

Manual to guide the Recognition of
Prior Learning (RPL)
by the CEM (2019)



CEM
Centre for
Environmental

Centre for Environmental Management

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The purpose of this document is to explain the recognition of prior learning (RPL) process at the CEM by means of frequently asked questions and answers.

1 Why the need to recognise prior learning?

Some of the CEM courses have entry requirements that need to be satisfied before an applicant can be allowed to register for the course. These entry requirements are based on knowledge and/or skills acquired prior to attending such a course.

2 Which CEM courses have entry requirements?

The following CEM courses have prior learning requirements and they therefore require the recognition of such learning prior to admission to the course:

- CEM-04.1.1 Environmental management system – lead auditor
- CEM-04.1.2 Environmental management system – internal lead auditor
- CEM-04.2.1 Occupational Health and Safety Management System – lead auditor
- CEM-04.2.2 Occupational Health and Safety Management System – internal lead auditor
- CEM-04.4.1 Legal compliance – lead auditor
- CEM-04.4.2 Legal compliance – internal lead auditor
- CEM-04.5.1 Compliance management system – lead auditor
- CEM-04.5.2 Compliance management system - internal lead auditor

3 Do I need to repeat the generic lead auditor modules if I am doing a second lead auditor course with the CEM?

Delegates who have successfully completed either of the following courses may apply for the RPL of the generic two days of training when the delegate wishes to enrol for the other course:

- CEM-04.1.1 Environmental management system – Lead auditor
- CEM-04.2.1 Occupational health and safety management system – Lead auditor
- CEM-04.4.1 Legal compliance – lead auditor
- CEM-04.5.1 Compliance management - lead auditor
- See the CEM Guideline: for the aligned presentation of the OHS and EMS and environmental compliance lead auditor courses, 2018 for more information.

4 May I attend an RPL-listed course without an RPL having been granted?

Applicants will not be registered to attend an RPL-listed course unless a written application was submitted the CEM requesting that the RPL be granted, and after such learning has been recognized.

5 How should I apply for any RPL?

Delegates wishing to enrol for any CEM course that is RPL-listed must submit an application in writing to the CEM requesting the recognition of prior learning (RPL).

6 What information must I submit to support my application?

The application must include the following information:

- The name of the applicant, with an ID- or passport number (for non-South African nationals);
- Contact details;
- The name and number of the course for which RPL is applied for;
- The date when the course is scheduled to be presented; and
- Eligible and objective evidence that supports the RPL- application.

7 What happens to my application?

The CEM Registration Officer must then:

- Receive and record the application;
- Inform the candidate that the application has been received;
- Collate the RPL application and screen it for suitability and adequacy;
- Request further or alternative evidence or information should the application not be acceptable;
- Schedule a meeting with the CEM technical coordinator to have the application reviewed and a decision made on the application.

8 What decisions can be made?

The Technical Coordinator may make any of three decisions;

- The submitted evidence meets the criteria and the RPL is granted;
- The submitted evidence does not meet the criteria and additional information is requested; or
- The submitted information does not meet the criteria and the RPL is not granted.

9 What happens if my application is successful?

The CEM Registration Officer must:

- Update the CEM's records;
- Inform the candidate of the outcome of the decision in writing;
- Where applicable, ensure that the candidate is registered for the course;
- Instruct Financial Administration to generate an invoice for the successful candidate.

10 What RPL requirements apply to which courses?

The following RPL requirements apply to the following courses:

For any environmental management system auditor course, prior learning in:

- ISO 14001-based management system and
- Environmental law.

For any occupational health and safety management system auditor course, prior learning in:

- OHSAS 18001-based or ISO 45001-based management system;
- ISO 45001 migration course should OHSAS 18001 be offered for RPL; and
- Occupational health and safety law.

For environmental compliance verification lead auditor course

- Environmental law.

