

## REGULATIONS FOR THE RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

Approved by the Executive Board of the Antwerp University Association on 21 March 2018  
These regulations enter into force at the beginning of the 2019/2020 academic year.

### Legal Foundation

Article II.232-240 of the Higher Education Code.

### Concepts

#### Article 1

In the application of these RPL regulations, the following concepts are to be understood as follows:

- Supervisor: advises candidates throughout the RPL procedure
- Assessor: assesses candidates on the competences that they wish to prove in the aptitude test
- Aptitude test: the examination of a candidate's competences prior to issuing a competence certificate
- Decision by the Assessment Committee: the conclusion of the Assessment Committee on the prior learning that has or has not been demonstrated in the competences that have been tested, along with supporting argumentation
- Decision on the aptitude test: written notice of the decision by the Assessment Committee to the candidate
- Competence certificate: the proof that a student has acquired competences appropriate to a well-defined educational programme, programme component, cluster of programme components, part of programme component or cluster of parts of programme components
- Competence: integrated knowledge, insight, skills and attitudes equipping an individual to perform in an effective, high-quality manner with regard to a particular position/role. Such performance is manifested in concrete actions and associated with a particular context.
- Criterion-based interview: a structured interview technique that is intended to analyse and validate the competences that people have attained in the past, due to their prior experiences
- RPL: (recognition of) prior learning; learning acquired through learning processes that have not been authenticated by proof of studies
- Institutional RPL Coordinator: serves a coordinating role in the application of these regulations within the institution
- RPL procedure: the working method for recognising prior learning, consisting of the phases 'Information and Orientation', 'Acknowledgement', 'Assessment', 'Recognition' and 'Appeal'
- Institution: the partner institution of the Antwerp University Association (AUHA), which can act as an authorised representative of the validating body in order to register candidates
- Candidate: a person following the RPL procedure through the Antwerp University Association, for the purpose of attaining a competence certificate
- Educational programme: a structured unit of the programmes offered by an institution, the completion of which is rewarded with a diploma
- Programme component: a delineated collection of educational, learning and evaluation activities aimed at the acquisition of well-defined competences
- Validating body: the Antwerp University Association (AUHA)
- Exemption: waiver of the requirement to complete an examination for a programme component (or part thereof)

### Area of application

#### Article 2

These regulations apply to all parties involved in the RPL procedure of the Antwerp University Association.

### Admission requirements

Who may complete the RPL procedure?

#### Article 3

Candidates must meet the general or specific conditions for admission to higher education.

#### Article 4

Registration for the RPL procedure is not connected to registration for an institution's educational programme.

### Procedure

#### Article 5

The RPL procedure of the AUHA follows a well-defined pathway consisting of fixed time frames, as described in Articles 8–35. The Christmas holidays, Easter holidays and the months of July and August are not counted in the time frames.

Where is the procedure described?

**Article 6**

The meaning and interpretation of the steps in the procedure are clarified in accompanying documents. The following are provided:

- 1° the schematic presentation of the procedure and time frames
- 2° the manual for the candidate
- 3° the portfolio assignment

These documents accompany the regulations.

How often is the procedure organised?

**Article 7**

At least two procedures are held at each institution per year: the spring procedure and the autumn procedure. Each institution in the Antwerp University Association may arrange one or more additional procedures. When setting up such additional procedures, the described time frames must be respected.

Phase 1  
Information and orientation

**Article 8**

Candidates for the RPL procedure must report to the Institutional RPL Coordinator (or deputy).

Who can help you get started?  
Bachelor and Master programmes

**Article 9**

The introduction is followed by the intake interview with the supervisor. This must be requested by the candidate.

The following provisions apply to candidates seeking to be tested on programme components from Bachelor or Master programmes:

- Spring procedure: The intake interview must be requested before 1 February, and the intake interview must take place before 1 March.
- Autumn procedure: The intake interview must be requested before 1 September, and the intake interview must take place before 1 October.

Graduate programmes

The following provisions apply to candidates seeking to be tested on programme components from graduate programmes:

- Spring procedure: The intake interview must be requested before 22 January, and the intake interview must take place before 15 February.
- Autumn procedure: The intake interview must be requested before 8 September, and the intake interview must take place before 1 October.

What is the intake interview?

**Article 10**

During the intake interview, the supervisor informs the candidate about the method used within the RPL procedure of the Antwerp University Association, as well as about the reference framework that applies to the candidate. The candidate's preliminary registration takes place at the same time as the intake interview. The intake interview makes the candidate eligible to complete the application for the recognition of prior learning.

Which competences can be demonstrated?

On the 'Proof of competence' form, the candidate describes the competences to be demonstrated and the programme components against which they should be tested. This form also indicates the number of credits that the competences to be examined encompass in these programme components.

Where to register

**Article 11**

Candidates must register for the RPL procedure at the institution offering the educational programme against which they wish to have competences assessed. The institution's description of competences for the relevant educational programme serves as the assessment framework for the procedure.

