



GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET  
HANDELSHÖGSKOLAN

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General Syllabus for Third-Cycle Studies in Business  
Administration Leading to a Degree of Doctor,  
240 Higher Education Credits

**Department of Business Administration**

Ratified by the Faculty Board of the School of Business, Economics and Law on 11 December 2014. Valid for third-cycle students admitted from spring semester 2015.

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

# General syllabus for third-cycle studies in Business Administration, 240 higher education credits

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## 1. Aims

The purpose of the doctoral programme in Business Administration is to provide the student with in-depth knowledge in the field of Business Administration, fundamental knowledge of different research methods, strong theoretical awareness and good insights into problems encountered in the research work and the practical application thereof. The overall aim of the programme is to train the student to become a critical and independent researcher in Business Administration with an ability to plan and carry out research projects. These objectives are expressed below in accordance with the aims for the Degree of Doctor specified in the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance.

### 1.1 Knowledge and understanding

For the Degree of Doctor in Business Administration the third-cycle student shall

- Demonstrate broad knowledge and systematic understanding of the research field of Business Administration, 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 Business Administration in particular.

### 1.2 Competence and skills

For the Degree of Doctor in Business Administration 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 doctoral thesis 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.

- 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.

### **1.3 Judgement and approach**

For the Degree of Doctor in Business Administration the third-cycle 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 the responsibility of the individual for how it is used.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how research can contribute to sustainable economic, ecological and social development.

## **2. Entry requirements**

To be eligible for admission to third-cycle studies in Business Administration, the applicant must meet the general and specific entry requirement (Swedish Higher Education Ordinance 7:35). The applicant must also be considered in other respects to have the ability required to benefit from the programme.

### **2.1 General entry requirements**

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

1. has been awarded a second-cycle qualification.
2. has satisfied the requirements for courses comprising at least 240 credits of which at least 60 credits were awarded in the second-cycle, or
3. 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 Business Administration if he or she has completed at least 90 higher education credits in Business Administration, of which at least 15 higher education credits are from the completion of a degree project, or alternatively has acquired substantially equivalent knowledge in some other way in Sweden or abroad.

## **3. Admission and selection**

Admission to the third-cycle programme in Business Administration is normally granted following a special call for applications.

In selecting between applicants who meet the general and specific entry requirements, their ability to benefit from the study programmes is taken into account.

Applicants are assessed based on the following criteria:

- Documented subject-related knowledge of relevance to the research field.

- -Documented knowledge of scientific theory and methodology.
- -Analytical skills, verified through scientific reports, essays, degree projects or other such work.

A comprehensive assessment is made of each applicant's previous academic performance, degree project and research interests. Interviews may be arranged.

Admissions and selections are conditional on the Department's resources to provide supervision within the doctoral student's focus area. Only applicants who can be offered supervision and otherwise acceptable conditions for study and whose participation in the entire programme is fully funded can be granted admission.

Third-cycle admission decisions are made by the Head of Department following preparation in the Department's committee for research and third-cycle studies (FFK).

#### **4. Programme disposition and content**

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 offered in the form of courses, seminars and supervision.

##### **4.1 Courses**

The coursework required for completion of the study programme comprises a total of 90 higher education credits. The required courses (F1) comprise 45 higher education credits and the elective courses (F2) 45 higher education credits.

##### **Required courses, F1 courses, 45 higher education credits**

The required courses comprise 45 higher education credits and are normally completed by all doctoral students at the Department of Business Administration during the first two semesters of the programme. Here, the students acquire knowledge of theory and methods in social science research and gain insight into the development of business administration research. They also learn about the different parts of the research process and gain knowledge about scholarly rectitude, research ethics, and the role of science in society and how it can contribute to sustainable development.

##### **Elective courses, F2 courses, 45 higher education credits**

The F2 courses must be related to the student's area of specialisation and are intended to support the thesis work specifically in current specialist knowledge and research front. The doctoral student is to select the courses in consultation with the supervisor(s) and the student examiner. The F2 courses are selected from the Department's, University's or other higher education institution's course catalogue.

The course Teaching and Learning in Higher Education 1: Basic Course, 5 higher education credits, is required for doctoral students with teaching assignments and is offered to all of the Department's doctoral students. Upon application, the course may count as an F2 course.

The courses are examined using the grades Pass (*godkänd*) and Fail (*underkänd*). Third-cycle course grades are determined by the appointed course examiner.

#### **4.2 Doctoral thesis**

The doctoral student must author, present and defend a doctoral thesis within the framework of the study programme. The thesis, which comprises 150 higher education credits, can be designed as a monograph or a compilation thesis. The latter consists of a summary introduction, often called *kappa* in Swedish, followed by a number of separate studies presented in article form.

