

Recognizing Prior Learning Coordinating Group (RCG) Terms of Reference (Revised 2005, 2009)

Vision

Saskatchewan's education and training sector, professional and trade associations, regulatory bodies, government, industry (business and labour), and communities work collaboratively to promote and support the recognition of *all* learning, while maintaining standards, contributing to a skilled, flexible, and responsive labour force, making Saskatchewan an ideal place to live and work. All learning is valued because it contributes to the social and economic well-being and growth of individuals and our communities.

Purpose

The Recognizing Prior Learning Coordinating Group (the "RCG") was tasked by the Minister of Learning in June 2004 to engage a wide range of Saskatchewan stakeholders in working together as active partners to advance the implementation of the goals and objectives outlined in the *Recognizing Prior Learning (RPL) in Saskatchewan: Provincial Policy Framework* (the "Framework").¹

Goals, Objectives and Action Plan

The RCG works to advance learning recognition for the benefit of learners, job seeker and employers in Saskatchewan. The work of the RCG is guided by three overarching goals articulated in the Framework. These goals are further broken down into a number of objectives, supported by proposed actions that contribute to enhanced learning recognition in the province.

The goals and objectives are identified in Appendix A of this document, together with proposed actions that the RCG will undertake to further the implementation of the Framework goals and objectives. The Action Plan informs the strategic planning of the RCG and guides the establishment of the annual workplan for the RCG. The Action Plan, as part of the Terms of Reference, is reviewed and updated annually.

RCG Structure

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall consist of:

1. A Co-Chair representing the Government of Saskatchewan;
2. A Co-Chair, representing industry, appointed for a two year term by the RCG members;
and
3. Up to five members of the RGC, appointed for a two year term by the RCG members, representing the following groups:
 - Industry
 - First Nations
 - Métis Nation
 - Designated Groups, as defined in the Employment Equity Act (Canada)²
 - Education/Training Providers

¹ First Session - Twenty-Fifth Legislature of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, Debates and Proceedings N.S. Vol. XLVII No. 57A Tuesday, June 15, 2004, 1:30 p.m.

² Employment Equity Act (Canada) 1995 c.44 <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/ShowFullDoc/cs/e-5.401//en>

Members

Members of the RCG represent key stakeholder groups that are an integral part of a province-wide system for learning recognition. The RCG consists of representatives from a wide range of stakeholder groups representing a broad array of perspectives. A description of the knowledge, skills and attributes of members is included in Appendix B.

The RCG is comprised of representatives from a variety of key sectors, including:

- **Career Development Practitioners and Employment Counsellors** [Career and Employment Services (Advanced Education Employment and Labour) Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Agencies (SAISIA), Saskatchewan Career and Work Educators Association (SCWEA) - 3
- **Client Advocacy** [e.g. Immigrants/refugees, Racialized Canadians, First Nations, Métis, Persons with Disabilities, Women, Persons with Low Income, Youth] – 8
- **Education/Training Providers** [e.g. credit granting and non-credit granting including: First Nations University, University of Regina, University of Saskatchewan, Gabriel Dumont Institute/Dumont Technical Institute, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission (ATCC), Regional Colleges System, Saskatchewan Association of Career Colleges (SACC), Saskatchewan Association of School Boards] – 10
- **Employers/Employers’ Organizations** [e.g. Chamber of Commerce, Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB), Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations (SAHO)] – 3
- **Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations** [e.g. Education and Training and Economic Development] – 2
- **Government of Saskatchewan** [e.g. Advanced Education, Employment and Labour; Adult Learning and Immigration, First Nations and Métis Relations, Health] - 5
- **Human Resources and Social Development Canada** – 1
- **Human Resources Professionals** [e.g. Saskatchewan Association of Human Resource Professionals (SAHRP), Public Service Commission, Crown Investments Corporation] – 3
- **Labour and Labour Organizations** [e.g. Saskatchewan Federation of Labour,] – 3
- **Métis Nation of Saskatchewan** [e.g. GDI Training and Employment] – 2
- **Saskatchewan Council for Admissions and Transfer** - 1
- **Saskatchewan Labour Market Commission** - 2
- **Trade/Professional Regulatory Bodies and Associations** [e.g. Network of Inter-Professional Regulatory Associations (NIRO), Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council (STEC), Saskatchewan Applied Science Technologists and Technicians (SASTT) Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation] – 4
- **Western Economic Diversification Canada** – 1

