CONDITIONS AND PROCEDURE FOR RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE IN DEGREE STUDY

Adopted based on subsection 15 (5) of the Higher Education Act, subsection 13 (1) of the Standard of Higher Education adopted by the Government of the Republic Regulation no. 62 of 11 July 2019, subsection 23 (4) of the University of Tartu Act and clause 12 (2) 10) of the Statutes of the University of Tartu. [effective as of 31 January 2020]

I. General provisions

1. The conditions and procedure for recognition of prior learning and professional experience (hereinafter: procedure) establish the conditions of and procedure for reviewing, assessing and taking into account of applications submitted for recognition of prior learning and professional experience (hereinafter: RPL) in the University of Tartu (hereinafter: university). Recognition of prior learning and professional experience in degree study aims to determine compliance with admission requirements and completion of the curriculum.

2. The university may fully or partly recognise formal study and continuing education completed in other institutions of higher education and other educational and training institutions, and knowledge acquired in the course of professional experience, everyday activities and leisure time as a part of fulfilling admission requirements and completing the curriculum, except for final examinations and graduation theses. Continuing education and knowledge acquired in the course of professional experience, everyday activities and leisure time can be recognised as completion of curriculum if there are courses with such learning outcomes in the University of Tartu.

3. In addition to the final examination or graduation thesis, the curriculum may specify subjects in which prior learning and professional experience is not taken into account. The extent of such subjects may not exceed 30 percent of the curriculum excluding the credit value of graduation thesis or final examination.

4. In case recognition as elective or optional courses is applied for subjects that have already been entered in a diploma supplement issued with a diploma certifying the completion of a previous study level, such courses can be taken into account as elective or optional courses in the value prescribed in the curriculum only in case the curriculum of the previous level of study was completed in a larger volume than the standard volume of curriculum. Subjects cannot be recognised as elective or optional courses in a larger extent than the part exceeding the standard volume of the curriculum of the previous level of study. There are no limits to the volume in recognising mandatory courses. [effective as of 4 September 2017]

5. To evaluate prior learning and professional experience, the vice dean for academic affairs of the faculty, head of the institute or director of college that manages the curriculum forms an RPL committee (hereinafter: committee) and appoints the chair of the committee and
determines the curricula whose compliance the committee will evaluate. The committee must include the programme directors of the respective curricula; the rest of the committee members are appointed from among teaching and research staff members. In the case of subject(s) and module(s) of another structural unit or cross-unit module(s), the evaluation of all the respective curriculum committees is requested and such evaluation will be decisive in making the decision.

6. In issues related with preparing the application and in curricula- or subject-specific RPL issues, counselling is provided by the structural unit who manages the curriculum. For that purpose, the dean of the faculty, head of the institute or director of college that manages the curriculum appoints RPL counsellor(s) in the structural unit.

7. The fee for reviewing an RPL application is established by the rector.

8. If the dean has not appointed a vice dean for academic affairs, the deans themselves perform the duties of the vice dean for academic affairs.

9. Head of Office of Academic Affairs is responsible for regular review of RPL principles and procedural rules and monitoring their observance.

II. Application

10. A person applying for recognition of prior learning and professional experience (hereinafter: applicant) submits an application to the vice dean for academic affairs of the faculty, head of the institute or director of college who manages the curriculum. A faculty council may establish in the faculty a procedure that limits the number of times a student may submit applications in a semester, provided that the student is given an opportunity to submit an application at least once in a semester.

11. The applicant presents documents certifying prior learning and/or professional experience and other materials with the application, except if completion of the course is represented in the university’s study information system. The applicant is responsible for the accuracy of the submitted documents and other materials.

12. Prior learning may be recognised without an RPL application if

12.1. the student candidate has fully completed a curriculum that is included in the committee-approved list of curricula of the university or other institutions of higher education, the content of which corresponds to the university’s curricula that are prerequisite curricula for admission to master’s studies;

12.2. the student wants to transfer courses completed on the basis of a study plan as a visiting student in another institution of higher education and previously agreed on with the programme director;

12.3. recognition of studies has been agreed in the joint learning cooperation agreement signed by the university and another institution of higher education;

12.4. the student is re-matriculated to a version of the same curriculum in which they studied before;

12.5. the student is transferred to another curriculum.

