

## RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) AND CREDIT ACCUMULATION AND TRANSFER (CAT) POLICY

QMS POLICY DOCUMENT	
QMS DOCUMENT CODE	IQA- HET/AS5
VERSION NUMBER	9
NUMBER OF PAGES	6

	IQ ACADEMY-HET DIVISION/FACULTY	DATE
COMPILED BY	Quality and Regulatory Compliance Division	2013
AMENDMENT/REVISION HISTORY	Faculty	12/2025
APPROVAL AUTHORITY	Faculty Management Committee	04/2025
DATE OF NEXT REVIEW	Head: Faculty	12/2027

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## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

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iQ Academy is committed to promoting equity, access and lifelong learning by implementing Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) practices. These practices aim to redress inequities, overcome barriers to higher education, and support adult learners with valuable knowledge and experience gained through formal, informal and non-formal learning.

This policy aligns with the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) and the national policies on RPL and CAT, ensuring that prior learning is recognised and assessed fairly, transparently and consistently.

## 2. POLICY PURPOSE

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The purpose of this policy is to:

- Facilitate access, mobility, and progression within the HEQSF by recognising prior learning and enabling credit transfer.
- Provide alternative pathways for individuals who lack formal qualifications but possess relevant knowledge, skills and competencies.
- Ensure the quality and integrity of qualifications through rigorous assessment and moderation processes for RPL and CAT.
- Promote lifelong learning by enabling students to avoid duplication of learning and build on their prior achievements.
- Align iQ Academy's RPL and CAT practices with national policies and frameworks, including those developed by the CHE, SAQA and DHET.

## 3. POLICY SCOPE

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This policy applies to:

- All Higher Certificate programmes offered by iQ Academy consist of 120 credits at NQF Level 5.
- Students seeking access to or progression within iQ Academy's programmes through RPL or CAT.
- Academic and administrative staff involved in assessing, moderating, and managing RPL and CAT processes.

This policy does not apply to short courses outside the HEQSF with non-credit bearings. However, learning acquired through such short courses may be considered for RPL purposes.

## 4. TERMINOLOGY

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The following terminology is defined:

- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): A process that evaluates and acknowledges the knowledge, skills, and competencies individuals have acquired through formal, informal or non-formal learning experiences.
- Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT): A system that enables students to accumulate credits for completed modules or qualifications and transfer those credits between programmes or institutions with the Higher Education Qualifications Sub Framework (HEQSF).

## 5. PRINCIPLES OF RPL AND CAT

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The implementation of RPL at IQ Academy is guided by the following principles:

- Equity and Inclusivity: RPL seeks to overcome barriers to access and success in higher education for individuals who lack formal prerequisites but possess relevant knowledge and skills.
- Transparency: RPL processes must be clear, fair and accessible to all stakeholders.
- Quality Assurance: RPL assessments must be rigorous, consistent, and aligned with the qualification's learning outcomes.
- Redress: RPL contributes to addressing past inequities by providing alternative access routes to higher education.

The application of CAT is based on the following principles:

- Articulation: CAT facilitates students' movement between qualifications and institutions within the HEQSF.
- Mobility: CAT supports student progression and enhances their chances of completing their qualifications.
- Lifelong Learning: CAT promotes lifelong learning by recognising prior achievement and avoiding duplication of learning.

## 6. RPL AND CAT AT IQ ACADEMY

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The HEQSF states the following:

***“The point of entry in the target programme must be such that candidates complete at least all the required credits at the exit level of the target qualification.”***

iQ Academy currently only offers Higher Certificate qualifications. These qualifications consist of a minimum of 120 credits, and all modules are at exit level NQF Level 5.

## RPL for Access

iQ Academy recognises prior learning to grant access to Higher Certificate programmes for individuals who still need to meet the conventional entry requirements. RPL for access includes assessing academic readiness and recognising content knowledge gained through non-formal study, work experience, or community involvement. RPL for access is the primary form of RPL applied at iQ Academy, as no RPL for credits or exemptions is permitted for modules in Higher Certificate programmes.

## Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT)

iQ Academy applies Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) in line with the *Policy on the Recognition of Prior Learning, Credit Accumulation and Transfer, and Assessment in Higher Education* (CHE, 2016) and the *National Policy and Criteria for CAT* (SAQA, 2023).

For qualifications where all modules are at the exit level (such as the Higher Certificates, NQF Level 5; 120 credits), CAT may be implemented only under the following conditions:

- Horizontal CAT may be considered where a student has completed a module at the same NQF level (Level 5), in a cognate field, at a registered and accredited institution.
- The module must demonstrate equivalence in level, credit value, purpose, and learning outcomes.
- A maximum of 50% of the total credits (i.e. 60 of 120 credits) may be transferred through CAT;
- At least 50% of the qualification must be completed in the receiving programme to preserve the integrity of exit-level outcomes;
- CAT applications must be supported by an official transcript and curriculum documentation, and reviewed by the Programme Coordinator or Faculty: Head.
- Decisions must be documented and signed by academic authority and retained for audit.

CAT is not permitted for non-credit bearing short courses or for learning that does not meet the equivalence criteria outlined above.

## 7. SHORT COURSE ASSESSMENTS AND RPL

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The national policies on RPL and CAT point 5.2.9 state the following:

***“Short courses offered outside of the HEQSF are non-credit bearing. Thus, individuals who register for and attend such short courses are not awarded credits against any level on the National Qualification Framework (NQF). This means no credit will be accumulated and/or transferred from such short courses. However, the learning acquired counts for RPL.”***

Short courses offered by iQ Academy are non-credit-bearing and do not contribute to credit accumulation or transfer. However, the learning acquired through these courses may be considered for RPL for access purposes. Some short courses contain the same learning outcomes as modules in higher certificate programmes and are assessed using the same structure, including

formative and summative assessments. Students who successfully complete short courses may use the acquired learning to gain access to relevant higher certificate programmes through RPL.

## 8. RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

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All academic, support, and administrative staff are responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of the RPL and CAT policies.

## 9. RULES FOR RPL

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The rules for RPL at iQ Academy align with the national policies on RPL and CAT:

- No more than 10% of a cohort of students in a programme can be admitted through RPL (paragraph 4.2.8)
- RPL assessments must be conducted in the same way as those in the Higher Certificate programmes. With one formative per unit and a final summative assessment. The pass mark of assessments must not be less than 50%.
- Students admitted through RPL must meet the same academic standards and progression requirements as students admitted through traditional entry pathways

## 10. RPL BASED ON IQ ACADEMY'S SHORT COURSE PROGRAMMES

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Students who have completed a short course programme offered by iQ Academy and are over 23 years old and must meet the traditional entry requirements for a Higher Certificate programme. They may be registered for a relevant Higher Certificate programme. Applicable short courses and their corresponding Higher Certificate programmes include:

- Introduction to Business Management: Entry into the Higher Certificate in Business Management
- Fundamentals of Human Resource Management: Entry into the Higher Certificate in Human Resource Management
- Human Resource Administration: Entry into the Higher Certificate in Human Resource Management
- Occupational Health and Safety Management: Entry into Higher Certificate in Human Resource Management
- Introduction to Public Administration: Entry into the Higher Certificate in Public Administration and Management
- Local Government Leadership: Entry into the Higher Certificate in Local Governance.

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## 11. RPL APPEALS PROCEDURE

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Students may appeal RPL decisions by following these steps:

- Submit a written appeal to the Faculty Management Committee within 14 days of receiving the RPL outcome.
- An independent panel will review the appeal, and the final decision will be communicated to the student within 30 calendar days.

## 12. MONITORING AND REVIEW

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Implementation of the RPL and CAT policies will be monitored through regular quality reviews and audits. The success rates of students admitted through RPL will be tracked to evaluate the policy's effectiveness. The policy will be reviewed annually or as required to ensure alignment with national frameworks and institutional goals.