

# Instructions for credit transfer at first-cycle and second-cycle level

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This is a translation. The original document in Swedish has preferential right of interpretation.



**Karolinska  
Institutet**



## Instructions for credit transfer at first-cycle and second-cycle level

Introduction .....	4
Purpose .....	4
National rules on credit transfer .....	4
Credit transfer at first-cycle and second-cycle level .....	5
Assessment of the application .....	5
Who decides on credit transfer .....	5
Who can apply for credit transfer .....	6
Application for credit transfer .....	6
Application received .....	7
Supplementing the application .....	7
Processing time .....	8
Form of proceedings .....	8
Decision .....	9
Appeal .....	10
Documentation of credit transfers .....	11
Registration and archiving .....	12
Elective course .....	12
Contract education .....	12
Application with reference to previous decision on credit transfer ..	12
Advance notice .....	12
Prior learning .....	13

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## Introduction

Credit transfer means that a student's previous education or professional experience is recognised and considered equivalent to other education, which means that the student does not need to undergo further studies or tests for knowledge and skills that the student already has.

Instructions for credit transfer are a supplement to Chapter 6. sections 7–8 of the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100) and regulates the transfer of credits for higher education, other education and professional experience. The instructions are based on national and local rules, the decisions of the Higher Education Appeals Board and the Swedish Higher Education Authority's reports in the area.

## Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to describe Karolinska Institutet's (KI) application of national and local regulations on credit transfers.

## National regulations on credit transfer

Credit transfer is governed by regulations in the Higher Education Ordinance and practice from the Higher Education Appeals Board.<sup>1</sup> Since KI is a public authority, the Administrative Procedure Act also applies.<sup>2</sup> Only those who are students<sup>3</sup> can be considered for credit transfer.<sup>4</sup>

According to Chapter 6, Section 7 of the Higher Education Ordinance, a student has the right to be given credits for previously developed knowledge and skills. However, this does not apply if there is a significant difference between the knowledge and skills that the student relies on and the objectives of the education for which they are intended to be credited.<sup>5</sup>

The university must examine whether a previous education or professional experience can be accepted for credit transfer. The university must then take into account the intended learning outcomes for the programme in

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter 6. sections 7–8 the Higher Education Ordinance

<sup>2</sup> Section 1 the Administrative Procedure Act (2017:900)

<sup>3</sup> Who is a student is defined in Chapter 1. 4 of the Higher Education Ordinance, in this document "student" is used for persons who are admitted and pursuing education at KI.

<sup>4</sup> Unless otherwise stated in the Act or Ordinance, see Chapter 6. 8 § Higher Education Ordinance.

<sup>5</sup> Chapter 6. sections 7 the Higher Education Ordinance.

accordance with established course syllabi or programme syllabi. It is clear from the practice of from the Higher Education Appeals Board that the higher education institution must always consider the application.

## **Credit transfer at first-cycle and second-cycle level**

Programme directors and course coordinators are responsible for ensuring that there is clear information on the programme and course web about the possibility of transferring credits for previous studies and professional experience. The information must include who the student can turn to for supplementary information, who decides on credit transfer and whether there are specific documents that should be attached to the application. The student should be referred to the overall page for credit transfer.

### **Assessment of the application**

An application for credit transfer must be assessed against the course's intended learning outcomes based on established course and programme syllabi. An individual assessment must be made of the student's knowledge and skills in relation to the education against which the credit transfer is to take place.<sup>6</sup>

A generous approach must be adopted when considering the application. .<sup>7</sup>

### **Who decides on credit transfer**

Decisions on credit transfer are made individually by an employed staff member.

The examiner decides on credit transfer towards the course syllabus' objectives, i.e. credit transfer of the entire course or part of a course. Exceptions are degree project courses and elective courses within programmes where credit transfer is instead handled within the programme responsibility. Decisions at course level cannot be sub-delegated, however, the examiner may leave it to one or more other teachers to prepare decisions on credit transfer of an entire course or part of a course.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See the Higher Education Appeals Board decision 2020-11-20 (reg.nr 241-1742-20), unpublished), decision 2017-08-25 (reg.nr 241-559-17), decision 2018-05-02 (reg.nr 41-35-05).

