



GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET

SAMHÄLLSVETENSKAPLIGA FAKULTETEN

General Syllabus for Third-cycle Studies in Political Science, 240 Higher Education Credits

The syllabus was approved by the Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Gothenburg on 27 March 2007, revised by the Dean on 21 May 2012, and revised by the Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences on 13 December 2018 (U 2018/719). The general syllabus includes doctoral and licentiate degrees.

1. Programme Aims

The goal of the programme is for the doctoral student to acquire and develop the knowledge and skills required to conduct independent research in political science and to contribute to the development of knowledge within the discipline through the production of a scholarly thesis.

Another aim of the third-cycle programme in political science is to develop the doctoral student's ability to apply the aforementioned knowledge and skills to post-doctoral research or other professional work. The doctoral student shall also develop communicative and pedagogical skills in both oral and written communication both in and outside an academic context. The doctoral student shall also acquire research project planning and implementation skills.

Moreover, third-cycle studies shall facilitate international contact or experience, for example in the form of participation in research conferences or visits to a foreign higher education institution.

The specific goals of the programme, which doctoral students must achieve in order to obtain a third cycle degree in political science, are indicated below. Note that the requirements specified in the system of qualifications concerning third cycle degrees provided in the Higher Education Ordinance, the qualifications ordinance and the rules and regulations for third-cycle studies at the University of Gothenburg also apply.

1.1 *Knowledge and understanding*

For a doctoral degree, the doctoral student shall:

- demonstrate advanced knowledge and understanding of the political science research field, as well as depth in current specialist knowledge within a well-defined section of the research field
- demonstrate extensive skills in political science methodology, particularly the methods pertaining to the specifically selected research field

For a licentiate degree, the doctoral student shall:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the political science research field, as well as depth in current specialist knowledge within a well-defined section of the research field, and demonstrate knowledge in political science methodology within the chosen research field

1.2 *Competence and skills*

Individual research work will prepare the student to be able to plan, conduct, complete and publish research and to attain internationally acceptable scholarly expertise in basic research and in applied

research and analysis assignments where political science knowledge is relevant.

For a doctoral degree, the doctoral student shall:

- demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate problems critically, independently, creatively, and with scientific rigour, as well as to conduct research and other advanced tasks using commensurate methods within given timeframes, and to show an ability to review and evaluate such work
- in the thesis demonstrate the ability to make a contribution to the chosen research field
- demonstrate the ability both orally and in writing to present and discuss research and research findings both nationally and internationally in the academic community and society at large
- demonstrate the ability to identify needs for further research within the field of political science
- demonstrate the ability to contribute to the development of the subject area in political science research and education

For a licentiate degree, the doctoral student shall:

- demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate problems critically and independently, as well as to conduct limited research and other advanced tasks within given timeframes, and to show an ability to review and evaluate such work and thereby make a contribution to the chosen research field
- demonstrate the ability both orally and in writing to present and discuss research and research findings both nationally and internationally in the academic community and society at large
- demonstrate the ability to independently contribute to research and development

1.3 Judgement and approach

For a doctoral degree, the doctoral student shall:

- demonstrate intellectual independence and scholarly integrity, as well as the ability to make ethical research judgements
- have profound insight into the opportunities and limitations of political science research, into its role in society, and into the researcher's responsibility for how it is applied

For a licentiate degree, the doctoral student shall:

- demonstrate the ability to make ethical research judgements
- have insight into the opportunities and limitations of political science research, into its role in society and into the researcher's responsibility for how it is applied

2. Entry requirements

Applicants must meet both general and specific entry requirements in accordance with Chapter 7 of the Higher Education Ordinance.

2.1 General entry requirements

According to the Higher Education Ordinance, Ch. 7, Sec. 39, an applicant meets the general entry requirements if he/she has obtained

- an advanced degree,
- successfully completed at least 240 HE credits, of which at least 60 must be at the advanced level, or

- largely equivalent knowledge and skills acquired in Sweden or abroad.

2.2 Specific entry requirements

Admission to postgraduate studies in political science requires: a minimum of 60 HE credits from a higher education programme in political science or a similar relevant higher education programme.

3. Selection among qualified applicants

Openings in the Department's doctoral studies programme are announced via a call for applications in coordination with the Faculty of Social Sciences. For further rules and regulations concerning calls for applications and admission, see the Faculty of Social Science's general admission regulations for doctoral studies.

The selection among qualified applicants shall be based on the ability to complete the programme, as provided in the Higher Education Ordinance, Ch. 7. To facilitate the selection process, the applicant must submit:

1. Results of completed courses, especially second-cycle courses (within political science), and CV. References may be taken as part of the admission process and weighed into the evaluation.
2. Essays and degree projects whose quality will be assessed against the following criteria:
 - ability to identify and formulate research question frameworks critically, independently, creatively and with academic rigour
 - ability to apply appropriate methods to academic research
 - ability to present and discuss one's own research findings in the context of related research
3. A research plan presenting the applicant's research interest/planned focus of the thesis. This plan is assessed based on the following criteria:
 - the originality of the thesis topic described
 - the feasibility of the thesis topic described
 - the relevance of the thesis to the supervisory expertise in the department
4. An introductory letter in which applicants motivate the application and describe how they intend to be an active part of the department's research environment. If the call for application has a special profile or is associated with a specific research project, applicants shall motivate their ambitions and merits in relation to the profile or project.

