



# Admission regulations for third-cycle study at Södertörn University

## 1. Preliminary regulations

The admission regulations for the third-cycle study programme are part of Södertörn University's local regulations for this education and have been stipulated by the Faculty Board.

The admission regulations contain rules governing access rights, selection criteria, etcetera, used when accepting students to third-cycle educational programmes at Södertörn University. Regulations containing greater and/or more detailed requirements than those found below may be established in the general study plans established by the University's third-cycle education departments.

Regulations concerning access to third-cycle educational programmes are to be found in chapters 6 and 7 of the Higher Education Ordinance. These are reproduced, below, together with the local regulations governing implementation that are in force at Södertörn University. The term doctoral student also applies to third-cycle students who have been accepted to doctoral studies terminating in a licentiate exam.

Any delegation of authority is to be made in concurrences with the regulations concerning such delegation established by the Faculty Board.

## 2. Admission to third-cycle educational programmes

### 2.1. Information concerning available doctoral student positions

#### **Legislative decrees**

##### **Higher Education Ordinance chapter 6**

**Section 3** Students must be given access to both study guidance and vocational counselling. The higher education institution (HEI) must ensure that any person who intends to begin university education has access to the relevant information concerning that education.

The HEI shall also ensure that students have ready access to regulations pertaining to admission. The HEI's admission regulations include those regulations that the HEI applies in matters concerning application to studies, general entry requirements, selection criteria and on how decisions are made and how they can be appealed. (*Regulation 2010:1064*).

##### **Higher Education Ordinance chapter 7**

**Section 37** Questions pertaining to admission are decided by the HEI. Those seeking admission to a third-cycle educational programme must apply within the time frame and in accordance with the procedure laid down by the HEI.

When an HEI decides to admit one or more doctoral students, it must make this known by providing information thereon through advertising or the equivalent thereof. However, this type of announcement need not be made:

1. when the student admitted is supposed to enter into and complete his or her education within the context of employment with an employer other than the HEI,
2. when a doctoral student is admitted who has already started his or her third-cycle study programme at some other HEI, or
3. if there are similar special reasons. (*Regulation 2006:1053*).

#### **Guidelines for local implementation**

- Admission to third-cycle study programmes should normally take place collectively and at one time, once the number of available places has been ascertained. This applies not only to doctoral studentships but to other kinds of doctoral positions, as well.
- Doctoral positions must be announced on the website of the concerned academic area and on that of the third-cycle department, on the central website of the HEI, on bulletin boards and, when this seems appropriate, in the daily newspapers. Internal announcements at the Baltic and East European Graduate School (BEEGS) must be published on the website for the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES). Under normal conditions, doctoral positions must also be announced internationally.
- Doctoral positions should be announced, primarily, at fixed times each year.

- All announcements of vacant positions must be handled by the Faculty Board. The concerned third-cycle departments submit suggestions to the area for processing within the appropriate academic area. Announcements are monitored and their quality assured in order to ensure that existing regulations are brought to bear.
- If the HEI announces a vacant place in a third-cycle educational programme and if a doctoral studentship at the HEI is linked to this vacancy, the studentship must be advertised in the same announcement.
- The application for admission to the educational programme also functions as an application to the doctoral studentship, if this is specified in the announcements.
- There are special cases when a notification need not be made; for example, in those cases where the applicants have scholarships or other financing of their own.
- If, in other than the above-mentioned cases, a person submits an application for the educational programme, the Faculty Board must immediately decide either that the applicant cannot be accepted or advertise the vacant third-cycle study programme place for which the applicant has applied.

## 2.2. Admission procedure

### Legislative decrees

#### Higher Education Ordinance chapter 7

**Section 35** In order to be admitted to a third-cycle programme, the applicant must:

1. fulfil both the general entry requirements and the special requirements stipulated by the HEI, and
2. in other respects be judged to have the capacity to benefit from third-cycle university education. (*Regulation 2010:1064*).

**Section 39** An individual fulfils the general entry requirements for the third-cycle educational programme when he or she:

1. has completed a second-cycle degree,
2. has completed HEI courses worth at least 240 HEI credits, of which at least 60 are for second-cycle courses, or
3. in some other manner, in this country or abroad, has acquired the equivalent qualifications.

The HEI may exempt an individual applicant from fulfilling the general entry requirements, if there are special grounds for doing so. (*Regulation 2010:1064*).

#### Guidelines for local implementation

An application for admission to third-cycle programmes must be submitted to the HEI.

Admission to a place in an educational programme must be handled within the concerned third-cycle educational area, which ranks applicants according to criteria stipulated in the general study plan for the third-cycle department and in chapter three of this text. Whenever

an area includes more than one third-cycle department, the matter must first be referred to the department concerned.

