

ORDER

Decree-Law 74/2006 of 24 March as amended by Decree-Laws 107/2008 of 25 June and 230/2009 of 14 September and 115/2013 of 7 August, which approved the Regulations for Graduate Diplomas and Degrees, sets out in article 45 that, in order to enable further studies towards a university diploma or degree, higher education institutions provide recognition of prior learning and professional experience towards their degrees. Article 45-A sets out that the recognition process is subject to regulation approved by the statutorily appointed body of the higher education institution and published in the Official Journal of the Portuguese Republic (Series II) and on the institution's website.

Pursuant to Article 43 (1n) of IPT by-laws, approved by Normative Order 17/2009 of 30 April, the President of the IPT is responsible for enacting the present Regulation.

Thus, under the provisions of the abovementioned regulation and after consultation with the Technical-Scientific Committees of the Schools of the IPT, and pursuant to Article 1(k) of IPT by-laws, I order that:

1 - The Regulation on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) of the Instituto Politécnico de Tomar (included as an annex to this document as an integral part of it) be approved.

2 - The regulation shall immediately be ordered for publication in the Official Journal (series II) and posted on the IPT's website;

3 - This Regulation shall become effective after publication.

Tomar, 29 August 2016.

The President of the Instituto Politécnico de Tomar (Eugénio Manuel Carvalho de Pina de Almeida, PhD)

Academic Regulation No. 3/IPT/2016 Regulation on Recognition of Prior Learning

TITLE I

Rules on recognition of prior learning

CHAPTER I

General Provisions

Article 1

Goal and Scope

1 - This regulation lays down the procedures for recognition of prior learning towards IPT degree programmes, in accordance with Article 45 of Decree-Law 74/2006 of March 24 as amended by Decree-Laws 107/2008 of 25 June and 115/2013 of 07 August, namely:

- a) Studies completed as part of degree-awarding programmes;
- b) Studies completed as part of Post-secondary Diploma Programmes (CTeSP);
- c) Studies completed as part of Post-secondary Certificate Programmes (CET);

- d) Units/modules completed as part of degree programmes offered by higher education institutions;
- e) Professional experience;
- f) Other studies completed.

2 - Any student enrolled in a degree programme offered by the IPT may apply for credit towards the degree programme in which he or she is enrolled, corresponding to the qualifications obtained, as set out in the preceding paragraph.

Article 2

Requirements and effects of the recognition of prior learning

1 - Recognition of prior learning is based on the level of credits and the subject area in which they were earned.

2 - Once the legal requirements and the provisions in this Regulation are met, recognition should be granted through a number of credits that matches a whole number of exempted units/modules required for the award.

3 - Parts of units or modules shall not be considered for recognition.

4 - Where a unit/module is credited through recognition of prior learning, it will be considered as successfully completed for the purpose of pursuing studies in the relevant degree programme, with the certificates and diploma supplement mentioning that it was deemed equivalent to a unit/module within a degree-awarding programme, a CTeSP programme, a CET or a professional course, as applicable.

5 - The provisions in the preceding paragraph shall not prevent students from signing-up for a retake to improve a mark on a unit/module completed through RPL, in accordance with applicable academic regulations.

6 - RPL is not allowed to be used for successfully completed units or modules forming part of the curriculum of the degree programme towards which credit is sought.

7. For RPL purposes, any qualification earned through another credit award scheme shall not be considered.

8 - The technical-scientific councils of the Schools within the IPT may specify units or modules in which, due to their specific nature, RPL is not allowed.

CHAPTER II

Recognition of prior qualifications taken as part of degree or diploma awarding programmes

Article 3

General principle

The schools within IPT credit prior qualifications achieved in national or foreign higher education institutions towards their undergraduate and graduate programmes, regardless of whether they have been taken in the framework of the Bologna Process or before that.

Article 4
Students readmitted to a programme of study

In the case of readmitted students:

- a) Any qualifications obtained in the same or in a previous edition of the degree are counted towards the degree;
- b) The amount of credits required for earning the academic degree shall not exceed the difference between the amount of credits required for the award and the amount of credits transferred and validated from previous education and training;
- c) In duly substantiated cases where, due to the specific nature of the content of some units/modules, it is not possible, according to abovementioned provisions, to use all the credits previously earned, the amount of credits to be counted towards the degree shall not exceed the amount of credits transferred by more than 10%.

Article 5
Students admitted per institution/study programme pair

In the case of students admitted by transfer between institution/programme, recognition of prior qualifications shall consider the level of training and the subject areas in which they have been earned, thus ensuring that all training complying with the requirements of the degree programme concerned is credited through RPL.

Article 6
ERASMUS Students

The units/modules to be recognised under the Erasmus mobility scheme are those indicated in the Student's Learning Agreement examined and approved by the Technical-Scientific Council on the basis of a duly reasoned opinion of the Director of the degree programme concerned.

