

Admission regulations for third-cycle study programmes

Type of document	Regulations
Approved by	University Board
Date of approval	2020-12-04
Ref. no.	SU FV-1.1.2-4212-20
Period of validity	2021-01-01 – until further notice
Replaces document	Admission regulations for third-cycle study programme at Stockholm University (ref.no. SU-FV-1.1.2-3502-17), adopted 2018-02-16
Responsible administrative unit	Office of the President
Responsible administrator	Rikard Skårfors, Josefin Fernstad

Description:

This document contains the national rules and the local rules that apply to admission to third-cycle study programmes at the University.

Table of contents

Introduction.....	3
<i>Responsibility for the educational programme, the quality of the educational programme, and academic supervision</i>	3
Generally.....	4
Admission to the educational programme.....	5
Admission Requirements	5
<i>General entry requirements</i>	5
<i>Specific entry requirements</i>	6
Admissions procedure.....	6
Academic supervision and other resources	6
Funding for studies.....	7
Procedure for Publically Announcing Solicitation of Applications (doctoral student recruitment).....	8
Selection process.....	10
Decision	10
Appealing against a decision.....	11

Introduction

Chapter 6, Section 3 of the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100) stipulates that Higher education institutions must adopt admissions regulations for all study programmes. “The admission regulations comprise the regulations that apply at the institution of higher education to applications, eligibility and entry requirements, selection, and admissions, as well as how decisions are made and how an appeal of a decision can be made.” The basic (national) regulations that govern admission to third-cycle study programmes are found in Chapter 7 of the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance, however other relevant rules are also found in Chapter 4 of the Swedish Higher Education Act (1992:1434), Annex 2 of the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance – Qualifications Ordinance, and in Chapter 5 of the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance. Local rules can also be found in the Rules for the Third-Cycle Study Programme and Degrees and Local Qualifications (Degree) Regulations for Stockholm University, (see the Governing documents – Rules and Regulations on the University’s employee website).

Below are the **national** rules as well as the **local** rules adopted by the University Board that apply in regards to admission to third-cycle study programmes at Stockholm University.

In the Higher Education Act and the Higher Education Ordinance, the term “student” includes doctoral students, unless it is specifically specified that it concerns first -cycle (undergraduate) or second-cycle studies and educational programmes. The term “doctoral student” also refers to research students who have been admitted to studies for a licentiate degree.

Responsibility for the educational programme, the quality of the educational programme, and academic supervision

The University Board adopts the Admissions Regulations and the Vice-Chancellor can make a decision on the revoking of access to resources (Chapter 2, Sections 2 and 3 of the Higher Education Act, Chapter 2, 2 and 3 §§ and Chapter 6, Sections 3, 30, 31 and 36 of the Higher Education Ordinance; Procedure for Revoking the Doctoral Student’s Right to Academic Supervision and other resources in the Governing Documents – Rules and Regulations). In other respects, the respective Area Board is responsible for the educational programme within their field, unless decided otherwise, (see further in the Decision-Making and Delegation Procedure for Stockholm University in the Governing Documents – Rules and Regulations).

The Area Board thus has the overall responsibility for the quality, effectiveness, structure, study plans and syllabi, and academic supervision of the studies, as well as for the coordination of the courses and the training of academic supervisors. Either of these Boards may, within the framework of the rules of the Admissions Regulations, also make decisions concerning additional guidelines and rules for admission that will apply within the activities of their Faculties. The Area Board also has the responsibility to conduct a general supervision of the educational programme at the third-cycle studies level in and monitor that regulations



are being complied with within their area of responsibility. See also the Rules for education and summative assessment at the Third-Cycle level in the Governing Documents – Rules and Regulations.

For all matters concerning admission to third-cycle study programmes, the Area Board may delegate or sub-delegate matters unless it is of such a nature that the decision should be made by the Board in its entirety. Admission decisions may not be further delegated beyond the Departmental Board or the equivalent. Decisions on the admission of applicants with funding other than a doctoral studentship may not be delegated further than to the Faculty Board level. Any delegation or further-delegation must take place in accordance with the Decision-Making and Delegation Procedure for Stockholm University established by the Vice-Chancellor.

