



COMPANY POLICY

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY AND CRITERIA

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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to set a framework for recognition of prior learning (RPL) within the context of application for affiliation (membership) with one of the councils within ACRP and registration against any of the approved categories of designation.

This policy recognises that ministry practitioners may acquire valuable competencies through formal education, informal and non-formal learning, ministry practice, workplace experience, leadership responsibilities, mentorship, and community involvement.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear, fair, and transparent framework for the recognition of prior learning (RPL). It aims to support access to professional registration for experienced ministry practitioners while promoting integrity, professionalism, and ethical practice within Christian ministry.

In addition, the policy seeks to encourage lifelong learning, inclusivity, and transformation within the profession.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- Individuals applying for professional designation registration through RPL.
- Existing affiliates applying for upgraded designations.
- Assessors, moderators, committees, and councils involved in the RPL process.

4. DEFINITIONS

- **“ACRP (Association of Christian Religious Practitioners)”** – a professional body recognised by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), comprising expert practitioners within the field of Christian religious practice.
 - **“Applicant”** – a person applying for professional recognition through the RPL process.
 - **“CGMP (Council for General Ministry Practitioners)”** – a council of ACRP responsible for professional registration with a focus on general ministry practice.
 - **“CMTP (Council for Ministry Training Practitioners)”** – a council of ACRP tasked with professional registration focusing on ministry training practices.
 - **“CPSC (Council for Pastoral and Spiritual Counsellors)”** – a council of ACRP responsible for professional registration specialising in pastoral and spiritual counselling.
 - **“Competency”** – The demonstrated and assessed ability to apply integrated knowledge, skills, values, and experience to perform tasks and fulfil responsibilities to the required standard within a specific professional context. It includes the capacity to transfer and apply learning to new situations and is
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evidenced through consistent, appropriate performance in line with the relevant **scope of practice** and qualification or professional designation requirements.

- **“Portfolio of Evidence (PoE)”** – a structured collection of documents and evidence submitted by an applicant to demonstrate prior learning, competencies, ministry experience, knowledge and professional practice.
- **“Professional Designation”** – a formal title conferred by the professional body recognising an individual’s expertise, competence, professional standing, and right to practice within a specific occupational field.
- **Qualification”** – any educational program / learning achievement officially registered with the **South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)** on the **National Qualifications Framework (NQF)**, ensuring that the qualification meets national standards and is quality-assured.
- **“Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)”** – a formal assessment process through which prior knowledge, skills, competencies, and practical experience are evaluated and recognised for purposes of professional designation registration.
- **“Scope of Practice (SoP)”** – the defined range of activities, responsibilities, and professional functions permitted within a specific professional designation.

5. PRINCIPLES

The following principles apply to all RPL assessments:

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) acknowledges learning acquired through formal, informal, and non-formal education, as well as through life and work experience, ministry practice, and acquired skills. RPL may, where appropriate, serve as a substitute for the required underlying qualification for the purposes of professional designation registration.

All assessments shall be evidence-based and conducted individually, with no blanket recognition granted without demonstrated competence. The assessment process must be fair, objective, transparent, and consistent, and must align with approved designation descriptors and scopes of practice.

Applicants are responsible for submitting complete, authentic, and sufficient evidence in accordance with the specified requirements. Assessments shall be conducted by suitably qualified assessors and moderators, and assessment outcomes may include full approval, partial recognition, recommendation for an alternative designation, or rejection.

Confidentiality and professional integrity shall be maintained throughout the process.

Successful RPL practice is dependent on defined preconditions, including transparency of rules, consistent adherence to established procedures, a standardised application process, defined roles and responsibilities of all parties involved, objective and fair assessment practices, proper recording of outcomes, and formal written communication of results to the applicant.

6. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the RPL process are to:

- Assess and recognise prior ministry learning and workplace experience.
- Enable eligible ministry practitioners to obtain professional recognition through RPL.
- Strengthen professional standards within Christian ministry.
- Encourage continuous professional development and skills enhancement.
- Promote equitable access to recognition across diverse contexts within the profession.

7. ELIGIBILITY FOR RPL

Applicants may apply for RPL if they are actively involved in Christian ministry or a related professional practice and have acquired relevant competencies through ministry experience, including leadership, training, counselling, teaching, mentoring, or community engagement.

Applicants must be able to provide sufficient and appropriate evidence to demonstrate competence in accordance with ACRP requirements.

8. CRITERIA FOR RPL

RPL assessment focuses on demonstrated competence acquired through learning and experience within ministry and professional practice.

Assessment may consider (but is not limited to):

- Ministry experience and practical application.
- Formal, informal, and non-formal ministry training as well as teaching involvement.
- Work performance (including counselling within psycho-spiritual context).
- Leadership responsibilities as well as ethical and professional conduct.
- Publications, sermons, teachings, or ministry resources.

ACRP reserves the right to request clarification or additional evidence where necessary, and to conduct interviews or competency discussions as part of the assessment process.

9. PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE (PoE)

Applicants are required to submit a comprehensive Portfolio of Evidence (PoE) to demonstrate prior learning, competencies, ministry experience, and professional practice.