Article 7
Training completed as part of post-secondary diploma programmes (CTeSP)

1 - Training completed as part of CTeSP programmes is credited towards first-cycle degrees as approved by the relevant Technical-Scientific Council up to a maximum of 60 credits.

2 - Training under article 25 of Decree-Law 43/2014 of 18 March (complementary training taken as part of CTeSP programmes by students without a high school diploma or equivalent qualification) shall not be credited towards the degree.

Article 8
Units/modules taken individually

1 - Students who have completed individual units/modules as part of a degree programme offered at the IPT may, through RPL, be exempted from attending the said units/modules.

2 – The credit mentioned in the preceding paragraph shall not exceed 50% of the total amount of credits required to complete the concerning degree.

Article 9
Classification of the units/modules claimed through RPL

The units/modules credited towards the degree pursuant to the preceding articles shall maintain the grades obtained at the higher education institutions in which they have been completed as follows:

- a) In the case of units/modules completed at Portuguese higher education institutions, the

grade of the credited components is the one awarded by the higher education institution in which they have been completed.
- b) Where units/modules have been completed at foreign higher education establishments, the grade for any credits gained via RPL shall
 - i. be converted according to the European Qualifications Framework;
 - ii. be the grade awarded by the foreign establishment when it adopts the Portuguese grading scale;
 - iii. be the one resulting from proportional conversion of the grade into the Portuguese grading scale, where the foreign HEI uses a different scale and does not use ECTS credits.

CHAPTER III

**RECOGNITION OF STUDIES PURSUED AS PART OF POST-SECONDARY
CERTIFICATE PROGRAMMES (CET), UNITS TAKEN INDIVIDUALLY AT
HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS, PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE OR
OTHER QUALIFICATIONS**

Article 10
**Training completed as part of post-secondary certificate programmes
(CET)**

1 – Recognition of training completed as part of CET programmes is subject to approval by the Technical-Scientific Council as follows:

- a) It is counted towards a first-cycle degree up to 35 credits;
- b) It is counted towards a CTeSP programme up to one third of the total credits of the award.

2 - Training under article 16 of Decree-Law 88/2006 of 23 May (complementary training taken as part of CET programmes by students without a high school diploma or equivalent qualification) shall not be credited.

3 - As a rule, and subject to the provisions in the following paragraph, the units/modules completed as part of a post-secondary diploma programme (CTeSP) or credit gained in a post-secondary certificate programme (CET) and credited towards a first-cycle degree via RPL will be given a grade between 0 and 20 calculated according to the criteria set out by the relevant Technical-Scientific Council.

4 - Alternatively, and in cases duly substantiated by the competent Technical-Scientific Council, a "PASS" grade may be awarded to some units/modules instead of numerical grades, in which case they will not count towards the overall grade of the degree.

Article 11
Training completed as part of postgraduate programmes

1 - Units/modules completed as part of a postgraduate programme may be deemed equivalent to units/modules within an IPT programme, in which case students will be exempted from attending them.

2 - For the purposes of this rule, by postgraduate programme is meant a course of study that accepts candidates holding a first or a second-cycle degree or individuals who meet the prerequisites needed to access the second-cycle, even though they do not hold a first-cycle qualification.

3 - Grades of the units/modules gained through RPL will be transferred.

4 - The number of credits mentioned in the preceding paragraphs may not exceed 50% of the total number of credits required for the award.

Article 12
Professional Experience and Other Training

1 - IPT schools recognise, through RPL, other qualifications not covered by chapter II and articles 10 and 11 up to one third of the total credits of the programme towards which credit will be transferred.

2 - IPT schools recognise, through RPL, duly proven professional experience of more than three years in a relevant subject area of the programme towards which credit will be transferred, up to one third of the credits required for the award.

CHAPTER IV
CREDIT TRANSFER LIMIT

Article 13
Credit transfer limit

All the ECTS credits awarded under the previous Chapter and Article 7 of this Regulation may not exceed two thirds of the total credits required for the award.

TITLE II
CREDIT TRANSFER PROCEDURES

CHAPTER I
DEADLINES AND RELEVANT COMPETENT BODIES

Article 14
Deadline for applying to RPL credit

The application for the recognition of prior learning (which should be only one in case there is more than one request from those referred to in paragraph 1 of article 1) must be accompanied by the relevant documents and submitted to the academic services division within 15 working days after annual enrolment or registration.

Article 15
Consideration and decision on RPL applications

1 - It is the responsibility of the Technical-Scientific Council of each IPT School to decide on the applications for the award and transfer of credits towards the programme the student is registered for.

2 - Each degree programme taught at IPT Schools has an RPL committee comprised of the Programme Director and two faculty members appointed by the relevant Technical-Scientific Council on a proposal by the Programme Director.

