



**A D V E N T U R E
I N D U S T R Y**
A S S O C I A T I O N

SA AIA Policy on the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for Awarding Professional Designations

Approval page

The signatories hereof, being duly authorised thereto, by their signatures hereto authorise the execution of the work detailed herein, or confirm their acceptance of the contents hereof and authorise the implementation/adoption thereof, as the case may be, for and on behalf of the parties represented by them.

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Date

Approved



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1 Purpose

This policy outlines the principles and procedures for the use of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) by the South African Adventure Industry Association (SA AIA) to award professional designations to individuals who do not hold the required underlying qualification but can demonstrate equivalent competence.

2 Scope

This policy applies to all current and future SA AIA professional designations. Specific procedures and limitations may apply to designations linked to regulated professions or activities governed by national legislation.

3 Legislative Context

In accordance with applicable legislation (e.g., Tourism Act No. 3 of 2014), certain professional roles require a recognised South African qualification registered on the NQF. Individuals with foreign or unregistered qualifications must either:

- a. obtain a SAQA foreign qualification evaluation, or
- b. undergo RPL through an accredited skills provider to access a formal qualification

prior to being considered for a SA AIA designation.

4 Principles of RPL

SA AIA's RPL system is based on the following national principles:

4.1 Fairness

All individuals have equal opportunity to demonstrate competence.

4.2 Transparency

Criteria and assessment tools are clearly communicated and applied consistently.

4.3 Validity

Evidence must align with the outcomes of the relevant qualification or designation standard.

4.4 Support

Applicants receive guidance and mentorship throughout the RPL process.

5 Eligibility for RPL

Applicants seeking professional recognition through RPL must:

- a. Be a member in good standing with SA AIA.
- b. Demonstrate learning and competence through formal, informal, or non-formal experience.
- c. Comply with any legislative or regulatory frameworks governing the specific designation.

6 Evidence Required for RPL Submission

A complete RPL portfolio may include:

- a. Proof of learning or workplace experience aligned to the relevant designation outcomes or unit standards.
- b. Portfolio of activities or projects.
- c. References verifying professional competence.
- d. Supporting documentation such as risk assessments, training logs, trip reports, or project documents.
- e. Written reflective statement.
- f. Legally required licences or certifications.
- g. Certified copy of ID and any prior qualifications.

7 Assessment Process

- a. RPL portfolios are reviewed by trained SA AIA-appointed assessors.
- b. Moderation is conducted by the SA AIA Skills & Ratification Committee.
- c. If gaps are identified, applicants may be referred for bridging training or an action plan.
- d. Successful candidates are recognised as competent and may proceed to designation award.

8 Post-RPL Recognition

- a. RPL applicants who are deemed competent must still meet all designation-specific requirements (e.g., code of conduct, CPD, first aid, logbook).
- b. SA AIA maintains a formal record of RPL outcomes for quality assurance.

- c. RPL-based designation holders follow the same renewal, ethics, and CPD rules as all other designation holders.

9 Appeals and Review

- a. Applicants may appeal assessment decisions in writing within 30 days.
- b. Appeals are reviewed by the SA AIA Appeals Committee.
- c. This policy is reviewed every three years or sooner if legislative requirements change.

10 Annexures

10.1 Annexure A: referenced and applicable documents

- a. Tourism Act No. 3 of 2014
- b. SAQA National Policy for the Implementation of RPL
- c. SA AIA Designation Framework
- d. SA AIA Code of Professional Conduct
- e. SA AIA CPD Policy

10.2 Nondisclosure

SA AIA will not disclose information contained in the RPL applications to third parties. Information is used solely for assessment, moderation, record keeping, and quality assurance in accordance with this policy.

10.3 Annexure B: abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SA AIA	South African Adventure Industry Association
NQF	National Qualifications Framework

11 Version Control and Review

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Responsible SA AIA Subcommittee	Skills and Ratification Committee