

## DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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**CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTISAN  
RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING**

I, Dr Bonginkosi Emmanuel Nzimande, MP, Minister of Higher Education and Training, in terms of Section 26 D and 36 (1) (a) of the Skills Development Act, (Act 98 of 1998), after consultation with the National Skills Authority, hereby publish in the schedule attached hereto the 2016 *Criteria and Guidelines for the implementation of Artisan Recognition of Prior Learning*.

The full document is available on the Department of Higher Education and Training website:  
[www.dhet.gov.za](http://www.dhet.gov.za)

**DR BE NZIMANDE, MP****MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING****DATE:** 30/11/2016

**SCHEDULE**



**higher education  
& training**

Department  
Higher Education and Training  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES**

**FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF**

**ARTISAN RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING**

**(ARPL)**

**2016**

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## 1. Purpose

This Criteria and Guidelines promote and implement Artisan Recognition of Prior Learning (ARPL) as an active pathway to a full artisan trade occupational qualification registered on the NQF linked listed trades and provides for full artisan trade qualification in all sectors of the economy, and set national criteria and guidelines on the practice of ARPL in order to grant access to non-contracted learners to a national trade test both in the formal and informal sectors of the economy.

## 2. Aim

This criteria and guidelines:

- 2.1 Are based on a developmental approach to Recognition of Prior Learning for artisan related occupations that takes into consideration the history and economic development of artisans in South Africa<sup>1</sup>. In particular, the need to consider literacy and numeracy in relation to ARPL is a critical component.
- 2.2 Progressively replaces all previous and prevailing artisan recognition of prior learning practices relating to Section 28 of the repealed Manpower Training Act of 1981.
- 2.3 Progressively replace all previous and prevailing artisan related recognition of prior learning practices developed and implemented by all Sector Education and Training Authorities.
- 2.4 Establishes the practice of the recognition of prior learning generic principles within the artisan development environment, eliminating the discriminatory practices and broadening access to persons who wish to become certificated artisans.
- 2.5 Is aligned to and support the National Policy for the Implementation of the Recognition of Prior Learning approved by the SAQA and must be read in conjunction with the Trade Test Regulations, 2015.
- 2.6 The implementation of Artisan RPL criteria and guidelines will be achieved by:
  - 2.6.1 Advancing a comprehensive, quality assured and resource-driven approach to optimise the delivery of ARPL services and programmes, including ARPL evaluations.
  - 2.6.2 Ensuring quality assurance and benchmarking of ARPL overseen by SAQA and the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) policies.
  - 2.6.3 Recognising and addressing the barriers to implementation, such as: limited incentives; lack of resources to develop and sustain services at affordable prices; lack of trained ARPL personnel; inadequate supporting systems that are unable to grant credits for part qualifications and admission systems

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<sup>1</sup> Towards understanding the distinctive nature of artisan training. Implications for Skills Planning in South Africa. Labour Market Intelligence Partnership 2014

without robust access routes; institutional resistance and lack of capacity must be addressed.

- 2.6.4 Providing a national co-ordination to assist QCTO, institutions of learning, and NAMB registered assessors to deal with barriers, accessing funding, building capacity, advocacy and marketing, and expanding ARPL provisioning into a comprehensive RPL system.

### 3. Objectives

- 3.1 To provide for the model implementation of ARPL, the further development of its resourcing, effective delivery and quality assurance.
- 3.2 To increase access via a trade test process ARPL for all persons who meet the criteria.
- 3.3 To develop, refine resources and where possible, automate the ARPL evaluation process through the use of technology.
- 3.4 To develop the human resource capacity within the country through the implementation of the artisan recognition of prior learning system.
- 3.5 To optimise the opportunities for the unemployed youth and eligible persons to acquire a progressive range of skills through part qualifications and become a semi-skilled trade worker.
- 3.6 To develop shared understanding of ARPL within a broader lifelong learning context.
- 3.7 To provide for a holistic model and approach to ARPL.
- 3.8 To provide the basis for national guidelines and priorities for implementing ARPL, and for effective monitoring and evaluation of the practices against these priorities.
- 3.9 To enable potential candidates to attain recognition of the appropriate knowledge and skills required for personal development, for employment, self-employment and ultimately access to a trade test to become a qualified artisan.
- 3.10 To guide and recognise the roles and functions of employers, unions, public and private providers, and NAMB registered assessors in the provision of ARPL across the education and training system.

