General syllabus for doctoral (third cycle) education in Design at the University of Gothenburg

1. Decision

Regulations regarding doctoral (third cycle) education and admission to this programme, respectively, are to be found in the Higher Education Ordinance, chapters 6 and 7 (SFS 1993:100).

Local regulations for doctoral (third cycle) education are to be found in the University of Gothenburg’s common governing documents and in the Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts’ governing documents.

This general syllabus was drawn up by the Faculty Board at the Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts, the University of Gothenburg on February 21st 2012. The syllabus is valid from February 21st 2012.

2. Goals of doctoral (third cycle) education

2.1 General national goals

The general national goals for doctoral (third cycle) education are given in the Higher Education Ordinance, Annex 2, Qualifications Ordinance

2.2 Local goals at the Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts, University of Gothenburg

The goals of doctoral (third cycle) education are to develop the knowledge and skills required in order to be able to independently pursue research and also contribute to knowledge development in the subject by producing a scholarly dissertation.

Doctoral (third cycle) education shall develop the doctoral student’s communicative and pedagogical skills so as to express him or herself well in speech and writing
both within and outside of academic contexts. The doctoral student shall even have acquired the knowledge to plan, lead and carry out research projects.

Doctoral (third cycle) education shall also give doctoral students the possibility to develop international contacts, for example, in the form of participation in research conferences and/or visits to foreign seats of learning.

2.3 Subject description and subject-specific goals

Subject description

The subject Design is: professional practical knowledge resulting in designed artefacts and services (this including environments, processes, structures and systems), through applied action. Characteristic of design competence is the ability to fuse a multiplicity of different perspectives and provide for different requirements in a meaningful holistic design.

Subject-specific goals

After having completed his or her doctoral studies a doctoral student is expected to be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

– demonstrate broad knowledge and systematic understanding of the research field Design.
– demonstrate relevant specialised knowledge in the doctoral student's own field of study.

Competence and skills

– demonstrate the ability to independently pursue research in his or her own field
– demonstrate the ability to identify, formulate and examine artistic and/or scholarly problems and issues within the field of Design.
– contribute to the base of knowledge and the methodological development of the subject Design

Judgement and approach

– demonstrate the ability to examine, analyse and discuss different forms of design in a societal and cultural context
– demonstrate a critical and reflective ability in relation to the field of research.

3 Qualifications and entry requirements
In order to be admitted to doctoral (third cycle) education, the applicant is required to fulfil the criteria for the general and the specific entry requirements in accordance with what is stated in chapter 7 of the Higher Education Ordinance.

3.1 General entry requirements

According to chapter 7, section 39, of the Higher Education Ordinance, a person meets the general entry requirements if he or she
1. has been awarded a second-cycle qualification, or
2. has satisfied the requirements for courses comprising at least 240 higher education credits of which at least 60 higher education credits were awarded in the second-cycle, or
3. has acquired substantially equivalent knowledge in some other way in Sweden or abroad.

According to a provisional regulation in the Higher Education Ordinance, an applicant that meets the general requirements for admission to doctoral (third cycle) education before 1st July 2007 maintains this general requirement for admission to doctoral (third cycle) education, but only to the end of 2015.

The faculty board may permit an exemption from the general entry requirements. However, to meet entry requirements, the applicant must be considered in other respects to have the ability required to complete the doctoral programme.

3.2 Specific entry requirements

Specific entry requirements for the subject Design are:

- at least 120 higher education credits (or the equivalent) in subjects that are considered to have relevance to doctoral studies in Design, or equivalent knowledge

- a documented specialisation of study including subjects oriented towards relevant issues within the subject.

- an independent project (thesis) of at least 30 higher education credits (or alternatively several projects, which, together, are the equivalent of, or are considered to be the equivalent of 30 higher education credits) in a subject that is considered to have relevance to doctoral studies in Design.
Further requirements:
   Experience from the field of design, and
documented evidence of one’s interest in reflective,
research-related issues and processes.

An applicant also meets the specific requirements if
he or she has acquired substantially equivalent
knowledge in some other way in Sweden or abroad.

3.3 Application
An application for admission shall be sent to the Faculty
Office at the Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing
Arts and shall contain documentation that supports the
applicant’s general and specific entry requirements and
also other documentation of value in order to assess the
applicant’s possibilities to benefit from doctoral (third
cycle) education.

In addition to this, the applicant shall attach a report
describing his or her interest in the subject area, the
focus of the dissertation work and its key issues. A time
plan shall also be included along with details of how
one’s studies are to be financed.

3.4 Admission, selection
The decision to admit students to doctoral (third cycle)
education is made by the faculty board. The number of
doctoral students admitted to doctoral (third cycle)
education will be restricted to those who can be offered
acceptable terms concerning supervision and study
conditions in general.

Furthermore, only students who are considered to have
guaranteed funding for the entire period of study,
according to the Higher Education Ordinance, chapter 7,
section 36, will be admitted.

