



# TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AUTHORITY

## PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION (PLAR)

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Purpose of the Guidelines

These guidelines have been developed by TVETA to guide TVET Providers on how to:

- (i) Prepare, plan, and implement Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) within TVET;
- (ii) Inform prospective PLAR candidates on what they can expect from PLAR and how they can actively participate in the PLAR process.

NB: Guidelines for best practice for establishing credit transfer arrangements are still to be developed in consultation with key stakeholders.

#### 1.2 Scope of the Guidelines

- (i) The guidelines are applicable to all PLAR providers in the TVET sector who offer National Qualifications.
- (ii) The guidelines also cover the following aspects of PLAR implementation:
  - a) Institutional readiness for providing PLAR within the TVET sector;
  - b) Steps involved in the PLAR assessment process;
  - c) Roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in the PLAR process; and
  - d) Monitoring and quality assurance of the PLAR processes.

## 2. STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING PLAR IN THE TVET SECTOR

### 2.1 Institutional Readiness for PLAR Provision

In order to prepare the institution for the provision of PLAR, prospective PLAR providers need to understand what institutional arrangements need to be in place to effectively implement PLAR in the TVET sector. PLAR Providers shall be inspected by TVETA to

assess the institution's readiness to implement PLAR. The following are essential requirements for PLAR implementation:

### **2.1.1 Registration and licensing of PLAR providers**

#### **Standard:**

All PLAR providers shall be Registered, Accredited and licensed by TVETA

#### **Guidelines:**

- i. Institutions planning to provide PLAR must be accredited with TVETA as per the TVET Act, 2013 and TVET Regulations, 2015.
- ii. PLAR providers shall be approved by- Assessment/ Certification Agency upon recommendation by TVETA

### **2.1.2 Institutional PLAR Policy**

#### **Standard:**

PLAR providers must develop institutional Policy to guide implementation of PLAR.

#### **Guidelines**

The arrangements should be in line with this Standards and Guidelines for implementing PLAR and should include, as a minimum, the following:

- PLAR TVET services offered
- Modes of PLAR provision
- Entry requirements for the different modes
- Cost of different modes of PLAR
- Internal Quality Assurance mechanisms to ensure quality PLAR provision.

### **2.1.3. PLAR Assessors and Verifiers**

#### **Standards:**

All PLAR providers must use assessors and verifiers who are approved by recognized certification agencies

#### **Guidelines:**

PLAR TVET providers must ensure that - prior to PLAR implementation - they must have or have access to accredited assessors and verifiers to execute the PLAR assessment.

### **2.1.4 Institutional PLAR Support System and structure**

#### **Standard:**

Institutions offering PLAR shall have support systems and structures to ensure that candidates get the needed support.

#### **Guidelines**

As a minimum, the following support mechanisms should be in place:

- i. Establishment of a PLAR administrative support structure;
- ii. Candidate selection;

- iii. Mentoring support;
- iv. Support during the assessment
- v. Post PLAR assessment support including top-up training

### **2.1.5 Use of registered Unit Standards and Qualifications**

#### **Standard:**

PLAR candidates shall be assessed against unit standards and qualifications registered on the Kenya National Qualification Framework (KNQF).

#### **Guidelines**

PLAR providers shall identify unit standards and or qualifications registered on the KNQF and offered at their respective institutions for PLAR.

#### **Standard**

The procedures and criteria for the assessment of qualifications shall be transparent, coherent and reliable and basically meet the normal assessment standards.

#### **Guidelines**

##### **The PLAR Process**

The PLAR process is special and the following guidelines need to be observed for quality assurance requirements.

##### **Stage 0: Invitation to be certified through PLAR**

Once the arrangements for PLAR are ready TVETA shall announce through gazette and provide application forms and procedures for PLAR

##### **Route A**

1: TVETA shall do an initial audit to ensure that there are relevant systems in place to conduct the assessment, that is, the Authority shall ensure that the relevant vetted qualification, trained assessors and adequate infrastructure to be an assessment center are available.