### 4. Scope

- 4.1 This criteria and guidelines provides for the role of the Chief Directorate: Indlela/National Artisan Development in the DHET in leading, managing and coordinating the implementation of recognition of prior learning for all occupations listed as trades in Gazette 35625 dated 31 August 2012.
- 4.2 This criteria and guidelines applies to:

- All QCTO accredited Skills Development Providers
- All QCTO accredited Trade Test Centres or Assessment Centres and
- Workplaces

## 5. Glossary of Terms

### 5.1 Advocacy

To create awareness and influence participation in the alternative access to trade tests through different related evaluation, gap closure and assessment activities.

### 5.2 Application

Where a candidate who complies with the minimum requirements for ARPL completes a manual or electronic application form for statistical and PoE purposes.

### 5.3 Assessor

A qualified person who is registered by the NAMB in accordance with established registration criteria for the purpose to conduct ARPL assessments and trade test for registered trades/occupations and part qualifications

### 5.4 Artisan Recognition of Prior Learning

An evaluation and process conducted at an accredited trade test centre which measures a candidate's meaningful level of related work experience, integrated conceptual knowledge and work related technical and personal skills in order to facilitate access to a process that lead to access to a trade test and certification as an artisan.

### 5.5 Artisan Recognition of Prior Learning Administration Officer

The responsibilities are not specifically limited to the facilitation of all ARPL logistical processes, but include general and other trade test related administrative duties. No assessment or evaluation competencies or activities are required from the Artisan Recognition of Prior Learning Administration Officer.

### 5.6 Artisan Recognition of Prior Learning Model

An adaptable framework which directs the flow of the ARPL process from theory to actual integrated practice, inclusive of governance and management components.

### 5.7 Artisan Recognition of Prior Learning Process

The formal activity of gathering all related trade specific experience in the form of a portfolio of evidence (PoE) which forms the basis for the evaluation of a candidate's readiness and the entry point of access to a process that leads to access to a qualifying trade test and certification as an artisan or in a part qualification.

### 5.8 Artisan Recognition of Prior Learning Toolkit (NQF registered qualification)

A formally structured evaluation tool primarily containing theoretical, practical and workplace evaluation instruments based on curriculum as developed by the QCTO, used to measure and aggregate a candidate's related trade experience in order to

determine trade test readiness and the entry point of access to a process that provides access to a qualifying trade test and certification as an artisan.

**5.9 Artisan Recognition of Prior Learning Toolkit**

A formally structured evaluation tool approved by the NAMB containing theoretical, practical and workplace evaluation instruments based on published training schedules of previously designated legacy trade qualifications or QCTO approved curriculum for NQF registered trades, used to measure and aggregate a candidate's related trade knowledge, practical skills and workplace experience in order to determine readiness for access to a trade test (External Integrated Summative Assessment).

**5.10 Contracted Learner**

A learner who has a formal learner contract registered with a SETA.

**5.11 Portfolio of Evidence**

This PoE includes the candidate's Curriculum Vitae (CV) and any certified supporting documents of past and current employment, affidavits, training and educational qualifications and photographic evidence of trade related work done for access to ARPL programme.

**5.12 Evaluation/interview**

Where a candidate is evaluated against a standardised checklist as per the toolkit whilst being interviewed by an assessor to ascertain and confirm an ARPL candidate's trade knowledge and integrated practice.

**5.13 Formal workplace**

Any workplace registered in terms of the Company's Act or recognised in terms of Government legislation.

**5.14 Feedback**

A verbal and written report, as specified in the ARPL toolkit, given to the candidate by the assessor during and after the evaluation/interview session related to any gaps identified.

