

General Syllabus for Doctoral Studies in Political Science

Political Science

1. Official approval

The general syllabus for doctoral studies in political science was adopted by the Faculty Board of Social Sciences at Stockholm University on 2012-04-03 and revised 2018-01-23. General provisions regarding doctoral studies can be found in the Higher Education Ordinance.

The general syllabus is valid from 2018-01-23.

2. Subject description

Political science is the scientific study of politics. Studies in the subject cover, for example, the following areas: normative principles and basic political concepts such as power, democracy, legitimacy and gender; political actors, practices and institutions in Sweden and other countries; the organisation and role of public administration in society; and international politics, including both governmental and non-governmental actors and processes.

3. Programme objectives

Doctoral studies in political science can be concluded with a licentiate or doctoral degree.

3.1 Degree of Doctor

A Degree of Doctor is awarded when the doctoral student has completed a doctoral programme worth 240 higher education credits.

Knowledge and understanding

For a Degree of Doctor, the doctoral student must:

- demonstrate broad knowledge of political science and a systematic understanding of the field of research, together with deep and current specialist knowledge in a defined part of the field of research;
- demonstrate familiarity with research methodology in general and the methods of the specific field of research in particular.

Områdesnämnden för humanvetenskap

Skills and abilities

For a Degree of Doctor, the doctoral student must demonstrate the following:

- demonstrate an ability to engage in scholarly analysis and synthesis, as well as in independent, critical review and assessment of new and complex phenomena, issues, and situations;
- demonstrate an ability to identify and formulate issues critically, independently, creatively, and with scholarly precision; to plan and conduct research and other advanced tasks using appropriate methods within specified time limits; and to review and evaluate such work;
- demonstrate an ability to make a substantial contribution to the development of knowledge through their own research in a thesis;
- demonstrate an ability, in both national and international contexts, orally and in writing, to present and discuss research and research findings authoritatively in dialogue with the scholarly community and society in general;
- demonstrate an ability to identify needs for further knowledge;
- demonstrate the potential to contribute to social development and support the learning of others, both in the fields of research and education and in other qualified professional contexts.

Judgement and approach

For a Degree of Doctor, the doctoral student must:

- demonstrate intellectual independence and scholarly integrity, as well as an ability to make ethical assessments relating to research;
- specialised insight into the potential and limitations of research, its role in society, and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used.

Academic thesis (doctoral thesis)

A Degree of Doctor is awarded when the doctoral student has received a passing grade on an academic thesis (doctoral thesis) worth at least 120 higher education credits.



3.2 Degree of Licentiate

A Degree of Licentiate is awarded either when the doctoral student has completed a doctoral programme worth at least 120 higher education credits in a particular subject, or when the doctoral student has completed at least 120 higher education credits of a programme intended to result in a doctoral degree, provided that the higher education institution has decided that such licentiate degrees can be awarded.

Knowledge and understanding

For a Degree of Licentiate, doctoral students must:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of political science, including current specialist knowledge in a limited area of this subject, as well as specialised knowledge of research methodology in general and the methods of the specific field of research in particular.

Skills and abilities

For a Degree of Licentiate, doctoral students must:

- demonstrate an ability to critically, independently, creatively, and with scholarly precision identify and formulate issues, and to plan and, using appropriate methods, complete a limited research project and other qualified tasks within specified time limits, so as to contribute to the development of knowledge and to evaluate this work;
- demonstrate an ability to present and discuss research and research findings clearly, in dialogue with the scholarly community and society in general, orally and in writing, in both national and international contexts;
- demonstrate the skills required to participate independently in research and development and to work independently in other advanced contexts; demonstrate an ability to critically, independently, creatively, and with scholarly precision identify and formulate issues, and to plan and, using appropriate methods, complete a limited research project and other qualified tasks within specified time limits, so as to contribute to the development of knowledge and to evaluate this work;



- demonstrate an ability to present and discuss research and research findings clearly, in dialogue with the scholarly community and society in general, orally and in writing, in both national and international contexts;
- demonstrate the skills required to participate independently in research and development and to work independently in other advanced contexts;

Judgement and approach

For a Degree of Licentiate, doctoral students must:

- demonstrate an ability to make assessments of ethical aspects of their own research;
- demonstrate insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society, and our responsibility for how it is used;
- demonstrate an ability to identify their need of further knowledge and to take responsibility for developing their knowledge.