<sup>7</sup> The Lisbon Convention and the Swedish Higher Education Authority's practice.

<sup>8</sup> Section 2.1.1.

It is within the responsibility of the programme to make decisions on credit transfer for a larger part of the programme, degree project and elective courses. The programme's programme syllabus contains information about degree objectives for programmes that are comparable to elective courses to be transferred.<sup>9</sup> Decisions on credit transfer at programme level<sup>10</sup> shall be delegated to individual officials. It is advisable that the examiner(s) of the courses in question participate in the preparation of the matter.

### **Who can apply for credit transfer**

Students at KI can have previous education<sup>11</sup> or work experience assessed for credit transfer.

### **Application for credit transfer**

A case about credit transfer is initiated by a student applying for credit transfer. Ladok should be used for the application. The student must attach documents to the application to prove previously completed education or professional experience. Ladok contains information about which documents must be attached to the application. The student is responsible for ensuring that the application received is complete.<sup>12</sup> The application can also be submitted in other ways, for example by text message, e-mail, post or verbally.<sup>13</sup> Both written and oral applications must be processed. The application should be submitted in good time so that a decision can be made before the start of the course.

For persons with protected identity, the application must be made on the form "Application for credit transfer". The case must be processed outside Ladok with regard to the protected identity and registered and archived with a confidentiality marking. The decision must be documented in Ladok.

When applying for credit transfer of education from other countries, the student must attach documentation to the application describing how the studies were organized, what was required for full-time studies, the division of the academic year, a detailed syllabus/course description, reading list, schedule, the number of credits of the course and the scope of the course in weeks and hours.

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<sup>9</sup> In addition to the programme syllabus, courses and components of courses must also be compared with the courses that are to be transferred.

<sup>10</sup> In this context, programme level refers to decisions on credit transfer of a larger part of a programme, degree project or elective courses.

<sup>11</sup> Also completed contract education with grades and with the same quality requirements as equivalent higher education (Section 7 of the Ordinance (2002:760) on contract education at universities and colleges).

<sup>12</sup> UKÄ (2021:23) Higher education institutions' handling of credit transfer cases – a guideline, p.23, 40.

<sup>13</sup> Such an application can advantageously be documented in Ladok by the administrator, with a comment on how and when the application was received. The processing can then continue via Ladok.

The student must arrange for the translation of documents written in languages other than Swedish, Finnish, Danish, Norwegian and English.

### **Application received**

Applications via Ladok are provided with the case number and date of arrival by the system. Applications via the form must be provided with the date of arrival and registration number. Cases must be processed as quickly as possible.

Once the application has been received, the case must be allocated to the correct administrator.

Checks must be made that the student has been admitted and is pursuing studies at KI in accordance with Chapter 1, Section 4 of the Higher Education Ordinance. If the student does not meet the requirements of Chapter 1. 4 of the Higher Education Ordinance, a decision shall be made to reject the application on the grounds that the applicant is not a student at KI

KI must provide clear information about what is needed for an application for credit transfer to be assessed.<sup>14</sup> The student is responsible for submitting documentation that supports the application.<sup>15</sup>

### **Supplementing the application**

KI shall investigate a case concerning credit transfer to the extent required.

<sup>16</sup> When a student initiates a credit transfer case, the student must participate as far as possible by submitting the documentation that the student wishes to refer to in support of a credit transfer. If necessary, KI shall, through questions or remarks, work to ensure that the student clarifies or supplements his/her application for credit transfer.<sup>17</sup>

KI must encourage the student to submit supplementary information, the last date to submit supplementary information must be stated.<sup>18</sup> The student must be given clear information about what needs to be supplemented, for example if it is a clarification or if/what documentation<sup>19</sup> is missing. In connection with this, KI must also inform that the case will be decided on the basis of existing documentation if supplementary information is not

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<sup>14</sup> Section 20 the Administrative Procedure Act.

