

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

Student instructions

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)

The recognition and identification of prior learning is based on competence-based thinking. Competence is crucial, not how and where the competence has been acquired. Learning and competence can be fostered in different situations through both formal and informal learning or in working life. Students have the right to apply for recognition of their prior learning regardless of how it has been acquired provided that the competence corresponds to the learning outcomes for the degree programme courses.

As a rule, completed study courses accrued through the recognition of prior learning (RPL) do not offer credits that are considered valid for monitoring study progress by the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela). An exception to this is a situation in which additional proof provided as part of the RPL requires as much work as the course in question and the RPL may be considered as generating credits to be taken into account in the monitoring of study progress

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Students start the RPL process and consider whether to make use of it. However, the student is not alone in the process - they receive support and advice from their teacher tutor, study counsellor, degree programme co-ordinator or someone from the Student Affairs Office. As a rule, the RPL process is started at the beginning of studies in connection with confirmation of the Personal Study Plans (PSPs). As studies progress, it is possible to continue the RPL process.

Prior learning in formal studies is primarily evaluated on the basis of certificates. Studies previously completed and evaluated as part of formal study attainment need not be evaluated again. Although the completed study courses of previously completed higher education studies do not expire, competence-based recognition of credit may be considered.

Final-year theses are only accredited in exceptional cases. Such cases include a thesis already completed in the same degree programme (e.g. a transfer student who has completed a thesis in another university of applied sciences or a public health nursing student who has already completed the thesis in a nursing degree programme). Maturity exams may be accredited in connection with the recognition of credits for a thesis.

The evaluation of competence acquired through non-formal and informal learning is carried out in relation to the objectives of the study module or course to be completed. In these cases, the objective is to provide appropriate proof. Studies included in the degree granting eligibility cannot be directly accredited. This does not apply to Path studies. Path studies are studies that an upper secondary level student has already completed at a higher education institution while pursuing their upper secondary level degree, with the aim of improving their opportunities for gaining admission to a university of applied sciences (UAS), completing a UAS degree and reducing the time spent studying.

Studies that provide practical upper secondary skills cannot be directly accredited, but rather always require some kind of proof defined by the degree programme.

In the optional studies of a UAS degree, Centria UAS accredits a maximum of 5 credits of leadership training completed during military service. The basis for this is the leadership education provided in the Non-Commissioned Officer School or Reserve Officer School. The student must present a certificate and personal evaluation statement from the school. A total of 3 credits can be earned from the Non-Commissioned Officer School and an additional 2 credits from the Reserve Officer School. At the discretion of the degree programme, some of these credits can also be recognised as prior learning for core competence or profiling competence studies.

RPL PHASES FROM THE STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

HOW DO STUDENTS GET STARTED?

When starting their studies, students draw up a Personal Study Plan (PSP) under the guidance of their own teacher tutor. For this discussion, students familiarise themselves with the curriculum of the degree programme and assess their competence in terms of the course learning outcomes. Curricula can be found in the Study guide (<https://centria.opinto-opas.fi/home>).

In self-assessment, students can reflect on their competence using, for example, a scale of 1-4, where:

- 1 = the student is a beginner, possessing some knowledge on a given subject
- 2 = the student is at an advanced stage, where they may have tried applying their competence in practice
- 3 = the student is a problem solver, who is able to apply competence in practice
- 4 = the student is a skilled expert, possessing the competence to guide others on a given subject

Student self-assessments are used in the PSP discussion to support the identification of competence. If a student assesses their competence to be 3 or 4, they can discuss the possibility of the RPL with the teacher tutor. Students consider whether they will make use of the RPL and apply for recognition or identification of their prior learning.

HOW DO STUDENTS APPLY FOR THE IDENTIFICATION AND RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)?

Based on the PSP discussion, the teacher tutor provides the student with instructions on applying for an RPL. Students submit the application, to which they can attach documents as proof of their prior learning. Material that can be used as proof of prior learning includes:

- information on the successful completion of previous studies, accompanied by certificates. as well as any course/study unit descriptions of previous studies
- other certificates showing participation in studies
- certificates of employment
- an account of other personal achievements and skills that can produce competence related to learning outcomes

- copies of reports and documents produced
- copies of presentations held
- copies of other materials produced.

The teacher tutor always instructs students to submit the RPL application and documentation to the right party. Students submit their RPL application and documentation in accordance with the instructions they have been given, either:

- for less than six courses based on previous studies and submit the application to the teachers of the courses (RPL1 form and documents); or
- for more than six courses based on previous studies and submit the application to the teachers of the courses (RPL1 form and documents)
- If a student wants to demonstrate competence acquired, for example, at work, they must submit an application to the teacher of the course (RPL2 form and documents) and suggest a method for demonstrating their competence. The teacher of the course approves the demonstration method or proposes an alternative one for the student and agrees with the student on the demonstration of competence.

In all cases, recognition of credit is approved by the Head of Programme, and the recommendation for accepting or rejecting the recognition of credit comes from either the student counsellor or the course teacher.

HOW ARE STUDENTS INFORMED OF ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION OF THEIR APPLICATION?

The Head of Programme grants full or partial recognition of credit or rejects the application, and notifies the student of the decision in writing within one month of submitting the application. The accepted courses are shown as completed study courses in the PSP in the Peppi system.

If the student is dissatisfied with the decision, they may appeal it. If the student's application is rejected, they will be given instructions on how to file an appeal upon being informed of the decision. If the student is not satisfied with the RPL decision, they may file an appeal in writing within 14 days of receiving the decision.

