



FACULTY OFFICE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

General syllabus for third-cycle programme in journalism, media and communication, 240 credits

The syllabus was adopted by the Faculty Board of Social Sciences at the University of Gothenburg on 10 February 2012 and revised by the Faculty Board on 12 December 2019 (ref. no.: GU 2019/3086).

1. Programme objectives

The programme objectives are for the doctoral student to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to independently pursue research within journalism, media and communication and to contribute to the creation of knowledge within the field. Further to this, the programme shall provide the opportunity to establish international contacts, such as through participation in research conferences and any stay at a higher education institution abroad.

The more specific programme objectives, that is, those which must be fulfilled to receive a formal qualification, are specified below. In addition, the requirements set out in the Higher Education Ordinance regarding the system of qualifications at third-cycle level apply.

The syllabus applies to both those students who finish the programme with a degree of doctor and those who finish the programme with a degree of licentiate.

1.1 Knowledge and understanding

For the degree of doctor, the doctoral student shall demonstrate:

- broad knowledge of the research field of journalism, media and communication and in-depth and up-to-date specialist knowledge within a limited domain of this field
- familiarity with scientific methods in general and within the limited research domain in particular.

For the degree of licentiate, the doctoral student shall demonstrate:

- knowledge of the research field of journalism, media and communication and in-depth and up-to-date specialist knowledge of a limited domain within this field
- familiarity with scientific methods in general and within the limited research domain in particular

Competence and skills

For the degree of doctor, the doctoral student shall demonstrate the capacity to:

- independently, critically and in a scholarly manner identify and formulate relevant research questions
- plan and use appropriate scientific methods to undertake research and other qualified tasks within predetermined time frames as well as review and evaluate such work
- in a scholarly manner analyse and synthesise as well as independently critically review new phenomena and issues of relevance to the subject area
- in a thesis provide a significant contribution to the construction of knowledge within the defined research domain
- in national and international research contexts present and discuss research and research findings
- report and present research and research findings in dialogue with the academic community and society at large
- identify the need for additional knowledge within the defined research domain.
- contribute to and support the learning of others within both research and education.

For the degree of licentiate, the doctoral student shall demonstrate the capacity to:

- independently and in a scholarly manner identify and formulate relevant research questions
- plan and use appropriate scientific methods to undertake research and other qualified tasks within predetermined time frames as well as review and evaluate such work
- in a scholarly manner analyse and synthesise as well as independently critically review new phenomena and issues of relevance to the subject area

- in a scholarly licentiate thesis provide a significant contribution to the creation of knowledge within the defined research domain
- in national research contexts present and discuss research and research findings
- report and present research and research findings in dialogue with the academic community and society at large
- identify the need for additional knowledge within the defined research domain.

1.2 Judgement and approach

For the degree of doctor, the doctoral student shall demonstrate:

- intellectual independence and academic rectitude as well as the capacity to assess the ethical aspects of their research
- the capacity to review and critically evaluate the academic works of others within the research domain
- the capacity to review and critically evaluate their own research efforts
- specialised insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used.

For the degree of licentiate, the doctoral student shall demonstrate:

- intellectual independence and academic rectitude as well as the capacity to assess the ethical aspects of their research
- the capacity to review and critically evaluate the research of others within the research domain
- the capacity to review and critically evaluate their own research efforts
- 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 fulfils the general and specific entry requirements set out in the Higher Education Ordinance.

2.1 General entry requirements

The general entry requirements set out in Chapter 7, Section 39 of the Higher Education Ordinance are fulfilled by a person who:

- has been awarded a second-cycle qualification
- has satisfied the requirements for courses comprising at least 240 credits, of which at least 60 credits at second-cycle level, or has otherwise acquired the essentially equivalent knowledge.

2.2 Specific entry requirements

Admission to the third-cycle programme in journalism, media and communication requires a master's degree (240 credits) in journalism, media and communication or in another subject where the master's thesis has a clear academic focus on journalism, media and/or communication. The specific entry requirements are also satisfied by a person who has otherwise acquired the essentially equivalent knowledge.

3. Admission and selection

Admission to the programme follows a call for applications. As a basis for the selection process, the applicant shall submit:

- The results of completed courses.
- Academic papers and degree project.
- A research plan in which the applicant presents their research interest and the planned subject of their thesis.

In accordance with Chapter 7 of the Higher Education Ordinance, applicants shall be selected with consideration for their capacity to complete the programme. The assessment is based on:

- The results of completed courses with a particular emphasis on second-cycle courses.
- Academic papers and degree project assessed on the basis of the applicant's capacity to: (a) with scholarly precision critically, independently and creatively identify and formulate issues; (b) undertake a scientific study using appropriate methods; and (c) present and discuss the study findings in relation to previous research.
- The research plan based on: (a) the relevance of the subject; (b) the project's viability; and (c) the department's available supervisory resources.

