

Validation des acquis de l'expérience *Recognition of prior experience*

Circulaire

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English version – in case of discrepancies or differences in interpretation, the French version prevails.

This document is subject to regular review. To make suggestions for improvement or to share feedback, please contact the University's Education quality team at quality@uni.lu.

Access: https://intranet.uni.lu/the_university/tr/Pages/VRA-Documents.aspx

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Abbreviations

BENELUX	Benelux Union of 1944 (Kingdom of Belgium, Kingdom of the Netherlands, Grand Duchy of Luxembourg)
CH	Swiss Confederation
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EEA	European Economic Area
EU	European Union
FTE	Full-time equivalent
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
MEN	<i>Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse</i>
MESR	<i>Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche</i>
SEVE	<i>Service des Études et de la Vie Étudiante</i> (Student Department)
SPA	Study Programme Administrator
ULCC	University of Luxembourg Competence Centre
VAE	<i>Validation des acquis de l'expérience</i> (Recognition of prior experience)
VAE committees	Faculty committees for the recognition of prior educational and prior professional experience

General information

1 Scope of the procedures

A procedure for the recognition of prior experience ('*validation des acquis de l'expérience*', hereinafter 'VAE') can be carried out:

1. To determine whether an applicant to a bachelor or master programme of the University is eligible to access a given study programme. In this case, the recognition of prior experience constitutes an alternative to the diploma-related conditions defined in article 32 of the Law of 27 June 2018 (amended) on the organisation of the University of Luxembourg (hereinafter 'the Law') under which an applicant is granted access to a study programme of the University.
According to current regulations, a recognition of prior experience for gaining access to a study programme of the University is only possible for citizens of the European Union, the European Economic Area or Switzerland.
Regulatory basis: Article 33 (1) and (3) to (6), of the Law and articles 5 and 9 of the Study Regulations (*Règlement des études de l'Université du Luxembourg*) of 5 May 2020 (hereinafter 'Study Regulations').
2. To determine whether an applicant or a student enrolled in a bachelor or master programme of the University has experience that is equivalent to a part of the respective study programme and can thus be granted credit for or be exempted from the corresponding study requirements.
Regulatory basis: Article 33 (2) to (6), of the Law and article 10 of the Study Regulations.

This document defines the two corresponding procedures. It concerns:

- Students enrolled in a bachelor or master programme of the University
- Applicants to a bachelor or master programme of the University
- Study Programme Directors
- Study Programme Administrators and Study Programme Specialists (if applicable)
- Boards of Examiners
- Faculty Committees for the recognition of prior learning
- Dean's Offices and Faculty Administration
- The Student Department and Admissions Office (SEVE)
- The University of Luxembourg Competence Centre
- The Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs

Both educational and professional experience are eligible for recognition. Table 1 summarises the four basic cases distinguished by the Law.

The recognition of prior experience for gaining *access to studies* concerns applicants to a bachelor or master programme who are citizens of the EU, EEA or Switzerland and who are not eligible to accede to the University in accordance with article 32 of the Law.

The request for recognition of prior experience for access is submitted by the Director of the study programme concerned, using the form referred to in Annex 2 of this document, after prior confirmation by the SEVE that the candidate is not otherwise eligible.

The recognition of prior experience for *transfer credit* or *exemptions* concerns selected applicants to, or students in, a bachelor or master programme with prior study experience at the level of higher education and/or with professional experience of at least three (3) FTE years of relevance to the study programme concerned.

The request for recognition of prior experience for transfer credit or exemptions is submitted by the applicant or student using the form referred to in Annex 3 of this document.

The recognition of prior experience is an academic process that concerns the assessment and certification of a student's or candidate's relevant knowledge, skills, and competences through the University. The competence to take formal decisions as part of the procedure lies exclusively with the two VAE committees or the Boards of Examiners referred to in article 33 (3) to (5), of the Law.

Table 1 Recognition of prior experience – cases distinguished by the Law

	Educational experience	Professional experience
Access to studies Law 33(1)	Applicants with an educational diploma that is not recognised according to Law art. 32	Applicants without a recognised diploma and with professional experience of at least 3 years (FTE)
Transfer credit/exemptions Law 33(2)	Students/selected applicants with prior educational experience at an equivalent level and in a pertinent educational domain	Students/selected applicants with prior professional experience of at least 3 years (FTE) in a professional domain of relevance to the study programme

According to article 55 (3) 3° of the Law, the University of Luxembourg Competence Centre, under the supervision of the University, is responsible for the full or partial administration of VAE procedures concerning bachelor programmes. This responsibility currently concerns the support of candidates in the process of a recognition of *professional* experience. For this reason, the present procedure has been prepared jointly by the Competence Centre, the academic administration of the University at central and Faculty level, and the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs.

2 Responsibilities

Deans are responsible for:

- Proposing a list of four persons each to serve as members of the Faculty committees for the recognition of prior experience, in accordance with article 33 (3), of the Law:
Committee for the recognition of prior educational experience: 4 members of the 'personnel enseignant-chercheur' of the University.
Committee for the recognition of prior professional experience: 2 members of the 'personnel enseignant-chercheur' of the University and 2 representatives of the relevant professional world.

