



UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

General syllabus for the PhD programme in Literature

This is a translation of *Allmän studieplan för utbildning på forskarnivå i moderna språkens litteratur*. If there are discrepancies between the English and Swedish versions, the latter takes precedence and is the legally binding document.

Established: General syllabus in Swedish established by the Faculty of Arts 2014-05-27, revised 2022-02-08, and 2025-12-18.

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1 Learning outcomes

Studies at the third-cycle (PhD) level shall essentially build upon the knowledge gained by students at first- and second-cycle levels or equivalent knowledge. In addition to what applies for studies at first- and second-cycle levels, studies at the third-cycle level shall develop the knowledge and skills needed in order to independently carry out research. (Swedish Higher Education Ordinance, 1 chapter, 9a §)

1.1 Licentiate Degree

According to the Higher Education Ordinance, third-cycle students shall, for a Licentiate Degree:

Knowledge and understanding

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding in the field of research 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 field of research 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 his or 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, and
- demonstrate the ability to identify the personal need for further knowledge and take responsibility for his or her ongoing learning.

The following requirements shall also apply for a licentiate degree in literature (local learning outcomes). Licentiate students shall:

Knowledge and understanding

- demonstrate knowledge about and reading within literature in the relevant language area.
- demonstrate broad knowledge about literary history and criticism
- demonstrate broad knowledge about literary theory and literary methods
- demonstrate awareness of how creative and aesthetic aspects of literature foster understanding of the perspectives of others.

Competence and skills

- demonstrate the methodological and theoretical skills needed to independently plan, carry out and account for a scientific research task within the framework of international literary research in the relevant language area
- demonstrate awareness of ethical issues within literary studies generally
- consistently apply sustainable research ethics in knowledge production.

Judgment and approach

- demonstrate the ability to engage with and challenge ideas and norms disseminated through literature and literary criticism in order to advance new ways of thinking.

1.2 Doctoral degree

According to the Higher Education Ordinance, PhD students shall, for the Degree of Doctor:

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 scientific methodology in general and the methods of the specific field of research 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 dissertation the ability to make a significant contribution to the formation of knowledge through his or 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 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.
- demonstrate specialized insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used.

The following requirements shall also apply for a doctoral degree in literature (local learning outcomes). Doctoral students shall:

Knowledge and understanding

- demonstrate broad knowledge about and wide reading within literature from different eras in the relevant language area
- demonstrate broad and deepened knowledge about literary history and criticism
- demonstrate broad and deepened knowledge about literary theory and literary methods
- demonstrate critical awareness of how creative and aesthetic aspects of literature foster understanding of the perspectives of others.

Competence and skills

- demonstrate the methodological and theoretical skills needed to independently plan, carry out and account for a scientific research task within the framework of international literary research in the relevant language area
- demonstrate broad and deepened awareness of ethical issues within literary studies generally
- consistently apply sustainable research ethics in knowledge production.

Judgment and approach

- demonstrate the ability to critically engage with and challenge ideas and norms disseminated through literature and literary criticism in order to advance new ways of thinking.

2 Eligibility and prior knowledge required

To be admitted to studies at the third-cycle level, the applicant must meet the basic eligibility requirements and any specific eligibility requirements stipulated by the faculty board, and must be deemed to have such abilities as are otherwise required in order to assimilate the education. (Swedish Higher Education Ordinance, chapter 7, 35 §)

2.1 Basic eligibility requirements

The basic eligibility requirements are having been awarded a degree at second-cycle level, having completed course requirements worth at least 240 credits, of which at least 60 credits must be at second-cycle level, or in some other way – either in Sweden or abroad – having acquired largely equivalent knowledge. The faculty board may grant dispensation from the basic eligibility requirements for individual applicants, if special reasons exist. (Swedish Higher Education Ordinance, 7 chapter, 39 §)

2.2. Specific eligibility requirements

In order to meet the specific eligibility requirements for admission to studies in literature at the third-cycle level, the applicant must have completed at least 120 credits at second-cycle level in a subject of central relevance for the research area; these need to include a 15 credit essay.

3 Selection

A selection of applicants who meet the entry requirements will be made with reference to their ability to benefit from PhD studies, and is mainly based on the following assessment criteria:

- previous study results and
- the quality of a submitted research plan, where relevant related to the research profiles of the department in question.

However, the sole circumstance that an applicant is deemed to have previous educational or professional experience accredited for these studies may not give the applicant priority over other applicants. (Swedish Higher Education Ordinance, 7 chapter, 41 §)

Licentiate studies are aimed primarily at those who are employed and who wish to develop their competence with studies at the third-cycle level. A decision about admission to studies at the third-cycle level with a licentiate degree as the ultimate objective will be made by the faculty board (may not be delegated), and may only be made when the applicant has submitted a written request to the faculty board (Umeå University's admission regulations).