During the admission of doctoral students to Södertörn University's active graduate schools, a representative of the graduate school concerned must participate in the admission process at the area level.

Those involved in processing admissions must be well acquainted with the current regulations. Doctoral students must be represented in the preparatory process.

Decisions on admission are taken by the Faculty Board after preliminary processing has been done within the concerned third-cycle education area. In cases when the area includes more than one third-cycle department, the issue is first processed within the department concerned.

The applicant's qualifications must be checked before admission. The Faculty Board's decision on whether to approve or reject the application must be documented in writing in order to safeguard the doctoral students' legal rights in connection with the admission procedure. The third-cycle education area must provide written documentation showing who has or have dealt with the applications, and specify the authority that appointed them.

## 2.3. Financing of studies

### Legislative decrees

#### Higher Education Ordinance chapter 7

**Section 36** The HEI may only accept for **third-cycle education** applicants who have been granted doctoral studentships or who are awarded student grants for doctoral students. The HEI may, however, accept applicants who have some other form of student financing, if, in the opinion of the HEI, such financing is sufficient for the completion of a third-cycle study programme and the applicant will be able to devote sufficient time to his or her studies to complete them within the four-year period that is specified for a licentiate or a licentiate in fine arts and the eight years specified for a doctoral degree or a doctoral degree in fine arts. (*Regulation 2010:1064*).

#### Local guidelines for implementation

- As a rule, doctoral students at Södertörn University must be offered studentships to finance their studies. In general, faculty resources and external research grants cover the expense of this.
- Before a final decision to admit a student is made, the relevant head of the school or the director of CBEES must ensure that a financing plan is in place.
- The financing plan must thereafter be maintained as an appendix to the individual study plan for the entire duration of the third-cycle education. The appendix details the financing of each consecutive semester of the third-cycle education.

- The Faculty Board assesses the financing plan as well as the individual study plan at least once each year.
- For students with alternative financing, a contract must be signed with the party doing the financing (business, authority, other HEI etcetera). In cases where the financing takes place within the context of employment outside of the university, the manager of the business in question must approve the entire study plan in order to thus certify that the education can take place as described.
- Only in exceptional cases can doctoral students on stipends be accepted, and only on the condition that these students can be offered the same conditions as doctoral students with studentships when it comes to insurance coverage etcetera.
- In cases when an applicant has financing for his or her studies other than through a doctoral studentship, the decision to admit must be appraised with special care, in order to safeguard the doctoral student's legal rights. The decision is taken by the Faculty Board and cannot be delegated.
- Applicants who cannot obtain doctoral studentships and who have no other acceptable source of funding cannot be admitted to third-cycle study programmes.

## 2.4. Admission to the third-cycle programme to obtain a licentiate degree

Admission to a third-cycle study programme can be done with either a doctoral degree or a licentiate as the final goal.

### Local guidelines for implementation

- Admission to a third-cycle study programme with a licentiate as the final goal must be considered an exception from the norm and should therefore be scrutinised with exceptional care. The decision concerning this type of admission is made by the Faculty Board and cannot be delegated.
- If a student who has been accepted to a licentiate study programme applies for a admission to third-cycle studies in order to obtain a doctoral degree, he or she must have his or her application evaluated in competition with other doctoral degree candidates.

## 2.5. Claiming credits during the selection process

### Legislative decrees

#### Higher Education Ordinance chapter 6

**Section 6** If a student at one Swedish HEI has completed a number of HEI courses with passing grades, the student has the right to claim credits for these courses at another Swedish HEI. This, however, does not apply if there are significant differences between the two types of study programmes.

This also applies to students who have completed courses with passing grades:

1. at a university or other educational institution for higher education in Denmark, Finland, Iceland or Norway, or in some other country that adheres to The Council of Europe's Convention of April 11 1997 concerning the acceptance of documentation of higher education within the European region, or
2. at NHV Nordic School of Public Health. (*Regulation 2006:1053*).

**Section 7** A student has the right to claim credits for types of education other than those specified in Section 6, if the knowledge and skills that the student claims to possess are of a character and scope that on the whole complement the educational programme towards which they are intended to apply. A student may also be granted credits for knowledge and skills acquired on the job market. (*Regulation 2006:1053*).

**Section 8** The HEI must assess whether prior education or vocational activities can be claimed as credits. Only those who are students can claim such credits, unless stipulated otherwise in law or regulation. (*Regulation 2010:1064*).

### **Higher Education Ordinance chapter 7**

**Section 41** When a choice is made between applicants who all fulfil the requirements stipulated in [Section 35](#) and [Section 36](#), the applicants' capacity to benefit from the university education must be taken into account.

