Policy on credit transfer for higher education courses including prior learning

Policy no. 3/11
Valid from 20/10/2011

This policy is based on:

- The Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100)
- President's decision 840/00, reg. no. 930-1356-00, doss. 50
- President's decision 270/03, reg. no. 930-2003-0624, doss. 50
- President's decision no. 1082/2004 “Deans of Faculty and Deputy Deans of Faculty of KTH’s nine Schools and their tasks relating to organisation of the Schools”, reg. no. 930-2004-2896, doss. 13
- President’s decision 361/05, reg. no. 930-2005-0480, doss. 10
- KTH rules of procedure, section 4.3.4
- President’s decision UF-2011/0576, reg. no V-2010-0518, doss 50

Background

Prior learning is a person’s acquired competence irrespective of her/his proof of formal credentials.

Recognition of prior learning in higher education concerns assessment of eligibility, general- as well as specific eligibility and credit transfer. It refers to education at first- and second cycle and to third cycle.

Prior learning is in addition to formal eligibility, an equivalent way to gain eligibility or obtain the competence corresponding to the higher education for which it is intended to give credit transfer.

In this policy the concept credit transfer is used with reference to recognition of prior learning, to other certificated learning and work experience. Guidelines for accreditation of eligibility to higher education is found in KTHs admission regulations.

In accordance with the Higher Education Ordinance, a student who has undergone a basic higher education with a passing grade has a right to claim a credit transfer for that course on a corresponding course at another higher education institution. The same applies to students who have passed a course in Denmark, Finland, Iceland or Norway or a country which is party to the European Council Convention of 11 April 1997 on the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education in the European region (the Lisbon Convention).

A student also has a right to claim a credit transfer for another course if the knowledge and skills cited by the student are of such a nature and scope that they mainly correspond to the
course for which a credit is to be claimed. A student may also be given credit for corresponding knowledge and skills acquired in a vocational or professional capacity.

The university will assess whether a previous course or activity may be accepted for the purposes of a credit transfer. The university will then take into consideration the aim of the course as a whole in accordance with established syllabuses or course plans. Only students or persons who have undergone certain commissioned education courses may be considered for credit transfer.

The Association of Swedish Higher Education has adopted recommendations to be applied by its members with regard to course credits for foreign courses and good practice in the granting of credit transfer. These recommendations are a supplement to the rules contained in the Higher Education Ordinance and form part of the basis for KTH’s policy on granting course credits.

**The President has resolved**

To adopt the following policy for credit transfer for higher education courses including prior learning.

**Policy**

The right to claim course credits is an important element for encouraging mobility within the country and between countries and the work on internationalisation carried out by the university and for lifelong learning.

KTH shall have an open approach towards granting credit transfer. It must therefore be possible to grant a credit transfer even if no exactly identical course exists at KTH or if the content of syllabuses, for example, does not entirely conform to those at KTH. The requirements that KTH normally imposes on the level and quality of the course must be taken into consideration in the granting of the credit transfer. Credit transfer may comprise one or several courses (also degree project), part of a course, or a specified number of credits. When a decision about credit transfer is made, the education cycle should be indicated.

When assessing prior learning, the knowledge and skills the student refers to, shall be examined so that the learning outcome in quality and compass mainly corresponds to the higher education for which it is intended to accredit. A student may also be given credit for corresponding knowledge and skills acquired in a vocational or professional capacity. Assessments concerning accreditation of prior learning shall be legitimate, just, legally secure and reliable.

Course credits granted by other higher education institutions in Sweden will normally be approved by KTH.

Students at KTH who carry out studies at another university within the framework of an exchange agreement have a right to a preliminary decision on credit transfer. A so-called
Learning Agreement should be drawn up and signed by a coordinator at KTH, a contact person at the foreign University and the student. This should include all parts of the planned studies during the exchange, also a degree project if applicable.

Students at KTH have a right to an assessment for the purpose of granting credit transfer and recognition of prior learning. Non-KTH students who have taken academic courses and want to supplement their academic education shall, as far as possible, have their applications processed and received in an advance decision (a so-called preliminary decision) regarding credit transfer.

In accordance with KTH’s rules of procedure, the Director of Undergraduate and Masters’ studies issue a decision on a credit transfer for an entire course. A decision on a course credit for an entire course may be delegated to a programme coordinator if the School has appointed such a person. The decision on a credit transfer for part of a course may be delegated to an examiner. Advance decisions (preliminary decision) are delegated in the same way.

Decisions on credit transfer may not be delegated further.

Applications for credit transfer must be processed as soon as possible and no later than within three months from when the complete application was received by KTH. Decisions on credit transfer for those accepted for later parts of an education programme at KTH will normally be made at the time of or in direct connection with the acceptance.

To enable a course credit to be assessed, the applicant must normally document the fact that he/she has been examined in a course (or similar) and has achieved a minimum of a pass. Correspondingly, attested documents of merits for recognition of prior learning must be presented. The study performance is graded by the higher education institution where the examination took place, not by KTH when assessing credit transfer.

The granting of credit transfer shall not be affected by the format of the course (e.g. distance courses, IT-based courses) provided that the study performance can be included in an examination at the higher education institution where the course was taken. The granting of credit transfer in regard to knowledge and skills in a vocational, professional or other capacity, shall in the same way be made unbiased.

Credit transfer for foreign courses should normally be granted even if the student, through a course in Sweden, fulfils the lower threshold for a general degree or for a professional degree. This is provided that the degree has not already been awarded.

Credit transfer may be granted for language studies if it can be proved that the level of the studies is higher than Swedish upper secondary school level and that the studies are in the nature of higher education studies.

Course credits must be documented in degree certificates with a clear link to the original document.
In cases of dissatisfaction with decision of disapproval, the decision may be appealed to the Higher Education Appeals Board. The appeal shall be sent to KTH within three weeks after the decision is received.

**Replaced policy**

Policy no. 1/00  
Valid from 04/12/2000  
Amended from 01/07/2005  
Amended from 30/08/2010