Working Groups and Sub-Committees

The RCG establishes Working Groups and Sub-committees to carry out specific actions to achieve its mandate. Working Group and Sub-Committee members may be recruited from outside the RCG membership. On behalf of the RCG, the Executive Committee will prioritize the recommendations provided by the Working Groups, and will request resources from the provincial government to support the work of the RCG.

Each Working Group:

- Is headed by a chairperson appointed by the RCG;
- Develops a work plan, which is submitted to the RCG for approval, and
- Carries out the work approved by the RCG, and reports back to the RCG on the progress of the work.

Working Groups and Sub-Committees currently carrying on work on behalf of the RCG are:

- The Communications Working Group;
- The Capacity Building Working Group; and,
- The Industry Engagement Working Group.

Accountability, Roles and Responsibilities

The Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour oversees the implementation of the RCG Action Plan to support the realization of the vision of RPL in Saskatchewan. The Minister makes decisions, taking into account the recommendations of the RCG, regarding financial resources to be allocated to support the work of the RCG and its Working Groups.

The Co-Chairs:

- schedule and develop the agenda for each meeting of the RCG;
- provide to all members a *Record of Actions & Decisions* following each meeting of the RCG; and
- provide an annual report of RCG and stakeholder activities (progress, outcomes and recommendations) to the Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour and to the members of the RCG.

The Executive Committee:

- conducts RCG-approved business and engages in decision-making to support the execution of the RCG workplan between meetings of the RCG;
- attends to administrative matters that must be addressed between RCG meetings;
- represents the RCG in providing leadership to support the vision for enhancing learning recognition in Saskatchewan;
- identifies and makes recommendations to the Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour regarding resources needed to undertake priority actions to support RPL in the province ;
- facilitates an annual strategic planning session of the RCG that includes:
 - a review of the Terms of Reference; and
 - the development of a workplan that outlines clear objectives, priorities for action, outcomes, timeframes and accountability.

The Members:

- participate actively in the RCG;
- serve as a communications channel with their home organizations and/or institutions;
- champion the multi-sectoral advancement of learning recognition in Saskatchewan;
- encourage the development of an integrated system-wide delivery of learning recognition services in Saskatchewan;
- identify, examine and seek solutions for issues affecting the advancement of learning recognition;
- share and co-ordinate learning recognition-related information from a variety of perspectives (i.e. policies, funding, evaluation, best practices, expertise and research data);
- provide a mechanism to share and seek input for advancing learning recognition with member organizations and various key stakeholders undertaking learning recognition-related initiatives within the province and across Canada; and
- collaboratively identify the resources needed to strategically undertake priority actions to implement the Framework and the RCG Action Plan;
- participate in the annual review of the Terms of Reference and the development of the annual workplan.

The Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour provides secretariat support to the Executive Committee, the RCG and its Working Groups and Sub-Committees.

General Operations

Meetings:

- The RCG will meet at least twice each year. Ideally, senior officials from the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour will take part in at least one meeting each year. Additional meetings may be held at the discretion of the Co-Chairs.
- Meetings will be held primarily in Regina, and every second year a meeting will be held at a location in Saskatchewan which is convenient to the members, based on a poll of preferred meeting location.
- Decisions will be made by consensus, and all members will be encouraged to identify concerns. If consensus cannot be reached, the matter will be directed to the RCG Co-Chairs for resolution. Any matters that the RCG Co-Chairs are unable to resolve will be referred to the Assistant Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour for resolution.
- Areas of dissent will be noted.

