



# Guidelines: Doctoral Programme

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Department of Social and Psychological Studies, Sociology

Karlstad University

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## 1. Introduction

This document provides students and their supervisors (advisors) with information and guidelines for the doctoral programme in Sociology at the Department of Social and Psychological Studies, Karlstad University. These guidelines cover matters such as coursework, Individual Study Plans (ISPs), administrative organisation, seminars and other related activities. The introduction to the graduate programme also introduces the Department of Social and Psychological Studies, Sociology as a discipline, the workplace, and the doctoral studentship and the duties of doctoral students.

As soon as possible after admission, newly admitted doctoral students should take part in the university-wide introduction for new employees (usually given once a semester). The head of the department is responsible for providing a formal introduction to the department. As part of this introduction, doctoral students are informed of matters related to employment, such as departmental routines, departmental meetings, administrative systems, employee benefits, the rights and obligations of employees, as well as regulations, trade unions, student contacts, etc. The head of the department is also responsible for assigning the doctoral student a workstation, computer, telephone and other necessities. First contact with Karlstad University may include a tour of the central administration, library, reception and restaurants. Important people to meet during the introduction would include the department head, supervisor, examiner, the chair of the graduate programme committee (*handledarkollegiet*), education and research coordinators, service planners, colleagues and the subject librarian.

Ideally, the doctoral student will be assigned a mentor from the discipline of Sociology (a lecturer or fellow doctoral student) who has some years of experience with the doctoral programme. The mentor's task is to supplement the ordinary, formal introduction of the doctoral student, particularly regarding practical matters. The mentor might, for instance, create opportunities for social gatherings, contacts and/or acquaintanceships.

Doctoral students also need to be aware of the support available to them during their studies, including the Graduate Student Association and doctoral student representatives. Information on practical matters affecting doctoral students may also be of value and can include information concerning the regulations for financing and procedures for purchasing books, conference participation, travelling to courses, etc.

## 2. Employment conditions and duties

### Doctoral student pay

Most doctoral students at Karlstad University are paid according to the local agreement on the remuneration of doctoral students. The agreement determines four salary levels: Level 1 applies to newly admitted doctoral students; students move to Level 2 when they have fulfilled 25% of the requirements for a doctoral degree, or completed 200 time units (of a total of 800), according to their Individual Study Plans; students move to Level 3 when they have fulfilled at least 50% of the requirements for a doctoral degree or obtained a licentiate degree; and finally students move to Level 4 when they fulfil at least 80% of the requirements for a doctoral degree.

The doctoral programme entails the equivalent of 800% activity, i.e. the doctoral degree is the equivalent of four years of full-time study, or eight semesters of 100% activity each.

### Departmental duties

Doctoral students could be offered the opportunity to do departmental work, are not obliged to work on other tasks than their own doctoral studies. Teaching or administrative tasks should be adapted to the doctoral student's knowledge, experience and other conditions. A doctoral student should not normally coordinate courses. Doctoral students are required to complete courses on teaching and learning in higher education equivalent to 7.5 ECTS credits. These courses should be taken before or soon after teaching work has begun and can be completed as one of the courses in the programme.

Departmental work should ideally be discussed with the students' supervisors, who may help to determine what is feasible in relation to their planned doctoral education as a whole.

### Obligations of doctoral students and potential problems

In order to meet their obligations, a high degree of independent responsibility and work is required by doctoral students. This includes ensuring that supervisors are able to provide supervision and guidance, but also, together with the supervisors, ensuring that an Individual Study Plan is drawn up and revised in accordance with local regulations. The doctoral students' tasks also include active participation in (all) departmental seminars and otherwise contributing to a lively departmental environment.

Sometimes doctoral students experience problems. If this happens, it is important that doctoral students take action to resolve problems as soon as possible so that they do not lose valuable research time. Doctoral students should in the first instance discuss the difficulties they experience with their supervisors or the head of department. The latter can for example serve as a mediator. Student representatives are bound by confidentiality. If needed, doctoral students have the right to request a different supervisor. It is not, however, their right to choose a specific new supervisor. A new supervisor is appointed by the department and the graduate programme committee, taking into account students' interests.

