



UNIVERSITY OF
GOTHENBURG



UNIVERSITY WEST

RPL in Sweden University of Gothenburg & University West

PERNILLA HULTBERG & SUSANNE RATH, FEBRUARY 2021



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Today's Agenda

Introduction of participants

Croatian legal framework and history of RPL

Swedish legal framework and history of RPL

RPL at Gothenburg University

Validation Network West

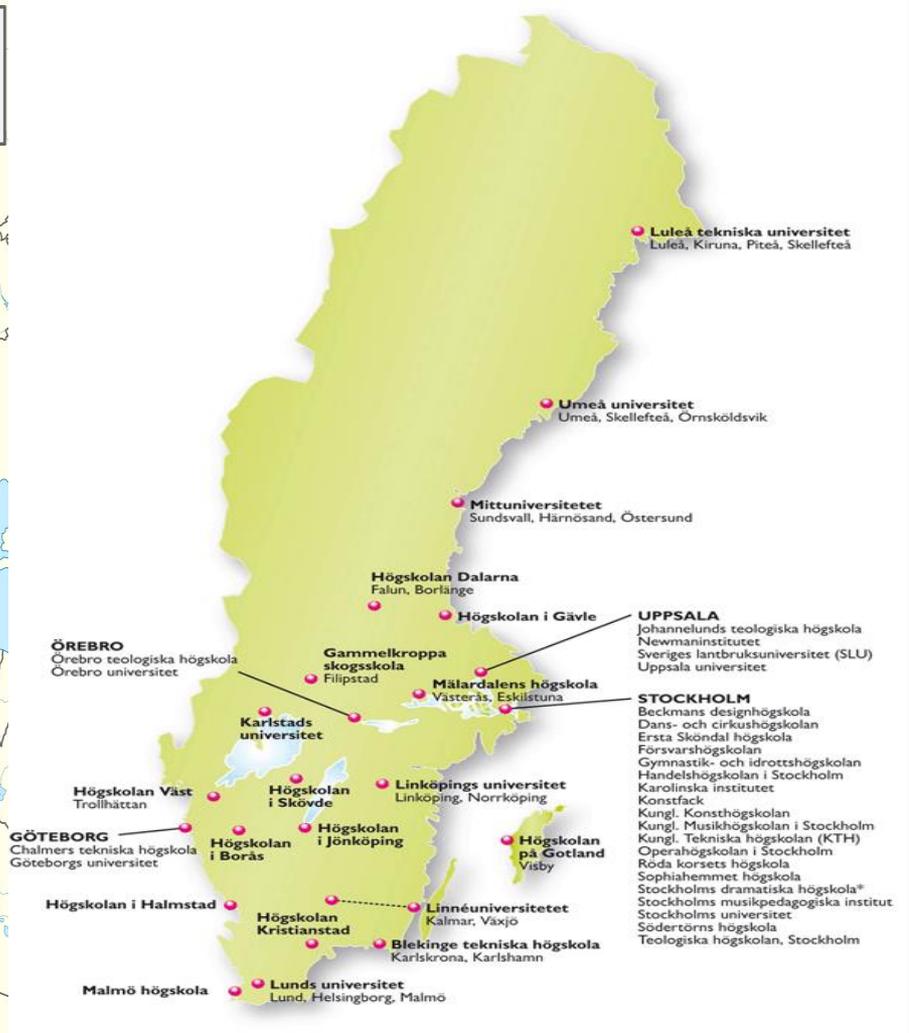
RPL at University West – a practical example

How do we make it work?

Complexity & challenges

Discussions

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University of Gothenburg

- Developed in **1891**
- Consist of **8** faculties and **38** departments (“institutions”)
- Large number of research and centres of expertise that span across several academic disciplines
- Around **49 000** students
- **6 000** staff - one of the largest universities in Northern Europe



University West and Trollhättan

University West and Trollhättan



University West in short

- Founded in 1990
- Four Faculties, 21 departments including T/A
- About 700 employees
- 27 programmes at undergraduate level
- 17 programmes at advanced level
- ~ 200 courses in a wide range of areas
- ~ 13.0000 students whereof 5000 full time students
- Research environments in:
 - Production technology
 - Child and Youth Studies
 - Learning in and for the new working life (WiL)
- **UW profile since 2002 - Work Integrated Learning – WiL**
UW is founded on the principle that knowledge is acquired everywhere, not only in institutions of higher learning. Integrating work situations into advanced study programmes exemplifies the important relationship between the academy and the outside world. UW is in a phase and process of WiL-certifying programmes.