10.1.1 What if an organisation makes a block booking for any on-site training of any RPL-listed course?

All the RPL rules defined in this document apply, should anyone wish to attend any of the RPL-listed courses offered as an on-site course. The onus is on the organisation to confirm that the identified delegates comply with the relevant RPL requirements. Evidence of conformity to the RPL requirements needs to be submitted to the CEM before any delegate can be registered for such a course.

11 What if an organisation located outside South Africa requires the delivery of an on-site course that requires RPL?

All management systems RPL requirements apply to organisations located outside South Africa. The requirements for gaining RPL in the applicable law may be waived upon request, depending on the nature and extent of the environmental law of the host country.

12 What if a foreign national working outside South Africa wishes to attend a public course in South Africa that is subject to an RPL requirement in environmental law?

Foreign nationals who are in a position to demonstrate conformity to the management system RPL requirements and who wish to attend a public course in South Africa may either:

- Apply to have the requirement for RPL in environmental law waived; or
- Provide evidence of prior learning in the law applicable in their home country.

Foreign nationals employed outside South Africa who have successfully applied for exemption from the requirements for RPL of the applicable law will sit for an 'international' examination paper that excludes questions related to applicable South African law.

13 What may be deemed to be eligible and objective evidence to support any application for RPL?

Eligible and objective evidence to support any application for the RPL include:

- Evidence of having successfully completed any recognised short course, such as a certificate of successful completion or the equivalent (see Box 1 for examples);
- Evidence of having previously covered the learning in any formal educational programme such as a degree or a diploma or a higher certificate, with an indication of the course content for which RPL is claimed (see Box 1 for examples); and
- Evidence of verifiable and attested experiential learning, such as detailed, written testimony by a line manager of exactly what the experiential learning entailed (see Box 1 for examples).

Box 1: Examples of eligible RPL evidence

Eligible evidence for claiming RPL for any management system course such as ISO 14001, OHSAS 18001 or ISO 45001 includes:

- The successful completion of a recognised short course that was offered by a recognised training service provider in the relevant management system of at least 16h00 notional hours of training. The description of the outcomes of the short course must provide for a detailed understanding of the standard requirements. The assessment grade achieved by the applicant must also be provided.
- Should the applicant have received training in the required management system as part of a formal degree, diploma or other tertiary qualification, a description of the duration of the training received in the management system requirements, details of the curriculum of the course and the assessment outcome of the delegate are required to support any RPL application.
- Experiential learning may be claimed in cases where the applicant is:
 - Not in a position to submit permissible and objective evidence of any training received,
 - Or
 - When knowledge and skills in the management system were acquired by means of a short course that does not meet the criteria set above.
 - The line manager of the applicant may, on a letter head of the organisation where such experiential learning was acquired, testify to the nature and extent of such experiential learning. (Please note that the experience gained in a particular management system needs to be detailed and the actual role of the applicant needs to be explicitly defined. Also indicate the time frame when the experiential learning was gained, as well as objective evidence thereof).
- In addition, only experiential knowledge and skills gained in ISO- or OHSAS-based management systems will be considered. General safety, health safety, environmental safety, food safety and quality-based experiential learning do not qualify

Eligible evidence for claiming RPL for any knowledge of applicable law

Eligible evidence for claiming RPL for any relevant knowledge of applicable legal requirements such as, but not limited to environmental, occupational health and/ or safety law, or law related to food safety, includes:

- The successful completion of a recognised short course that was offered by a recognised training service provider that covered the requisite profile of applicable law. The minimum duration of such a course shall be 16h00 notional hours of training. The description of the outcomes of the short course must provide for a detailed understanding of the legal requirements. The assessment grade achieved by the applicant must also be provided.
- Should the applicant have received training in the required legislation as part of a formal degree, diploma, certificate, or other tertiary qualification, a description of the duration of the training received in the field of law, the detail of the curriculum of the course and the assessment outcome of the delegate are required to support any RPL application.
- Should the training have been received more than three years prior to any application for RPL, the applicant must indicate what arrangements were made to stay abreast of any changes in the relevant legal requirements.

The End