### 3. Doctoral Courses

The doctoral programme can lead to a licentiate or doctoral degree. A licentiate degree is the equivalent of two years of full-time studies (120 ECTS cr.) and a doctoral degree is the equivalent of four years of full-time studies (240 ECTS cr.). The doctoral programme includes coursework and the writing of a licentiate or doctoral thesis. The licentiate degree comprises 30 ECTS credits of coursework and a thesis of 90 ECTS credits, while the doctorate comprises 60 ECTS credits of coursework and a thesis of 180 ECTS credits.

Doctoral students are encouraged to finish their courses during the first year of the programme so that they can present their project plans at an early draft seminar shortly after completing their coursework.

The subject-specific courses include general and specialisation courses:

The following subject-specific courses are mandatory for the **licentiate** degree:

- Research methodology, comprising 7.5 ECTS cr.
- Classic and contemporary sociological theories, comprising 7.5 ECTS cr.
- Philosophy of science, comprising 7.5 ECTS cr.
- Elective specialisation courses, comprising 7.5 ECTS cr.

The following subject-specific courses are mandatory for the **doctor's** degree:

- Philosophy of science, comprising 7.5 ECTS cr.
- Research methodology, comprising 15 ECTS cr., of which 7.5 ECTS cr. qualitative method and 7.5 ECTS cr. quantitative method
- Classic and contemporary sociological theories, comprising 15 ECTS cr.
- Elective specialisation courses, comprising 22.5 ECTS cr.

Specialisation courses have to be selected in consultation with supervisors and the examiner. With the approval of the examiner, doctoral students may transfer credits for general and specialisation courses offered by other subjects and/or higher education institutions.

### 4. Individual Study Plans and the doctoral programme in Sociology

#### Individual Study Plan

Newly admitted doctoral students, together with their supervisors, have to draw up an Individual Study Plan (ISP) within six months. The ISP serves as a detailed plan and timetable for the doctoral programme. The ISP should contain a realistic plan for coursework and supervision. The ISP should also contain a clarified description of the thesis project, including a preliminary introduction to the research problem, the aim of research work, and methodological, theoretical as well as current ethical considerations. The ISP has to be revised once a year and deviations from the plan have to be noted.

Supervisors and doctoral students should pay attention to multiple functions of the ISP. It is a tool for planning doctoral studies, for controlling and monitoring progress, and can serve as a basis for discussion during supervision meetings.

The planning of doctoral education is crucial. Therefore, already when the first ISP is prepared students should plan ahead, noting the proposed date of the public defence, “nailing” and printing of the thesis, and other milestones. Supervisors play an important role in planning: they provide advice (not control) to doctoral students on a realistic and feasible approach, both in terms of thesis work, and in planning coursework and departmental duties.

## 5. Supervision, opponents and examination

### Supervisors

The chair of the graduate programme committee suggests a suitable main supervisor and co-supervisors. The suggestion should primarily be based on competence in the doctoral student’s field of study, but should also pay attention to the discipline’s needs and eventual requests from the student, in that order. The head of department may also voice an opinion regarding the overall need for qualifications within the department. The suggestions from the chair are discussed by the graduate programme committee before a final decision is reached. A list of persons qualified to be doctoral supervisors and the distribution of students among them should be presented by the chair as the basis for discussion.

Co-supervisors may be appointed at a later stage to make sure that the doctoral student gets an efficient team of supervisors. If requested, a third co-supervisor may be appointed.

### Examiner

An examiner is appointed by the graduate programme committee in connection with the admission of the graduate student. In case of suspected bias or conflicts of interest, the graduate programme committee discuss the matters of switching examiner or supervisor. The required qualifications of the examiner are determined by university regulations, as below. In addition, the examiner should hold a PhD in Sociology or an equivalent qualification. The graduate programme committee decides on equivalent qualifications on a case-by-case basis and the guidelines below should be followed:

The examiner should normally hold a permanent position as a teacher at the university. The minimum requirement is that the examiner should have at least a 50% permanent position, or a 50% fixed-term contract of at least two years.