Academic thesis

In order to obtain a Degree of Licentiate, the doctoral student must have received a passing grade on an academic thesis worth at least 60 higher education credits.

4. Prerequisites and entry requirements

4.1 General entry requirements

In order to meet the general entry requirements for doctoral studies, the applicant must have completed a master's degree, completed courses equivalent to at least 240 higher education credits (of which 60 credits must be at the master's level), or have otherwise acquired equivalent knowledge in Sweden or elsewhere.

The higher education institution may permit an exemption from the general entry requirements for an individual applicant under special circumstances.

4.2 Specific entry requirements

In order to meet the specific entry requirements for doctoral studies in political science, the applicant must meet the following four conditions:



- 150 higher education credits in political science, including master's level studies worth at least 60 higher education credits, or equivalent training;
- degree project (thesis) in political science worth at least 15 higher education credits;
- an additional 90 higher education credits in subjects relevant to the programme;
- English proficiency equivalent to at least 550 credits on a Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).

Equivalency assessments (when such are required) are done by the director of PhD studies, and the decision in each case is made by the Department Board.

5. Announcement and admission procedures

The provision of doctoral programmes at any given time is dependent on available resources. Information regarding admissions to doctoral studies is routinely advertised on the Department's website.

The Department may admit candidates to doctoral studies twice a year. Admission decisions are made by the Department Board. The application deadlines are 6 February and 15 November each year, provided that a doctoral student position has been advertised.

Department-funded doctoral students are admitted in the spring admission round. Externally funded doctoral students may also be admitted in this round. In the autumn admission round, only externally funded doctoral students are admitted. Decisions to admit doctoral students funded by means other than doctoral studentships are made by the Faculty Board. Admission decisions relating to the admission round in the spring will be announced no later than during the first half of June the same year, and the successful candidates will begin their doctoral studies during the autumn semester. Admission decisions relating to the admission round in the autumn will be announced by the middle of December, and the successful candidates will begin their doctoral studies during the spring semester.

Before deciding to admit a candidate, the Department must ensure that a financial plan has been established. The financial plan should be signed by the prospective doctoral student, the supervisor, the head of department, and, where applicable, the external financier. In addition, the financial plan should be described in/enclosed with the individual study plan.

Applications are submitted via the University's recruitment system, which can be accessed at www.su.se. The application should be designed in accordance with the instructions in the recruitment system and include information about the highest completed degree, other degrees, current employment, language skills, references, and other requested information.



Applicants for doctoral studies in political science must enclose the following documents with their applications (in Swedish, English, Norwegian, or Danish):

1. Certified true copies of grades and all referenced qualification documents, including essays, articles, reports, and other academic works.
2. An outline describing the planned research/research focus. This should include the main focus, a possible thesis topic, and preferably a detailed description of a potential research problem, theory, method, and material. This outline is not binding and may be revised during the research process.
3. The names of two academic references.

5.1 Assessment and selection criteria

Admissions are processed by a designated appointments committee. The ranking of candidates who meet the general and specific entry requirements will be made with reference to their ability to benefit from the training. The following assessment criteria will be used in the selection process:

1. The quality of previous written works (e.g., theses, articles, and reports):
 - * Empirical substance;
 - * Independence in structure and analysis;
 - * Clear research design, i.e., clear research problem, clear research questions, well-justified delimitations, explicit relations to theory, and methodological awareness.
2. Expectation that the thesis project will be completed within the intended time frame:
 - * Previously demonstrated ability to complete tasks within specified time limits;
 - * Problem definition and cogency in the research plan.

Decisions to admit candidates to doctoral studies are made by the Department Board.

Neither the decision to admit someone to doctoral studies nor employ someone as a doctoral student can be appealed.

More detailed information about the admission process can be found on the Department's website.

