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DECISION

Committee for Research
and Doctoral Education

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General syllabus for third-cycle programmes in Education

Research area for doctoral studies: Studies in the Educational Sciences

Studies according to this general syllabus may lead to the following qualifications:

Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education

Degree of Licentiate of Philosophy in Education

Södertörn University prescribes the following based on Chapter 6, Sections 26–27 of the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100).

1. Subject description

Doctoral studies in Education focus on the education of the individual and the collective, the citizen and the cultural being. At its heart lies an interest in the formation of the human subject and its potential for change in and through culture and society as well as the fundamental pedagogical issues this raises. Based on the disciplinary roots in the humanities, particular attention is paid to the ethical, political and aesthetic dimensions of the object of educational knowledge: the preservation and transformation of culture, knowledge and values in the context of education, both inside and outside formal educational institutions. The aim of doctoral studies in Education is to advance the doctoral student's knowledge in the subject's core fields and to prepare them for independent research and development work. The aim of the programme is to provide the doctoral student with the ability to autonomously plan and conduct a research project and to present and disseminate the results of their research.

After completing the programme, the doctoral student will be able to conduct independent scholarly research in Education and make high level contributions in various areas of professional life. These could involve identifying, leading and organising learning processes in educational settings in different organisations, schools and companies, as well as other educational activities.

2. Programme objectives

2.1. Degree of Doctor

Under the Higher Education Ordinance, a Degree of Doctor is achieved when the doctoral student has completed a programme of 240 credits within a subject that is offered at third cycle (doctoral) level; of these, at least 120 credits must be for a scholarly thesis of a pass level (doctoral thesis). In Pedagogy the thesis must cover 180 credits – see section 4.1.

On completing the programme, the doctoral student must have acquired the following knowledge and competence necessary for the Degree of Doctor, in accordance with the System of Qualifications in the Higher Education Ordinance:

Knowledge and understanding

- demonstrate broad knowledge and systematic understanding of the research field and the research area, as well as advanced and up-to-date specialised knowledge in a limited area of this field
- demonstrate familiarity with research methodology in general and the methods in pedagogy and educational science 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 timeframes and to review and evaluate such work
- demonstrate through a thesis 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
- 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 specialised insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used.

2.2. Degree of Licentiate

Under the Higher Education Ordinance, a Degree of Licentiate is achieved when the doctoral student has completed a programme of 120 credits within a subject that is offered at third cycle (doctoral) level; of these, at least 60 credits must be for a scholarly thesis of a pass level. In Pedagogy the thesis must cover 75 credits – see section 4.1.

On completing the programme, the doctoral student must have acquired the following knowledge and competence necessary for the Degree of Licentiate, in accordance with the System of Qualifications in the Higher Education Ordinance:

Knowledge and understanding

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding in the field of research and the research area, including current specialist knowledge in a limited area of this field as well as specialised knowledge of research methodology in general and pedagogy and educational science 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
- 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 their 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
- demonstrate the ability to identify the personal need for further knowledge and take responsibility for their ongoing learning.

3. Entry requirements and selection

3.1. General provisions

Under the Higher Education Ordinance, the requirements for admission to third-cycle courses and study programmes are that the applicant meets the general and specific entry requirements prescribed by the higher education institution. The applicant must also be assessed as otherwise possessing the necessary capability to assimilate the content of the degree.

The entry requirements must be fulfilled by the application deadline for the advertised doctoral studentship.

3.2. General entry requirements

A person meets the general entry requirements for third-cycle courses and study programmes (under Chapter 7, Section 39 of the Higher Education Ordinance) if he or she

1. has been awarded a second-cycle qualification,
2. satisfies the requirements for courses comprising at least 240 credits of which at least 60 credits were awarded in the second-cycle, or
3. has acquired substantially equivalent knowledge in some other way in Sweden or abroad.

The higher education institution may permit an exemption from the general entry requirements for an individual applicant, if there are special grounds.

Decisions on exemptions are made by the Faculty Board or the body to which the Faculty Board has delegated decision-making powers regarding admissions.

3.3. Specific entry requirements

The specific entry requirements for doctoral programmes in Education are met by someone who has at least a pass grade for an independent work in Education (pedagogy, teaching and learning, subject didactics) or the equivalent subject worth at least 15 credits at Master's level.

