



# PRINCIPLES FOR RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

**Rector's Decision on 5 February 2013 supplementing Section 33 in the Degree  
Regulations of the University of Jyväskylä**

## DEFINITION

Recognition of prior learning refers to the process of approving previous studies, internships, work experience or other competences as part of a degree, study entity or study unit in compulsory or optional studies.

Recognition of prior learning may take the form of substitution or inclusion. Substitution requires a correspondence between contents, and studies can be substituted fully or partially. Inclusion means that prior competence is accepted as part of the degree as such, in which case a correspondence between contents is not required, but the studies must meet the level of curriculum and correspond to the expertise required by the degree.

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Recognition of prior learning can apply to formal education (primarily in higher education institutions) and competence acquired outside formal education (e.g. through work experience or internships).

**Recognition of prior learning requires a correspondence between the prior studies or competence and the learning outcomes of the curriculum.** Prior learning should be recognised as fully as possible, but faculties do not have any obligation to recognise prior learning to an extent which, together with the studies to be completed, would substantially exceed the total extent of studies defined in the Government Decree on University Degrees. Recognition of prior learning may also require further demonstration.

*No more than half of the extent of a master's or bachelor's degree awarded by the University of Jyväskylä may be compensated by previous studies or competence otherwise acquired. The proportion of recognisable studies may, however, be greater, if they have been completed at a Finnish university and if a major part of such studies may be included in the degree. (Degree Regulations of the University of Jyväskylä, Section 33, paragraph 4.)*

The rule of maximal recognition of prior learning is not applied to degrees awarded by the joint degree programmes of the University of Jyväskylä.

Recognition of prior learning may be requested by students who have the right to study at the University of Jyväskylä and have registered for attendance. Students to whom the University has granted the right to complete studies as part of the degree within a limited time frame and content in the Open University or as separate studies may also apply for recognition of prior learning. The identification of prior learning may be performed along with admission counselling, but the actual recognition of prior learning will be realised only for students who have a valid right to study.

The identification of competence acquired outside of the University of Jyväskylä does not always lead to recognition of prior learning.

Theses must primarily be completed at the University of Jyväskylä. A study already accepted as a thesis for a degree cannot be recognised as such. However, this limitation does not apply to the theses of an international joint degree programme.

Language and communication studies completed in accordance with a curriculum of the University or any other Finnish higher education institution can be used to compensate the language and communication studies of another degree. If the other degree requires more compulsory language and communication studies or language studies in more languages, or they include other learning outcomes specific to the faculty, the student shall complete all language and communication studies which are required for the degree and cannot be compensated by other means.

If a student completes only a master's degree at the University, and no language or communication studies have been included in his/her earlier higher education degree, the requisite language and communication studies shall be completed.

Completed study entities do not expire. Faculties decide on the expiry periods of incomplete studies and study units. According to the Degree Regulations of the University of Jyväskylä, the University Language Centre decides on the expiry of language and communication studies.

Recognition of prior learning is regulated by the Degree Regulations of the University of Jyväskylä (Section 33). The faculties and teaching units of the University have the right to give instructions which further define the Degree Regulations and this decision in principle.

## **PRINCIPLES FOR RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING**

Studies can be compensated with studies completed at other higher education institutions. Recognition of prior learning based on studies elsewhere, such as at vocational institutions, can be approved only in special cases. Studies in extensive continuing education programmes which partially include university education (e.g. PD studies and the MBA and eMBA programmes) can be approved for recognition of prior learning case-specifically, considering the level and extent of the programme. Short continuing education programmes are mostly adequate for partial substitution. Incomplete polytechnic degrees are adequate only for substitution.

Studies already included or to be included in a university degree are not approved for substitutive studies, excluding corresponding language and communication studies. Parts of a bachelor's degree cannot be recognised for a master's degree. However, study entities which form a qualification can be included in the degree and they can be marked in the degree certificate even if they have been part of an earlier higher education degree. In this case, they will not be counted in the minimum extent of the degree to be completed.

For a postgraduate degree, it is possible to compensate those studies of a basic degree which are suitable for postgraduate studies and which the student has not included in the basic degree.

The inclusion of studies applies only to studies completed at a university, continuing education programmes included. As an exception, the degree can encompass supplementary specialisation studies completed after graduating from a polytechnic (university of applied sciences), or leadership training offered by the Finnish Defence Forces.

Studies completed at another higher education institution can be recognised with their original grades if the grading system corresponds to the grades at the University of Jyväskylä, or with the Pass grade.

## **PRINCIPLES FOR THE RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING WHEN COMPETENCE IS ACQUIRED OUTSIDE FORMAL EDUCATION**

Competence may be acquired outside formal education as the result of informal learning (continuing education, short in-service training, liberal adult education) or non-formal learning (work experience, positions of trust, hobbies). **The knowledge and skills learned through the experience are important, not the experience in itself.**

The student must verify the competence in a format in which it can be assessed. In addition to documents in writing, a demonstration of competence may also be required from the student.

