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General syllabus for the Third-cycle Programme in Educational Work

Swedish title: Allmän studieplan för utbildning på forskarnivå i pedagogiskt arbete

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Please note: This document is a translation of the Swedish original “Allmän studieplan för utbildning på forskarnivå i pedagogiskt arbete”. If the English version differs from the original, the Swedish version takes precedence.

1. Subject description and scope

The third-cycle subject Educational Work is closely linked with the professional field of education in preschools, schools, teacher education/training and informal learning. Central areas of knowledge include student development, learning, knowledge acquisition, types of instruction, learning environments and the work, conditions and professional development of educators. Educational Work is based on and is intended to develop the theory and practice of teaching and learning. The subject is part of educational sciences and often includes interdisciplinary perspectives. This syllabus is for Educational Work at the Department of Language Studies and the Department of Creative Studies. For admission to the Third-cycle Programme in Educational Work, the two departments have different specific entry requirements (see 3.2 below). In addition, the two departments require a different number of compulsory courses (see 5.2 below).

2. Programme objectives

Third-cycle courses and study programmes are fundamentally to be based on the knowledge acquired by students in first- and second-cycle courses and study programmes, or its equivalent. In addition to the requirements for first- and second-cycle courses and study programmes, third-cycle courses and study programmes are to develop the knowledge and skills required to be able to undertake autonomous research (Chapter 1, Section 9a of the Swedish Higher Education Act, SFS 1992:1434).

2.1 Degree of Licentiate

According to the System of Qualifications, Annex 2 to the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance (SFS 1993:100), for a Degree of Licentiate the third-cycle student is to:



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Knowledge and understanding

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding in the research field including current specialist knowledge in a limited area of this field as well as specialised knowledge of research methodology in general and the methods of the specific research field in particular.

Competence and skills

- demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate issues with scholarly precision critically, autonomously and creatively, and to plan and use appropriate methods to undertake a limited piece of research and other qualified tasks within predetermined time frames in order to contribute to the formation of knowledge as well as to evaluate this work;
- demonstrate the ability in both national and international contexts to present and discuss research and research findings in speech and writing and in dialogue with the academic community and society in general; and
- demonstrate the skills required to participate autonomously in research and development work and to work autonomously in some other qualified capacity.

Judgement and approach

- demonstrate the ability to make assessments of ethical aspects of their 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; and
- demonstrate the ability to identify the personal need for further knowledge and take responsibility for their own ongoing learning.

For a Degree of Licentiate of Educational Work, the third-cycle student is to also (local outcomes):

Knowledge and understanding

- demonstrate that they are well-informed about national and international developments in research in the field of educational work and related disciplines; and
- demonstrate a breadth and depth of knowledge within the subject area of their thesis.

Competence and skills

- demonstrate the necessary skills for scientific analysis and synthesis and to probe and assess complex phenomena, issues and situations related to educational work;
- demonstrate sufficient competence to autonomously handle, analyse and critically review a wide range of materials; and
- demonstrate a solid grasp of planning and implementing qualified research tasks using adequate methods and theoretical tools.

Judgement and approach

- demonstrate the ability to provide a well-reasoned argument for and substantiate the importance of research to social analysis and sustainable development in educational work; and
- demonstrate the ability to make ethical judgements regarding research.

2.2 Degree of Doctor

According to the System of Qualifications, Annex 2 to the Higher Education Ordinance, for a Degree of Doctor the third-cycle student is to:



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Knowledge and understanding

- demonstrate broad knowledge and systematic understanding of the research field as well as advanced and up-to-date specialised knowledge in a limited area of this field; and
- demonstrate familiarity with research methodology in general and the methods of the specific research field 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 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 their 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; and
- 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.

Judgement and approach

- demonstrate intellectual autonomy and disciplinary rectitude as well as the ability to make assessments of research ethics; and
- 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.

For a Degree of Doctor of Educational Work, the third-cycle student is to also (local outcomes):

Knowledge and understanding

- demonstrate that they are well-informed about national and international developments in research in the field of educational work and related disciplines; and
- demonstrate a breadth and depth of knowledge within the subject area of their thesis.

Competence and skills

- demonstrate the necessary skills for scientific analysis and synthesis and to probe and assess complex phenomena, issues and situations related to educational work;
- demonstrate a solid grasp of the skills necessary to autonomously handle, analyse and critically review a wide range of materials, including policy documents relating to educational work;
- demonstrate a solid grasp of planning and implementing qualified research tasks using adequate methods and theoretical tools;
- by writing a doctoral thesis, demonstrate the ability to contribute their own research to the development of knowledge in the field of educational work;



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- demonstrate the ability in both national and international contexts to expertly present their own and other scholars' research orally and in writing in dialogue with the scientific community and society at large; and
- possess the requisite knowledge and experience of research in Sweden and abroad to autonomously stake out a relevant career path.