Swedish history of RPL

2001

A governmental investigation, followed by amendments in the Higher Education Ordinance (HEO) in 2003 where RPL for access became mandatory

2004

National delegation I (2004 – 2007) - to promote RPL 2004

2009

Report from the apex body of HEI's ("UHR") – little progress since 2001

2015

National delegation II (2015 – 2019) – to promote a national strategy for validation in all sectors, including HEI's. Still waiting for the outcome

2016-2018

National RPL-procejt for HEI's - to support RPL, develop reliable methods, guidelines



The European Higher Education Area *in 2015:*

Bologna Process

Implementation Report



YEREVAN COMMUNIQUÉ

We, the Ministers, meeting in Yerevan on 14-15 May 2015, are proud to recognize that the vision which inspired our predecessors in Bologna has given rise to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), where 47 countries with different political, cultural and academic traditions cooperate on the basis of open dialogue, shared goals and common commitments. Together we are engaged in a process of voluntary convergence and coordinated reform of our



I

(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

RECOMMENDATIONS

COUNCIL

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION

of 20 December 2012

on the validation of non-formal and informal learning

(2012/C 398/01)



EN

ISSN 2093-216X

European guidelines

for validating non-formal

and informal learning

Swedish legal framework for RPL (I/II)

There is legal support for RPL in HEIs in the Higher Education Ordinance (HEO), chapters 6 and 7:

- the provisions on RPL for access are far more contemporary than those on RPL for credit transfer
- validation is not defined in the HEO but in in the Education Act (regulating primary and secondary education)

There are no national guidelines on RPL for credit transfer, the main reason being that as governmental agencies in their own right, Swedish HEIs take their own decisions on RPL for credit transfer.

Many, but not all HEIs, have developed internal policy documents on RPL for credit transfer, also concerning recognition of prior *formal* learning.

Swedish legal framework for RPL (II/II)

- The higher education act (HL)
The higher education ordinance (HF)
- Recognition of prior learning is assessed when an individual:
 - applies to a specific course or program (for access) – entry requirements
 - when a student applies of crediting within an education (for credit transfer) – LO
- You can't get a general evaluation of your previous learning or your competence, no preliminary decision is given at HEIs

RPL at the University of Gothenburg

RPL for access

Centralised process, section of Admission makes decisions

Group of officers discuss RPL-applications, consults lecturers/faculties responsible for the course or program

No grades/merits, nothing to compete with in a selection process (HP)

RPL for credits

Decentralised process for RPL for credits

Handled in different ways at faculty or department

No grades

Validation network West - background

- Cooperation started with the remittance of the first report from The national Delegation of Validation (2015-2019) in 2016.
- A few persons from different HEIs made contact. Supported by a regional network for vice-chancellors.
- The network was formalised when the big RPL-project was initiated, involving seven HEIs. Funding from the project
- Cooperation - beneficial for all, for staff (learn from experience, good practice), for students (more similar assessments and outcomes)

CHALMERS

 JÖNKÖPING UNIVERSITY



What have VnW accomplished

A common methodology and an agreement for cooperation, signed by vice-chancellors:

- Consensus (of methodology, RPL practitioners, ethics etc.)
- Intention to work and assess as similar as possible
- Knowledge of differences and similarities
- An agreement to use a common methodology, a common manual/handbook
- An agreement to accept each other's assessments, if possible
- Sustainability through the aim to continue to cooperate

Validation network West - today

- Keeping the network alive after the project period and funding ended in 2019
- Each of the seven HEIs are responsible for the networks meetings one year at a time
- Meetings 3-4 times a year
- Individual contacts in between
- Supported by a steering committee
- Work groups depending on interests, needs, initiatives



Local RPL implementation project at UW in 2019

A strategic funding at UW for one year was given to implement RPL in a "new way", inspired by the model and values of VnW.

A model for general entry requirements developed at Malmö University was introduced and implemented. This model points out Swedish, English and Mathematic skills and knowledge for general entry requirements.

Centralised process for all applications. Mappers are key practitioners and coordinates and administrates everything in the validation process.

Web pages with instructions for applicants were developed.

So far – main focus and on RPL for access at UW.