When to register  
Bachelor and Master programmes

**Article 12**

The following provisions apply to candidates seeking to be tested on programme components from Bachelor or Master programmes:

For the spring procedure, registration must be completed before 1 March. For the autumn procedure, registration must be completed before 1 October. At registration, it is noted which procedure (spring/autumn/other) the candidate wishes to follow.

Graduate programmes

The following provisions apply to candidates seeking to be tested on programme components from graduate programmes:

For the spring procedure, registration must be completed before 15 February. For the autumn procedure, registration must be completed before 1 October. At registration, it is noted which procedure (spring/autumn/other) the candidate wishes to follow.

**Article 13**

The institution uses a registration form set by the validating body for registration. Any changes to the personal details entered on this form must be announced in full to the Institutional RPL Coordinator.

**Article 14**

Acceptance of the regulations  
Premature termination by the candidate  
Termination 'by statute'

- §1 By registering for the RPL procedure, the candidate agrees to abide by these regulations.
- §2 A candidate may stop the process at any time by sending written notification to the Institutional RPL Coordinator.
- §3 If a candidate does not adhere to the time frames and/or agreements specified in the regulations with regard to registration, payment, submission of the portfolio or the assessment interview, the procedure will be closed by statute.

**Article 15**

Cost of the procedure

- §1 Upon registering, the candidate pays an amount corresponding to the administrative costs and the contribution for the aptitude test.
- §2 The set amount for administrative costs is €66.29.
- §3 As a contribution for the aptitude test, the candidate pays one of the following amounts:
  - €66.29 if 1–20 credits are to be assessed
  - €138.60 if 21–40 credits are to be assessed
  - €210.92 if 41–60 credits are to be assessed
  - €427.87 if 61–80 credits are to be assessed
  - €644.81 if 81–100 credits are to be assessed
  - €861.76 if more than 100 credits are to be assessed
 If the aptitude test will be for the Master level and if the applicant has already completed a Bachelor degree, the costs amount to €260.99. These amounts are applicable starting in the 2019/2020 academic year, and the Board of the Association can adjust them each year according to the health index on 1 January. These new amounts are to be incorporated into these regulations as an addendum.

Phase 2  
Acknowledgement

**Article 16**

A candidate cannot be definitively admitted to the aptitude test until the amount for the administrative costs and the contribution for the aptitude test has been received.

How to start working on the portfolio assignment

**Article 17**

The candidate compiles a portfolio independently, according to the instructions for the portfolio assignment from the validating body.

How to receive assistance with the portfolio assignment  
Bachelor and Master programmes

**Article 18**

At the candidate's initiative, individual coaching in the compilation of the portfolio may be provided in the form of a one-off conversation with the supervisor. This assistance should be requested in a timely manner.

The following provisions apply to candidates seeking to be tested on programme components from Bachelor or Master programmes:

The coaching session can take place up to two weeks before the final deadline for submission of the portfolio. For the spring procedure, the coaching session must be requested before 15 March, and the coaching must take place before 15 April. For the autumn procedure, the coaching session must be requested before 15 October, and the coaching must take place before 15 November.

Graduate programmes

The following provisions apply to candidates seeking to be tested on programme components from graduate programmes:

At the candidate's initiative, individual coaching in the compilation of the portfolio may be provided in the form of a one-off conversation with the supervisor. The candidate must request and make an appointment for this one-off session upon registration.

**Article 19**

The candidate must assess the portfolio for completeness.

When the portfolio must be submitted  
Bachelor and Master programmes

**Article 20**

The candidate must submit four copies of the portfolio to the supervisor.

The following provisions apply to candidates seeking to be tested on programme components from Bachelor or Master programmes:

The date for submitting the portfolio is at least four weeks after the date of registration. For the spring procedure, the portfolio must be submitted before 1 May. For the autumn procedure, the portfolio must be submitted before 1 December.

Graduate programmes

The following provisions apply to candidates seeking to be tested on programme components from graduate programmes:

The date for submitting the portfolio is no more than four weeks after the date of registration. For the spring procedure, the portfolio must be submitted before 1 March. For the autumn procedure, the portfolio must be submitted before 1 November.

**Article 21**

The institution confirms receipt by signing the 'Receipt of portfolio' form. This document is prepared in duplicate: one copy is to be retained by the candidate, and one copy is to be retained by the institution.

*Phase 3  
Assessment*

**Article 22**

§1 In the RPL procedure, the validating body uses the portfolio method and the associated criterion-based interview.

§2 As a supplement, the Assessment Committee may require the candidate to take a skills test.

*Who will assess the  
application?*

**Article 23**

§1 On behalf of the validating body, the institution appoints three assessors for each file for the assessment of the candidate.

- At least one assessor must be quite familiar with the portfolio method.
- At least one assessor must have a thorough, comprehensive overview of the programme.
- At least one assessor must have completed the assessors' training.
- At least one assessor must be from outside the department or the teaching group (university colleges) or the faculty (university).