The PoE should include key documentation such as a Curriculum Vitae (CV) and copies of relevant qualifications and certificates (including short courses, skills programmes, and formal or non-formal training).

Supporting evidence may further include ministry records, experience logs, sermons or teaching materials, counselling or mentoring records, employment-related documentation, and job descriptions.

Applicants are also encouraged to provide references and testimonials from employers, supervisors, colleagues, or appropriately qualified individuals in the relevant field.

Additional supporting documentation may include performance appraisals, professional registrations or licenses, publications, training materials, and formal declarations outlining ministry experience and competencies.

Any other relevant evidence that supports the demonstration of competence may also be submitted.

10. REQUIREMENTS FOR RPL

See **ACRP's Rules of Affiliation and Designation** (Comprehensive version) available for the ACRP office on request, or on the website at www.acrp.org.za.

11. RPL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

STEP	ACTION	RELEVANT PARTY
1	Briefing of applicants regarding RPL requirements	Relevant ACRP Ministry Council
2	Compilation of PoE in terms of requirements	Applicant
3	Submission of application and evidence in required format	Applicant
4	Assessment and recommendation	RPL Assessment Committee
5	Moderation and quality assurance	Appointed Moderator / Council
6	Recording of assessment outcome	Relevant ACRP Ministry Council
7	Communication of outcome to applicant	Relevant ACRP Ministry Council

12. ASSESSMENT METHODS

Assessment methods may include a combination of approaches designed to evaluate the applicant's competence comprehensively. These may include portfolio evaluation, interviews, practical demonstrations, written assignments or reflective submissions, and structured competency discussions.

Where necessary, the process may also include verification of references and confirmation of ministry experience to ensure the evidence provided is authentic and relevant.

13. ASSESSMENT OUTCOMES

Assessment outcomes may include:

- Approval for registration on the requested designation.
- Registration on an alternative designation.
- Partial recognition with developmental recommendations.
- Rejection of the application where evidence is insufficient.

Applicants shall be informed of outcomes in writing.

14. APPEALS

Applicants have the right to appeal an RPL decision within 21 business days of receiving the outcome.

Appeals must be submitted in writing and must clearly state the grounds for appeal. The appeal should be based on clarification of the original evidence submitted.

It is important to note that the submission of new evidence will constitute a new application rather than an appeal.

Appeals Procedure

STEP	ACTION	RELEVANT PARTY
1	Submission of a written motivation (in PDF format) to the relevant ACRP Ministry Council (committee) within 21 workdays of being informed of the RPL assessment outcome.	Applicant
2	Recording and forwarding of the appeal together with the original PoE to the ACRP Board.	Relevant ACRP Ministry Council
3	Reviewing the RPL application and the RPL Assessment Committee decision.	ACRP Board
4	Final decision communicated in written format to the relevant ACRP Ministry Council.	ACRP Board
5	Final outcome communicated to the applicant in written format.	Relevant ACRP Ministry Council

ACRP will review application and designation decisions only once, therefore, applicants have a single opportunity to appeal.

The decision of the ACRP Board shall be final.

15. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

15.1 ACRP Responsibility

ACRP is responsible for maintaining an effective and credible RPL system. This includes appointing suitably qualified assessors and moderators, ensuring quality assurance and compliance with established standards, and maintaining accurate and complete records of all RPL activities and outcomes.

15.2 Assessors/Moderators Responsibility

Assessors and moderators are required to conduct assessments in a fair, objective, and consistent manner. They must evaluate all submitted evidence against the approved criteria and maintain strict confidentiality throughout the assessment process.

15.3 Applicants' Responsibility

Applicants are responsible for submitting authentic, complete, and sufficient evidence in support of their application. They are also expected to cooperate fully during the assessment process and to comply with all RPL requirements and procedures.

All information submitted during the RPL process shall remain confidential and shall be managed in accordance with applicable privacy and data protection legislation.

16. RECORD KEEPING

ACRP shall maintain accurate and comprehensive records relating to the RPL process. This includes tracking the number of applications received, as well as the number of successful and unsuccessful applications. Records must also reflect the reasons for assessment outcomes, as well as any appeals submitted and the final decisions arising from those appeals.

17. FRAUD AND MISREPRESENTATION

The submission of fraudulent documents, false declarations, or any form of misrepresentation is strictly prohibited and may result in serious consequences. These may include rejection of the application, revocation of professional registration, and/or disciplinary action taken by ACRP.

18. FEES

ACRP may charge fees for RPL application processing, assessment and moderation, and appeals administration. Applicable fees shall be determined and approved by ACRP from time to time.

19. REVIEW OF POLICY

This policy shall be reviewed periodically or whenever legislative, regulatory, or operational changes require revision.

20. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Policy becomes effective on the date approved by the ACRP Board and replaces all previous versions of this policy.

Approved:

Chief Executive Officer	Signature	Date:
Dr Gerhard Botha		19 May 2026

This Policy was drafted and refined with the assistance of AI tools. All content was reviewed, edited and approved by the author to ensure compliance with applicable laws and the company's standards.