The Rector is responsible for:

- Designating the members of the two VAE Committees upon proposition of the Dean
- Confirming admission offers

The Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs is responsible for:

- Defining, updating, communicating and ensuring compliance with the framework, criteria and procedures for the recognition of prior experience
- Monitoring assessment practices and VAE decisions, and adapting procedures if necessary

The SEVE is responsible for:

- Providing, as part of the University webpages, information for applicants and students on the procedures for recognition of prior experience as well as the respective forms for requesting a recognition of prior experience
- Assessing the eligibility of diploma and providing diploma related information in view of VAE requests for access to studies to Study Programme Directors
- Supporting applicants in preparing and submitting VAE requests for access
- In the case of a VAE request for access, informing the applicant of the admission decision
- Archiving files of VAE requests for access

Faculty Administration/Dean's Office is responsible for:

- Providing administrative support to VAE committees
- Receiving requests from Study Programme Directors or SPAs and forwarding them to the responsible VAE committee
- Ensuring that VAE committees convene and decide within the applicable deadlines
- Receiving and forwarding the decision of the VAE committee to the SEVE (VAE requests for access only), Programme Director and SPA

The Programme Director is responsible for:

- Requesting a recognition of prior experience with regard to access for selected applicants
- Performing a preliminary assessment of the file supporting a request for recognition of prior experience (access and credit/exemptions) based on the framework and criteria defined in this procedure
- Proposing, if applicable, to place or advance the requester in/to a higher study year
- Forwarding requests together with the results of the preliminary assessment and, if applicable, a recommendation to the Board of Examiners (VAE for credit/exemptions of less than 60 ECTS credits) or to Faculty Administration (VAE for access and/or credit/exemptions of 60 ECTS credits and more)
- Informing, and coordinating with, the SPA of the programme throughout the process

The Study Programme Administrator is responsible for:

- Supporting the Study Programme Director throughout the process
- Acknowledging receipt of VAE requests for credit/exemptions from applicants/students
- Supporting applicants/students in preparing and submitting VAE requests for credit/exemptions
- Supporting the organisation of the meeting of the Board of Examiners (if applicable)
- Liaising with Faculty Administration/the Dean's Office for all requests decided by the VAE committee

The ULCC is responsible for:

- Supporting the development of a methodology for the assessment of professional experience
- Providing support to applicants/students in preparing the file that supports the request insofar as it concerns professional experience
- Assisting the respective VAE committee and Board of Examiners with the assessment of professional experience
- Providing instruction/training to members of VAE committees or Boards

The VAE committee or Board of Examiners is responsible for:

- Assessing the file supporting a request for recognition of prior experience based on the framework and criteria defined in this procedure and, if applicable, organising interviews or other assessment procedures with requesters
- Consulting the responsible Programme Director (optional)
- In the case that the request is based fully or partly on professional experience, consulting the ULCC member who has supported the request, if applicable
- In the case of a request that is fully or partly based on undocumented experience, consulting the University's Inclusion Officer
- Approving or rejecting the request and, in the case of requests for exemptions, defining the exemptions granted
- Communicating the decision to the Study Programme Director, Study Programme Administrator, Faculty Administration/Dean's Office and SEVE

The education quality management of the University is responsible for:

- Guaranteeing compliance of the procedure with the applicable regulatory framework
- Verifying that the procedure is adequately communicated and received
- Monitoring assessment practices and decisions and providing analytical information on the VAE process to study programmes, decision makers and the SEVE

3 Structure of the document

This document is divided into two parts. The first part describes the procedure for the recognition of prior experience for gaining access to a study programme of the University. The second part concerns the recognition of prior experience for transfer credit/exemptions from study requirements.

Each part describes the basic purpose and legal basis of the procedure, outlines the cases in which a procedure can be requested, defines how requests are submitted and assessed, and describes the available forms of recognition.

Recognition of prior experience for access to studies

1 Purpose of the procedure

The procedure defined in this section concerns the eligibility of an applicant to a bachelor or master programme of the University to access the respective programme. With the approval of a request for recognition of prior experience for access the University certifies that the experience of the applicant is equivalent to the qualification level required for access to the study programme concerned.

The recognition is limited to the study programme concerned and does not certify the person's general qualification to enter higher education at either bachelor or master level. The recognition is, therefore, not equivalent to an official recognition of a diploma by way of registration of that diploma in the national registry of recognised educational degrees.

A positive decision does not entail award or recognition of ECTS credits. Credits can only be recognised/granted through the procedure described in the second section of this document. The two procedures can, however, be conducted in parallel/jointly for a given case.

The recognition of prior experience for access to studies is based on article 33 (1) and (3) to (6), of the Law, and on article 9 of the Study Regulations. It represents, in the sense specified above, an alternative to access studies at the University based on the general qualification levels defined in article 32 of the Law.

The recognition of prior experience for access to studies is only possible for citizens of the EU, EEA and Switzerland (as stipulated by article 5 of the Study Regulations).

