

Conditions and Regulations of Recognition of Prior Learning

Adopted based on the Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act paragraph 9, section 4, point 5¹, paragraph 12¹ section 2, Standard of Higher Education, paragraph 12 section 1 and paragraph 13, and the Statutes of the Institute of Theology paragraph 16, section 7.

I. General Provisions

1. The conditions and regulations of recognition of prior learning (hereinafter: the regulation) stipulate the procedure of reviewing, evaluating and taking into account the submitted applications, and payment procedures in the Institute of Theology of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church (hereinafter: the Institute) for determining compliance with the admission conditions and completion of the curriculum for taking prior learning and work experience into account (hereinafter: VÕTA).
2. The Institute may take into account degree studies and continuing learning performed in other universities and other educational and training institutions, as well as work experience, daily activities and learning taken place in the context of entertainment as part of the admission requirements and curriculum.

II. Principles for taking the previous studies and work experience into account

3. The student and applicant can apply for taking into account studies and working experience performed in the past and elsewhere as a condition of admission, completion of a course or module and practice. VÕTA means the evaluation of learning outcomes and acquired work experience in correspondence with the subjects, modules and program objectives, and is based on the applicant's competence.
4. VÕTA does not apply to the final examination and defence of final theses. Optional subjects are considered as part of the curriculum for the maximum amount specified in the curriculum.
5. The curriculum may determine in addition to the final examination or final paper the subjects, for which previous studies and work experience are not taken into account. The volume of these subjects should not exceed 30 percent of the curriculum, excluding the volume of final paper or final examination.

6. The applicant has the right to ask for VÖTA counselling from the Institute. The learning management specialist helps the applicant to fulfil an application.
7. VÖTA is assessed by a Committee (hereinafter: VÖTA Committee), which is designated by the Dean of the Faculty of Theology, using the organizational workers and ordinary teaching staff. Chairman of the Committee is appointed by the Dean of the Faculty of Theology. If necessary, the VÖTA Committee may involve experts from outside the Committee.

III. Application

8. A person applying for VÖTA (hereinafter: the applicant) shall submit to the VÖTA Committee a relevant application and fills in the application form, accompanied by documents certifying previous studies or work experience. The applicant is responsible for the accuracy of the documents and other materials.
9. The documents may be submitted all the year round, but no later than two weeks before the end date for the submission of necessary admission documents in order to allow the Committee determine whether the documents are compliant with the admission criteria.
10. Examination of the application is generally charged by the IT and the sum is determined by the Council of the Faculty of Theology.
11. VÖTA is also applied in determining the compliance with the conditions of admission. The learning management specialist is responsible for counselling the applicant in VÖTA matters, if necessary.
12. The Council of the Faculty of Theology of the Institute may approve a list of curricula of other institutions of higher education, which in substance correspond to graduate courses prerequisite to enter Master's Studies, so that the applicants do not have to submit an extra application of VÖTA for determining compliance with the admission conditions.
13. Recognition of subjects the student has studied in another institution of higher education may take place via simple procedure of VÖTA. An VÖTA application is unnecessary, if there exists a previous agreement of taking the subject into account or if the student does not want to have that subject taken into account. If the previous agreement exists, the student submits the performance records to the Dean's office of the Institute and his/her subjects performed as a visiting student shall be included into the diploma supplement. In other cases, the student has to submit an VÖTA application form as a visiting student with an evaluation sheet or extract from the study information system of that other institution of higher education to the Dean's office of the Institute.
14. Continuing education courses are taken into account, if they are related to the student's current curriculum and terminated by an examination or pass/fail examination.

15. Review and assessment of application is free of charge in the following cases:
 - 15.1. assessment of subject(s) previously performed in the Institute is requested;
 - 15.2. the student has previously agreed with the Dean performing studies in another institution of higher education;
 - 15.3. institutions of higher education have signed corresponding agreements;
 - 15.4. determining compliance with admission conditions;
 - 15.5. assessment of prerequisite studies for entering Master's studies.
16. Upon reception of application, the documents and their copies are checked and confirmed on the spot, and the original documents are returned to the applicant.
17. The application will be reviewed within one month of its submission; if the application is submitted during summer months, it will be reviewed during September, which belongs to the following academic year.
18. The VÖTA Committee is responsible for fair assessment of the application and for the assessment quality.
19. If the VÖTA Committee decides to dismiss the request in part or in its entirety, the decision must be justified. The applicant shall be notified electronically.