A decision about admission to studies at the PhD level with a doctoral degree as the ultimate objective will be made by the head of department at the relevant department, after a report by the director of research studies, following consultation with the professors (or with other representatives) within the relevant main field of study.

If a doctoral student who has taken a licentiate degree and is readmitted with the ultimate aim of taking a doctoral degree, a corresponding reduction of time and funding from the student's previous third-cycle studies needs to be shown in the individual study plan with a time and funding plan.

4 Structure and content of the studies

4.1 Structure

Studies in literature at the third-cycle level conclude with a licentiate degree or a doctoral

degree. Studies consist of 120 credits for a licentiate degree and 240 credits for a doctoral degree. A doctoral student who has been admitted to studies at PhD level with a doctoral degree as the ultimate objective may, if he or she so desires, take a licentiate degree as an intermediate objective.

Studies in literature at the third-cycle level that conclude with a licentiate degree span two years of net studying time, and consist of a course element worth 30 credits and a licentiate dissertation worth 90 credits.

Studies in literature at the third-cycle level that conclude with a doctoral degree span four years of net studying time, and consist of a course element worth 60 credits and a doctoral thesis worth 180 credits.

As soon as possible after admission, the head of department appoints a main supervisor and an assistant supervisor, following a report by the director of research studies. The main supervisor needs to have gone through supervision training or by the faculty board be deemed to have a corresponding competency. At least one of the supervisors needs to be employed at the Department of Language Studies. At least one of the supervisors needs to be at minimum Associate Professor.

For every doctoral student, an individual study plan is drawn up, in which funding, supervision, courses, thesis work, etc. are detailed. The plan is established by the head of department following a report by the director of research studies. The study plan is reviewed and updated at least once a year.

All students at the third-cycle level must be affiliated with a graduate school. Students are normally affiliated with the Faculty of Arts Doctoral College. In cases where a student is to be affiliated with another graduate school, this is stated when the student is admitted and when the individual study plan is drawn up.

4.2.1 Courses

Licentiate degree

The course element consists of 30 credits, which are divided into 10-20 credits worth of foundational courses and 10-20 credits worth of specialization courses. The division is made taking into account the students' previous knowledge and the demands of the dissertation project, and is documented in the individual study plan.

Block 1: Foundational courses (10-20 credits)

The courses within this block aim to

- a) orient the student in general scientific theory, in the governance of research and its role in society, as well as in ethical principles and issues connected to research
- b) supply the student with a competence within theory and methods of relevance for the research area
- c) develop the student's abilities to communicate results in writing and orally, normally both in Swedish and at least one international language that is viable within the

research area

- d) develop other generic competencies that are important for the student in order to carry out the studies, as well as for the student's employability upon finishing

The licentiate student is to take at least 5 credits within the framework of a graduate school. Current courses are found in the graduate schools' program syllabi.

Higher education teaching courses can form part of this block (at most 9 credits). A licentiate student who teaches during his/her studies needs to have taken at least one course in higher education teaching.

The structure and content of other courses are decided by the main supervisor and student, and the director of research studies and the examiner. Courses are documented in the individual study plan.

Block 2: Specialization courses (10-20 credits)

The courses within this block aim to give the student a broadened and/or deepened competency within literature and the specific research area.

Course structures and contents are decided by the main supervisor and student, and the director of research studies and the examiner. Courses are documented in the individual study plan.

Modifications for each individual student may be made with reference to her/his previous knowledge and in relation to demands connected to participation in the research environment as well as the graduate school.

The research seminar is part of licentiate studies. The extent of the student's participation in and presentations at the seminar is decided by the main supervisor and student, and the director of research studies and the examiner. The extent of participation is documented in the individual study plan.

Examination

Courses in licentiate studies are examined orally and/or in writing, according to the examiner's instructions. Tasks are given the grades pass or fail. The grade is to be determined by a specially appointed teacher (examiner).

Doctoral degree

The course element consists of 60 credits, which are divided into 20-40 credits worth of foundational courses and 20-40 credits worth of specialization courses. The division is made taking into account the student's previous knowledge and the demands of the dissertation project, and is documented in the individual study plan.

Block 1: Foundational courses (20-40 credits)

The courses within this block aim to

- a) orient the student in general scientific theory, in the governance of research and its role in society, as well as in ethical principles and issues connected to research

- b) supply the student with a competence within theory and methods of relevance for the research area
- c) develop the student's abilities to communicate results in writing and orally, normally both in Swedish and at least one international language that is viable within the research area
- d) develop other generic competencies that are important for the student in order to carry out the PhD studies, as well as for the student's employability upon finishing

The doctoral student is to take at least 10 credits within the framework of a graduate school. Current courses are found in the graduate schools' program syllabi.

Higher education teaching courses can form part of this block (at most 9 credits). A doctoral student who teaches during his/her studies need to have taken at least one course in higher education teaching.