The three assessors together constitute the Assessment Committee, and they appoint from amongst themselves a chair, who will sign the necessary documents on behalf of the Assessment Committee.

§2 The institution announces the composition of the Assessment Committee to the validating body. This announcement is accompanied by brief argumentation. The Assessment Committee acts on behalf of the validating body. The institution bears responsibility for the administration of the Assessment Committee.

*How the  
assessment takes place*

**Article 24**

§1 No later than two weeks before the assessment interview is held, the candidate is notified of the time of the interview and, if applicable, the nature and timing of the supplementary skills test.

§2 The assessment interview takes place based on the portfolio that has been submitted and proceeds according to the method of the criterion-based interview.

§3 The following provisions apply to candidates seeking to be tested on programme components from Bachelor or Master programmes:

The decision by the Assessment Committee is taken no later than eight weeks after the portfolio has been submitted. For the spring procedure, this decision will be taken before 5 June. For the autumn procedure the decision will be taken before 31 January.

The following provisions apply to candidates seeking to be tested on programme components from graduate programmes:

The decision by the Assessment Committee is taken no later than four weeks after the portfolio has been submitted. For the spring procedure, this decision will be taken before 1 May. For the autumn procedure the decision will be taken before 1 December.

*Bachelor and  
Master programmes*

*Graduate programmes*

**Article 25**

The assessment concerns only those competences described by the candidate on the 'Proof of competence' form.

**Article 26**

The Assessment Committee decides by majority vote which competences are to be recognised.

**Article 27**

§1 Based on the Assessment Committee's report of the assessment interview, the Assessment Committee formulates a decision on the aptitude test that describes and substantiates its decision. The 'Decision on the aptitude test' form is to be used for this purpose.

§2 This decision formulates the supporting argumentation for competences that have been assessed but not recognised.

§3 The decision states the appeal options available to the candidate.

*Phase 4  
Recognition*

**Article 28**

How you will be notified of the results

*Bachelor and Master programmes*

*Graduate programmes*

The Assessment Committee delivers the decision on the aptitude test to the candidate in writing by registered mail or with confirmation of receipt no later than two weeks after the decision of the Assessment Committee.

The following provisions apply to candidates seeking to be tested on programme components from Bachelor or Master programmes:

For the spring procedure, this takes place before 19 June. For the autumn procedure, this takes place before 16 February.

The following provisions apply to candidates seeking to be tested on programme components from graduate programmes:

For the spring procedure, this takes place before 15 May. For the autumn procedure, this takes place before 15 December.

#### **Article 29**

§1 The Assessment Committee delivers the competence certificate, if applicable, to the student, along with the decision on the aptitude test.

§2 The competence certificate must contain at least the following information:

- Identification data for the candidate
- The institution and authorised representative issuing the certificate on behalf of the validating body
- The educational programme and academic year that has been used as the reference framework; the methods applied
- The competences demonstrated by the aptitude test
- The date

#### **Article 30**

Where is a competence certificate valid?

A competence certificate compiled by an Assessment Committee of the AUHA is valid within all institutions of the AUHA.

#### **Article 31**

How to convert a competence certificate into exemptions

§1 A candidate may use the competence certificate to request exemptions in an institution of the AUHA.

§2 Such exemptions will not be granted automatically, even at the institution in which the RPL procedure was followed. The candidate must follow the exemption procedure as described in the Education and Examination Regulations of the institution in which the candidate wishes to request an exemption.

#### **Article 32**

*Phase 5 Appeal*

The candidate may file an objection with the policy secretary of the Association within seven calendar days after receiving written notice of the decision on the aptitude test.

In case of disagreement

#### **Article 33**

The policy secretary of the Association determines the admissibility of the objection. The policy secretary may hear a statement from the student.

#### **Article 34**

§1 If the objection is admissible, the candidate will be heard by the Assessment Committee. The Assessment Committee will then deliberate again, taking into account the information added to the deliberation file in response to the objection.

§2 All internally registered appeals must be substantiated and will result in either confirmation of the original decision or the revision of this decision.

§3 The candidate will be notified of the decisions referred to under the previous item within 20 calendar days after registration of the objection.

#### **Article 35**

Upon exhausting the internal appeals procedure, a candidate may turn to the Council for Disputes over Study Progress Decisions.

**Quality assurance**

#### **Article 36**

For the sake of the quality of the RPL procedure, all institutions of the Antwerp University Association are obliged to provide the following information to the validating body:

- All registration forms
- All decisions by the Assessment Committees
- The name and position of the assessors, with supporting argumentation

The Antwerp University Association stores these data in a register.

#### **Article 37**

§1 The institutions of the Antwerp University Association retains the forms used and a copy of the portfolio in a personal file for the candidate.

§2 The Antwerp University Association may request this information for purposes of quality control.

**Concluding provisions**

**Article 38**

These regulations enter into force on 1 September 2019.

These regulations were approved by the Executive Board of the Antwerp University Association on 21 March 2018