



GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET  
HANDELSHÖGSKOLAN

Ref no GU 2019/2431

# General Syllabus for PhD Programme in Economic History

This general syllabus was confirmed by the Faculty Board of the School of Business, Economics and Law on 2019-10-23.

The programme comprises 240 higher education credits and leads to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Third-cycle students admitted based on an older general syllabus may, if they so wish, change to a subsequent general syllabus.

This document is a translation of the Swedish original. In the event of discrepancies between the translation and the original, the original shall prevail.

## 1. Aims

The purpose of the programme is to provide the third-cycle student with the type of knowledge and skills he/she will need to be able to conduct research and contribute to the development of knowledge autonomously in the field of Economic History. The doctoral thesis shall be a qualified contribution to the development of knowledge and the scholarly discussion in the disciplinary domain. Upon completion of the programme, the doctoral student shall be able to benefit from the education in the fields of research, development and inquiry work, as well as in private and public administration.

For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, the student shall:

### *Knowledge and understanding*

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

### *Competence and skills*

- 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 advanced tasks within predetermined timeframes and to review and evaluate such work.
- Demonstrate through a thesis project the ability to make significant contributions to the formation of knowledge in the field of Economic History through his/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.
- Demonstrate the capacity to contribute to social development and support the learning of others both through research and education and in other qualified professional capacity.

### *Judgement and approach*

- Demonstrate intellectual autonomy and disciplinary rectitude as well as the ability to make assessments of research ethics.
- Demonstrate specialised insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and people's responsibility for how it is used.

## **2. Entry requirements**

To be eligible for admission to third-cycle studies, the applicant must meet both the general and the specific entry requirements in accordance with the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance, Ch. 7.

### ***2.1 General entry requirements***

A person meets the general entry requirements for third-cycle studies if he/she:

- has been awarded a second-cycle qualification,
- has satisfied the requirements for courses comprising at least 240 higher education credits, of which at least 60 were awarded in the second cycle, or
- has acquired substantially equivalent knowledge in some other way in Sweden or abroad (Swedish Higher Education Ordinance Ch. 7, Sec. 39).

### ***2.2 Specific entry requirements***

A person meets the specific entry requirements for third-cycle studies in Economic History if he/she has:

- completed at least 90 higher education credits in Economic History,
- completed at least 30 higher education credits in Economic History in the second cycle, or
- has acquired substantially equivalent knowledge in some other way in Sweden or abroad (Swedish Higher Education Ordinance Ch. 7, Sec. 40).

### 3. Admission and selection

Admission to third-cycle studies is normally granted following a special call for applications. Applications must be submitted to the Unit for Economic History, in response to special calls in accordance with provided instructions. A notice of interest can be submitted at any time. Applicants must enclose evidence of eligibility, previous degree projects (or equivalent) that give an indication of the applicant's capacity and a letter of intent specifying the area of research that the applicant would like to specialise in.

Admission decisions are made by the head of Department of Economy and Society following preparation by the Department's committee for research and third-cycle studies, which consists of senior researchers at least qualified for appointment to reader/associate professor and, when dealing with new admissions, also a PhD student representative.

When selecting between applicants who meet the general and specific entry requirements, their ability to benefit from the programme is taken into account (Swedish Higher Education Ordinance Ch. 7, Sec. 41). Applicants are assessed primarily based on the following criteria:

- The applicant's analytical skills, as demonstrated via scholarly reports, degree projects or similar documents, but also his/her documented subject-related knowledge and knowledge in relation to scientific theory and method.
- The applicant's letter of intent regarding his/her preferred area of research, in relation to the Department's research domains and supervisory capacity.
- The applicant's ability to collaborate with others.
- The Unit's research strategy and supervisory capacity in the applicants' areas of research.

Merely the fact that an applicant is considered able to transfer credits from prior courses and study programmes or for professional or vocational experience may not give the applicant priority over other applicants (Swedish Higher Education Ordinance Ch. 7, Sec. 41).

### 4. Programme disposition and content

#### 4.1 Programme structure

The study programme consists of coursework comprising 90 higher education credits and a thesis part comprising 150 higher education credits, for a total of 240 higher education credits. It is normally completed on full-time basis in eight semesters.

Coursework and the thesis project shall be completed in parallel, but there shall be a focus on coursework early in the programme. Under normal circumstances, 75 higher education credits of coursework shall be completed after two years. In the first year of the programme, the student shall plan and initiate his/her thesis project and throughout the remainder of the programme repeatedly report the progress made at the Unit's so-called higher seminars.

The Unit offers compulsory courses and electives continuously according to needs and available resources. Students should take courses offered within the framework of the Swedish Postgraduate School in Economic History and may also complete courses at other departments and academic institutions. To the extent resources are available, priority is given to the ability of students to complete parts of the programme in an international research environment outside the home Department.