**5.15 Gaps**

The deficiencies identified in the trade knowledge practical skills and workplace experience of an ARPL candidate.

**5.16 Gap Closure**

The education and training interventions to address the gaps identified as a result of the evaluation process.

- 5.17 Informal workplace**  
Any business not registered in terms of the Company's Act or recognised in terms of Government legislation which employs trade related semi-skilled workers or artisans.
- 5.18 Knowledge Evaluation**  
Theoretical trade knowledge evaluation conducted using a questionnaire for the candidate and marked by a subject matter expert who is an assessor.
- 5.19 Non- Contracted candidate**  
A worker who has not entered into a learning agreement with an employer and registered with the SETA.
- 5.20 Orientation**  
Is a process where a candidate is inducted in the legal framework, purpose, requirements and expectations around ARPL.
- 5.21 Part qualification**  
A part qualification in the OQSF context refers to a set of employable skills that are extracted from an occupational qualification. This set of employable skills represents a grouping of assessed units of learning that are registered under the OQSF as a part qualification, and progressively articulate to a complete qualification.
- 5.22 Practical Evaluation**  
Assessing Integrated Practical tasks, by noting the use of tools, equipment and machinery where applicable, materials and compliance with Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) in performing a task or tasks by the ARPL candidate as prescribed in the ARPL toolkit.
- 5.23 QCTO Certificate**  
A national trade certificate issued for all contracted and non-contracted candidates issued by the QCTO in terms of Section 26 D of the SDA.
- 5.24 Qualification**  
A trade qualification recorded or registered on the NQF.
- 5.25 Qualified Artisan**  
A person who has passed a trade test for a listed trade that was conducted at an accredited Trade Test Centre and issued with a certificate based on the prevailing legislation which applied when such a trade test was conducted.
- 5.26 Registration**  
The formal acceptance and capturing of biographical information of a candidate to undergo the ARPL process.



**5.27 Semi-Skilled Trade Worker**

A person who may gain access to a trade test or external integrated summative assessment in a trade or Part Qualification linked to a listed trade registered on the NQF.

**5.28 Skilled Trade Worker**

A person who obtains a part qualification linked to a listed trade registered on the NQF through an external integrated summative assessment that includes community based trade workers, trade assistants and technical operators.

**5.29 Subject Matter Expert**

A person who is registered with NAMB as an assessor or moderator for the relevant trade.

**5.30 Technical Panel Evaluation**

Evaluation by two or more qualified artisans registered with NAMB as assessors in the trades being evaluated to determine a candidate's suitability and categorisation for ARPL route to be followed.

**5.31 Technical Portfolio of Evidence**

The updated POE containing information about evaluation, Gap Closure, Knowledge, Practical Assessments and Workplace experience.

**5.32 Trade Test**

A final summative assessment for an artisan for a listed trade that is conducted at an accredited Trade Test Centre by an assessor registered with NAMB.

**5.33 Workplace experience**

A prescribed minimum number of years of experience and specific scope of experience gained in a workplace and for the purpose of ARPL directly related to the trade enlisted for.

**5.34 Workplace Observation**

Observation by an assessor of the ARPL candidate at the workplace in cases where workplace experience cannot be verified off site.

**6. Principles for the implementation of ARPL**

The evaluation approach to ARPL shall at all times consider the following principles:

**6.1 Fairness:**

All ARPL processes must be applied in a fair, just and non-judgemental manner and no candidate may be unfairly discriminated against on the basis of race, gender, age, disability or in any form inconsistent with the Constitution of RSA.

**6.2 Access:**

No undue restrictions to ARPL prospective candidates must be practiced provided they meet the minimum requirements to be considered as an Artisan RPL candidate.

**6.3 Redress and Equality:**

It must be explicit within the ARPL practice that every qualifying candidate is assisted in all ways possible to participate meaningfully in the ARPL processes, while at the same time special attention must be given to disadvantaged candidates in ensuring that they are not further disadvantaged.