IV. Assessment

20. The compliance of the learning outcomes described in the application with the subject(s), module(s) or the learning outcomes of the applied for curricula is assessed. Non-significant difference in the volume of previous studies and components or in form of assessment of learning outcomes cannot be the reason for not taking the subject(s) or module(s) into account.
21. On the assessment of compliance with the learning outcomes described in the application the Committee makes their decision based on the assessment criteria of the learning outcomes of subject(s) or module(s).
22. The result of the studies and work experience is assessed, not the method of achieving the result.
23. VÖTA is assessed individually based on the applicant's documents. If necessary, the Institution has the right to evaluate the previous study results and professional experience by providing the student hands-on tasks, conduct interviews, or to assess the applicant's knowledge and skills in other ways.
24. The acquisition of competences in degree studies, other organized teaching and professional experience, daily activities or leisure time is assessed integrally. Depending on the learning outcomes the time of occurrence of learning may be taken into account for the assessment.

25. If during the previous studies the achievement of outcomes has been assessed, the result of the assessment of the prior learning outcomes will not be changed nor is the student required to take an examination or pass/fail examination anew.
26. If in the course of previous studies the achievement of outcomes has not been assessed, VÖTA applies non-differentiated prior learning assessment (using the scale *pass or fail*).
27. Transferring grades from another assessment system the grades compared are calculated into the current assessment system or the given grade in the comparable system is used. If the assessment systems are impossible to compare, non-differentiated assessment is used for transferring grades.
28. Assessment is based on sufficient proof. The proof is first and foremost
 - 28.1. a document which certifies that a certain syllabus or module is acquired during previous studies, and a curriculum or training program which describes the learning outcomes and the form of their assessment;
 - 28.2. for work experience: the job description and description of competences gained with the work experience and a self-reflection.
29. Depending on the learning outcomes, the Committee may ask for additional proof (such as a portfolio, the Europass documents, letter of recommendation or characterization by the employer) to be submitted or use other methods of assessment (monitoring or simulation of the work, conversation, etc.). For meeting additional requirements the Committee and applicant shall determine the convenient date for both parts. The Committee has the right to ask the experts of the relevant area for an assessment.
30. VÖTA must be based on the original performance, therefore no part of the curriculum can be subjected twice to VÖTA.
31. The Committee reviews the application, makes a decision and notifies the applicant in writing, in a reproducible form within 30 days of submission of the application. None of submitted applications for completing the curriculum is reviewed in July and August.
32. In case described in section 29 the Committee may extend the review period up to 30 days counting from meeting the additional conditions, and notifies the applicant about it in writing or by e-mail or any other electronic form to ensure that the response can be reproduced, if necessary.
33. The decision of the Committee includes the name(s) of module(s) and subject(s), their volume, grade(s) and type (compulsory, elective or optional subject). In case of rejecting the application in whole or in part, the decision must be well-grounded.
34. When taking a subject into account for completing the curriculum, the original performance is marked, and if it provides less credit points than needed in the part n of the curriculum, the missing number of credit points should be chosen from the list of the elective subjects to complete the curriculum.

35. When taking into account previous work experience for completing the curriculum, generally non-differentiated assessment is used and this entry is signed by chairman of VÖTA Committee.

V Quality assurance

36. The quality of the VÖTA is ensured on the basis of the general education quality assurance of the Institute, paying attention to the following:
 - 36.1. VÖTA principles, including the principles and procedures of assessment are public, transparent and fair and they are applied consistently;
 - 36.2. the information provided for the applicants, counsellors, and the Committee is clear and accessible;
 - 36.3. the tasks of the applicants, counsellors, and the Committee are clearly defined;
 - 36.4. all applicants are offered counselling, if necessary,;
 - 36.5. VÖTA policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and monitored.

VI Final provisions

37. The present regulation and its amendments shall be adopted by a majority of simple votes of the Council of the Institute.
38. VÖTA applications submitted prior to the entry into force of the present regulation will be reviewed under the terms and condition valid until the entry into force of this regulation.
39. This regulation shall enter into force on 1 February 2014.