2: The Assessment/ Certification Agency shall invite applications from the public to have their prior learning assessed after confirming registration of the assessment centre.

##### **Route B**

1: Individuals/Employers/Groups of Individuals shall make a request to the Assessment/ Certification Agency for the assessment of competence in a specified area.

2: In the event that the Assessment/ Certification Agency does not have 1 in Route A above in place, the Assessment/ Certification Agency shall inform the persons making the request of the situation which exists. The Assessment/ Certification Agency shall seek to have these systems in place within six (6) months of the request.

3: Alternatively the Assessment/ Certification Centre can provide relevant alternative areas of competence that can readily be assessed and are acceptable to the persons making the request.

### **Stage 1: Application for Assessment**

1.1: An individual or group of individuals shall respond to the Assessment/ Certification Agency invitation in route A or once the systems are in place in route B, by applying to the Assessment/ Certification Agency. Copies of the application form will be on the Assessment/ Certification Agency website and at other locations to be advertised.

1.2: Assessment/ Certification Agency shall conduct an initial interview with the candidate to ensure some level of candidate readiness and to orient the candidate to the occupational qualification and unit standards.

### **Stage 2: Registration and preparation of candidates for the PLAR**

2.1: The candidate shall register with the Assessment/ Certification Agency. The registration form is available from the Assessment/ Certification Agency.

2.2: The Assessment/ Certification Agency shall assign the candidate to an Approved Training Centre (ATC) who will carry out all assessments and requisite training. An MOU will govern the relationship between the Assessment/ Certification Agency and the Accredited Training Center in regards to the Assessment of Prior Learning (PLAR). The MOU format will be available through the Assessment/ Certification Agency

### **Stage 3: Assessment**

3.1: The assessment shall be conducted in accordance with the Assessment/ Certification Agency Guidelines.

### **Stage 4: Certification**

4.1: A full National Vocational Qualification awarded

4.2: Unit competence is awarded

4.3: Candidate 'not-yet-competent'

4.4: In cases 4.2 and 4.3 top-up training may be recommended and accepted by the trainee to achieve the award in 4.1

### **Fees**

The fee structure is available from the Accredited Training Centre (ATC) offices. The registration are payable directly to the ATC and include administrative cost, certificate cost and cost for quality assurance.

#### **4. Roles and Responsibilities of Key Role Players in implementing PLAR**

This need to be refined as per TVET Act

##### **4.1 The TVETA**

One of the main roles of TVETA regarding provision of PLAR is to create an enabling environment within which PLAR can be conducted. TVETA may in accordance with the standards and guidelines set out, assess the skills or competences acquired by a person on the job, equate such competences to qualifications within the training framework and recommend to the appropriate competent authorities to issue corresponding certification. TVETA is, among others, obligated to:

- 4.1.1 Register PLAR TVET providers, assessors and moderators, verifiers and assessment centers;
- 4.1.2 Provide support and guidance to PLAR providers on PLAR implementation;
- 4.1.3 Monitor and audit PLAR providers;
- 4.1.4 Develop policies and guidelines for implementing PLAR within the TVET sector;
- 4.1.5 Oversee the national implementation of PLAR within TVET
- 4.1.6 Undertake research on PLAR implementation strategies and modes of delivery and share findings and recommendations with PLAR TVET providers;
- 4.1.7 Report to the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Education on PLAR achievements and challenges;
- 4.1.8 Maintain a central database of learner records in line with the TVETA procedures.

##### **4.2 Employers**

Employers create conducive environment to PLAR by:

- 4.2.1 Developing guidelines for implementing PLAR.
- 4.2.2 Aligning HR policies to take account of PLAR such as workforce planning, job matching and promotion possibilities.
- 4.2.3 Ensuring that on-the-job training and HR development activities are aligned to standards registered on the National Qualification Framework.

