



General syllabus for studies in Religious Studies at third-cycle level

This is a translation of *Allmän studieplan för utbildning på forskarnivå i religionsvetenskap*. If different meanings between the Swedish and English syllabus occurs, the Swedish version has precedence.

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1 Specialisations

Third-cycle studies in religious studies are characterised by religious thinking and praxis, attitudes and ideas being studied in interaction with their context. The studies contain two specialisations:

(a) *historical-systematic theology* and (b) *theological social studies*.

Within the *historical-systematic theology* specialisation, students study religious thinking and religious praxis in history and in contemporary times with historical and systematic-theological theories and methods, with the main focus on the Christian traditions. In the specialisation, the interaction between expressions of religion and the intellectual, cultural, social and political contexts are central.

Within the *theological social studies* specialisation, students study religious attitudes, ideas, behaviours, collectives and organisations in cultural and social life, inspired by the social-scientific arsenal of theories and methods. The specialisation comprises the study of religious organisation, transmission of religious traditions, religious action and change processes connected to these.

2 Learning outcomes

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

2.1 Licentiate degree

According to the Higher Education Ordinance's degree ordinance, research students shall, for a licentiate degree:

Knowledge and understanding

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding within the research field, including current specialist knowledge within a defined area of this field and in-depth knowledge of scientific methodology in general and the methods of the specific research field in particular.

Skills and abilities

- demonstrate an ability to critically, independently and creatively identify and formulate questions with scientific accuracy, to plan and carry out – with adequate methods – limited research work and other advanced tasks within given timeframes and thereby contribute towards the development of knowledge, and to evaluate this work,
- demonstrate an ability – in both national and international contexts – to clearly present and discuss research and research results, both orally and in writing, in dialogue with the scientific community and society as a whole, and
- demonstrate the skills required in order to participate independently in research and development work, and to work independently in other advanced activities.

Judgement and approach

- demonstrate an ability to carry out research ethics assessments in their own research,
- demonstrate an understanding of the opportunities and limitations of science, its role in society and mankind's responsibility for how it is used, and
- demonstrate an ability to identify their need for further knowledge and to take responsibility for the development of their knowledge.

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

Knowledge and understanding

- in relation to lower education levels demonstrate broadened and deepened proficiency in the chosen subject in religious studies/theology,
- demonstrate good orientation of the development of research within their own subject and within related disciplines and areas of knowledge, both within Sweden and internationally, and
- have significantly deeper knowledge within the thesis-specific subject area,

Skills and abilities

- have developed an ability to independently and creatively identify and formulate scientific issues,
- have developed ability in scientific analysis and synthesis, and probing research and assessment of complex phenomena, questions and situations, and
- have developed sound skills in planning and using adequate methods and theoretical tools to carry out advanced research tasks within given timeframes.

Judgement and approach

- have command of a religious/theological viewpoint and demonstrate a good ability to argue for, and demonstrate in a concrete manner, the significance of the religious dimension in terms of social analysis and otherwise apply a probing scientific approach.

2.2 Doctoral degree

According to the Higher Education Ordinance's degree ordinance, research students shall, for a doctoral degree:

Knowledge and understanding

- demonstrate broad knowledge within – and a systematic understanding of – the research field, as well as in-depth and current specialist knowledge within a defined area of the research field, and
- demonstrate familiarity with scientific methodology in general and the methods of the specific research field in particular.

Skills and abilities

- demonstrate an ability for scientific analysis and synthesis, and for independent critical review and assessment of new and complex phenomena, questions and situations,
- demonstrate an ability to critically, independently, creatively and with scientific accuracy identify and formulate questions, to plan and carry out – with adequate methods – research work and other advanced tasks within given timeframes, and to review and evaluate this work and demonstrate their ability to make a significant contribution to the development of knowledge in the form of a dissertation/thesis
- demonstrate an ability – in both national and international contexts – to present and discuss research and research results with authority, both orally and in writing, in dialogue with the scientific community and society as a whole,
- demonstrate an ability to identify the need for further knowledge, and
- demonstrate the necessary conditions for contributing towards the development of society and supporting other people's learning, both within research and education and within other advanced professional contexts.

Judgement and approach

- demonstrate intellectual independence and scientific integrity, and the ability to carry out research ethics assessments, and
- demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the opportunities and limitations of science, its role in society and mankind's responsibility for how it is used.

The following requirements shall also apply for a doctoral degree in religious studies (local learning outcomes). The research student shall

Knowledge and understanding

- in relation to lower education levels demonstrate broadened and deepened proficiency in the chosen subject in religious studies/theology,
- demonstrate good orientation of the development of research within their own subject and within related disciplines and areas of knowledge,
- have considerably deepened knowledge within the thesis-specific subject area and have actively contributed to the development of knowledge within this area by writing a thesis,

Skills and abilities

- have developed an ability to independently and creatively identify and formulate scientific issues,
- have developed ability in scientific analysis and synthesis, and probing research and assessment of complex phenomena, questions and situations,
- have developed sound skills in planning and using adequate methods and theoretical tools to carry out advanced research tasks within given timeframes, and
- have developed skills – in both national and international contexts – in presenting research and research findings with expert knowledge, both orally and in writing, in dialogue with the scientific community and society, and have knowledge and experience of research work that provides the necessary conditions for independently shaping a relevant professional career, and

Judgement and approach

- have command of a religious/theological viewpoint and demonstrate a good ability to argue for, and demonstrate in a concrete manner, the significance of the religious dimension in terms of social analysis and otherwise apply a probing scientific approach.