The structure and content of other courses are decided by the main supervisor and student, and the director of PhD studies and the examiner. Courses are documented in the individual study plan.

Block 2: Specialization courses (20-40 credits)

The courses within this block aim to give the student a broadened and/or deepened competency within literature and the specific research area.

Course structures and contents are decided by the main supervisor and student, and the director of PhD studies and the examiner. Courses are documented in the individual study plan.

Modifications for each individual student may be made with reference to her/his previous knowledge and in relation to demands connected to participation in the research environment as well as the graduate school.

The research seminar is part of PhD studies. The extent of the student's participation in and presentations at the seminar is decided by the main supervisor and student, and the director of PhD studies and the examiner. The extent of participation is documented in the individual study plan.

Examination

Courses in PhD studies are examined orally and/or in writing, according to the examiner's instructions. Tasks are given the grades pass or fail. The grade is to be determined by a specially appointed teacher (examiner).

4.2.2 Licentiate dissertation/Doctoral thesis

Licentiate dissertation

The licentiate dissertation is awarded 90 credits. It can take the form of either a single, continuous scientific work (a monograph) or a compilation of scientific articles with an introduction to and summary of these (dissertation by publication).

In the licentiate dissertation, it needs to be clearly stated what is the doctoral student's own contribution, and (if such is the case) what materials have been contributed by others.

Normally, at least one article in a dissertation by publication needs to be accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed scientific journal.

The licentiate student is expected to continually report on her/his work within the framework of the seminar and in other fora. The following seminars are obligatory for all licentiate students:

- presentation seminar (during the first month of studies): the preliminary research plan is presented
- planning seminar (within the first six months of studies): the developed research plan is presented
- mid-point seminar (when approximately half of the dissertation work is completed): background, material, method and preliminary results are presented
- final seminar (about three months before the planned public defense): developed drafts of all parts of the dissertation need to be presented in order that a comprehensive assessment can be made.

During the time of study, the licentiate student is expected to participate in activities arranged by the relevant graduate school, for example seminars and workshops. Participation is documented and followed up in the individual study plan.

The licentiate dissertation can be written in Swedish, English or in the language of the specialization, and the language choice is documented in the individual study plan. A licentiate dissertation written in Swedish needs to have a detailed summary in English and/or another international language viable in the research field, and possibly in a national minority language. A licentiate dissertation written in another language needs to have a detailed summary in Swedish and can also have summaries in other languages, including national minority languages.

The licentiate dissertation must be defended orally at a public seminar. It is assessed as either a pass or a fail. The final grade is based on both the content of the dissertation and its defense.

Doctoral dissertation

The doctoral dissertation is awarded 180 credits. It can take the form of either a single, continuous scientific work (a monograph) or a compilation of scientific articles with an introduction to and summary of these (dissertation by publication).

In the doctoral dissertation, it needs to be clearly stated what is the doctoral student's own contribution, and (if such is the case) what materials have been contributed by others.

Normally, at least two articles in a dissertation by publication need to be accepted for publication in peer-reviewed scientific journals.

The doctoral student is expected to continually report on her/his work within the framework of the seminar and in other fora. The following seminars are obligatory for all doctoral students:

- presentation seminar (during the first month of studies): the preliminary research plan is presented
- planning seminar (within the first six months of studies): the developed research plan is presented
- mid-point seminar (when approximately half of the dissertation work is completed): background, material, method and preliminary results are presented
- final seminar (about six months before the planned public defense): developed drafts of all parts of the dissertation need to be presented in order that a comprehensive assessment can be made

During the time of study, the doctoral student is expected to participate in activities arranged by the relevant graduate school, for example seminars and workshops. Participation is documented and followed up in the individual study plan.

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The doctoral dissertation must be defended orally at a public seminar. It is assessed as either a pass or a fail. The final grade is based on both the content of the dissertation and its defense.

5 The degree

A licentiate degree in literature is achieved once the doctoral student has completed studies at the third-cycle level worth 120 credits and has received a pass grade in the tests included in the studies, and has written, and defended at a seminar, a licentiate dissertation, which has been passed by the examining committee.

A doctoral degree in literature is achieved once the doctoral student has completed studies at the third-cycle level worth 240 credits and has received a pass grade in the tests included in the studies, and has written, and defended at a public defense, a doctoral thesis, which has been passed by the examining committee.

A degree certificate will be issued on application to Student Services/the Degree Evaluation Office.

6 Other instructions

The provisions that apply in respect to third-cycle studies can be found in:

- The Swedish Higher Education Ordinance: Chapter 5 (Employment as Doctoral Student, etc.), Chapter 6 (Studies) and Chapter 7 (Access to Education), Appendix 2

(Degree Ordinance) and transitional regulations

- Admission regulations for studies at the third-cycle level at Umeå University (FS 1.1-861-21)
- Local degree ordinance at Umeå University (FS 1.1-2441-18)