6. Programme content and structure

The doctoral programme in political science is structured in such a way that the studies normally take four years to complete for full-time students. The studies may also be structured in such a way that they can be completed on a part-time basis within a maximum of eight years. The Department does not have separate admissions to licentiate studies; a licentiate



degree may be taken as a part of a doctoral degree. The Department provides education in the form of courses, seminars, and thesis supervision. The scope of the programme is expressed in terms of higher education credits, where one year of full-time study is considered equivalent to 60 higher education credits. A Degree of Doctor comprises 240 higher education credits. A Degree of Licentiate comprises 120 higher education credits.

A Degree of Doctor requires the following:

- courses equivalent to 75 higher education credits;
- 165 higher education credits for the individual degree project presented in the form a thesis;
- oral defence of an academic thesis at a public defence seminar, as well as a passing grade on the thesis.

A Degree of Licentiate requires the following:

- courses equivalent to 45 higher education credits;
- 75 higher education credits for the individual degree project presented in the form a thesis;
- defence of an academic thesis at a seminar;
- a passing grade on the thesis.

All doctoral students admitted to doctoral studies in political science must follow this general syllabus. Any collaborations in the form of cotutelle or individual doctoral students' involvement with research schools or externally funded projects may only affect the individual differences in the training that are documented in the individual study plan.

The detailed structure of the programme is specified in Section 6.3 and in the individual study plan.

Seminars

Throughout their training, doctoral students are encouraged to participate actively in the Department's public seminars, as well as in one or more of the research seminars linked to the Department's research profiles.

Routines for study and career guidance

Study and career guidance is provided continuously throughout the doctoral programme through discussions with the supervisors, alumni activities and career days for doctoral



students organised by the Faculty, as well as regular development talks with the director of PhD studies or the Department's management.

6.1 Individual study plan

All active doctoral students in political science must have an individual study plan. The study plan should be drawn up by the supervisor and the doctoral student no later than three months after the doctoral student has been admitted to a doctoral programme. It should include a description of and timetable for the research project, prospective courses, and planned research visits at foreign universities, as well as a work plan with concrete intermediate goals for one year at a time. The type of funding should be specified in the study plan. The individual study plan should be reviewed at least once a year. The study plan will be adopted by the Department Board after consultation with the doctoral student and his or her supervisors.

Provisions for resource retention

Doctoral students are entitled to retain funding, supervision, and other resources as long as they follow their individual study plan. In the event of deviations from the study plan, the doctoral student and the supervisor should discuss whether the original study plan needs to be revised. Resources may not be withdrawn for any period in which the doctoral student is employed under a doctoral studentship. If a doctoral student substantially neglects his/her obligations described in the individual study plan, the Faculty Board may decide not to renew the position (Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6).

The doctoral student is entitled to an extension of the period of study under special circumstances, which may involve sick leave, military service, elected positions in trade unions or student organisations, or parental leave.

6.2 Supervision and other resources

Each doctoral student should have two or more supervisors (at least one of whom must have research supervision training). One of these should be appointed principal supervisor. In the first year of study, newly admitted doctoral students are part of a special supervision group with regular seminar activities, where three or four of the Department's teachers have a shared responsibility for the supervision. During this year, the director of PhD studies is formally the principal supervisor, and another researcher from the Department is a supervisor. Doctoral students are entitled to change supervisors upon request.

Towards the end of the first year of study, and when a thesis proposal has been presented at a seminar, a permanent principal supervisor and at least one other supervisor will be appointed for each new doctoral student. Once the supervisors have been appointed, the supervisors and



the doctoral student should clarify their expectations of each other and agree on the forms of supervision. The doctoral student's right to supervision is specified in more detail in the Department's implementation provisions for doctoral studies. The appointment of a supervisor can be changed at the request of the supervisor or the doctoral student, or for other reasons.

The supervision group/supervisor should give the doctoral student advice and instructions on the choice of specialised courses, as well as on the focus, planning, and implementation of the thesis project. The doctoral student should, through regular contacts, keep the supervisor informed of his/her progress and seek advice on the continued work process.

The director of PhD studies is responsible for informing newly admitted doctoral students of the terms and conditions of the training during the first semester.

