

Recognition of Achievements:

Study Committee Guidelines for Studiumplus for the Recognition of Extracurricular Achievements as Key Competences

1. Subject and Legal Foundations

This policy by the Studiumplus Study Committee serves to guide the recognition of achievements in studies and examinations that were completed outside of the University of Potsdam. The guidelines focus particularly on recognizing work from adult education programs and professional training, as well as degree programs at other institutions of higher education. The legal basis for credit recognition is Section 7 of the Study Regulations. The provision reads as follows (excerpted):

Section 7 Recognition of Achievements (1) Competences can only be recognized as key competences if they correspond to the module contents of at least one Studiumplus module. (2) Achievements that students have completed outside of the bachelor's degree programs at the University of Potsdam and for which they have documentation must be equivalent to the standards for studies and examinations at the University of Potsdam and will also be recognized in accordance with the criteria of the applicable framework regulations ... (10) Competences gained in external adult education programs can in exceptional cases be recognized as key competences if the provisions of Section 7 subsections 1 and 2 are met. The number of credit points shall be calculated according to the method used at the University of Potsdam. (11) Studies and professional training completed before enrolling at the University of Potsdam can be partially recognized as key competences if the provisions of Section 7 subsections 1 and 2 are met. ...

The guidelines are also oriented towards the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs decisions of June 28, 2002 (I) and September 18, 2008 (II) regarding the crediting of skills and knowledge acquired outside of the higher education system towards a university degree.

2. Basic Recognition Maxims

In general, the decisive criteria is whether or not extracurricular work is equivalent to studies or an examination at the University of Potsdam (see Section 7 subsection 2 of the Study Regulations). Equivalence exists if the extracurricular work, in terms of its type and content and subject, could conceivably be the subject of a course of studies or examination within

a degree program at the University of Potsdam. This is an assessment of abstract suitability, not specific criteria. The applicant must document equivalence by submitting relevant paperwork. The University of Potsdam is not obligated to perform follow-up research.

3. Study and Exam Credits That Cannot Be Recognized

In general, study and exam achievements cannot be recognized if they formed the basis of an admissions decision to bachelor's studies at the University of Potsdam. Portions of vocational training that led to a higher education entrance qualification also cannot be recognized in general.

4. Distinctions to be Made

Studiumplus achievements that translate into credit points are basically earned in the context of coursework. Work is to be graded insofar as there are no practical components in the sense of Section 12 subsection 3 of the Study Regulations, which can make up to 50% of credit points in Studiumplus. Recognition must take heed of these guidelines. We must therefore first determine whether the credit to be recognized should be considered a graded or non-graded achievement.

During the recognition process, a distinction must be made between practical study components in the sense of Section 12 subsection 3 of the Study Regulations and other achievements that are typically more theoretical in character. In the following, we must distinguish between such work that is done outside of academic institutions (see 5. and 6.) and in the context of study and exam credits earned at another institution of higher education in the context of academic studies.

5. Recognition of Study and Exam Credits Completed Outside the University

a) In general, the content of work completed outside the university must be classifiable to one of the fields of competence (Section 7 subsection 1 Study Regulations). Furthermore, the content of this work must be equivalent to work completed at the University of Potsdam (Section 7 subsection 2 Study Regulations). This relates foremost to the content level of the work. Appropriate documentation (study regulations, training regulations, certificates, etc.) must demonstrate that the level of achievement is comparable to that of university coursework. This is typically not the case for theoretical training sections in the course of vocational training. Moreover, we also require that the instructor or supervisor of the course possess a qualification that would qualify this person to work as an adjunct professor at the University of Potsdam or to conduct an internship. This must be documented sufficiently. The comparability of student workload must be clear from the submitted documentation.

These documents must allow the specification and calculation of a specific workload.

b) Graded achievements: Achievements that do not fall under Section 12 subsection 3 of the Study Regulations must be graded. This is why such achievements (that are not practical studies) can only be recognized if they are graded and the grading system is comparable to that of the University of Potsdam. Graded work that was completed outside of the University of Potsdam can therefore only be recognized if the degree of difficulty and the time required for completion correspond to a study or exam achievement at the University of Potsdam that is typically graded. The examination must be evaluated by a review who is qualified to work as a lecturer at the University of Potsdam. In addition, a transparent standard of evaluation must be applied that allows conversion to the evaluation standards in use at the University of Potsdam. Relevant documentation must be submitted to demonstrate this.

c) Practical Achievement Components: No grades are required for practical achievements. In the course of the equivalency review, however, we must ask whether the practical achievement could be completed in the context of an internship at the University, whether the level of the content is comparable. The practical unit must be contained both temporally and in terms of content. This must be documented sufficiently. Listing the dates for training in a business without any additional specific information does not fulfill these requirements.

6. Specific Case Studies

When establishing these standards, theoretical education in the context of vocational training often cannot be recognized as equivalent due to a lack of equivalence. For the practical portions of training, which can be ungraded and for which there is greater latitude for recognition, the question of recognition revolves primarily around the definition and unity of content of the training to be recognized, and the comparability of the qualification of the supervisor or trainer with internship supervisors in the context of degree programs at the University of Potsdam. For example, practical training from a master in the manual trades usually does not qualify for recognition. Adult education courses at community colleges or similar institutions typically cannot be recognized because the content of their courses does not compare with the content of university courses. Recognition can be granted as an exception if the course instructor could also work in the same capacity at the

University of Potsdam and the course content could be that of a course at the University of Potsdam. Language courses taken outside of the university have a special role because international standards have developed for their recognition.

7. Recognition of Study and Exam Credits Earned at Another University

Under Section 7 subsection 11 of the Study Regulations, study and exam credits earned at another institution of higher education can be recognized. First, special attention is paid to the classification of content into a field of competence (Section 7 subsection 1 Study Regulations). When determining equivalence, attention must be paid above all to the legal equivalence of the educating institution. If this is a state or state-recognized institution of higher education whose degree programs are comparable with bachelor's degree programs at the University of Potsdam, then equivalence is typically granted. This applies to study credits from universities and comparable institutions. Comparability can also exist with universities of applied science. This depends on the details of the program of study. In contrast, study credits from professional academies typically cannot be recognized due to a lack of equivalence. Other continuing education programs outside of state and state-recognized institutions of higher education generally do not permit recognition due to a lack of equivalence.