

ESTONIAN MILITARY ACADEMY
POLICY AND PROCEDURES for the
RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING and PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

I GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. This regulation (hereinafter the EMA RPL procedure) lays down the general principles with regard to the recognition of prior learning (RPL) and professional experience, and the related procedures for counselling, application, assessment and quality assurance at the Estonian Military Academy (EMA).
2. The EMA RPL Procedure shall be applied with regard to EMA degree studies for the purposes of:
 - 2.1 fulfilling prescribed admission requirements;
 - 2.2 transferring previously acquired academic credits to count towards the completion of the curriculum at the EMA;
 - 2.3 converting previous studies and/or work experience into academic credit points.
3. The EMA shall recognise only the applicant's original performance, not subjects or modules that have been previously recognised in the framework of the RPL procedure.
4. The EMA RPL Procedure does not apply to final examinations, final thesis defence, and EMA's continuing education programmes or courses.
5. The EMA retains the right to single out individual subjects from its degree studies curricula that cannot be transferred under the RPL Procedure, and to stipulate the maximum share of RPL to be counted towards completion of curricula. Any restrictions related to the application of RPL shall be outlined in the curricula.
6. In the application of RPL, the EMA shall take guidance from the principle of integrity of higher education studies that foresees that the total combined workload of studies at the first and second level of higher education should be at least 300 ECTS.
7. Previous studies and work experience shall be assessed at the EMA by special RPL Committee comprising at least three experts from the field of degree studies, and it shall be formed by the order of the Head of the EMA Department of Academic Studies.
8. The EMA RPL Committee shall take guidance from the procedure outlined in this document, and the general RPL quality and assessment criteria laid down in relevant legislation.

II CONSULTATION (?)

9. The EMA shall provide the necessary advice/counselling to RPL applicants at the levels of vocational and higher education studies. At the level of vocational education, RPL counselling shall be provided by the EMA academic affairs specialist–advisor; at the level of higher education by student advisor-academic affairs specialist.

10. The EMA's RPL advisors shall be responsible for:
 - 10.1 ensuring that applicants receive impartial advice;
 - 10.2 explaining to the applicant the EMA's RPL procedure and procedure;
 - 10.3 advising the applicant on filling out appropriate forms and submitting relevant evidence;
 - 10.4 verifying that the documents submitted by the applicant are in compliance with the EMA's RPL requirements, and advising with regard to remedying any deficiencies found;
 - 10.5 taking minutes at the EMA RPL Committee meetings;
 - 10.6 notifying the applicant of the EMA RPL Committee's decision within five working days of the meeting;
 - 10.7 making requisite RPL-related entries to the EMA's Study Information System (ÕIS) and the Estonian Education Information System (EHIS).
11. The EMA's RPL advisors shall be entitled to:
 - 11.1 request that the applicant submit a properly filled-out application along with all the requisite supporting evidence;
 - 11.2 demand the applicant to make the required changes to the submitted application;
 - 11.3 refuse to accept incomplete applications (incl. not supplemented with requisite evidence) or applications that have not been submitted in due time.
12. The EMA RPL advisors shall not engage in the formal process of assessment of RPL applications.

III THE APPLICATION PROCESS

13. At the EMA, RPL applications (hereinafter *the Application*) shall be submitted via the EMA Study Information System.
14. The EMA's official forms to be used in the RPL application process are appended to this regulation (see Annexes 1 to 6). The deadlines for the submission of RPL applications shall be stipulated in the EMA's Admissions Regulation.
15. The RPL application must be submitted at least ten working days before the start of the subject that the applicant wants to have recognised under the RPL procedure (except for the subjects read during the autumn term of the first academic year).
16. All documents certifying previous studies and/or work experience (except military service records) must be attached to the application and shall be submitted via the EMA Study Information System.
17. For the purposes of certifying previous studies and in-service training, the EMA shall accept, for example, university diplomas with academic supplements, academic transcripts, syllabi/course programmes, thematic course schedules, training certificates.
18. For the purposes of certifying work experience and independent studies, the EMA shall accept, for example, job descriptions, self-analyses, study portfolios, professional certificates, official orders, projects, plans, examples of work done (e.g. guidelines, study materials), recommendation letters, military service records.

19. The RPL applicants shall:

- 19.1 review(?) the EMA RPL regulations;
- 19.2 review(?) the EMA curriculum they have been admitted to or where they plan to apply, and evaluate the sufficiency of their knowledge and skill level with regard to the learning outcomes of the curriculum in question;
- 19.3 submit their application, together with the supporting documentation in due time;
- 19.4 ensure that the submitted information and documents are correct;
- 19.5 provide further evidence, if required;
- 19.6 ensures that all documents made out in a foreign language (other than English) are translated into Estonian;
- 19.7 take part in studies at the EMA until the EMA RPL Committee has reached a decision.

20. The RPL applicants shall be entitled to:

- 20.1 counselling from the EMA on questions related to the RPL procedure;
- 20.2 receive feedback on their RPL applications;
- 20.3 challenge/appeal the decisions of the EMA RPL Committee.

21. The EMA shall recognise previous studies without requiring the submission of a RPL application in the event if:

- 21.1 the student is readmitted to the EMA;
- 21.2 the changes made to the subjects the student has previously completed at the EMA do not exceed 25%;
- 21.3 the training and/or subjects completed by the student abroad are already recognised as part of the EMA curriculum and/or as an accepted supplement.

