



GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET
HANDELSHÖGSKOLAN

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General Syllabus for PhD Programme in Human Geography

This general syllabus was confirmed by the Faculty Board of the School of Business, Economics and Law on October 23rd 2019

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

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 autonomously in the field of Human Geography and contribute to the development of knowledge in the field through the production of a doctoral thesis.

The programme also aims to develop the student's ability to apply acquired scholarly knowledge and skills in future research work or some other qualified professional capacity.

The programme shall furthermore develop the student's communicative and pedagogical skills as well as his/her ability to express him-/herself in speech and writing in both academic and non-academic contexts. Students shall also acquire knowledge about the planning, management and execution of research projects.

Moreover, the programme shall facilitate international contacts in the form of for example participation in research conferences and/or extended visits at academic institutions abroad.

The specific aims of the programme, which must be achieved in order for a student to be awarded a doctoral degree in Human Geography, are specified below. Additional requirements for PhD studies in Sweden are given in Annex 2 (the Qualifications Ordinance) of the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance.

1.1 Knowledge and understanding

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



GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET HANDELSHÖGSKOLAN

- Demonstrate broad knowledge and systematic understanding of the research field of Human Geography 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 Human Geography in particular.

1.2 Competence and skills

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

- Demonstrate the capacity for scholarly analysis and synthesis as well as to review and assess new and complex phenomena, issues and situations in the field of Human Geography autonomously and critically.
- Demonstrate the ability as regards the field of Human Geography to identify and formulate issues with scholarly precision critically, autonomously and creatively, to plan and use appropriate methods to undertake research and other qualified 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 selected area of 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 in the field of Human Geography.
- 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.

1.3 Judgement and approach

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

- 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 in Sweden, 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

According to Ch. 7, Sec. 39 of the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance, a person meets the general entry requirements for third-cycle studies if he/she:

- has been awarded a second-cycle qualification,



GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET HANDELSHÖGSKOLAN

- 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.

2.2 Specific entry requirements

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

- completed courses in Human Geography corresponding to at least 90 higher education credits, of which at least 15 higher education credits are from a Master's degree project in the same or adjacent field.

A person is also considered to meet the general entry requirements if he/she has acquired substantially equivalent knowledge in some other way in Sweden or abroad.

3. Admission and selection

Admission to third-cycle studies in Human Geography is normally granted following a special call for applications.

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). To this end, applicants are assessed based on the following criteria:

- Previous education of particular relevance, in addition to that required to meet the general and specific entry requirements.
- Publications (see below)
- Research plan (see below)
- Experience of qualified research and inquiry work

To facilitate the assessment of applicants, the following documents must be enclosed with each application:

- a) *Papers, degree projects and other publications*, which are assessed based on the following criteria:
 - Originality and relevance with respect to aim and research problem(s) addressed.
 - Connection to previous research and relevance of the choice of theoretical perspective.
 - Choice of methods, practical execution and quality of data.
 - Quality and integration of theory in the analysis, interpretation and conclusion drawn.
 - Scholarly exactitude and linguistic presentation.
- b) *A research plan*, in which the applicant states his/her research interest/planned thesis topic. The plan is assessed based on the following criteria:
 - Scientific relevance and originality.
 - Demonstrated familiarity with current and previous research.
 - Feasibility within the framework of the PhD programme.
 - Connection to the Unit's research areas and supervisory capacity.



GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET HANDELSHÖGSKOLAN

Applicants are offered admission based on the Unit's supervisory resources within their areas of specialisation. Admission decisions are made by the Unit for Human Geography at the request of the head of the Department of Economy and Society. The selection process involves interviews with shortlisted applicants.

4. Programme disposition and content

The study programme described herein comprises 240 higher education credits and leads to the award of a doctoral degree. 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 specified in Annex 2 (the Qualifications Ordinance) of the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance have been met (see general syllabus for the licentiate programme in Human Geography).

The programme consists of courses, which are examined as they are completed, and research work, which is to lead to the presentation of a scholarly thesis. The course and thesis parts correspond to 75 and 165 higher education credits, respectively.

The student is also expected to participate in seminar activities within the framework of the programme and, unless there are reasons to the contrary, contribute in other ways to the Department's work.

4.1 Thesis project

Each thesis project must be presented annually at a special third-cycle seminar.

Halfway through the programme, each thesis project must be presented at a higher seminar. A manuscript shall be presented and a discussant appointed. The presentation can also be made in the form of a licentiate seminar.

Well in advance of the public defense of the thesis project (6 months as a rule of thumb), the entire thesis manuscript must be presented at a higher seminar. The written manuscript must be made available two weeks prior to the seminar, and a pre-examiner shall be appointed. The outcome is evaluated at the subsequent meeting of the Department's committee for research and third-cycle studies. The committee appoints internal reviewers who are to follow the final phase of the thesis project.

4.2 Courses

The programme consists of a course part corresponding to 75 higher education credits, structured as follows:

Compulsory courses (33 higher education credits)

- Introduction to Human Geography (7,5 higher education credits)
- Introduction to Research Ethics and Good Research Practice (3 higher education credits)
- Research Design (7,5 higher education credits)
- Courses in qualitative and quantitative methods (15 higher education credits)



GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET HANDELSHÖGSKOLAN

Electives (42 higher education credits)

Elective courses are determined in consultation with supervisor and examiner. A list of elective courses is available at the department. At least two of the courses should be offered by the national postgraduate school in Human Geography. Individually designed reading courses enabling the PhD student to specialize in a certain area may be included (maximum 15 higher education credits). Course on Teaching and Learning in Higher Education may be included (maximum 5 higher education credits)

If a student is given permission to transfer credits from previous education, this must be clearly stated in the individual study plan.

4.3 Thesis and public defence

The most central component of the programme is the authoring of a scholarly thesis in which the student is expected to advance the knowledge in the particular area of research.

In accordance with the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance, the doctoral thesis must be presented at a public defence event.

The topic of a student's thesis project shall be determined in consultation with his/her supervisors. The thesis must be based on autonomously conducted research and be of good international scholarly standard. It can be designed either as a monograph or as a compilation thesis.

5 Supervision

Each third-cycle student shall be assigned two supervisors (one principle and one assistant). The principal supervisor must be from the Unit for Human Geography at the University of Gothenburg. At least one supervisor must be qualified for appointment to docent (reader) and at least one must have completed training in supervision of third-cycle students.

The student has the right to request a change of supervisors.

6 Individual study plan

An individual study plan shall be drawn up within two months of each student's admission to the programme. The University of Gothenburg's central template for individual study plans shall be utilised to this end.

The individual study plan shall document the work completed by the student as well as the remaining parts of the programme. 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 examiner. It shall also be revised at the student's request and whenever relevant changes have occurred.

7. Degree

A degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Human Geography is awarded upon successful completion of the programme.



**GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET
HANDELSHÖGSKOLAN**

8. Transitional provisions

Students admitted based on an older general syllabus may, if they so wish, change to the present version.

9. Additional information

The programme is also subject to applicable Swedish legislation, University and School guidelines as well as local provisions at the Unit for Human Geography.

Information about applicable rules is available via the website of the School of Business, Economics and Law.

Information about local rules is available via the website of the Unit for Human Geography.