

Procedure for the Accreditation of Prior and Experiential Learning

1. General

- 1.1. The procedure for the accreditation of prior and experiential learning (hereinafter 'APEL') is established by subsection 15 (5) of the Higher Education Act, subsection 13 (1) of the standard of higher education, and chapter 7 of the standard of vocational education.
- 1.2. This procedure regulates the submission, assessment and decision-making regarding the accreditation of APEL applications, as well as the fees associated with application processing in vocational and higher education curricula at the Estonian Aviation Academy (hereinafter the 'Academy').
- 1.3. APEL can be implemented:
 - 1.3.1. to meet the admission criteria established by the Academy;
 - 1.3.2. during the completion of the curriculum to recognise credits acquired from previous studies (except for the final thesis and examination);
 - 1.3.3. during the completion of the curriculum to award credits for the knowledge and skills acquired during in-service training, independent learning and work experience (except for the final thesis and examination);
 - 1.3.4. to recognise in-service training fully or partially;
 - 1.3.5. when finalising vocational training, to recognise a prior passing result of a vocational examination as a passing result of the final vocational or professional examination.
- 1.4. In-service training and learning at work can be counted towards the completion of the compulsory and optional subjects and modules of the curriculum. In vocational training, a subject is the topic of the module in the implementation plan.
- 1.5. In addition to the final examination or thesis, the head of the curriculum may specify subjects in the curriculum for which accreditation is not offered for prior studies and work experience.
- 1.6. The application review process and assessment are free of charge for the applicant. There is no service fee for APEL credit transfers.
- 1.7. Prior studies are accredited without an APEL application if:
 - 1.7.1. the student is re-matriculated as a student at the Academy;
 - 1.7.2. the student wishes to transfer credits for subjects completed at another higher education institution as an exchange student, having previously approved this with the head of the curriculum;
 - 1.7.3. recognition of studies has been agreed in the cooperation agreement between the Academy and a partner higher education institution.

2. Application

- 2.1. A person applying for APEL (hereinafter the ‘applicant’) submits an APEL application in the study information system, indicating what they are applying to be accredited for as part of the completion of their curriculum (degree study subjects, in-service training, work experience). The student in in-service training submits the application to the in-service training general email address trainings@eava.ee. Applications may be submitted throughout the academic year.
- 2.2. The applicant is responsible for the accuracy of the data and documents submitted.
- 2.3. The applicant must append to the application:
 - 2.3.1. in case of previous degree study, the correct digital copy of the document certifying completion of the subject or module (diploma supplements, grade sheet, transcripts of academic performance) and description of the subject in which the learning outcomes and the assessment of these is described, if necessary;
 - 2.3.2. in case of in-service training, the document certifying completion of in-service training (certificate, transcript);
 - 2.3.3. in case of previous work experience, the document certifying working (in which the position and the duration of the employment is fixed) and the analysis of acquired skills and knowledge in accordance with the learning outcomes.
- 2.4. When processing the application, the Academy has the right to ask the applicant to submit additional documents or other evidence.
- 2.5. In case of applying for recognising credits acquired from studies in a foreign country, the applicant submits the Estonian ENIC/NARIC (Academic Recognition Information Centre) decision on recognising the document that is the basis for accrediting the studies, if necessary.
- 2.6. The APEL coordinator, appointed by the Rector’s directive reviews the applications and forwards the properly completed applications to the APEL approval committee (hereinafter the ‘committee’), approved by the Rector’s directive.

3. Assessment

- 3.1. The applicant’s prior studies and work experience is assessed and the decision is taken by the committee. The committee has the right to involve experts in the assessment.
- 3.2. The committee generally meets four times a year (in January, April, August and September) to assess applications. The committee has a quorum if at least half of the committee members are present. The exact dates of the assessments are published on the Academy’s website at the beginning of the academic year at the latest.
- 3.3. The following principles are followed during assessment:
 - 3.3.1. the assessment must ensure that the learning outcomes assessed under the APEL procedure are not at a lower level than the learning outcomes achieved with the conventional completion of the curriculum;

- 3.3.2. the assessment is not based on the experience itself, but what was learnt from the experience;
- 3.3.3. the assessment considers the relevance of what was learnt in relation to the learning outcomes of the subjects, modules or in-service training for which accreditation is sought;
- 3.3.4. insignificant differences in the workload and components of prior studies, studied topics or assessing the learning outcomes, do not serve as a reason for the non-approval of an application;
- 3.3.5. the assessment takes into account how current the content learnt was and the application is not approved if, following comprehensive assessment, the prior competencies can be considered outdated.
- 3.4. Similar to prior studies, in-service training may be accredited if the training was completed with an assessment of the learning outcomes. If learning outcomes were not assessed upon completion of the in-service training, the accreditation may be possible in a manner similar to the accreditation of work experience.
- 3.5. If the portfolio of evidence is not sufficient, additional evidence may be requested during the assessment process, while additional assessment tools may also be added, including a conversation or interview with the applicant, conducting an additional test, a test assignment or examination, etc.
- 3.6. If, in the course of prior studies, the achievement of learning outcomes has been assessed using a grading system that is valid in Estonia at the time of making the accreditation decision regarding the prior studies, then the result of the assessment of learning outcomes is not changed when accrediting the prior studies. If the achievement of learning outcomes has been assessed using another grading system, undifferentiated assessment will be used for the transfer of grades.
- 3.7. In case of applying for accrediting the courses completed in Academy's Massive Open Online Course, MOOC as optional courses, the assessment by the committee is unnecessary, as these APEL applications are confirmed independently by the APEL coordinator, based on the correct evidence.
- 3.8. The decision of the committee is protocolled, and the assessments are confirmed by the head of the APEL committee in the study information system no later than within 10 working days from the assessment. If the application is rejected in whole or in part, the decision must state the reasons.
- 3.9. Decisions related to the organisation of studies may be contested for in accordance with the regulation of the organisation of studies.

4. APEL quality assurance

- 4.1. The quality of APEL is assured as part of the overall quality assurance of the education at the Academy, taking into account the following:

- 4.1.1. the principles and procedures of APEL are transparent, clear and fair, and are applied consistently;
- 4.1.2. the information provided to applicants, advisers and the committee is clear and accessible;
- 4.1.3. all applicants are provided with the necessary advisory assistance;
- 4.1.4. the principles and procedures are regularly reviewed and compliance with them is monitored.
- 4.2. The APEL committee is formed for APEL quality assurance, on the basis of the Rector's directive in which the APEL head of the committee, assessors, coordinator and advisers are appointed.
- 4.3. The duties of the people related to implementing APEL are:
 - 4.3.1. The APEL head of the committee ensures that work carried out by the committee is in accordance with this procedure and APEL quality principles, ensures the availability of the training and informational events related to APEL and makes suggestions to upgrade APEL procedures, if necessary.
 - 4.3.2. The APEL coordinator ensures the availability of the information related to APEL in the Academy, ensures the efficacy of the committee's work, advises the applicant on preparing the APEL application, regularly reviews the applications and the additional documents, produces statistics based on APEL and makes suggestions to upgrade APEL procedures, if necessary.
 - 4.3.3. The APEL adviser ensures that the applicant is provided with professional advisory assistance and makes suggestions to upgrade APEL procedures, if necessary.

5. Implementation provisions

- 5.1. Upon the entry into force of this procedure, the "Procedure for the Accreditation of Prior and Experiential Learning" approved by the decision of the Council of the Academy on 30.08.2021 (Minutes No. 1-4/50) is repealed.
- 5.2. This procedure enters into force on 15 January 2024.