- 4.2.4 Developing ‘preferred supplier’ relationships with accredited providers for in-house training and HR development interventions.

### **4.3 PLAR TVET Providers**

They should provide PLAR services that comply with statutory requirements. The registered and/or accredited TVET providers should:

- 4.3.1 Apply for an expansion of scope to offer PLAR training and assessment.
- 4.3.2 Implement PLAR policies, processes and procedures.
- 4.3.3 Ensure that sufficient resources are available for PLAR implementation.
- 4.3.4 Comply with quality audits undertaken by accreditation bodies.
- 4.3.5 Establish reporting mechanisms.

### **4.4 PLAR Applicants**

Participate in the PLAR process and provide appropriate evidence to prove competence(s) and

- 4.4.1 Apply for PLAR.
- 4.4.2 Identify prior learning in relation to unit standards and related criteria.
- 4.4.3 Prepare evidence pertaining to that learning.
- 4.4.4 Undertake continued development where identified.
- 4.4.5 Provide feedback as required on the PLAR process.

### **4.5 PLAR Mentors**

PLAR mentors advise PLAR candidates in the selection of qualifications and their preparation for assessment. They support PLAR applicants by:

- 4.5.1 Receiving training and continuing professional development in PLAR in TVET and mentoring.
- 4.5.2 Providing motivational and learning support to PLAR applicants.
- 4.5.3 Advising applicants on the possibilities of PLAR, different pathways to qualifications and career guidance.

- 4.5.4 Ensuring applicants understand the PLAR TVET policy, process and procedures.
- 4.5.5 Supporting applicants to identify their prior learning and interpret registered qualifications, unit standards and assessment criteria by linking them to learning, including using group mentoring to facilitate shared learning between applicants.
- 4.5.6 Assisting in the identification and compilation of authentic, current and valid evidence of competence.
- 4.5.7 Helping the applicant to prepare for assessment.
- 4.5.8 Providing feedback as required on the PLAR process.

#### *4.6 PLAR Certification /Assessment Agencies*

PLAR Assessors have the responsibility to assess PLAR candidates and determine whether or not they have met the unit standard requirements of the qualification. They:

- 4.6.1 Receive training and continuing professional development opportunities in assessment and PLAR.
- 4.6.2 Inform applicants about the assessment arrangements.
- 4.6.3 Implement fit-for-purpose assessment methods, approved by the TVETA, including integrated assessment tasks covering more than one unit standard.
- 4.6.4 Convene PLAR assessment panels (if appropriate).
- 4.6.5 Coordinate and conduct PLAR assessments according to relevant policies and principles by assessing applicants' collections of evidence against required standards and criteria.
- 4.6.6 Communicate results to applicants i.e. inform applicants that recommendations have been made to TVETA/awarding body; give feedback and guidance on how to address areas for development.
- 4.6.7 Regularly review the assessment process and implement changes as and when required.
- 4.6.8 Comply with all moderation and quality assurance requirements of the Authority.
- 4.6.9 Provide records of assessment to the assessment Centre for safe keeping.
- 4.6.10 Ensure that all original documents are kept and remain property of Assessment/ Certification Agency .

4.6.11 Keep abreast of current assessment practices, learning outcomes, standards for assessment, methods of assessment, timeframes, technical details and understanding of the process.

4.6.12 Provide feedback to TVETA as required on the PLAR process.

## **5. Costing PLAR**

To ensure that PLAR is widely accessible, fees for the delivery and administration of PLAR services must not be so high that they become barriers to prospective candidates. The PLAR services provider shall ensure optimum number of candidates register to allow sharing of the cost of assessment and Gap (top-up) training.

## **6. Quality Assurance**

The TVET Regulations 2015 for the Registration of Training Institutions, Trainers and the internal quality assurance mechanisms shall apply to Registration of Assessment Centers, and Assessors in the Provision of PLAR services.