

Faculty of Social Sciences
Department of Education

General Study Plan for the PhD programme in Education

Allmän studieplan för utbildning på forskarnivå i pedagogik

1. Decision

The General Study Plan for the PhD programme in Education was decided upon by the Faculty of Social Sciences at Stockholm University on December 29th, 2020. The study plan went into effect on January 1st, 2021.

Local Implementation Regulations

General regulations and goals concerning PhD programmes are found in The Higher Education Ordinance (HF)¹. The Stockholm University Board and Vice Chancellor decide upon supplementary regulations at the university level². The Faculty of Social Sciences' regulations of PhD programmes complement the university regulations³. PhD programme studies are offered according to available resources at a department.

2. Subject Area Description

Education is an academic discipline in which formal and non-formal education, development, and learning are studied in relation to cultural and societal contexts.

3. Programme Objectives

Doctoral studies can lead to either a licentiate degree or a doctorate degree.

3.1. Doctoral Degree

A Doctoral Degree is achieved upon completing 240 credits in a subject area at the PhD level.

Knowledge and understanding

¹ Higher Education Ordinance or *Högskoleförordning* (1993:100)

² *Admission rules for third-cycle studies at Stockholm University (Antagningsordning för utbildning på forskarnivå vid Stockholms universitet)*, University Board (Universitetsstyrelsen) 2018-02-16, dnr SU FV-1.1.2-3502-17; *Local implementation regulations for doctoral degrees at Stockholm University (Föreskrifter för utbildning på forskarnivå vid Stockholms universitet)*, Vice Chancellor (Rektor) 2018-02-22, (dnr SU FV-1.1.2-3448-17).

³ <http://www.samfak.su.se/regelverk-och-beslut>



To obtain a Doctoral Degree, the doctoral student must:

- demonstrate a broad knowledge and systematic understanding of the research area as well as a detailed and current specialized knowledge within a defined part of the research area, and
- demonstrate a familiarity with general research methods and in particular, the research methods used in the specific research area.

Proficiency and Ability

To obtain a Doctoral Degree, the doctoral student must

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

Judgement and approach

To obtain a Doctoral Degree, the doctoral student must

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



Scholarly Dissertation (Doctoral Dissertation)

To receive a Doctoral Degree, the doctoral student must have presented and passed with a scholarly dissertation (doctoral dissertation) of 150 Swedish higher education credits.

3.2. Licentiate Degree

To obtain a Licentiate Degree, the Licentiate student must

Knowledge and understanding

– demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the research area, a current specialized knowledge within a defined part of the research area, as well as a deep understanding of general research methods and in particular, the research methods used in the specific research area.

Proficiency and Ability

To obtain a Licentiate Degree, the Licentiate student must

– demonstrate an ability to critically, independently, creatively and with scholarly precision, identify and formulate issues; as well as plan, using appropriate methods

- conduct a limited research study and other advanced tasks within specified time limits and through which, make a contribution to the development of knowledge and be able to examine and evaluate such work

– demonstrate an ability, in both national and international contexts, orally and in writing, to clearly present and discuss research and research results with the scholarly community and society in general; moreover, demonstrate a proficiency associated with being able to independently participate in research and development work and in other advanced profession contexts

Judgement and approach

To obtain a Licentiate Degree, the Licentiate student must

– demonstrate the ability to make research ethical decisions in their own research,

– demonstrate insight into the potential and limitations of science, its role in society and people's responsibility for how it is used, and

– demonstrate an ability in identifying needs for future knowledge, and taking responsibility for their own knowledge development.



Scholarly Dissertation

To receive a Licentiate Degree, the Licentiate student must have presented and passed with a scholarly dissertation of at least 75 Swedish higher education credits.

4. Prerequisites and Admission Criteria

4.1 General Admission Criteria

In order to be eligible for the PhD program, students must have:

1. completed an advanced level/Master's degree,
2. completed courses equivalent to at least 240 Swedish higher education credits, of which at least 60 credits were obtained at the advanced level, or
3. acquired equivalent knowledge in another way in Sweden or elsewhere⁴.

The General Admissions Criteria must be fulfilled by the closing date of the admissions round.

4.2 Special Admissions Criteria

In order to meet the Special Admissions Criteria, the student must have:

1. completed courses equivalent to at least 90 Swedish higher education credits and a thesis of at least 15 Swedish higher education credits in one of the following subject areas: education, international and comparative education, didactics, subject specific didactics, child and youth studies, special education, pedagogical work,

or a teaching degree equivalent to at least 180 Swedish higher education credits, including a thesis of at least 15 Swedish higher education credits

or a Bachelor of Arts in Study and Career Guidance, including a thesis of at least 15 Swedish higher education credits

or completed courses equivalent to at least 90 Swedish higher education credits in a relevant subject within the Social Sciences or Humanities, including a thesis of at least 15 Swedish higher education credits.

