TESDA CIRCULAR

SUBJECT: Implementing Guidelines on the Recognition of Prior Learning in TVET (RPL-TVET)		No. 090 Series of 2021 Page 1 of 13 pages
Date Issued: **October 20, 2021**	Effectivity: **Immediately**	Supersede/s:

In the interest of the service and to promote lifelong learning, the following guidelines on the implementation of the **Recognition of Prior Learning in TVET (RPL - TVET)** are hereby issued.

I. Background

There are learnings gained throughout life (academic/work/life experiences) that result in knowledge, skills, and attitudes with equitable competencies, applicability, and relevance in the world of work, economy, and society in general. These are important to be given value and formal recognition to promote lifelong learning and so as not to exclude some individuals from social development specifically participating in the workforce or seeking further formal training.

Lifelong learning is defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) as "all learning activities undertaken throughout life for the development of competencies and qualifications" where "competencies" cover the knowledge, skills, and know-how applied and mastered in a specific context, and "qualifications" mean a formal expression of the vocational or professional abilities of a worker which is recognized at international, national or sectoral levels."*(www.ilo.org/manila/publications/WCMS_126138/lang_en/index.htm)*

Accordingly, to the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), "lifelong learning is rooted in the integration of learning and living, covering lifelong (cradle to grave) and life-wide learning for people of all ages, delivered and undertaken through a variety of modalities and meeting a wide range of learning needs and demands".

The UNESCO Education Strategy, 2014 – 2021 further states, "The concept of lifelong learning requires a paradigm shift away from the ideas of teaching and training towards those of learning, from knowledge-conveying instruction to learning for personal development and from the acquisition of special skills to broader discovery and the releasing and harnessing of creative potential. This shift is needed at all levels of education and types of provision..." *(https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000231288)*

The Republic Act. No. 10968 known as the "Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF) Act of 2018" embodied the principle of lifelong learning by serving as the quality assured national system for the development, recognition, and award of qualifications based on standards of knowledge, skills, and values acquired in different ways and methods by learners and workers of the country".

Meanwhile, the Department of Education (DepEd) has established and implements the Philippine Education Placement Test (PEPT) in recognition of lifelong learning in basic education. At the same time, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) developed and implemented the Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accreditation Program (ETEEAP) as the lifelong learning recognition platform in higher education.

Likewise, TESDA has developed the Philippine TVET Competency and Certification System (PTCACS) that recognizes work experience as a requirement for National Competency Assessment. The system has been strengthened with the implementation of the portfolio assessment for National Certification.

The development of a policy on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) that establishes a system of assessing a learner's knowledge and skills acquired through formal education, previous work, and life experience, and other forms of non-formal and informal learning for the purpose of awarding a certificate of achievement towards a qualification specifically for TVET is important and necessary. This institutionalizes RPL in the TVET system and completes lifelong learning in the country's educational system. A quality assured RPL shall effectively make TVET inclusive for all. Hence, this policy circular.

II. Objectives

Generally, this Circular aims to promote lifelong learning and make TVET inclusive for all clients through the recognition of their formal, non-formal, and/or informal learning experiences.

Specifically, it aims to:

A. Institutionalize RPL among public and private technical vocational institutions (TVIs);

B. Provide the TVIs with the mechanism and clear procedures in implementing RPL; and

C. Provide learner/s the opportunity to recognize their prior formal, non-formal, and informal learnings and experiences towards gaining a formal qualification.

III. Scope and Coverage

The implementation of these guidelines shall cover:

A. Public and private TVIs

B. Individuals applying for recognition of prior learning wanting to gain technology-based qualification

C. Programs within the TVET system and secondary and higher education programs relevant to TVET

D. Informal and Non-formal education and learning

IV. Definition of Terms

A. *Certificate of Achievement* - refers to a certificate granted/awarded to the learner per module, after satisfactorily completing a module of instruction in a TVET program.

B. *Content complexity* – relates to the cognitive demands inferred from the language of content standards. In essence, it considers factors such as prior knowledge, processing of concepts and skills, sophistication, number of parts, and application of content structure required to meet an expectation or to attain an outcome. *(Source: www.cpalms.org)*

C. *Equivalency* – is a process of recognizing present competencies and granting/awarding of certificate of achievement therefore towards an additional qualification.

