

APPROVED BY  
Decision No. SEN-N-5  
of January 26, 2022,  
of Vytautas Magnus University Senate

## DESCRIPTION OF POLICY ON ACADEMIC RECOGNITION OF COMPETENCES AND QUALIFICATIONS AT VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY

### I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. The Description of Policy on Academic Recognition of Competences and Qualifications at Vytautas Magnus University (hereinafter referred to as the “University”) shall govern the principles, responsibilities, and means of the implementation of the assessment and recognition of competences acquired during previous formal and non-formal learning.

2. The University’s policy on academic recognition shall cover the following areas: the recognition of qualifications acquired abroad, the recognition of competences acquired in partial studies, and the recognition of competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning.

3. The aim of the Description shall be to ensure adequate, transparent, and accessible recognition of acquired competences at the University in accordance with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and institutional cooperation practices.

4. The University’s policy on academic recognition shall focus on the consistent, smooth, accessible, and transparent management of recognition processes in pursuit of the objectives set out in the University Strategy.

5. Academic recognition shall be carried out in accordance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention, the Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania, the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania, the Law on Non-formal Adult Education and Continuous Learning of the Republic of Lithuania, subordinate legal acts and legal acts of the University regulating academic recognition processes.

6. The following key concepts shall be used in the Description:

**Academic recognition** – the assessment and recognition of competences or qualifications acquired through formal and non-formal education.

**Partial studies** – a period of a student’s studies at another higher education institution in Lithuania or abroad.

**Diploma** – a document certifying the qualification degree or the qualification degree and professional qualification acquired by a person, which is issued upon completion of the first cycle, second cycle or integrated studies.

**Competence** – a practically tested ability to use the acquired knowledge, skills, and other elements of competence in an integrated and targeted manner in various work or study situations, as well as the ability to make progress in professional and personal activities.

**Qualification** – the totality of competences after the acquisition of which a certain professional qualification or a professional qualification and a qualification degree (Bachelor's, Master's) are awarded on the completion of studies at an appropriate level.

**Study credit** – a unit of the volume of a study course by which learning outcomes and the student's working time are measured. 1 ECTS shall correspond to 26.67 hours of the student's working time.

**Learning outcomes** – the totality of knowledge and skills acquired during studies, the volume of which is defined in credits and the level of which is evaluated by grading.

## **II. BASIC PRINCIPLES OF POLICY ON ACADEMIC RECOGNITION AT THE UNIVERSITY**

7. To ensure a smooth and high-quality academic recognition process, the assessment and recognition of competences shall be based on the following principles:

7.1. **Principle of accessibility.** The University shall aim to enable all individuals to participate in the academic recognition process. Accessibility shall mean geographical accessibility of the site under assessment, the ensuring of equal opportunities, the clarification of the essence and specifics of the assessment procedure, the discussion of possible assessment results.

7.2. **Principle of flexibility.** The University shall seek to apply the assessment methodology which shall make it possible to assess the competences acquired by a person, regardless of where and how they were acquired; an opportunity shall be created to individualize study pathways for a person entering the higher education system from various backgrounds: other higher education institutions, practical activities, non-formal education institutions, other countries, etc.

7.3. **Principle of transparency and objectivity.** The University shall ensure that the competences acquired by a person are assessed in accordance with directives and recommendations at European and national level. Competences shall be assessed by aligning and combining different assessment methods and avoiding the assessor's subjective attitude to the

assessment procedures, criteria or to the person whose competences are being assessed. The person shall be provided with feedback on the decision taken and shall be given the opportunity to appeal.

7.4. **Principle of comparability.** Competences shall be assessed and recognized in accordance with the learning outcomes specified in the study program or study course concerned.

7.5. **Principle of voluntariness.** By voluntarily choosing to participate in the process of the assessment of competences, the person shall be responsible for the documents certifying the acquired competences and additional information submitted for assessment, shall be motivated, ready for the assessment procedure and, if he/she wishes to acquire a higher education qualification, he/she shall deliberately plan further studies at a higher education institution.

7.6. **Principle of cooperation.** To ensure transparent and flexible academic recognition, the University shall cooperate with all stakeholders: current and prospective students, graduates, social partners, other higher education institutions, networks of national academic recognition information centres and quality agencies.

7.7. **Principle of lawfulness.** When carrying out academic recognition, the University shall comply with the requirements of legal acts and with the recommendations and guidelines for recognition of the European Higher Education Area.

7.8. **Principle of equal opportunities.** In assessing the competences acquired by a person, there shall be no discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, language, religion, political opinion, national origin, ethnic or social origin, or any other ground unrelated to the essence of an academic qualification.

### **III. MAIN STAGES OF ACADEMIC RECOGNITION PROCESS**

8. Academic recognition shall be carried out in the following stages:

8.1. **Provision of information.** Persons shall be informed about the principles, the procedure and the conditions of the assessment, possible assessment results, and studies that meet individual needs. The person shall decide to participate in the assessment and recognition procedure. Information on the principles, procedures, responsible persons, and quality assurance of academic recognition shall be made publicly available.

