



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND LAW

General Syllabus for PhD Programme in Economic History

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMY AND SOCIETY

This general syllabus was confirmed by the Faculty Board of the School of Business, Economics and Law on 2026-03-24.

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

Doctoral 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 doctoral 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 doctoral 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 doctoral 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 doctoral 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 doctoral 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. 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 doctoral studies. When dealing with new admissions a doctoral student representative is a member of the committee.

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 75 higher education credits and a thesis part comprising 1565 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.

Supervisors and an doctoral examiner are appointed in connection with each admission decision. An individual study plan is also established.

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 27 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 Doctoral Programme in Economic History, 7.5 higher education credits
2. Research Design, 7.5 higher education credits
3. Central Problems in Economic History, 7.5 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, 27 higher education credits

Each doctoral student in Economic History must complete a number of doctoral studies elective courses. The purpose of these courses is to enable the student to expand and deepen his/her knowledge in the field of Economic History, or in methods used for research in the discipline. The student selects courses in consultation with his/her supervisor and the doctoral examiner. Courses in teaching and learning in higher education 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 student can request a transfer of credits for doctoral courses completed at other departments or academic institutions if the respective examinations were performed by the course provider(s) or at the Unit.

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 doctoral 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

The following steps in the process are obligatory:

Research plan. 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.

Half-time 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 doctoral 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.

Final seminar. 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 doctoral 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 of the faculty decides on the members of the examination committee, based on a proposal from the Department for Economy and Society, as per faculty rules for public defences.

A finalized version of the manuscript is sent to the examination committee for review. The examination committee shall evaluate whether the manuscript thesis is of adequate quality for it to be defended publicly in its current version.

After evaluations have been acquired from the grading committee, date, time and venue of the public defence is decided by dean of the faculty, based on a proposal from the Department for Economy and Society. The faculty's rules for public defences are employed in the preparation of the public defence.

Once the public defence has been finished, the examination committee assigns a grade of either pass or fail for the thesis project. The examination committee is to evaluate the thesis as well as the public defence of the thesis.

4.4 Supervision

Doctoral students are entitled to supervision throughout the programme (normally four years of full-time studies). The director of doctoral 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 doctoral students, and must belong to the same unit as the student. When the doctoral 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 doctoral 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 doctoral studies and other senior researchers at the Department have a collective responsibility to ensure that the highest possible quality of each doctoral student's education and thesis project be achieved.

4.5 Doctoral examiner

In connection with the admission process, each doctoral student is to be assigned a doctoral examiner. The doctoral examiner shall regularly meet with the doctoral student for a discussion on and planning of the doctoral student's progress so far and future progress.

4.6 Individual study plan

An individual study plan shall be drawn up within two months of each student's admission to the programme.

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 doctoral 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 shall be developed in the University's ISP-system

5. Degree

A degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Economic History is awarded upon completion of a doctoral 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.