<sup>15</sup> Section 19 the Administrative Procedure Act.

<sup>16</sup> Which means that the case must be sufficiently investigated.

<sup>17</sup> Section 23 the Administrative Procedure Act.

<sup>18</sup> Within 10 working days.

<sup>19</sup> Cited qualifications must always be substantiated with written documentation, such as grades or employer's certificates.

provided.<sup>20</sup> The last date to submit supplementary information must be stated. KI is responsible for making a decision on the matter even if the student remains passive.

### **Processing time**

A case must be processed as simply, quickly and cost-effectively as possible without compromising legal certainty.<sup>21</sup>

If KI assesses that the processing will be significantly delayed, KI must notify the student and state the reason for the delay.<sup>22</sup> The processing time shall not exceed two months from the date of receipt of complete documents.<sup>23</sup>

If the matter is not decided within six months, the student may request that KI decide the matter.<sup>24</sup> Such a request must be in writing and may only be made on one occasion during the processing of the case. If the student requests that KI make a decision on the matter, KI shall, within four weeks from the date the request was received, decide on the matter or reject the request in a separate decision. Such a decision can be appealed to the Higher Education Appeals Board.<sup>25</sup> If the appeal is upheld, the Higher Education Appeals Board shall decide to order KI to decide the matter as soon as possible or within the time determined by the Higher Education Appeals Board.<sup>26</sup>

### **Form of proceedings**

The processing must be in writing.<sup>27</sup> During the preparation stage of a matter, students have the right to provide oral assignments.<sup>28</sup> If the student wishes to submit complicated or extensive assignments, KI may request that the oral assignments be supplemented with written documentation. Information/s that are not a written document must be documented as soon as possible, if the information may be of significance for a decision in the case. It must be clear from the documentation when it has been made and by whom.<sup>29</sup> The information can be compiled in a service note.

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<sup>20</sup> 23 § the Administrative Procedure Act, JO's decision 2020-01-01, ref. no. 8498-2018.

<sup>21</sup> 9 § the Administrative Procedure Act.

<sup>22</sup> Section 11 the Administrative Procedure Act.

<sup>23</sup> 9 § the Administrative Procedure Act.

<sup>24</sup> Section 12 of the Administrative Procedure Act. In the first instance, the official assigned to the matter shall decide. If they are unable to attend, another person must be appointed by delegation to decide on the matter. The delegation decision should then also include a revocation of the previous delegation.

<sup>25</sup> Section 12 of the Administrative Procedure Act.

<sup>26</sup> Section 49 the Administrative Procedure Act.

<sup>27</sup> 9 § the Administrative Procedure Act.

<sup>28</sup> Section 24 the Administrative Procedure Act.

<sup>29</sup> Section 27 the Administrative Procedure Act.

## Decision

The application for credit transfer can be granted in full, in part or rejected.

The student must be notified if, and to what extent, the application is granted through a written decision.<sup>30</sup> A decision to reject all or part of the application must be clearly justified. The justification must contain information about the regulations that have been applied and the circumstances that have been decisive for KI's position.

The decision must state who made the decision, who was the rapporteur, and who was involved in the final processing without participating in the decision. The rapporteur is, for example, one or more teachers who participated in the assessment of the case. The case officer is involved without participating in the decision, for example by handling the communication of supplementary information with the student.<sup>31</sup>

The decision may be appealed by the person to whom the decision relates, if it has gone against them. A reference to appeal must be submitted with the decision. See also the paragraph on appeals.

Credit transfer of course(s) corresponding to full semester(s) courses within a programme does not mean that the student is given access to a higher semester.<sup>32</sup>

A credit transfer for a course in education, to which the student has not been admitted, does not entitle the student to follow other parts of that education. The student is only guaranteed to follow the regular course of study based on decisions on admission and admission semester.

### *Especially regarding refugees with inadequate study documentation*

"If a decision cannot be made, the following applies to a person who has a residence permit in Sweden as a refugee and who has insufficient study documentation.