Expenses:

- Members are volunteer and do not receive honoraria.
- Expenses for travel and provision of meeting rooms will primarily be covered by the in-kind contributions of participating organizations.
- The Ministry of Advanced Education Employment and Labour will cover the general expenses for meetings of the RCG (e.g. refreshments and lunches).

Alternate Representatives/ Guests:

- Members are encouraged to attend all meetings. However, if a member is unable to attend a meeting, he/she may send an alternate to attend meetings with the understanding that the member will brief the alternate in advance of the meeting.
- Additional parties may be invited to participate to provide advice and assistance on specific issues as agreed upon by the RCG.
- With the approval of the Executive Committee, guests may be invited to attend meetings.

APPENDIX A: RCG Action Plan

Acronym Guide for the Action Plan:

AEEL	The Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour
ATCC	Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission
CBO	Community-Based Organizations
EO	Employers' Organizations
ETP	Education and Training Providers
GMA	Government Ministries/Agencies
IND	Industry
PRBA	Professional Regulatory Bodies and Professional Associations
RCG	Recognizing Prior Learning Coordinating Group
SaskCAT	Saskatchewan Council for Admissions and Transfer
SLMC	Saskatchewan Labour Market Commission

GOAL A: DEMONSTRATE LEADERSHIP	
OBJECTIVE 1	LEAD
A.1 COORDINATE PLANNING AND SUPPORT FOR RPL SERVICES:	
A.1.1 Develop and maintain a Provincial Framework for RPL that is endorsed and adopted by stakeholders, and reflected in their respective RPL policies.	AEEL
A.1.2 Through a provincial coordinating group, monitor the implementation of the Framework, provide a forum for on-going strategic planning, and identify resource requirements needed to achieve the goals articulated in the Framework.	AEEL
A.1.3 Support a central collection of RPL resources and materials available to stakeholders and the public that can be used to support the promotion, planning and delivery of RPL services in Saskatchewan, including information on other Canadian and international assessment services.	AEEL
A.1.4 Create and maintain a publicly accessible provincial electronic credit transfer guide, which is built upon institutional credit transfer agreements.	SaskCAT
A.1.5 Incorporate results of annual progress reports from stakeholders, with recommendations for improvement, into the RCG strategic planning process.	RCG
A.1.6 Develop and maintain an on-line forum for RPL practitioners in Saskatchewan that facilitates information and expertise sharing and dialogue.	AEEL
A.1.7 Support the provision of labour market information and forecasted demand to identify those program areas where RPL may be beneficial in increasing the number of people with the requisite skills to meet labour market demand.	AEEL
A.1.8 Develop and deliver accredited training for RPL practitioners.	ETP
A.1.9 Support the development (start-up) of RPL expertise with various stakeholders, encouraging new models for implementation that may serve as examples for others.	RCG
A.1.10 Collaborate with industry, other provinces and territories, and the federal government to develop and adopt national standards for RPL that support the portability and transferability of skills.	RCG
A.1.11 Develop options to provide funding to individuals who require RPL assessment services and demonstrate financial need to do so, and ways to provide financial incentives and assistance for learning recognition and credentialing.	AEEL

