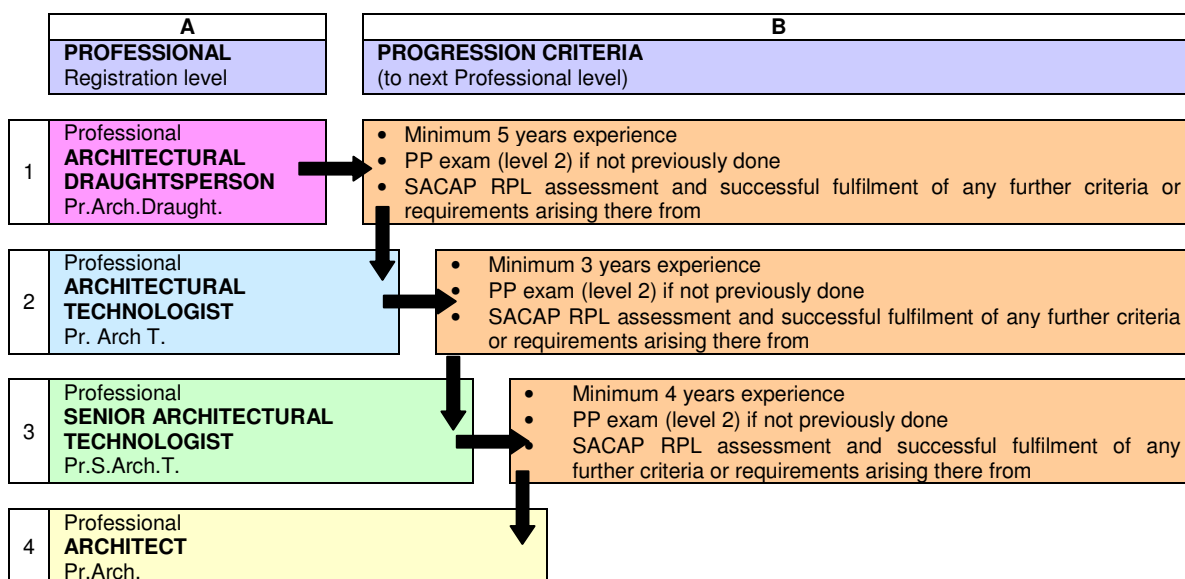
The Professional Architect	A
The Professional Senior Architectural Technologist	B
The Professional Architectural Technologist	C
The Professional Architectural Draughtsperson	D

2. PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE PROGRAMME

Only applicants who have passed the Professional Practice Examination would be eligible for the RPL process.

3. MATRIX FOR RE-GRADING OF PROFESSIONALS THROUGH EXPERIENCE

The following matrix establishes the framework for the progression to another level of PROFESSIONAL registration through RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning) and EXPERIENCE in the Architectural Profession (please also refer to the full framework available on the website www.sacapsa.com):



4. ASSESSMENT METHOD

The RPL evaluation is primarily based on a panel interview and an assessment of a portfolio, which measures an individual's existing learning outcomes against the outcomes required for registration in a relevant category. An applicant could also be subjected to a written or oral examination on specific aspects of architectural practice, or be requested to prepare an assignment in the form of either an essay or a design project.

The assessment follows outcomes based methodology – competency in ten outcomes fields is assessed relevant to the category applied for. Each competency is broadly weighed to correlate with the credits in the curriculum of a typical accredited program in architecture. The assessment scale consists of only two performance levels, namely "not adequate" and "adequate". An applicant, who is deemed "adequate", has achieved the minimum required critical outcomes to practice within a category according to the norms set down by the Council.

