

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
POLICY ON RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)*

The document comprises three sections.

- Section A proposes a draft policy on Recognition of Prior Learning
- Section B expands upon Section A and provides additional information on critical issues relating to RPL.
- The Appendix considers possibilities for implementation of RPL at UCT

SECTION A:

Preamble

The National Plan Higher Education (2001) is based on the policy framework and the goals, values and principles that underpin that framework, outlined in the White Paper on Higher Education (1997). These are intended to develop a higher education system that will amongst other things:

“promote equity of access and fair chances of success to all who are seeking to realise their potential through higher education, while eradicating all forms of unfair discrimination and advancing redress for past inequalities”; (p7)

The National Plan outlines the implementation framework for achieving the vision and goals of the White Paper. In line with the White Paper, it established indicative targets for the size and shape of the higher education system, including overall growth and participation rates, institutional and programme mixes and equity and efficiency goals.

The National Plan for Higher Education indicates that “an important avenue for increasing the potential pool of recruits to higher education is to recruit non-traditional students i.e. workers, mature learners, in particular women, and the disabled. The provision of higher education to workers, mature learners and the disabled, aside from the equity and redress imperatives, would also play a significant role in addressing the shortage of high-level skills in the short to medium-term, especially as there is a large potential pool of recruits. Increasing the access of workers, mature learners and the disabled to higher education is an important policy goal in its own right and should be approached as such”. (Ministry of Education, 2001, 28)

Despite this recognition of the importance of increasing the numbers of mature learners in higher education, a recent report on Human Resource Development suggests that very little progress has been made across the system in this regard. “In South Africa the further and higher education systems are characterised by a bias towards young, pre-employed students. Lifelong-learning opportunities for older, employed workers in colleges, technikons and universities are largely absent. Participation rates in the FET and HET sectors compare poorly with the participation rates for other countries. The South African post-school education and training system has not modernised and massified to the extent of other systems in the world, which have adapted significantly to the needs of adult and continuing education”. (Kraak, 2003, 18 – 19)

* This draft policy document was formally approved by the Health Sciences Faculty Board, the Humanities Dean’s Advisory Committee (DAC) on 27 July 2004, the Science Faculty’s DAC on 20th August, and by a special CHED staff seminar on 23 August 2004. The Deans of Law and Engineering and Built Environment informed us that they had not received any major objections. There was a concern from the Dean of Law about the need to prioritise resource for student support to UCT’s traditional students. Comment from the Commerce Faculty is still pending.

There is a commitment at UCT to redressing inequities and supporting lifelong learning through widening access to adult learners. This commitment is based on a belief that there are able people with valuable knowledge and experience in workplaces and communities who could benefit from university study. In fact UCT has admitted a number of students over time through making use of the discretionary power given to the Senate in terms of the Matriculation Board regulations to admit students who do not have matriculation endorsement. The exercise of this power has been devolved to faculties and each faculty may take advantage of this discretionary power to admit adults with potential to succeed on the basis of an assessment of their prior learning and experience.

Recognition of Prior Learning (hereafter RPL), in the form of various kinds of ‘alternative access’ mechanisms, has therefore taken place in a number of programmes at UCT over a number of years, particularly at post-graduate level. However, an analysis of current practices at UCT reveals that there are no clear procedures for conducting an assessment of prior learning and experiences. Much of RPL presently relies on the academic judgements of lecturers. This is likely to continue to be a dimension of RPL given the focus on making judgements about whether candidates’ prior learning and experience would enable them to succeed in an academic environment, rather than rigidly comparing performance against clearly defined standards. However UCT recognises that there is a need to make procedures more widely known and transparent, and to ensure more effective moderation of the assessment procedures and monitoring of student performance.

Recently UCT’s Council approved the establishment of a Centre for Open Learning[†]. UCT recognises that there are significant opportunities for expanding the use of RPL to enable access into post-graduate programmes, articulation from other types of learning pathways, and continuing professional development programmes or short courses. The HEQC is also requiring institutions to provide evidence of an institutional RPL policy.

