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General syllabus for the Third-cycle Programme in Media and Communication Studies

Swedish title: Allmän studieplan för utbildning på
forskarnivå i medie- och kommunikationsvetenskap

Established by: The Board of the Faculty of Arts on 13 May 2020, revised
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Please note: This document is a translation of the Swedish original
“Allmän studieplan för utbildning på forskarnivå i medie- och
kommunikationsvetenskap”. If the English version differs from the original,
the Swedish version takes precedence.

1. Programme objectives

Third-cycle courses and study programmes shall be based fundamentally 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 shall 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).

1.1 Licentiate degree

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

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



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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 the student's 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 the student's own ongoing learning.

For a licentiate degree of Media and Communication Studies, the third-cycle student shall also (locally determined outcomes):

Knowledge and understanding

- demonstrate knowledge of the history, methods and theory of media and communication studies and how these relate to other cultural and social sciences; and
- demonstrate knowledge of their own research area and the ability to relate this to the research context of media and communication studies.

Competence and skills

- demonstrate the ability to autonomously and critically apply the methods and theories of media and communication studies to the writing of a licentiate thesis.

Judgement and approach

- demonstrate the ability to apply a reflexive approach to their own research by critically reviewing their own research process, their own role in knowledge production and the significance or impact of the results of their research on stakeholders; and



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- demonstrate the ability to apply a sustainability perspective in their own research.

1.2 Doctoral degree

According to the System of Qualifications, Annex 2 to the Higher Education Ordinance, for a doctoral degree the third-cycle student shall:

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 the student's 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.



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For a Doctoral Degree of Media and Communication Studies, the third-cycle student shall also (locally determined outcomes):

Knowledge and understanding

- demonstrate a breadth and depth of knowledge of the history, methods and theory of media and communication studies and how these relate to other branches of cultural studies; and
- demonstrate a breadth and depth of knowledge of their own research area and the ability to autonomously and critically relate this to the context of media and communication studies.

Competence and skills

- demonstrate the ability to autonomously and critically apply the methods and theories of media and communication studies in the writing of a doctoral thesis.

Judgement and approach

- demonstrate advanced ability to apply a reflexive approach to their own research by critically reviewing their own research process, their own role in knowledge production and the significance or impact of the results of their research to stakeholders; and
- demonstrate the ability to apply a sustainability perspective in their own research.

2. 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 considered in other respects to have the ability required to benefit from the course or study programme (Chapter 7, Section 35 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

2.1. 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).



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2.2. Specific entry requirements

A person meets the specific entry requirements for third-cycle courses and programmes in media and communication studies if the person has satisfied the requirements for courses comprising 30 credits on the second-cycle level in media and communication studies, or the equivalent in subjects and specialisations of relevance to the appointment. Excellent knowledge of English is a requirement for benefiting from the programme.

3. Selection

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

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

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 licentiate degree as the final objective rests with the Dean and may not be delegated further.

The decision to admit a student to third-cycle studies with a doctoral degree as the final objective rests with the Head of the department in question and is made based on a proposal by the Director of third-cycle studies.

If a third-cycle student who has graduated with a licentiate degree is readmitted to study for a doctoral degree, 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.

4 Programme structure and content

4.1. Programme structure

The Third-cycle Programme in Media and Communication Studies concludes with a licentiate degree or doctoral degree. The programme covers courses comprising 120 credits for a licentiate degree and 240 credits for a doctoral degree.



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A third-cycle student admitted to third-cycle studies intended to conclude with a doctoral degree may, if they so wish, complete a licentiate degree as an interim objective.

For a licentiate degree, the Third-cycle Programme in Media and Communication Studies covers a two-year period of actual study and consists of courses comprising 30 credits and a licentiate thesis of 90 credits.

For a doctoral degree, the Third-cycle Programme in Media and Communication Studies covers a four-year period of actual study and consists of courses comprising 60 credits and a doctoral thesis of 180 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 third-cycle studies. 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 third-cycle studies.

All third-cycle students must be affiliated to a graduate school. Students in the Third-cycle Programme in Media and Communication Studies will usually be affiliated to the Faculty of Arts Doctoral College. In the event that the third-cycle student is to be affiliated to another graduate school, this must be stated when they are admitted and when formulating their individual study plan.