The assessment and ranking of the applicants is conducted by the department's supervisory committee, which is comprised of teachers and supervisors from the third-cycle programme. Preparations for the selection process may include interviews with the applicants.

The decision on admission is made by the head of department.

4. Programme content and structure

The programme encompasses 240 credits and results in a degree of doctor. A degree of licentiate can be awarded once 120 credits have been earned provided that the requirements of the Higher Education Ordinance are fulfilled.

The programme consists of courses, which are examined incrementally, and own research work, which is to lead to a doctoral thesis. Within the confines of the programme, the doctoral student is expected to participate in the department's seminar activities and, unless special reasons dictate otherwise, to contribute to the department's joint activities.

A doctoral student can transfer credits from previous third-cycle studies. Following an individual application by the doctoral student, a decision on the transfer of such credits, and thereby a corresponding reduction in the programme duration, will be made by the head of department in conjunction with the preparation of the individual study plan, although no later than six months after said plan has been prepared. Credit transfers shall be tied to a decision on a reduction in the funded period equivalent to the transferred course credits. This reduction shall be documented in the individual study plan. The credits and the reduction may correspond to a maximum of two years.

4.1 Courses

The programme courses encompass 60 credits, of which 37 credits are compulsory. The compulsory courses are:

- Theory courses, 15 credits
- Quantitative methods, 7.5 credits
- Qualitative methods, 7.5 credits
- Teaching and learning in higher education, 5 credits
- Research ethics, 2 credits

The elective courses are decided in consultation with the supervisor/examiner on the basis of the thesis subject.

In the case of the degree of licentiate, the programme courses encompass 30 credits, of which 24.5 credits are compulsory and as follows:

- Theory courses, 15 credits
- Methods, 7.5 credits
- Research ethics, 2 credits

4.2 Thesis and public thesis defence

Central to the programme is the writing of a doctoral thesis. This thesis shall be based on independent research work and be of good international academic standard. It may comprise a single coherent work (a monograph thesis) or a collection of academic papers (a compilation thesis). The subject is chosen in consultation with the supervisor. During the work on their thesis, the doctoral student shall present:

- A thesis plan subject to review at the department's general research seminar at the end of the doctoral student's second term.
- Parts of their thesis text at a seminar halfway through the programme.
- Their thesis text at a final seminar. An external commentator with special expertise in the research domain will be appointed for the final seminar.

After the final seminar, the supervisor, in consultation with the examiner and teachers committee, will decide on any changes that may need to be made before the thesis can be submitted for public defence. The decision about submission will be made by the examiner.

The theses shall be defended at a public defence in accordance with the rules for a degree of doctor set out in the Higher Education Ordinance.

In the case of a degree of licentiate, the doctoral student shall write an academic paper. This paper shall be based on independent research work and be of good academic standard. It may comprise a single coherent work (a monograph thesis) or a collection of academic papers (a compilation thesis). The subject is chosen in consultation with the supervisor.

During the work on their thesis, the doctoral student shall present a research plan subject to review at the department's general research seminar at the end of the doctoral student's second term.

The licentiate thesis shall be defended at a public seminar in accordance with the rules for a degree of licentiate set out in the Higher Education Ordinance.

5. Supervision

The head of department appoints a principal supervisor and an assistant supervisor to each doctoral student. These appointments shall be made in consultation with the department's supervisory committee. The supervisors can be employees of or contracted by the University of Gothenburg, although at least one of the supervisors shall be an employee

of the University of Gothenburg. The principal supervisor shall be of at least readership level. At least one of the supervisors shall have completed supervisor training.

The doctoral student is entitled to supervision as set out in the document entitled *Tillämpningsbeslut för utbildning på forskarnivå vid Samhällsvetenskapliga fakulteten (Implementation decision for third-cycle studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences)*.

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

6. Individual study plan

An individual study plan shall be prepared for each doctoral student in conjunction with their admission. This study plan is to be finalised by the head of department following consultations with the student and their supervisor and shall include a timetable and associated funding plan for the entire duration of the programme.

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

The doctoral student, supervisor and head of department shall confirm in writing that they consent to the content, and the assistant supervisor that they have read the content, of the individual study plan.

7. Other matters

Regarding other matters, please refer to the applicable legislation, guidelines for the University of Gothenburg and the Faculty of Social Sciences, and local implementation rules for the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication.