

Non- State Higher Education Circular No. 02/2020

My No. HE/NS/03/379
Non – State Higher Education Division
Ministry of Education
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The Chief Executive Officer
Degree Awarding Non- State Higher Education Institutes

Guidelines on Recognition of Prior Learning for Lateral Entry

This circular provides guidelines with regard to recognizing prior learning in order to transfer earned credits based on a Diploma or a Higher Diploma level qualifications to a Bachelor’s Honours degree programme, allowing a student to lateral entry into the second or third year of the said degree programme.

02. The Degree Awarding Institutes offering the Bachelor’s Honours degree programme must seek initial approval for any **Lateral Entry Agreement** based on a Diploma or a Higher Diploma qualification from the Minister in charge of the subject of higher education. In order to consider lateral entry approval, the Degree Awarding Institute must submit a comprehensive report to the Ministry of the Minister in-charge of the subject of higher education (Hereinafter referred to as ‘Ministry’), evaluating and mapping courses in the sub-degree level qualification to the approved Bachelor’s Honours degree programme, in terms of relevance to the approved course structure, the volume of learning and course learning outcomes.

03. Hence, following principles are introduced to be considered when implementing a lateral entry agreement by any recognized Degree Awarding Institute approved by the Ministry in-charge of the subject of Higher Education under Section 25A of the Universities Act No. 16 of 1978.


3.1. Decisions regarding admission of students should be separate from decisions regarding Recognition of Prior Learning. The admissions process that decides whether students are eligible to enter a particular programme of study should be based on the minimum admission requirements stipulated by the university in accordance with Sri Lanka Quality Framework 2015, and approved by the University Grant Commission. Students admitted to a programme of study after fulfilling approved entry requirements may be considered for Recognition of Prior Learning in order to determine which individual modules/ course units may be credited based on prior learning, and resultant advanced placement.

- 3.2. Not more than 50% of the total volume of credits required for the qualification to be awarded should be considered under Recognition of Prior Learning (e.g. 45 of 90 credits for a Bachelor’s degree or 60 of 120 credits required for a Bachelor’s Honours degree). Thus a minimum of 50% of the total volume of credits must be completed at the university awarding the qualification.
- 3.3. Course exemptions based on Recognition of Prior Learning should not be grant for any of the course credits at the highest level pertaining to an award. Eg. The fourth year of a Bachelor’s Honours Degree.
- 3.4. A limit must be placed on the time period for which Recognition of Prior Learning is permitted. It is recommended that RPL should be considered for not more than 10 years from the date of achieving the relevant learning outcomes.

04. When a Lateral Entry Agreement is to be implemented by any Degree Awarding Institute recognized in terms of the Section 25A of the Universities Act No. 16 of 1978, the guidelines to be followed is recognized a mentioned below.

- 4.1. The Degree Awarding Institutes offering a Bachelor’s/Bachelor’s Honours degree programme must seek initial approval from the Ministry for Lateral Entry Agreement to that programme based on a same focus area Diploma or a Higher Diploma.
- 4.2. Lateral Entry Agreement is considered only for Diploma and Higher Diploma qualifications offered by a Higher Education Institute, incorporated by an Act of Parliament or recognized by the Ministry.
- 4.3. To initiate the Lateral Entry Agreement, the Degree Awarding Institutes must submit a comprehensive report to the Ministry by evaluating course descriptions and grading scales for course equivalency and establishing course-mapping in the Diploma/Higher Diploma qualification to the approved Bachelor’s/ Bachelor’s Honours degree programme in terms of, the volume of learning and course learning outcomes that would enable the Ministry to determine the suitability of the request.
- 4.4. Two types of Lateral Entry Agreements are possible:
 - 4.4.1. 1+3 model or 1+2 Model – In this type, students who have successfully completed a Diploma level qualification can be directly admitted to the second year of Bachelor’s Honours degree programme. In case the courses of sub-degree level qualification do not map entirely to the first-year 30 credits of Bachelor’s Honours degree, the students are required to fulfil the first-year deficiency before starting the second - year. Students are required to fulfil academic requirements for the remaining three years of the four-year program at the Degree Awarding Institute.

- 4.4.2. 2+2 model/ 2+1 model – In this type, students who have successfully completed a Higher Diploma level qualification can be directly admitted to the third year of Bachelor’s Honours degree programme. In case the courses of sub-degree level qualification do not map entirely to the first and second year 60 credits of Bachelor’s Honours degree, the students are required to fulfil the deficiency before starting the third-year. Students are required to fulfil academic requirements for the remaining two years of the four-year program at the Degree Awarding Institute.
 - 4.5. Even though the courses transferred/exempted under the Lateral Entry Agreement are counted towards Bachelor’s Honours degree requirements, their grades are not used in calculating the semester GPA or the cumulative GPA. A grade of “CT” is assigned in the student transcript of Degree Awarding Institute for each course completed under the Diploma/Higher Diploma level qualification.
 - 4.6. The Ministry will grant the approval for the Lateral Entry Agreement request of Degree Awarding Institute. However if any complication occur the approval will be based on the recommendation of a Review Panel of subject experts appointed by the Specified Authority.
 - 4.7. Once the Lateral Entry Agreement of a Degree Awarding Institute is approved, the Degree Awarding Institutes can admit students who have completed the Diploma/Higher Diploma qualification to the respective higher level provided they meet the minimum admission requirements to the degree programme stipulated by the Ministry.
05. This circular is issued as per the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Accreditation and Quality Assurance (SCAQA) given on 28.07.2020 at its 66th meeting.



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Secretary/ Specified Authority