In special cases, the recognition of prior professional or educational experience is a statutory component of the admission procedure of a study programme. This concerns programmes with study plans that foresee a number of ECTS credits to be acquired through courses offered at the University that is lower than the number of ECTS credits certified with the diploma upon graduation. Such statutory VAE procedures are subject to the entirety of rules applicable to the recognition of prior experience documented in the Law, Study Regulations and this procedure. The criteria used for assessing whether a candidate has the required experience must be specified in the annex to the Study Regulations of the study programme concerned. The decision on the recognition of prior experience remains in any case with the responsible committee.

2 Requesting a recognition of prior experience

Only the Director of the study programme to which the candidate has applied **can request** a recognition of prior experience for access to studies.

Whether the recognition can be requested and which procedure applies depends on the situation of the applicant and the diploma he or she holds. The following cases describe possible scenarios concerning the eligibility of a candidate. SEVE Admissions is responsible for assessing eligibility, classifying the application file and providing the respective information to Study Programme Directors:

Case a: Eligible diploma

For holders of a diploma listed in article 32 (1) (for access to a bachelor programme) and (2) (for access to a master programme) of the Law **no VAE is needed** and can be requested.

This includes, for access to a *bachelor* programme:

- Eligible national secondary school leaving diploma (*diplôme luxembourgeois de fin d'études secondaires ou secondaires techniques, secondaires classiques ou générales; diplôme d'accès aux études supérieures luxembourgeois*).
- Diploma or certificates issued by a secondary school or other educational institution outside of Luxembourg that are recognised as equivalent by the Ministry of Education, Children and Youth (MEN). This usually includes secondary school diploma issued by recognized educational institutions in a signatory state of the European Convention on the Equivalence of Diplomas leading to Admission to Universities or the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region that certify the successful completion of at least 12 consecutive years of schooling and enable access to higher-education or university studies in the respective country.¹ Under certain conditions, other diploma may be recognized.

For access to a *master* programme, it includes:

- Bachelor or master diploma issued by an institution of higher education of an EU or EEA member state or the Swiss Confederation that is recognised in the respective country for a recognised/accredited study programme. Such diploma qualify for access without the need for further recognition through inclusion in the national registry of educational diploma maintained by the Ministry for Higher Education and Research (MESR).
- Other bachelor or equivalent diploma included in the national registry of educational diploma maintained by the MESR.

Case b: Diploma qualifying for national recognition

The applicant holds a diploma that is usually recognised as equivalent by the responsible Ministry and is a citizen of the EU/EEA/CH:

The Admissions Office informs the applicant that a recognition of the diploma with the responsible Ministry is required. If the candidate is selected for admission and, for valid reasons, was not able to request the recognition of the diploma with the responsible Ministry before the beginning of the academic year, the applicant is admitted under the condition that he submits the request for recognition by 15 October.

For conditionally admitted students whose request for recognition of their diploma is rejected by the responsible Ministry, Programme Directors request a recognition of prior experience for access to studies. The retroactive recognition of prior educational experience for access to studies is possible if a complete VAE file is submitted to the SEVE within one (1) month of the decision of the responsible Ministry not to recognise the diploma.

Requests for a recognition of prior experience submitted for conditionally admitted students are admissible only upon presentation of the negative decision of the responsible Ministry.

Case c: Diploma qualifying for a VAE

The applicant is a citizen of the EU/EEA/CH and holds a diploma that is usually not recognised as equivalent by the responsible Ministry but has been or may be recognised by the University as part of the recognition of prior experience:

If the applicant is selected for admission, the Programme Director requests a recognition of prior experience for access for the concerned applicant.

Case d: Diploma that have never been assessed previously

The applicant is a citizen of the EU/EEA/CH and holds a diploma that is normally not recognised as equivalent by the responsible Ministry and has never been assessed or is unlikely to be accepted as part of a VAE procedure by the University:

If the selection committee of the study programme concerned is interested in selecting the candidate, the Programme Director can request a recognition of prior experience for access. The Programme Director or study programme selection/admission committee should, in this case, commit to selecting the candidate if eligibility is confirmed. For programmes that rank candidates, a placement of the applicant in the upper echelon of candidates is recommended. The Rector reserves the right not to admit a candidate despite a positive recognition of

¹ Cf. <https://guichet.public.lu/en/citoyens/enseignement-formation/enseignement-postprimaire/jeune-recemment-arrive-pays/reconnaissance-etudes/reconnaissance-bac-maturite.html>.

prior experience if doubts about the quality or authenticity of the diploma remain. The responsible VAE committee decides whether the request is accepted for internal assessment.

Case e: Previously rejected or fraudulent diploma

The applicant holds a diploma that is normally not recognised as equivalent by the responsible Ministry and has previously been identified as (definitely) not equivalent, not trustworthy or fraudulent by the University:

A recognition of prior experience based on the diploma can, in this case, not be requested, unless there is evidence that the previous rejection of the diploma was erroneous.

