



FACULTY  
OF SOCIAL  
SCIENCES

GENERAL SYLLABUS FOR SOCIAL  
WORK

Reg. No.  
U 2020/961

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Faculty Board

## **General syllabus for third-cycle studies in Social Work**

The general syllabus for third cycle studies was approved by the Faculty Board of Social Sciences 26 November 2020, Reg. no U 2020/961.

Studies in line with this general syllabus can lead to one of the following degrees:

Doctor of Philosophy

Licentiate of Philosophy

### **1 Subject description**

Research in social work is mainly concerned with the emergence, causes and solutions of social problems, the conditions and life situations of vulnerable groups and individuals, analyses of welfare policy, social policy measures, societal interventions, welfare organisations and professions. Current research areas can be found on the department's website, ([www.soch.lu.se](http://www.soch.lu.se)).

### **2 Objective and outcomes of third-cycle studies**

The aims of the third-cycle programme in social work at the School of Social Work, Lund University, is to provide students with specialised knowledge of social work and to train independent, critical researchers with extensive theoretical knowledge in the social sciences, advanced methodological

skills and perception and the ability to independently carry out research projects.

## **2.1 Doctor of Philosophy**

On completion of the programme, the third-cycle student is to have acquired the following knowledge and skills:

### ***Knowledge and understanding***

For the degree of Doctor the third-cycle student shall

- demonstrate broad knowledge and systematic understanding of the research field as well as advanced and up-to-date specialised 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 degree of Doctor the third-cycle 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 a 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 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 degree of Doctor the third-cycle student shall

- demonstrate intellectual autonomy and disciplinary rectitude as well as the ability to make assessments of research ethics, and
- 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**

On completion of the programme, the third-cycle student is to have acquired the following knowledge and skills:

### ***Knowledge and understanding***

For a degree of Licentiate the third-cycle student shall demonstrate

- knowledge and understanding in the field of research including current specialist knowledge in a limited area of this field as well as specialised knowledge of research methodology in general and the methods of the specific field of research in particular.

### ***Competence and skills***

For a degree of Licentiate the third-cycle student shall

- 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, and
- 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 shall

- the ability to make assessments of ethical aspects of his or her own research
- insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used, and
- the ability to identify the personal need for further knowledge and take responsibility for his or her ongoing learning.

## **3 Admission requirements**

The requirements for admission to third-cycle studies are that the applicant meets the general and specific admission requirements and is considered in other respects to have the ability required to benefit from the programme.

### **3.1 General admission requirements**

A person meets the general admission requirements for third-cycle studies if he or she

1. has been awarded a second-cycle qualification
2. has satisfied 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 faculty board may permit an exemption from the general entry requirements for an individual applicant, if there are special grounds.

### **3.2 Specific admission requirements**

A person meets the specific admission requirements if they

1. have satisfied the requirements for courses comprising at least 30 second-cycle credits in social work, or a corresponding qualification acquired in Sweden or abroad, and
2. have completed a second-cycle independent project worth at least 15 credits.

### **3.3 Credit transfer from previous studies**

If a student at a higher education institution has successfully completed a second-cycle course or study programme, he or she is entitled to transfer the credits awarded for the course or study programme to the third-cycle programme if the department board, following a review, judges the course or programme to have a quality or specialisation that justifies credit transfer.

Credit transfer is always to be assessed if a student so requests and the decision is to be documented in the individual study plan, no later than a year after it was decided. Credit transfer is to be linked to a decision on reduction in the period for funding that corresponds to the number of credits transferred.

## **4 Admission and selection**

Admission of third-cycle students is granted in accordance with the Admission Regulations for doctoral programmes at Lund University and the Regulations for third-cycle education at the Faculty of Social Sciences.

### **4.1 Admission**

The faculty strives to admit third-cycle students following the announcement of a study place at a set time. Students who are

admitted to a Licentiate programme must re-apply to be able to continue studies towards a degree of Doctor.

Admissions are primarily granted to applicants to third-cycle courses and study programmes who have been appointed to doctoral studentships. Third-cycle students must have funding in the form a doctoral studentship or other funding in accordance with the University's admission regulations. The faculty board is responsible for a thorough assessment of the study funding.

A funding plan must be available on admission. The plan must specify the research student's funding throughout the entire programme of study.

#### **4.2 Selection**

A selection among applicants must be made if there are a limited number of places. The basis for selection is the applicant's qualifications at the time of application. The overriding criterion is the applicant's ability to benefit from the third-cycle programme. Special emphasis is placed on the applicant's capacity to pursue research in the social sciences. However, the fact that the applicant is considered able to transfer credits from prior courses and study programmes or for professional or vocational experience may not alone give the applicant priority over other applicants.

In order to assess the ability to benefit from the third-cycle programme, the applicant's previous study results, papers, reports, research plans, any other research qualifications and documented professional experience will be considered. First- and second-cycle degree projects are accorded special weight.

The faculty strives to ensure diversity. Gender equality must always be taken into account. Priority will be given to the under-represented gender at the department, in cases of equally qualified applicants, unless there are valid reasons to the contrary.