The university shall, as far as possible, use knowledge testing as a basis for credit transfer. This approach shall be applied if the following circumstances can be invoked:

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<sup>30</sup> [Forms and templates in first- and second-cycle education | Employees](#)

<sup>31</sup> Section 31 the Administrative Procedure Act, Section 21 of the Public Authorities Ordinance (2007:515)

<sup>32</sup> However, some programmes provide the opportunity to apply on admission to the later part of the programme. For information about this, contact the programme's study counsellor.

- that when fleeing, documents have been left behind in their home country;
- that it is not possible to communicate with the authorities in the home country;
- that the archives in the home country have been destroyed;
- that the information cannot be disclosed for political reasons;

Information on previous studies shall be provided on honour and conscience and, if possible, certified by someone who is familiar with the circumstances.<sup>33</sup>

#### *Rectification of decisions*

If a decision on credit transfer has been dispatched or in some other way made available to third parties and contains an obvious error as a result of clerical errors, calculation errors or some other similar oversight, the decision may be corrected by KI.<sup>34</sup>

#### *Amendment of decision*

A decision on credit transfer can be changed before the decision has been dispatched. In order for a favourable decision that has been dispatched to be amended, one of the following is required:

- there is a readmission reservation,
- there are imperative safety reasons;
- The student has provided incorrect or misleading information in his/her application for credit transfer or<sup>35</sup>
- The decision has not gained legal force.<sup>36</sup>

A negative decision that has been dispatched can be changed.<sup>37</sup>

### **Appeal**

Decisions on credit transfer of education or professional experience may be appealed to the Higher Education Appeals Board.<sup>38</sup> The decision may be appealed by the person to whom the decision relates, if it has gone against them.<sup>39</sup> A reference to appeal<sup>40</sup> must be submitted with the decision.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions, Recommendations on credit transfer of foreign higher education in undergraduate education, Dnr 27/99, 200-03-24, p. 3-4.

<sup>34</sup> 36 § the Administrative Procedure Act, Prop. 2016/17:180, pp. 225-226.

<sup>35</sup> See Section 37 § 2 the Administrative Procedure Act.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. HFD 2015 ref. 73.

<sup>37</sup> 37-38 §§ the Administrative Procedure Act, Prop. 2016/17:180, p. 225-226.

<sup>38</sup> Chapter 12. 2 § the Higher Education Ordinance. The appeal must be addressed to the ENT but sent to KI.

<sup>39</sup> Section 42 the Administrative Procedure Act.

<sup>40</sup> Designed according to the guidelines that apply at KI.

<sup>41</sup> Chapter 12. 2 § the Higher Education Ordinance.

The appeal case must be registered.<sup>42</sup>

If an appeal is received against a favourable decision on credit transfer, contact [ursam@ki.se](mailto:ursam@ki.se).

### *Examination of the right time and submission of the documents to the the Higher Education Appeals Board*

When the appeal has been received by KI, KI must make a timely assessment<sup>43</sup>, after which the documents/appeal must be submitted to the Higher Education Appeals Board.<sup>44</sup> Please note that the appeal must be submitted promptly – which according to the Parliamentary Ombudsman is **within a week**.<sup>45</sup> It is the task of the Higher Education Appeals Board to assess whether other conditions exist for an appeal to be admissible.<sup>46</sup>

### *Should the decision be changed?*

Once the appeal has been received by KI, KI must examine whether the appeal has been received in due time, and also decide whether there are grounds to correct or change the decision. If the decision is changed, KI must also submit the new decision (amending decision) to the Higher Education Appeals Board. The amending decision must be submitted to the appellate court even if KI considers that the decision has been completely changed in accordance with the complainant's request. The appeal shall be deemed to include the amending decision, the appellate court shall decide whether the amending decision is considered to satisfy the appellant's wishes.<sup>47</sup>

## **Documentation of credit transfers**

Decisions on credit transfer are made in Ladok, except for people with protected identity. For these persons, a decision on credit transfer is made in a separate document and must be signed analogue or digitally. A template for decisions on credit transfer must be used.<sup>48</sup> The decision is then documented in Ladok.<sup>49</sup> KI must register the credit transfer in the study

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<sup>42</sup> 3.2.4, [Document management plan for Karolinska Institutet's documents, version 1.10](#).

