



TRANSLATION

Credit Transfer Regulations

for first- and second-cycle education and at
admission to third-cycle education
at Blekinge Institute of Technology

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Blekinge Institute of Technology

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I Background

BTH's Credit Transfer regulations should be regarded as a complement to Chapter 6, §§ 6-8 of the Higher Education Ordinance (*Högskoleförordningen*, HF), which regulates credit transfers of studies at higher education institutions, other studies, and professional activities.

The right to credit transfer is important for promoting lifelong learning, mobility within the country and between countries, and the university's internationalisation work. In both the study organisation and local regulations, the higher education institution should promote a generous approach to credit transfers, both nationally and internationally.

For example, credit transfer should be possible even if a similar course does not exist at the higher education institution or if the content of course syllabi and required literature lists from studies abroad are not fully in line with those of the student's home university.

It should be noted that international conventions (namely the Lisbon and Bologna Conventions) advocate generosity as part of increased mobility. These emphasise that a significance difference should exist in order for a credit transfer to be denied. In other words, this means that the burden of proof lies with the authority that makes the evaluation and not with the student.

Third-cycle courses and study programmes: The credit transfer regulations refer to possible credit transfers of studies or activities that have been carried out before admission to third-cycle courses and study programmes at BTH. Approbation of, for example, a third-cycle course which has been carried out at another higher education institution than BTH after admission to third-cycle studies at BTH is, at BTH, not regarded as a credit transfer in accordance with 6 Chapt. 6 § in the Higher Education Ordinance (HF). Education elements, for example a course that has been carried out after admission to third-cycle studies, are at BTH consistently regarded as an examination element where the individual third-cycle student's examiner for third-cycle studies has to make a decision regarding whether the element is to be included in the third-cycle studies and in that case to what extent it should be included, indicated in higher education credits (at BTH, examinations which form part of the third-cycle studies are graded with the grades of Pass/Failed).

2 Regulations

2.1 National regulations

In the Higher Education Ordinance (HF), the Swedish Government has issued general regulations regarding credit transfers for courses. In addition to these, BTH follows the recommendations of the Association of Swedish Higher Education Institution (SUHF)¹ regarding credit transfers for foreign education and good practice when conducting credit transfers.²

2.1.1 Examination of the right to credit transfer

Pursuant to Chapter 6, § 8 HF, the higher education institution is obliged to assess whether previous education or activities can be accepted for the purposes of credit transfer. Only a student or a person who has completed a contract education course or programme as regulated by the Commission (2002:760) on contract education at universities or higher education institutions can be considered for credit transfer.

2.1.2 Credit transfers for studies at Blekinge Institute of Technology

There are no specific regulations in the Higher Education Ordinance that regulate credit transfers for certain studies for another course or study programme within the same higher education institution. According to practice, students still have the right to have the possibility of such a credit transfer examined.

2.1.3 Credit transfers for studies at another higher education institution in Sweden

According to Chapter 6, § 6 HF, a student at a higher education institution in Sweden who has undergone higher education for which she/he received passing grades has the right to a credit transfer of these studies at another higher education institution. However, this does not apply if there is a substantial difference between the courses or study programmes.

2.1.4 Credit transfers for studies at another university college in the Nordic region

What applies under heading 2.1.2 also applies to students who have completed certain courses or study programmes (with a passing grade) at a university or equivalent educational institution in Denmark, Finland, Iceland or Norway. This also applies to students who have completed certain courses or study programmes (with a passing grade) at the Nordic School of Public Health.

¹The Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions.

² Credit transfers for foreign higher education - guidelines and good practice 1999-09-29

2.1.5 Credit transfers for studies at foreign higher education institutions

If a student has completed studies at a foreign higher education institution (with a passing grade), the student has the right to apply the credits earned, so long as the foreign higher education institution is a party to the Council of Europe Convention of 11 April 1997 on the recognition of higher education certificate in the European Region³ or if the higher education institution fulfils one of the following conditions⁴

- It is state-run, state-recognised or subject to state supervision
- It is recognised by a regional authority charged by the state with recognising education courses and study programmes
- It is recognised by an organisation charged by the state with the task of accrediting courses or study programmes or by a generally accepted accreditation organisation⁵

However, the possibility of a credit transfer does not apply if there is a substantial difference between the courses or study programmes.

If none of the above points is met, the higher education institutions should follow the Swedish Council for Higher Education's⁶ assessment of so-called "acceptable standards" in relation to the regulations for student finance with respect to certain countries.

2.1.6 Credit transfers for degree projects

No distinction is made between degree projects and other courses.

2.1.7 Credit transfers for other education and professional activities

According to Chapter 6, § 7 HF, the student has the right to receive credit for education other than the types referred to in Chapter 6, § 6 HF if the knowledge and skills cited by the student are of such a nature and scope that they largely correspond to the education to which the credit transfer is intended to apply. A student may also receive credit for equivalent knowledge and skills acquired in professional activities.

³ Sweden's Treaties and International Agreements (SÖ) 2001:46

⁴ The Statute Book of the Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHRFS) 2013:10

⁵ <http://www.iau-aiu.net/onlinedatabases/list.html>

⁶ The Statute Book of the Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHRFS) 2013:10

2.1.8 Definition of a student

Chapter 1, § 4 HF states that the term “student” refers to the person admitted to and pursuing a higher education. “Doctoral student” refers to a student who is admitted to and pursuing third-cycle studies, if nothing else is specifically stated.

