



General syllabus for third-cycle programmes in Media and Communication Studies

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 Media and Communication Studies

Degree of Licentiate of Arts in Media and Communication Studies

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

1. Subject description

The field of Media and Communication Studies examines historical, aesthetic, cultural, media didactic, educational, and sociological perspectives on the media. The emphasis is on the interplay between media and culture, learning and education in relation to societal development and school as an institution. The doctoral programme has a cultural theoretical profile and adopts a historicizing perspective on the rapidly changing contemporary landscape in education and the media, striving to be open to a rich diversity of media and communication studies traditions and currents. An interdisciplinary approach is applied to the study of the relationships between media, society, and school, and research focuses on issues of long-term societal relevance.

2. Programme objectives

After completing their degree, the doctoral student must be able to conduct autonomous scientific research in Media and Communication Studies and make expert contributions in various professional areas. This may involve identifying, leading and organising learning processes in educational environments such as organisations, schools and business and other education providers.

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 Media and Communication Studies 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

For the Degree of Doctor the third-cycle student must

- 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

For the Degree of Doctor the third-cycle student must

- 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

For the Degree of Doctor the third-cycle student must

- 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.

Other requirements

- The research must be relevant to the research area of Studies in the Educational Sciences

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 Media and Communication Studies 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

For a Degree of Licentiate the third-cycle student must

- 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

For a Degree of Licentiate the third-cycle student must

- 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

For a Degree of Licentiate the third-cycle student must

- 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.

Other requirements

- The research must be relevant to the research area of Studies in the Educational Sciences

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 are met by someone who has at least 90 ECTS in Media and Communication Studies, including an independent work of at least 15 credits.

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. 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 documented in theses and other independent scholarly works and proposed research plan, 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.
- The ability to comply with given timeframes
- The qualifications and competence of the applicant are assessed with regard to creativity and scholarly maturity, the ability to demonstrate coherence and problem formulation, independent judgement and critical analysis, as well as communication and collaboration skills.

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 Media and Communication Studies 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 shall 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 the courses

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

The elective courses are offered through instruction within and outside the academic school, as well as through literature studies, individual oral and written research presentations, peer reviews, participation in courses in higher education pedagogy courses, etc.

Courses for a Degree of Doctor

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

- Classics of Media Theory, 7.5 credits
- Contemporary Debates in Media and Communication Theory with an Educational Studies Profile, 7.5 credits
- Advanced Methodology in Media Studies. Offered as a teacher-led or individual reading course, 7.5 credits

Elective courses, 22.5 credits

At least one 7.5-credit course should focus on media didactics or questions that concern other aspects of the school-media relationship.

Courses for a Degree of Licentiate

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 (includes two of the courses listed below)

- Classics of media theory, 7.5 credits
- Contemporary debates in Media Studies with a profile towards educational studies, 7.5 credits
- Advanced Methodology in Media Studies. Offered as a teacher-led or individual reading course.

Elective courses, 7.5 credits

The course should focus on media didactics or questions that concern other aspects of the school-media relationship.

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).

The summarising discussion must be authored solely by the doctoral student. Unpublished articles that are presented as part of a compilation thesis must be of such quality that they are assessed as suitable for publication in a peer reviewed scholarly journal. 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.

Information about the peer review process is provided in the subject's guidelines.

The doctoral thesis shall be reviewed by an external reviewer at a public thesis defence. It is assessed by a specially appointed examining committee in accordance with the rules of the Higher Education Ordinance and the university's local regulations. The grading shall take into account both the content of the thesis and the defence at the public defence. The thesis is given a grade of either 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.

The summarising discussion must be authored solely by the doctoral student. Unpublished articles that are presented as part of a compilation thesis must be of such quality that they

are assessed as suitable for publication in a peer reviewed scholarly journal. For co-authored articles, a statement must be appended to describe 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.

Information about the peer review process is provided in the subject's guidelines.

The licentiate thesis shall be publicly reviewed and defended. Forms of presentation of the licentiate thesis are specified in the university's guidelines and in area- or subject-specific procedures. The licentiate thesis is given a grade of either 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 the 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.