Judgement and approach

- demonstrate the ability to provide a well-reasoned argument for and substantiate the importance of research to social analysis and sustainable development in educational work; and
- demonstrate the ability to make ethical judgements regarding research.

3. Entry requirements and prior knowledge required

The requirements for admission to third-cycle courses and study programmes are that the applicant meets the general and specific entry requirements that the Faculty Board may have laid down, and is in other respects considered to have the ability required to benefit from the course or study programme (Chapter 7, Section 35 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

3.1 General entry requirements

A person meets the general entry requirements for third-cycle courses and study programmes if the person has been awarded a second-cycle qualification, has satisfied the requirements for courses comprising at least 240 credits of which at least 60 credits were awarded in the second cycle, or has acquired substantially equivalent knowledge in some other way in Sweden or abroad. The Faculty Board may permit an exemption from the general entry requirements for an individual applicant, if there are special grounds (Chapter 7, Section 39 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

3.2 Specific entry requirements

To fulfil the specific entry requirements for admission to the Third-cycle Programme in Educational Work at the Department of Language Studies, the applicant must have a teaching qualification (Bachelor of Arts/Master of Arts in Education) and one year of experience. To fulfil the specific eligibility requirements for admission to the Third-cycle Programme in Educational Work at the Department of Creative Studies, the applicant must have a teaching qualification (Bachelor of Arts/Master of Arts in Education) and two years of experience. In addition, both departments require that the applicant has written an academic paper or completed a degree project of at least 15 credits.

4 Selection

In selecting between applicants who meet the general and specific entry requirements, their ability to benefit from the course or the study programme are to be considered based on the following assessment criteria:

- previous credits awarded;
- the quality of the submitted research plan/sketch, where appropriate assessed in relation to the host department's research profile.



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However, 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 alone give the applicant priority over other applicants (Chapter 7, Section 41 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

The licentiate programme is largely aimed at professionals seeking to develop their careers through third-cycle studies. The decision to admit a student to third-cycle studies with a Degree of Licentiate as the final objective rests with the Dean and may not be delegated further. Such a decision may only be made when a written application is submitted by the applicant to the Faculty Board (cf. Umeå University's admission rules).

The decision to admit a student to third-cycle studies with a Degree of Doctor as the final objective rests with the head of the department in question and is made based on a proposal by the director of doctoral studies after consultation with the professors (or other representatives) within the main field of study.

If a third-cycle student who has graduated with a Degree of Licentiate is readmitted to study for a Degree of Doctor, the deduction corresponding to time and funding from previous third-cycle studies must be stated in the individual study plan's timetable and funding plan.

5 Programme structure and content

5.1 Programme structure

The Third-cycle Programme in Educational Work concludes with a Degree of Licentiate or Degree of Doctor. The programme covers courses comprising 120 credits for a Degree of Licentiate and 240 credits for a Degree of Doctor.

A third-cycle student admitted to third-cycle studies intended to conclude with a Degree of Doctor may, if they so wish, complete a Degree of Licentiate as an interim objective.

For a Degree of Licentiate, the Third-cycle Programme in Educational Work covers a two-year period of actual study and consists of courses comprising 37.5 credits and a licentiate thesis of 82.5 credits.

For a Degree of Doctor, the Third-cycle Programme in Educational Work covers a four-year period of actual study and consists of courses comprising 75 credits and a doctoral thesis of 165 credits.

At the earliest opportunity after admission, the head of department will appoint a principal supervisor and assistant supervisor based on a proposal by the director of doctoral studies. The principal supervisor is required to have undergone training in supervising third-cycle students or be deemed by the Faculty Board to have equivalent knowledge. At least one of the third-cycle student's supervisors must be qualified for appointment as a docent.

An individual study plan must be drawn up for each student specifying the courses included in the programme, the degree project and how the third-cycle student is to be funded and supervised. Individual study plans are reviewed and revised on an annual basis. The individual study plan is established by the head of department based on a proposal by the director of doctoral studies.



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Instruction is given in the form of lectures, seminars and supervision. Active participation in research seminars is a requirement. This includes accepting assignments as a commentator on papers or thesis chapters presented by other seminar members.

It is considered desirable for third-cycle students to acquaint themselves with the international scientific community during the period of study by, for example, visiting foreign higher education institutions and participating in international conferences. This particularly applies to those intending to graduate with a Degree of Doctor.