Case f: Recognition of professional experience

The applicant is a citizen of the EU/EEA/CH and does not hold an educational diploma at secondary school (for access to a bachelor programme) or bachelor (for access to a master programme) level or holds a diploma that does not qualify for access to a study programme of the University based on either article 32 or article 33 of the Law (i.e. is not eligible, not recognised as equivalent, or does not qualify for a VAE procedure):

If the selection committee of the study programme concerned is interested in selecting the candidate, the SEVE demands proof of a minimum of three (3) FTE years of professional experience in a domain of relevance to the programme. Upon presentation of evidence for such experience, the Programme Director can request a recognition of prior professional experience for access.

The SEVE categorizes applications using the cases described above and transmits this information to the Study Programme Director and Study Programme Administrator concerned. Study programmes follow their selection process, identifying the list of candidates they intend to select. Programme Directors should request a VAE procedure only if the candidate fulfils the selection criteria of the programme and is placed above the relevant threshold for selection, if applicable.

Programme Directors initiate a procedure for the recognition of prior experience in view of gaining access to studies by informing the SEVE that they intend to select a respective candidate for whom a VAE is required and possible. The SEVE informs the applicant that a procedure has been opened, communicates the applicable deadlines and asks for the required documents. It fills in the form referred to in annex 2 to this procedure and transmits it together with all additional documentation to the director and administrator of the study programme concerned.

A complete request consists of:

1. The request form including the name and student ID of the candidate concerned.
2. Documentation of the prior educational experience and achievements of the candidate concerned. If applicable and possible, the file includes a copy of the diploma obtained by the candidate, any suitable evidence for the authenticity and comparability of the diploma, and a list of courses, subjects or other learning activities and formats followed by the candidate.
The documentation should, if applicable, contain information on:
 - a. The name of the educational institution at which the candidate has studied/followed courses and/or from which he has obtained a diploma.
 - b. The time period during which the candidate studied at the respective institution.
 - c. The designated learning objectives, outcomes or subjects of the course(s) followed.
 - d. Reference to evidence that, or of the degree to which, the candidate has achieved the designated learning outcomes, e.g., in the form of assessments passed (including the grade, if applicable), credits or certificates awarded, teacher feedback, etc. If applicable, this evidence is submitted jointly with the request.
3. Documentation of the professional experience that the candidate wishes to be recognised, if applicable, in the form of a list of professional activities, stating for each activity:
 - a. The name of the employer or institution at which the activity took place (if the activity was performed as freelance or voluntary work, this should be indicated).
 - b. The time period and the average number of hours per week during which the activity was performed.
 - c. The knowledge, skills, and competences involved in the performance of the activity.
 - d. Reference to evidence that, or of the degree to which, the candidate has mastered the knowledge, skills, and competences referred to under point c. above. If applicable, this evidence is submitted jointly with the request.

Study Programme Directors or the responsible evaluating committee may ask for additional documentation.

Requests should be submitted and completed electronically whenever possible. A request is accepted only if it is complete.

In the case of a recognition of professional experience, the candidate can ask for support of the ULCC in preparing the application file. The ULCC can issue a recommendation to the Programme Director and responsible committee.

Once the file is complete, the SEVE forwards the request and all corresponding documentation to the Programme Director of the study programme concerned.

The SEVE makes information about the possibility to submit requests for the recognition of prior experience to obtain access to study programmes available to applicants. It also informs about the applicable deadlines at least three (3) months before the first respective deadline.

3 Evaluation of the request

The Programme Director performs a preliminary evaluation of the request. This evaluation consists of:

1. A check of the eligibility of the experiences submitted as part of the request.
2. An estimation of the degree of confidence that the candidate has the claimed experience, based on the available evidence.
3. An assessment of the degree to which the achieved knowledge, skills, and competences are equivalent with the learning outcomes of relevant parts of the study programme.

3.1 1. Eligible experiences

The submitted evidence is eligible if qualifications are at the applicable qualifications level (based on the Luxembourg Qualifications Framework) or the candidate has minimum of three (3) FTE years of work experience and if they are of relevance to the access prerequisites defined by the programme, if applicable.

According to article 33 (1) of the Law, for the recognition of prior experience can be taken into account:

1. Studies pursued by the requester:
 - a. For access to a bachelor programme: at secondary school level and at the level of higher education.
 - b. For access to a master programme: at the level of higher education (level 5 and higher in the Luxembourg and European qualifications frameworks).
2. Professional experience exercised during a cumulated period of *at least* three (3) years (full-time equivalent); this criterion is applied to the total of the professional activities listed by the requester.

Both types of experience need to be of relevance to the study programme concerned. Relevance is established on the basis of a correspondence between the domains of the knowledge, skills, and competences involved in the claimed experience on the one hand, in the qualifications and prerequisites required for admission to the study programme on the other. At the stage of assessing eligibility, these domains should be defined at a level of detail that is not too fine-grained, e.g. ISCED's fields of education and training four-digit 'detailed field' level.²

² Cf. International Standard Classification of Education, Fields of education and training 2013 (ISCED F 2013), Detailed field descriptions, UNESCO Institute for Statistics (<http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-fields-of-education-and-training-2013-detailed-field-descriptions-2015-en.pdf>).