Competence acquired by the student will be compared to the learning outcomes of the study units or study entities for which substitution is proposed. If the competence and the learning outcomes correspond to each other, substitution can be granted either fully or partially.

## **APPLYING FOR RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING**

The possibilities for recognition of prior learning are handled when creating the student's personal study plan (HOPS) and are discussed primarily with the HOPS supervisor. This ensures that substitutions are considered in personal study plans. It is recommended to apply for recognition of prior learning in good time before the start of studies to be substituted.

Students apply for recognition of prior learning with a dedicated form. The form shall include the following attachments: a certificate of completed studies and/or the transcript of records, and detailed information on the learning outcomes, extent, content and competence level (e.g. a copy of the study guide of the completed studies. Upon request, the student must present the original certificates.

Sufficient appendices (e.g. diplomas, testimonials, portfolios, learning diaries, publications and other reports in writing, or other documented proof of acquired competence) shall be attached to the form. In addition to these documents, the student must also describe the acquired competence on the basis of the presented material and compare it to the objectives of the studies being applied for.

In addition to the recognition of prior learning application, the student shall deliver a clarification on the extent of the studies or competence acquired abroad in terms of ECTS credits or workload, as well as the applied grading scale.

An application which, despite a separate request, is not supplemented by the above attachments is considered insufficient and will be rejected.

## **DECISION ON RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING**

On the basis of the material delivered by the student, the following occurs: approval of prior learning for study units, study entities or parts of them; request for additional evidence of competence from the student; or rejection of the application.

Additional evidence may be, for example, a skills demonstration test, demonstration lecture, interview, essay, portfolio with an oral presentation, or a written additional report. Competence may also be demonstrated with an examination for the recognition of prior learning. The examination assesses if the student already has the competence required by the learning outcomes of the study unit or study entity. One can register for the examination for the recognition of prior learning only once.

The decision on recognition of prior learning is made by a person named by the dean or the director of the independent institute or service department. These persons must be presented on the public website of the unit.

The decision on recognition of prior learning shall be made within one month from the date the application was handed in. Decisions on the applications handed in during June, July and August will be made by the end of September. The decision shall outline any possible additional evidence required and must give a deadline for providing it. The final decision will be made within one month from the date the additional evidence is submitted.

## **NOTIFYING, REGISTERING AND SAVING THE RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING**

The student is informed of the decision on recognition of prior learning and its basis by mail or to the email address supplied by the student. Notification by email is possible if the student has given permission for this method. The fully or partly accepted recognition

of prior learning is saved in the student data system including the name, location of completion, extent and grade of the completed study unit. The study units and entities compensated for are marked accordingly in the system. If the student provides additional evidence of competence through an examination, the completed study unit is registered as a study unit granted by the University of Jyväskylä. Only the name, location of completion and possible grade of a compensated entity is marked on the degree certificate.

Fully or partially accepted recognition of prior learning for competence acquired outside formal education is saved in the student data system with a marking that the credit completion has been performed through the recognition of prior learning procedure. Compensated study units and entities are visible in the transcript of records with a substitution mark. Study units or entities are mainly marked with the grade Pass. Recognition of prior learning is not marked separately on the actual degree certificate.

Students are also informed of the basis for a rejected or partially rejected recognition of prior learning by mail or to the email address supplied by the student. An email notification is possible if the student has given permission for this method. The decision also includes the contact details of the maker of the decision and information on submitting a request for rectification.

Recognition of prior learning decisions and their attachments are retained in the faculty for ten years.

## **RECTIFICATION PROCEDURE FOR A RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING DECISION**

If a student is dissatisfied with the recognition of prior learning decision, the student may request rectification verbally or in writing. The request for rectification shall be made within fourteen days from the receipt of the decision. The request for rectification shall be directed to the person who has made the decision. The request for rectification must specify in detail which part of the decision is referred to and on what grounds the rectification is applied for.

A decision on the rectification request must be made within one month from the date the request is issued. The decision shall be given in writing. If the student is dissatisfied with this decision, the student can submit a further request for rectification to the Faculty Degree Committee. The student may submit a further request for rectification within fourteen days from the receipt of the decision. The request for rectification shall be delivered to the University's Registry Office. It is not allowed to appeal the decision of the Faculty Degree Committee (the Universities Act, Section 84).

## **VALIDITY**

This decision is valid from 1 August 2013.

The expiry rule of completed study entities applies to students who request recognition of prior learning on 1 August 2013 and thereafter. Decisions made earlier than this will follow the regulations of the faculties, if the regulations are more beneficial for the student than this decision.

Rector

Matti Manninen