2.1.9 Grades for credit transfers for full courses or modules/examination elements

Study performance is graded by the examining higher education institution, not by the higher education institution that approves the credit transfer. This means that the course/course module/examination element whose credits transferred to Blekinge University of Technology should not be graded. In cases where a student has had a credit transfer approved for part of a course based on her or his knowledge/skills and a final grade is to be assigned for the course, the examiner decides how the credited part(s) should be evaluated.

2.1.10 Credit transfers decided by another higher education institution

Credit transfers at another higher education institution must normally be approved. However, these decisions shall not be accepted by BTH if they are based on evaluations that are substantially different from those normally applicable at BTH.

2.1.11 The right to appeal

According to Chapter 12, 2 § HF, decisions regarding the transfer of credits for education or professional activities may be appealed to the Higher Education Appeals Board (Överklagandenämnden för högskolan, ÖNH). The appeal is to be addressed to ÖNH but sent to BTH.

2.2 Local regulations

2.2.1 Students with insufficient study documentation

For individuals who, for special reasons, have insufficient study documentation, the higher education institution shall, as far as possible, use knowledge testing as a basis for credit transfer. Special reasons can be that while fleeing her/his country of origin, the student left documents in that country, that the documents have been destroyed, that information cannot be verified by the authorities of the student’s country of origin, or that information about the documents is not disclosed for political reasons.

2.2.2 Exchange students and students within a collaboration

For students in an exchange programme, a prior assessment of the credit transfer, a so-called “Learning Agreement”, is part of the decision on exchange studies and must therefore be done in advance.

Any change to an existing Learning Agreement must be approved by all parties⁷ in order to guarantee a credit transfer upon the student’s return.

For students reading a course package within the framework of a collaboration with partner universities, the prior assessment of the credit transfer, a so-called “Plan for Qualification”, is part of the decision and must therefore be established before studies at BTH begin.

For courses at a foreign university, these must correspond to the Swedish higher education level and be defined in credits, education level, and subject and accepted by all parties before the start of the studies.

2.2.3 Calculation of study period in the event of a credit transfer

If there is a system at the foreign university to express the extent of studies in terms of study period, that system must be used for conversion into Swedish credits.

ECTS credits must always be accepted as a common conversion factor.

If concepts about normal study period does not exist, a calculation of the reasonable number of credits for a semester or an academic year is made by calculating credits as part of the total credits for the degree. If the calculation results in partial credits, the total is rounded up to the nearest whole number.

2.2.4 Time limit

The application for credit transfer must be dealt with expeditiously in accordance with § 7 of the Administrative Procedure Act, and a decision must normally be taken no later than two months after the full application has been received. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the application is complete.

⁷ “All parties” refers to the International Director, the Programme Manager at BTH, the student, and a qualified person at the receiving higher education institution.



2.2.5 Documentation in Ladok

A credit transfer granted at BTH must always be documented in Ladok and the level and number of credits must be determined and specified. The basis for the credit transfer must also always be documented.

2.2.6 Credit transfers from previous studies to third-cycle education

For each doctoral student admitted to third-cycle education, the dean who renders this decision appoints an examiner for the entire length of study. This examiner is the one who makes a decision on the individual doctoral student's application for credit transfer from previous education or activities. The examiner must indicate in her/his decision whether and to what extent (expressed in credits) previous education or experience should be applied as a credit transfer to current third-cycle studies.

In the event of rejection or partial approval, the decision must include the examiner's justification and a reference to the appeals process.

3 Applications for credit transfer

First- and second-cycle students:

The application for credit transfer is made through the Student Portal and is handled and decided in BTH's service request system.

Doctoral students:

The application for credit transfer is made using the specified form, which is available via BTH's website. The application is sent to the registrar at BTH.

4 Credit transfer decisions

First-and second-cycle level:

- The International Director decides on credit transfers for studies within the context of exchange programmes or the Qualification Plan.⁸
- The person responsible for the main field of study decides on credit transfers within his or her main field of study.
- The Head of Department decides on credit transfers in the subjects that are offered at BTH but that do not fall within a main field of study.
- The deans jointly decide on credit transfers for the courses belonging to the programme organisation.

In all credit transfer cases, the decision-maker appoints a rapporteur.

The decision-maker must have academic competens.⁹

Where an application for credit transfer relates to a subject not offered at BTH, the deans jointly decide whether the case can be examined.

The decision is communicated to the student by e-mail via BTH's service request system.

Decisions to grant a credit transfer are documented and certified in Ladok by BTH's Credit Transfer Officer.

Third-cycle level:

Decisions are made by the examiner assigned to the individual doctoral student. The decision is communicated to the student by e-mail from the BTH Registrar's Office.

⁸ In cases where the credit transfer follows a signed Learning Agreement or an established BQP/MQP, the International Director delegates the right to make a decision on credit transfers in her/his name to the degree officer.

⁹Normally, "academic competens" means that a person has a PhD.



5 Appeals

A decision to reject the student's application for credit transfer can be appealed by the student to the Higher Education Appeals Board (*Överklagandenämnden för högskolan, ÖNH*). The appeal is to be submitted to Registrar Blekinge Institute of Technology, 371 79 Karlskrona (or by e-mail to registrator@bth.se) within three weeks of the date on which the applicant received the decision.

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