The Programme Director marks irrelevant experiences in the request and determines the overall eligibility of the request. Only eligible requests qualify for further evaluation.

3.2 2. Degree of confidence

The evidence submitted by the requester should be authentic, suited to support the claimed experience, and comparable to the qualifications required for regular access to the respective study programme. Generally acceptable are formal and authentic certificates, transcripts or reports issued by a recognised institution of higher education, public establishment, or an established private institution/company. References or teacher/employer feedback and reports should be from a reliable referee who has had a direct role in the educational or professional activity. Exceptions apply to requesters who, for valid reasons, are not in a position to document their experiences (e.g. refugees – see the separate procedure for the recognition of undocumented or insufficiently documented prior experience).

In case of doubt of the authenticity of the documentation, confidence can be increased by asking for additional documentation of the respective experience from a second source (extracts from student records, testimony from teachers or colleagues, proof of studies/work completed or achieved, etc.).

If the evidence demonstrates or suggests that the requester has not performed the educational or professional activity or has not achieved the concerned knowledge, skills, or competences (learning outcomes) to a degree judged as satisfactory or sufficient by the issuing source, this experience should not be considered in the further evaluation of the request.

3.3 3. Assessment of equivalence

For eligible and reliable experiences, the Programme Director assesses the degree to which the achieved or mastered knowledge, skills, and competences of the requester are equivalent to the general requirements for access to the study programme.

Article 9 (2) of the Study Regulations stipulates that eligible experiences are recognised and qualify as the basis for a recognition of prior experience if they are judged equivalent to the qualifications required for access to a study programme. These qualifications include the general conditions for access defined in article 32 of the Law, i.e. diploma that meet national and European standards as established by the respective qualification frameworks, and programme-specific admission prerequisites, e.g., related to language competences or the domain in which a previous diploma/degree has been obtained.

Good practice is to establish programme- or discipline-specific descriptors of knowledge, skills and competences that correspond to the general eligibility criteria of the respective level (bachelor, master) and the programme-specific prerequisites concerning diploma (especially access to master level). These descriptors form the basis for the analysis of the equivalence of the claimed experience. Equivalence is then established by comparing the respective descriptors with the knowledge, skills and competences duly documented in the request and assessed as described above.

Based on the preliminary evaluation, the Programme Director prepares an advisory opinion (*'avis'*) for the responsible VAE committee(s).

The Programme Director forwards the request together with any advice to the administration/Dean's Office of the Faculty in charge of the concerned committee(s) within a maximum of one (1) month of receipt of the complete file from the SEVE and within the deadlines specified below.

The committee evaluates the request, following the steps 1-3 outlined above. The committee has the possibility to invite the candidate for an interview, demand a written examination of the candidate, or assess the candidate in a real-life situation or simulation.

Interview criteria and assessment instruments must be defined in advance and must be suited to measure correspondence between the claimed experience and entry requirements at the applicable level. They should be based on applicable descriptors of knowledge, skills

and competences that correspond to the general eligibility criteria of the respective level (bachelor, master) and the programme-specific prerequisites concerning diploma.

The committee reaches its decision within a maximum of one (1) month after receipt of the VAE file and within the deadlines specified below.

The committee informs the Faculty Administration/Dean's Office of the decision without delay. Faculty Administration/Dean's Office forwards the decision to the admissions team of the SEVE, the Programme Director and Study Programme Administrator (SPA). The SEVE notifies the candidate of the decision and continues the processing of the application file accordingly.

3.4 Deadlines

The deadlines indicated here represent dates after which a timely processing of the request can no longer be guaranteed. Requests submitted later than the indicated dates will still be treated, but may cause delays for (re-)enrolment.

Case b, if no recognition by MESR:

- 15.10. Request for recognition of diploma submitted to MESR
- 15.11. Decision of MESR presented to University
- 1.12. Complete VAE file (request by Programme Director and documentation by student) received by SEVE
- 15.1. Recommendation Programme Director
- 1.2. Decision VAE communicated to SEVE

Case c or d:

- 15.6. Request for VAE submitted
- 30.7. Recommendation Programme Director
- 30.8. Decision VAE communicated to SEVE

Case f:

- 1.6. Request for VAE submitted
- 1.7. Recommendation by ULCC, if applicable
- 15.7. Recommendation Programme Director
- 15.8. Decision VAE communicated to SEVE

Recognition of prior experience for transfer credit or waivers

1 Purpose of the procedure

Applicants or students with prior experience of direct relevance to the study programme for which they are applying/in which they are enrolled can receive recognition for this experience in the form of transfer credit or waivers for certain specified study requirements of the programme. As a result, they may also be placed in a higher study semester. The main purpose of such recognition is to avoid duplication of individual study effort, to ease the transition for students who change to the University from another higher education institution, and to preserve the motivation of the student.

The principal condition for the recognition of prior experience is its equivalence with defined study requirements and learning outcomes. Experience is assessed for equivalence in the form of knowledge, skills or competences. In the case of prior study achievements at institutions of higher education, the completion of and performance at courses can serve as a proxy, such that equivalence is established by way of a comparison between defined learning outcomes and course or curriculum content between the two study programmes concerned.

