

Faculty News

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Stockholm University

Teacher training - A course in constant fluctuation

Teacher training changes radically every ten years or so and is currently undergoing such a change. A new course in teacher training is due to start in the autumn of 2011 if Parliament decides in April to accept the government's proposition "Best in class – a new teacher training course" (Proposition 2009/10:89). Worth mentioning is that fact that training of comprehensive school teachers will contain less mathematics and natural science than at any time over the last 20 years.

The proposition proposes that the current teacher examination, with its different themes, is to be replaced by four new exams: pre-school exam, primary school exam, special subject teacher exam and vocational teacher exam.

Teacher training is a compromise between subject-depth and employability. Schools often want teachers with as wide a range of competencies as possible, which can be satisfied as required by sufficient subject and academic depth in the subjects which future teachers teach. For school teachers who will teach primary classes, the proposition prioritises breadth of subject matter, and for subject teachers, depth. The scope and point allocation of the course for primary and subject teachers is:

	Primary school teachers		Subject teachers	
	Pre-school - class 3	Classes 4-6	Comprehensive school 7-9	College
Educational sciences, basic	60	60	60	60
Practical experience (VFU)	30	30	30	30
Subject courses	120	120	150	180
Independent work	30	30	30	30
Total curriculum	240	240	270	300

The independent work will mainly be included in the subject studies, but will be based on an educational science perspective and linked to the future profession as teachers, which will probably mean they become responsible didactics. The range for subject studies will

therefore be 120 – 180 hp for each of the courses.

The relatively large freedom of choice in current teacher training for subject teachers will be replaced by more rigid subject combinations. The main proposal for primary school teachers is that their training will contain three subjects with a total of 150 hp, pre-college range is 180 hp for two subjects. A principal issue is which subject combinations will give good employability in the schools of today, which continuously change with regard to future school subjects and combinations of the same.

Current teacher training gives students who will teach grades 1-6 at least 70 hp for pure subject studies in the subject area he/she has chosen, e.g. maths or natural science. The proposal prioritises total subject breadth for primary school teachers. Point allocation between various subjects and subject areas in the future primary training course is expected to be:

	Pre-school - class 3	Classes 4-6
Educational sciences, basic	60	60
Practical experience (VFU)	30	30
Independent work	30	30
Mathematics	30	30
Swedish	30	30
English	30	30
NO including technology	15	30/0*
SO	15	30/0*
Practical-aesthetic subjects	-	30/0*

* = Optional

Future primary school teachers specialising in primary class to class 3 will receive 30 hp maths and 15 hp nature-oriented subject (NO) including technology in their next teacher training. This means that students with a background in mathematics B and natural science from college which would probably give entitlement to teacher training, will receive a term of mathematics training and 10 weeks training in all natural science subjects and technology as a basis on which to teach mathematics and natural science in the primary classes. In classes 4-6, they will again receive natural science training whether they selected in-depth SO or practical aesthetic subjects. It is worth noting that we have to go

right back to the 1970s-80s and intermediate training to find a course with such little subject content in mathematics and natural sciences. A comment on the subject of primary school teachers can be found at <http://www.newsmill.se/artikel/2010/02/24/nya-l-rarutbildningen-l-ngt-fr-n-b-st-i-klassen-1> (Firefox is required as Internet Explorer cannot read this site.)

All educational institutions will be forced apply for examination rights for the new course. The directive for applications, subject combinations for subject teachers and exam profiles will - hopefully - be presented in early May. Applications for the right to hold examinations must be submitted by the end of June. A decision on which educational institutes will be granted the right - and for what - will be made in autumn 2010. The lead time for applications and course planning is very short! Experience from the pressure applied by the last reform gives cause for doubt as to whether there is sufficient time to achieve high quality training, which involves many institutions in all faculties.

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The Future of Faculty News

There is an ongoing discussion about what kind of information we are to distribute at the Faculty, to whom it should be directed, how this has to be done and in what form.

We have decided to abandon the article form of Faculty News and the distribution to subscribers only. Instead it will be a small summary of relevant news sent by email and to all at the Faculty. The distribution will be via the head of departments.

The email will be in the form of headlines with a sentence or two about the news, and a link to the relevant page at our web site with more information. There will also be a downloadable form of the email on the web site of the Faculty.

Opinions about the spread of internal information is most welcome.

Please contact me by email:

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Stefans spalt



Spring is soon here!

There are a lot of signs in nature that spring is coming, but there are also other. One of these is the stream of government bills presented to the parliament for decision before the summer. This year, election year, the spring flood of bills has been extraordinarily strong and many of these concern the university. Best in class sets the rules for future organization of teacher education programs. This of course has intensified the work to establish which programs Stockholm University will give from the fall 2011. Applications to give these programs should be submitted June 28. Speaking about teacher education, we welcome the Department of Mathematics and Science Education to the Arrhenius Laboratories in June this summer.

In another bill the government proposes that students from outside of Europe should pay an application fee and also tuition. There is work going on to identify effects of this system and how to deal with it. Most likely the number of applications to our Masters programs will go down.

Focus on knowledge – quality in higher education describes a new system for evaluation of undergraduate programs, to be implemented next year. Evaluation of degree projects, Self-evaluation with site visit, and polls among alumni, are the three components in this system.

Finally the bill An academy in our time – increased freedom for universities and colleges. Today the Faculty as part of a university is protected by law. In this bill the collegial participation in decision making is no longer guaranteed. Our vice-chancellor supports this change in contrast to the four faculties. I am quite concerned that this change could lead to political correctness being more important than scientific quality and a critical attitude. Also greater freedom to appoint teachers other than professors and lecturers, and to run student housing are included. There are however no changes concerning the economic control system that e.g. has led to the full cost account with the related time reports required from teachers.

Yet another sign of the approaching spring is the deadlines for application to VR and FORMAS. Scientists within the Faculty of Science can apply to a number of areas at VR, Natural and Engineering Sciences, Medicine and Health and Educational Sciences. New this year is the requirement to state all costs in the project. I wish you all good luck!

Finally I hope that you all get a chance to enjoy the arrival of spring when nature wakes up again, this year after a long and cold winter sleep.

Stefan Nordlund