Applicants are evaluated and ranked by a selection committee whose members are appointed by the Director of Graduate Studies in consultation with the Head of Department. The selection committee's suggestion is discussed in the Supervisors Committee, which consists of third-level programme teachers and supervisors. The process may include interviews with shortlisted applicants. All final admission decisions are made by the Head of Department.

4. Programme disposition and content

The programme leading to a PhD in political science comprises 240 HE credits. A licentiate degree may be obtained upon completion of 120 HE credits if the requirements for licentiate degrees specified in the Higher Education Ordinance have been fulfilled.

Doctoral programmes consist of both courses with exam work, and individual research work leading to the academic thesis. During the programme, the doctoral student is also expected to take part in seminar activities and, unless there are specific reasons not to, contribute to the Department's joint activities.

The doctoral student may be credited for previously completed higher education. To request a transfer of credits, the doctoral student must submit a formal request. Decisions related to the transfer of credits are made by the Head of Department when the individual study plan is created, and no later than six months after establishment of the plan. When a transfer of credits is granted, there will also be a decision regarding reducing the period of doctoral student finance, which will correspond to the number of credits transferred. The reduction shall be documented in the individual study plan. A doctoral student may not transfer more credits than the equivalent of two years of study.

4.1 Courses

For a doctoral degree, the programme consists of 60 HE credits of coursework, of which 37,5 HE credits must be from programme-specific compulsory courses, and 5 compulsory HE credits in teaching and learning in higher education. Additional courses are selected in consultation with the supervisor.

For a licentiate degree, the programme consists of 30 HE credits of coursework, of which 22,5 HE credits must be from programme-specific compulsory courses, and 5 compulsory HE credits in teaching and learning in higher education.

Additional courses are selected in consultation with the supervisor.

4.2 Thesis and defence

Central to the programme is the completion of a scholarly thesis through which the doctoral student contributes to the development and knowledge within the chosen discipline. The doctoral student is expected to provide regular progress reports. This requirement is primarily fulfilled by presenting the thesis prospectus and, later, a draft chapter proposal at Departmental research seminars. At the end of the first year of study, the doctoral student presents a thesis prospectus at a seminar for the entire Department. The doctoral student presents a chapter/an article at one of the Department's seminar series when having fulfilled 50% of the programme. Finally, the doctoral student presents several draft parts of the thesis for a final review at a seminar when having fulfilled 80% of the programme.

One external and one internal reader shall be appointed for 80% seminars. At 50% seminars, comments are provided by one appointed internal or external reader.

In accordance with the rules detailed in the Higher Education Ordinance for doctoral and licentiate degrees respectively, the thesis shall be defended at a public defence seminar. The topic of the doctoral thesis or licentiate dissertation shall be selected in consultation with the supervisor.

The thesis shall be based on independent research and be of acceptable international academic quality.

It can be formulated either as an integrated piece of work (monograph thesis) or as a compilation of related academic research papers unified by a short scholarly overview (compilation thesis). The thesis must be formulated in accordance with the provisions in the Higher Education Ordinance.

For the licentiate degree the student has to write a scholarly essay. A summary of up to 250 words shall be appended to the essay. The essay shall be based on independent research and be of acceptable scholarly quality. The essay for the licentiate degree shall be presented in the Department's Research Seminar in Politics. The seminar shall be led by one of the Department's examiners in the third cycle programme. The licentiate dissertation shall be treated and made accessible in the manner prescribed in the Faculty of Social Science's general provisions for licentiate degrees.

5. Supervision

Two supervisors shall be appointed for each doctoral student – one principal and one assistant supervisor. The principal supervisor shall be employed or adjunct at the University of Gothenburg and have at minimum associate professor competence. At least one of the supervisors shall have completed supervisor training.

The doctoral student is entitled to supervision as stipulated in "*Rules and regulations for third-cycle studies at the University of Gothenburg*" and "*Implementing decision for third-cycle studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences*". Doctoral students have the right to change supervisors upon request.

6. Individual study plan

The individual study plan shall comprise a timeline and a funding plan for the entire period of study, that is, through to the planned date of thesis defence. An individual study plan shall be developed for each doctoral student in connection with admission. The plan is determined by the Head of Department in consultation with the doctoral student and his/her supervisors. The doctoral student, the supervisors and the Head of Department shall confirm the individual study plan, and any alterations made to it. A study plan progress review shall be carried out at least once a year. The review shall give a clear indication of the doctoral student's progress.

7. Additional information

For further information, please review current legislation and University and Faculty guidelines, as well as local documents issued by the Department of Political Science.