⁴ The applicant is responsible for submitting clear documentation and argumentation of their competence in relation the equivalent knowledge obtained through a degree at the advanced level.



The thesis should, in every case, address a relevant problem related to educational issues, theories, and methods.

2. English language proficiency, which will be tested during the admissions

The Special Admissions Criteria must be fulfilled by the closing date of the admissions round.

5. Announcement and Admissions

Admissions to doctoral studentships financed through the Social Science Faculty are, depending on the availability of resources, announced once per calendar year on the first weekday in February with a final application date of the first weekday in March. Announcements are made through the Stockholm University recruitment system.

Doctoral studentships are publicly announced on the Stockholm University website and the departmental website. Applicants must digitally submit a CV, official transcript of records and official copy of their degrees, earlier theses (the theses must be written in Swedish or English), and a research plan (maximum 5 pages, excluding references), written in Swedish or English. The research plan should outline the research question and objectives of the study, as well as which theoretical perspectives and methodology will be used. The research plan should also include a brief research summary. The research plan should clearly align to one or more of the departmental research areas so that the doctoral student will have a supervisor within the area of expertise of the dissertation. Information on the departmental research areas can be found on the departmental website.

Admissions decisions cannot be appealed. Admission is announced at the start of June based on the decision made by the Department of Education Board. The doctoral studentship begins September 1st.

A doctoral student whom receives an external employment contract, including financing for the duration of their studies, can send in an application no later than the first weekday in March, each year. For more information on the application process for externally financed doctoral studentships, see the Department of Education website. Decisions regarding admission of externally financed doctoral studentships are made by the Faculty of Social Sciences based upon an agreement reached by the Department of Education experts.

The first employment contract for a doctoral student is valid for one year. The following employment contracts are signed up to two years at a time. A person can be employed as a doctoral student for up to eight years. The combined time of employment cannot exceed the equivalent of full-time, four-year doctoral studies (a combined 48 months). Studies which lead



to a Licentiate Degree cannot exceed a combined employment time of full-time, two-year studies (24 months). Documented departmental work is then added to the total combined time of employment.

The combined time of employment can then not be longer than four, full-time years, unless under special circumstances. The special circumstances can be leave due to illness, leave for military duty, or required obligations within a union or student organization, or parental leave (HF§ 5:7).

If a Licentiate position is announced, the student must complete their Licentiate Degree and a new scholarly review and financial analysis must be done if the Licentiate student wishes to continue on to PhD studies.

5.1 Assessment Process and Selection Criteria

Applications go through several steps of assessment by faculty members who currently supervise doctoral students. According to the following criteria, the faculty members assign a point value to the theses and research plans submitted, whereby a ranking of the applications is done.

- Stringency of the research question and analysis of earlier work and of the research plan.
- Familiarity with the research area of the intended research plan.
- Methodological and theoretical understanding and the degree to which reflexivity is reached in the texts.
- The qualities of planned research in relation to what it contributes to the discipline.
- The intended study's prospective ethical implications and possibility of an ethical review.
- Ability to express themselves both written and verbally in an academic setting.
- The planned study's feasibility within the allotted time.
- The assessment process and selection criteria aim to provide clarity with regards to the applicant's ability to complete doctoral programme within the intended time.

6. Programme Content and Structure

The PhD programme in Education usually takes four years of full-time study to reach 240 Swedish higher education credits. The programme consists of 90 Swedish higher education credits of course credits and a dissertation of 150 Swedish higher education credits. The Licentiate programme usually takes two years of full-time study and consists of 120 Swedish higher education credits, of which, 45 Swedish higher education credits are for course work and 75 Swedish higher education credits are for the dissertation.



The doctoral students should pursue their PhD studies, however, a limited number of hours (at most, 20%) can be allocated towards teaching or administration at the Department of Education (this does not apply to externally financed doctoral students). If a doctoral student does documented work for the department, their study time is extended according to exact time spent. Doctoral studies cannot be conducted below part-time or beyond eight years, part-time study.

The writing of the dissertation/doctoral thesis is the most important component of the programme. The dissertation or Licentiate thesis should be based upon an independent, scholarly work within the education research area. During the programme, academic and employment counselling shall be given. Supervisors are responsible for providing their supervisee with an overview of possible employment opportunities for when the student finishes their degree.