Selection among applicants that meet the requirements
stated in paragraph 2 and 3 above and also points 3.1 and
3.2 will be based on the application documents received
and interviews with the applicants who are considered to
be possible candidates for admission. Work samples may
be requested as a complement to other application
documents. Selection among qualified applicants is made
in consideration of their ability to benefit from doctoral
(third cycle) education. The following assessment
criteria are applied to test this ability:
- the relevance and importance of the research project described in the application
- documented evidence of ability to carry out research or researching tasks.

4. Organisation and content

For a Licentiate degree, doctoral studies in Design consist of a course section comprising 30–60 higher education credits and a thesis comprising 60–90 higher education credits. For a Doctoral degree, a course section comprising 60–120 higher education credits and a dissertation comprising 120–180 higher education credits.

4.1 General information about the content of the programme

Besides the work involved in producing a licentiate thesis and/or a doctoral dissertation, doctoral (third cycle) education in Design takes the form of, among other things, actively taking part in organised doctoral courses, carrying out individually designed courses that can be literature- or media-based; this programme also takes the form of active participation in seminars, conferences and exhibitions, carrying out study trips, one’s own seminars, lectures and workshops, and also work on articles and artistic productions.

Certain parts of the programme can take place at a foreign higher arts education institute provided there is an agreement between these institutes that guarantees the level of education and the integration of these studies into one’s doctoral studies as a whole.

4.2 Course section

The courses comprise subject-specific courses, compulsory Faculty courses and also external courses that take place at the Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts and at other faculties. All organised courses at doctoral level within the faculty shall have an examiner and a written syllabus which, among other things, states the goals, the content and the number of higher education credits awarded. The form of testing shall also be stated.

Participation in subject-specific courses should comprise at least 15 higher education credits for the licentiate degree and at least 30 higher education credits for the doctoral degree. Participation in faculty courses is compulsory – and should comprise at least 15 higher education credits for the licentiate degree and at least 30 higher education credits for the doctoral degree.
4.3 Licentiate thesis  
The Licentiate thesis shall demonstrate the candidate’s ability to identify, clearly define, and, using relevant methods, his or her ability to perform a research task. The Licentiate thesis can also contain elements of artistic expression that are in dialogue with the written presentation. The thesis can either take the form of a unified, coherent piece of work or of a short summary of articles that the candidate has published or had accepted for publication in scientific journals or anthologies, or the equivalent within the artistic field. 

The thesis shall, within a limited area of the field in question, constitute an independent contribution to research and document satisfactory insights into the relevant requirements and criteria of good research. The thesis shall be of such quality that it can be accepted for publication in a scientific series or research journal, or the equivalent within the artistic field. In the parts of the thesis that consist of artistic production, these shall meet the national requirements for artistic excellence and have relevance to the development of research within the artistic field. 

In certain cases, thesis work can be pursued as team work. This shall then be organised in such a way that the individual contributions can be specified and assessed on the same grounds as for individual pieces of work. 

4.4 Doctoral dissertation  
The doctoral dissertation shall demonstrate the candidate’s ability to identify, clearly define and, using relevant methods, his or her ability to perform a research task. The doctoral dissertation can also contain elements of artistic expression that are in dialogue with the written presentation. The doctoral dissertation can either take the form of a unified, coherent piece of work or of a short summary of articles that the candidate has published or had accepted for publication in scientific journals or anthologies, or the equivalent within the artistic field. Licentiate work can be included as a part of the doctoral degree, either in revised or unrevised form. 

The doctoral dissertation shall constitute an independent contribution to research and document satisfactory insights into the relevant requirements and criteria of good research. The doctoral dissertation shall be of such quality that it can be accepted for publication in a scientific series or research journal, or the equivalent within the artistic field. In the parts of the dissertation that consist of artistic production, these shall meet the
international requirements for artistic excellence and have relevance to the development of research within the artistic field.

In certain cases, dissertation work can be pursued as team work. This shall then be organised in such a way that the individual efforts can be specified and assessed on the same grounds as for individual pieces of work.

4.5 To be given credit for previous education

A doctoral student who has pursued part of his or her doctoral studies in the same subject at a Swedish higher education institute, and has been awarded pass marks, may be given credit for these studies. A doctoral student may also be granted the right to be given credit for studies pursued at a foreign seat of learning. Cases of accreditation of previous studies are decided by the faculty board upon request from the subject representative. Credits that are part of the entry requirements may not be credited within doctoral (third cycle) education.

4.6 Courses and seminars

The basis of the course section is made up of subject-specific and faculty courses, whose main aim it is to give an introduction to and develop the artistic field’s research praxis. In addition to these courses, there are seminars where research problems are treated and where the doctoral student will be given the opportunity to put his or her project work up for discussion and acquaint him or herself with the various stages of other seminar participants’ research. Each doctoral student should participate actively in the seminars for at least four terms, and preferably during the entire doctoral programme (a doctoral student who has been admitted to the licentiate degree programme should participate in the seminars for at least two terms).