**6.4 Transparency:**

All ARPL practices must be transparent to all participants and access to information must not be restricted without just cause.

**6.5 Consultation:**

A prospective or participating ARPL candidate must be consulted on all matters including that which may have an adverse effect on their ambition to becoming recognised artisans.

**6.6 Professionalism:**

Is a primary requirement for all assessors and ARPL Administration Officers during the processing and practice of ARPL and must be devoid of corruption and exploitation and abuse of any form.

**6.7 Recourse:**

All disputes arising from the ARPL process must be granted natural justice attention and appropriate remedies.

**6.8 Consistency:**

ARPL must respond to non-sectoral demand and must be consistent across time, place and role players.

**6.9 Credibility:**

The ARPL process must be acceptable and trustworthy to industry, maintaining the credibility of the QCTO trade certificate to ensure their support of a process whereby access is provided to a trade test for non-contracted candidates in providing suitably qualified and competent artisans to industry and the economy at large.

**7 Granting access to Trade Test for ARPL candidates**

**7.1** According to the Trade Test Regulations published on 8 May 2015 in Government Gazette number 38758, 2015, access is granted to ARPL candidates who meet the requirements as contemplated in Regulation 2(3) and 11(5).

**7.2** Subsequent to this provision, the nature of ARPL as defined above, provides only an access mechanism to a trade test and does not grant directly an artisan qualification, nor does it confer any trade test tasks, credits and/or transfers.

- 7.3 The ARPL process and practice shall be based on NAMB approved ARPL Toolkits. Approved toolkits shall be recognised as a valid instrument in the performance of ARPL activities, and results arising from the use of toolkits not approved, shall be considered null and void.

## **8 Responsibilities within the framework**

- 8.1 The Department of Higher Education & Training (DHET) sets policies, criteria and guidelines regarding all ARPL practices.
- 8.2 The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) within this scope is responsible for quality assurance and artisan certification.
- 8.3 An accredited Trade Test Centre will conduct the ARPL evaluation process from advisory to the consolidation of the Statement of Results (SoR) as per approved toolkit for the specific trades for which they are accredited, excluding any gap closure interventions.
- 8.4 Accredited Skills Development Providers (SDP) are responsible for the delivery of the gap closure interventions in terms of the knowledge and /or practical skills components as identified during the ARPL evaluation/assessment process, and such training records must be included in the PoE.
- 8.5 The employer is responsible to provide on-the- job experiential training to an ARPL candidate to address the gaps in the workplace component as identified in ARPL evaluation process and provide the candidate with a record of trade related duties performed, and must be included in the PoE.
- 8.6 The National Artisan Moderation Body (NAMB), with statutory functions and as an Assessment Quality Partner (AQP) of the QCTO, is responsible for trade test related functions. In this instance NAMB is responsible for the development of ARPL Toolkits for all occupational trades and the general quality assurance function of all trade test practices.
- 8.7 All accredited Trade Test Centres (TTC) must accept ARPL applications and registers qualifying candidates. Records of all admitted candidates must be kept and whenever required, provide such records for moderation by the NAMB.

## **9 ARPL admission requirements**

All candidates seeking access to a trade test/ External Integrated Summative Assessment (EISA) through Artisan Recognition of Prior Learning must have:

- 9.1 Completed a standardised official application form provided in the ARPL toolkit for a specific trade applied for.
- 9.2 Have accumulated at least three years relevant verifiable work experience for a particular trade.

- 9.3 The minimum years of work experience may be accumulated from various traceable employers or services provided to customers in the relevant trade.
- 9.4 The minimum age for a person to register for ARPL is nineteen years.