All third-cycle students must be affiliated with a graduate school. Normally, the third-cycle student belongs to the Postgraduate School in the Educational Sciences. If the third-cycle student is to be affiliated to another graduate school, this must be stated at the time of admission and when formulating their individual study plan.

5.2 Content

5.2.1 Courses

Degree of Licentiate

For a Degree of Licentiate, either as an interim or final objective, the Third-cycle Programme in Educational Work consists of courses comprising 37.5 credits.

At the Department of Creative Studies, 30 credits come from compulsory courses and 7.5 credits from elective courses. Compulsory courses for a Degree of Licentiate:

- Introduction to the educational sciences, including educational work, 7.5 credits
- Research and Pedagogical Practice, theory course, 7.5 credits
- Research and Pedagogical Practice, subject- or department-specific theory course, 7.5 credits
- Research Methods I/Basic Methods Course, 7.5 credits

At the Department of Language Studies, 22.5 credits come from compulsory courses and 15 credits from elective courses. The third-cycle student takes the compulsory courses within a graduate school. Current courses are listed in the graduate school's curriculum.

Elective courses for a Degree of Licentiate:

The choice of elective courses is made by the student in consultation with their supervisor. At the Department of Language Studies, courses in teaching and learning in higher education worth at most 9 credits can be included among elective courses, while this limit is 5 credits at the Department of Creative Studies.

Degree of Doctor

For a Degree of Doctor, the Third-cycle Programme in Educational Work consists of courses comprising 75 credits.

At the Department of Creative Studies, 45 credits come from compulsory courses and 30 credits from elective courses. Compulsory course for a Degree of Doctor:

- Introduction to the educational sciences, including educational work, 7.5 credits
- Research and Pedagogical Practice, theory course, 7.5 credits



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- Research and Pedagogical Practice, subject- or department-specific theory course, 7.5 credits
- Research Methods I/Basic Methods Course, 7.5 credits
- Research Methods II/Method Scope, 7.5 credits
- Stages in the Research Process I–III, 7.5 credits

At the Department of Language Studies, 22.5 credits come from compulsory courses and 52.5 credits from elective courses. The third-cycle student takes the compulsory courses within a graduate school. Current courses are listed in the graduate school's curriculum.

Elective courses for a Degree of Doctor:

The choice of elective courses is made by the student in consultation with their supervisor. At the Department of Language Studies, courses in teaching and learning in higher education worth at most 9 credits can be included among elective courses, while this limit is 5 credits at the Department of Creative Studies.

Modes of assessment for a Degree of Licentiate and Degree of Doctor:

For courses in third-cycle programmes, modes of assessment include active participation as well as oral and written examinations. The grading scale is Pass (G) or Fail (U). Grades are determined by a specially appointed teacher (examiner).

5.2.2 Licentiate or doctoral thesis

Licentiate and doctoral theses are to be designed either as a unified scientific work on a single subject or aspect of a subject (monograph) or as a compilation of scientific papers with an introduction and summary (compilation thesis). For additional instructions on the latter option, see Guidelines for compilation theses at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.

For a Degree of Licentiate, the student is required to write a licentiate thesis comprising 82.5 credits. A licentiate thesis must be defended orally at a public seminar. The thesis will be graded as either a Pass (G) or Fail (U). In assessing the grade, consideration must be given to the content of the thesis and to the defence.

For a Degree of Doctor, the third-cycle student is required to write a doctoral thesis comprising 165 credits. A doctoral thesis must be defended orally at a public defence. The thesis will be graded as either a Pass (G) or Fail (U). In assessing the grade, consideration must be given to the content of the thesis and to the defence.

6. Degree

A Degree of Licentiate of Educational Work is awarded when the third-cycle student has completed a third-cycle programme comprising 120 credits and has thus achieved a passing grade in all examinations included in the programme, and has written and publicly defended a licentiate thesis at a seminar and received a passing grade from the examining committee.

A Degree of Doctor of Educational Work is awarded when the third-cycle student has completed a third-cycle programme comprising 240 credits and has thus achieved a passing grade in all examinations included in the programme, and has written and publicly defended a doctoral thesis and received a passing grade from the examining committee.



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A degree certificate is issued upon application to the Degree Evaluation Office at the Student Services Office.

7. Other instructions

Provisions concerning third-cycle courses and programmes can be found in:

- Higher Education Ordinance: Chapter 5 (Employment of doctoral students, etc.), Chapter 6 (Courses and study programmes), Chapter 7 (Admission to courses and study programmes), and Annex 2 (System of qualifications);
- Admission regulations for doctoral education at Umeå University (FS 1.1-861-21);
- Rule for doctoral education at Umeå University (FS 1.1-1212-22); and
- Local system of qualifications at Umeå University (FS 1.1-2561-21).