Examiners for first-cycle education should normally hold doctorate degrees.

Examiners for second-cycle (master’s level) and third-cycle education should normally be a *docent* (reader/associate professor) or professor. (Quality Assurance document of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences)

The examiner has the overall responsibility for the quality of doctoral education and ultimately determines whether a specific course can be included in a student’s degree. The examiner should normally not also act as a supervisor to the specific doctoral student. Furthermore, the examiner should describe the quality assurance process before doctoral students are to defend their theses.

## External reviewers (opponents)

The graduate programme committee decides on the external reviewer for the public defence based on the suggestions of the doctoral student and the supervision team. A reading group is appointed in the same way. At the 50% seminar, the reviewer may be external or from the university. The reviewer at the 80% seminar should always be external, and should routinely form part of the examining committee.

A reading group should be appointed in connection to the 80% seminar. The reading group (normally constituted of 2–3 persons, of which one external) should be selected with regards to the direction and perspectives of the thesis. The role of the reading group is to give comments and suggestion to help improve the presented text. These comments are to be submitted in writing, as well as orally to the supervisors who, in consultation with the student, decide what needs to be changed, further developed and revised in the thesis. Supervisors could ask the reading group and the graduate programme committee for additional assistance, if needed.

Next, it is recommended that the reading group read and review the thesis manuscript before it goes to print, upon agreement with the supervisors and student. Comments and recommendations are given at a meeting at which the reading group, the supervisors (and in some cases the doctoral student) are present. The reading group can make recommendations on whether the doctoral student's thesis is ready for defence, but does not have a formal mandate to influence such a decision. The supervisors, together with the doctoral student, make final decisions about which comments and recommendations should be addressed. Ultimately, the graduate programme committee is responsible for the quality of the thesis, although this responsibility in practice lies with the supervisors and the reading group.

## 6. Mandatory seminars

Doctoral students' work should be presented at seminars to facilitate planning and thesis work and to exert continuous quality control. Seminar discussions of thesis work give doctoral students the opportunity to hone their abilities to compile, analyse, present and discuss their results with other researchers. The seminars offer fixed points structuring the planning of the thesis project and provide an overview of progress. Therefore, after a first year of coursework, doctoral students should present their thesis projects at the general seminar on at least three different occasions. Each thesis project should be presented at the seminars listed below. Guidelines for what should be presented at each seminar are also included.

### Early draft seminar

The purpose of the early draft seminar is to ensure that thesis work has commenced and is planned feasibly, given the available resources. This seminar gives the subject the opportunity to give their views on the project plan (PM).

The seminar should be completed within 13 months after the student has started the thesis project. The project will now be clearly defined, and students should be able to draw on their coursework when formulating their project plans.

The written material should present a general description of the aim of the study, method and theoretical approaches, research questions formulated and a brief orientation in the field of study.

## Halfway seminar

At the halfway (50%) seminar, students should present completed chapters regarding theory, methods, an introduction and, in if possible, an analytical or empirical chapter. An internal or external reviewer will attend this seminar. The seminar should take place about halfway through the doctoral programme; it is up to the supervisor to decide when the seminar should take place.

## 80% seminar

The 80% seminar is attended by an external reviewer and has to take place 10–12 months before the public defence of the thesis. The manuscript presented at the 80% seminar should be basically finished, so that detailed and constructive comments can be given. The reading group should attend the seminar and provide oral and written comments. The reviewer gives written comments to the supervisors. After the seminar the reviewer and supervisors should meet to discuss how work should proceed based on the comments given during the seminar. The reading group also provides further comments during a later stage of the process, before the public defence.

## Public defence

Six weeks before the public defence, the examiner notifies the dean and suggests the chair of the public defence, the external reviewer and the examining committee, as well as the date and time for the *spikning*, the notification of publication of a doctoral thesis. The external reviewer has to be at least an associate professor and should be working outside of Karlstad University, unless there are special grounds for an exception. The examining committee has to consist of three or five members and at least one reserve member has to be appointed. Members of the examining committee members should be professors or associate professors, unless there are special grounds for an exception. The graduate programme committee decides on matters of switching an examiner or supervisor. The university's equity policy should be followed when the examining committee is appointed. Details of the quality assurance process should be annexed to the notification (maximum half an A4 page). The dean decides on the time and place for the public defence and appoints the external reviewer, the examining committee and the chair of the defence.