OBJECTIVE 2	LEAD
A.2 CONDUCT AND SHARE RESEARCH ON BEST PRACTICES AND THE BENEFITS OF RPL:	
A.2.1 Highlight and recognize excellence in the delivery of RPL services through the annual SLMC Training for Excellence Awards.	SLMC
A.2.2 Contract with a private sector firm to undertake an assessment of the costs and benefits of RPL to small, medium and large businesses in Saskatchewan.	AEEL
A.2.3 Promote best practices through organized events, e.g., promote industry best practices at labour conferences, or through business events, at educational conferences, etc.	AEEL,ETP, EO
A.2.4 Support on-going opportunities that allow RPL practitioners to share information, expertise, stay networked, and provide updates to each other on RPL activity.	ETP, IND
A.2.5 Undertake periodic reviews of RPL initiatives in other jurisdictions and distribute to stakeholders, in order to help improve the planning and delivery of RPL services in Saskatchewan.	RCG
OBJECTIVE 3	LEAD
A.3 INCREASE AWARENESS OF RPL SERVICES AND BENEFITS:	
A.3.1 Publish and promote the Provincial Framework and the RCG Action Plan to the public and stakeholders.	AEEL
A.3.2 Develop and implement a coordinated communications strategy that promotes the benefits of RPL services to stakeholders and promotes the value of recognizing acquired competencies in addition to credentials.	RCG
A.3.3 Develop and maintain a “one-stop” website that provides an overview of RPL processes in Saskatchewan, with contact information and/or links to the various stakeholders.	RCG
A.3.4 Promote portfolio approaches to high school students as part of career development curriculum and guidance services.	IND, AEEL, ETP
A.3.5 Promote RPL services and portfolio approaches to employers.	CBO
A.3.6 Promote partnerships between training institutions and employers in recognizing RPL and thus enhance the efficiency of training/education.	AEEL
GOAL B: PROMOTE AND SUPPORT THE DELIVERY OF HIGH-QUALITY, ACCESSIBLE AND RELEVANT RPL SERVICES IN SASKATCHEWAN	
OBJECTIVE 1	LEAD
B.1 INTEGRATE RPL PROCESSES INTO EMPLOYERS’ HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PRACTICES:	
B.1.1 Develop expertise on how to incorporate RPL into the HR systems of businesses of all types.	IND
B.1.2 Enter into partnership agreements with educational institutions to recognize industry-based training and assessment for academic credit, where applicable.	IND
B.1.3 Conduct regular reviews of skills/competencies of staff and incorporate into strategic plans and succession plans that forecast medium to long term business needs.	IND
B.1.4 Conduct portfolio-assisted interviews.	IND
B.1.5 Provide prospective employees/applicants with access to information about international credential recognition and assessment (e.g., IQAS), and support, where applicable, the assessment process and costs.	IND
B.1.6 Help employees prepare a portfolio and access RPL services in the community.	IND
B.1.7 Through provincial or local business associations, develop common tools and resources that help small to medium size firms (that may lack the dedicated HR resources of large firms) to implement RPL activities.	AEEL EO
B.1.8 Identify and articulate occupational competencies and learning standards expected in the workplace.	IND

OBJECTIVE 2	LEAD
B.2 ADOPT RPL AS A SERVICE PROVIDED BY SASKATCHEWAN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS/TRAINING PROVIDERS:	
B.2.1 Develop an integrated RPL service for learners.	
B.2.1.1 <i>Establish a first contact at each institution/organization (e.g., phone number, website, etc.) for individuals with questions about RPL.</i>	ETP
B.2.1.2 <i>Develop and make available information materials for learners, including international students, on RPL services provided and related fees.</i>	ETP
B.2.1.3 <i>Train student services staff as RPL advisors (knowledge of basic information on RPL and referral services).</i>	ETP
B.2.1.4 <i>Encourage and promote portfolio approaches into employment services provided to students.</i>	ETP
B.2.1.5 <i>Integrate RPL into apprenticeship system student in-take and assessment.</i>	ATCC
B.2.1.6 <i>Incorporate RPL processes into adult basic education assessments (e.g., challenge to exams, equivalency assessments, portfolios, etc.).</i>	AEEL
B.2.1.7 <i>Provide pre and post-assessment guidance and support services for the learner to explain RPL assessment outcomes and identify next steps for the learner.</i>	ETP
B.2.2 Build capacity to provide RPL services.	
B.2.2.1 <i>Develop and adopt RPL policy and procedures for the institution/organization, and by program area, where applicable.</i>	ETP
B.2.2.2 <i>Develop mechanisms to acknowledge RPL credit on official academic transcripts.</i>	ETP
B.2.2.3 <i>Develop and collect information materials for staff (not limited to advisors and assessors) on RPL processes and benefits.</i>	ETP
B.2.2.4 <i>Provide referral services to international credential assessment services (IQAS) and/or provide in-house international credential assessment expertise.</i>	ETP
B.2.2.5 <i>Provide RPL training and on-going professional development opportunities for advisors and assessors, and secure external RPL expertise where required.</i>	ETP
B.2.2.6 <i>Develop RPL assessment tools or methods, (e.g., interview questions, role-play exercises, challenge exams, portfolio/evidence file expectation,; etc.) that will assess the prior learning against the achievement levels required by the particular credential to be awarded.</i>	ETP
B.2.2.7 <i>Share information and expertise on RPL processes with other institutions/organizations and interested stakeholders.</i>	ETP
B.2.2.8 <i>Encourage faculty to communicate expectations and standards more clearly by the articulation of learning outcomes in program areas.</i>	ETP
B.2.2.9 <i>Develop and make available an appeals mechanism for learners who are unsatisfied with the result of the RPL process.</i>	ETP
B.2.2.10 <i>Based on labour market demand/forecasts, enter into partnerships with employers and regulatory bodies to provide RPL services to employees or prospective employees.</i>	ETP
B.2.2.11 <i>Develop and maintain credit transfer agreements with other institutions and/or organizations to facilitate the efficient use of RPL.</i>	SaskCAT/ETP
B.2.2.12 <i>Regularly monitor, review, evaluate and revise RPL policies and practices to maintain and improve standards.</i>	ETP