A student supervisor and an examiner are appointed in connection with each admission decision. An individual study plan is also established.

A higher seminar for senior researchers and third-cycle students is arranged at the Department. Ongoing Economic History research at and outside the Department is presented and discussed at this event. In addition to the third-cycle students' thesis plans and thesis chapters, the seminar assesses licentiate and master's theses. Third-cycle students are expected to participate actively in the seminar activities throughout the programme.

All courses must be examined and successfully completed before the public defence of the student's PhD thesis. Coursework corresponding to at least 60 higher education credits, including all compulsory courses, must be examined and successfully completed prior to the licentiate seminar.

## **4.2 Courses**

The coursework in the programme consists of 48 higher education credits from compulsory courses and 42 higher education credits from electives.

### *4.2.1 Compulsory courses, 48 higher education credits*

The compulsory courses must be completed by all students enrolled in the programme and aim to provide an introduction to the history and empirical contributions of the subject, as well as relevant theoretical and methodological approaches and research design in the social sciences. Completion of the programme requires completion of at least the following courses:

1. Introduction to the Third-Cycle Programme in Economic History, 7.5 higher education credits
2. Research Design, 7.5 higher education credits
3. Central Problems in Economic History, 15 higher education credits
4. Quantitative Methods, 7.5 higher education credits
5. Qualitative Methods, 7.5 higher education credits
6. Introduction to Research Ethics and Good Research Practice, 3 higher education credits

### *4.2.2 Elective courses, up to 42 higher education credits*

Each third-cycle student in Economic History must complete a number of third-cycle elective courses. The purpose of these courses is to enable the student to expand or deepen his/her knowledge in the field of Economic History. For a doctoral degree, electives corresponding to 42 higher education credits must be completed. A list of possible electives is available from the Unit. The student selects courses in consultation with his/her supervisor and the doctoral examiner. Independent studies corresponding to a maximum of 22.5 higher education credits can be applied to a doctoral degree. Courses in teaching and learning in higher education arranged at the University of Gothenburg corresponding to up to 7.5 higher education credits can also be applied.

### *4.2.3 Examination*

Each course in the programme includes an oral or written test and is examined using a two-step grading scale (pass and fail). The grades for the individual research course are determined by a course examiner.

#### 4.2.4 *Transfer of credits*

The compulsory courses 1, 2 and 3 are completed at the Unit or within the framework of the Swedish Postgraduate School in Economic History. The student can request a transfer of credits for third-cycle courses completed at other departments or academic institutions if the respective examinations were performed by the course provider(s) or at the Unit. The student can also request a transfer of credits for second-cycle courses completed prior to enrolment in third-cycle studies.

### 4.3 Doctoral thesis

#### 4.3.1 The thesis

The doctoral thesis can be designed as a monograph or a compilation thesis. The latter must consist of a summary introduction followed by at least three scholarly articles/papers. Monographs must be written by the third-cycle student alone, whereas for compilation theses this requirement applies only for the introduction and at least one of the articles/papers. The respective student's contributions in co-authored articles/papers must be clearly specified in the introduction to his/her compilation thesis.

Theses written in Swedish must be accompanied with a brief English summary, and vice versa.

#### 4.3.2 The process

A first plan for the doctoral thesis project, briefly describing the focus and other aspects of the research task, must be presented before the end of the second semester of the programme.

The third-cycle student is expected to continuously present his/her research at the Unit's higher seminar. When the respective supervisors are of the opinion that 50 per cent of the programme has been completed, the student is expected to present a thesis chapter at the higher seminar and provide a progress report to the Department's committee for research and third-cycle studies. Based on this report and the thesis chapter presented at the higher seminar, the committee then formulates a recommendation regarding the remainder of the thesis project. The student is expected to present a draft of a final thesis transcript at a final review seminar no later than during the last semester of the programme, about six months prior to the planned date for the public defence of the doctoral thesis. At this seminar, the thesis transcript is reviewed by external scholars. In a next step, the Department's committee for research and third-cycle studies once again formulates recommendations for the remainder of the thesis project based on the presented manuscript and the student's seminar contributions.

#### 4.3.3 Public defence and examination

The doctoral thesis must be defended orally at a public defence event. The dean decides the date, time and venue of this event. Moreover, the public defence must be properly announced in a timely manner (in normal cases at least three weeks in advance) by means of a procedure referred to as *spikning* in Swedish. The literal translation of *spikning* is 'nailing', and the concept simply refers to the traditional nailing of the thesis transcript and a special coversheet (*spikningsblad*) to a special notice board at the University. An online version of this process is also required, called 'electronic nailing'. At the time of the nailing, the printed version of the thesis manuscript must be available at the University. The number of copies made available must be sufficient to allow for satisfactory assessment of the quality of the document.