## **5 The programme for a degree of Doctor**

Third cycle studies that lead to a degree of Doctor comprise four years of full-time study (240 credits). Studies for a degree of Licentiate comprise two years of full-time study (120 credits). Part-time studies (at least 50%) may be pursued but must be completed within eight years for the degree of Doctor and four years for the degree of Licentiate. The doctoral student is also entitled, but not obliged, to take a degree of Licentiate (120 credits) as a stage in third-cycle education leading to a degree of Doctor.

### **5.1 Programme design**

The programme leading to a degree of Doctor comprises 240 credits, made up of courses comprising 75 credits and an academic thesis, the PhD thesis, comprising 165 credits. The programme leading to a degree of Licentiate comprises 120 credits, made up of courses comprising 37.5 credits and an academic thesis, the Licentiate thesis, comprising 82.5 credits. Teaching is in the form of courses, seminars, guest lectures and supervision of the thesis work.

For a degree of Doctor the third-cycle student must have successfully completed all examinations in the programme and the PhD thesis.

For a degree of Licentiate the third-cycle student must have successfully completed all examinations in the programme and the Licentiate thesis.

### **5.2 Supervision**

At least two supervisors shall be appointed for each third-cycle student. One of them shall be nominated as the principal supervisor. The principal supervisor is to have the qualifications of an associate professor and be employed at the School of Social Work, Lund University. The individual study plan must specify the duties and responsibilities of each of the supervisors.

Third-cycle students are entitled to supervision during the time deemed necessary for the studies. Supervision includes both help with the orientation of studies, thesis work and support throughout the studies. A third-cycle student who so requests shall be allowed to change supervisor.

### **5.3 Individual study plan**

At the start of the programme, the student shall draw up an individual study plan of the University's and their undertakings along with a timetable for the studies in consultation with the supervisor. The individual study plan must be followed up annually.

The third-cycle student is to register at the start of each semester and, in consultation with the supervisors, specify the degree of activity for the current semester.

### **5.4 Courses and other components**

The courses that can be included in the programme may be courses offered by the department and faculty, courses at other higher education institutions in Sweden or abroad, individual literature courses/independent study courses or other credit-earning components in line with the department's guidelines.

With regard to faculty-wide courses, there must be course syllabi that state the courses' learning outcomes, content and credits. For courses completed at other faculties and higher education institutions, the credits available for credit transfer are determined by the head of department or director of third-cycle studies. The courses to be taken by the individual student and to be included in the degree are to be specified in the individual study plan.

One of the grades Pass or Fail will be awarded for the thesis and other examinations within the programme. The examiner of courses is a professor or lecturer with the qualifications of an associate professor.

#### ***5.4.1 Course***

Of the 75 course credits for the degree of Doctor, the third-cycle student must acquire at least 25 credits in theory and methodology of science, including research ethics (3 credits) and at least 25 credits in theory and research orientation of social and behavioural science relevant to social work. The course component is assessed primarily on the basis of written reports of individual assignments, which are normally discussed at seminars.

Of the 37.5 course credits for the degree of Licentiate, the third-cycle student must acquire at least 15 credits in theory and methodology of science, including research ethics (3 credits) and at least 15 credits in theory and research orientation of social and behavioural science relevant to social work.

#### ***5.4.2 Research seminars and other components***

As part of the studies and thesis work, the third-cycle student is to participate in seminars on the department's research activities and the student's thesis projects. Research students shall have the opportunity to present reports on the theoretical and/or methodological issues of the project, plans, papers and thesis chapters, and critically review the work of fellow students.

Third-cycle students shall present their thesis at no fewer than three seminars:

1. a planning seminar when the plan for the thesis is drawn up
2. a midway review when about half of the thesis work has been completed
3. a concluding seminar to take place about six months prior to the planned date of the public defence

### **5.5 Thesis**

The PhD thesis is the most important component of the third cycle programme. The thesis is to be based on an independently pursued research project.

The PhD thesis is to be designed as a unified research study (monograph thesis) or as a number of research articles by the examinee accompanied by an introductory summary in which the components are placed within a whole (compilation thesis).

A work by two or more authors may be approved as a doctoral thesis or part thereof, if the contributions of the different authors are so clearly specified that they can be assessed individually.

The thesis is to be defended orally at a public defence. It is awarded one of the grades Pass or Fail. The grade is to reflect both the contents of the thesis and the public defence.

### **5.6 Licentiate thesis**

The thesis for the degree of Licentiate shall be presented orally at a public seminar. It is awarded one of the grades Pass or Fail by an examining committee.

### **5.6 Departmental duties**

A third-cycle student can participate in departmental work within a framework of a maximum of 20% of full-time working hours. The third-cycle student must be compensated by a corresponding extension of the study period. The individual study plan is to specify the departmental duties.

Third-cycle students who teach in the first or second cycle shall have completed introductory training in training in teaching and learning in higher education of at least two weeks. The department should work to ensure that third-cycle students who teach continuously undergo further relevant training in teaching and learning in higher education.

## 6 Further information

Information on admission and application deadlines is available at the School of Social Work.

The language of instruction is Swedish with a substantial component of English.

Third-cycle students admitted before 26 November 2020 are entitled to complete their studies according to this syllabus. Any agreement on this is to be documented in the individual study plan.