



TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AUTHORITY

PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION (PLAR)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Guidelines

These guidelines have been developed to guide TVET Providers on how to:

- i. Prepare, plan, and implement Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) within TVET;
- ii. Inform prospective PLAR candidates on what they can expect from PLAR and how they can actively participate in the PLAR process.

NB: Guidelines for credit transfer arrangements are as provided by Kenya National Qualification Authority (KNQA).

1.2 Scope of the Guidelines

- i. The guidelines are applicable to all PLAR providers in the TVET sector who offer National Qualifications.
- ii. The guidelines covers the following aspects of PLAR implementation:
 - a) Institutional readiness for providing PLAR within the TVET sector;
 - b) Steps involved in the PLAR assessment process;
 - c) Roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in the PLAR process;
 - d) Monitoring and quality assurance of the PLAR processes
 - e) Review of PLAR Process

2.0 STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING PLAR IN THE TVET SECTOR

2.1 Institutional Readiness for PLAR Provision

In order to prepare the institution for the provision of PLAR, prospective PLAR providers need to understand what institutional arrangements need to be in place to effectively implement PLAR in the TVET sector. Providers shall be inspected by TVETA to assess the institution's readiness to implement PLAR. The following are essential requirements for PLAR implementation:

2.1.1 Registration and licensing of PLAR providers

Standard:

All PLAR providers shall be Registered, Accredited and licensed by TVETA

Guidelines:

- i. Institutions planning to provide PLAR must be accredited with TVETA as per the TVET Act, 2013
- ii. PLAR providers shall be approved by a Assessment/ Certification Agency upon recommendation by TVETA

2.1.2 Institutional PLAR Policy**Standard:**

PLAR providers must develop institutional Policy to guide implementation of PLAR.

Guidelines

The arrangements should be in line with this Standards and Guidelines for implementing PLAR and should include, as a minimum, the following:

- i. PLAR TVET services offered
- ii. Modes of PLAR provision
- iii. Entry requirements for the different modes
- iv. Cost of different modes of PLAR
- v. Internal Quality Assurance mechanisms to ensure quality PLAR provision.
- vi. The body responsible for certification

2.1.3. PLAR Assessors and Verifiers**Standards:**

All PLAR providers must use assessors and verifiers who are approved by recognized Certification agencies.

Guidelines:

PLAR TVET providers must ensure that - prior to PLAR implementation - they have or have access to accredited assessors and verifiers to execute the PLAR assessment.

- i. TVETA accredit trainers, assessors and verifiers and place a register on website
- ii. The accredited assessors and verifiers shall be approved by assessment bodies after they are accredited.
- iii. The assessors and verifiers shall renew their accreditation after every 3 years with TVETA having fulfilled CPD requirements as trainers.
- iv. The assessors shall have at least one level higher than candidates to be assessed

2.1.4 Institutional PLAR Support System and structure**Standard:**

Institutions offering PLAR shall have support systems and structures to ensure that candidates get the needed support.

Guidelines

As a minimum, the following support mechanisms should be in place:

- i. Establishment of a PLAR administrative support structure;
- ii. Candidate selection;
- iii. Mentoring support;
- iv. Support during the assessment
- v. Post PLAR assessment support including top-up training

2.1.5 Use of Registered Unit Standards and Qualifications

Standard:

PLAR candidates shall be assessed against unit standards and qualifications registered on the Kenya National Qualification Framework (KNQF).

Guidelines

PLAR providers shall identify unit standards and / or qualifications registered on the KNQF and offered at their respective institutions for PLAR.

Standard

The procedures and criteria for the assessment of qualifications shall be transparent, coherent and reliable and basically meet the normal assessment standards.

Guidelines

The PLAR Process

The PLAR process is special and the following guidelines need to be observed for quality assurance requirements:

1. Gazettement of PLAR Standards and Guidelines.

Once the arrangements for PLAR are ready TVETA shall announce through a gazette notice and provide application forms and procedures for PLAR

TVETA shall do an initial assessment to ensure that there are relevant systems in place to conduct the assessment, that is, the Authority shall ensure that the relevant accredited units of competency, accredited assessors/verifiers and an Approved assessment Centers with capacity to conduct the assessment are available.