D. *Formal Education* – a structured program of learning that leads to the full or partial achievement of an accredited/registered PQF qualification.

E. *Informal Learning* –unstructured learning gained through work, social, family, hobby, or leisure activities and experiences.

F. *Learning outcomes* – statements of what the individual learner knows, understands and can do on completion of a learning process. They are also used in PQF to describe the level of individual qualification.

G. *Lifelong Learning* – all learning activities that are undertaken throughout life, which results in improving an individual's knowledge, know-how, skills, competencies, and/or qualifications for personal, social, and/or professional reasons.

H. *Module* – is a component of the competency-based curriculum stating the specific learning outcomes, appropriate learning materials and method, and assessment criteria. It serves as a basis for training an individual to gain a unit or units of competencies towards achieving qualification for a job or occupation.

I. *Non-Formal Education* – a structured program of learning but does not lead to a PQF qualification.

J. *TVET Program* - is a program of learning in formal education that leads to a qualification in the PQF and is registered under the Unified TVET Program and Accreditation System (UTPRAS) of TESDA.

V. Framework

As a lifelong learning process, the RPL system makes TVET inclusive and accessible to individuals wanting to continue acquiring formal TVET qualifications. The system facilitates mobility and mainstreaming of learning for career and livelihood as presented in figure 1.

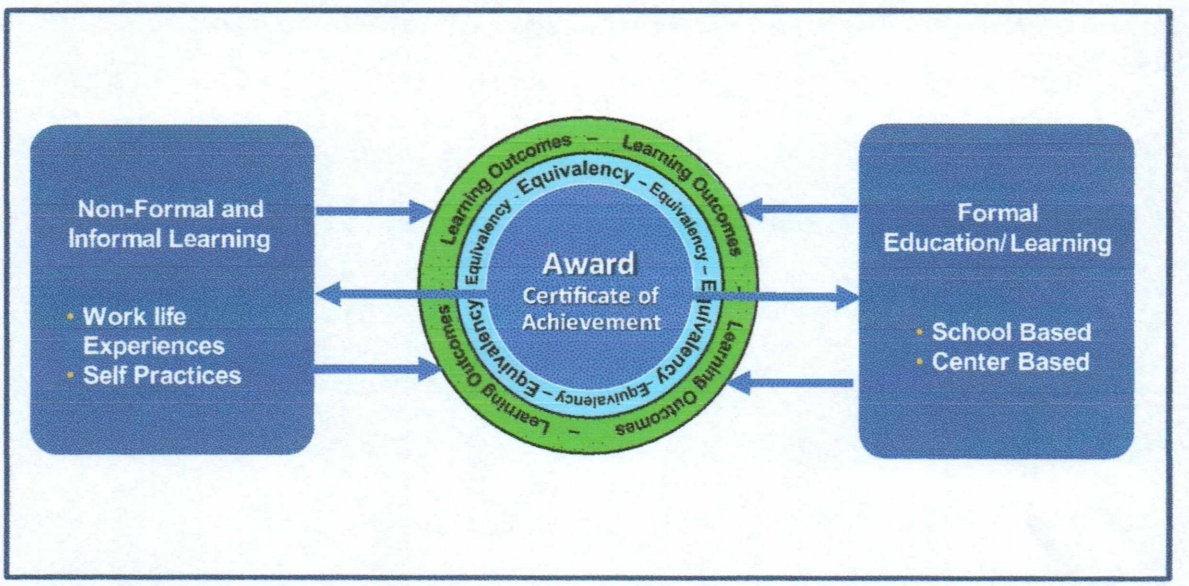

Figure 1.

The system recognizes prior learnings gained from formal, non-formal, and informal education and learning by an individual. Formal education and learning are structured programs of learning that lead to the full or partial achievement of a qualification in Secondary, Post-Secondary, and Higher Education within the PQF. Non-formal education and learning are structured programs of learning but do not lead to a PQF qualification. On the other hand, informal learning is unstructured learning gained through a wide range of workplace and life activities including social, family, hobby, or leisure activities and experiences.

Specific learning achievements from any of the education and learning pathways shall be evaluated against the learning outcomes of a module of a qualification or a TVET program. The evaluated learning achievement shall be awarded equivalent certificates of achievement or training without the need for the learner-applicant to attend formal training. This allows articulation of qualifications within the TVET system in the PQF.