The present procedure has the purpose of guaranteeing that the assessments made as part of a recognition of prior experience are consistent, fair, transparent, and suitable to establish equivalence. With a recognition of prior experience, the University certifies, vis-à-vis the student and vis-à-vis all interested third parties, that the student has the concerned knowledge, skills, and competences as specified in the curriculum of the study programme.

2 Requesting a recognition of prior experience

Both applicants to a study programme of the University and students of the University can request a recognition of prior experience to obtain transfer credit, waivers or advanced standing (see for further explanations below). Requests from applicants should only be treated if the applicant is selected for admission.

The University does not accept requests submitted by students in their final semester of studies.

The requirement to obtain at least 60 ECTS credits through completion of courses offered by the University in order to receive a diploma from the University (article 33 (2) of the Law) applies independent of the number of credits granted or the semester in which a student is placed.

Incoming mobility students cannot request a recognition of prior experience as long as they have not applied for admission (as a regular student) to a study programme of the University.

Applicants who wish to request a recognition of prior experience in view of obtaining transfer credit or waivers or would like to enter the programme in a higher study semester (obtain advanced standing) indicate this on the application form. They submit the request by filling in the form (s. Annex 3) and uploading it on the admission portal together with all additional documentation.

Students submit the request by email to the Study Programme Administrator of their programme using the form referred to in the annex to this document.

A complete request consists of:

1. A request form (s. annex to this procedure) duly filled in.
2. Documentation for the educational achievements which the requester wishes to be recognised, if applicable, in the form of, at least, a list of courses or other learning activities. This list states, for each course or other learning activity:
 - a. The name of the educational institution at which the student has participated in the course/at which the learning activity took place.
 - b. The time period during which the student participated in the course/learning activity.
 - c. The designated learning objectives and/or outcomes of the course/learning activity.
 - d. Reference to evidence that, or of the degree to which, the student has achieved the designated learning outcomes, e.g., in the form of assessments passed (including the grade, if applicable), credits or certificates awarded, teacher feedback, etc. If applicable, this evidence is submitted jointly with the request.
3. Documentation of the professional experience that the requester wishes to be recognised, if applicable, in the form of a list of professional activities, stating for each activity:
 - a. The name of the employer or institution at which the activity took place (if the activity was performed as freelance work, this should be indicated).
 - b. The time period and the average number of hours per week during which the activity was performed.
 - c. The knowledge, skills, and competences involved in the performance of the activity.
 - d. Reference to evidence that, or of the degree to which, the requester has mastered the knowledge, skills, and competences referred to under point c. above. If applicable, this evidence is submitted jointly with the request.

Study Programme Directors may ask for additional documentation.

Requests should be submitted electronically whenever possible. A request is accepted only if it is complete. Upon receipt of a complete request, the SPA forwards the request and all corresponding documentation to the Programme Director.

The SEVE makes information about the possibility to submit requests for the recognition of prior experience to obtain transfer credit/waivers/advanced standing available to students and to applicants.

Applicants are informed that the University does not guarantee that requests submitted later than **15 June** are decided before the beginning of the following academic year.

Students should send requests concerning the **winter semester before 30 June** preceding the respective winter semester, and requests concerning the **summer semester before 30 January** preceding the respective summer semester. The University does not guarantee that requests submitted after these deadlines are decided before the start of the following semester.

3 Evaluation of the request

The Programme Director performs a preliminary evaluation of the request. This evaluation consists of:

1. A check of the eligibility of the experiences submitted as part of the request.
2. An estimation of the degree of confidence that the requester has the claimed experience, based on the available evidence.
3. An assessment of the degree to which the achieved or mastered knowledge, skills, and competences or learning outcomes are equivalent with the learning outcomes of relevant parts of the study programme.

3.1 Eligible experiences

According to article 33 (2) of the Law, for the recognition of prior experience can be taken into account:

- Studies pursued by the requester at the level of higher education (level 5 and higher in the Luxembourg and European qualifications frameworks).
- Professional experience exercised during a cumulated period of *at least* three years (full-time equivalent); this criterion is applied to the total of the professional activities listed by the requester.

Both types of experience need to be of relevance to the study programme concerned. Relevance is established on the basis of a correspondence between the domains of the knowledge, skills, and competences involved in the claimed experience on the one hand, in the study programme learning outcomes on the other. At the stage of assessing eligibility, these domains should be defined at a level of detail that is not too fine-grained, e.g. ISCED's fields of education and training four-digit 'detailed field' level.³

The Programme Director marks irrelevant experiences in the request and determines the overall eligibility of the request. Only eligible requests qualify for further evaluation.

3.2 Degree of confidence

The evidence submitted by the requester should be suited to support the claimed experience. Generally acceptable are formal and authentic certificates, transcripts or reports issued by a recognised institution of higher education, public establishment, or an established private institution/company. References or teacher/employer feedback and reports should be from a reliable referee who has had a direct role in the educational or professional activity. Exceptions apply to requesters who for valid reasons are not in a position to document their experiences (e.g. refugees – see the separate procedure for the recognition of undocumented or insufficiently documented prior experience).