<sup>43</sup> A review of the right time means that the administrator or decision-maker examines whether the appeal has been received in time, i.e. within 3 weeks from the time the complainant has been informed of the decision.

<sup>44</sup> For more information see <https://utbildning.ki.se/student-pa-ki/studentratt-och-studiemiljo/regelverk-som-styr-utbildningen-studentratt/overklaganden>.

<sup>45</sup> JO 2022/03 p. 359 and 46 § the Administrative Procedure Act. For instructions, see onh.se.

<sup>46</sup> Prop.2016/17:180 p. 267.

<sup>47</sup> 46 § the Administrative Procedure Act.

<sup>48</sup> <https://medarbetare.ki.se/media/128555/download>

<sup>49</sup> See manuals for Ladok.

documentation system as soon as possible after the student has been notified of the decision.<sup>50</sup>

### **Registration and archiving**

The application and decision are registered and archived in Ladok. For persons with protected identity, all application and decision documents in cases concerning credit transfer must be registered and archived with a confidentiality mark in accordance with the current document management plan.<sup>51</sup>

### **Elective course**

Assessment of credit transfer of elective courses is made against the objectives for elective courses in the programme syllabus.

### **Contract education**

Those who participate in contract education may be given grades and degree certificates or course certificates, if the same quality requirements are set for the contract education as for the corresponding higher education. This applies even if the participants do not qualify for access to higher education.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, a person who has completed and received a certificate from such contract education has the right to transfer credit for the education as a university education at first- or second-cycle level.<sup>53</sup>

### **Application with reference to previous decision on credit transfer**

Only the original education/equivalent, which the student referred to in the previous decision on credit transfer, can form the basis for the assessment of credit transfer at KI.

### **Advance notice**

KI has no statutory obligation to provide advance rulings on credit transfers. KI does not normally give advance notice before the person is a student at

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<sup>50</sup> 9 § the Administrative Procedure Act, Chapter 2. Section 3 Ordinance (1993:1153) on the reporting of studies, etc. at universities and colleges.

<sup>51</sup> [Document management plan for Karolinska Institutet's documents, version 1.10.](#)

<sup>52</sup> 6 § (SFS 2002:760) Ordinance on Contract Education at Universities and University Colleges.

<sup>53</sup> Section 7 of the Ordinance on Contract Education at Universities and University Colleges, Section 7 of the Guidelines for Contract Education (Dnr 1-315/2026) states that "A credit-bearing contract education shall follow the course syllabus (and any programme syllabus) established in accordance with KI's guidelines for the management of course syllabi that apply to first- and second-cycle education. The same quality requirements apply to contract education as to education at undergraduate or advanced level. All credit-bearing contract education must be documented in Ladok.

A person who has successfully completed a credit-bearing contract education has the right to transfer credits for the education as a first- or second-cycle higher education programme. As the quality requirements for credit-bearing contract education at KI are the same as for the regular higher education at first- or second-cycle level, participants with passing grades will have these courses transferred without further assessment."

KI. Advance notice can be given, for example, if a person plans to apply for a later part of a programme and does not meet the requirement of being a student at KI or before a student is to pursue studies abroad and plans to be able to transfer these credits upon return to KI.<sup>54</sup>

An advance notice can be significant for the student's ability to plan their studies, it is therefore important that the notice contains correct information about the conditions that apply for a credit transfer later to be possible.<sup>55</sup>

An advance decision on credit transfer is only a preliminary decision and thus not binding, which must be made clear to the student. Advance rulings must be documented and registered.

### *Exchange/study abroad*

Prior to exchange studies within an exchange programme and for studies abroad approved by the programme or course coordinator, a preliminary assessment (advance notice) of the possibility of transferring credits must be made.<sup>56</sup> This assessment must be communicated to the student. The preliminary assessment (advance ruling) does not constitute a decision on credit transfer.

