

## General study plan for education at research level in Environmental Social Science, 240 higher education credits

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*The translation is not an official translation. The Swedish version is the binding document.*

This study plan was confirmed up by the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Gothenburg on 2 May 2013 (U 2013/229), and revised by the Faculty Board of Social Sciences on 3 February 2015 and 13 December 2018 (Dnr: U 2018/717).

### 1. The aims of the programme

The programme's overarching aim is to develop the knowledge and skills required to be able to conduct independent research in Environmental Social Science and to contribute to the development of knowledge within the subject by producing a scientific thesis.

Education at research level in Environmental Social Science aims also to develop the candidate's ability to utilize the scientific skills and knowledge they attain in continued research or other qualified professional work. The education will also develop the candidate's communication and pedagogical skills – how to express themselves both orally and in writing both in the academic context and outside of it. The candidate must take 5 credits in higher education pedagogy as part of their 240 credits for this programme. The candidate should also acquire knowledge about planning and conducting research projects.

Education at research level will give international contacts through such activities as participation in research conferences or periods of time spent at foreign universities.

The specific goals of this programme that must be achieved in order to obtain a degree in Environmental Social Science are listed below. Otherwise, the goals listed in the Higher Education Ordinance, Qualifications Ordinance concerning Third-cycle qualification apply.

#### *1.1 Knowledge and understanding*

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

- demonstrate in-depth knowledge about and understanding of Environmental Social Science and in-depth, specific knowledge within a specialized area of this research field and

- demonstrate familiarity with scientific methods in general and methods in Environmental Social Science in particular.

### *1.2 Skills and abilities*

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

- demonstrate their ability to conduct scientific analysis and synthesis and to independently critically evaluate and assess new and complex phenomena, questions and situations,
- demonstrate an ability to critically, independently, creatively and with scientific precision identify and formulate inquiries and plan and with appropriate methods carry out research and other qualified tasks within a given time frame and to review and evaluate such work,
- in their thesis demonstrate the ability to use their own research to contribute to the development of knowledge within Environmental Social Science,
- demonstrate an ability in national as well as international contexts to both verbally and in writing present and discuss research and research results in dialogue with the scientific community and society at large,
- demonstrate an ability to identify needs for further research within Environmental Social Science and
- demonstrate that they are able – both within research and education as well as in other qualified professional contexts – to contribute to the development of society and support others in their learning.

### *1.3 Judgement and approach*

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

- demonstrate intellectual independence and scientific integrity and the ability to make research ethical judgments,
- have in-depth insights into the capacity and limitations of research, its role in society and people's responsibility for how research is used and
- be able to evaluate strengths and weaknesses in their own thesis relative to other relevant research.

## **2. Entry requirements**

To be admitted to the programme in Environmental Social Science the applicant must meet the general and specific entry requirements according to the regulations stipulated in the Higher Education

Ordinance, chapter 7.

### *2.1 General entry requirements*

According to Chapter 7, paragraph 39 of the Higher Education Ordinance, the general entry requirements are met by a person who has

- obtained a degree in the second-cycle,
- completed required courses of at least 240 higher education credits, of which at least 60 are in the second-cycle, or
- in some other way acquired essentially equivalent knowledge either within or outside of Sweden.

### *2.2 Specific entry requirements*

In order to be admitted to the research programme in Environmental Social Science, the following is required:

- A degree in the second-cycle in a social science subject including 30 higher education credits at either first- or second-cycle that focus on environmental issues and a thesis in the second-cycle with a focus on environmental issues. Special qualifications may also consist of equivalent knowledge acquired in Sweden or another country.
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## **3. Selection and admission**

Admission to the programme generally takes place following a faculty announcement. For further information about the regulations regarding announcement and admission see the Faculty Regulations for Admission to Research Education at the Social Sciences Faculty. According to the Higher Education Ordinance Chapter 7, selection of applicants should take into consideration the applicants' ability to complete the education. Consideration is also taken to the supervision resources and competence in the candidate's preliminary research focus in Environmental Social Science. As a basis for this selection procedure, the application should submit the following:

- - a. Results of completed courses with particular emphasis upon courses in the second-cycle that have an environment focus.

b. Dissertations and exam papers, which will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- ability to critically, independently, creatively and with scientific precision identify and formulate scientific problems and inquiries,
- connection to earlier research and choice of theoretical perspective,
- choice of method and practicalities of conducting the research,
- the integration of theory in analysis, interpretation and conclusions and
- precision and language quality.
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c. Certification of other relevant qualifications such as participation in evaluations, research assessment or development work.

d. A brief research proposal in which the applicant presents their research interest or planned thesis field. This proposal is evaluated according to the following criteria:

- scientific relevance,
- demonstrated familiarity with current and earlier research,
- feasibility within the framework of the research programme and
- connection with the Faculty's research profiles and supervision resources.