In all four categories the level of proficiency must be considered appropriate to the complexity of the projects envisaged at that particular level. This assessment must, therefore, be guided by the following documents, which must be thoroughly studied by both applicants and assessors:

- SAQA Criteria & guidelines for the implementation of RPL All categories
- SACAP draft regulations for the identification of work All categories
- SACAP policy & requirements: practical training All categories
- Draft SAQA unit standard: B Arch, M Arch (Prof) Candidate Architect
- Draft SAQA unit standard: BAS Candidate Senior Architectural Technologist
- Draft SAQA unit standard: B Tech Candidate Senior Architectural Technologist
- Draft SAQA unit standard N Dip Arch Tech Candidate Architectural Technologist
- Draft SAQA unit standard: N Cert Arch Tech Candidate Architectural Draughtsperson

The panel may be able to verify successful achievement of all outcomes from the assessment of the portfolio and subsequent interview with the candidate. In the event that the panel could not verify specific components of the required outcomes from the portfolio, these outcomes must be tested through oral, written or practical examination. If an applicant is assessed as inadequate due to not achieving the minimum critical outcomes, the applicant must gain further experience for re-assessment, or enrol at a suitable tertiary institution where the outcome must be successfully achieved, depending on the recommendations of the panel.

5. APPEALS PROCESS

An unsuccessful applicant may lodge a thoroughly motivated appeal in writing to the Registrar who, in deliberation with the RPL Appeals Committee, may:

- 5.1 Instruct the relevant panel to consider additional evidence;
- 5.2 Invite the candidate for-re-assessment; or
- 5.3 Dismiss the appeal.

6. MODERATION AND REVIEW

SACAP's RPL Appeals Committee will serve as an advisory as well as a moderation panel, and as a review and an appeals mechanism in support of regional RPL panels.

7. PREPARATION FOR APPLICANTS – GENERAL

Professional registration, whether for the first time or when upgrading to a higher level, is a major achievement. Applicants must prepare adequately and intensively for the assessment. Applicants often have experience of practice matters but lacks formal learning in the fields of architectural history and theory, urban design, architectural design and landscape design.

8. LITERATURE STUDY

If it is considered that an academically based training underpinning registration as Professional Architect includes six years of learning architectural design and theory, the gap is significant.

Ways to bridge it includes:

- 8.1 Working with a mentor;
- 8.2 Attending relevant modules at a school of architecture; and
- 8.3 Extensive reading self-study.

The following publications would add greatly to background knowledge – but it must be emphasised that the list is fundamental and should form the basis for further reading and a culture of life-long learning:

Overview of the built environment professions and practices

- BARTUSKA, T.J. and Young, G.L. (editors). 1994. The built environment: creative enquiry into design and planning. Menlo Park, Ca.: Crisp.

Western architectural history

- KOSTOF, S. 1985. A history of architecture. New York: Oxford.
- CROUCH, D.P. 1985. History of architecture: Stonehenge to skyscrapers. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- RISEBERO, B. 1982. Modern architecture and design: An alternative history. London: Herbert.

African architectural history

- ELLEH, N. 1997. African architecture: evolution and transformation. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- GARLAKE, P. 1978. The Kingdoms of Africa. Oxford: Phaidon.

South African architectural history

- BIZELL, J. 2002. Blueprints in black and white: the built environment professions in South Africa. Durban: Solo.
- FRESCURA, F. 1981. Rural shelter in Southern Africa. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.
- GREIG, D. 1971. A guide to architecture in South Africa. Cape Town: Timmins.

Architectural theory

- ALEXANDER, C. et al. 1977. A pattern language. New York: Oxford University Press.
- CHING, F.D.K. 1996. Architecture: Form, Space and Order, New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- JENCKS, C. and KROPF, K. (editors) 1997. Theories and Manifestoes of Contemporary Architecture. London: Academy Editions.
- LANG, J. 1987. Creating architectural theory. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.

- LAWSON, B. 1980. How designers think. London: Butterworth.

Analysis and synthesis

- CLARK, R.H. & PAUSE, M. 1996. Precedents in architecture. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- LEUPEN, B. et al. 1997. Design and analysis. Rotterdam: O1O.

Urban design and urbanism

- CORREA, Charles, 1989. The new landscape: Urbanisation in the Third World. London: Butterworth
- KATZ, P. 1994. The new urbanism: Toward architecture of community. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- KRIER, R. 1979. Urban space. London: Academy Editions.
- TIBBALDS, F. 1992. Making people-friendly towns: Improving the public environment in towns and cities. Harlow, Essex: Longman.

Landscape architecture theory

- BOOTH, N.K. 1983. Basic elements of landscape architectural design. Prospect, Illinois: Waveland.
- TURNER, T. 1996. City as landscape: A post-postmodern view of design and planning. London: Spon.