To address the policy vacuum and to provide an enabling environment in which student access to UCT can be expanded through RPL, UCT has developed a comprehensive policy on RPL.

1. Definition

In the university context, the recognition of prior learning (RPL) is the evaluation and acknowledgement of the knowledge and skills that a candidate has gained other than through formal study to enable them to gain access to higher education even though they don’t meet the normal entrance requirements. This includes knowledge gained as a result of non-formal study, paid and unpaid work experience, community and organisational involvement, and individual inquiry. In the academic context, it is the acknowledgement that academically significant and socially useful knowledge is acquired through multiple formal, informal, and non-formal means. When evaluated through appropriate and reliable assessment practices, that knowledge can be used for purposes of academic access and accreditation. (For further information on varieties of RPL, and related epistemological issues which form part of the debate about RPL in higher education, see Section B).

2. Purposes of RPL

In the university context, the purpose of RPL is:

- To recognise and, where appropriate, grant advanced standing for the expertise gained by skilled individuals in non-academic contexts.
- To contribute to the holistic assessment and self-assessment of people entering onto a learning path.

[†] The Centre for Open Learning (CoL) is in the process of being established within CHED. Its purpose is to make the academic resources of the institution accessible to a wider range of participants, to enable the institution to become more socially responsive, to facilitate improved throughputs and student mobility, and to generate income for the university.

- To enrich the academy and the curriculum by facilitating dialogue across sites of knowledge and practice.
- To facilitate access to higher education and provide redress for historical inequities.
- To promote and facilitate lifelong learning.

3. Principles Governing RPL at UCT

- UCT is a broad institution with multiple forms and sites of academic practice. RPL practices for specific programmes must be context-sensitive and framed to suit those differing contexts where RPL is deemed appropriate
- The evaluation of prior learning is an academic task and, like other forms of assessment, is done by academic experts in a given field, drawing on other experts as needed. Academics make the decision on whether to introduce an RPL access route into a particular programme of study.
- RPL is based on a developmental model, not a deficit model of adult learning; it builds on knowledge and skills that adults have already acquired.
- RPL is part of UCT's broader commitment to be socially responsive to key social needs, and to significant constituencies in government and civil society. (See Section B: RPL and Curriculum Responsiveness).

4. Guidelines for RPL process

The assessment of RPL candidates and the decisions concerning their admission are the ultimate responsibility of the Deans in consultation with the heads of department to which they are applying, facilitated and supported by the Centre for Open Learning, and drawing as needed on the expertise of other units in CHED.

RPL processes at UCT will typically be located in one of two sites, and will involve the following procedures:

4.1 RPL procedures where learners' choice of programme is clear:

- Adult learners seeking alternative access to a specific programme of study will approach the Admissions office or a Faculty office and will then be directed to the appropriate programme leader.
- Programme leaders seeking guidance or assistance in developing an RPL assessment process will approach relevant staff in the Centre for Open Learning for support.
- The outcome of the RPL process, including a written report by the assessor(s), will be forwarded to the Head of Department concerned. The Head of Department is responsible for ensuring that quality assurance requirements have been met. (See Section 8)
- The final decision regarding the admission of the RPL candidate to a particular programme of study will be made by the appropriate faculty committee or dean.
- Appeals concerning RPL results will be handled consistently with other forms of academic appeal. In cases in which RPL candidates appeal, the department or programme will provide written reasons for the decision and an explication of the inadequacies in the evidence of knowledge and skill.

- For the purposes of record-keeping and quality assurance copies of initial RPL assessment documents will be stored in the Faculty Offices and annual reports on the number of people assessed and admitted should be sent to the Institutional Planning department at the end of each year.

4.2 RPL procedures where learners' choices are not clear or where courses are offered through the COL

Where potential RPL candidates are not clear as to what programme of study they wish to pursue, they should seek advice from the Centre for Open Learning. In the future, it may be possible for the CoL to take candidates through a portfolio-development and RPL assessment process before referring them to an appropriate department or programme of study and recommending acceptance, where this is appropriate.

5. RPL and Academic Development

RPL must be used in ways that allow students a reasonable chance of succeeding in their studies, and provide sufficient academic support and appropriate and supportive pedagogical interactions. (See Section B: RPL and Student support).