#### **10 ARPL candidate evaluation criteria**

The primary objective of ARPL evaluation is to determine the extent of work experience gathered in relation to a specified trade in order to assist in the readiness and preparedness of a candidate to undergo a trade test. Therefore:

- 10.1 ARPL evaluation may be performed only at QCTO accredited TTCs.
- 10.2 The compilation of the portfolio of evidence with respect to the ARPL process must be facilitated by a NAMB registered assessor.
- 10.3 The candidate evaluation/interview, theory and practical assessments must be conducted by a NAMB registered assessor. The evaluation and interview must cover the entire scope of the trade, based on each module of the trade. The ARPL candidate must be probed by the assessor on answers given during the interview, to ascertain the candidate's competence.
- 10.4 The workplace observation process will be conducted by a relevantly qualified artisan or evaluation of workplace experience will be conducted by a NAMB registered assessor.
- 10.5 Only candidates registered in accordance with the admission requirements as set in Section 9 of these Criteria and Guidelines may be evaluated and assessed.
- 10.6 All ARPL evaluations shall be conducted using a NAMB approved ARPL toolkit for all listed trades.
- 10.7 ARPL evaluations shall include the measurement of the candidate's level of theoretical knowledge in a specific trade. The theoretical knowledge should include concepts, components, measurement, design, assembling and testing, based on the scope of the trade or part- qualification that lead to a qualification linked to the trade.
- 10.8 ARPL evaluations shall include the measurement of the candidate's scope of practical experience. The candidate must perform at least one integrated practical task in the respective trade.
- 10.9 During the process of ARPL practical evaluations all test pieces must be marked, bearing the identity of the candidate and photographed before being kept safely until the candidate is granted access to a trade test. The photographs to be included in PoE.
- 10.10 During the process of ARPL workplace observation or evaluation of workplace experience, a performance report on a standardised format provided in the NAMB approved toolkit, must be completed.

10.11 All candidates must be inducted by an NAMB registered assessor before they are evaluated, stating the objectives of the evaluation and assessment beforehand and what is required from them. (to be included at the start)

10.12 A Trade Test Centre must register a candidate who meets the entry requirements of this Criteria and Guidelines within 10 working days from application.

## **11 Evaluation and Assessment Process**

### **11.1 Evaluation requirements**

All admitted ARPL candidates, irrespective of their admittance location, shall be subject to the following requirements:

11.1.1 A personal file (Portfolio of Evidence) of the ARPL candidate must be created by the accredited Trade Test Centre. The file must contain candidate biographical information, personal identification copy, fees payment record, copies of certificates, PoE record and all other administrative information pertaining to the association of the candidate with the accredited TTC. These records must be filed and uploaded and stored on a national database.

11.1.2 Registers of all mandatory attendance for the purpose of evaluation or knowledge gap closure must be signed by the ARPL candidate and filed by the accredited TTC.

11.1.3 All admitted and registered ARPL candidates must undertake a trade and orientation session facilitated by a NAMB registered ARPL assessor before they are assimilated into the ARPL process.

11.1.4 The ARPL process of evaluation and assessment shall occur on the basis of the compilation of a portfolio of evidence (PoE) which shall be facilitated by a NAMB registered assessor using an approved Artisan Trade-Toolkit.

11.1.5 The Technical (updated) PoE shall contain the biographic information of the candidate, trade and trade experience of the candidate, employer information, outcomes of evaluations and results of theoretical assessment, results of practical assessment, results of workplace observation or experience evaluation, referral details and any other recommendations.

11.1.6 All instruments, human and other resources necessary to facilitate the compilation, presentation and storage of the PoE are to be used.

11.1.7 At least one integrated practical task related to the trade shall be undertaken by the candidate, the nature and the results thereof shall be recorded in the candidate's PoE.



- 11.1.8 All candidates must have workplace experience reports signed by a NAMB registered assessor as a component of their PoE. Where a candidate is unemployed he/she will be evaluated to determine workplace experience earlier acquired.
- 11.1.9 All records of exchange between the accredited TTC and Chief Directorate: INDLELA/NAD must be kept in the PoE of the candidate.
- 11.1.10 A completed PoE must be available to the National Artisan Moderation Body for moderation.
- 11.1.11 All successfully conducted trade tests emanating from the ARPL pathway must be recorded separately, kept safe and made available by the accredited TTC when required by the Chief Directorate: INDLELA/NAD during monitoring, moderations or audits.