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.

3.4. Selection

Under the Higher Education Ordinance, selection for third-cycle education is done after an assessment of the applicant's capacity to assimilate the programme content. Under university regulations, grounds for selection are the following: documented formal qualifications, demonstrated expertise at time of application in the form of essays and other independent written scholarly works and, where relevant, a proposed research plan. For the applicants who are assessed as most qualified, an interview and references will be used as grounds for selection.

Any grounds for assessment and other circumstances regarding the graduate school or research project must be stated in the text of the job advertisement for the doctoral studentship.

Eligible applicants (see Sections 3.1-3.3) must be ranked by their ability to assimilate third-cycle programmes, after which other circumstances are considered based on the ranking.

An applicant who is considered able to transfer credits from prior education or professional experience may not be given priority over other applicants.

Aspects of gender equality must always be considered. Where qualifications are equivalent, applicants from the underrepresented sex, in relation to the distribution among third-cycle students in the subject at the university, have priority.

Ground for assessment that are applied during selection:

- The applicant's formal qualifications: course/degree certificates, grades and diplomas.
- The applicant's expertise as regards
 - subject knowledge
 - knowledge of scholarly theory and method
 - analytical ability.
- The quality, feasibility and relevance of the proposed research for the research subject and area and, where relevant, the graduate school or research project. For applicants to doctoral positions affiliated with the Baltic and East European Graduate School (BEEGS), the research plan will also be assessed according to its links to and relevance for the graduate school.
- The ability to comply with given timeframes

During assessment, the following circumstances are also considered:

- whether there are adequate supervisory resources
- whether the planned research is deemed feasible given the available financial resources
- whether the planned research is deemed feasible from the standpoint of research ethics.

4. Programme design and content

4.1. General information

Third-cycle education leads to a Degree of Doctor, but may lead to a Degree of Licentiate if this is stated in the doctoral student's admission decision or at the doctoral student's request.

Education for a Degree of Doctor in Education covers 240 credits, of which

- courses equivalent to 60 credits
- a scholarly thesis equivalent to 180 credits.

Education for a Degree of Licentiate covers 120 credits, of which

- courses equivalent to 45 credits
- a scholarly thesis equivalent to 75 credits.

The doctoral student conducts their research work in parallel to studying courses. Active participation in the research environment's seminar activities is also included in third-cycle programmes.

Teaching takes place mainly in the form of courses and supervision. In agreement with the supervisor, the doctoral student may take part in teaching and knowledge tests at another department or other higher education institution, as well as participate in international conferences and courses. The doctoral student must be offered support for career planning.

4.2. Supervision

Students in third-cycle education are entitled to supervision during the equivalent of four years of full-time study for a Degree of Doctor and two years for a Degree of Licentiate. At least two supervisors must be appointed for each doctoral student. One of these must be appointed as principal supervisor within two months of the programme starting. Supervisors are selected in consultation with the doctoral student. A doctoral student who so requests must be allowed to change supervisor.

The supervisor(s) and doctoral student must have regular contact regarding how studies are progressing and, every semester, they must check what has been achieved in relation to the individual study plan.

4.3. 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 individual study plan is drawn up at the start of employment and is validated according to the school's delegation of authority and decision procedure, no later than five months after the doctoral student has started studying. Follow ups and revisions to the study plan must be performed once each year, when completed programme components and fulfilled outcomes are presented.

4.4. Courses

Courses are offered through teaching, at the university or externally, or as individual reading courses. All courses are examined by a specially appointed examiner, internal or external to the university.

The university's regulations state the awarded grades must be either pass or fail.

The elective and individually decided courses are chosen in consultation with the doctoral student's principal supervisor, based on how each course

- contributes to fulfilling one or more qualitative targets, or
- provides advanced knowledge in selected specialist areas relevant to work on the thesis, or
- is part of individual career planning, such as a course in higher education pedagogy.

Doctoral courses

Annex 1 to Guidelines for general syllabus for third-cycle/doctoral studies (ref. no. 2923-1.1.2-2022)

Compulsory area-wide courses, 15 credits

- Introduction to Educational Studies, 7.5 credits
- Truth, Construction and Subjectivity: Contemporary Issues in the Theory of Scientific Knowledge, 7.5 credits

Compulsory subject-specific courses, 22.5 credits

- Pedagogical Relations and Practices, 7.5 credits
- Pedagogical prerequisites: theory and policy, 7.5 credits
- Challenges of pedagogy: Globalisation and social equality, 7.5 credits

Elective courses, 22.5 credits

The elective, individually chosen courses are selected in consultation between the doctoral student and principal supervisor.