If the evidence demonstrates or suggests that the requester has not performed the educational or professional activity or has not achieved the concerned knowledge, skills, or competences (learning outcomes) to a degree judged as satisfactory or sufficient by the issuing source, this experience should not be considered in the further evaluation of the request.

3.3 Assessment of equivalence

Article 10 (4) of the Study Regulations stipulates that eligible experiences are recognised and qualify as the basis for transfer credit or waivers if they are judged equivalent to the learning outcomes of a given part of the study programme. It is the responsibility of the assessor, not the requester, to determine which parts of a programme are concerned. The assessor is free to perform the assessment at different, and multiple, levels of the study programme at which learning outcomes are defined, including entire study semesters or study years, modules, courses, or parts of courses.

Equivalence is then established by comparing the respective learning outcomes in the form of knowledge, skills or competences with the knowledge, skills and competences documented in the request and assessed as described above. A merely partial equivalence at a higher level would typically be followed by a more detailed assessment at a lower level.

Based on the preliminary evaluation following the steps outlined above, the Programme Director determines the volume of ECTS credits that corresponds to the equivalent experience, and thus the committee responsible for deciding on the request:

- If the recognition concerns less than 60 ECTS credits, the request is decided by the Board of Examiners of the study programme.

³ Cf. International Standard Classification of Education, Fields of education and training 2013 (ISCED F 2013), Detailed field descriptions, UNESCO Institute for Statistics (<http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-fields-of-education-and-training-2013-detailed-field-descriptions-2015-en.pdf>).

- If the recognition concerns 60 ECTS credits or more, the request is decided by the responsible Faculty Committee for the recognition of prior experience. In the case in which a request asserts both educational and professional experiences the two Committees (for the recognition of professional and of educational experience respectively) can deliberate jointly.

The Programme Director or SPA forwards the request to the Board of Examiners or to the Faculty administration/Dean's Office in charge of the VAE committee within one (1) month of having received the request, joining a summary of the results of the preliminary assessment and a recommendation for the exemptions to be granted.

If the Programme Director judges that there is no equivalence and, hence, no exemptions can be granted, the Committee responsible for the further treatment of the request is the Board of Examiners. If the Board establishes that the request concerns 60 credits or more, it transfers the case to the responsible Committee for the recognition of prior experience (via Faculty administration/Dean's Office).

The board/committee receiving the request proceeds to the evaluation of the request, following the steps 1-3 outlined above. The board/committee has the possibility to invite the requester for an interview, organise a written examination, or assess the requester in a real-life situation or simulation. If at least some of the claimed experiences are validated and equivalence is established, the board/committee defines the type and specificities of the exemptions granted (s. below). The board/committee reaches its decision within a maximum of one (1) month after receipt of the request.

The board/committee communicates its decision to the Programme Director and Study Programme Administrator (SPA) in case of the Board of Examiners, to Faculty Administration/Dean's Office in case of the Committee for the recognition of prior experience, who forward the decision to the Programme Director and SPA of the respective study programme. The SPA notifies the requester of the decision and, if applicable, the exemptions and/or advanced standing granted as well as their consequences for the maximum duration of studies of the requester. The SPA also registers all transfer credit and waivers granted in the student management system (ACME) and informs the SEVE in case the requester is placed in a higher semester.

4 Forms of recognition

According to article 10 of the Study Regulations, recognition of prior experience can be granted in the form of transfer credit or waivers or a combination of the two.

4.1 Transfer credit

If the equivalence between a for-credit element of a study programme and the eligible experience is complete, i.e. concerns all learning outcomes/requirements defined for the course/study activity, a requester can be awarded transfer credit. This is typically the case if the requester completed equivalent courses at an institution of higher education. Transfer credit is granted in the form of ungraded ECTS credits, which can be attributed to courses, modules or entire study semesters or years.

The courses and modules validated through the award of transfer credit are listed on the transcript of the student together with the corresponding ECTS credits, without grade, and marked accordingly ('transfer credit').

ECTS credits awarded in the form of transfer credit count towards the minimum credit requirement for completion of the study programme if awarded for courses or modules foreseen in the applicable study plan of the programme. These courses or modules are listed on the transcript of the student but are not included in the basis for the calculation of the final grade.

In the case in which the recognition of prior professional or educational experience is a statutory component of the admission procedure of a study programme, credit is awarded in accordance with the criteria (e.g., in the form of learning outcomes) defined in the annex to the Study Regulations of the programme concerned. No course offer and modules with which equivalence could be established exist in this case. The credits thus awarded must be listed on the transcript of records of the student as credits awarded through a recognition of prior experience. Wherever possible, the criteria for their award should be explained in the diploma supplement for the study programme.

According to article 33 (2) of the Law, in order to receive a diploma from the University, a student needs to have obtained at least 60 ECTS credits through completion of courses followed at and offered by the University. This condition remains applicable independent of the volume of transfer credit awarded.

