



UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

# General study plan for doctoral studies in business administration

This is a translated version of the General study plan for doctoral studies in business administration (Dnr - FS 4.1.1-1191-22). In case of discrepancy, it is the original Swedish version which is the legally binding one.

## 1 Objectives of the education

Business administration is a subject that is focused on studying aspects of, and about, companies and organizations in a broad sense. This includes studies in entrepreneurship, marketing, management, accounting and finance.

### 1.1 Doctoral Degree

For a doctoral degree, according to the degree regulations, the doctoral student must, after completing the education:

#### *Knowledge and understanding*

- demonstrate broad-ranging knowledge in, and a systematic understanding of, the main area of business administration,
- demonstrate deep and current specialist knowledge in the parts of the business administration subject that relate to the dissertation work, and
- demonstrate familiarity with scientific methodology in general, and with the methods of business administration in particular

#### *Skills and abilities*

- demonstrate the ability to conduct scientific analyses and syntheses, as well as to independently and critically review and assess new and complex phenomena, questions and situations,
- demonstrate the ability to critically, independently, creatively, and with scientific thoroughness identify and formulate research questions within the subject, as well as to plan and with adequate methods undertake research and other advanced tasks within set timeframes, and to review and evaluate such work,
- with a dissertation, demonstrate the ability to make a significant contribution to increased knowledge within the field via one's research,
- demonstrate the ability to present and discuss research and research results with authority in both national and international contexts, orally and in writing, in dialogue with the scientific community and society at large,
- demonstrate the ability to identify the need for further knowledge, and
- demonstrate the prerequisites to be able to contribute to society's development and support the learning of others both within research and education as well as in other advanced professional contexts

#### *Judgement and approach*

- demonstrate intellectual independence and scientific integrity as well as the ability to make ethical assessments relating to research



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- demonstrate deepened insight into the possibilities and limitations of science, its role in society and people's responsibility for how it is used, and
- demonstrate the ability to argue for the importance of the business perspective for science and society at large.

### *Scientific dissertation*

- obtain a passing grade on a doctoral dissertation corresponding to 150 ECTS.

## **1.2 Licentiate Degree**

For a licentiate degree, according to the degree regulations, the doctoral student must, after completing the education:

### *Knowledge and understanding*

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the main area of business administration,
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of current specialist knowledge in a delimited part of the subject, and
- demonstrate deepened knowledge of scientific methodology in general and the specific research area in particular

### *Skills and abilities*

- demonstrate the ability to critically, independently, creatively, and with scientific thoroughness identify and formulate research questions, as well as to plan and with adequate methods undertake a limited research work and other advanced tasks within set timeframes, and thereby contribute to knowledge development and be able to evaluate such work,
- demonstrate the ability to clearly present and discuss research and research results in both national and international contexts, orally and in writing, in dialogue with the scientific community and society at large, and
- demonstrate the necessary skills needed to participate independently in research and development work and to work independently as a part of other advanced efforts.

### *Judgement and approach*

- demonstrate the ability to make ethical assessments relating to one's research
- demonstrate insight into the possibilities and limitations of science, its role in society and people's responsibility for how it is used, and
- demonstrate the ability to identify their need for additional knowledge and to take responsibility for their knowledge development.

### *Scientific dissertation*

- obtain a passing grade on a licentiate thesis corresponding to 75 ECTS.

## **2 Eligibility and Prerequisites**

To be admitted to the doctoral education, the applicant must (1) meet the basic eligibility requirements as well as the special eligibility requirements that the Faculty of Social Sciences



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may have prescribed, and (2) be judged to have such ability in general as is necessary to be able to complete the education. (HF 7 ch. 35 §).

### **2.1 Basic Eligibility**

Those considered to possess basic eligibility for the doctoral education are students who have (1) completed a degree at advanced level, (2) completed course requirements of at least 240 ECTS, of which at least 60 ECTS at advanced level, or (3) in some other way within or outside the country acquired substantially equivalent knowledge.

### **2.2 Special Eligibility**

To fulfil the requirement for special eligibility for the doctoral education in business administration, it is required that the applicant, with an approved result, has completed courses in the subject of business administration comprising at least 90 ECTS, including an independent work (thesis or equivalent) comprising at least 15 ECTS. The requirements are also considered to be met by those who have acquired substantially equivalent knowledge in other ways, within or outside the country.

