

Principles of recognition of prior learning at Centria University of Applied Sciences

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1. Introduction

The recognition of prior learning is based on the student demonstrating competence that corresponds to the competence required by the degree to be completed. Recognition is done either by substitution or inclusion. Prior learning may include study attainments or other competence. Prior learning can be recognised in full or partially. The student must consider whether recognition is appropriate and apply for it. They must also identify to which Centria courses' learning outcomes their prior learning corresponds.

These instructions explain the principles and operating methods of Centria University of Applied Sciences in the recognition of prior learning (RPL). RPL may also be referred to as recognition, which is the term used in these instructions. These instructions explain the student the **principles of recognition** (chapter 2), how the **recognition is initiated and how it progresses** (chapter 3) and **partial recognition of prior learning** (chapter 4). **Other policies related to recognition** (chapter 5)

These instructions are applicable to the studies of students present in bachelor's and master's degree programmes. Recognition of prior learning does not apply to students who have registered as absent or to students at the open university of applied sciences.

2. Principles of recognition

What kind of competence do I need to apply for recognition?

- Prior studies at a higher education level (criteria below)
- Higher education level competence acquired in other ways (e.g., work experience or another form of familiarisation).

What kind of previous studies can and cannot be recognised as Centria courses?

- A prerequisite for recognising prior learning is that the studies have been completed at a higher education level (EQF/NQF 6 or EQF/NQF7). For example, upper secondary level studies (vocational upper secondary qualifications, further vocational qualifications, specialist vocational qualifications, general upper secondary school studies) cannot be recognised directly. Similarly, lower-level studies cannot be recognised as part of master's degrees.
- The previous study attainment may have been completed in a higher education institution located in Finland or abroad.
- The student's competence cannot be recognised as part of a course that has already been completed (assessed) or a course that has already been recognised (i.e., the study register may not contain any record of the course in question).

- Additionally, the student's competence cannot be recognised if their previous study attainment does not meet the learning outcomes of the curriculum of the degree to be completed.

What Centria studies can be recognised?

- When completing a **bachelor's degree**, the student may apply for recognition of prior learning for
 - courses included in basic and vocational studies,
 - courses included in optional studies,
 - practical training (field-specific differences may exist, ask for more details from your programme)
 - a thesis and maturity test in exceptional cases*
- and when completing a **master's degree**,
 - courses included in advanced vocational studies
 - courses included in optional studies
 - a thesis and maturity test in exceptional cases*

*Theses can be recognised, for instance, if the student has completed a thesis in the same degree programme at another university of applied sciences, or a public health nursing student has completed a thesis in the degree programme in nursing. Maturity tests can be recognised in connection with the recognition of the thesis.

How and when can I apply for recognition?

- Apply for recognition using the eRPL form in Peppi (with the exception of the recognition of work placements, in which case your programme will provide you with instructions)
- Students may apply for recognition at any stage of their studies
- You may apply for recognition once or several times.

Validity of previous studies

- The date (year of completion) of previous study attainments is irrelevant. Studies do not have an automatic or time-based expiration date.
- The only thing that matters is that the student's competence meets the learning outcomes of the curriculum of the degree to be completed.

Substitution

- **It is the primary form of recognition**, in which case the student's personal study plan is in line the structure and content of the Centria curriculum.
- The studies to be substituted are recorded in the study register **with the names and scopes of the student's current curriculum.**
- Substitutions **do not have a set upper limit in terms of number of credits.**
- One completed course may substitute for several courses in the degree to be completed, and correspondingly, the competence acquired on several completed courses may substitute for a single course.
- The scope of substitution is not only determined by the number of credits, but also by the equivalence of competence. If the student's previous study attainment is worth 5 credits,

the course may also be recognised as a more extensive course worth 6 credits, for example.

Inclusion

- In **inclusion**, a previous study attainment is attached as such to the student's degree with the previous attainment's name, scope and grade.
- The student has the right to include at least the number optional higher education courses specified in the curriculum in their degree
- Inclusion is possible if the student's competence corresponds to the learning outcomes of the curriculum, but the curriculum does not include any corresponding courses.
- Generally, 1 credit corresponds to 27 hours of work by the student.
- The Defence Forces' non-commissioned officer training (3 credits) and reserve officer training (2 credits) can also be included with a Defence Forces' certificate with a grade S/H (pass/approved).

Recognition of practical training

- Degree programmes have different approaches to the recognition of practical training because Centria's degree programmes and their practical trainings are different in nature.
- Each degree programme is responsible for a more detailed presentation of the practices concerning the recognition of practical training. The student may ask their teacher tutor, practical training instructor, student counsellor or the head of programme for more information.

Determining the grade:

- Your grade depends on the original study attainment (1–5, H or S)
- If the attainment has not been graded (1–5, H or S) by a competent body (e.g., authority, certified attainment) it will be graded S (pass). If the student wants a numeric grade, they must register for the course and agree on the grading with the teacher.