## 12 ARPL Trade Test readiness grid

The following readiness grid must be used by the TTC to determine the formative ARPL evaluation which shall determine whether access is granted by the relevant TTC.

ASSESSMENT FIELD	0 – 29%	30% - 49%	50% +
		Not Yet Ready (Requires extensive gap closure programme)	Not Yet Ready (Requires gap closure programme on specific areas)
1. THEORY			
2. PRACTICAL			
Scope of Trade OR part-qualification covered	Key components of the qualification defined in the workplace component was covered by the candidate during employment		
3. WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE	70% of the workplace positive work attitudes together with the problem solving capacity must be displayed.		

- 12.1 A candidate who obtains a **NOT YET READY** result in the theoretical evaluation of the ARPL process but is deemed **READY** in the practical assessment and workplace observation must receive knowledge gap closure in accordance with the grid above before proceeding to be recommended for a trade test.
- 12.2 A candidate who obtains a **NOT YET READY** result in the practical assessment of the ARPL process but is deemed **READY** in the theory part of the assessment must receive the required practical training at a QCTO accredited SDP.
- 12.3 If the candidate does not meet the requirements of workplace observation or evaluation of workplace experience, the candidate will be referred for more focused workplace exposure. A recommendation to NAMB for a trade test must be done when the candidate is re-assessed and has been deemed **READY** in the practical and workplace observation.

- 12.4 A candidate who obtains a NOT YET READY result in the workplace observation or evaluation of workplace experience, but is READY in the theory and practical evaluation must be referred for gap closure in the workplace component at a workplace. In the event where the candidate is funded through an ARPL agreement, the candidate must be referred to a SETA approved workplace.
- 12.5 A Trade Test Centre must provide the candidate with his/her ARPL evaluation and phase evaluation results within three weeks of completion thereof in a prescribed format provided in the toolkit.
- 12.6 Based on a Statement of Results indicating achievement of all components of learning as prescribed in the curriculum by the QCTO, including training schedules of the legacy trades, any Trade Test Centre may schedule a trade test.
- 12.7 Where a candidate is found Not-Yet-Competent on the first trade test attempt, but found competent in at least fifty percent (50%) of the trade test tasks given during the first trade test attempt, will be given recognition for those tasks for a maximum of eighteen (18) months or 3 attempts, whichever comes first.
- 12.8 If a candidate is found not yet competent in his/her third trade test attempt, the candidate will have to undergo an additional gap closure programme.

### 13 Implementation of this Criteria and Guidelines

- 13.1 For the purpose of the implementation of this criteria and guidelines the following is attached in the approved ARPL Toolkit for a particular trade to ensure a standardised implementation of ARPL nationally across all trades listed in Government Gazette 5735 dated 9 September 1977 and Government Gazette 35625 dated 31 August 2012:

#### Toolkit format and the mandatory documents required of candidates

- Application form
- Employment status and history
- Candidate interview/evaluation checklist
- Trade overview
- Evaluation/assessment criteria
- Practical Assessment checklists
- Workplace experience evaluation
- Score sheets
- Feedback and referral
- Appeals form
- Access recommendation
- Statement of results
- Portfolio of evidence checklist