Sustainable architecture

- BAGGS, S. & J. 1996. The healthy house. London: Thames & Hudson.
- ANINK, D. et al. 1996. Handbook of sustainable building. London: James & James.
- PAPANEK, V. 1995. The green imperative: ecology and ethics in design and architecture. London: Thames & Hudson.

Journals

- ARCHI-technology
- Leading architecture and design
- SA Architecture, etc. ...

9. **CURRICULUM VITAE**

There are a number of authoritative guidelines available on CV writing. Some critical requirements:

- 9.1 The CV should be a properly bound document with a cover page identifying the applicant. Applicants are requested to submit **one original and three copies** of their CV's.
- 9.2 A table of contents.
- 9.3 The candidate's application form should constitute the first item.
- 9.4 A **certified** declaration outlining previous work and experience, with a concise statement motivating the application and why the candidate believes it should be approved.
- 9.5 Practical and academic experience should be chronologically listed, with the most recent achievements first.
- 9.6 **Evidence** must be offered for any achievement claimed. Failing to include such evidence could result in delays and even refusal. Appropriate evidence includes:
 - 9.6.1 Certificates for previous tertiary level courses completed;

9.6.2 Certificates for previously gained professional registration;

9.6.3 References or testimonials from current and past employers, supervisors and/or colleagues in a professional category similar or higher than that being applied for.

Such substantiating documentation should be clearly and correctly cross-referenced with the achievement claimed.

9.7 It must be emphasised that misleading information would cast serious doubt on an applicant's integrity and his/her suitability as an architectural professional.

9.8 Generally a CV must be reader-friendly and the current trend is to focus on the quality of references, rather than quantity. Applicants should omit items and claims that do not have direct relevance to the application.

10. PORTFOLIO

The outputs of architecture are creative and graphic. Applicants should exploit the portfolio to showcase the building projects they have been involved with. It is recommended that they study design assignments and dissertations at schools of architecture to familiarise themselves with the latest presentation techniques. Some requirements are:

10.1 The portfolio should be a ring-bound or hardcover A3 document in landscape format with the applicant's name and the category being assessed on the cover page.

10.2 It should have a table of contents listing projects chronologically from the most recent. Projects older than five years should be added with circumspection.

10.3 Projects should be illustrated with design development drawings (reduced to A3) and photographs, and each project should be elucidated with a description of locality, client, nature and scope, and a statement of the applicant's involvement, e.g. development of the brief, designer or part of the design team, technical documentation or contract administration

11. LEARNING LEVELS FOR ASSESSMENT

LEVEL	LEARNING LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
A	Knowledge	To be able to recall and remember facts and information (recall).
B	Understanding	To not only recall facts, but especially to understand their impact (insight).
C	Application	To apply existing knowledge to new situations.
D	Problem solving	To solve a complex problem (analysis, synthesis & evaluation).

12. SACAP ASSESSMENT SCALE

PROFESSIONAL CATEGORY	LEARNING LEVEL REQUIREMENTS PER CATEGORY		OUTCOMES FIELD & N ^o											
			Office practice, legal aspects and ethics	Computer applications	Contextual & urban relationships	Architectural history, theory & precedent	Architectural design	Environmental relationships	Contract documentation & administration	Building structures	Construction technology	Building services & related technologies		
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Professional Architect	Knowledge	A												Relevant to Identification of Work Matrix
	Understanding	B												
	Application	C		■										
	Problem solving	D	■		■	■	■	■	■	■				
Prof. Senior Arch. Technologist	Knowledge	A												Relevant to Identification of Work Matrix
	Understanding	B												
	Application	C			■	■			■					
	Problem solving	D	■	■				■			■			
Prof. Arch. Technologist	Knowledge	A												Relevant to Identification of Work Matrix
	Understanding	B			■	■			■					
	Application	C	■					■			■			
	Problem solving	D		■										
Prof. Arch. Draughts-person	Knowledge	A			■	■			■					Relevant to Identification of Work Matrix
	Understanding	B	■					■						
	Application	C									■			
	Problem solving	D		■										