



Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Curriculum for Doctoral Studies in Business Administration at Karlstad University

1. Curriculum Approval

The curriculum was approved by the Faculty Board of Arts and Social Sciences on 2 June 2016. The PhD programme is offered to the extent permitted by available funding. General stipulations for PhD programmes are provided in the *Higher Education Act* and in the *Higher Education Ordinance*.

Research in Business Administration at Karlstad University is pursued in multidisciplinary and disciplinary groups. The groups can involve researchers from Karlstad University and other universities and fields of study.

2. Aims and Objectives

The general objectives of licentiate or doctoral studies in terms of knowledge and understanding, competence and skills, and judgement and approach are specified in the Qualification Ordinance (*Higher Education Ordinance, annex 2, SFS 2006:1053*), as presented in 2.1-2.4:

2.1 Knowledge and understanding

For a Degree of Licentiate the third-cycle students 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.

For a Degree of Doctor the third-cycle students 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.

2.2 Competence and skills

For a Degree of Licentiate the third-cycle students shall

- demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate issues with scholarly precision critically, independently 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 independently in research and development work and to work independently in some other qualified capacity.

For a Degree of Doctor the third-cycle students shall

- demonstrate the capacity for scholarly analysis and synthesis as well as to review and

- assess new and complex phenomena, issues and situations independently and critically
- demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate issues with scholarly precision critically, independently 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.

2.3 Judgement and approach

For a Degree of Licentiate the third-cycle students shall

- demonstrate the ability to make assessments of ethical aspects of his or her 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, and
- demonstrate the ability to identify the personal need for further knowledge and take responsibility for his or her ongoing learning.

For a Degree of Doctor the third-cycle students shall

- demonstrate intellectual independence 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.

2.4 Licentiate thesis/doctoral thesis

For a Degree of Licentiate the third-cycle student shall have been awarded a pass grade for a research thesis of at least 60 credits.

For a Degree of Doctor the third-cycle student shall have been awarded a pass grade for a research thesis (doctoral thesis) of at least 120 credits.

2.5 Required seminars

For a Degree of Licentiate the third-cycle student shall submit the thesis work in progress at a public seminar with an internally or externally appointed reviewer when a fulfilled thesis work percentage of 50-80% has been completed.

For a Degree of Doctor the third-cycle student shall submit the thesis work in progress at the following public seminars:

1. Planning seminar: after one year of studies
2. Midway seminar: upon completion of approx. 50% of studies
3. Final seminar: upon completion of approx. 80% of studies

The planning seminar reviewer may be an internal appointee but the midway and final seminar require an external reviewer. The main advisor appoints reviewers and decides when the students have fulfilled the requirements for 50 and 80% of studies respectively.

In addition, the Department of Business Administration at Karlstad University Business School organises a mandatory day for doctoral students and supervisors called “doctoral student day”, at which students present and discuss their thesis work.

3 Subject Specific Objectives

Upon completion of doctoral studies in business administration, students shall demonstrate

- knowledge and skills in research practice, especially methodological problems related to business administration,
- expert knowledge of business administration theory and of essential aspects of the reality that constitutes the object of study in business administration,
- deep knowledge of problem issues in the field and ability to formulate and analyse such problems, and
- ability to plan, carry out, present and publish academic work.

Doctoral students are also expected to develop abilities to cooperate with other researchers and practitioners in academic pursuits nationally and internationally.

Upon completion of the programme students should be prepared for a research and teaching career in academia as well as for a professional career in private or public organisations.

4. Eligibility

Applicants to doctoral studies must meet the general admission requirements as well as the specific admission requirements and be judged to have the ability otherwise required to pursue the programme successfully.

4.1 General admission requirements

A person who has earned a Master’s degree of at least 240 ECTS credits of which at least 60 ECTS cr are studies at master’s level, or who in some other way in the country or abroad has acquired largely equivalent knowledge has general eligibility for admission. If there are special reasons for doing so, the faculty board may grant an individual applicant exemption from the general eligibility (*Higher Education Ordinance*, Ch.7).