VI. General Provisions

A. The system shall be the mechanism in awarding certificates of achievement or training for the recognized prior learning achievements.

B. The authority to implement RPL is granted through application to the TESDA Provincial Offices (PO) and is subject to compliance with the requirements.

C. Only registered programs are covered by this system.

D. Individuals may apply for RPL after enrollment in a registered program under the system.

VII. Specific Provisions

A. Guidelines for Learner's Application

1. To apply for RPL, learner-applicant must first enroll in the registered program, accomplish the self-assessment instrument (Form 1) and attend the Training Induction Program (TIP); and

2. Submit any of the following documentary evidence of formal, non-formal, and informal education and learning:

Formal Education/Learning	Non-formal and Informal Education/Learning
1. Certificate of Training from any TVET institution	1. Certificate of Non-Formal or Informal Training
2. Micro-credential Certificate (e.g., Certificate of Achievement, Certificate of Completion)	2. Certificate of Recognition/ Appreciation related to the LOs of the qualification
3. Diploma (K to 12 TVL Track and HEIs)	3. Awards/Citations related to the LOs of the qualification
4. Form 137/138	4. Certificate of Employment/ Contract of Employment with actual tasks, duties, and responsibilities
5. Transcript of Records	5. Work Journals/Samples
6. National Certificate (NC)	6. Video documentation
7. Certificate of Competency (COC)	7. Sample of finished products/ goods
8. Other traceable documents that reflect the learning outcomes of the program/ qualification applied for (please specify)	8. Other traceable documents that reflect the learning outcomes of the program/ qualification applied for (please specify)

B. Guidelines for the Grant of Authority to TVIs

1. To be eligible to implement RPL, the TVI must have any of the following accreditation or certification:

    a. Asia Pacific Accreditation and Certification Commission (APACC) accreditation

    b. International Organization for Standardization (ISO) certification

    c. System for TVET Accreditation and Recognition (STAR) rated program

    d. Certification from any reputable Quality Management System (QMS) accrediting bodies

2. For the application process, the TVI shall prepare and submit to the Provincial Office the documentary requirements:

    a. Letter of Intent

b. Eligibility documents

c. Document on the establishment of RPL Committee

d. Document on the establishment of RPL Evaluation Team

e. RPL operating procedures

3. Establishment of RPL Committee (RPLC)

a. The RPLC shall be composed of but not limited to the following:

- Vocational Instruction Supervisor or its equivalent for the private and other TVIs, as Chairman
- Registrar or personnel in charge of learners' records
- Career Advocate or Guidance Counselor

b. The RPLC shall have the following functions:

- Oversee the overall process of implementing RPL;
- Organize and establish the RPL Evaluation Team;
- Develop the operating procedures of the TVI's RPL;
- Promote and advocate the RPL;
- Conduct RPL orientation; and
- Establish and maintain records and documentary evidence for each RPL learner-applicant.

4. Establishment of RPL Evaluation Team (RPLET)

a. There shall be one (1) RPLET for every qualification covered in the implementation of the RPL of the TVI

b. The RPLET shall be composed of at least two (2) trainers with active National TVET Trainer Certificates (NTTC) or a combination of at least one (1) trainer with active NTTC and one (1) industry expert in the related qualification

c. The RPLET shall have the following functions:

- Develop evaluation instruments for RPL;
- Evaluate evidence submitted by the learner-applicant to determine the acceptability of the evidence;
- Assess learner-applicant using portfolio assessment and other appropriate assessment method/s;
- Recommend awarding of certificate of achievement per module;
- Inform the learner-applicant/s on the ascertained/ determined skills gap and provide guidance on how to achieve the said skills gap; and
- Advise the learner-applicant to proceed to the training proper on the module/s found not yet competent.

5. Upon submission of the documentary requirements, the PO shall:

   a. Evaluate for completeness and correctness of the submitted requirements

   b. Inform the TVI-applicant of any deficiencies in the requirements

   c. Prepare and grant a Certificate of Authority to implement RPL to the TVI-applicant if all requirements are complete and in order

   d. Establish and maintain a database of TVIs authorized to implement RPL.

   e. Furnish a copy of the said database to the Regional Office (RO), and

   f. Conduct annual monitoring on the implementation of RPL.

