



General Syllabus for Third-Cycle Programmes in Social Work

This syllabus is for programmes leading to a Degree of Doctor and for programmes leading to a Degree of Licentiate. This general syllabus is subordinate to the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance and Södertörn University's local *Regulations for Third-Cycle Education at Södertörn University*.

The syllabus has been validated by the Committee for Research and Doctoral Education and was revised 30 November 2021.

1. Qualitative targets

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, Swedish Higher Education Act)

The aim of the programme is to deepen the doctoral student's general knowledge of social work with a specific focus on individuals and groups in vulnerable situations, the societal conditions that affect people's circumstances and the factors and strategies that prevent and counteract societal marginalisation. Research in Social Work at Södertörn University is transdisciplinary and has a profile that focuses on vulnerable groups and places: research into social work in schools, societal interventions and Eastern Europe.

The intended learning outcomes of the Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work have been validated on the basis of the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance.

For the Degree of Doctor the doctoral student shall:

Knowledge and understanding

- demonstrate broad knowledge and systematic understanding of the research field of social work, as well as advanced and up-to-date specialised knowledge in a limited area of this field, and
- demonstrate specialised knowledge of research 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 for reviewing and assessing 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 timeframes and to review and evaluate such work,
- demonstrate through a documented research project the ability to make a significant contribution to the development of knowledge through their 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 through other qualified professional capacities.

Judgement and approach

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

Local intended learning outcomes

In addition to the intended learning outcomes for the Licentiate and doctoral degrees, after completing the degree programme the third-cycle student must

- demonstrate broad knowledge in the area of Politics, Economy and the Organisation of Society (knowledge and understanding)
- be able to autonomously apply this knowledge in the analysis of an area that is relevant to the subject (competence and skills)

2. Entry requirements

2.1 General regulations

To be admitted to third-cycle studies, the applicant must fulfil the general entry requirements and the specific entry requirements stated below. The applicant must also be assessed as possessing the necessary capability to assimilate the content of the degree.

2.2 General entry requirements

The general entry requirements for third-cycle courses and study programmes are fulfilled by someone who has:

1. been awarded a second-cycle qualification,
2. satisfied the requirements for courses comprising at least 240 credits of which at least 60 credits were awarded in the second-cycle, or
3. acquired substantially equivalent knowledge in some other way in Sweden or abroad. In exceptional circumstances, the Faculty Board may permit an exemption from the general entry requirements for an individual applicant. (Ordinance 2010:1064)

2.3 Specific entry requirements

The specific entry requirements are fulfilled by a person who has knowledge equivalent to 90 credits in Social Work, or a closely related subject in the social sciences, including a degree project worth at least 15 credits at second-cycle level, or who has acquired the equivalent knowledge abroad or through a previous qualification. In exceptional circumstances, the Faculty Board may permit an exemption from the specific entry requirements for an individual applicant.

The ability to assimilate academic material in English and a command of the language necessary for work on the thesis are prerequisites for admission to the degree programme.

3. Admissions

3.1 Application

Applications for admission to a third-cycle programme must be submitted to Södertörn University.

3.2 Limitations on admission and selection

The number of doctoral students admitted may be no greater than that which can be offered supervision, acceptable study conditions and who have a plan for student financing. A research student who is employed on a doctoral studentship is assumed to conduct their studies on a full-time basis. If it is believed to benefit the doctoral student's education, the doctoral studentship may be extended for a maximum of one year when the doctoral student conducts teaching or administrative tasks. These departmental duties may not exceed 20% of full-time.

Limitations on admission to third-cycle programmes are applied if the number of eligible applicants is greater than the number of available places. The supervisory collegium in Social Work must take the following into consideration:

1. The applicant's merits and expertise.
2. The quality of the research project.
3. The suitability and feasibility of the research project as a doctoral project.
4. The funding plan.
5. Whether sufficient collected supervisory capacity exists to provide good and professional supervision and the relevant expertise.

For applicants to doctoral positions affiliated with BEEGS, the research plan will be assessed according to its link to the graduate school's specific geographic area, its orientation to the Baltic states or Eastern Europe.

The basis for selection among the eligible applicants to third-cycle studies in Social Work comprises documented qualifications and the assessed level of ability to assimilate the third-cycle programme. The initial selection is made on the basis of documented material provided by the applicant, such as grades/credits, written work, the appended research plan (where appropriate) and any vocational certifications. The applicant's merits, expertise and ambition, based on their grades and written work, are assessed as regards creativity and academic maturity, the capacity for stringency and problem formulation, independent judgement and critical analysis, the ability to comply with a given timeframe and communication and cooperation skills.

Other factors in decision-making, such as interviews with applicants, may be significant. The expertise possessed by the lecturers linked to third-cycle education and aspects relating to equal opportunities are also taken into account during the admissions procedure.

