



General Syllabus for Degree of Doctor in Religious Studies

The syllabus was confirmed by the Faculty Board of Arts at the University of Gothenburg on 16 December 2015. It is complemented with the following documents, available via the website of the Faculty of Arts (www.hum.gu.se):

- For the Faculty of Arts' rules for third-cycle studies, see *Instructions for Third-Cycle Studies at the Faculty of Arts*.
- For the University of Gothenburg's rules for third-cycle studies, *Rules and Regulations for Third-Cycle Studies at the University of Gothenburg*.

This is a translation of the Swedish original version. In case of differences between the English translation and the Swedish original, the Swedish version shall prevail.

Title of qualification and description of subject

Upon completion of the third-cycle programme specified herein, a degree of Doctor of Philosophy or Doctor of Theology in Religious Studies shall be awarded at the request of the third-cycle student.

The central research domains in the field of Religious Studies at the University of Gothenburg comprise biblical studies, the history of Christianity, religious behavioural studies, history of religion and systematic theology.

1. Objectives

Third-cycle courses and study programmes shall be based fundamentally on the knowledge acquired by students in first and second-cycle courses and study programmes. The aim of the programme is to develop the knowledge and skills required to be able to undertake autonomous research in the field of Religious Studies and to contribute to the development of knowledge in the subject area through the productions of a scholarly thesis. The development of a doctoral thesis is a central part of the programme that is intended to give the third-cycle student the ability to explore problems critically and to plan, carry out and document this scholarly project in an autonomous manner.

Third-cycle studies shall develop the third-cycle students' communicative and pedagogical skills to enable them to express themselves well both orally and in writing in and outside academic contexts. The doctoral student shall also acquire knowledge about the planning, management and implementation of research projects.

Moreover, third-cycle studies shall facilitate international contacts, for example in the form of participation in research conferences and/or visits and temporary assignments at foreign higher education institutions.

1.1 General national objectives

According to the Qualifications Ordinance, Annex 2 of the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance, the objectives for the Degree of Doctor are as follows:

Knowledge and understanding

For the Degree of Doctor, the third-cycle student shall

- demonstrate broad knowledge and systematic understanding of the research field as well as advanced and up-to-date specialised knowledge in a limited area of this field, and
- demonstrate familiarity with research methodology in general and the methods of the specific field of research in particular.

Competence and skills

For the Degree of Doctor, the third-cycle student shall

- demonstrate the capacity for scholarly analysis and synthesis as well as to review and assess new and complex phenomena, issues and situations autonomously and critically,
- demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate issues with scholarly precision critically, autonomously and creatively, and to plan and use appropriate methods to undertake research and other qualified tasks within predetermined time frames and to review and evaluate such work,
- demonstrate through a thesis project the ability to make a significant contribution to the formation of knowledge through his or her own research,
- demonstrate the ability in both national and international contexts to present and discuss research and research findings authoritatively in speech and writing and in dialogue with the academic community and society in general,
- demonstrate the ability to identify the need for further knowledge, and
- demonstrate the capacity to contribute to social development and support the learning of others both through research and education and in some other qualified professional capacity.

Judgement and approach

For the Degree of Doctor, the third-cycle student shall

- demonstrate intellectual autonomy and disciplinary rectitude as well as the ability to

make assessments of research ethics, and

- demonstrate specialised insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used.

2. Entry requirements

Admission to the programme requires that the applicant fulfil the general and specific entry requirements provided in Chapter 7 of the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance.

2.1 General entry requirements

A person meets the general entry requirements under Chapter 7, Section 39 of the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance if he or she:

- has been awarded a second-cycle qualification, or
- 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
- has acquired substantially equivalent knowledge in some other way in Sweden or abroad.

2.2 Specific entry requirements

Admission to the third-cycle programme in Religious Studies requires:

- at least 30 higher education credits in Religious Studies awarded in the second cycle, of which at least 15 must be from a degree project, or equivalent knowledge, and
- sufficient Swedish and English skills to be able to benefit from compulsory coursework and to be able to actively participate in seminars and similar activities.

3. Admission and selection

Admission to third-cycle studies in Religious Studies is normally initiated by the Department announcing a call for doctoral studentships. Admission is conditional upon the studies being properly funded.

In selecting between applicants, Chapter 7 of the Higher Education Ordinance provides that their ability to benefit from the programme shall be taken into account. To facilitate this selection process, the applicant must submit:

- His or her second-cycle degree project and relevant publications, if any. These documents will be assessed based on the following criteria: originality, grounding in scholarship, complexity of the task and precision in the use of methods and language.
- A project draft in which the applicant stipulates a research domain that he/she would like to develop, justifies its relevance and discusses which theories, methods and materials may come into question. The project draft is assessed based on the following

criteria: originality, scholarly relevance and feasibility. The project draft also provides supporting information for assessing the Department's supervisory competence in the respective research domain.

Admission and selection are also conditional on the Department's supervisory resources in the applicant's focus area. In addition to a review of qualifications submitted, the application process may include interviews. Admission decisions are made by the Head of Department following preparation at the Department.

4. Programme disposition and content

The third-cycle programme in Religious Studies leading to a Degree of Doctor comprises 240 higher education credits. There is the option to obtain a Degree of Licentiate after 120 higher education credits provided the requirements specified in the general syllabus for a Licentiate degree in Religious Studies are fulfilled.

The third-cycle programme consists partly of courses, which are examined incrementally, and partly of own research work, which is to lead to a scholarly thesis.

The student shall participate in seminar activities within the confines of his or her education. The doctoral student shall also participate in Department-wide activities, unless there are special reasons not to.

4.1 Courses

The programme consists of a course part comprising 60 higher education credits, of which 45 are from compulsory courses.

Compulsory courses:

1. Teaching and learning in higher education, basic course, 5 higher education credits (should be completed in the first year of the programme)
2. Theories and methods, 15 higher education credits
3. Specialisation, 15 higher education credits
4. Conference presentation, theory and practice, 10 higher education credits

Elective courses:

5. Elective courses, 15 higher education credits, determined in consultation with the doctoral student's supervisors and the student examiner.

If a student wishes to include credits from previous education, this shall be explicitly stated in the individual study plan (see 6.1.).

4.2 Doctoral thesis

The doctoral thesis comprises 180 higher education credits. It can be designed as a monograph or a compilation thesis. A licentiate thesis can be included as part of a doctoral thesis, in a revised or unaltered form.

The doctoral student is expected to provide regular reports on his or her thesis work. This obligation is primarily fulfilled through presentation at Department seminars.

The doctoral thesis is defended at a public defence seminar. Both the content and defence are considered in the assessment of the thesis project. The thesis is graded with one of the grades Pass or Fail.

For more information, see *Instructions for Third-cycle Studies at the Faculty of Arts*.

5. Supervision

At least two supervisors shall be appointed for each third-cycle student: one principal supervisor and one assistant supervisor. At least one of the supervisors must be employed at the University of Gothenburg, normally at the third-cycle student's home Department. At least one of the supervisors must be qualified for appointment to a readership (*Docent*) and at least one of the supervisors must have completed supervisor training.

The doctoral student is entitled to supervision at least as stipulated by the standard adopted by the Faculty Board (see *Instructions for Third-cycle Studies at the Faculty of Arts*).

A doctoral student who so requests is entitled to change supervisors.

6. Individual study plan

An electronic individual study plan shall be drawn up by the third-cycle student and the supervisors in consultation with the student examiner. The document must be finalised no later than two months after commencement of studies.

The individual study plan shall be reviewed at least once a year. The review shall clearly identify the third-cycle student's progression.

The third-cycle student, supervisors and student examiner must confirm in writing that they have taken part of the individual study plan and any revisions made.

6.1 Credit transfer

When the individual study plan is established, the third-cycle student may request that credits be transferred from past successfully completed second- or third-cycle education. Credits applied to fulfil the general or specific entry requirements may not also be applied towards the third-cycle degree, but must be replaced with another course. In addition, the following applies:

- A doctoral student who has successfully completed a second-cycle course that is included as a compulsory or elective course at third-cycle level may request that the course be replaced with another course of the same extent in the individual study plan. This does not affect the duration of the programme for the Degree of Doctor.

- A doctoral student who has completed part of his or her third-cycle education while he or she was enrolled as a third-cycle student at another higher education institution or in another subject area may request that the part be applied directly to his or her degree without replacements. This reduces the duration of the study programme for a Degree of Doctor in proportion to the credits transferred.

6.2 Timetable and funding plan

The individual study plan shall include a timetable and associated funding plan for the entire period of study, up to the planned date for public defence of the thesis.

7. Transitional provisions

Third-cycle students admitted before 1 January 2016 may, following consultation with the supervisors and the student examiner, request permission from the Head of Department to transfer this programme syllabus. The individual plan must then be updated.