The time and place for the public defence is published with at least three weeks' notice, and the thesis must be *spikad* (see also Regulations for the doctoral thesis and public defence, Reg.no HS 20137101). At least three weeks before the defence the respondent should submit 25 copies of the thesis to the University Library, if the thesis is published electronically. If it is only printed, 50 copies have to be submitted to the Library.

## 7. Thesis: scope and design

The thesis has to pertain to scientific problems relevant to the subject, and has to contain analytical parts that make use of relevant theories or perspectives. Data should be processed in a methodically convincingly way and the thesis has to be clearly structured.

The thesis can be written either as a monograph or as a compilation thesis. A monograph is a text that forms a coherent whole with a coherent argument. A compilation thesis consists of a number of articles published in (and/or submitted to) peer-reviewed scholarly journals, as well as an introductory and summary chapter, known as the *kappa*.



## Compilation thesis

The following is required for a compilation thesis:

- The thesis has to comprise at least four articles, including at least two items accepted for publication in peer-reviewed scholarly journals/books.
- The introductory chapter (the *kappa*) should clearly state the doctoral candidate's own contribution and, if applicable, the contributions of co-authors of the included articles.

Scope for a licentiate thesis:

- The thesis has to comprise at least two articles, of which at least one has been accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed scholarly journal/book.
- The *kappa* should clearly state the student's own contribution and, if applicable, the contribution of co-authors of the included articles.

## The *kappa*

The *kappa* is an essential part of the thesis in which the results are reported, discussed and evaluated in relation to the current state of research. The study's results and contributions to the research frontier should be summarised and discussed in the *kappa*. Here, the doctoral student also thoroughly explains the context of the research problem and the research process. The background, aims, problems, issues, method(s), theoretical framework, definitions, materials, ethics, previous research, the included articles and the results are presented and discussed in the *kappa*. The *kappa*'s main task is to summarise, analyse, discuss and evaluate the content of articles.

If one or more articles in the thesis had been co-authored, the doctoral student's own contribution has to be clearly stated, as well as the contributions of the co-authors.

For already published articles, the thesis have to contain information on the terms and conditions of reprinting, preferably in the initial list of publications included in the thesis.

## Regulations and guidelines for co-authorship

In most cases, articles included in the thesis have been co-written by the student and the supervisor. The amount of work done by each party varies and it is therefore important that responsibilities are clearly stated.

Co-authorship should follow the regulations of the Swedish Sociological Association (*Svenska Sociologförbundet*). Co-authors should:

- Have made substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of the data for the work
- Have drafted or critically revised the work as regards important intellectual content;
- Have approved the final version for publication;
- Be prepared to defend the article and its results publicly.

Each author has to comply with all the above criteria. This means that project management, doing administrative tasks, data collection, proofreading or supervision does not qualify one for co-authorship.

## Monograph

A monograph has to contain new scholarly knowledge, make a significant contribution to science (SOCK) and be based on independent research. The doctoral student should present and discuss previous research, contextual factors, the aim, research problem(s), issues, method(s), theoretical framework, definitions, materials, ethics and previous research results before the more analytical sections begin.

The scope of a monograph should be 200–250 pages. This is a benchmark.



## APPENDIX 1

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Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

**Curriculum for Doctoral studies in Sociology**

## Curriculum approval

The curriculum was approved by the Faculty Board of Humanities and Social Sciences on 2 June 2016.

General stipulations for doctoral programmes are provided in the Higher Education Act and in the Higher Education Ordinance. The doctoral programme is offered to the extent permitted by available funding.