6.1 Individual Study Plan

In conjunction with admission to the programme, an individual study plan must be drafted for each doctoral student using the current templates or system, as decided upon by the Office of Human Science.

The supervisor and doctoral student should meet, at least once per term, to assess if the student's doctoral studies are progressing according to the deadlines/goals set in the individual study plan. The primary supervisor is responsible for making sure the meetings take place. Both the supervisor and the doctoral student have the right to suggest changes to the individual study plan. The head of the department decides upon and signs the individual study plan which is then archived at the department. Every term, the supervisor assesses that the study plan is being followed. The doctoral student is informed of the assessment. The head of the department shall be informed in writing if there is a large shift or change made in the individual study plan.

The doctoral studies can only be extended beyond the 48 months under special circumstances. Those special circumstances can include leave due to illness, military leave, or other binding obligations such as union or student organization duties or parental leave as well if documented work for the department has been conducted at a maximum of 20% of full-time.

6.2 Supervision and Other Resources

An accepted doctoral student, regardless of financing form, has the right to regular supervision during the duration of their combined study period in which to reach the 240 Swedish higher education credits. Each accepted doctoral student shall be assigned at least two supervisors, of which, at least one of whom must have gone through supervisor training or be deemed as having equivalent skills by the Faculty of Social Sciences. The main supervisor must be currently employed at the Department of Education. Supervisors are assigned by the head of the department and can be changed upon request by the supervisor or doctoral student or due to other circumstances. A doctoral student or supervisor whom requests a change of supervisor should contact the director of research studies (or departmental dean if the director of studies is the supervisor). Academic and employment counselling must be offered during the doctoral studies.

Faculty financed doctoral studentships, in addition to supervision and desk space, have the right to the means necessary to complete the research plan as outlined in the grounds for admissions. In addition, the Departmental Board can approve funding for the doctoral student to present their research internationally during their study time. For externally financed doctoral students, their terms of employment are outlined in the contract with their external employer.

Doctoral students whom have not defended by the end of their employment contract, but can prove a degree of activity according to the Higher Education Ordinance, will receive continued supervision so long as the university president does not decide otherwise in accordance with the Higher Education Ordinance section 6, chapter 30. For doctoral students whose employment contract has ended, an individual action plan is drafted and attached to an individual study plan and followed-up each quarter. If a doctoral student whose employment contract ended and would like to resume their studies after an absence of at least one year or requests a change in supervisor, a manuscript review is conducted by the subject area professor group.

If a doctoral student deliberately disregards their commitments outlined in the individual study plan, the head of the department can decide if the doctoral student is no longer allowed supervision or other resources for their studies. Before such a decision is made, the doctoral student and supervisor is given the opportunity to state their point of view of the situation. The review process shall be based on their account and other available information. In the decision, a weighing of if the university has lived up to their commitments, as outlined in the individual study plan, should also be made. The decision should be provided in writing and with justification. (HF§ 6:30)



If resources are withdrawn according to HF§ 6:30, the doctoral student can apply through the head of the department to have the resources reinstated. The doctoral student must show that they intend to make significant improvements to the quality and quantity of their work or in another way show that they are able to complete the remaining tasks stated in the individual study plan (HF§ 6:31).

6.3 Courses and Examination

To receive a PhD in Education, doctoral students must have passed all courses which fulfil the goals of the program and are not examined during the public defence/dissertation/Licentiate thesis. PhD students are required to have passed 90 Swedish higher education credits of course work, of which, 52.5 credits consist of required courses and 37.5 are elective course credits. For a Licentiate degree 37.5 credits of required courses and 7.5 of elective credits must be fulfilled. For a detailed list of courses, see the department *Doctoral Students and Supervisors Handbook*. Elective courses are listed on the Department of Education website.

Course work examines the doctoral students' attainment of knowledge and skills through oral and written examinations in relation to the following goals (which are not completely covered in writing the dissertation):

- demonstrates a broad knowledge and systematic understanding of the research area.
- demonstrate an ability, in both national and international contexts, orally and in writing, to present and discuss research and research results with authority in dialogue with the scholarly community and society in general
- demonstrate intellectual independence and scholarly integrity, as well as an ability to make ethical assessments relating to research, and
- demonstrate insight into the potential and limitations of science, its role in society and people's responsibility for how it is used
- demonstrate an ability in identifying needs for future knowledge, and
- contribute the development of society and support other people's learning
- demonstrate a familiarity with general research methods and in particular, the research methods used in the specific research area.

