

**PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES FOR TRANSFERRING STUDIES AND LEARNING**

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# Introduction

While pursuing a degree, a student can, in accordance with the criteria given in the degree regulations, transfer credits of courses in Finnish and foreign institutes of higher education, or corresponding courses completed at other institutes of learning, and substitute degree studies and training with other courses of a corresponding level, or with corresponding training or work experience. In accordance with a decision by the University, a student can also transfer credits and substitute degree studies with learning demonstrated in other ways. (Section 14 of Government Decree on Polytechnics)

# Credit transfer

Learning that was acquired elsewhere before the start of studies, or during the right to study, are identified and recognised, and transferred as study credits in the manner specified in this guideline.

## The following concepts are related to the credit transfer procedure:

**Formal learning** usually occurs in an institute of learning and is organised in terms of learning objectives, time spent on learning, or financial aid received for learning, and students receive a certificate.

**Non-formal learning** means learning that is informal but deliberate on the part of the learner, and is organised in terms of learning objectives, time spent on learning and financial aid received for learning. This learning takes place in folk high schools and workplace training.

**Informal learning** means learning in everyday activities related to family or leisure time.

**Identification**

* From the perspective of student: Student aims to comprehend learning that he or she has acquired in different ways, and analyses it relative to his or her learning objectives so the he or she is able to describe and demonstrate his or her learning.
* From the perspective of University: The University evaluates the student’s demonstrated learning that was acquired earlier (or elsewhere during the study right) relative to learning objectives.

**Recognition** means the official acceptance by the University of a student’s learning that was acquired elsewhere.

**Substitution** is a form of credit transfer where required studies (obligatory study units and practical training) are compensated with studies of the same field that are completed elsewhere and have a corresponding content, or with learning that is demonstrated in another manner.

**Inclusion** is a form of credit transfer where studies completed elsewhere are included as part of the degree. (Can be applied to all studies)

## Stages of transferring credits

– student evalutes his or her own learning relative to learning objectives, and applies for the identification and recognition of the learning,

– the University evaluates the learning that was gained earlier or elsewhere, as part of the HOPS process (personal learning plan=HOPS), relative to the learning objectives and outcomes stated in the Unviersity’s curriculum or teaching implementation plan.

– if the student’s evidence (certificates, possible additional credits etc.) are accepted, the University recognises the learning by giving an official acceptance (grade or credit notation) for the student’s learning that was acquired elsewhere.

# Principles of credit transfer

In order to be able transfer credits of studies that have been completed at a Finnish or foreign institute of higher education, the studies must be related to, and be a part of, the degree such that overall learning in accordance with the goals of the degree is realised. The same principle applies to learning that is acquired in other ways. The same principles are also applied to degrees earned as adult education. The extent of the studies that are required after credit transfer is determined on the basis of a personal learning plan.

A student who is seeking a degree at Kemi-Tornio University of Applie Sciences can apply for the transfer of credits for studies (a study unit or part of a study unit) whose objectives or evaluation criteria are specified in the teaching implementation plan. The application/decision pertains to the entity being evaluated, which is recorded as a study credit.

Studies and learning that fulfill the requirements of level and quality are transferred only once. Transfer of credits for learning gained earler is generally applied for during the first academic year, however no later than the start of the study unit for which substitution is being applied. During your studies, it would be wise to apply for the transfer of credits for learning gained elsewhere as quickly as possible in connection with the updating of your your HOPS.

## 3.1. Learning produced by formal learning

Credits cannot be transferred directly for studies that are required for eligibility (comprehensive school or secondary school) in studies of a university of applied sciences. Exceptions are study units of university of applied sciences that are completed at upper secondary schools, vocational upper secondary schools and youth education experiences.

Credits can be transferred for study units of college-level education when the education has study units that correspond to the goals of the study programme of the university of applied sciences. Grades completed at universities, as well as university study modules completed at summer university, adult education centres, folk high schools and elsewhere can compensate for studies if their degree requirements correspond to the degree requirements of entities or entity parts of a university of applied sciences degree. An entire degree cannot be transferred.

