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UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

General syllabus for doctoral studies in Architecture
with a doctoral degree as goal

Scope: 240 higher education credits
Degree: Doctoral degree
Study level: Third-cycle
Established by: General syllabus established by the Faculty of Science and Technology Board on 2025-09-25
Enters into force: 2025-10-01
Responsible body: Faculty of Science and Technology

This document has been translated from Swedish into English. If the English version differs from the original, the Swedish version takes precedence.

1. Subject description and delimitation

Architecture in the broadest sense is about all human construction but can also be delineated to the shaping of buildings and environments where the artistic and aesthetic aspect takes on a more prominent role. This means that the subject includes technical and functional aspects as well as more artistic and symbolic. These two aspects are closely intertwined in architectural practice and thus also become two important cornerstones of architecture as a science subject. Architecture as a research subject must thus be anchored against both scientific research, and against practice as the more artistic research tradition. The impact of architecture on human social interactions and experiences also involve an inevitable connection to the social science research field. All in all, this means that in architectural research you must have both competence and openness to a very broad palette of research methods and scientific theoretical approaches. The subject's postgraduate education prepares future researchers for this by ensuring high competence regarding research on a scientific basis but with a grounding in artistic practice and the demands these make. A holder of a doctoral degree in architecture is expected to be able to independently drive and be an important and competent research partner in all conceivable projects that have an impact on people's environment and life situation, both from a technical, societal and aesthetic perspective.

2. Objectives of the education

2.1 Description of education at current level

The education is at third-cycle level. The goals for third-cycle education are found in the Higher Education Act, Chapter 1, Section 9a.

2.2 Learning outcomes for the current degree

The national learning outcomes for the degree can be found in Appendix 2 of the Higher Education Ordinance.

The learning outcomes for the doctoral degree in Architecture are those specified by the Higher

Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Sections 4 and 5 (see Appendix A), where the terms *research field* and *limited area of this field* are to be interpreted as architecture in accordance with the preceding section and as the doctoral student's specialization within this subject. These learning outcomes are complemented by sustainability, gender and equal opportunity perspectives which are integrated in the content and organisation of the programme. It provides the student with additional insights into how the sustenance of inequality by traditional structures and perspectives can be counteracted.

3. Entry requirements and prerequisites

To be admitted for studies at doctoral level the applicant is required to meet the general entry requirements and the specific entry requirements as described below, and be deemed to have the necessary ability to benefit from the education. (Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 7, Section 35)

General entry requirements

To fulfil the general entry requirements, the applicant must have qualifications equivalent to either a completed degree at advanced level (second-cycle), or completed course requirements of at least 240 ECTS, including at least 60 ECTS at advanced level, or has otherwise acquired essentially equivalent knowledge within or outside Sweden. The faculty board may, in the case of a specific applicant, consent to an exemption from the general entry requirements if there are special reasons to do so. (Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 7, Section 39)

Specific entry requirements

To fulfil the specific entry requirements for admission to the doctoral education in architecture the applicant must have at least 90 credits (ECTS) within the subject Architecture, of which at least 30 credits must be at advanced level.

The requirements for prior knowledge as described above are also considered to be met by those who have otherwise acquired essentially equivalent knowledge.

4. Selection

Selection among applicants who meet the entry requirements will be made with consideration of their ability to benefit from doctoral education, and is based on the following assessment criteria:

- personal suitability
- previous study results
- quality of applicant’s proposed research plan in relation to the department’s research profile and educational programmes
- quality of other attachments to the application , if applicable (i.e. previous publications or portfolio)
- other merits

However, applicants must not be given preference over other applicants in the selection process solely based on the assessment that the applicant can receive accreditation for previous education or professional activities. (Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 7, Section 41)

Decisions regarding admission to doctoral studies concluding in a doctoral degree are made in accordance with Umeå University's delegation of authority.

5. Content and structure

5.1 Content

For a degree of doctor to be awarded, the studies shall entail 240 ECTS credits.