Generally

National rules

The licentiate degree is obtained *either* after the doctoral student has completed an educational programme of a minimum of 120 higher education credits in a subject for a third-cycle study programme, *or* that the doctoral student has completed a part of a minimum of 120 higher education credits of an educational programme that is concluded with a doctoral degree, if the University decides that such a licentiate degree can be awarded at the University (Swedish Higher Education Ordinance, Annex 2 – Qualifications Ordinance).

A doctoral degree is obtained after the doctoral student has completed an educational programme of 240 higher education credits in a subject for third-cycle study programmes (Swedish Higher Education Ordinance, Annex 2 – Qualifications Ordinance).

Local rules

Admission to third-cycle study programmes at Stockholm University shall normally take place to such educational programme that concludes with a doctoral degree. In the event of special reasons existing, a decision on admission can be made as part of a third-cycle study programme that concludes with a licentiate degree comprising a minimum of 120 higher education credits.

A renewed scientific examination and an analysis of the funding plan must be made, in cases where admission has taken place to educational studies leading to a licentiate degree, before the research student's application to be admitted to a later part of the educational programme is granted.

In order to participate in a third-cycle study programme the individual must be admitted to a third-cycle study programme.

Admission to the educational programme

Admission Requirements

National rules

As far as this can be done with regard to the quality requirement in Chapter 1, Section 4 (1) of the Higher Education Act, higher education institutions shall receive the applicants as students who fulfil the entry requirements for the studies.

To be admitted to a third-cycle study programme, it is required that the applicant

1. has fulfilled the general entry requirements plus the specific entry requirements prescribed by the institution of higher education, and
2. has been assessed to have such other abilities as needed to benefit from the course or study programme. (Chapter 7, Sections 35, 39 and 40 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

Unless otherwise provided by regulations issued by the government or the authority determined by the government, the institution of higher education that arranges the educational programme decides which eligibility conditions shall apply to be admitted to the educational programme.

If it is not possible to admit all eligible applicants to a particular educational programme, a selection must be made among the applicants. The Swedish Government or the authority determined by the government may issue regulations on selection. (Chapter 4, Sections 1-3 of the Higher Education Act).

General entry requirements

National rules

The individual who fulfils the general entry requirements for admission to a third-cycle study programme is someone who has

1. earned a degree from a second-cycle studies programme,
2. completed course requirements of a minimum of 240 higher education credits, of which a minimum of 60 higher education credits are in second-cycle studies, or
3. in some other manner has acquired, either within or outside of Sweden, essentially equivalent knowledge.

The institution of higher education may grant an exemption, for an individual applicant, from the requirement for fulfilling the general entry requirements, if there are special grounds for doing so. (Chapter 7, Section 39 of the Higher Education Ordinance).



Local rules

Decisions on exemptions from the requirement of fulfilling the general entry requirements may not be delegated by the Area Board further than to the Faculty Board level.

Specific entry requirements

National rule

The requirements concerning specific entry requirements that are established must be absolutely necessary for the student to be able to benefit from the course or study programme. The entry requirements may relate to

1. knowledge from studies at an institution of higher education or the equivalent education,
2. specific professional/vocational experience, and
3. the requisite language skills or other preconditions as established by the educational programme. (Chapter 7, Section 40 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

Local rules

Decisions concerning specific entry requirements for courses and a third-cycle study programme may not be delegated by the Area Board further than to the Faculty Board.

Admissions procedure

Academic supervision and other resources

National rules

Only as many doctoral students may be admitted to third-cycle study programmes as who can be offered academic supervision and acceptable study conditions in general, and who have funding for their studies in accordance with Chapter 7, Section 36 of the Higher Education Ordinance. (Chapter 7, Section 34 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

For each doctoral student, a minimum of two academic supervisors must be appointed. One of them will be appointed as the principal academic supervisor. The doctoral student is entitled to academic supervision during their educational studies up until if the Vice-Chancellor decides otherwise, on the basis of Chapter 6, Section 30 of the Higher Education Ordinance.

