Action plan for the development of third-cycle education 2017 – 2018

The action plan was drawn up by the Research Studies Council at the Faculty of Social Sciences. The council is responsible for monitoring and promoting third-cycle education. During 2017–18, the council will follow the development of and, if possible, implement indicators in the university-wide quality assurance system; review the link between the programme content and learning outcomes in accordance with the general syllabi; and review the opportunity to offer a clearer, faculty-wide introduction to third-cycle education.

Admission
Doctoral students in all subjects must be admitted in accordance with a common procedure and assessment process. The admissions process, entry requirements and documentation shall be characterised by transparency, clarity and uniformity. While being flexible, as the forms of funding between doctoral students and subjects vary, the faculty should issue an annual joint call for applications for doctoral studentships with the same start date in order to attract more attention externally and to establish a clearer social context internally.

- A faculty-wide procedure for admission to third-cycle education is to be completed by December 2017.
  Responsibility: Research Studies Council, departments

- A coordinated call for applications and announcement of which subjects will be admitting new doctoral students shall be issued before the admission to the autumn semester of 2018.
  Responsibility: Research Studies Council, departments

Courses and structure
Given our small third-cycle subjects, doctoral students should be offered a clearer faculty-wide structure during the first semester/s of the programme, focusing on generic skills and networking. This reduces uncertainty concerning education requirements and creates a clearer sense of belonging.

- Draw up a clear management and decision-making procedure for course development and establishment. Due by June 2017 at the latest.
  Responsibility: Research Studies Council, faculty management

- Evaluate the kick-start course and examine whether certain components should be replaced by others. Due by March 2017 at the latest.
  Responsibility: Research Studies Council, faculty management
Quality and assessment
The faculty’s third-cycle education is to maintain high quality to withstand both internal and external review and evaluation. The third-cycle programmes are to be quality assured within the context of the university-wide quality assurance system. The learning outcomes control the implementation of the programmes and the doctoral students are to be given the conditions they need to fulfil the learning outcomes. The management of individual study plans is to be quality assured and transparent. The departments are entitled to the faculty office’s support and expertise when evaluating the third-cycle programmes.

- Examine how the learning outcomes are achieved, assessed and followed up. Due by June 2018 at the latest.
  Responsibility: Research Studies Council, departments

- Examine which indicators in the LU quality assurance system are to be implemented and how. Completed December 2017.
  Responsibility: Research Studies Council

- Ensure that the faculty office has the necessary expertise to support and coordinate the work involved in the Swedish Higher Education Authority’s evaluation of third-cycle education throughout the evaluation cycle. Completed January 2017.
  Responsibility: Faculty management

- Implement a system for individual study plans (ISPs). The system must be fully implemented by September 2017.
  Responsibility: Faculty management, departments