

## **REFINE – CRITERIA FOR EXEMPTIONS BASED ON REALKOMPETANSE**

**It is necessary to point out that Realkompetanse in relation to a certain study program does not necessarily imply that the candidate lacks General Access Certificate (GSK), but refers to the fact that the application for exemption in each concrete case rests on a non-formal basis.**

**Application for exemption should as a rule always be directed at a single subject or a specified part of a study program.**

Comment:

*The candidate should be well informed of the contents and learning objectives of the subject/program in question as presented in the curriculum, and document/substantiate his/her competence in relation to this. It is not the task of the institution to evaluate the background of the candidate against all possible subjects/programs. The responsibility for documentation of realkompetanse rests with the applicant/candidate, but the institution should clarify its requirements with regard to type of documentation that is required etc.*

**It should be possible to include realkompetanse in the form of voluntary subjects in a study program.**

Comment:

*If the curriculum for a given study program includes voluntary or non-specified subjects this should be regarded as an option for exemption. However, this solution should not be used as an “easy way out”. But an advantage with exemptions based on voluntary subjects is that it makes it possible to honour competence that does not cover single subjects directly, i.e. competence that is interdisciplinary in its character but which can be regarded as relevant in relation to a certain study program.*

**It is knowledge/competence/skills that should be evaluated, not general experience and practise.**

Comment:

*The candidate should not be awarded for “faithful service and endurance”. It is therefore of the utmost importance that one finds ways of documenting the knowledge/competence/skills that a candidate possesses with regard to the subject/program that he/she seeks exemptions from.*

*All claimed competence must be documented or substantiated, i.e. through testimonials, course diplomas, paper produced, physical products, self evaluation etc.*

*In addition it should be possible for the candidate to document his/her competence further through interview, demonstration of skills, special tests etc.*

**The candidate should be evaluated as severely as, but not more severely than an ordinary student.**

Comment:

*Ordinary students are normally only tested in parts of a curriculum. It might therefore be considered rather harsh to demand that the realkompetanse candidate should demonstrate proficiency in the whole curriculum of a given subject. One should also pay proper attention to the fact that the candidate's knowledge has been acquired in a different way from ordinary students and consequently may surface in another way.*

*It is quite common with regard to exemptions based on formal education from other higher education institutions to accept subjects that sometimes differ quite a lot from the institution's own subjects.*

**The extent of exemptions that is accepted based on realkompetanse as a percentage of a study program should equal the extent of exemptions accepted based on other formal education.**

Comment:

*As realkompetanse, when documented or substantiated, shall be regarded as equal (if not identical) to other "traditional" education, exemptions should be possible in the same extent as exemptions based on formal education.*

**Exemptions based on realkompetanse should be presented in diplomas in the same way that one would normally describe exemptions using a deviating system of grading, and may f i result in the candidate not getting a grade point average for the program.**

Comment:

*If the exemptions comprise a small part of the total program a grade point average should be calculated on the basis of remaining subjects, but when the level of exemptions exceed a certain portion of the program then a grade point average should not be awarded. The normal procedures for exemptions should be used.*

**The institution should prepare internal procedures for the handling of applications for exemptions, specifying the all procedures including any deadlines both for the candidate and all involved internal departments.**

Comment:

*Potential candidates must be able to find out how to apply, which deadlines that apply as well as any formal demands with regard to description and documentation. In the same way all internal staff, both administrative and faculty staff, must be made aware of all rules and regulations with regard to correct procedures. General forms and guidelines must be developed.*

**The institution must make the options for exemptions based on realkompetanse known for potential candidates, f i through its internet pages.**

Comment:

*The institution may not be expected to actively market the possibilities for exemption. But potential candidates should be able to find the information without too much effort. One should aim for procedures and routines that do not have a deterring effect on the candidates.*

**The institution should establish a central department for the handling of applications for exemptions.**

Comment:

*The exemption from subjects or study programs is a right for all citizens. Decisions on exemption based on realkompetanse is primarily a responsibility for the faculty staff, therefore applications must be treated by the relevant department or section. But a central unit within the institution should have the superior responsibility for the handling of all applications to ensure:*

- *Overview of all applications*
- *Handling in accordance with correct procedures*
- *Equal procedures for all subject areas.*
- *Follow-up routines with regard to deadlines etc*
- *Development of staff competence*
- *Advisory function both towards potential candidates and own staff*

**A set of procedures and guidelines for the handling of applications should be developed..**

Comment:

*The procedures and guidelines should be easily available on the internet pages and should be partly aimed at own staff and partly aimed at potential candidates. The procedures should make visible the basic principles that form the basis for the evaluations, as well as more specific demands related to specific subjects/subject areas.*

**The institutions should cooperate to ensure that applications are handled and evaluated in an equal manner.**