VIII. RPL Process flow

The RPL involves three (3) major processes: application, evaluation, and award of certificate of achievement, as shown in figure 2.

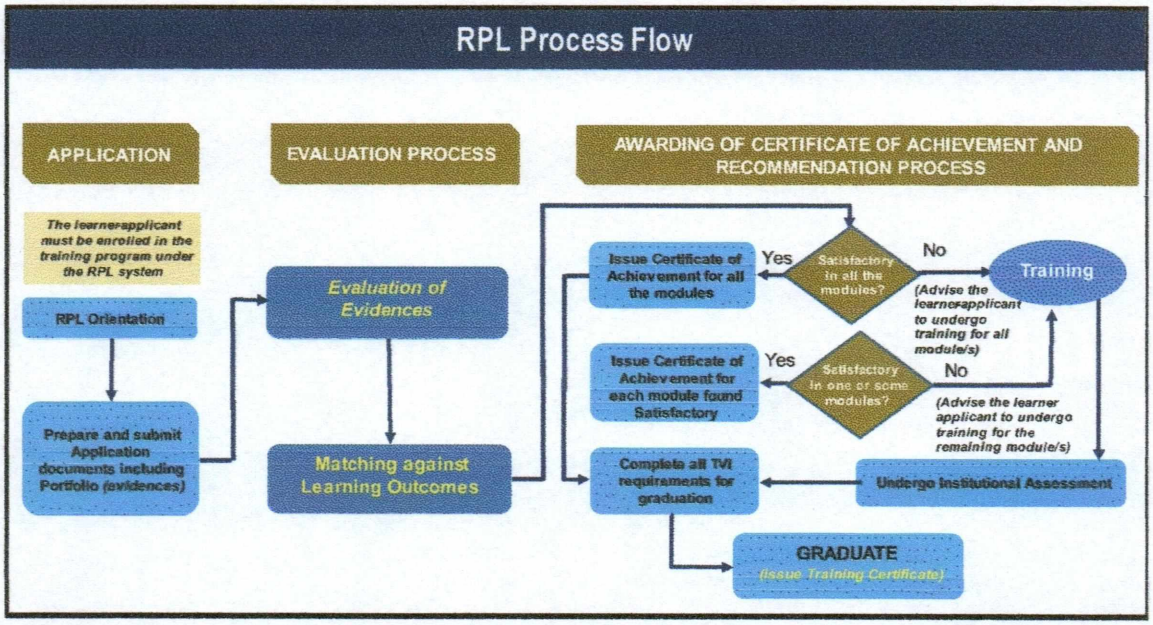

Figure 2.

A. Application Process

1. The learner-applicant shall be oriented on the RPL process
2. The learner-applicant shall prepare and submit documentary requirements including a portfolio for evaluation

B. Evaluation Process

1. Rules of Evidence

   The evaluation process must adhere to the following rules of evidence:

   a. *Authentic* – the evidence is the applicant's work and is genuine. Evidence is issued by reputable authority/ institution/entity/company;

   b. *Valid* – the evidence is related to the current curricular offerings of the institution; relevant to the elements and performance criteria, consistent with the range of variables and evidence guide;

   c. *Current* – the evidence reflects the applicant's present knowledge; establishes that the candidate can meet the

learning outcomes and performance criteria specified in the present curricular offerings of the respective institution;

d. *Consistent* – the evidence shows that the candidate consistently meets the standards under the workplace conditions; incorporates multiple items of evidence;

e. *Recent* – the evidence shows the latest training/s and experience was/were gained within the last ten (10) years relative to the specific current curricular offerings of the institution; and

f. *Sufficient* – the evidence covers all the learning outcomes, evidence requirements, dimensions of competency.

