



GOLDEN TIGER REALTORS | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Ending the Perpetual Candidate: Pathways, Mentorship and Work Readiness

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Abstract. Many candidate property practitioners never reach full status. They stall between entry and designation, earning little and often leaving the sector. This article examines the shift from logbooks to practical modules, the statutory mandate for recognition of prior learning, and the role of structured mentorship. It argues that access and standards can rise together if firms take ownership of candidate development, and that a competency-based route to full status deserves serious consideration.

1. The transformation mandate

Section 21(3)(d) of the Property Practitioners Act 22 of 2019 provides for a Work Readiness Programme to enhance participation of historically disadvantaged people in the sector. Section 21(4) requires the PPRA, with the Services SETA, to develop a special training dispensation for historically disadvantaged practitioners that includes recognition of prior learning (RPL). [1]

2. The problem

The "perpetual intern" is a well-known sector problem. Candidates without funding, academic preparation or a supportive principal can remain in candidate status for years. Because candidates are excluded from the PPRA CPD programme, they also sit outside the main structured learning system. [2]

The cost is felt most by historically disadvantaged entrants. Without full status they cannot progress, and without progression the sector loses exactly the practitioners transformation depends on.

3. The changing training landscape

- **Logbook replaced by practical modules.** The intern logbook ended on 1 July 2024. Candidates now complete a practical course of up to six modules over up to six months. [3]
- **One main route to full status.** Designation still largely depends on completing the NQF Level 4 qualification and passing the PDE 4 examination.
- **RPL under-used.** The statutory RPL dispensation offers a route for people with real property experience, such as informal rental agents, but is not yet widely applied.



4. GTR's perspective: support quality is the deciding factor

GTR's view is that the main variable in candidate success is the quality of support inside the firm. A qualification route without workplace support produces perpetual candidates. Any alternative route based on assessment alone would carry the opposite risk: practitioners who pass a test but cannot run a transaction safely.

GTR therefore supports exploring a competency-based route to full status, built on RPL and rigorous assessment, provided it is backed by structured mentoring and does not lower standards. Through its partnership with GTLA, GTR can support both routes:

Stage	Qualification route	Competency / RPL route (proposed)	GTR support on both
Entry	Enrol in NQF 4 Real Estate qualification	RPL assessment of prior experience	Values-fit recruitment and onboarding
Development	Workbook, assessments, workplace evidence	Gap training on missing competencies	Assigned mentor; monthly progress reviews
Designation	Qualification, then PDE 4	Competency assessment, then PDE 4	Mock exams; supervised transactions
After designation	Annual CPD	Annual CPD	Path to Higher Occupational Certificate: Principal

5. Recommendations for implementation

- 1. Set a time-to-designation target.** Aim for candidates to reach full status within a fixed period (for example 12 months) and track it per office.
- 2. Make mentorship formal and measurable.** Every candidate gets a named mentor with a written development plan, logged meetings and a sign-off checklist for the practical modules.
- 3. Use RPL actively.** Work with GTLA and the Services SETA to recognise prior experience of candidates who have worked informally in rentals or township property markets.
- 4. Engage the PPRA on a competency-based route.** Share GTR's candidate data and mentoring model as input to any policy on alternative routes to full status.
- 5. Pursue SETA learnerships and Work Readiness funding.** Fund stipends for youth candidates so that low early earnings do not push them out of the sector.
- 6. Open a learning track for candidates.** Although candidates are not required to do CPD, offering selected content early builds the learning habit before designation.



6. Recommendations for further research

- **Attrition drivers:** survey candidates who left the sector to identify the main causes (income, support, exams, cost).
- **Mentorship effect:** test whether formal mentoring measurably shortens time-to-designation.
- **RPL in practice:** document how RPL can be applied to informal property workers, and the evidence they can realistically provide.
- **Route comparison:** if alternative routes are introduced, compare complaint rates, transaction volumes and retention of practitioners from each route over three to five years.
- **Gender and youth:** track whether interventions increase entry by Black women and youth, in line with the PPRA chairperson's call that half of new transformation entrants be Black women. [4]

References

- [1] Property Practitioners Act 22 of 2019, s 21: Property Sector Transformation Fund.
https://www.acts.co.za/property-practitioners-act-2019/21_property_sector_transforma.php
- [2] Accounting Weekly (2025). Reminder of CPD compliance requirements for property practitioners.
<https://www.accountingweekly.com/trending-news/reminder-cpd-compliance-requirements-property-practitioners>
- [3] PayProp (2024). PPRA overhauls property industry training requirements. <https://payprop.com/blog/ppra-overhauls-property-industry-training-requirements>
- [4] Property Professional (April 2024). Still not enough transformation in the property sector.
<https://propertyprofessional.co.za/2024/04/29/still-not-enough-transformation-in-the-property-sector/>