8.2. **Provision of consultations.** Persons shall be consulted during the preparation for the assessment procedure; they shall be provided with a detailed presentation of the procedure for the assessment and recognition of the acquired competences and an explanation of how to prepare for it.

8.3. **Assessment.** The evidence of the acquired competences shall be analyzed, different assessment methods shall be applied to the assessment, and the compliance of the competences with the learning outcomes of the study program concerned shall be determined.

8.4. **Making of a decision (evaluation).** It shall be determined whether the evidence provided by the person is sufficient to confirm the acquired competences and/or qualifications. The decision on the recognized competences of the person and/or the validated study modules (courses) shall be made by the assessor or the assessment commission.

9. The University shall ensure the quality of academic recognition processes in each area through consistent and transparent planning, implementation, assessment, and improvement of processes and activities.

#### **IV. RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS ACQUIRED ABROAD**

10. Vytautas Magnus University was granted the right to carry out academic recognition of foreign qualifications by the Order No. V-589 of July 21, 2017, of the Minister of Education and Science “On Granting the Right to Vytautas Magnus University to Carry Out Academic Recognition of Education and Qualifications Related to Higher Education and Acquired Under Education Programs of Foreign Countries and International Organizations”.

11. The purpose of the assessment of qualifications acquired abroad shall be to assess, using various assessment methods, whether a qualification acquired abroad may be recognized as equivalent to secondary education provided in the Republic of Lithuania or to a higher education qualification of an appropriate level and to grant the right to enter studies at the University.

12. The focus of the assessment shall be qualifications acquired abroad which entitle a person to enter the first cycle, second cycle, or third cycle study programs.

13. The recognition of qualifications acquired abroad shall be carried out centrally in accordance with general or individual (in the absence of general) recommendations of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as the “SKVC”) and, where necessary, in consultation with responsible staff of the SKVC.

14. The assessment and recognition of qualifications acquired abroad shall be carried out at the University by specialists of the International Cooperation Department in accordance with general requirements.

15. The person shall be personally informed of the decision taken on whether or not he/she has been granted the right to enter studies at the University.

16. The quality assurance of the assessment of qualifications acquired abroad shall be guaranteed in cooperation with the SKVC. Each year, annual reports on the decisions taken on the recognition of qualifications shall be submitted to the SKVC.

## **V. RECOGNITION OF COMPETENCES ACQUIRED IN PARTIAL STUDIES**

17. The University shall recognize competences acquired in partial studies both according to a pre-agreed plan, when the student went to another higher education institution for partial studies, and according to a non-pre-agreed plan, when the student studied previously at the same or another institution.

18. The competences acquired and the learning outcomes achieved by the person who studied at another Lithuanian or foreign higher education institution under the agreement concluded between higher education institutions or the agreement on partial studies (*Erasmus*, double diploma, or other study exchange program) or according to the content of studies coordinated on another legal basis shall be validated by converting the evaluations received into the ECTS and validating them according to pre-agreed equivalents if no violations of the requirements of the agreement or another document by which the study plan was agreed are established in relation to the studied courses.

19. At the University, partial studies organized according to a pre-agreed plan shall be based on a learning agreement made between the student, the sending institution and the receiving institution. It shall provide for the obligations of each party and specify (before the mobility period) what courses will be studied by the student, whether the learning outcomes are appropriate, how and how many credits will be granted.

20. The decision on the recognition of competences and the validation of learning outcomes shall be formalized by issuing a document on the validation of the learning outcomes of partial studies. The titles of the validated study courses, their volume in credits and evaluations shall be recorded in the Diploma Supplement; in the case of the academic certificate, instead of the courses provided for in the study program.

21. The learning outcomes of a person who studied or is studying at another Lithuanian higher education institution or a foreign higher education institution according to an uncoordinated content of studies or as an unclassified student shall be validated after assessing the formal requirements for the validation of learning outcomes and their compliance with the requirements of the study program.

22. According to the procedure established by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania and the University, not more than 75 percent of the volume of the study program to be studied may be validated.

23. Competences acquired in partial studies and the achieved learning outcomes shall be assessed at the University by the curator appointed in the academic unit for validating learning outcomes.

## **VI. RECOGNITION OF COMPETENCES ACQUIRED THROUGH NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING**

24. To ensure the right of persons to lifelong learning and thereby increase their opportunities in the labor market, the University shall recognize competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning.

25. The University shall assess and recognize competences acquired in employment, unpaid or voluntary work, during internships, independent learning, leisure time.

26. To assess and recognize competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning, evidence of acquired competences shall be submitted.

27. Competences acquired by a person through non-formal and informal learning may be validated as part of the study program to be studied or being studied, but not more than 75% of the volume of the program.

28. After assessing knowledge, abilities, and skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning described in the learning outcomes of the study course(s), they shall be formalized by giving a grade, granting credits of the study course(s) concerned and issuing an academic certificate confirming this.

29. The assessment of competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning shall be carried out at the University by the organizer of the assessment of competences, the consultant and the expert, who shall assess achievements and determine competences.

## **VII. FINAL PROVISIONS**

30. Decisions on academic recognition may be appealed in accordance with the provisions approved by the University Senate in the descriptions of the procedures for academic recognition.