2. Evaluation Modalities

To determine the equivalency of the evidence/s presented with the learning outcomes of the training program enrolled by learner-applicant, the evaluation modalities may include the following:

a. Portfolio assessment
b. Interview
c. Written examination
d. Actual demonstration of skills
e. Actual work observation or third-party report
f. Combination of different assessment methods

3. Applicable Rules on Matching

a. The modules of the basic competencies of the training program shall be automatically matched/credited if the training program/s is/are of the same PQF Level.

b. The modules of the common competencies of the training program shall be automatically matched/credited if the training program is of the same PQF Level and within the same industry sector.

c. The module/s of the core competencies of the training program shall be given an equivalent certificate of achievement if the module is similar in content and complexity.

d. The critical aspects of competency of the modules shall be the basis of equivalency and awarding of Certificate of Achievement.

e. Equivalency between the learning outcomes from different programs shall be based on the complexity and similarity in the level and application of knowledge and skills. The wording of the learning outcomes does not need to be exactly the same, but the outcome must be comparable.

f. The matching process to determine equivalency shall be undertaken by the RPLET who shall make a professional judgment that there is a clear and demonstrable complexity and similarity in contents between two learning outcomes from different programs.

g. If it is not possible to find a full or one-on-one match between a learning outcome in a training program to a learning outcome in another training program, matching across multiple learning outcomes in the training programs is allowed.

4. Evaluation of Evidences

In determining the current competencies of the learner-applicant equivalent to the critical aspects of competency of the module/s, the RPLET shall perform the following:

a. Evaluate and determine if the documentary evidence/s falls under formal learning or non-formal and informal learnings;

b. Subject all documentary evidence submitted to the rules of evidence for acceptability using Form 2;

c. All accepted documentary evidence/s shall be evaluated further for currency and sufficiency based on the critical aspects of competency of the module/s of the training program using the portfolio assessment instrument.

d. Based on the results of the portfolio assessment, the RPLET shall indicate the results in Form 3 by ticking the cell for SATISFACTORY for all learning outcomes found current and sufficient and for learning outcomes/s found not current and sufficient tick the cell for UNSATISFACTORY.

e. For learning outcomes found not current and sufficient, the RPLET shall use other appropriate evaluation modalities such as interview, written examination, actual demonstration, and actual work observation/third party report based on the critical aspects of competency of the module/s.

f. Based on the results of other appropriate evaluation modalities, the RPLET shall indicate the results under the specific other evaluation modalities in Form 3 by ticking the cell for SATISFACTORY for all learning outcomes found current and sufficient and for learning outcomes/s found not current and sufficient tick the cell for UNSATISFACTORY.

C. Awarding of Certificate of Achievement

1. Using form 3, indicate whether the learner-applicant shall be issued a Certificate of Achievement or proceed to the training proper;

2. Form 4, shall be accomplished to indicate the overall recommendations by modules (basic, common, and core) of the training program;

3. Based on the overall recommendations in Form 4, the RPLET shall do the following:

   a. Recommend for the issuance of Certificate of Achievement for the modules of the training program found to have been satisfied in accordance with the evaluation rules.

   b. Recommend for the issuance of Training certificate If all the modules of the training program are satisfied including other institution requirements for graduation.

   c. For the module/s found to have not been satisfied advise the learner-applicant of the results of the evaluations including the skills gap, and advise the learner-applicant to attend the regular training.

4. After completing the training for every module, advise the learner-applicant to undergo the institutional assessment.

IX. Monitoring and Evaluation

A. The PO shall directly monitor the continuing compliance of the TVIs granted the Certificate of Authority to implement RPL with respect to the operating procedures.

B. The Regional Offices shall maintain their respective regional databases of TVIs that implement and maintain the RPL.

C. The Central Office, through National Institute for Technical Education and Skills Development (NITESD) shall evaluate the implementation of the RPL for continuous improvement.

X. Special Provisions

A. The Certificate of Authority granted to the TVI shall be revoked or rescinded when the TVI is found not compliant with the provisions stipulated in this Circular and in other pertinent policies.

B. The personnel and officials of TTIs involved in performing the functions of RPLC and RPLET for RPL implementation may be authorized to claim honoraria subject to the existing pertinent policy on the same and availability of funds.

C. The Scholarship program shall cover the TVET program implemented through the RPL subject to applicable guidelines on scholarship.

D. The RPL shall be included in the T2MIS as one of the training modalities.

XI. Superseding Clause

All other existing circulars and related issuances inconsistent with this Circular shall be superseded and modified accordingly.

XII. Separability Clause

In case any provision in this Circular shall be invalid, unenforceable, or unconstitutional, the validity, legality, and enforceability of the remaining provisions shall not in any way be affected and considered operational.

XIII. Effectivity

This Circular takes effect as indicated.

SEC. ISIDRO S. LAPEÑA, PhD., CSEE
Director-General