If a person who has completed studies in an open university of applied sciences is admitted to the university of applied sciences as a degree student, credit can be transferred for studies completed in the open university of applied sciences based on the contents of each study programme.

A student can include studies from other universities of applied sciences and universities (including from abroad) that are outside of his or her own study field into elective studies; the purpose of these is to individ-ually deepen and expand the student’s know-how. The number of courses transferred into electives cannot exceed the number specified in the curriculum.

The maximum number of credits that can be transferred from a degree for officers and non-commissioned offers’ leadership training is 7 credits. The grade and scope of studies are recorded in the transcript of study record, as well as a notation indicating that the transfer of credits is based on a leadership training degree (degree/location where completed/date).

Credits of the studies of a transfer student coming from another university of applied sciences are generally transferred in full.

Language studies related to the study field cannot be substituted *completely* with languate studies that were completed at different fields of a university of applied sciences or institute of higher education. Mother tongue, second national language and foreign language studies are substituted with studies completed at other study programmes in so far as they develop overall language skills.

Special criteria are required for the substitution of a bachelor’s thesis with a thesis that is part of another degree at the university of applied sciences

The age and evaluation of earlier courses affects the transfer of credits. Studies that are more than ten years old are transferred only for justified reasons.

## 3.2 Learning produced by non-formal and informal learning

Verification of learning that is produced by non-formal and informal learning often requires a variety of steps for identification and recognition.

In addition to certificates provided by a student, additional demonstration is needed to demonstrate mastery of the theoretical background of the subject, for instance.

The following methods may be used, among others:

1. **Essay** is suitable for supplementing evidence of practical skills and/or demonstrating the connection between what you have learned earlier to the theoretical knowledge required by an institute of higher education.
2. **Interview** is suitable to be used along with other methods of verification. It supplements and creates additional information but is not suitable as the only evaluation method.
3. **Examination** can be either written or oral.
4. **Presentations and other demonstrations of skill**

A presention can be an oral or written demonstrations of skill; the presentation method, scope and content vary based on the goal.

Know-how can be observed in practical work situations, or situations can be simulated to correspond to the practical operating environment and job tasks.

1. **Learning diary**

Suitable for demonstrating what is learned at work. The diary can contain observations and experiences and can be used as a tool for self-evaluation and external evaluation, and parts of it can be added to a portfolio.

1. **Portfolio** is a traditional and natural way to show learning in many fields of study, and can be also be used to identify and show skills, including experiential know-how gained at work. The contents, scope and presentation method of a portfolio depends on its purpose.

When the additional demonstration is sufficiently comprehensive, the entire study unit to be transferred can be evaluated on the basis of the additional demonstration. All of the credit units of the course can be transferred as a course that entitles student allowance.

# International exchange

Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences follows the system of transferring credits approved by the European Union; therefore credits for successfully completed studies and training are transferred in full for the degree being pursued, if the courses are in accordance with a pre-approved study programme (Learning Agreement) or with agreed changes made to it later, and there is a transcript of study record given by the receiving institution showing the completion and academic performance of the studies. The transfer of credits can be refused only if the student does not achieve the level of performance required by the receiving institution or meet the requirements for exchange set by institutions of higher learning.

Grades of studies to be transferred are converted to the grading scale of the university of applied sciences as follows:

A = excellent (5), B = very good (4), C = good (3), D = satisfactory (2),

E = sufficient (1), FX = fail (0)

In some partner institutions, the grading scale may be expressed in reverse order. For example 1 = excellent (5)

In exceptional cases a course can be transferred with the mark of pass (HYV).

Study units that correspond to the student’s field of study but for which there is not a substitutable study unit/module are included as professional studies. The inclusion of studies into professional studies may require changing a learning plan, but the decision regarding the change is made by the education director/study programme director.