6.3 1 Transfer of Credit

Up to 30 Swedish higher education credits of course work, not counted towards the student's eligibility for admission into the PhD programme, can be transferred and will cut the study time by 1 term. In general, doctoral course work and a maximum of 30 credits at the master's

level from the department or other universities/departments can be transferred into the doctoral degree. Professional development courses for faculty members can also be transferred. The director of research studies, in discussion with the main supervisor, decides upon the transfer of credit of master's level course work. The main supervisor decides upon the transfer of credit of doctor course work completed at other universities. Course work is planned in the individual study plan.

6.4 Additional Obligations

Within a year of admissions, the doctoral student must participate in the introduction day for doctoral students, organized centrally by the Faculty of Social Sciences, and they must participate in the introduction training offered at the Department of Education.

The doctoral student's progress is tested during two public seminars:

1. Towards the end of the second year of study, the student's manuscript is read by two faculty members in the department and presented in a reading seminar.
2. About six months before the planned public defence date, the manuscript is reviewed by two faculty members, one of who must be associated with the department, and is presented in a final reading seminar.

A doctoral student completing a Licentiate degree will have their work reviewed by a reading group after one year of full-time study.

During their time of employment, doctoral students should participate in working group meetings and conferences which directly relate to their work at the department or Social Sciences faculty/centrally at Stockholm University.

The doctoral student should be accessible during their research at the department and thereby contribute to the research environment.

During their studies, a doctoral student should present their work at, at least one, international conference.

6.5 Dissertation and Public Defence

To obtain a PhD, a doctoral student must have received a passing mark at the public defence of their dissertation of 150 Swedish higher education credits. A dissertation can be either one cohesive work (monograph) or a compilation of published, peer-reviewed articles (compilation dissertation). In addition to the individual articles, a compilation dissertation should demonstrate synthesis through an integrated overview and reflection of the study's knowledge contribution in relation to the study's overall aims and related research area (a so-



called “kappa”). The dissertation can be written in either Swedish or English and should contain a summary in both languages.

For a detailed description of dissertation requirements, including format, quality requirements, publishing and shared work, see the Department of Education’s *Handbook for Doctoral Students and Supervisors*.

Before the public defence, the final manuscript is reviewed during the final reading seminar. Thereafter, the final manuscript is read and assessed by a professor (not the main supervisor) who is nominated by the head of the department. Based on the professor’s assessment, the public defence date can be set.

The dissertation is defended and examined during a public seminar or public defence. For information on rules, routines, and preparation for the defence, refer to the *Riktlinjer för disputationer vid Samhällsvetenskapliga Fakulteten* (Guidelines for a Public Defence at the Faculty of Social Sciences) as well as the departmental *Lathund vid disputation* (Guidelines for a public defence).

6.5.1 Licentiate Thesis and Seminar

To obtain a Licentiate degree, the doctoral student must have received a passing mark on the thesis of 75 Swedish higher education credits. The thesis can be either one cohesive work (monograph) or a compilation of published, peer-reviewed articles (compilation thesis). In addition to the individual articles, a compilation thesis should demonstrate synthesis through an integrated overview and reflection of the study’s knowledge contribution in relation to the study’s overall aims and related research area (a so-called “kappa”). For a detailed description of the thesis requirements and format, see the Department of Education’s *Handbook for Doctoral Students and Supervisors*. The thesis can be written in either Swedish or English and should contain a summary in both languages.

Before the examination the final manuscript is reviewed during the final reading seminar. Thereafter, the final manuscript is read and assessed by a professor (not the main supervisor) who is nominated by the head of the department. Based on this assessment, the examination date can be set.

The thesis must be defended and examined during a public seminar with an opponent from another university. For information on routines, and preparation in relation to Licentiate theses, refer to the *Riktlinjer för licentiatseminarium vid Samhällsvetenskaplig Fakulteten* (Guidelines for a Licentiate seminar at the Faculty of Social Sciences) as well as the departmental *Lathund vid disputation* (Guidelines for a Licentiate seminar).

7. Transitional Rules

Doctoral students, who were accepted before the current General Study Plan went to effect, can, in consultation with their main supervisor and director studies, request to follow the current study plan. Their individual study plan should then be updated.

Doctoral students accepted between July 1st, 2007 and September 1st, 2015 can choose to complete their studies according the General Study Plan that was in effect when they applied. Doctoral students accepted before July 1st, 2007 must transfer to the new General Study Plan⁵.

⁵ Övergångsfrågor för utbildning på forskarnivå Dnr SU FV-4.9-3369-15.