IV THE RPL ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

22. The EMA RPL process shall focus on the assessment of competencies acquired by the applicant in the process of formal, non-formal or informal/experiential learning and their correspondence to/alignment with the EMA's admission requirements, and the learning outcomes of a specific module and/or curriculum.

23. In cases of assessing compliance with EMA's admission requirements, the results of the RPL assessment shall be forwarded in writing both to the applicant and to the EMA Admissions Committee.

24. The RPL assessment process shall be based on the principle of comprehensive assessment and the relevancy of the learned content. Comprehensive assessment shall take into account formal, non-formal or informal/experiential learning towards completion of the curriculum.

25. Minor discrepancies in the workload of previous studies and study components or in the method used for the assessment of learning outcomes, shall not be deemed sufficient grounds for refusal to recognise subject(s) or module(s). In accordance with the principle of comprehensive assessment, minor differences shall be deemed those that do not exceed 25% of the module and/or curriculum in question.

26. If previous studies included differentiated assessment of learning outcomes, the EMA shall transfer the result of the original performance. If previous studies did not include differentiated assessment of learning outcomes, the EMA shall use non-differentiated assessment (i.e. pass/fail) to denote the result in transfer records.

27. In the case of recognising work experience, the EMA shall apply non-differentiated assessment.

V EMA RPL COMMITTEE PROCEDURES

28. The EMA RPL Committee shall only assess applications that are:

28.1 submitted in due time;

28.2 duly completed.

29. The work of the EMA RPL Committee shall be organised and chaired by the Committee Chair, in their absence, by the Deputy Chair. The EMA RPL Committee's records management (including taking meeting minutes) shall be arranged by EMA vocational and higher education advisors.

30. The EMA RPL Committee shall work in meetings that shall be convened by the Committee Chair or, in their absence, by the Deputy Chair. The committee is entitled to conduct electronic voting on the proposal of the Committee Chair or, in their absence, the Deputy Chair, and having secured the agreement of other members of the committee.

31. For the purposes of simplifying and facilitating the Committee's work, EMA advisers may, on the proposal of the Committee Chair, send RPL applications for expert assessment to EMA staff responsible for the subject or area in question.

32. The EMA RPL Committee shall have a quorum if at least two thirds of Committee members are in attendance. The EMA RPL Committee shall take decisions by consensus. The EMA RPL Committee is entitled to decide on the following matters:

32.1 recognise / transfer;

32.2 partially recognise / transfer partially (if the curriculum includes subject components);

32.3 not to recognise / transfer.

33. The EMA RPL Committee shall:

33.1 ensure the impartiality and independence of experts;

33.2 examine the RPL applications and supplementary documentation on the agenda prior to the meeting;

33.3 decide on RPL applications no later than 15 working days after their submission via the EMA Study Information System;

33.4 provide written feedback to the applicant both in the case of positive or negative decision;

33.5 notify the applicant in writing of any delays in the processing of their RPL application;

33.6 notify the applicant of the need to fulfil additional requirements, and sets a deadline for compliance.

34. The EMA RPL Committee shall be entitled to:

34.1 request the applicant to provide additional documentary evidence;

34.2 conduct additional assessment and/or require the applicant to demonstrate the knowledge acquired (e.g. in the form of an interview, discussion, or performance);

34.3 refer the application for expert evaluation to the person responsible for the subject or area at the EMA;

34.4 engage experts from within, as well as outside, the EMA in the assessment process.

VI APPEALS PROCEDURE

35. The EMA RPL Committee's decisions shall be subject to appeal in accordance with the procedure stipulated in the EMA's Study Regulations.

VII QUALITY ASSURANCE

36. Ensuring the quality of the EMA's RPL process constitutes an integral part of the EMA's study process and its quality assurance system.

37. The EMA's RPL quality assurance shall take guidance from the following principles:

37.1 the EMA's RPL procedure, its underlying principles, assessment criteria, and procedure shall be public, clear and fair, and consistently observed;

37.2 the tasks and requirements for applicants, advisers and the EMA RPL Committee must be clearly defined;

37.3 information given to applicants and experts is unambiguous and clearly formulated;

37.4 all applicants are provided consultation, if necessary;

37.5 the underlying principles and procedures of the RPL process shall be reviewed regularly and their observance is monitored.

38. At the beginning of each academic year, the Chair of the EMA RPL Committee shall be responsible for delivering the RPL activity report for the previous academic year, including an overview of compliance with the principles outlined in clause 37, at the EMA Academic Council's first regular meeting.

39. The Planning division under the EMA Department of academic studies shall be responsible for the regular review, and compliance monitoring with regard to the principles and organisation of EMA's RPL process.

VIII IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS

40. These regulations shall enter into force on 1 July 2019.

41. This repeals the "Accreditation of Prior and Experiential Learning Regulations in the Estonian National Defence College", approved by EMA Commandant's directive No 44 of 24 March 2010 on the basis of the EMA Governing Council's Resolution of 04 March 2010.

42. This repeals the "ENDC APEL Committee Rules of Procedure" approved by EMA Commandant's directive No 171 of 07 September 2010.