III. General principles of evaluation

13. The compliance of learning outcomes described in the application is evaluated with the learning outcomes of course(s), module(s) or curriculum the recognition of which is applied for. Evaluation of the compliance of learning outcomes described in the application is based on the assessment criteria of the learning outcomes of course(s) or module(s) the recognition of which is applied for.

14. A minor difference in the length of earlier studies and components of learning or in the form of assessment of learning outcomes is not regarded as a reason to refuse to recognise the course(s) or module(s).

15. The result of the learning through studies and work experience is evaluated irrespective of the method of achieving the result.

16. Acquisition of skills and knowledge obtained through learning in degree study, other organised studies and professional experience and in the course of everyday activities and
leisure time is evaluated in a comprehensive manner. Depending on the learning outcomes, the time of studying and/or working may be taken into account upon evaluation.

17. If the achievement of learning outcomes has not been assessed in the course of prior studies, in the course of recognition of prior learning the non-differentiated (pass or fail) assessment is used.

18. If the achievement of learning outcomes has been assessed in the course of prior studies according to an assessment system that is valid in Estonia at the moment of making the decision on recognition of prior learning, in the case of recognition of prior learning the result of assessment of the learning outcomes will not be changed and the student is not required to take a new examination or assessment. If the achievement of learning outcomes has been assessed according to another assessment system, the non-differentiated assessment is used for transfer of grades.

19. Assessment relies on sufficient evidence.

19.1. Evidence of prior learning is primarily a document certifying the completion of a course or module, and the syllabus or training programme, which describes the learning outcomes and the form of their assessment;

19.2. Evidence of professional experience is primarily the description work assignments (job description) and the description of skills and knowledge acquired with work experience, and the applicants’ evaluation of their work.

20. Depending on learning outcomes, the committee may demand submission of additional evidence (e.g. portfolio, Europass documents, employer’s letter of recommendation or references) or use other assessment methods (monitoring or imitation of work, conversation, etc.). To comply with the additional requirements, the committee appoints a deadline by agreement with the applicant. When reviewing the application, the committee is entitled to ask for an opinion of experts in the respective area.

21. Recognition of prior learning and work experience must be based on original performance, which is why it cannot be a part of a curriculum already recognised in the RPL procedure.

IV. Recognition

22. The committee reviews the application, makes a decision and informs the applicant of the decision in a format that can be reproduced in writing within 30 days of receiving the application. Applications submitted for completion of curriculum are not reviewed in July. Compliance with admission requirements is evaluated during periods specified in the admission rules of the university.

23. In the case specified in clause 20, the committee may extend the period of reviewing the application by up to 30 days from the date of complying with the additional requirement, by informing the applicant of it in a format which can be reproduced in writing.

24. The decision of the committee includes the name(s), credits, grade(s), and type (compulsory, elective or optional course) of the recognised module(s) and course(s). If the application is fully or partially denied, such decision must contain reasoning.

25. If prior learning and/or professional experience is recognised as completion of admission requirements, the committee sends to the admissions committee their decision confirming the applicant’s right to apply for the university’s curriculum (curricula) specified in the decision. The applicant is informed of such decision.

26. If prior learning and/or professional experience is recognised as part of the completion of a curriculum, the recognised course(s) and module(s) are entered based on the committee’s decision into the study information system in the faculty, institute or college.

27. The committee’s decisions can be appealed according to the procedure provided in the study regulations.

V. Implementation provisions

28. The conditions and procedure for recognition of prior learning and professional experience, adopted by the Senate of the University of Tartu Regulation no. 10 of 27 April 2012 and amended by the Senate of the University of Tartu Regulation no. 24 of 20 December 2013 and no. 17 of 19 December 2014, are hereby repealed.
29. The procedure will take effect on 1 January 2016.