



The Chartered
Institute of
Management
Accountants®

Chartered Institute of Management Accountants
Commentary to the
RLP Coordination Policy 2016
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1. Introduction

The Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) thanks the Department of Higher Education and Training for the opportunity to offer a response to its invitation to comment on the 'RLP Coordination Policy'.

1.1 About the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants

Founded in 1919, The Chartered Institute of Management Accountants® (CIMA®) is the world's leading and largest professional body of management accountants. As part of the Association of International Certified Professional Accountants®, CIMA and its members and students operate in 192 countries and territories, working at the heart of business — in industry, commerce, the public sector and not-for-profit organisations. CIMA works closely with employers and sponsors leading-edge research, constantly updating its professional qualification and professional experience requirements to ensure it remains the employer's choice when recruiting financially trained business leaders.

CIMA is recognised as a professional body by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) in terms of the National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008 (Act No.67 of 2008) (NQF Act). CIMA South Africa began operations in 1955 and has grown consistently in terms of students and members. CIMA South Africa represents over 3,000 members and 10,000 students.

Chartered Global Management Accountant designation (CGMA), awarded to members of CIMA, is the most widely held management accounting designation in the world. It distinguishes more than 151,000 accounting and finance professionals who have advanced proficiency in finance, operations, strategy and management. The CGMA designation is underpinned by extensive global research to maintain the highest relevance with employers and develop competencies most in demand. CGMAs qualify through rigorous education, exam and experience requirements. They must commit to lifelong education and adhere to a stringent code of ethical conduct. Businesses, governments and non-profits around the world trust CGMAs to guide critical decisions that drive strong performance.

CIMA is a founder member of The Association of International Certified Professional Accountants (the Association), the most influential body of professional accountants, combining the strengths of the American Institute of CPAs (AICPA) and CIMA to power opportunity, trust and prosperity for people, businesses and economies worldwide. It represents over 696,000 members and students in public and management accounting and advocates for the public interest and business sustainability on current and emerging issues. With broad reach, rigor and resources, the Association

advances the reputation, employability and quality of CPAs, CIMA and CGMA designation holders and accounting and finance professionals globally.

1.2 Perspective of this response

Our response is from the perspective of an international professional body that is registered and recognised by SAQA and quality assured by the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) and that of a body that has operated and supported South African skills development and businesses for nearly five decades.

2. Comments

2.1 General

We recommend that there be a communication strategy to reach people who have experience and are not currently in education and training or employment, but who may apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) to become employable. The communications strategy should be focused on informing such people of how to apply.

Such strategy should focus on the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) leading key players in the RPL value chain in advocating for RPL implementation to alleviate the negative perceptions on qualifications obtained through RPL.

CIMA supports inclusive RPL implementation through offering different entry points into the CIMA qualification. CIMA South Africa awards exemptions to registered students on the following basis:

- Selected university programmes are automatically awarded exemptions into the CIMA Professional Qualification,
- Through affiliations with other professional bodies to recognise each body's members' qualifications and experience and awarding of exemptions on the CIMA Professional Qualification on that basis,
- Recognition of work experience to award students exemptions on the academic programme, and
- Recognition of relevant prior academic excellence through a special entry route for holders of relevant qualifications awarded with distinction.

2.2 Purpose of the Policy

For the policy to successfully accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities ((section 5 (1) (d) of the NQF Act),

it ought to particularly consider practical ways in which to move people forward who were denied access to education for all jobs; especially Black, female people and who were consequently denied access to management functions and decision making roles.

2.3 Scope of the policy

In addition to the DHET monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the practice, it should also Monitor & Evaluate the value contribution of people who have been appointed into roles via RPL into the Post-School Education and Training (PSET) system. Such insights would be able to build the compelling reasons that RPL does work and RPL appointments and exemptions into further education, does work successfully.

We recommend that SAQA's scope be expanded to include advising the Minister on how/or not, RPL is addressing issues of continued learning and the promotion of relevant skills for South Africa to complete globally from a human skills perspective and remain economically viable as a country

2.4 The legislative mandate provided through the NQF Act

CIMA recommends that when Quality Councils (QCs) develop and implement RPL policy and criteria, they consult with Professional Bodies and other education providers as to how RPL policy will be implemented in a way so as neither to dilute the value of the RPL policy and what it seeks to achieve, nor dilute the entry into the education via Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT).

SAQA must also be responsible for ensuring the country's RPL policies are aligned with and in-keeping with global best practices.

CIMA highlights that it would be most efficient if the QCs would invite comment to its RPL policies prior to advocating such to its respective education and training institutes

2.5 A National Coordinating mechanism for RPL Quality

The urgency of such establishment is welcomed, however it is cautioned that in such urgency, the establishment is well planned and therefore becomes a sustainable mechanism to create and preserve long term value linked to its objective.



2.6 Steps to follow in establishing a national coordinating mechanism for RPL

Step 22 c): this is welcomed, and it is emphasised that good quality and consistent training is an expected imperative. Training should include consistent overview of success factors and what success looks like.

Step 22 d): we recommend that the report includes the impact of RPL on the social and economic conditions within South Africa. Such report ought to include comment from all stakeholders in the value chain of RPL.

Step 23: the initial set up should have clear deliverables for the DHET and what are the expected outcomes within each quarter. It should also spell out what quality delivery standards would look like. There must be clear expectations and deliverables linked to spend within the set up and the project set up phase. There must be clear expectations of the review period from set up to roll out

Step 24: the 5-year period proposed should be reduced as this policy is needed urgently.

2.7 The Funding of the National Coordinating Mechanism for RPL

It is welcomed that the coordinating mechanism will be state funded and no new contributions from the public funds will be necessary.

Whilst it is appreciated that it might be difficult to quantify costs related to RPL development, it is urged that difficulty not be the reason that such exercise is not attempted and that cost ought to be projected towards the real deliverables and the success factors that underpin RPL development. It is urged that resources are focused on the creation of a sustainable national policy drive.

2.8 Responsibilities of DHET

Responsibility e) sounds like a welcomed initiative. Of utmost importance will be the how to access, the who may access and the monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes of those who did access such fund.

3. Conclusion

CIMA supports the policy and the further development and implementation of RPL.

As a global professional body that has been operational in South Africa for since 1955, CIMA appreciates and upholds its responsibility to co-operate with local stakeholders in achieving the objectives of the NQF Act, the RLP Coordination Policy and the education and upliftment of all South Africans.