Elective courses for doctoral students in other graduate schools: the number of credits is the number of course credits remaining after subtracting those of the compulsory courses in the area, subject and graduate school.

Licentiate course

Compulsory area-wide courses, 15 credits

- Introduction to Educational Studies, 7.5 credits
- Truth, Construction and Subjectivity: Contemporary Issues in the Theory of Scientific Knowledge, 7.5 credits

Compulsory subject-specific courses, 15 credits (includes two of the courses listed below)

- Pedagogical Relations and Practices, 7.5 credits
- Challenges of pedagogy: Globalisation and social equality, 7.5 credits

Elective courses, 15 credits

The elective, individually chosen courses are selected in consultation between the licentiate student and principal supervisor.

Elective courses for doctoral students in other graduate schools: the number of credits is the number of course credits remaining after subtracting those of the compulsory courses in the area, subject and graduate school.

4.5. Doctoral thesis

The thesis must be based on autonomous research work and be of importance for research within the chosen third cycle subject area. It must be either a unified and continuous piece of academic work (monograph thesis) or a compilation of academic articles that the doctoral

student has written alone or with co-authors, to which a summarising discussion has been added (compilation thesis).

A compilation thesis must consist of three to four articles and a summarising chapter. When the thesis is defended, at least half of the articles must be either published or accepted for publication in peer-reviewed journals or the equivalent. Unpublished articles presented as part of a compilation thesis must be of such quality that they are deemed acceptable for publication in a peer-reviewed scientific publication. For co-authored articles, a statement must be appended to describe how work was distributed between the co-authors and the extent of the doctoral student's contribution.

If all or parts of the thesis are jointly authored, individual contributions must be clearly differentiated during the examination process.

Work on the thesis undergoes formal peer review on at least three occasions. These are an introductory seminar (research plan), a halfway seminar (50-60%) and a final seminar (90%), and peer review prior to printing.

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 university's regulations. During grading, consideration must be paid to both the content of the thesis and its public defence. The thesis can be given one of the following grades: Pass or Fail.

4.6. Thesis for licentiate degree

The thesis must be based on autonomous research work and be of importance for research within the chosen third cycle subject area. It must be either a unified and continuous piece of academic work or a compilation of academic articles that the doctoral student has written alone or with co-authors, to which a summarising discussion has been added.

A compilation thesis must consist of three to four articles and a summarising chapter. When the thesis is defended, at least half of the articles must be either published or accepted for publication in peer-reviewed journals or the equivalent. Unpublished articles presented as part of a compilation thesis must be of such quality that they are deemed acceptable for publication in a peer-reviewed scientific publication. For co-authored articles, a statement must be appended to describe how work was distributed between the co-authors and the extent of the doctoral student's contribution.

If all or parts of the thesis are jointly authored, individual contributions must be clearly differentiated during the examination process.

Work on the thesis undergoes formal peer review on at least three occasions. These are an introductory seminar (research plan), a halfway seminar (50-60%) and a final seminar (90%), and peer review prior to printing.

The Licentiate thesis must be reviewed and publicly defended. The process for presenting a Licentiate thesis is stated in university guidelines and in routines specific to the area or subject. The thesis can be given one of the following grades: Pass or Fail

5. Other information

Additional information about education at third-cycle level, as well as governing documents, are available on the university's external and internal websites. Further information about third-cycle education per subject can be provided by the director of doctoral studies.

6. Entry into effect and transitional provisions

This general syllabus enters into effect on 1 January 2024. The previous syllabus ceases to apply for doctoral students admitted after this date.

Doctoral students who have been admitted to third-cycle education under a previous general syllabus are entitled to complete their programme under that syllabus or to request to transfer to the new general syllabus. The decision to transfer to a new syllabus is made by the steering committee for Studies in Educational Sciences after a collegial process within the third-cycle subject area, and in consultation with the doctoral student's principal supervisor and the director of doctoral studies. The transfer must be noted in the individual study plan.