In the case of undergraduate programmes, candidates who intend to register for a degree may enrol for foundation courses in the formative disciplines in order to gain exposure to foundational academic literacy skills necessary for coping with the academic discipline. Students can register as occasional students for these courses and then design an assessment portfolio. Ideally these students should be tutored by people with knowledge and experience of adult education and RPL.

Candidates accepted into Postgraduate programmes may be required to follow an extended programme because of bursary requirements or because of the results of an RPL assessment conducted by the relevant lecturers. For example, in their first year of study candidates could register as occasional students for individually determined undergraduate courses and up to a maximum of one third of the postgraduate programme or they may be required to register for modules at other levels to address particular gaps that may have been identified in the RPL assessment process. Subject to satisfactory performance, in the second year of study candidates register for the postgraduate degree and complete the balance of the postgraduate programme.

6. RPL and Staffing

6.1 Opportunities for Staff development and training

Programmes and departments developing RPL processes are responsible for ensuring that academic staff have access to appropriate training and professional development, where available.

Administrative staff are often the point of first contact and the staff who help students negotiate the institution; they serve an important role in serving non-traditional students, including RPL candidates. Faculties should ensure that administrative staff involved in administering programmes with a significant number of adult learners have access to training (where available), designed to build their understanding of the needs of adult learners and RPL candidates.

6.2 Workload and Promotion Opportunities

RPL is recognised as an important and legitimate site of teaching practice and research. Academic staff who take the lead in such activities should be recognised as meeting teaching obligations and should be encouraged to publish research on their experiences.

7. RPL Assessment methodologies

RPL assessment methodologies include but are not limited to portfolios of evidence, interviews, demonstrations and simulations, observations, written and oral exams, letters of recommendation and

other forms of expert testimony, case studies, and documentation of successful past learning experiences.

RPL assessment methodologies should be chosen based on their appropriateness to a particular context, learner, discipline, and programme. They may be chosen by the individual assessor or by those in the leadership of the programme in question. While the choice of methodologies is ultimately an academic function, UCT recognises the importance of learners' input into the decision-making process. The choice and use of a given set of RPL methodologies must be consistent with the UCT principles of assessment more generally.

RPL practices should meet key criteria for validating assessment practices, and in particular: transparency, fairness, legitimacy, attention to unintended negative consequences, and feasibility.

Faculties need to ensure that mature learners admitted through RPL are provided with the necessary support to acquire effective academic literacy in English, and to providing students with opportunities to use their home languages as a tool for learning, and to scaffold access to disciplinary discourses. In some cases, it may be possible and appropriate for RPL candidates to demonstrate their learning in the principle language of their professional practice.

8. Quality Assurance

Quality assurance in RPL is multi-levelled and multi-faceted. It covers:

- Academics who assess potential learners for RPL should design appropriate assessment methods that will allow judgements of past learning in relation to the outcomes of the particular course/programme.
- Sufficient evidence should be collected to enable judgements of different kinds of skills and knowledge of the applicant in relation to the entrance criteria of the particular course in which the candidate is interested.
- The head of department should evaluate the recommendation of the lecturer/course coordinator by examining whether the evidence provided justifies the evaluative judgement made by the lecturer.
- The head of department should also ensure that the assessment methods used to arrive at any evaluative judgements were valid and fair.
- The faculty needs to ensure that there are mechanisms in place to provide educational counselling and advice for adult learners.
- A review of the quality management systems related to RPL needs to be incorporated into the scope of the Academic reviews where appropriate. This should include a focus on assessment methods, moderation, support for students, curriculum review, and staff development.
- An open and transparent appeals process, including the explicit detailing, when requested, of reasons for any negative RPL outcome.
- Continuous review of procedures for RPL and success rates of students admitted via RPL should be conducted by faculties and annual reports submitted to the Institutional Planning Department.