A doctoral student who so requests will be allowed to change academic supervisors. (Chapter 6, Section 28 of the Higher Education Ordinance).



Local rules

What is meant by “acceptable study conditions in general” is that that the doctoral student is provided with the working conditions needed for the educational studies and that a workplace is provided.

It is essential for the quality of the educational programme that the individual who is accepted can be offered academic supervision and guidance within the intended subject area and to a reasonable extent. If this is not the situation, the application for admission may not be approved. The forms of academic supervision may vary, however the University’s commitment is that the doctoral student must be ensured continuous academic supervision and guidance throughout their study period.

No later than one month after the educational programme has begun, the academic supervisors are to be appointed, upon delegation the Board of Science/Board of Human Science, the Departmental Board, or the Head of the Department for the Department or that has admitted the doctoral student (see also the Rules for the Third-Cycle Study Programme and Degrees).

Funding for studies

National rules

An institution of higher education may only accept applicants for doctoral studies in a third-cycle programme who are employed as a doctoral student (has a doctoral studentship). The institution of higher may however accept an applicant who has some other form of funding for their studies, if the University considers that the funding can be secured throughout the educational studies and that the applicant can devote so much of their time to their educational studies that it can be completed within four years in terms of licentiate degree or artistic licentiate degree or eight years in the case of a doctoral degree or artistic doctoral degree. (Chapter 7, Section 36 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

Local rules

Funding for studies within the studies in a third-cycle study programme shall normally refer to employment as a doctoral student, a doctoral studentship. A doctoral studentship is financed via grants or external funds. External funds go to the University, and are thus not linked to an individual doctoral student.

Funding for studies other than a doctoral studentship means that the funds are linked to a specific individual, e.g. a scholarship, employment with employer another than the University, or self-financing.



Decisions on admission for doctoral students with funding other than a doctoral studentship at Stockholm University may not be further delegated by the Board of Science/Board of Human Science, beyond to the Faculty Board level.

Admission of doctoral students with scholarship funding is not permitted if the funding plan requires repayment if the doctoral student does not achieve the degree objectives and thus cannot obtain their degree, or if the institution of higher education or academic supervisor is required to report to the funder on the planning, contents and implementation of the studies for the individual doctoral student (Rules for Scholarships with Repayment Requirements in the Governing Documents – Rules and Regulations).

A minimum level for other forms of student financing for studies is the salary level for doctoral students that follows from the Villkorsavtal-SU/Conditions Agreement-SU or the generally accepted practice with in the profession after deduction of preliminary tax according to the tax table that corresponds to the average tax rate for municipalities and county councils that is published annually by Statistics Sweden. If the applicant intends to be part of the time alternately in Sweden and part of the time in another country, the requirement at the level only applies when the applicant intends to stay in Sweden. See also the Rules for education and summative assessment at the third-cycle level in the Governing Documents – Rules and Regulations, the section on individual study plans and the section on admission to the educational programme and funding for studies.

When accepting a doctoral student with external employment, an agreement must always be prepared and signed between the University and the external employer. See also the President's decision on Procedures for Contract Work at Stockholm University in the Governing Documents – Rules and Regulations.

Procedure for Publically Announcing Solicitation of Applications (doctoral student recruitment)

National rules

Questions and issues about admissions are decided by the institution of higher education. Anyone who desires to be admitted to a third-cycle study programme must make an application within the time period and according to the rules as established by the institution of higher education.

When an institution of higher education intends to accept one or more doctoral students, the institution of higher education must make this information public via posting, advertising, or an equivalent procedure. However, no information needs to be provided

1. upon admission of a doctoral student who is to conduct their third-cycle studies within the framework of an employment with an employer other than the institution of higher education,

2. for the admission of a doctoral student who has previously begun his or her third-cycle studies at another institution of higher education, or
3. if there are similar special reasons. (Chapter 7, Section 37 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

An institution of higher education that has been granted permission to issue degrees at the doctoral level in a field may, without a new admission, decide that a doctoral student who has been admitted to another university or another institution of higher education may transfer to the institution of higher education and continue their educational studies and receive their degree from there. However, this only applies if the doctoral student has had the majority of their doctoral studies located at the institution of higher education in the subject to which the authority to issue degrees relates to.