Evaluation and ranking of the applicants are conducted by the department's committee for education at research level in Environmental Social Science, on the basis of preparation by the supervisor's colloquium, which consists of an interdisciplinary group of researchers and teachers in graduate education. This may involve interviews of the applicants after ranking of the received application documents.

Decisions on admissions are made by the Head of Department.

#### **4. The content and structure of the programme**

Education at research level in Environmental Social Science covers 240 credits and is concluded with a doctoral degree. It is possible to complete a licentiate examination after 120 credits if the requirements laid out in the Higher Education Ordinance for Licentiate Degree have been met.

Education at research level consists partly of courses that are examined one by one and partly of

independent research work that will result in a scientific thesis. The candidate is also expected to participate in seminars and contribute to the department's common activities, unless there are special reasons for not doing so.

The candidate may be given exemption for credits received from previous education. Decisions about exemption and consequent reduction of the study period are made following application by the candidate by the Head of Dept. when an individual study plan is drawn up, though at the latest 6 months after the design of the new study plan. Exemption should be aligned with equivalent reduction in the period of financial support. This reduction should be documented in the individual study plan. The education may be reduced by a maximum of two years.

#### *4.1 Courses*

The education consists of one section of 60 credits, of which 35 credits consist of compulsory courses. Other courses are decided upon in consultation with the supervisors.

#### *4.2 Thesis preparation*

The candidate must present the progress of their thesis work at at least three seminars:

- a research plan is presented before the end of their first year following admission (PM seminar)
- the progress of the research is presented about halfway through the programme (mid-term seminar)
- when the manuscript is complete, around 3-6 months before the proposed date for the defense (final seminar)

An external reader will read the manuscript for the final seminar.

The candidate must also participate in seminars at which other candidates and researchers present their work and they must act as discussant for other candidates and researchers.

#### *4.3 Thesis and thesis defense*

The main element in the programme is the authorship of a scientific thesis in which the candidate should contribute new knowledge to their research field. According to the Higher Education Ordinance for doctoral theses, the thesis should be defended publicly.

The thesis should be based upon independent research and it should be of good international scientific standard. It may be composed as a single, coherent piece of work (monograph) or take the form of a

collection of scientific articles that are then summarized (compilation thesis). The thesis should be structured according to the prescriptions in the Higher Education Ordinance.

## **5. Supervision**

Two supervisors are allocated to each doctoral candidate, one main supervisor and one assistant supervisor. The main supervisor must be employed or an adjunct to the University of Gothenburg and be an Associate Professor or Professor. At least one of the supervisors must have completed training in supervision. A doctoral examiner will also be allocated to each doctoral candidate. The examiner must be an Associate Professor or Professor and employed by the University of Gothenburg. The candidate is entitled to supervision in accordance with the *Decision on application for education at PhD level at the Faculty of Social Sciences (Tillämpningsbeslut för utbildning på forskarnivå vid Samhällsvetenskapliga fakulteten)*.

Candidates are entitled to change supervisor upon request.

## **6. Individual study plan**

An individual study plan is drawn up for each candidate upon admission. This plan should specify what parts of the programme have been completed and what remains. The plan is to be used as a guide throughout the whole programme and should ensure that the studies conducted and followed up in an efficient manner. The study plan is finalized by the Head of Dept. in consultation with the candidate, supervisor and examiner. The Head of Dept. is responsible for revisions to the study plan and for annual follow up. In the follow up it should be made clear how the studies are progressing. The candidate, supervisor and examiner and Head of Dept. must testify in writing that they have agreed to the plan and any changes.

### *6.1 Time plan and financial plan*

The individual study plan must contain a time plan and financial plan for the entire period of the education until the date of the defense.

## **7. Other items**

For further details please consult current legislation, the guidelines of University of Gothenburg and the Faculty of Social Sciences.