SECTION B:

CRITICAL ISSUES RELATING TO RPL

1. Varieties of RPL

UCT recognises that different approaches to RPL are appropriate in different contexts, and that within UCT, programmatic and organisational contexts will play an important role in shaping the RPL process. The form that RPL assumes is also shaped by its purpose:

RPL for access recognises prior learning that has prepared a learner to enter an academic programme for which he or she does not have the conventional entry requirements. In addition to the assessment of academic readiness and the identification of academic developmental needs, RPL includes recognition of the content knowledge the learner has gained in the area of study for which he or she seeks admission. In the short term, RPL will likely be used most often for access purposes.

RPL for exemption recognises that a learner has sufficiently mastered the content of sections of a course of study through prior formal, informal, or non-formal means and therefore will exempt those sections of the course of study and replace them with an equivalent number of alternatives.

RPL for advanced standing recognises that a learner has sufficiently mastered the content of sections of a course of study through prior formal, informal, or non-formal means and therefore grants formal recognition for that knowledge. In most cases, this form of RPL will be used for the purposes of admission to a post-graduate degree.

RPL for lateral movement recognises that many forms of academic knowledge and skill are portable and relevant across disciplines and that qualifications in one area may, with appropriate interventions, serve as entry into study in another.

2. Further details on principles of RPL

- UCT is a broad institution with multiple forms and sites of academic practice. RPL practices for specific programmes must be context-sensitive and framed appropriately to those differing contexts.
- If RPL is to be a vehicle for bringing students into UCT who will be successful in their studies, this requires that appropriate academic support be available, and that pedagogical practice and curriculum must recognise diverse backgrounds and ways of knowing
- The evaluation of prior learning is an academic task and, like other forms of assessment, is done by academic experts in a given field, drawing on other experts as needed.
- The revisiting of prior learning on the part of learners is a learning experience in itself. Given appropriate academic contextualisation and institutional structure, in the future RPL may form part of an accredited academic programme of study.
- The knowledge and skills reflected in successful applications for RPL contribute to the fund of human knowledge and thus inform and enrich the curricular, pedagogical, and critical practices of the academy.
- RPL is based on a developmental model, not a deficit model of adult learning. It aligns with existing UCT practices for opening access to tertiary study through alternative means and builds on the knowledge and skills adults have already acquired.

- In general, RPL activities will combine assessment of prior learning with the exploration of the relationship between academic and other cultures of learning and between formal and informal knowledge domains, and will typically be linked to the creation of a plan for future learning.
- RPL assessment methodologies vary within academic contexts and will be chosen based on their appropriateness to a given learner, circumstance, or field of study.
- RPL is part of UCT's broader commitment to be socially responsive to key social needs, and to significant constituencies in government and civil society.

3. RPL and the Curriculum

3.1 The Epistemological Challenge of RPL

UCT recognises that knowledge is created, organised, and utilised differently across disparate sites of practice and that negotiating the relationship between them is one of the challenges of RPL. The relationship between academic curriculum and professional practice differs across programmes and disciplines, as does the mix of theoretical study, application, and interface with the broader society. RPL provides the occasion to interrogate curriculum, test epistemological and pedagogical assumptions, and recognise both the foundational principles and changing face of academic inquiry.

In the university context, RPL is premised on the expectation that adults acquire and, indeed, create knowledge through a variety of formal, informal and non-formal learning experiences. Adult learners especially need an environment in which their prior learning can be respected, a space to explore and articulate that prior learning, an opportunity to explore the relationship between their prior learning and academic ways of knowing and guidance in developing an appropriate plan for future learning.

In RPL procedures in the university context, the assessment of knowledge, including prior learning, remains the domain of academics with expertise in a given field. Admissions decisions are made by faculty managers in consultation with appropriate academic staff, but guiding learners through the exploration of their own learning and the relationship of that learning to academic knowledge and discourse is an academic function. Academics will also take the lead in exploring the pedagogical and curricular possibilities opened by and through RPL, and in leading the epistemological debates that arise therefrom.

3.2 RPL and Curriculum Responsiveness

RPL participates in the on-going interaction between the academy and civil society. It recognises that this interaction contributes both to the university's knowledge-creation role, as well as its role of service to the broader community. RPL is an aspect of UCT's commitment to equity and redress and reflects its openness to a range of different forms of pedagogy and assessment. RPL recognises that the relationship between academic knowledge and the knowledge created in other sites of practice changes with disciplinary context or field of study, and can be the subject of healthy contestation.