What has been stated in the first paragraph shall also apply if an institution of higher education has been given the right, by having been given the designation “university” according to Chapter 1, Section 11 of the Higher Education Act, to issue degrees at the doctoral level. (Chapter 7, Section 38 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

Local rules

All student slots in a third-cycle study programme must be publically announced in the broadest possible manner so that admission takes place in competition. Exceptions to this rule may be granted only in the following cases:

- with the admission of a doctoral student who is financed within the framework of employment with an employer other than Stockholm University, i.e. external employment,
- with the admission of a scholarship-funded doctoral student, and
- if an already admitted doctoral student changes university/institution of higher education or major/field of studies.

Both the Board of Science and the Board of Human Science are to establish dates certain for the application. Public announcements and calls for applications must be made in the University’s recruitment system. At all Departments that provide education in a third-cycle study programme, there must be established and pre-announced application dates (one or more per year).

The Area Board must regularly follow up to ensure that the public announcement has been made in accordance with the above rules.

Selection process

National rules

A selection from applicants who meet the requirements according to Sections 35 and 36 shall be made with regard to their ability to benefit from the course or study programme. (Chapter 7, Sections 35-36 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

The institution of higher education decides which assessment criteria are to be applied in the examination of the ability to benefit from the course or study programme.

That fact alone that an applicant is assessed to be able to receive credits for previous educational or professional/vocational activities to be credited to the educational programme may not give the applicant priority over other applicants in the selection process. (Chapter 7, Section 41 of the Higher Education Ordinance). Note that unlike the general entry requirements it is not possible for an individual applicant to be granted exemptions from having fulfilled the specific entry requirements.

Local rules

The admission process for third-cycle study programmes must be transparent. An overall written description of what the admission process usually looks like, for example the procedures for the selection process, which entity prepares the case, and other aspects that are of significance, must be easily accessible to potential applicants. The description must also state which entity makes the decision on admission.

In the general study plan for each subject, the Area Board shall establish which assessment criteria are to be applied in the examination of the ability to benefit from the course or study programme in this subject. See also the Rules for educational programme and examination at postgraduate level third-cycle study programmes in the Governing Documents – Rules and Regulations, section on general study plan/programme syllabus.

The Area Board must regularly follow-up to ensure that there are clear descriptions of the admissions process at the respective Departments.

Decision

National rules

For each admission decision, the decision date, contents of the decision, and who made the decision must be stated, (see Section 21 of the Government Agency Ordinance (2007:515)). In the event that someone has been the rapporteur or participated in the final administrative proceedings without participating in the decision, their name must also be stated.



Chapter 1, Section 4a of the Higher Education Ordinance states that the reasons for an admission decision do not need to be provided. However if a reason has not been provided, the public authority must subsequently inform them afterwards of the reason if an applicant so requests this and it is necessary for them to be able to exercise their legal rights.

Local rules

It is normally the Departmental Board or the equivalent that, upon delegation from the Board of Science/Board of Human Science, decides on the admission to third-cycle study programmes. The decision may not be further delegated beyond this level. See the exceptions above that apply to the admission of doctoral students with other funding or doctoral students who are admitted to studies that conclude with a licentiate degree, when the admission decision is delegated to the Faculty Board level.

Before a decision on admission is made, the Departmental Board or the equivalent must ensure that the admission process has taken place in accordance with the rules in this document. This includes ensuring that the grounds and justification for the selection of applicants is documented in writing and sufficiently clear for a decision to be made.

Appealing against a decision

National rule

A decision that an applicant has not been admitted to a third-cycle study programme cannot be appealed. This follows from Chapter 12, Sections 2 and 4 of the Higher Education Ordinance.