3 Eligibility requirements

In order to be eligible for admission to a programme at 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)

3.1 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, chapter 7, § 39)

3.2 Specific eligibility requirements

In order to meet the specific eligibility requirements for admission to religious studies at third-cycle level, the applicant must have completed at least 30 credits at second-cycle level, with an independent project worth at least 15 credits in religious studies/theology with the specialisation that corresponds to the intended penetration in their thesis work. Students who have acquired equivalent knowledge in some other way, either within Sweden or abroad, may be admitted for third-cycle studies after assessment.

4 Selection

A selection shall be made of applicants who meet the eligibility requirements, taking into account their ability to assimilate third-cycle studies and mainly based on the following assessment criteria:

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

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

Licentiate studies are aimed primarily at those who are in employment and who wish to develop their competence with studies at third-cycle level. A decision on admission for studies at 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 for this to the faculty board (Umeå University's admission regulations).

A decision on admission for studies at third-cycle 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 third-cycle studies following consultation with the professors (or with other representatives) within the main subject area in question.

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 be shown in the individual study plan with schedule and funding plan.

5 Composition and content of the studies

5.1 Composition

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

Religious studies programmes at third-cycle level that conclude with a licentiate degree cover two years of net studying time, and consist of a course element worth 40 credits and a licentiate dissertation worth 80 credits.

Religious studies programmes at third-cycle level that conclude with a doctoral degree cover four years of net studying time, and consist of a course element worth 75 credits and a doctoral thesis worth 165 credits.

As soon as possible after admission, the head of department appoints a main supervisor and an assistant supervisor, after a report by the director of third-cycle studies following consultation with the professors (or with other representatives) within the main subject area in question.

For every research student, the main supervisor and the student shall draw up an individual study plan together, in which funding, supervision, courses, thesis work, etc. are detailed. This study plan is reviewed and updated annually. The plan is established by the head of department after a report by the director of third-cycle studies.

All research students must be affiliated with a graduate school. Students are normally affiliated with the Faculty of Arts Doctoral College. In cases where a research 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.

5.2 Content

5.2.1 Courses

Licentiate degree

Religious studies programmes at third-cycle level with a licentiate degree as the intermediate/ultimate objective consist of a mandatory course segment worth 75 40 credits. The student reads courses giving at least 7.5 credits within the framework of a graduate college. Current courses are listed in the graduate school's syllabus. Course over and above these are chosen by the student in consultation with his or her supervisor on the learning outcomes and the specialisation in the dissertation work.

Doctoral degree

Religious studies programmes at third-cycle level consist of a mandatory course segment worth 75 credits. The student reads courses giving at least 10 credits within the framework of a graduate college. Current courses are listed in the graduate school's syllabus. Course over and above these are chosen by the student in consultation with his or her supervisor on the learning outcomes and the specialisation in the thesis work.

Knowledge tests for licentiate and doctoral degrees

The following knowledge tests apply for courses within studies at third-cycle level: active participation and oral or written examinations. The tests are assessed as either a pass or a fail. The grade will be determined by a specially appointed member of teaching staff (examiner).

5.2.2 Licentiate dissertation/Doctoral thesis

The licentiate dissertation/doctoral thesis shall take the form of either a single, continuous scientific work (monograph) or a compilation of scientific dissertations with an introduction and a brief summary (compilation thesis). At least two of the dissertations in a doctoral thesis and one of the dissertations in a licentiate dissertation should normally be accepted for publication in referee-reviewed scientific publications.

A licentiate dissertation or doctoral thesis that is published in Swedish is to contain a summary in English or other internationally viable language. Every licentiate dissertation and thesis is to include a short abstract in English.

The licentiate dissertation must be defended orally at a public seminar. It is assessed as either a pass or a fail. When grading, the content of the dissertation and its defence will be taken into consideration.

The doctoral thesis must be defended orally at a public thesis defence. It is assessed as either a pass or a fail. When grading, the content of the thesis and its defence will be taken into consideration.

6 The degree

A licentiate degree in religious studies is achieved once the research student has completed studies at 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.

Specialisation (a) Historical-systematic theology: Degree of Licentiate of Theology

Specialisation (b) Theological social studies: Degree of Licentiate of Philosophy in Religious Studies

A doctoral degree in religious studies is achieved once the research student has completed studies at 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 thesis defence a doctoral thesis, which has been passed by the examining committee.

Specialisation (a) Historical-systematic theology: Degree of Doctor of Theology

Specialisation (b) Theological social studies: Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Religious Studies

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

7 Other instructions

Applicable provisions on studies at third-cycle level are detailed in:

- The Swedish Higher Education Ordinance (HF): 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 third-cycle level at Umeå University (1.1.2-25-14)
- Local degree ordinance at Umeå University (ref. 1.1.2-482-14)