3.3 RPL and Curricular Change

RPL processes that bring experienced adults into the academy provide the opportunity for mutual exchange across forms of expertise. Where appropriate, and depending on the disciplinary context or field of study, faculties and programmes may choose to create curricula tailored to such learners to accommodate and empower RPL learners whose self-worth may have been undermined in the past. Such curriculum-development provides the opportunity to revisit curricular structures and pedagogical practices created with school-leavers in mind and takes account of learning that has occurred in a variety of contexts. The academic exploration

of current knowledge in the field that RPL invites contributions, in turn, to the development of interdisciplinary and innovative programmes and research.

3.4 RPL as a Learning Process

Like other forms of assessment, RPL has a diagnostic and evaluative function. However, UCT recognises that self-assessment and articulation of one's prior learning, the creation of a learning pathway, and the exploration of the relationship between experiential and academic learning is itself a learning experience. Where appropriate, faculties and programmes will develop credit- or non-credit-bearing modules in which such assessment, self-assessment, and educational planning can take place. Even when not credit-bearing, such modules are more than assessment exercises but rather provide the opportunity to interrogate past learning experiences and explore the meanings of and possibilities for new learning.

4. RPL and Student Support

UCT is committed to the academic, intellectual and professional development of its student body, to the support mechanisms necessary for student success, and to the defensible use of resources as reflected in rates of through-put. RPL does not, therefore, exist in a vacuum. RPL mechanisms across the university must be embedded in broader structures of student support. These include a holistic assessment of learners' current levels of academic readiness; provision of appropriate opportunities for academic development (including language development), where needed; and support for portfolio-development and educational planning/advising.

Whatever their content knowledge of the field in question, learners applying for alternative access to higher education come from a variety of educational, professional and organisational backgrounds. Their preparation for academic work may be strong, they may have professional or organisational skills that quickly adapt themselves to academic contexts, or there may be a distinct gap between their content knowledge and their ability to express and utilise that knowledge in academic terms.

Evaluation of academic readiness and a plan for the academic development of such learners is therefore a legitimate part of the process of access. Such assessments, which seek to identify gaps in learners' academic preparedness, however, are not RPL as such. Rather, RPL mechanisms to assess and recognise the achievement of knowledge and skill are used along with assessments of academic readiness to develop viable learning pathways.

5. RPL and Academic roles

RPL affords academic staff the opportunity to develop their competence in the following roles:

- *Assessment:* It is a fundamental principle of RPL in the university context that assessments of prior learning are done by academics with expertise in the area being assessed. Assessors are thus drawn from the university ranks and from equally qualified colleagues in the field.
- *Advising:* Helping learners to explore and articulate their prior learning, become oriented to academic modes of communication and inquiry, and design learning pathways is an academic function.
- *Programme Coordination:* RPL is recognised as a site for programme development, curricular transformation, and innovations in learning and teaching.
- *Research:* RPL processes of assessment, development of academic readiness and curriculum transformation and innovation provide rich potential sites of academic research, and contribute to intellectual enquiry in the field of Higher Education development.

APPENDIX:

POSSIBLE SITES FOR RPL AND A PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

This section explores existing programmes, and potential new areas of provisions that could contribute to meeting social needs, and where RPL could help to facilitate access. The suggestions are based on the work of a sub-committee of the Centre for Open Learning Task Team, recommendations from a consultant, Dr Elana Michelson, who worked with the task team for a while and generated proposals for an implementation strategy and a list of possible opportunities for new RPL sites.