6.3 Courses and examinations

Within the doctoral programme, the doctoral student will complete courses worth a total of 75 higher education credits. The course component includes obligatory courses (52.5 higher education credits) as well as optional courses (22.5 higher education credits), the latter of which are selected in consultation with the supervisor. Courses at the doctoral level mostly consist of method courses and courses aiming to provide deep and broad subject knowledge. **Most of the obligatory courses are completed during the first year. The courses that the doctoral students must take are: Research problems in Political Science (7.5 credits), Research Fields (15 credits), Research Methods in Political Science (15 credits), Applied Methods (7.5 credits). The doctoral students will also take non-credit-bearing obligatory courses, which are Supervision Group and Introduction to Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.**

6.3.1 Credit transfer

Doctoral students may apply for a credit transfer in order to have credits from completed equivalent courses at the master's or doctoral level included in their degree. When courses at the master's level are included, one week of funding will be withdrawn per 1.5 transferred credits. More information about credit transfer is available in the implementation provisions for doctoral studies.

6.3.2 Other obligatory elements

The doctoral programme includes other obligatory elements that do not generate higher education credits:

- 1) A thesis proposal seminar: In the end of the first year of study, the doctoral student will present a thesis proposal.

- 2) A midterm seminar: When about half of the thesis project is completed, drafts of parts of the thesis will be presented.
- 3) A final review seminar: At the final review seminar, a near-complete thesis manuscript will be presented.

6.4 Doctoral thesis and public defence

The thesis must document the doctoral student's capacity for scholarly methodology and presentation, as well as his/her ability to independently study a research problem.

The thesis must either be a unified, coherent scholarly work (monograph thesis) or consist of a number of academic articles, authored by the doctoral student, with an introductory chapter (compilation thesis). The requirements concerning the quality and scope of the research are the same for both types of theses. The thesis must correspond to 165 higher education credits within the doctoral programme. The doctoral thesis may be written in either Swedish or English. The thesis must have a summary in both Swedish and English. A compilation thesis should contain a number of essays, each of which should be of sufficient quality and scope to qualify for publication as an article in a peer-reviewed journal. Similar to when an academic thesis has been co-authored by two or more people, in cases where someone other than the author of the thesis has contributed to one or more essays, the doctoral student's individual contributions must be distinguishable and correspond to a total of 165 higher education credits. (See "Guidelines for compilation theses" on the Department's website for more information¹).

The doctoral thesis should be defended orally at a public defence seminar, after which it will be awarded a grade of Pass or Fail. The defence may be held in either Swedish or English. The grading process will consider both the content and the defence of the thesis.

The external reviewer and the members of the examining committee will be appointed by the Faculty Board. Provisions regarding the examining committee, etc., can be found in Chapter 6 of the Higher Education Ordinance, in instructions issued by the Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences, and in Stockholm University's regulations².

6.5 Licentiate thesis and licentiate seminar

The academic thesis should, at a seminar taking place during the semester, be reviewed by an external reviewer with at least a doctoral degree and high expertise in relevant fields and methods. The thesis may be written in either Swedish or English and must have a summary in

¹ www.statsvet.su.se/forskning/utbildning-på-forskarnivå/regler-och-föreskrifter

² www.samfak.su.se and www.su.se/forskning/utbildning-på-forskarnivå



both Swedish and English. The thesis should be available at the Department and the University Library for at least two weeks (during the semester) before the seminar. Other political science departments at Swedish higher education institutions should be notified of the upcoming defence.

The thesis will be graded by an examining committee consisting of three members with doctoral degrees, at least one of whom holds the rank of professor. The external reviewer and the examining committee will be appointed by the Department Board, based on a proposal from the most closely specialised professor. The courses and the thesis will be examined using the grades Pass or Fail. The grade on the thesis should be reported to the Faculty Board.

In all other respects, licentiate theses are subject to the same regulations as doctoral studies in general (where applicable).

7. Transition arrangements

Students who began their doctoral studies according to a previous general syllabus are entitled to follow either the new syllabus or the one that was in effect when they were admitted. Requests to follow a previous syllabus should be made to the head of department in consultation with the director of studies and the supervisor.

8. Additional information

Complementary advice and instructions are provided in special implementation provisions established by the Department. More general rules can be found in the Higher Education Ordinance, in the Faculty of Social Science's guidelines, and in Stockholm University's regulations.