RPL applications for access at UW

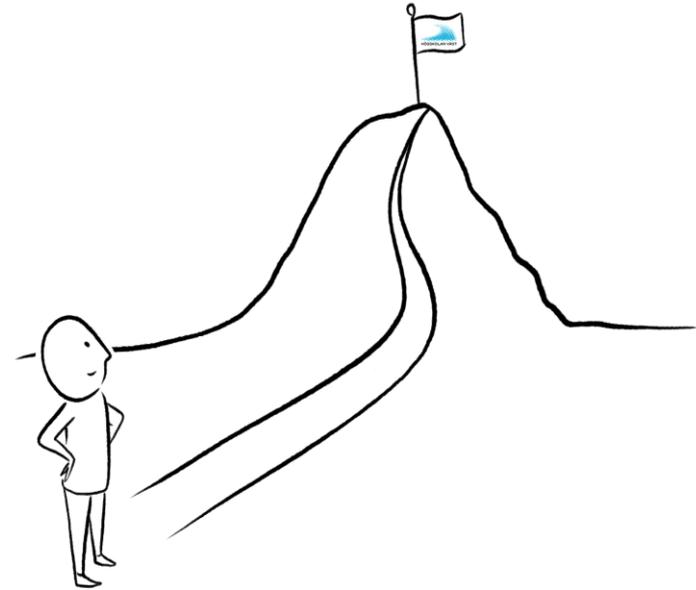
	2019 AS	2020 SS & AS	2021 SS
No. of applications	7	10 15	2
Assessed eligible	7	12	0

A practical example of a validation journey

This is Andy, 45. He has not studied at upper secondary school in Sweden, i.e he has no grades and has therefore no general entry requirement qualifications to get access to university studies in Sweden.

Yet - he has many years of qualified working experience.

He is dreaming of studying a course in leadership or labour law and get his knowlegde documented in HEC.



Mapping phase – explorative meeting with applicant & mapper

According to the general entry model Andy has to validate Swedish, English and Mathematic knowledge and assign given tasks in each subject:

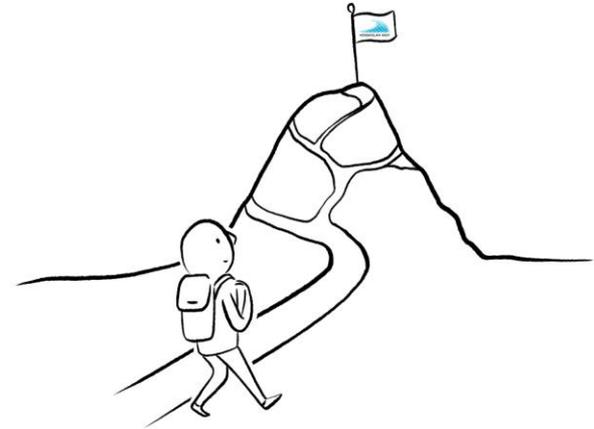
- Communication and how to use the Swedish language
- English knowledge and how to use English
- Mathematic knowledge
- Self assesment and description of other qualifications showing his ability to assimilate higher educational studies



Application and documentation phase

Andy makes given tasks and also submits other RPL applications forms requested:

- General form for RPL application provided by Swedish Council for Higher Education
- Tasks for Swedish, English and Mathematics knowledge – at this point we only offer document validation at UW
- Self assessment description
- Employer´s certificates



Assessment phase

Andys application is by the end of the admission round put together by mapper and sent to assessor.

Mapper and assessor reviews Andys documents together - is Andys application and written tasks "enough" and complete?



Request for supplementary task

Andy is asked to submit a supplementary task, the Swedish summary is too short to be able to be assessed in an academic way.

He asks for an interview instead – not possible

Andy shows some impatience and resistance in this phase.