The following documents were analyzed to extract national and provincial growth and development priorities and needs:

- Ikapa Elihlumayo Growing the Cape (Provincial Trade and Industry Lekgotla 16 August 2003)
- National Critical Scarce Skills within the context of the HRD Strategy in South Africa – (report of an inter-departmental workshop)
- Framework Agreement on Growth and Development in Western Cape (November 2003)
- Towards 10 years of Freedom: Progress in the First Decade – Challenges of the Second Decade (produced by the President’s Office at the end of 2003)
- NEPAD Action Plans extracted from the NEPAD web-site
- Western Cape – Provincial Government Socio-Economic Review 2003: Western Cape Provincial Treasury
- Proposals for an Expanded Public Works Programme – (Unpublished report of 1 July 2003)
- A Framework for developing a human resource and skills development strategy in the Western Cape: A Final Report (Department of Economic Development, 2003)
- Unofficial report on “The Labour Market and Institutions of Human Resource Development” produced by Paul Lundall of the Development Policy Research Unit at UCT in 2003

1. Possible sites for RPL

A list of possible areas to explore for attracting adults learners to approved UCT programmes has been drawn up based on an analysis of the needs highlighted in the above documents. Access could be expanded by developing new courses or initiatives, or adapting existing programmes, in the following areas:

1.1 FET colleges:

The recent study of the HSRC on Human Resource Development in South Africa has highlighted the importance of increasing the pool of people with intermediate level skills, which are at the old artisan level. The FET colleges have a critical role to play in this regard but relatively little work has gone into equipping the staff in the colleges to design effective curricula. Staff could be drawn into specialized education or management programmes working in collaboration with the School of Education, the Commerce Faculty and the GSB covering topics like curriculum design/development, academic management, quality assurance, career development, understanding the labour market, identifying and developing demand led skills programmes, educator training via new ACEs specifically designed for FET for colleges and schools.

1.2 **Tourism and Heritage**

Specialized training in the field of tourism and heritage studies could be offered to the following groups drawing on expertise within the university. The area of tourism has been chosen because it is a growth area in the Western Cape economy. UCT has a lot of expertise, which could supplement existing forms of training in tourism offered by the Technikons and the FET colleges.

The following areas of expertise exist at the University and can be drawn upon to develop specialized training courses on eco-tourism for local tour guides, tour companies and international tourists:

- astronomy
- botany
- geology
- ornithology
- entomology
- archaeology
- palaeontology
- history (historical sites)
- social and cultural history
- social reconstruction
- drama
- art
- music
- theatre

1.3 **Clothing Sector**

The clothing sector is critical to the local economy but more and more workers are being retrenched due to the inability of the clothing sector to survive international competition. The government has set aside a large amount of money to explore ways of strengthening the sector. Several members of the University's staff have extensive knowledge of the sector and good networks amongst workers and employers. CHED has an agreement with the Clothing and Textile SETA to train facilitators. Therefore this seems to be an area where we could potentially build on our expertise and make a meaningful contribution to the local economy through developing and offering customized courses for different constituencies in the clothing sector. Courses could be designed for managers, designers, unionists, and employers related to various aspects of the crisis in the clothing sector and exploring opportunities for growth and development.

1.4 **Public Works programmes:**

The government has set aside millions of rands for expanding the public works programmes as a way of accelerating infrastructure development and providing jobs at the same time. Many of these jobs would be aimed at unskilled and semi-skilled workers and the government has expressed a commitment to providing skills training for such work. However, there is also likely to be a need for more high level skills training to be provided in order to improve the management, planning and costing of the programmes as well as the more technical aspects involved in designing the various infrastructure programmes in areas such as transport, roads development and water. UCT would be able to integrate management training with various aspects of technical expertise required in relation to public works.

1.5 Community Site-facilitators in the Health Sciences Faculty.

For the past three years, there has been an initiative under way in the Health Sciences Faculty to explore professional development opportunities to Site Facilitator Staff, who currently supervise health sciences students during their community-placement modules. The Site Facilitators are UCT employees. Thus opening up access for them to pursue further studies could be an important precedent and 'redress' activity on UCT's part. It could be funded through the Skills Levy since the students would be UCT employees. It might allow for the development of new curriculum initiatives organized around an innovative epistemological and pedagogical logic.