Documents proving competence (study attainments):

- The student must attach some of the following documents to their application for recognition: a diploma, a transcript of records or other official document (in Finnish and English) indicating at least the educational institution, the date on which the study attainment or document was granted, the name, scope and grade of the course. Also attach a description of the course's contents.
- In Finnish-language education, the student must present the original documents of their study attainments in Finnish and English. You can request certificates from your previous educational institution or have an official translator translate them for you (the student must pay for the translation themselves).

Processing time

- Applications will be processed without undue delay.
- The maximum processing time for the application is 1 month.

3. Initiating recognition and its progress

The student must carefully familiarise themselves with the recognition instructions

- In addition to the instructions, the student must familiarise themselves with the course descriptions and learning outcomes of their studies. Students receive instructions on the structure of their degree and the recognition practices at the beginning of their studies.
- The student must compare their previously acquired competence with the skill requirements of the degree to be completed and determine whether they meet the prerequisites for recognition of prior learning, i.e., whether their competence and the learning outcomes are in line.
- The student must ensure that they have a document as proof of their competence (e.g., a diploma, certificate of employment, etc.)
- **Please note:** First-year students will have a personal study plan (PSP) discussion twice a year with their teacher tutor. Other students will have it once a year. The PSP discussion is an excellent opportunity for the student to discuss the recognition of prior learning with their teacher tutor. In the PSP discussion, it must be ensured that the student knows exactly what studies they will have to complete after the potential substitution or inclusion.

The student must submit an application for recognition in Peppi (eRPL)

- Fill in the application carefully and according to the instructions.
- Attach any electronic documents on your competence to your application (e.g., a link to the study path, employment certificate).
- The application must include a description of the prior learning, i.e., the course description and learning outcomes (link to the study guide or provide the course description as a compiled document) or a description of the content of other competence.
- The student must also compare the description verbally with the learning outcomes of the relevant Centria course.
- In their application, **the student must determine whether they are applying for substitution or inclusion.** The student must know their difference.
- In their application, the student must mention the single course or several courses or other experience they deem to correspond to one or more courses included in their current curriculum (substitution or inclusion)

The person handling your application checks it

- The handler will check the application and any documents attached to the application submitted by the student (in Finnish and English).
- If the student's application is incomplete, the handler will ask the student to supplement their application by instructing them how the application should be supplemented.
- The more carefully the student fills in the application, the easier it will be to make a decision.

The decision-maker determines the equivalence of competence

- The decision-maker will check the content requirements of the study attainments submitted by the student and whether they are in line with the studies to be completed.

- If the prior learning corresponds to the learning outcomes of the studies, the student's application will be approved
- If the student has already completed the course or their prior learning does not meet the learning outcomes, the application will be rejected
- If the student's application is of "wrong type", i.e., the student applies for substitution instead of inclusion, or vice versa, the application must be returned to the student for correction. The primary form of recognition is substitution.
- The decision-maker will decide on the matter, and the student services will record the recognition in the student register.

The student receives the decision by e-mail – the student has the right to request a review

- The student will receive a decision on their application by e-mail.
- If the student is dissatisfied with the decision, they may request a review orally or in writing. The request for review must be submitted within 14 days of the receipt of the decision. The decision will be accompanied by instructions for requesting a review.

4. Partial recognition of prior learning

The above-mentioned instructions apply to cases where prior learning replaces an entire Centria course or can be included in your Centria degree. Your prior learning could also be partly but not entirely in line with Centria's learning outcomes. In this case, you will be eligible for partial recognition of prior learning. Partial recognition is appropriate if:

The student has competence that

- is partly in line with the content or scope of the curriculum/course to be completed.
- competence has not been proven/assessed (e.g., work experience, hobby, position of trust)
- the course has not been completed in a higher education institution (e.g., vocational qualifications)

Operating model in the above situations:

- The student should register for the course and participate in the first teaching session of the course
 - The student should explain the teacher what kind of relevant competence they have previously acquired (description and assessment of the course).
 - The teacher will determine when and whether the student should participate/turn in an assignment/take an exam to supplement/prove that their competence is in line with the learning outcomes of the curriculum/course
 - The teacher will assess the student's competence, taking into consideration any previously assessed parts.
- ⇒ As a result of the partial recognition and supplementary study attainment, the teacher will assess the student's competence and give them credits and an assessment.

5. Other policies related to recognition

- The Defence Forces' non-commissioned officer training (3 credits) and reserve officer training (2 credits) can also be included with a Defence Forces' certificate with a grade S/H (pass/approved).
- For valid card training (e.g., Occupational Safety Card, Electrical Safety Card, First Aid Card), prior learning cannot be recognised directly. If the training is in line with Centria's curricula, it can be partly included in the recognition of a course. Register for the course and ask the teacher how your competence could be taken into account on the course. See section "Partial RPL".
- Other card training programmes, such as the Hygiene Passport and the Alcohol Passport, are not in line with the Centria degree curricula and cannot be recognised as part of your studies at Centria.