3 - It is the responsibility of the RPL Committees to examine RPL and credit transfer applications to prepare the decision proposal that will be forwarded to the competent Technical-Scientific Council for consideration and approval, and eventual module exemptions and respective grade, should RPL be approved.

CHAPTER II
PROCEDURES

Article 16
Application documentation

1 - RPL applications must be addressed to the chairman of the relevant Technical-Scientific Council and submitted to IPT's academic services division using an approved form.

2 - Applications pursuant to the provisions in the preceding paragraph, duly dated and signed by the stakeholders in person or their mandated representatives, must be accompanied by the documents described in the following paragraphs under pain of being rejected.

3 - The following documents must accompany the application for the recognition of training undertaken as part of programmes of study leading to a degree or diploma:

- a) Certificate issued by the home educational establishment attesting completion of the units/modules subject to RPL as well as the respective grades and completion dates;
- b) For every unit/module subject to RPL, the course specifications document including name of institution, name of school, name of programme, name of unit or module, academic year, course outcomes, subject contents, contact hours, total workload and ECTS credits (if applicable).

4 - For documents issued by a foreign HE institution, a translation certified by the competent authority of the issuing country may be required.

5 - RPL applications for units/modules within degree programmes taught at the IPT are exempted from providing the documents mentioned in 3(b) above.

6 - The following documents must accompany the application for recognition of professional experience or other qualifications:

- a) Curriculum vitae of the applicant;
- b) Portfolio prepared by the applicant containing a brief outline of the relevant information for RPL purposes, notably:
 - i. Description of accumulated experience including when, where and in what context it was obtained, accompanied by supporting documents;
 - ii. Brief description of learning outcomes and acquired skills and abilities;
 - iii. Assignments, projects and other documentary evidence;
 - iv. Supporting documents demonstrating the qualifications obtained by the applicant;
 - v. Listing of the units/modules towards which the professional experience or other qualifications may be credited.

7 - Where there is reasonable doubt as to the authenticity of the supporting documents, the originals of the copied documents may be requested for comparison.

8 - Submission of the application is subject to the payment of a fee according to the IPT's fee schedule in force.

Article 17 **The RPL process**

1 - The application for credit award and transfer submitted to IPT's academic services will be referred to the RPL Committee of the relevant programme for consideration and drafting of the proposal for decision.

2 - The RPL Committee may request, from the applicant or other source, further information with relevance to the process.

3 - To analyse and give an opinion on an application for recognition of prior learning, the Committee shall consult with the academic staff responsible for the units/modules in question.

4 - The analysis of an application for recognition of professional skills will be based on the result of the assessment process defined and organised by the RPL Committee using one of the following methods:

- a) An assessment method similar to that used to assess the units/modules under recognition;
- b) Assessment based on the preparation and presentation of a project, an assignment or series of assignments;
- c) Assessment based on the presentation and defence of the applicant's portfolio;
- d) Assessment based on the combination of the various methods.

5 - The units/modules credited via RPL that have been assessed using only the assessment method in c) above will be given a grade based on criteria set out by the Technical-Scientific Council or, alternatively and in duly substantiated cases, a "PASS" grade may be awarded to units/modules, in which case they will not count towards the weighted average final mark.

6 - Once in possession of all the elements required to assess the process, the RPL Committee should examine it in detail, draft the decision proposal and forward it to the Technical-Scientific Council within 15 working days.

7 - The Technical-Scientific Council shall, within no more than 10 days after receipt, decide (provisionally) on each application referred by the RPL Committees, accompanied by the outcome of the examination, and shall communicate its decision to the academic services that will notify the applicant of a preliminary hearing.

8 - The applicant may, within 5 working days after receipt of the notification in the preceding paragraph, make a written formal request to the Chairman of the Technical-Scientific Council to review the decision.

9 - Upon receipt of the formal request, the Technical-Scientific Council shall, within 10 working days, make a final decision thereon considering the grounds indicated by the complainant.

10 - Once the deadlines mentioned in Article 8 have elapsed (appealed decisions) or in Article 9 (non-appealed decisions) the student must pay the RPL fee within 10 working days to the amount set out in IPT's schedule of fees and charges.

11 - The RPL procedure should be planned so as to be completed and decided until the end of the first term.

Article 18

The legal effects of RPL

Recognition will only become effective upon proof of payment of the RPL fee, and the lack of payment within the prescribed period will result in the expiration of the technical-scientific council's decision which will lose legal effect.

Article 19

Final Provisions

1 - This Regulation shall enter into force after its approval by the President of the Polytechnic Institute of Tomar and publication in the Official Journal of the Portuguese Republic.

2 - This regulation will be available on IPT's website.

3 - Inconsistencies and omissions shall be resolved by order of the President of IPT, after consultation with the Technical-Scientific Councils and the School Directors.