OBJECTIVE 3	LEAD
B.3 USE RPL AS A MEANS TO SUPPORT LABOUR MOBILITY FROM OTHER PROVINCES AND COUNTRIES:	
B.3.1 Develop an integrated RPL service for membership candidates.	
B.3.1.1 <i>Establish a first contact for prospective candidates (e.g., phone number, website, etc.) who have questions about how to become licensed in Saskatchewan.</i>	PRBA
B.3.1.2 <i>Develop and make available information materials on how prior learning (including international learning) will be assessed by the regulator and any related fees.</i>	PRBA
B.3.1.3 <i>Provide pre and post-assessment guidance and support services for the prospective candidate to explain RPL assessment outcomes and identify next steps for the learner.</i>	PRBA
B.3.2 Build capacity to provide RPL services.	
B.3.2.1 <i>Develop and adopt RPL policy and procedures.</i>	PRBA
B.3.2.2 <i>Develop mechanisms to acknowledge RPL credit for licensure requirements.</i>	PRBA
B.3.2.3 <i>Develop information materials for staff and professional members (not limited to advisors and assessors) on RPL processes and benefits.</i>	PRBA
B.3.2.4 <i>Enter into partnerships with educational institutions to provide RPL services to prospective members, where applicable.</i>	PRBA
B.3.2.5 <i>Provide referral services to international credential assessment services (IQAS) and/or provide in-house international credential assessment expertise.</i>	PRBA
B.3.2.6 <i>Provide RPL training for advisors and assessors, with on-going professional development opportunities to continue to develop RPL expertise, where applicable.</i>	PRBA
B.3.2.7 <i>Develop RPL assessment tools or methods, e.g., interview questions, role-play exercises, challenge exams, portfolio/evidence file expectations; etc., where applicable.</i>	PRBA
B.3.2.8 <i>Share information and expertise on RPL processes with other provincial regulators and interested stakeholders.</i>	PRBA
B.3.2.9 <i>Articulate skills and competencies required for licensure.</i>	PRBA
B.3.2.10 <i>Enter into arrangements with other provincial regulators to recognize the skills and competencies of prospective members acknowledged in other jurisdictions through the licensing process (e.g., Mutual Recognition Agreements).</i>	PRBA
B.3.2.11 <i>Develop and make available appeals mechanisms for prospective members who are unsatisfied with the result of the RPL process, where applicable.</i>	PRBA
OBJECTIVE 4	LEAD
B.4 INCORPORATE RPL INTO THE CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROVIDED BY COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS AND GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES/AGENCIES:	
B.4.1 Promote Saskatchewan RPL services as part of career counseling advice provided to clients.	
B.4.1.1 <i>Develop and make available information materials for clients on RPL services provided in Saskatchewan.</i>	CBO
B.4.1.2 <i>Train counseling staff as RPL advisors (knowledge of basic information on RPL and system-wide referral services).</i>	CBO GMA
B.4.1.3 <i>Encourage and promote portfolio approaches and the documentation of learning “on-the-job” into employment services provided to clients.</i>	CBO GMA
B.4.1.4 <i>Provide non-credit RPL assessment services for the purposes of facilitating employment for clients (e.g., work placements).</i>	CBO GMA
B.4.1.5 <i>Provide pre and post-assessment guidance and support services for the client, in partnership with the RPL assessor (e.g., educational institution or regulatory body) to explain RPL assessment outcomes and identify next steps for the client.</i>	CBO GMA