4.2. Content

The Third-cycle Programme in Media and Communication Studies consists of two categories of courses: compulsory basic courses and elective advanced courses. The programme consists of courses comprising 60 credits for a doctoral degree and 30 credits for a licentiate degree, with a minimum requirement of 22.5 credits for basic compulsory courses for both degrees.

Compulsory basic third-cycle courses in media and communication studies offered by the University (more or less regularly) include teacher-directed and general courses in media theory, media history and research methods at 7.5 credits each. In the event that teaching is not offered, compulsory basic courses may be held as reading courses.

Which additional advanced courses the third-cycle student will take in the programme is decided in consultation with their supervisor and established in the individual study plan. After consultation with their supervisor, third-



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cycle students in the programme have the opportunity (and are encouraged) to take courses offered by other higher education institutions in Sweden or abroad. While advanced third-cycle courses are normally offered as reading courses, they may also be arranged in the form of departmental or cross-faculties courses.

Courses specialising in the subject of the third-cycle student's thesis are established in consultation with their supervisor. Literature lists are available for previously established (pre-2014) advanced reading courses. These should be revised in consultation with your supervisor with due consideration for both the subject of your thesis and the subsequent publication of new literature. Although such courses are usually read individually, it may also be possible to arrange doctoral groups.

Certain courses are compulsory for third-cycle students affiliated to the Faculty of Arts Doctoral College. For students working towards a doctoral degree, courses consisting of 15 credits are taken within the framework of the graduate school, 10 credits of which are for compulsory courses. For students working towards a licentiate degree, courses consisting of 12.5 credits are taken within the framework of the graduate school, of which 7.5 credits are for compulsory courses. Compulsory courses offered by the graduate school may replace other courses, subject to the approval of the supervisor.

Third-cycle courses are examined both orally and in writing. The grading scale is Pass (G) or Fail (U).

The Media and Communication Studies Research Seminar plays a key role in third-cycle studies and third-cycle students are expected to participate actively in such seminars. Ongoing research projects, draft manuscripts and articles and current papers are discussed at research seminars. Guest lecturers are invited a couple of times each semester. Third-cycle students are urged to present an article or chapter of a thesis for discussion at the seminar at least once each academic year.

A mid-way review is compulsory for all third-cycle students at the Faculty of Arts (reg. no. 500-1227-12). The mid-way review should be arranged when the third-cycle student is approximately halfway through their doctoral studentship. It is also compulsory to hold a final review, which should be held six months before the defence of the third-cycle student's thesis.

Courses in teaching and learning in higher education may be included as elective courses at 1.5 credits per course week up to a maximum of 7.5 credits. Courses must be completed for credits to be reported.

Modes of assessment for a licentiate degree and doctoral degree: For courses in third-cycle programmes, modes of assessment include active participation as well as oral and written examinations. The grading scale is



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Pass (G) or Fail (U). Grades are determined by a specially appointed teacher (examiner).

4.3 Licentiate or doctoral thesis

Licentiate and doctoral theses are to be designed either as a unified, cohesive scientific work (monograph) or as a compilation of scientific papers with an introduction and summary (compilation thesis). All compilation theses must have an introductory chapter written by the author alone. This must clearly describe the third-cycle student's own contribution and, where applicable, the contributions of other authors.

A compilation thesis for a doctoral degree must consist of between three to five articles, at least two of which should normally have been accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed scientific journal. A compilation thesis for a licentiate degree must consist of at least two articles, at least one of which should normally have been accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed scientific journal. For further information about writing a compilation thesis, please refer to the documents *Guidelines for Compilation Theses at the Faculty of Arts* and the *Handbook for Doctoral Students at the Faculty of Arts*.

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.

A doctoral thesis must be defended 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.

5. Degree

A Licentiate Degree of Media and Communication Studies is awarded when the third-cycle student has completed a third-cycle programme comprising 120 credits in media and communication studies 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 Doctoral Degree of Media and Communication Studies is awarded when the third-cycle student has completed a third-cycle programme comprising 240 credits in media and communication studies 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.

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



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6. 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);
- Rules for doctoral education at Umeå University (FS 1.1-1212-22);
and
- Local system of qualifications at Umeå University (FS 1.1-2561-21).