1.6 Industrial Health

The Industrial Health Research Group (IHRG) currently offers a range of non-certificated short courses to Health and Safety officers in industrial settings. If this provision were expanded, and made part of a formal, UCT qualification, there would be the potential for bringing in students from a variety of backgrounds, values, commitments, and social locations. This area of work could raise interesting issues about the relationship of science to other knowledges. Courses could be linked to Postgraduate diplomas in the Health Sciences.

1.7 MPhil in Housing Development and Management:

This is currently being re-designed. The faculty is trying to get World Bank funding for it, which, if successful, would mean that resources would be available.

1.8 Film and Media:

Opening up access to the Film and Media Studies programme would be a high-profile offering of UCT resources to an economic sector which is increasingly playing a significant role in local economic development. In this sector, community and media NGOs are already an organized grouping, and expanding this programme could open access to less well resourced people and a chance to enrich the student body with people who already have highly developed skills and alternative perspectives. A partnership with organisations in this sector would also offer the opportunity to place UCT's current students who want media apprenticeships.

If an RPL pilot was located here, it may be necessary to hire an additional staff member with the specific brief of working with adult learners. This would be an excellent site for some external funding. Companies could be approached and asked for the funding to support such a post. There might also be a chance to get funding from the MAPP SETA. Such an initiative might also act as a 'tap-root' to further study at postgraduate level, for example, the several post-graduate diplomas on African culture in the Centre for African Studies.

1.9 Other possible areas linked to the need to pursue equity imperatives, or skills development geared to growth and development priorities within the province

- disability studies

- construction economics and construction management
- property studies
- transport studies
- financial services/insurance management
- environmental and geographical sciences
- project management
- legal literacy and labour law
- gender studies

2. Proposed Implementation Strategy

2.1 Examine and perfect current practice

- Identify a current site of practice to be interrogated and transformed
- Conduct a participant research project on the current RPL practices and curriculum of that program
- Make needed changes in RPL practices, curriculum, and academic support
- Share findings with other sites of RPL practice and explore ways to apply lessons

2.2 Admissions and Registration

Formalise faculty admissions and recording-keeping policies and procedures in line with the institutional policy

2.3 Appoint an RPL coordinator in the COL

2.4 Initiate two pilot projects

- Identify two pilots, to begin in 2005.
- Fund-raise if necessary
- Interrogate curriculum and identify needed changes
- Liaise with AARP, Academic Development, Adult Learning Group etc.
- Design/Anticipate curriculum interventions
- Initiate a marketing and recruitment drive for potential adult students
- Admit first cohort of students
- Begin projects

2.5 Language, Multilingualism, and Applied Linguistics

- Liaise with the Centre for Applied Language and Literacy Studies in Africa (CALLSSA)
- Bring together a group of UCT academics to address issues of language, assumptions concerning academic 'deficit,' and RPL.
- Identify ways in which RPL and innovations in language research and policy can support each other.

2.6 Staff Development

- Design staff development opportunities for academics concerning RPL assessment, advising, curriculum implications, etc.
- Design staff development for PASS staff in faculties and the Admissions Office who may be involved in RPL
- Institute series of staff development activities
- Monthly seminars on RPL-related epistemological, pedagogical and curricular issues
- Develop and offer programme-specific Portfolio-Development and Educational Planning modules appropriate to pilot sites or else embed them in foundation courses in those programmes.
- Offer non-programme-specific Portfolio-Development and Educational planning course

3. Possible Funding Sources

Funding for RPL activities can be derived from the following:

- RPL candidates could pay a nominal assessment fee of R100;
- Where RPL portfolio development, educational planning and academic development comprise a course for credit, a standard course fee should be charged.
- Where external sources of funding are available, or where learners are not able to cover the full costs, an appropriate fee could be negotiated
- Where RPL candidates register for foundation courses as occasional students fees could be charged and the faculty can claim fee credits for these students. A scale of fees could be drawn up linked to means tests or whether external sponsorship is available
- Funding can be acquired through SETAs or from employers who can claim the money back if their skills plans include provision for the students studying at UCT
- Fundraising can take place for the specific purposes of supporting RPL activities, and for bursary support of RPL candidates.
- Funding for staff development within UCT can be claimed from the Skills Levy if these training activities are incorporated into UCT's skills plan.