The doctoral thesis must be based on independently conducted scientific work and may include a previously presented licentiate thesis. This work then becomes part of the doctoral thesis and must be defended at the final public defence event.

The doctoral thesis must document the postgraduate student's ability to process a problem in the relevant subject area independently and in a scientific manner, and overall show that the student has achieved the thesis-related programme aims. The thesis work is followed up at three mandatory seminars. The Department has developed a separate document specifying the targets that are to be achieved at each seminar.

The doctoral student is expected to participate actively in other doctoral students' seminars at the Department, and also to participate in the Department's licentiate seminars, public defence events and national and international conferences. The Department of Business Administration has allocated special funding to enable each doctoral student to present his/her research at an international research conference. This event shall be planned in the individual study plan.

#### **Planning report**

Each doctoral student is to prepare, present and defend a planning report at a planning report seminar at the Department. In addition, he/she is expected to serve as a reviewer (*opponent*) in connection with the presentation of another doctoral student's planning report. As the planning report constitutes the first important step of the thesis work, the student should devote thorough time and attention to the development of it. The report is to be reviewed by a fellow doctoral student (see above) as well as an additional reviewer (holding a doctoral degree) appointed by the student's principal supervisor.

#### **Mid-way review**

When the principal supervisor is of the opinion that 50% of the thesis work has been completed, the doctoral student must present his/her thesis manuscript at a mid-way review seminar. The manuscript is reviewed by a reviewer (holding a doctoral degree) appointed by the student's principal supervisor. After the mid-way review, the principal supervisor is to write a memorandum specifying how the thesis work corresponds to applicable degree objectives.

#### **Internal final review**

The public review is preceded by an internal review by a reviewer appointed by the supervisor (this reviewer must be qualified for appointment to at least a readership). The mandatory internal final review seminar should be arranged when the principal supervisor and the student examiner decide jointly that the thesis is ready for public review. After the doctoral student has presented and defended his/her thesis internally, a memorandum shall be prepared, specifying how the thesis corresponds to applicable degree objectives and how any weakness can be remedied.

### **Public defence**

The doctoral thesis must be defended at a public defence event. The doctoral student must complete 75 higher education credits of the course part of the programme prior to the public presentation of the thesis. At the public defence event, the doctoral thesis is reviewed by a specially appointed external reviewer. An examining committee assesses the thesis and the defence of it. The examining committee is appointed according to applicable rules; efforts shall be made to ensure an equal gender distribution.

Each doctoral thesis is assigned a grade of Pass (*godkänd*) or Fail (*underkänd*). The examining committee's decision is made by majority vote. A grade of Fail requires that a written explanation be provided.

A degree certificate is issued once all degree requirements have been met and an application has been received from the doctoral student. For additional instructions concerning doctoral theses, public defences etc., please contact the Department or see the University of Gothenburg's rules for third-cycle studies.

## **5. Supervision**

At least two supervisors, of whom at least one must be qualified for appointment to a readership, shall be assigned for each doctoral student no later than one month following the admission of the student and identified in the individual study plan. One of them shall be appointed principal supervisor. The doctoral student's preferences must be considered to the greatest extent possible when supervisors are appointed. At least one of the supervisors must have completed the University's training in supervision of third-cycle students or equivalent training at another higher education institution.

A doctoral student who so requests has the right to change supervisor (principal or assistant). Such request must be submitted in writing to the Head of Department.

The doctoral student must be provided continuous contact with the supervisors for discussion and access to continuous feedback throughout the progression of the thesis work. The doctoral student is entitled to at least 360 hours of supervision over four years. Note that the 360 hours include any work deemed necessary in connection with the actual meeting between the student and his/her supervisor(s).

Each student is to be assigned a student examiner. The student examiner is to establish and revise the individual study plan in consultation with the doctoral student and the supervisors.

## **6. Individual study plan**

An individual study plan shall be drawn up for each third-cycle student. This plan shall document the work completed by the student as well as the remaining parts of his/her study programme. The 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 student and his/her supervisors share the primary responsibility of making the study plan a living document that is used in their daily work. The individual study plan shall be established and revised jointly by the student, supervisors and student examiner.

The individual study plan shall be revised at least once a year. It shall also be revised if relevant changes have occurred and on the student's request. An individual study plan for the student is to be established no later than two months after admission to third-cycle studies and shall be developed according to the University's central template for individual study plans.

## **7. Transitional rules**

Applicants who meet the general entry requirements for third-cycle studies in Business Administration before 1 July 2007 (meaning at least 120 credits at first-cycle level or equivalent knowledge acquired in some other way in Sweden or abroad) will be considered to also meet the general entry requirements for third-cycle studies after that, however, until no later than to the end of June 2015.

## **8. Additional information**

Doctoral 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.

Doctoral students admitted based on an older general syllabus may, if they so wish, change to this present general syllabus.