

Credit Transfer for Open/Online Graduate Programs: Annex 10 Sweden

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3.9 Other countries (and institutions)

This report contains over double the number of case studies initially envisaged (24 not 10). However, if TRU wishes to go deeper into PLAR issues at master's level, there are three additional countries (Ireland, South Africa and Sweden) and seven mini-case studies which could be studied in more detail and which even at an overview level have yielded particularly useful results. The mini-case studies are:

1. Cork Institute of Technology, Ireland
2. University of Limerick, Ireland
3. Dublin City University, Ireland
4. IT Sligo, Ireland
5. UNISA, South Africa
6. **Uppsala University, Sweden**
7. **University of Gävle, Sweden.**

3.9.3 Sweden (Uppsala, Gävle)

Sweden has an effective and pervasive credit transfer system at/before first degree level. These are described in the publication *The Higher Education Ordinance*¹ of the Swedish Council for Higher Education (Chapter 6, Sections 6-8) as well as embedded into many universities' own admissions guidelines.

For convenience we reproduce these in full:

Credit transfer

Section 6

If a student at a higher education institution in Sweden has successfully completed a higher education course or study programme, she or he is entitled to transfer the credits awarded for a course or study programme at another higher education institution. *This does not apply, however, if there is a substantial difference between these courses or study programmes.*

¹ <https://www.uhr.se/en/start/laws-and-regulations/Laws-and-regulations/The-Higher-Education-Ordinance/#chapter6>

The same applies for students who have successfully completed a course or study programme

1. at a university or higher education institution in Denmark, Finland, Iceland or Norway or a signatory to the Council of Europe's Convention of 11 April 1997 on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Swedish Treaty Series 2001:46), or
2. at *Nordiska högskolan för folkhälsovetenskap* (NHV — The Nordic School of Public Health) – Ordinance (2006:1053).

Section 7

A student is entitled to transfer credits from a course or study programme other than that laid down in Section 6 if the nature and extent of the knowledge and skills cited by the student are such that they correspond on the whole to the course or study programme for which the credits are to be recognised. *A student may also be given credit for corresponding knowledge and skills acquired in a vocational or professional capacity* – Ordinance (2006:1053).

Section 8

The higher education institution shall assess whether credits can be awarded for the prior course or study programme or professional or vocational experience.

Credits may only be awarded to those who are students unless otherwise provided by statute or ordinance – Ordinance (2010:1064).

While this covers graduate programmes also, less is known generally about this, and there is more discretion given to the institutions and entities or people within it. In particular “If you wish to continue studying at Master’s level, it is the HEI that makes decisions regarding eligibility and admissions”.²

3.9.3a Uppsala University

For example, Uppsala University is an elite university which recently absorbed Gotland University, a substantial online provider, so this would be a good place to start.³ Uppsala University has a long list of over 40 international master’s programmes taught in English.⁴ (Almost all are 120 ECTS but a few are as short as 60.) The ones we checked all seem to have the standard admissions requirement of a first degree. On the other hand the university has a Transfer of Credit Form⁵ which covers Master as well as Bachelor degrees and a useful summary of their transfer credit rules:

² <https://www.uhr.se/en/start/recognition-of-foreign-qualifications/before-you-apply/i-want-to-study-in-sweden/credit-transfers/>

³ See for example “The Swedish Master Project: The introduction of the second cycle at three Swedish universities” – http://www.fba.uu.se/digitalAssets/128/a_128306-f_master.pdf

⁴ <https://www.uu.se/en/admissions/master/masterprogrammes/>

⁵ https://www.uu.se/digitalAssets/274/c_274702-l_1-k_tg-eng-webb.pdf

Transfer of credits is always made towards a degree. There are two types of degrees; Professional degrees⁶ (a special list applies)⁷ and General degrees (*högskoleexamen*, *kandidatexamen*, *magisterexamen*⁸ and *masterexamen*).⁹

Uppsala University, according to a Vice Chancellor's decision from July 1 1993 and February 19 2008, applies the following local regulations towards transfer of credit:

A) PROFESSIONAL DEGREES

- 1) If you want to transfer credit for a part of a course within a professional degree, the lecturer/teacher who acts as the examiner of the course makes that decision. Contact the department in charge of that particular subject.
- 2) Decisions towards transfer of credit from any Swedish higher education for a whole course are taken by the Faculty Board of the particular course, but may also be delegated.
- 3) Decisions towards transfer of credit from any foreign higher education are decided by the Graduation Office within the Student Affairs and Academic Registry Division, following a delegation from the Vice Chancellor. Contact the Graduation Office directly (see below for address).

B) GENERAL DEGREES

- 1) Transfer of credit towards a part of a course is decided by the examiner of that particular course. Contact the department in charge of that particular subject.
- 2) Transfer of credit for a whole course as part of a general degree is decided by the Graduation Office, following a delegation from the Vice Chancellor. Contact the Graduation Office directly.

3.9.3b University of Gävle

In the other half of the split Swedish HE sector, *Högskolan i Gävle* (the University of Gävle) has very similar rules to Uppsala University, but with some interesting additional clarifications in their publication *Transfer of Swedish and Foreign University Credits*.¹⁰

If you want to include credits for education outside the higher education system, such as older education or education provided by another education provider, this must be assessed. What is assessed is whether this education can be considered equivalent to higher education....

⁶ <http://www.studera.nu/startpage/road-to-studies/i-have-an-academic-degree-what-do-i-do-now/professional-degree-and-recognition-in-sweden/>

⁷ <https://www.uhr.se/en/start/recognition-of-foreign-qualifications/before-you-apply/i-want-to-work-in-sweden/regulated-professions/>

⁸ <https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magisterexamen> – magister degree – 60 ECTS, like a postgraduate diploma

⁹ [https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masterexamen_\(svensk_examen\)](https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masterexamen_(svensk_examen)) – masters degree, 120 ECTS

¹⁰ <http://www.hig.se/Ext/En/University-of-Gavle/Organisation/Hogskolans-gemensamma-forvaltning/Avdelningen-for-utbildningsstod/Division-of-Educational-Support/Degree-Certificates/Transfer-of-Swedish-and-Foreign-University-Credits.html>

There is no general restriction on how much of a qualification can be comprised of transferred credits, *as long as at least one course* is from the higher education institution which issues the degree.

A decision on transferring credits is valid [only] *at the higher education institution at which the decision has been made.*

At the University of Gävle there are *no separate local regulations on maximum limits for transferring credits* for courses studied.