Doctoral studies shall comprise a net study period of four years and consist of a course component of 60–90 ECTS credits and an academic thesis 150–180 ECTS credits. A doctoral student who has been admitted to studies with a doctoral degree as the final goal may, if desired, pursue a licentiate degree as an intermediate goal. The requirements for obtaining a licentiate degree are detailed in the corresponding general syllabus

An individual study plan is to be established for each doctoral student which shall give details of financing, supervision, courses, thesis-related work, etc. The doctoral student shall, with their supervisor, plan and give three mandatory seminars: one early-stage planning seminar, one mid-term seminar, and an end-term seminar before the thesis defence.

5.1.1 Courses

The doctoral programme in Architecture consists of courses to the extent of 60–90 ECTS credits. The course part consists of a fixed set of mandatory courses and a variable number of courses individually determined according to the doctoral student's needs.

The mandatory courses convey generic skills, provide an overview of the field as such and its scientific methods, and thematize sustainability, gender equality, and equal opportunities issues as an integral component. Depending on the specialization and the doctoral students' previous knowledge, the admission decision can specify additional mandatory course requirements if such is deemed necessary to guarantee that the student achieves a good overall expertise of the subject, and deep knowledge in their particular area of specialization.

Courses developing general competence:

- *Introduction to Doctoral Studies at the Faculty of Science and Technology*, 1 ECTS credit
- *Writing Science*, 5 ECTS credits
- *Oral Presentation*, 1 ECTS credits
- *Science, ethics and society*, 4 ECTS credits
- *Basic statistics and research methods,* 5 ECTS

Courses developing competence in Architecture and its research methodology:

- Concepts, theories and sustainability perspectives of architecture, 7.5 ECTS credits
- Scientific theory and research methodology in architecture, 7.5 ECTS credits

Additional mandatory courses for the individual doctoral student can be specified in the admission decision.

The remaining course requirements can be fulfilled with elective courses which broaden or deepen the doctoral student's expertise in the subject or provide additional generic skills.

5.1.2 Doctoral thesis

Through the thesis, the doctoral student shall demonstrate that the national learning outcomes for the doctoral degree have been achieved. The doctoral thesis comprises 150–180 ECTS credits. It may either take the form of a single coherent work (a monograph) or a compilation consisting of an introduction, a number of scientific papers, and a summary and discussion of the papers which includes a description of the author's contributions to each paper (compilation thesis). Further, the thesis shall contain a popular scientific description aimed at readers outside academia.

The doctoral thesis shall be defended orally in public, resulting in an assessment with one of the following grades: G (Pass) or U (Fail). When setting the grade, the grading committee shall pay attention to both the content of the thesis and its defence.

6. Examination

The doctoral degree is awarded upon completion of doctoral studies equivalent to 240 ECTS credits, provided that the applicant has received the grade *Pass* in all mandatory parts. In particular, this includes the public defence of the doctoral thesis and its approval by the grading committee. Degree certificates are issued following application to Student Services/Examina.

7. Other instructions

The provisions that apply in respect of doctoral studies can be found in:

- The Higher Education Ordinance: Chapter 5 (employment as a doctoral student), Chapter 6 (the education), and Chapter 7 (admission to education), Appendix 2 (Degree Ordinance).
- Admission regulations for doctoral education at Umeå University.
- Local degree ordinance at Umeå University.
- Rules for doctoral education at Umeå University.
- Handbook for doctoral studies at the Faculty of Science and Technology at Umeå University.

National goals for the degree

(Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Sections 4 and 5)

Knowledge and understanding

For the doctoral degree, the doctoral student shall

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

Competence and skills

For the doctoral degree, the doctoral student shall

- demonstrate the capacity for scholarly analysis and synthesis as well 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 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 in 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

For the doctoral degree, the doctoral student shall

- demonstrate intellectual autonomy and disciplinary rectitude as well as the ability to make assessments of research ethics, and
- demonstrate specialized insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how this is used.