The supervisory collegium must also, before proposing candidates for admission, assess whether issues of research ethics have been addressed, the proposed time plan and funding plan, whether the total supervisory competence can be considered adequate to provide good, professional supervision and the relevant expertise, and whether the doctoral student has understood what is entailed by third-cycle education at Södertörn University. In addition, the supervisory staff should consider the candidate's desire and ability to participate in and actively contribute to the subject's research environment.

At a preparatory stage, the collegium may conduct a review of the applicant's formal merits and qualifications in an assessment panel that is appointed by the subject's supervisory collegium. Where relevant, this assessment panel cooperates with the graduate school, BEEGS, or the head of the project that has proposed admission using project funding. The assessment panel also checks the candidate's formal qualifications. As work progresses, it is reported to the supervisory collegium. The group then produces a written proposal for a ranking of the applicants, with motivations.

Applicants are selected using the above selection criteria, and the supervisory collegium rank a limited number of applicants in a leading group. A representative for the subject's doctoral students may be present during this process. When a leading group of applicants is apparent, interviews should be conducted. These provide the opportunity for the supervisory collegium to gather additional information. The primary aim of the interviews is to familiarise the applicant with the subject and the research area. An individual study and funding plan is drawn up when the doctoral student commences their employment.

A proposal is also made regarding the principal supervisor and other supervisor(s), which is confirmed by the supervisory collegium at the end of the doctoral student's first semester. The doctoral student has the right to change supervisor.

3.3 Admission decisions

The admissions process complies with the *Regulations for Third-Cycle Education at Södertörn University*. The Faculty Board decides on the admission of students to third-cycle programmes.

4. Programme content

4.1. General

In total, a Degree of Doctor covers 240 credits, of which 75 credits are from courses and 165 credits are from the thesis. Of the course credits, 60 credits are obligatory (37.5 credits from obligatory courses common to the research area, and 22.5 credits from subject-specific obligatory courses). Doctoral students at BEEGS must study an additional obligatory course worth 7.5 credits. The remaining 15 credits or 7.5 credits (for doctoral students at BEEGS) come from elective courses.

A Degree of Licentiate covers 120 credits and consists of courses worth a total of 45 credits and an academic paper worth 75 credits. Such a degree may either be the final aim of the programme or a stage on the way to a doctoral degree.

Credits from courses at second-cycle level or higher and which are not included in the general entry requirements may, after a decision in accordance with the academic school's delegation of authority, be transferred to the third-cycle programme. However, this may be a maximum of 30 credits.

The doctoral student should begin their academic paper/thesis during the first year of the programme and thus conduct research activities in parallel with course-based studies. Active participation in the research environment's seminar activities is also included in third-cycle programmes.

4.2 Courses

The obligatory courses consist of a number of common courses for the area (totalling 37.5 credits, 45 credits for doctoral students admitted to BEEGS):

- Research Design (7.5 credits)
- Qualitative Research Methods in the Social Sciences (7.5 credits)
- Advanced Quantitative Research Methods in Social Sciences (7.5 credits)
- Truth, Construction and Subjectivity: Contemporary Issues in the Theory of Scientific Knowledge (7.5 credits)
- Organisations and Institutions (7.5 credits)

Subject-specific obligatory courses (22.5 credits) (Social Work)

- Introduction to Research in Social Work (7.5 credits)
- Subject-specific course, elective specialisation (7.5 credits)
- Methodology, elective specialisation (7.5 credits)

These courses are taken after consultation with the principal supervisor and can be offered as taught courses, internal or external to the university, or through literature studies. They are examined by the principal supervisor or other specially appointed examiner internal or external to the university.

Obligatory course for doctoral students at BEEGS

- Contemporary Research into the Baltic Sea Region and Eastern Europe, 7.5 credits

Elective courses

- 15 credits or 7.5 credits for doctoral students at BEEGS

Elective, individually-chosen courses are chosen in consultation with the doctoral student's principal supervisor and take account of how the principal supervisor assesses that the courses contribute to the doctoral student fulfilling the qualitative targets. They are offered through teaching, internally or externally to the university, through literature studies, participation in excursions, through oral and written research presentations, reviews of others' research, participation in the course in teaching and learning in higher education, etc.

A Degree of Licentiate includes the following courses:

Obligatory courses within the research area (22.5 credits) (PESO courses)

- Qualitative Research Methods in the Social Sciences (7.5 credits)
- Advanced Quantitative Research Methods in Social Sciences (7.5 credits)
- Truth, Construction and Subjectivity: Contemporary Issues in the Theory of Scientific Knowledge (7.5 credits)

Subject-specific obligatory courses (7.5 credits)

- Introduction to Research in Social Work (7.5 credits)

These courses are taken after consultation with the principal supervisor and can be offered as taught courses, internal or external to the university, or through literature studies. They are examined by the principal supervisor or other specially appointed examiner internal or external to the university.

Obligatory course for doctoral students at BEEGS

- Contemporary Research into the Baltic Sea Region and Eastern Europe, 7.5 credits

Elective courses (15 credits or 7.5 credits for doctoral students at BEEGS)

The elective, individually decided courses are chosen in consultation with the doctoral student's principal supervisor.

