

# Recognition of Prior Learning in practice – example from Malmö University

Refugees impact on Bologna reform  
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MALMÖ HÖGSKOLA

# RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING/VALIDATION

According to Malmö university

Purposes within higher education in Sweden:

- eligibility/admissions process (applicants)
- crediting/progression/exemption of part of, or the whole course or programme (students)

Malmö university has several years of experience when it comes to RPL/validation:

- in the admissions process (quality assured process)
- crediting within some study programmes, above all Teachers Education
- special assignments on governmental mandate, mostly Teachers Education
- self assessment towards labour market through for example Aspirantutbildningen (programme for students with a foreign academic degree)

# RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING/VALIDATION

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The current refugee situation has brought life into recognition of prior learning, throughout society. But...

The refugee situation shouldn't be a prerequisite for this work, Instead this work should be done for all possible target groups and is on the contrary a prerequisite for the refugee situation to develop positively in Sweden, with regard to both integration and competence provision.

The validation process demands

1. More time and resources (guidance/mapping/assessing)
2. Process structures for quality assurance and legitimacy

# RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING/VALIDATION

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## CHALLENGES

- On operating level generally the work isn't seen as part of the assignment of HEI (there are exemptions)
- Lack of supporting structures
- Insufficient knowledge regarding work procedures/practices (how to map and assess knowledge and proficiency obtained elsewhere than within HEI)
- No monitoring of work done within the assignment

...which have resulted in:

Low activity

Uneven activity, lack of equivalence/equality

Too little information to applicants/students about the opportunities

# RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING/VALIDATION

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## CHALLENGES

Resources haven't been earmarked locally at the institutions  
(although included in the funds)

...which has resulted in:

Teachers/academic subject experts (that are inevitable in the validation process)  
and others that are involved in the process often experience RPL as a new activity  
that is not being funded

...which has resulted in:

Hard to motivate teachers and other involved to do the work, when  
the work shedule is already cram-full

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## CHALLENGES

Due to the national resource allocation system the universities lose performance related funds when crediting

...which is a problem for:

Work that takes extra time (crediting on the basis of prior learning)

Many groups in society (for example refugees with insufficient documents) need even more than what is within the assignment of HEI:

... advance notice – assessment and information about possibilities for crediting even *before* being a student (obvious in guidance cooperation project between HEI in southern Sweden and the Public Employment Agency)

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**ACTIONS** being taken on a national level (very important):

- Durable structures are to be built (Swedish Council for Higher Education and National Delegation for Validation)
- Monitoring is made possible (Swedish Higher Education Authority)

The inflow of refugees has confronted society: the competence must be utilised!

Crucial system related problems are being flagged by National Delegation for Validation :

- lack of economic incentives
- need of assessment/information on forehand

# RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING/VALIDATION

According to Malmö university

**ACTIONS** being taken by Malmö university:

**In the admissions procedure - assessment for eligibility (since 2009):**

Established process

”Validation guidance” provided for applicants while they are working with text supporting the application

Close cooperation Admission´s dept– Study and Career Guidance dept

Admission´s Board – representatives from all faculties, assessors with competence (both individual matters and development work)

Validation coordinator (Study and Careers Adviser)



# RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING/VALIDATION

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**ACTIONS** being taken by Malmö university:

The applicant describes (in text) his/her competence in relation to statements, using supporting instructions/questions.

Even though the applicant is requested to describe experiences, focus is on what has been learned, what competence came from the experience, not the experience itself. Learning outcomes!

The assessment/validation is made in relation to the study programme or course applied for.

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According to Malmö university

**ACTIONS** being taken by Malmö university:

*From the instructions:*

## **The English language**

The list below describes the knowledge and language skills needed to benefit from courses and programmes conducted in English.

*I can...*

- *understand spoken English and comprehend long oral presentations such as lectures in English*
- *discuss different topics and contribute oral comments on course literature and other texts, as well as actively participate in discussions by arguing, expressing knowledge and refuting other people's arguments with nuance*
- *use a varied vocabulary which is appropriately adapted to different audiences and contexts*
- *read and comprehend fiction and long pieces of non-fiction of varying kinds and ranges of difficulty*
- *summarize the contents of a text orally as well as in writing in a clear and well-structured manner...*

# RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING/VALIDATION

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**ACTIONS** being taken by Malmö university:

Procedure:

Describe what experiences gave you these abilities, no matter if it was acquired from for example formal training, workplace experience, or general life experience.

*Try to be as specific as you can when describing in what way you acquired, but also practised the knowledge and proficiency within the different occupations.*

All documents that support the fact that you acquired the knowledge and proficiency referred to, are of interest, so please send attested copies of these. The more specific the documents are the better.

# RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING/VALIDATION

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**ACTIONS** being taken by Malmö university:

Write a summary from an original longer text and send in both the summary and the original text.

If possible, send in texts in English that you produced within the occupations that you refer to.

# RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING/VALIDATION

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**ACTIONS** being taken by Malmö university:

## Supporting structure for validation processes at Malmö University

Decision 24 april 2017 by Vice Chancellor on the basis of a report where the structures were being presented.

Applying for funding 2017-18 (Swedish Council for Higher Education) to implement the structure and using experiences from that when building the national structure

- Durable, longlasting
- Adaptable for all recognition of prior learning at the university (eligibility and crediting)
- Adaptable for all applicants and students

# RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING/VALIDATION

According to Malmö university

**ACTIONS** being taken by Malmö university:

## What is being clarified in the new supporting process structure at Malmö University?

- Established, agreed process (also for crediting)
- Roles, responsibility, what competence is needed
- What mapping is about
- What assessment is about
- Mapping made by validation guidance specialists (very important part)
- Assessment made by teachers on the basis of the mapping

# RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING/VALIDATION

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**ACTIONS** being taken by Malmö university:

## **What is being clarified in the new supporting process structure at Malmö University?**

- Project group (all faculties represented) for development work and inspiration/exchange of RPL practices
- Seminars for development work (RPL assessment seminar for teachers in October)
- Coordination regarding application forms, information, instructions
- Monitoring of the implementation of the structure with regard to efficiency, change of work load etc
- Recognition of prior learning/validation IS part of the university's assignment, but we should continue to try to contribute to changes that are necessary on both a national, regional and local level

**Thank you!**

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