The HEI decides the basis on which the student's capacity to benefit from third-cycle university education must be evaluated.

The fact that an applicant is judged to have previous education or work experience which can give credits towards third-cycle education must not, however, suffice to give that applicant preference over other applicants during the selection process. (*Regulation 2010:1064*).

### **Guidelines for local implementation**

- It is not permitted to routinely allow the student to apply credits earned during the second year of a master's degree. The Faculty Board is responsible for ensuring that applicants with master's degrees are not routinely given preference for the purpose of shortening the duration of the doctoral student's third-cycle study programme to fewer than four years.
- Credits for previous education must not be given in connection with the admission process.
- When such credits are granted, this must happen on the initiative of the student and be evaluated for each individual student and for each separate course in relation to the examination requirements of the third-cycle programme.
- The decision to grant credits for prior education is made within each area of the third-cycle programme. Whenever the area includes more than one area-specific department, the issue is resolved within the department concerned. The Faculty Board is kept informed of the granting of credits through memorandums.
- The doctoral student can appeal a decision concerning credit-granting.

### 3. Qualification requirements and criteria for selection

#### Legislative decrees

##### Higher Education Ordinance chapter 7

**Section 35** In order to be admitted to a third-cycle programme, the applicant:

1. must fulfil both the general entry requirements and the special requirements stipulated by the HEI, and
2. in other respects be judged to have the skills necessary to benefit from third-cycle university education. (*Regulation 2010:1064*).

**Section 39** An individual fulfils the general entry requirements for the third-cycle educational programme when he or she:

1. has completed a second-cycle degree,
2. has completed HEI courses worth at least 240 HEI credits, of which at least 60 are for second-cycle courses, or
3. in some other manner, in this country or abroad, has acquired the equivalent qualifications.

The HEI may exempt an individual applicant from fulfilling the general entry requirements, if there are special grounds for doing so. (*Regulation 2010:1064*).

**Section 40** The special qualifications requested must be essential to the student's capacity to benefit from the study programme. The demands may concern:

1. knowledge gained from an HEI education or the equivalent,
2. special work experience, and
3. necessary language proficiencies or other requirements necessitated by the study programme.

**Section 41** When a choice is to be made between applicants who all fulfil the requirements stipulated in [Section 35](#) and [Section 36](#), the applicants' capacity to benefit from the third-cycle study programme must be taken into account.

The HEI decides the basis on which the student's capacity to benefit from third-cycle study programme must be evaluated.

The fact that an applicant is judged to have previous education or previous work experience that can give credits that can be applied towards a third-cycle study programme must not, however, suffice to give that applicant preference over other applicants during the selection process. (*Regulation 2010:1064*).

#### Guidelines for local implementation

- The applicant must have fulfilled all entry qualification requirements by the end of the application period.

### **Requiring special qualifications**

- The requirements for special qualifications must be specific and relevant. They must be specified in the third-cycle education department's general study plan. Special qualifications are not extensions of general requirements; rather, they constitute a demand for a foundation of knowledge that is essential to the third-cycle study programme in question.
- Demands for special qualifications must be carefully scrutinised, discussed and approved by the Faculty Board. The prerequisite skills laid down as special qualifications must be entirely necessary to the doctoral student's capacity to benefit from the study programme.

### **Basis for assessment in the selection process**

- The selection criteria for admission to a third-cycle study programme are listed below; more detailed versions can be found in the respective third-cycle education department's general study plan and admission regulations.
- The selection process must be characterised by circumspection, predictability and transparency with respect to the basis on which assessments have been made.
- The Faculty Board decides to admit or refuse applicants based on the third-cycle programme area's collective assessment of the application and on what has emerged during interviews with the applicants as well as during the collection of references.
- When preparing a decision on admission to third-cycle education the Faculty Board shall assess:
  - The student's merits and competence,
  - the quality of the individual research project,
  - the individual research project's suitability and feasibility as a doctoral project,
  - For doctoral students within the graduate school BEEGS, the research project is evaluated according to its anchorage in the graduate school's specific geographical area, that is its orientation towards the Baltic nations or East Europe,
  - the financing plan,
  - whether research-ethical issues have been taken into consideration
  - whether the total competence among potential supervisors is sufficient to furnish the applicant with good, professional supervision as well as relevant expertise.
- The Faculty Board shall, in the general study plans for each third-cycle education department, establish the criteria which are to form the basis for assessing the applicant's prospective ability to derive benefit from the third-cycle education in that discipline. In this context, we refer the reader to chapter 6, Section 35 of the Higher Education Ordinance.