2. The Assessment/ Certification centres shall invite applications from the general public to have their prior learning assessed.
3. Individuals/employers/groups of Individuals shall make a request to the Assessment/ Certification Agency for the assessment of competence in a specified occupational area and undertake the following stages to be certified:
 - i. **Application (stage1)**
 - a) Application submission

- b) Candidate Bio Information gathering
- c) Application processing
- d) Database enrollment of candidate (process tracking)
- e) Scheduling of initial assessment meeting
- ii. Initial Assessment (stage 2)**
 - a) PLAR Advisor meets candidate to conduct Initial Assessment to ascertain feasibility of application
 - b) Identification of occupational area and level
 - c) Discussion and identification of types and quantity of evidence to be produced
 - d) Completion and analysis of self-assessment
 - e) Scheduling of orientation meeting
- iii. Orientation and Registration (stage 3)**
 - a) Group / individual orientation held - (PLAR Overview)
 - b) Portfolio Development Introduction
 - c) Registration of candidate for assessment process
 - d) Scheduling of Pre-Assessment meeting
- iv. Pre-Assessment (stage 4)**
 - a) Assessor with PLAR Advisor and candidate develops an assessment plan
 - b) Review of occupational standard(s) / Unit(s) and requirements
 - c) Selection of the type, quality and sources of evidence in support of claims
 - d) Selection of assessment strategies to be used in the assessment process
 - e) Set dates and times for assessment
- v. Assessment (stage 5)**
 - a) Candidate undergoes assessment based on pre-selected strategy/plan:
 - (i) Portfolio review and professional discussion
 - (ii) Credential review - past certification and training documents
 - (iii) Practical demonstration
 - (iv) Application of other assessment methods
 - b) Assessment decision made
 - c) Feedback and final review
 - d) Internal verification review
 - e) Record and submission of claim
- vi. Certification (stage 6)**
 - a) External Verification review (Quality Assurance)
 - b) Processing of certification claim
 - c) Printing of N/CVQ certificate or unit statement of competence
 - d) Issue of N/CVQ certificate or unit statement of competence
- vii. Post certification guidance and support (stage 7)**
 - a) Post certification review
 - b) Additional training is initiated, or process is restarted

PLAR should be treated as an assessment strategy following the same principles of competence-based assessment.

Fees

The fee structure is available from the Accredited Training Centre (ATC) offices. Registration is payable directly to the ATC and includes administrative, certificate and quality assurance costs.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities of Key Players in implementing PLAR

TVETA shall take its responsibility as provided in various parts of TVET Act 2013. The providers, assessment agencies and employers to comply as per their established mandates in their legislative Acts where applicable.

4.1 TVETA

One of the main roles of TVETA regarding provision of PLAR is to create an enabling environment within which PLAR can be conducted. TVETA may in accordance with the standards and guidelines;

4.1.1 Accredite, License and Register PLAR TVET providers, assessors and moderators, verifiers and assessment centers; as per Section 17 (1) of the TVET Act, 2013.

4.1.2 Provide support and guidance to PLAR providers on PLAR implementation; as per Section 7 (i) of the Act.

4.1.3 Monitor and audit PLAR providers; as per sections 7(m) and 33 of the Act.

4.1.4 Develop standards and guidelines for implementing PLAR within the TVET as per Sections 7 (h), 31(a) ,(c) and 57(b) of the Act.

4.1.5 Undertake research on PLAR implementation strategies and modes of delivery and share findings and recommendations with PLAR TVET providers;

4.1.6 Maintain a central database of PLAR providers, assessors and verifiers, per section 25 of the Act.

4.2 Employers

Employers are responsible for creating a conducive environment by:

4.2.1 Developing guidelines for implementing PLAR.

4.2.2 Aligning organization HR policies to take account of PLAR such as workforce planning, job matching and promotion possibilities.