A chairperson, typically a *docent* (reader) or professor at the unit who has not served as the respective student's supervisor, leads the public defence event. The review is initiated by an

external reviewer with specialist knowledge in the topic of the thesis. This person is usually not from the University of Gothenburg. The examining committee consists of three members, each of whom must be qualified for appointment to *docent* (reader). However, no more than one of the members may be from the School of Business, Economics and Law, and at least one of the remaining two must be from a higher education institution other than the University of Gothenburg. The external reviewer may attend the meeting of the examining committee and also participate in its discussions, but may not be involved in the decisions made. The same rule applies for the principal supervisor. The examination committee assigns a grade of either pass or fail for the thesis project.

#### **4.4 Supervision**

Third-cycle students are entitled to supervision throughout the programme (normally four years of full-time studies). The director of third-cycle studies must ensure that the student is provided supervision of the highest quality possible.

Each student shall be assigned two supervisors (one principle and one assistant). Under normal circumstances, the principal supervisor must be qualified for appointment to *docent* (reader). He/she must also have completed training in supervision of third-cycle students, and must belong to the same unit as the student. When the third-cycle student first begins his/her studies, he/she is assigned temporary supervisors who are tasked to assist the student in the development of a thesis plan. Supervisors for the remainder of the programme are appointed once the thesis plan has been presented at the higher seminar. A third-cycle student has the right to request a change of supervisors.

The supervision consists of provision of advice and instructions regarding the student's completion of the programme and the thesis project in particular. In addition to the personal supervision, the director of third-cycle studies and other senior researchers at the Department have a collective responsibility to ensure that the highest possible quality of each third-cycle student's education and thesis project be achieved.

#### **4.5 Student examiner**

In connection with the admission process, each third-cycle student is to be assigned a student examiner.

#### **4.6 Individual study plan**

An individual study plan shall be drawn up within two months of each student's admission to the programme. This plan shall document the work completed by the student as well as the remaining parts of the programme. The individual study plan shall specify:

- The focus of the thesis project
- Student examiner
- Supervisors and the extent, accessibility and structure of the supervision
- Elective courses
- Time and funding plan
- The student's responsibilities in terms of teaching and administrative assignments at the Department, as well as compensation for these tasks

The individual study plan is to serve as a steering document for the entire period of study and shall help ensure that the studies are undertaken and followed up effectively. The responsibility to make the individual study plan a living document used in the daily work lies primarily with the student and his/her supervisors.

The individual study plan shall be established and then reviewed and revised at least once a year jointly by the student and his/her supervisors and student examiner. It shall also be revised at the student's request and whenever relevant changes have occurred. Each individual study plan must be confirmed by the Head of Department before it can go into effect.

Individual study plans must be developed according to the University's central template for this document.

## 5. Degree

A degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Economic History is awarded upon completion of a third-cycle programme comprising 240 higher education credits in Economic History, i.e. when he/she has achieved a pass grade for all relevant courses and the thesis project.

A degree certificate is issued at the request of the student.

## 6. Additional information

### *Degree of Licentiate of Philosophy*

Students who originally planned to conclude their studies with a doctoral degree have the right to instead conclude their studies with a licentiate degree if at least 120 higher education credits have been completed and all other requirements for a licentiate degree have been met. The programme leading to a licentiate degree comprises 60 higher education credits of coursework (which includes the compulsory courses) and a thesis project corresponding to 60 higher education credits, for a total of 120 higher education credits.

For a degree of Licentiate of Philosophy, the student must:

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the research field of Economic History, including advanced and up-to-date specialised knowledge in a limited area of this field, as well as in-depth knowledge about research methodology in general and the methods used in the field of Economic History in particular.
- Demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate issues with scholarly precision critically, autonomously and creatively, to plan and use appropriate methods to undertake research and other advanced tasks within predetermined timeframes and thereby contribute to the development of knowledge, and to review and evaluate such work.
- Demonstrate the ability in both national and international contexts to present and discuss research and research findings clearly in speech and writing and in dialogue with the academic community and society in general.
- Demonstrate the skills required to participate autonomously in research and development work and to work autonomously in some other qualified capacity.
- Demonstrate the ability to make assessments of ethical aspects of his/her own research
- Demonstrate insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used.



- Demonstrate the ability to identify the personal need for further knowledge and take responsibility for his/her ongoing learning.

To be awarded a licentiate degree, the student must have successfully completed a thesis project corresponding to 60 higher education credits.

See separate document for other provisions regarding the licentiate degree.