### 1. General Information

In 1969, the Department of Sociology at Gothenburg University branched out to the Gothenburg affiliation Karlstad University College. In 1999, Sociology was approved as a doctoral discipline in connection with the inauguration of Karlstad University. Activities developed quickly with courses and doctoral students in several sociological research fields. The subject conducts research in, for example, critical aging studies, organisation theory, resistance studies, and social movements. These projects accentuate a range of classic and modern sociological theories and concepts such as social capital, class, gender, sexuality, homosociality, emotion, and ritual, which are discussed in seminars on current sociological problems. The department also interacts with other disciplines at Karlstad University and other higher education institutions regarding doctoral courses and supervision.

In accordance with Karlstad University's equity policy, gender issues are addressed throughout the programme.

### 2. Aims and objectives

#### 2.1 General objectives

The general objectives of licentiate or doctoral studies in terms of knowledge and understanding, skills and abilities, and judgement and approach are specified as follows in the Higher Education Ordinance, attachment 2, SFS 1993:100):

#### *Knowledge and understanding*

*For a degree of Licentiate research students have to*

- *Demonstrate knowledge and understanding in the field of research, including current specialist knowledge in a defined part of the field and a deeper knowledge of scientific methods in general and of methods in the specific field of research in particular.*

*For a degree of Doctor research students have to*

- *Demonstrate broad knowledge in and systematic understanding of the field of research, together with deep and up-to-date specialist knowledge in a defined part of the field of research; and*

- *Demonstrate familiarity with scholarly methods in general and with methods in the specific field of research in particular.*

### **Skills and abilities**

*For a degree of **Licentiate** research students have to*

- *Demonstrate an ability to identify and formulate issues, critically, independently and creatively, and proceeding with scientific precision; to plan a limited research project and other advanced tasks and to carry them out using appropriate methods within specified time limits, so as to contribute to the development of knowledge; and to evaluate this work;*
- *Demonstrate an ability to clearly present and discuss research and research results in dialogue with the scholarly community and society in general, orally and in writing, in both national and international contexts; and*
- *Demonstrate the skills required to independently participate in research and development work and to work independently in other advanced contexts.*

*For a degree of **Doctor** research students have to*

- *Demonstrate an ability to engage in scholarly analysis and synthesis and in independent, critical examination and assessment of new and complex phenomena, issues and situations;*
- *Demonstrate an ability to identify and formulate issues, critically, independently and creatively, and proceeding with scientific precision, and to plan and, using appropriate methods, conduct research and other advanced tasks within specified time limits, and to scrutinise and evaluate such work;*
- *Demonstrate, in a thesis, their ability to make a substantial contribution to the development of knowledge by their own research;*
- *Demonstrate an ability to present and discuss research and research results with authority, in dialogue with the scholarly community and society in general, orally and in writing, in both national and international contexts;*
- *Demonstrate an ability to identify their need of further knowledge; and*
- *Demonstrate potential to contribute to the development of society and support other people's learning, both in the field of research and education and in other advanced professional contexts.*

### **Judgement and approach**

*For a degree of **Licentiate** research students have to*

- *Demonstrate an ability to make ethical assessments in their own research;*
- *Demonstrate insight into the possibilities and limitations of science, its role in society and people's responsibility for how it is used; and*
- *Demonstrate an ability to identify their need of further knowledge and to take responsibility for developing their knowledge.*

*For a degree of **Doctor** research students have to*

- *Demonstrate intellectual independence and scholarly integrity and an ability to make ethical assessments relating to research; and*

- *Demonstrate deeper insight into the potential and limitations of scholarship, its role in society and people's responsibility for how it is used.*

### ***Licentiate/doctoral thesis***

*For a degree of **Licentiate** the research student must have received a pass grade on a scholarly thesis of at least 60 ECTS credits.*

*For a degree of **Doctor** the research students must have received a pass grade on a doctoral thesis of at least 120 ECTS credits.*

(Higher Education Ordinance; System of Qualifications)

## **2.2 Subject-specific objectives**

The subject specific aims of doctoral studies in Sociology at Karlstad University are as follows:

The aim of doctoral studies in Sociology is that students develop skills in scientific analysis and in conducting independent research on social structures, processes and actors. On completion, students should be able to demonstrate theoretical and methodological knowledge, experience of theoretical analysis and concrete research, a firm grasp of central sociological theories and perspectives as well as broad knowledge of social conditions and the potential of sociological research.