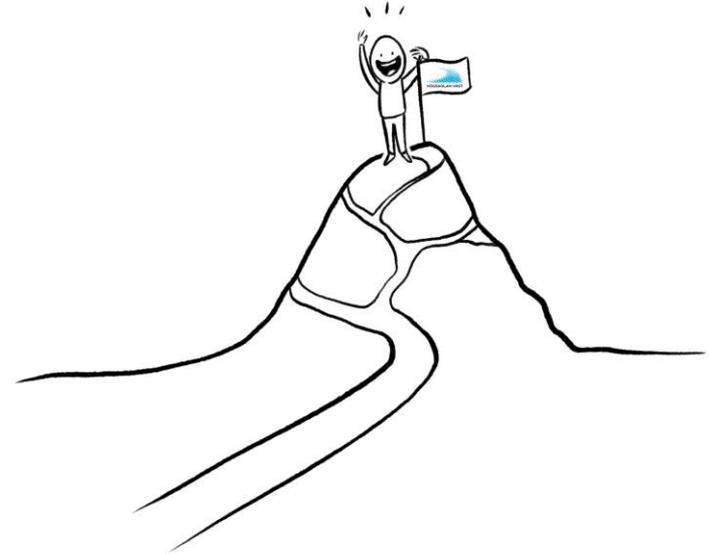


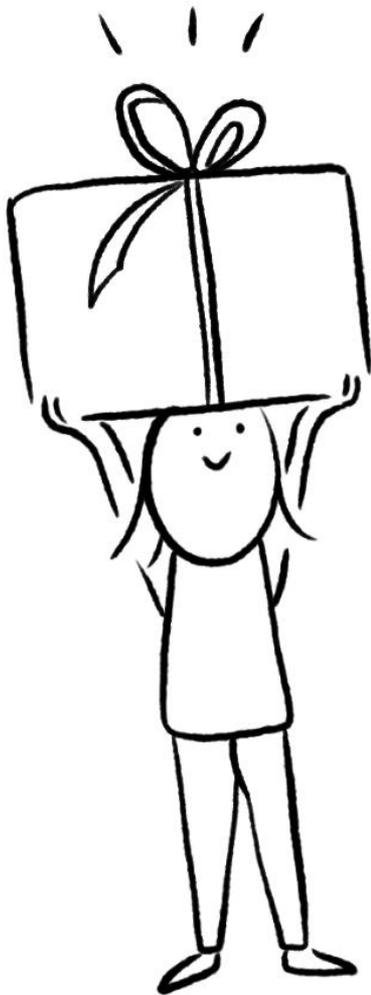
Assesed, eligible – and admitted

After supplementary task is submitted – another assesment meeting. His eligibility is now approved by the assessor.

Andy is on the waiting list (since he has no grades, only eligiblility) - but is finally admitted just before the course starts.

He fulfils the course (7,5 HEC) and now wants to study more.



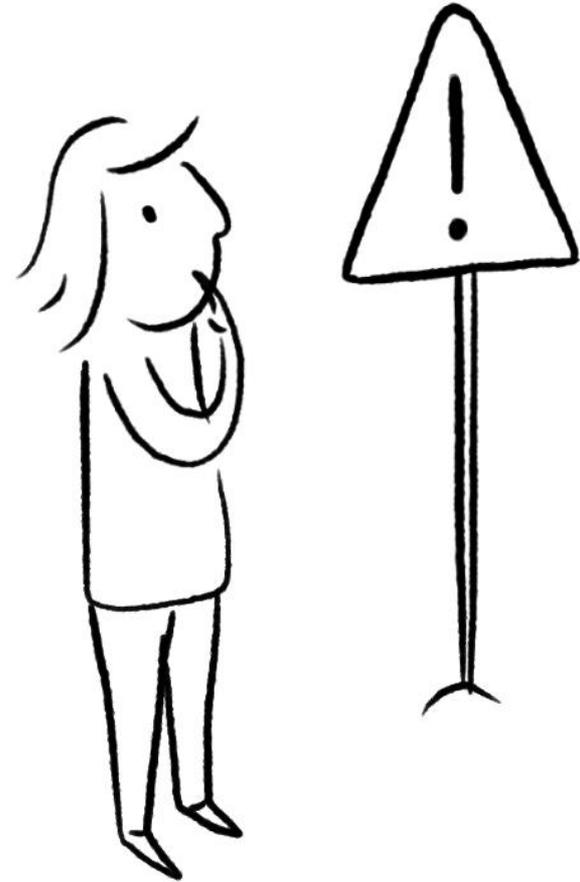


How do we make it work - at UW?

- Good start – thorough and successful anchoring process
- A general culture of good communication at University West or “anybody can talk to anybody”
- Clear and transparent routines & centralised process
 - Validation mapper officers are key practitioners
- Solid interest for RPL development overall in the organisation
- Clear instructions for applicants developed on student web pages
- Support from vice and pro-vice chancellor

Complexity & challenges

- Validation knowledge of assessors hard to develop and accomplish
- Need of constant information in the organisation
- Lack of adapted and national IT-system
- Managing expectations
- Support in the validation process is seldom requested
- Identification of applicants
- Differences in size and organisation at HEIs



Discussion – identified questions

- Statistics: how many applications, how many positive outcomes, for how many ECTS, how long does the process last, how many people are normally involved – differences between University of Gothenburg and University West
- Connection to learning outcomes: do you focus at LOs at the course or programme level? What is your work currently in this area?
- Marking/grading: why do you avoid it? Is the lack of it a problem for candidates, e.g. they have lower average grades, their diploma supplement looks differently, etc.?
 - no grades/merits (same for all credits, formal as non formal)
- Information system – what do you use to store evidence, ensure transparency etc.?
 - a key factor that we do not have, a national IT-tool/support system (Valda)



Thank you!
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www.gu.se

www.hv.se