4.2. Specific admission requirements

Special eligibility is granted to a person who has completed degree requirements of 240 ECTS credits of which 120 ECTS cr are in business administration. The Master-level studies should include at least 30 ECTS cr in business administration of which 15 ECTS cr must be an independent degree project. In cases where the degree project at Master’s level comprises 30 ECTS cr, the number of credits for Master-level studies in business administration must be at least 45 ECTS cr. The independent projects required for the 240 ECTS credit degree must total 30 ECTS cr and be projects in business administration. The requirements for subject courses and independent projects can be replaced by studies in a corresponding discipline or major field of study.

5 Admission Procedure

Applications for admission to doctoral studies are processed in accordance with the procedures prescribed by the Board of Karlstad University (Dnr C2014/367).

6 Selection

Candidates will be selected on the basis of their deemed capacity to successfully complete a programme at the doctoral level. In the ranking and selection of the candidates, special attention will be paid to previous studies, especially to the quality of independently documented research or development projects completed in previous studies especially at Master's level and to work experience with relevance to doctoral studies, such as participation in research projects or advanced inquiry projects. Special consideration is also given to proposed research area, the degree to which it matches the department's supervision capacity and the candidates' ability to work independently and complete a doctoral project.

7 Content and Outline

The doctoral programme can lead to a doctoral or licentiate degree. The doctoral degree requires four years of study, the equivalent of 240 ECTS credits, and the licentiate degree two years or 120 ECTS credits. The studies include course work as well as independent thesis work. To earn a doctoral degree, the candidate must complete 90 ECTS credits of course work and 150 ECTS credits of thesis work. To earn a licentiate degree, the candidate is required to complete 60 ECTS credits of course work and 60 ECTS credits of thesis work.

7.1 Courses

Methods and Philosophy of Science

This coursework area comprises 30 ECTS cr for the doctoral degree and 15 ECTS cr for the licentiate degree.

For the doctor's degree, the following courses are mandatory:

- 7.5 ECTS cr qualitative method
- 7.5 ECTS cr quantitative method
- 7.5 ECTS cr philosophy of science
- 7.5 ECTS cr optional courses in philosophy of science or method.

For the licentiate degree, the following courses are mandatory

- 7.5 ECTS cr qualitative or quantitative method (see above)
- 7.5 ECTS cr philosophy of science

Subject Specific Courses

In addition to the mandatory courses in method and philosophy of science, a survey course in business administration, or equivalent, of 15 ECTS cr is required for both the doctor's and the licentiate degree. The remaining course requirements for the doctor's degree (45 ECTS cr) and for the licentiate degree (30 ECTS cr) are courses of relevance to the student's research area, chosen in consultation with the main advisor and examiner.

7.2 Doctoral and Licentiate Thesis

Doctoral students are required to write a thesis for a doctoral or a licentiate degree. The thesis should either be a monograph or a collection of previously published papers with an introductory chapter. Candidates are required to defend their licentiate thesis at a seminar and their doctoral thesis at a public examination. Further information is provided in the policy documents “Regulations on Doctoral Thesis and Public Defence Procedures” and Requirements” and “Regulations on the Licentiate Thesis”.

If the thesis is written in conjunction with another candidate, each candidate is assessed individually provided that the individual contributions are clearly indicated to the advisor and the examining committee. The thesis, normally written in English or Swedish, should document the candidate’s ability to deal with a problem in the field independently and in an appropriately academic fashion.

7.3 Supervision

Doctoral students are entitled to advisors in accordance with the principles stated in the current policy document at Karlstad University.

Upon admission, a main advisor and co-advisor are appointed in consultation with the candidate. They advise the candidate in the choice of research area and thesis topic and give support throughout the process. The candidate maintains regular contact with the advisors, keeps them informed of the progress and consults them on design issues.

The advisors’ function is to discuss, read and critically examine the candidate’s thesis work continuously before it is submitted to public examination.

7.4 Individual Study Plan

Upon admission, each doctoral student must draw up an individual study plan in conjunction with the advisors (ISP). The plan should include a realistic estimate of time for course work, thesis work and supervision as well as an introduction to the proposed research field, problem, aim, methodological and theoretical frames, and relevant ethical considerations. The individual study plan is subject to continual revision (at least once a year). The revisions are entered into the university’s ISP template.

6.5 Examination

Doctoral students are examined in accordance with the requirements of each individual course syllabus. Doctoral or licentiate theses are examined in accordance with the *Higher Education Ordinance* (Ch.6, §§ 33-36) and Karlstad University’s current policy document.