4.2.3 Ensuring that on-the-job training and HR development activities are aligned to standards registered on the National Qualification Framework.

4.2.4 Developing ‘preferred supplier’ relationships with accredited providers for in-house training and HR development interventions.

4.2.5 Provide feedback on graduate competence gaps

4.2.6 Provide assessment infrastructure and equipment to facilitate PLAR

4.2.7 Provide the occupational standards where assessment is derived

4.3 PLAR TVET Providers

They should provide PLAR services that comply with statutory requirements. The registered and /or accredited TVET providers should:

4.3.1 Apply for an expansion of scope to offer PLAR training and assessment.

4.3.2 Implement PLAR policies, processes and procedures.

4.3.3 Ensure that sufficient resources are available for PLAR implementation.

4.3.4 Comply with quality audits undertaken by accreditation bodies.

4.3.5 Establish reporting mechanisms.

4.3.6 Provide PLAR advisor/mentor

4.4 PLAR Mentors office of career services

PLAR mentors advise PLAR candidates in the selection of qualifications and their preparation for assessment. They support PLAR applicants by:

4.4.1 Receiving training and continuing professional development in PLAR in TVET and mentoring.

4.4.2 Providing applicant motivational and learning support to PLAR applicants.

4.4.3 Advising applicants on the possibilities of PLAR, different pathways to qualifications and career guidance.

4.4.4 Ensuring applicants understand the PLAR TVET policy, process and procedures.

4.4.5 Supporting applicants to identify their prior learning and interpret registered qualifications, unit standards and assessment criteria by linking them to learning, including using group mentoring to facilitate shared learning between applicants.

4.4.6 Assisting in the identification and compilation of authentic, current and valid evidence of competence.

4.4.7 Helping the applicant to prepare for assessment.

4.4.8 Providing applicant feedback as required on the PLAR process.

4.5 PLAR Applicants

Participate in the PLAR process and provide appropriate evidence to prove competence(s) and

4.5.1 Apply for PLAR.

4.5.2 Identify prior learning in relation to unit standards and related criteria.

4.5.3 Provide evidence pertaining to Prior Learning

4.5.4 Undertake continued development where identified.

4.5.5 Provide feedback as required on the PLAR process.

4.5.6 Provide feedback on assessment provider quality of service

4.6 PLAR Certification /Assessment Agencies

PLAR certification / Assessment Agencies have the responsibility to:

4.6.1 Provide capacity to assessors and verifiers and direct them to be accredited by TVETA

4.6.2 Inform applicants about the assessment arrangements.

4.6.3 Implement fit-for-purpose assessment methods, approved by the TVETA, including integrated assessment tasks covering more than one-unit standard.

4.6.4 Convene PLAR assessment panels (if appropriate).

4.6.5 Coordinate and conduct PLAR assessments according to relevant policies and principles by assessing applicants' collections of evidence against required standards and criteria.

4.6.6 Communicate results to applicants i.e. inform applicants that recommendations have been made to TVETA/awarding body; give feedback and guidance on how to address areas for development.

4.6.7 Regularly review the assessment process and implement changes as and when required.

4.6.8 Comply with all moderation and quality assurance requirements of the Authority.

4.6.9 Provide records of assessment to the assessment Centre for safe keeping.

4.6.10 Ensure that all original documents or materials are kept and remain property of Assessment/ Certification Agency.

4.6.11 Keep abreast of current assessment practices, learning outcomes, standards for assessment, methods of assessment, timeframes, technical details and understanding of the process.

4.6.12 Provide feedback to TVETA as required on the PLAR process.

5. Costing PLAR

To ensure that PLAR is widely accessible, fees for the delivery and administration of PLAR services should be affordable so that cost does not become a barrier to prospective candidates. The PLAR services provider shall ensure optimum number of candidates register to allow sharing of the cost of assessment and gap (top-up) training.

6. Quality Assurance

Registration of Training Institutions, Trainers and the internal quality assurance mechanisms shall apply to Registration of Assessment Centers, and Assessors in the Provision of PLAR services as provided for in the TVET Regulations 2015