Doctoral studies in sociology also prepare students for an academic career and for professional investigative work in private and public organisations.

## **3. Admission requirements**

*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 (Higher Education Ordinance, Ch. 7 par. 35).*

### **3.1 General eligibility**

*A person, who has earned a master's degree of at least 240 ECTS credits of which at least 60 ECTS credits 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 higher education institution may grant an individual applicant exemption from the general eligibility requirements (Higher Education Ordinance, Ch. 7).*

### **3.2 Special eligibility**

A person who has completed courses in Sociology totalling at least 120 ECTS credits, of which 30 ECTS credits are master-level credits, has special eligibility for admission to doctoral studies in Sociology. A person, who in some other way in the country or abroad has acquired equivalent knowledge, also has special eligibility.

#### 4. Admission procedure

Applications for admission to doctoral studies are processed in accordance with the procedures prescribed by the Board of Karlstad University.

#### 5. Selection

Candidates will be selected on the basis of their assessed 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 study records, the quality of previously performed research or development work, especially at master's level. Special consideration will also be given to the candidates' proposed research area, supervision capacity and to the candidates' intention to be present and participate in the research environment.

#### 6. 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.

Studies include coursework as well as independent thesis work. To earn a doctoral degree, the candidate must complete 60 ECTS credits of coursework and a thesis of 180 ECTS credits. To earn a licentiate degree, the candidate is required to complete 30 ECTS credits of coursework and a thesis of 90 ECTS credits.

##### 6.1 Courses

Mandatory courses for all doctoral students at Karlstad University must be included in the programme to the extent required by local regulations.

##### *Subject-specific courses*

The subject-specific courses include general and specialisation courses:

The following subject-specific courses are mandatory for the **licentiate** degree:

- Research methodology, comprising 7.5 ECTS cr.
- Classic and contemporary sociological theories, comprising 7.5 ECTS cr.
- Philosophy of science, comprising 7.5 ECTS cr.
- Elective specialisation courses, comprising 7.5 ECTS cr.

The following subject-specific courses are mandatory for the **doctor's** degree:

- Philosophy of science, comprising 7.5 ECTS cr.
- Research methodology, comprising 15 ECTS cr., of which 7.5 ECTS cr. qualitative method and 7.5 ECTS cr. quantitative method
- Classic and contemporary sociological theories, comprising 15 ECTS cr.
- Elective specialisation courses, comprising 22.5 ECTS cr.

Specialisation courses have to be selected in consultation with supervisors and the examiner. With the approval of the examiner, doctoral students may transfer credits for general and specialisation courses offered by other subjects and/or higher education institutions.

## **6.2 Doctoral and licentiate theses**

Doctoral students are required to write a thesis for a doctoral or a licentiate degree, either as a monograph or as a unified collection of previously published papers (a compilation thesis). Candidates are required to defend their licentiate thesis at a seminar and their doctoral thesis at a public defence. Further information is provided by the policy documents “Doctoral Thesis Requirements” and “Licentiate Thesis Requirements”.

The thesis topic is chosen in consultation with the supervisor and the examiner. If the thesis is produced in collaboration with others, the individual candidate's contribution must be clearly indicated.

## **6.3 Supervision**

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

## **6.4 Individual Study Plan**

Each doctoral student must draw up an individual study plan in conjunction with the supervisors within six months. The plan should include a realistic estimate of time for coursework, 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 written revision (at least once a year).

## **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, par. 33–34) and Karlstad University's current policy document.



## **6.6 Additional information**

Earlier versions of this doctoral curriculum were approved on:

14 Jun. 2007, Reg.no FAK3 2007/219

24 Oct. 2011, Reg.no DEK3 74/2011

12 Dec. 2012, Reg.no FAK3 2007/219

2 Jun. 2016, Reg.no HS2016/415, applies to doctoral students admitted from 31 Dec. 2015 as well as previously admitted doctoral students who wish to adhere to this curriculum.