## **3 Selection, assessment criteria and admission**

Selection among applicants who meet the eligibility requirements must be made with regard to their ability to successfully complete the doctoral education and is based on the following assessment criteria (listed without mutual priority):

- previous study results,
- the quality of the submitted research idea and its relationship to the focus of the call,
- communicative ability, both written and oral
- methodological, analytical and critical skills,
- independence and ability to cooperate,
- ability to meet given deadlines,
- personal suitability.

The mere fact that an applicant may have previous professional experience or education counted as credit in the doctoral education may not give the applicant priority over other applicants during selection (HF ch. 7 § 41). Equal representation between women and men in admission to the doctoral program is sought.

### **3.1 Decision on admission to doctoral degree**

Decisions on admission to the doctoral education with a doctoral degree as the final goal are made by the rector (who is also head of department) of Umeå School of Business, Economics and Statistics, following a proposal from the Dep. head of department in consultation with the appointed recruitment group at the unit. At the same time as the decision on admission, the rector of the Business school determines the financing plan drawn up by the Dep. head of department.

The application for crediting of previous education is made at admission and the total study time is reduced by the corresponding credited ECTS. In the normal case, the doctoral education is done over four years, corresponding to 240 ECTS. In the case of an application for crediting of previous education of 60 ECTS or more, the decision is made by the dean of



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the faculty. Credited courses must be specified in the individual study plan and registered in LADOK.

### **3.1 Decision on admission to licentiate degree**

According to the delegation procedures for Umeå University, it is the dean of the faculty who decides on admission to postgraduate education with a licentiate degree as the final goal, and this may only happen when the applicant requests this in writing. At the same time as the decision on admission, the rector of the Business school determines the financing plan drawn up by the Dep. head of department.

## **4 The structure and content of the education**

### **4.1 The structure of the education**

The doctoral education in business administration ends with a doctorate or licentiate degree. Studies that conclude with a doctorate include 240 ECTS, which corresponds to four years of net study time and consists of a course component of 90 ECTS and a doctoral thesis of 150 ECTS. Studies that end with a licentiate degree include 120 ECTS, which corresponds to two years of net study time and consists of a course component of 45 ECTS and a licentiate thesis of 75 ECTS. A doctoral student who has been admitted to the doctoral education with a doctoral degree as the end goal can, if he/she so wishes, take a licentiate degree as a stage goal.

### **4.2 The individual study plan**

For each doctoral student, an individual study plan must be drawn up which, among other things, must include a plan for the thesis work, a plan for financing, and a plan for courses, and supervision. The individual study plan is determined by the examiner after consultation with the supervisor and doctoral student. The individual study plan must be followed up every semester by the supervisor and doctoral student, reviewed annually by the committee for doctoral education, and determined by the Head of doctoral education.

### **4.3 Supervision**

In connection to the admission to the doctoral education and based on a proposal from the Dep. head of department, the rector of the Business school appoints at least two supervisors, one of whom will be the main supervisor. The main supervisor must normally be employed at the department of business administration. All supervisors must have a doctorate and at least one supervisor must be a Docent. At least one of the supervisors must also have undergone the training for supervisors organized by Umeå University, or be able to demonstrate equivalent competence (by, for example, obtaining equivalent pedagogical credentials from another university).

The supervisors' main task is to continuously support the doctoral student's dissertation process by, for example, reading, discussing and critically reviewing the doctoral students work. The supervisors must also assist with advice and instructions when planning the studies, and in consultation with the doctoral student, ensure that the studies continue according to the individual study plan. A full-time doctoral student is, by the *Regulations for doctoral education at Umeå University* (FS 1.1-334-21), entitled to 100 hours of supervision per year for four years (for a doctoral degree) or two years (for a licentiate degree). Part-time



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doctoral students have the right to supervision to an extent corresponding to their level of activity.

### 4.4 Scientific seminars

The purpose of participation in the scientific seminars is for the student to instil the ability to participate in the scientific debate within the subject as well as the ability to discuss their work in a scientific forum. Special occasions are set aside for the presentation of the research proposal, mid-term seminar and internal final seminar with designated opponents. The seminar where the research proposal is presented must be held within 6–9 months after admission, a mid-term seminar when half of the education time has been completed (i.e., 24 months) and an internal final seminar, corresponding to an internal defense with appointed opponents, when the thesis work is judged to be close enough to completion (but at least 12 weeks before defense). Special guidelines for each seminar are specified in separate documents.