4.2 Waivers without credit

In the case in which the eligible experience is equivalent to only a part of the learning outcomes or study requirements of a given element of the study programme, it does not qualify for transfer credit. In this case, the concerned element can be waived, but the requester does not receive credit for the waived element. This can be the case, e.g., for a mobility or internship module, where the student has study experience abroad or professional experience of the required duration and at the required qualification level, but in a different field of study/adjacent professional field.

A waiver exempts the student from defined study requirements, including exams, courses, or modules. The requirements waived are indicated on the transcript of records. No ECTS credits are awarded for waived courses or modules. Such waivers do not affect the minimum credit requirements for completion of a study programme. The Study Programme Director has to define an offer of for-credit study activities through which the student can acquire a number of credits that is at least equivalent to the number of credits affected by the waiver.

The sum total of credits granted for programme elements (as defined in the study plan of the programme) waived in this way, without attribution of credit, must not exceed thirty (30).

4.3 Advanced standing

A student who has been granted transfer credit through a recognition of prior experience can be placed in a higher study semester or year (i.e. the 'standing' of the student in the study plan of the programme is advanced). The Programme Director can propose such an advancement of a student's standing to the Board of Examiners or the responsible VAE committee. The decision is taken by the Board or committee.

As a general guideline, a student's standing should only be advanced if the equivalent of at least 70 per cent of ECTS credits required for completion of the semester(s) concerned have been attributed to the student through transfer credit.

4.4 Consequences for maximum study duration

Article 11 of the Study Regulations defines two formula for the calculation of the maximum study duration of a student who has been granted transfer credit or who has been placed in a higher study semester as a result of a positive recognition of prior experience (advanced standing). Paragraph 1 of article 11 concerns advanced standing, paragraph 2 concerns transfer credit. The reduction is not cumulative: it is either calculated on the basis of paragraph 1 or on the basis of paragraph 2, whereas the higher reduction applies. The tables in Appendix 1 indicate the reductions of the maximum study duration as a function of the semesters or credits granted.

Waivers do not affect the maximum study duration.

Annex 1. Reductions of the maximum study duration as a result of a recognition of prior learning

Appendix table 1 Reductions of the maximum study duration as a result of advanced standing

120 ECTS credits programme			180 ECTS credits programme			240 ECTS credits programme		
Semesters granted	Reduction in semesters	Maximum duration (semesters)	Semesters granted	Reduction in semesters	Maximum duration (semesters)	Semesters granted	Reduction in semesters	Maximum duration (semesters)
0	0	8	0	0	10	0	0	12
1	2	6	1	1.66 = 2	8	1	1.5 = 1	11
2	4	4	2	3.32 = 3	7	2	3	9
3	6	2	3	4.98 = 5	5	3	4.5 = 4	8
			4	6.64 = 7	3	4	6	6
			5	8.3 = 8	2	5	7.5 = 7	5
						6	9	3
						7	10.5 = 10	2

Appendix table 2 Reductions of the maximum study duration as a result of transfer credit

120 ECTS credits programme			180 ECTS credits programme			240 ECTS credits programme		
Credits granted	Reduction in semesters	Maximum duration (semesters)	Credits granted	Reduction in semesters	Maximum duration (semesters)	Credits granted	Reduction in semesters	Maximum duration (semesters)
1-7	0	8	1-8	0	10	1-9	0	12
8-22	1	7	9-26	1	9	10-29	1	11
23-37	2	6	27-44	2	8	30-49	2	10
38-52	3	5	45-62	3	7	50-69	3	9
53-60	4	4	63-80	4	6	70-89	4	8
			81-98	5	5	90-109	5	7
			99-116	6	4	110-129	6	6
			117-120	7	3	130-149	7	5
						150-169	8	4
						170-180	9	3

Annex 2. Form for requesting a VAE for access

The request for recognition of prior experience for access is submitted by the Director of the study programme concerned, after prior confirmation by the SEVE that the candidate is not otherwise eligible. To submit the request, Study Programme Directors use the form provided on the intranet (ULI) pages of the VRA under the following link:

https://intranet.uni.lux/the_university/tr/Pages/VRA-Documents.aspx, folder 'VAE'.

All information of relevance to a process of recognition of prior experience is collected and shared using this form.

The SEVE fills in information related to the diploma of the candidate and collects all additional information needed from the candidate. The form, together with the complementing documentation, make up the VAE file, which is the basis for the assessment of the request. Programme Directors and the responsible VAE committee use the form to document their assessment and the decisions taken.

Annex 3. Form for requesting a VAE for transfer credit or waivers

Students request a recognition of prior experience for transfer credit or waivers using the respective form that is available on the University website: [insert link]. University staff can equally download the form on the intranet (ULI):

https://intranet.uni.lux/the_university/tr/Pages/VRA-Documents.aspx.

Students must submit the form to the SPA of the study programme in which they are enrolled.

Any further processing and assessment of the request must be documented using the follow-up form for VAE requests for transfer credit or waivers provided on the intranet (ULI) at: https://intranet.uni.lux/the_university/tr/Pages/VRA-Documents.aspx.