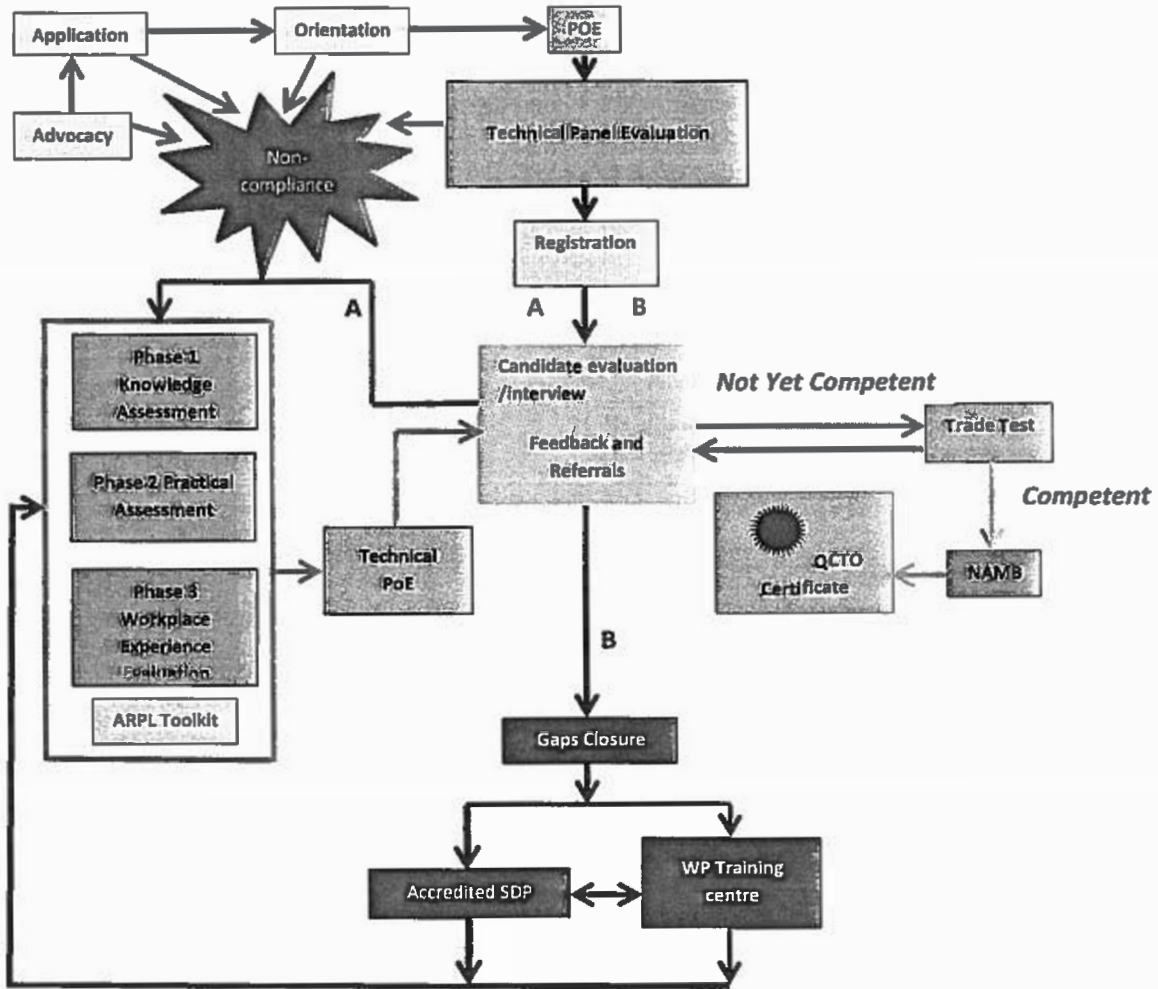
**14 List of acronyms**

ARPL	Artisan Recognition of Prior Learning
MTA	Manpower Training Act of 1981
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SETAs	Sector Education and Training Authorities
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
AET	Adults Education and Training
MES	Modules of Employable Skills
POE	Portfolio of Evidence
NAMB	National Artisan Moderation Body
SME	Subject Matter Expert
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
SDP	Skills Development Providers
TTC	Trade Test Centre
NADSC	National Artisan Development Support Centre
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
SOR	Statement of Results



**15 Artisan Recognition of Prior Learning MODEL**

This policy, criteria and guidelines will be implemented as per the process flow below:



**NYC- Not yet competent; C- Competent**

**Figure 1: The ARPL Process Flow**

**ARPL ROUTE DESCRIPTION**

**A: Phase Assessments**

**B: Gap Closure and Phase Assessments**