### 4.5 Courses

The course part consists of compulsory courses and electives. They shall provide theoretical and methodological support for the thesis work. Subject courses must increase the student's subject knowledge within the chosen field, while elective courses can be taken in subjects that lie outside the student's thesis subject. The choice of courses is decided by the examiner following suggestions from the doctoral student and supervisor. In addition to the distribution of courses according to what is described below, the requirement for courses given in English must also be taken into account, corresponding to at least 15 ECTS for the doctoral degree and at least 7.5 ECTS for the licentiate degree. External courses given by other institutions or universities can be credited after assessment by the examiner.

#### *Doctoral Degree*

Education at the doctoral level in business administration consists of a course component comprising 90 ECTS, which are distributed so that 60 ECTS are made up of compulsory courses and 30 ECTS are made up of elective courses.

Compulsory courses for doctoral degree (60 ECTS):

- Subject studies in business administration theory, 30 ECTS
- Studies in business administration methodology and method, 30 ECTS
  - Methodology/research design, 15 ECTS
  - Qualitative methods, 7,5 ECTS
  - Quantitative methods, 7,5 ECTS

Elective courses for doctoral degree (30 ECTS):

- For example; further subject studies, deepening of methods, history of ideas, theory of scientific

#### *Licentiate degree*

Education at the doctoral level in business administration with a licentiate degree as the goal (or stage goal) consists of a course component comprising 45 ECTS, which are distributed so that 30 ECTS are made up of compulsory courses and 15 ECTS are made up of elective courses.



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Compulsory courses for licentiate degree (30 ECTS):

- Subject studies in business administration theory, 15 ECTS
- Studies in business administration methodology and method, 15 ECTS
  - Methodology/research design, 7,5 ECTS
  - Qualitative or quantitative methods, 7,5 ECTS

Elective courses for licentiate degree (15 ECTS):

- For example; further subject studies, deepening of methods, history of ideas, theory of scientific

### **4.6 Doctoral dissertation/licentiate thesis and defense**

The doctoral thesis/licentiate thesis must be structured either as a unified, coherent scientific work (a monograph thesis) or as a compilation of scientific articles with an introduction and an integrated summary of these (combination thesis). The requirement for independence does not exclude that the thesis work can be part of a larger research project. A scientific thesis, which has been written by two people jointly, may be approved as a doctoral thesis if the contributions of each author can be distinguished.

A doctoral dissertation is to be defended orally at a public defense and assessed by a grading committee appointed by the faculty with one of the grades pass or fail. When grading, account shall be taken of the content of the thesis and its defense of it.

The licentiate thesis is to be defended orally at a public seminar. It is assessed by a grading committee appointed by the faculty with one of the grades pass or fail. When grading, consideration shall be given to the content of the thesis and the defense of the thesis.

## **5 Degree**

The doctoral degree in business administration is obtained after the doctoral student has completed a doctoral level education of 240 ECTS within the business administration subject and thereby received passing grades in the exams included in the education, and has written and defended a doctoral thesis, which has been approved by the grading committee.

The licentiate degree in business administration is obtained after the doctoral student has completed a doctoral level education of 120 ECTS within the business administration subject and thereby received passing grades in the exams included in the education, and has written and defended a licentiate thesis, which has been approved by the grading committee.

## **6 Other instructions**

The principal rule is that doctoral students admitted after July 1, 2022, follow the new general study plan to obtain a doctoral degree.

Students who have started their doctoral studies before July 1, 2022, as well as those who have been admitted to such education before then but have been granted a deferral until later to start the education, have the right to complete their education according to the older regulations, however at the latest until June 30, 2030.

Regulations currently governing the doctoral education can be found in:



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- The Higher Education Ordinance (HF): Chapter 5 (Employment as a doctoral student), Chapter 6 (The education) and Chapter 7 (Admission to the education), Appendix 2 (System of qualifications)
- Admission Regulations for Doctoral Education at Umeå University
- Local Examination Procedures at Umeå University
- Doctoral education at the Faculty of Social Sciences