B.4.1.6 <i>Provide support for individuals who may have requisite knowledge/skills but have difficulty expressing/demonstrating them. Focus especially on the needs of women, First Nations, Métis, youth, immigrants, refugees, visible minorities and people with disabilities.</i>	CBO, GMA
B.4.1.7 <i>Support immigrants/refugees in Saskatchewan by providing services to individuals that will help facilitate the RPL process, where applicable.</i>	CBO GMA
B.4.1.8 <i>Stay well-connected with other stakeholders in order to provide effective RPL advising and referral services to clients.</i>	CBO GMA
B.4.2 Build capacity to provide RPL services.	
B.4.2.1 <i>Develop information materials for staff (not limited to advisors) on RPL processes and benefits.</i>	CBO GMA
B.4.2.2 <i>Provide referral services to international credential assessment services (IQAS), where applicable.</i>	CBO GMA
B.4.2.3 <i>Provide RPL training for advisors, with on-going professional development opportunities to continue to develop RPL expertise.</i>	CBO GMA
B.4.2.4 <i>Share information and expertise on RPL processes with other CBOs and interested stakeholders.</i>	CBO GMA
GOAL C: DEMONSTRATE ACCOUNTABILITY	
OBJECTIVE 1	LEAD
C.1 EVALUATE RPL SERVICES AND OUTCOMES:	
C.1.1 Establish a common (minimum) set of output and outcome indicators that measure province-wide RPL activity and the impact of RPL in Saskatchewan.	RCG
C.1.2 Individual stakeholders develop additional indicators, if useful to do so, to track and report on RPL activity internally, using the information to improve service delivery.	RCG
C.1.3 Develop an evaluation strategy for the Framework and RCG Action Plan that will include a long-term evaluation of the retention, graduation and employment outcomes of learners who have accessed RPL assessment services.	RCG
C.1.4 Stakeholders collect and analyze data on RPL activity, and report progress to the public and stakeholder groups.	RCG

APPENDIX B: Member Profile: Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes

RCG members will champion the province-wide advancement of RPL to support the realization of the Framework's vision. The RCG will ensure that the membership includes members with direct experience in the delivery of learning recognition services. Decision-making and resource allocation authority within an organization will be considered an asset. RCG members shall model their behaviour, actions and plans on the Guiding Principles as listed in the Framework and the RCG Terms of Reference, insofar as relevant. Organizations will be asked to consider the following selection criteria to identify their designated representative(s).

Prospective members should demonstrate a commitment to:

- Working collaboratively to realize the Framework's vision of RPL in Saskatchewan;
- Planning across sectors and exploring new uses of available resources;
- Working in partnership with government, the private sector and non-government organizations; and
- Being available and willing to attend meetings and undertake activities related to achieving the desired outcomes of the RCG.

Prospective members should value:

- Direct, transparent communication;
- Proactive, thoughtful and considerate participation which encourages the expression of differences of opinion;³ and
- The integrity of the RCG governance process and the legitimate roles and responsibilities of all RCG members and other provincial stakeholders.

³ Chait, Richard.P., Holland, T.P. and Taylor, B.E. 1996 *Improving the Performance of Governing Boards*. Phoenix: The Oryx Press.