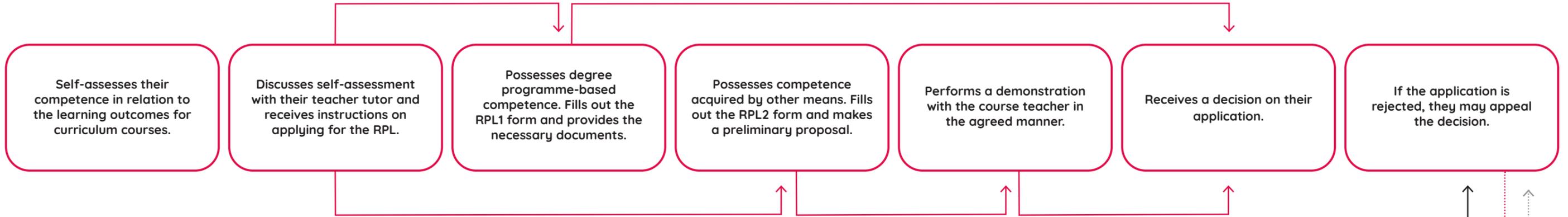
GLOSSARY

- Formal learning usually takes place in educational institutions, it is systematic in terms of learning outcomes, time spent learning or support provided for learning, and a certificate is issued upon its successful completion. Formal learning is purposeful from the learner's point of view. Non-formal learning is systematic in terms of learning outcomes, time spent learning or support for provided for learning. Non-formal learning is purposeful from the learner's point of view. In Finland, learning opportunities are typically offered by adult education organisations and workplace training.
- Informal learning is learning done in connection with daily work, the family or leisure time activities. Informal learning is not systematic in terms of learning objectives, time spent learning or support provided for learning, and certificates are not usually issued for its successful completion. Informal learning can be purposeful, but in most cases it is unplanned or unstructured. (Ministry of Education, 2007.)
- Recognition of credit refers to the acceptance of studies, practical placement, work experience or competence as part of a degree or course, for compulsory or optional studies.

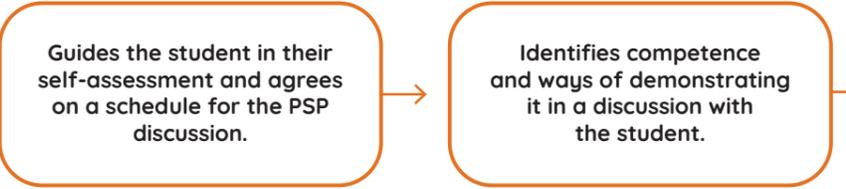
- Substitution is a form of recognition of credit, which refers to the substitution of studies completed elsewhere with similar content in the same field.
- Inclusion is a form of recognition of credit, in which studies completed elsewhere are included as part of the degree.
- Recognition is examined from the perspective of both the student and the higher education institution. Students strive to understand the competence acquired in different ways and structures it in relation to set learning outcomes so that they can describe and demonstrate their competence. The higher education institution evaluates the prior learning presented by the student in relation to set learning outcomes.
- Identification refers to the formal acceptance of prior learning acquired by a student. (The Council of Rectors of Finnish Universities (Unifi) and the Rectors' Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences (Arene), 2009.)
- Personal Study Plan (PSP).



STUDENT



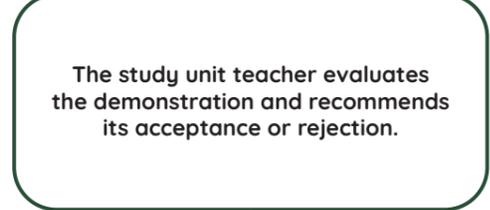
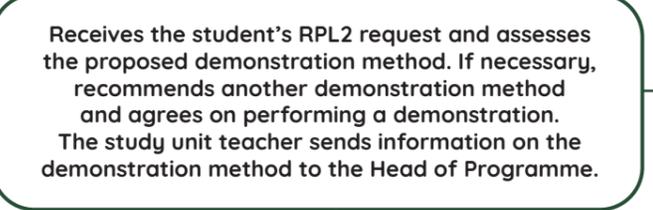
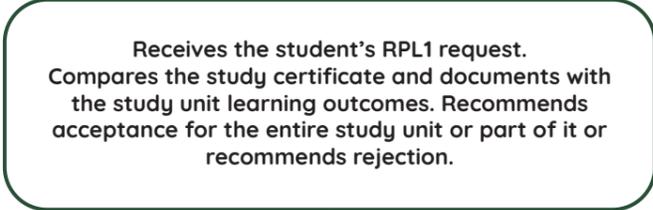
TEACHER TUTOR



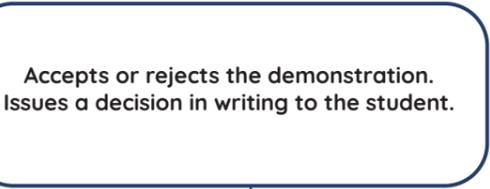
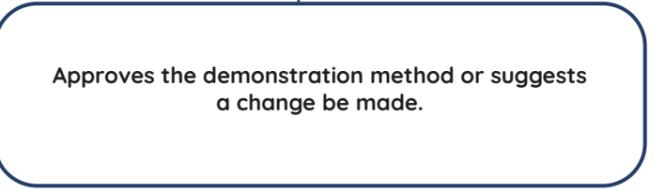
STUDY COUNSELLOR



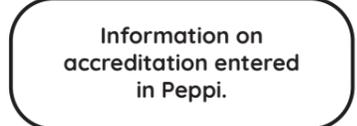
STUDY UNIT TEACHER



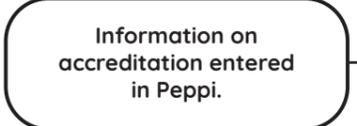
HEAD OF PROGRAMME



STUDENT AFFAIRS OFFICE



STUDENT AFFAIRS OFFICE



DIRECTOR (EDUCATION)