4.3 Doctoral thesis

To be awarded a doctoral degree, the doctoral student must write an academic thesis that is worth 180 credits. The thesis must be based on autonomous research work and be of significance and relevance to research in the selected field. The thesis shall either be a

unified and continuous piece of academic work (monograph thesis) or a compilation of academic works that the doctoral student has written alone or with co-authors, to which a summarising discussion has been added (compilation thesis). The works shall be of such quality that they can be published in recognised academic journals. At least two of the works must be accepted for publication in recognised academic journals. Just as with monograph theses, it is the overall assessment of the compilation thesis' scholarly quality that is the determining factor.

4.4 Licentiate thesis

To be awarded a Degree of Licentiate, the doctoral student must write an academic thesis that is worth 75 credits. The thesis must be based on autonomous research work.

4.5. Additional information

Further information about doctoral education can be provided by the director of doctoral studies for the research area for doctoral studies, or by the chair of the supervisory collegium for Social Work.

5. Format of the programme

5.1. Individual study plan

The principal supervisor and doctoral student must, together, draw up an individual study plan for the doctoral student's third-cycle studies that includes the university's and the doctoral student's commitments, and a schedule for the programme. The study plan is drawn up at the start of employment and is validated by the Steering Committee for PESO (according to the school's delegation of authority and decision procedure) no later than five months after the start of the doctoral studentship. Follow-ups and revisions to the study plan must be presented to and approved by the steering committee once per year. The doctoral student and the supervisor must confirm in writing that they have read the individual study plan and any revisions to it.

5.2. Teaching

Teaching is primarily provided in the form of courses, lectures, seminars and supervision. Courses and thesis work must be conducted in parallel. The doctoral student must start their thesis work at an early date. This work is normally presented on one occasion each semester at the subject's higher seminar. The supervisor and doctoral student must maintain continual contact. It is both a right and an obligation for doctoral students to have their texts read and discussed at higher seminars. A manuscript must be presented in its entirety to the seminar prior to its public defence (final seminar). In association with the final seminar, the manuscript must be reviewed by a specially appointed reviewer. During the period of study, the doctoral student must participate in academic activities by attending seminars, guest lectures, etc. The doctoral student may be provided with the opportunity to participate in teaching and knowledge testing at another faculty or another higher education institution. The doctoral student must be offered the opportunity to participate in international conferences and courses.

5.3. Supervision

Students in third-cycle education are entitled to supervision that is equivalent to four years of full-time study for a Degree of Doctor and to two years for a Degree of Licentiate. The content and scope of supervision is stated in the *Regulations for Third-Cycle Education at Södertörn University*. Supervisors in third-cycle education in Social Work are the subject's professors and associate professors and specially appointed teachers. At least two supervisors must be appointed for each doctoral student. One of them must be the principal supervisor. Supervisors are selected in consultation with the doctoral student. The principal supervisor must be an associate professor or equivalent and the assistant supervisors must have doctoral degrees. They must have completed a course in third-cycle supervision or be assessed as having the equivalent competence. The supervisors are appointed by the head of school after a proposal from the supervisory collegium in Social Work and the Steering Committee for PESO. A doctoral student is able to change supervisor if they request this. Such a request is made to the head of school and a reason does not need to be provided.

The supervisor(s) and doctoral student must have close, regular contact and, every semester, they must check what has been achieved in relation to the annual individual study plan. The choice of thesis subject must take place in consultation between the doctoral student and principal supervisor during the first semester of the programme. The principal supervisor is responsible for providing advice as regards the focus, scope and execution of work on the thesis. The supervisor must also ensure that delimitation of the thesis subject takes place in such a manner that studies can be completed within the decided period of study. The doctoral student must contact their supervisors, director of studies, or line manager, if there are any problems.

If a doctoral student substantially neglects their obligations in the individual study plan, the vice-chancellor must decide on the withdrawal of resources for their studies. The local regulations in the *Regulations for Third-Cycle Education at Södertörn University* state how the case is prepared before the proposal to withdraw resources is submitted to the vice-chancellor.

1.Examination

Knowledge testing takes place through written or oral examination. Tests and examinations are graded as either Pass or Fail. The principal supervisor is examiner for the courses for which no specific examiner has been appointed.

The doctoral thesis must be reviewed by an external reviewer at a public defence. It is assessed by a specially-appointed examining committee in accordance with the provisions of the Higher Education Ordinance and the *Regulations for Third-Cycle Education at Södertörn University*. During grading, consideration must be paid to both the content of the thesis and its public defence. The thesis shall be given one of the following grades: Pass or Fail.

The licentiate thesis shall be reviewed by a faculty examiner and be defended publicly. The procedures for presentation of the licentiate thesis are stated in the *Regulations for Third-Cycle Education at Södertörn University*. PESO is responsible for the routines and

administration of doctoral education that are common to the research area. The thesis must be awarded a grade of either Pass or Fail by a specially-appointed examining committee.