In the application for credit transfer of exchange studies, the student must submit a certificate confirming completed studies, course or module with at least a passing grade.

### **Prior learning**

Students have the right to have knowledge and skills acquired through professional experience tested for credit transfer. Detailed documentation proving the claimed competence must be attached to the application.

*"Prior learning means the overall competence a person has, regardless of how he/she has acquired it and regardless of whether he/she has formal grades for it or not. Prior learning is tested in connection with a student's eligibility for a particular education and in connection with a person's request for credit transfer of education other than higher education or professional experience."<sup>57</sup>*

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<sup>54</sup> UKÄ (2021:23) Higher education institutions' processing of credit transfer cases – a guideline, p.39.

<sup>55</sup> UKÄ (2021:23) Higher education institutions' handling of credit transfer cases – a guideline, p.39–40.

<sup>56</sup> The programme director decides on credit transfer that applies to most courses or a larger part of the programme. The examiner decides on credit transfer of part of a course or an entire course. It is not possible to decide on the credit transfer in advance.

<sup>57</sup> Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions' recommendations for the work of validating prior learning in higher education 2023-03-16, ref. no. SU-850-0012-23

### *Processing and assessment*

In addition to the application, the student must attach an evaluation of how they consider themselves to meet the intended learning outcomes in the course syllabus. In the evaluation, the student must describe and justify his/her competence that corresponds to the intended learning outcome. The student should answer the following questions:

- Describe when, where and how you have acquired the knowledge, skills and attitudes that correspond to the intended learning outcome.
- Specify specific situations and/or tasks that make your knowledge, skills and approach visible.
- Describe the methods and/or theories you have used and justify why and state in which research/literature you find support for your reasoning and action.

If something is missing in the application, the student must be given the opportunity to supplement their application.

### *The process and assessment methods*

The processing and decision-making of credit transfer of prior learning shall follow the ordinary processing of credit transfer. The process below complements the processing of the application for credit transfer based on prior learning.

1. Students who have questions regarding the application for credit transfer of prior learning or the design of the application, should contact the programme's study counsellor or the course's education administrator/examiner.
2. The student submits the application including self-evaluation of his/her knowledge, skills and approach in relation to the intended learning outcomes.
3. The decision-maker decides whether the application, including the self-evaluation and appendices, needs to be supplemented.

### *Supplementing the application*

A supplement to the application can be made in writing and/or through a conversation/interview with the student. An interview/conversation with the student at the beginning of the case can give the student the opportunity to

clarify their self-evaluation. It can be an advantage to prepare the questions that need to be answered during the conversation. Based on the interview/conversation, the decision-maker can, in addition to supplementing the application, receive a basis for deciding whether and, if so, what additional assessment methods (references or subject experts) are needed to assess competence and make decisions in the matter. A service note is written after the interview/conversation and attached to the case.

4. The student submits the requested supplement.
5. The decision-maker decides on the basis of the complete application and, if so, what additional methods are needed to assess the competence and makes a decision on the matter. Below are suggestions for different assessment methods:

*Proposal for a method for assessing knowledge, skills and attitudes when applying for credit transfer of prior learning*

In addition to the application and self-evaluation, the following methods can be used to assess the student's knowledge, skills and attitudes in relation to the learning outcomes of the course syllabus.

*References*

Another way to assess the student's knowledge, skills and approach is to interview, for example, the manager of the workplace where the student has been working.

*Subject experts*

Subject experts can be hired to provide additional information to the decision-maker.

6. If new questions have arisen in connection with the assessment, a final interview/conversation with the student can be used to clarify these questions. However, the purpose of the interview/conversation should only be supplementation.

7. The decision-maker makes a decision on whether to approve or reject the application for credit transfer based on the overall documentation. If the application is rejected in whole or in part, a clear justification must be written in the decision.
8. Finally, the decision-maker writes a service note that is added to the case where there is a description of how the assessment was carried out and what methods have been used, and justifies in what way the documentation shows goal fulfillment. Assessment documents such as job notes from conversations with the student, previous employers, etc., must also be added to the case.