At specially arranged faculty seminars, each doctoral student who has been admitted to the licentiate degree programme shall give a report of his ongoing thesis work when approximately 50% of the work has been completed. When the thesis is in its entire form and in a preliminary version, a final seminar shall be arranged. At least one external examiner shall take part in all of the seminars mentioned above.

At specially arranged faculty seminars, each doctoral student who has been admitted to the doctoral degree programme shall give a report of his or her ongoing
dissertation work; this will take place when approximately 25% of the work has been completed, and, in those cases where a licentiate degree is not to be taken, when 50% of the work has been completed. In addition to these, a similar seminar can be arranged when approx. 75% of the dissertation work has been completed. When the dissertation is in its entirety in a preliminary version, a final seminar shall be arranged. At least one external examiner shall take part in all of the seminars mentioned above.

4.7 Supervision

A main supervisor and at least one assistant supervisor shall be chosen for each doctoral student. The main supervisor has the main responsibility for the doctoral student’s education, and this also includes dissertation work. If the main supervisor lacks the specialist knowledge required to support the doctoral student’s dissertation work, an assistant supervisor with expertise of this kind will be chosen. One person can be chosen as an assistant supervisor for the entire course of the doctoral programme or different people for different parts of the doctoral project. Doctoral students have the right to supervision to the extent that has been stipulated by the faculty board and for the total amount of time considered to be needed for the programme in question. An application for a change of supervisor should be made to the faculty board.

Supervisors shall give doctoral students advice and instructions as to what courses should be chosen, the general direction of the dissertation and how dissertation work should be planned and carried out. By getting in touch with his or her supervisor on a regular basis, the doctoral student shall keep his or her supervisor informed about how his or her work is progressing and obtain advice on how it is to be organised in future.

Supervision normally takes place on an individual basis but supervision in groups may act as a complement to this.

4.8 Individual study plan

In accordance with the Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6 section 36, an individual study plan shall be drawn up for each doctoral student. The individual study plan shall contain

1. a time plan for the doctoral student’s education up to his or her intended degree,
2. information on how the doctoral student’s supervision is to be organised,
3. a description of other duties the doctoral student and the faculty board have during the period of study, and
4. anything else required in order for studies to be pursued in an efficient way.

The study plan shall also contain a financing plan for the entire course of the programme, and, at the latest from the point in time when the doctoral student has completed 25% of his education, a plan for his or her dissertation work (or thesis work for a licentiate degree).

A proposal of an individual study plan is signed by the doctoral student and his or her main supervisor and handed in to the faculty board. The study plan is to be revised by the doctoral student and the main supervisor together once a year and handed in to the faculty board for approval.

5. Examination/ knowledge assessment

Doctoral (third cycle) education leads to a doctoral degree by submitting a doctoral dissertation or for a licentiate degree by submitting a licentiate thesis. The dissertation (thesis) can combine artistic and scientific/scholarly elements in several different ways. Regarding artistic production, the doctoral student shall document his or her practical artistic work during the process as well as in completed artistic products.

Each course that is included in the doctoral programme shall have an examiner at the department that gives the course. When exams are assessed, consideration shall be taken of how in depth the doctoral student’s knowledge is, as well as of what ability the doctoral student has demonstrated of independent judgement and critical analysis.

5.1 Licentiate degree

For a licentiate degree in the subject Design, a doctoral student is required to have completed at least 120 higher education credits in the doctoral (third cycle) programme, of which at least 30 higher education credits are in the form of courses that have been awarded a pass mark and at least 60 higher education credits in the form of a licentiate thesis, which can contain both text and artistic production. The licentiate thesis is submitted and discussed at a public seminar, where it is examined by an
opponent chosen by the department at which the subject has been studied. On assessing the thesis, consideration shall be taken of its content as well as of the seminar discussion.

5.2 Doctoral degree
For a doctoral degree, the doctoral student is required to have completed at least 240 higher education credits in the doctoral (third cycle) programme, of which at least 60 higher education credits are in the form of courses that have been awarded pass marks and at least 120 higher education credits in the form of the successful completion of a doctoral dissertation, which can contain both text and artistic production. The doctoral dissertation shall have been submitted and defended orally at a public defence. On assessing the dissertation, consideration shall be taken of its content as well as of its defence.

5.3 Grades
A doctoral dissertation, a licentiate thesis and courses are awarded the grades Pass or Fail.

5.4 Degree certificate
The degree certificate is issued by the Vice-Chancellor of the university.

5.5 Title
A degree within the framework of doctoral (third cycle) education shall be given the title: degree of Licentiate of Philosophy in Design at the Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts. This degree may be given a different title if there are special reasons for doing so.

6. Provisional regulation
A doctoral student who has been admitted before 21st of February 2012 can, after having consulted his or her supervisor, make a request to his or her Head of Department to go over to this syllabus. The individual study plan should then be updated.