The scope of the completed study units is transferred in accordance with the certificate if the ECTS credits system has been used. If this is not the case, the scope of the study unit transfered is determined using the workload required for one credit unit stated on the certificate.

The education director /study programme director (=person who approved the Learning Agreement) approves the transfer of credits for studies completed abroad in a foreign exchange and they are written in the transcript of study record as compensated studies (K) or other (m) studies. The transcript of study records includes a notation saying that the transfer of credits is based on studies completed in an exchange institution (location and date of completion). Cases that are unclear and require judgement shall be discussed with the international co-ordinator and a decision shall be made in the student’s favor.

# Training and work experience that enhance professional skill

Credits can be given for practical training or work experience that are completed before studies begin as training that enhances professional skill. After verification, credits for learning gained through work experience can be given for something other than training. In the transfer of credits for training, the general principles of transferring credits for studies, and training guidelines, shall apply. Furthermore, attention is paid to professional development that is in accordance with goals of the curriculum of the training programme in question. The process of applying for transfer of credits for training is similar to the process of applying for the transfer credits for studies, but if a testimonial is necessary, it is provided by the person in charge of the training of the study programme. The application must include an employment certificate.

# Registration of transferred courses

Transferred courses are coded as follows in the transcript of study record:

k = Studies of the curriculum’s study unit have been substituted with learning gained elsewhere. The decision on whether or not the credits of the course entitle student allowance is made during the registration phase (K/E). Courses that are completed while one’s study right is in force are the substituting courses that entitle student allowance

m = Learning gained elsewhere is included into the student’s personal learning plan. During the registration phase, it is determined whether the credits entitle student allowance (K/E). Courses that entitle student allowance are those which are completed while one’s study right is in force.

# Procedure for transferring credits

1. The process of transferring credits begins when creating a HOPS (personal learning plan). The person in charge of the HOPS process reviews the principles and procedure of credit transfer with the student. In this discussion it is necessary to emphasise to the student that he or she is responsible for making the application, and for verifying studies or practical training.
2. The student applies for credit transfer by filling out a **credit transfer form.** The student shall attach certificates and other material which his or her application for credit transfer is based on. There is form specifically for applying for the transfer of credits for learning gained from formal education, and a form for applying for credit transfer for learning gained through non-formal or informal learning.

1. The student sends the form/forms including appendices to the person in charge of study guidance and the HOPS process; this person makes sure the form has been filled out properly and all required appendices are included with the form.
2. The person in charge of study guidance and HOPS process either recommends or does not recommend the transfer of credits with his or her own signature. If necessary, he or she talks with teachers of the relevant study units regarding the transfer of credits. If it is noted in this discussion that the transfer of credits requires verification of learning with evidence, the decision regarding these study units is negative, and the student is informed in connection with the decision with what teacher he or she needs to discuss regarding providing additional evidence.
3. For study units that require additional demonstration, the student shall make a new application and complete the agreed demonstrations for which the teacher gives a passing grade/certificate.
4. The student gives the application and its appendices to the person in charge of the HOPS process; this person forwards the application to be decided. The draft decision also includes recommends a grade for the study unit. **The assessment can be fail/pass only in exceptional cases.**
5. The person in charge of the study programme makes a decision on transferring credits and sends the documents to the student affairs office.
6. The transferred credits and their additional information are entered into the student register at the study field and the form and its appendices are archived until the student has graduated or quit. The processing of the application shall take no more than four (4) weeks. The student affairs office sends a copy of the decision, including instructions for appeal, to the student.
7. Appeal

A student can apply for rectification verbally or in writing to the teacher who performed the evaluation, or to the education director who made the decision on transferring credits, within 14 days of receiving notification of the decision. If the new decision is also not satisfactory, the student can apply for rectification to the board of examiners of Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences within 14 days of receiving notification. A written application for rectification shall be given to the student affairs office, which forwards it to the draftsperson/secretary of the board of examiners.