



Faculty of Economic Sciences, Communication and IT

Curriculum for Doctoral Studies in Media and Communication Studies at Karlstad University

Approved by the Faculty Board of Economic Sciences, Communication and IT on 3 December 2009 (Reg.no. FAK1 2010/43) and is valid from 1 January 2010.

Curriculum Approval

The curriculum was approved by the Faculty Board of Economic Sciences, Communication and IT on 3 December 2009. 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*.

1. General Information

In media and communication studies the focus is on the role of media in society and the conditions of media production, content and audience. Studies are interdisciplinary drawing on theory and method in the social sciences and humanities.

The subject media and communication studies (MCS) was introduced at Karlstad University College in the 1970s. With the inauguration of Karlstad University in 1999, the department was allocated research funding and in 2002 media and communication studies was approved as a doctoral discipline. MCS constitutes an important part of Karlstad University's research profile area called Communication and the Service Community. Since 2009 the subject has three research profiles: (1) *Communication, Citizenship and Social Change*; (2) *Digital Media and Cultural Circulation*, and (3) *Global Media Studies*. Research students are quickly acquainted with the core of this academic conversation on current media and communication issues through research seminars. The department cooperates with other subjects in and outside of Karlstad University regarding doctoral courses and supervision.

In accordance with Karlstad University's equal opportunities policy, gender issues are addressed throughout the programme. Doctoral students are also introduced to multi-disciplinary approaches and involved in interdisciplinary experiences.

2. Aims and 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 2006:1053*:

Knowledge and understanding

*For a degree of **Licentiate** research students must*

- *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 must*

- *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 must

- 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 must

- 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 dissertation, 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 a 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 must

- 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 must

- 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 dissertation/doctoral dissertation

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

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

Subject Specific Objectives

The subject-specific goals of doctoral studies in media and communication studies at Karlstad University are as follows:

Upon completion of the programme students should be able to demonstrate broad knowledge of media research methodology in theory and in practice. In their research students should demonstrate the ability to plan, lead, complete and publish research results nationally and internationally. They should be able to work with applied research and investigatory tasks in some professional media and communication areas such as the media and entertainment industry or other areas. Students should also demonstrate insight into multi-disciplinary approaches and been involved in interdisciplinary experiences.

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.6).

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 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.6).

3.2. Special eligibility

A person who has completed courses in media and communication studies totalling 90 ECTS cr corresponding to three progression levels has special eligibility for admission to doctoral studies in media and communication studies. A person who has acquired equivalent qualifications in some other way in the country or abroad also has special eligibility.

3.3. Transitional Provisions

Students who met the general admission requirements for admission to doctoral studies before 1 July 2007 shall be considered generally eligible for admission to the doctoral level until 30 June 2015 (SFS 2006:1053).

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 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. Special consideration is also given to proposed research area and its relevance to the departmental research profile, the degree to which it matches the department's supervision capacity and the candidates' intention to be present and participate in the departmental 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. 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 a dissertation of 150 ECTS credits. To earn a licentiate degree, the candidate is required to complete 60 ECTS credits of course work and a dissertation of 60 ECTS credits..

6.1 Courses

The doctoral programme comprises three types of courses: (1) General mandatory courses, (2) subject-specific mandatory courses, (3) subject-specific specialisation courses.

General mandatory courses

Mandatory courses for all doctoral students at Karlstad University must be included in the programme to the extent required by local regulations. For the Licentiate degree *The History and Philosophy of Science* 7.5 ECTS credits is mandatory. For the Doctor's degree *The History and Philosophy of Science* 7.5 ECTS credits and *Communicating Science* 4.5 ECTS credits are mandatory, i.e. in total 12 ECTS credits.

Subject-specific mandatory courses

The subject-specific mandatory courses must total at least 30 ECTS credits for both the licentiate and the doctor's degree. The subject-specific courses are decided by the professor/s and announced in special directives.

Subject-specific specialisation courses

For the doctor's degree subject-specific specialisation courses comprise 48 ECTS and for the licentiate degree 18 ECTS credits. Specialisation courses are offered on the basis of departmental expertise and doctoral interests. Students are encouraged to take courses at other universities at home or abroad.

Specialisation courses for the respective degrees are chosen in consultation with the examiner. Specialisation courses can be chosen to support the dissertation and the specialised knowledge it may require.

Transfer of Credits

On the approval of the examiner, course credits may be transferred for subject-specific mandatory and specialisation courses completed in the MCS subject at the research school, in conjunction with other subjects or at other institutions.

The examiner decides if any of the subject-specific courses can be replaced by equivalent qualifications for the respective degrees. Regarding transfer of credits awarded for equivalent general mandatory course/s, the Faculty Board decides.

6.2 Doctoral and Licentiate Dissertations

Doctoral students are required to write a dissertation for a doctoral or a licentiate degree. Dissertations should either be a monograph or a unified collection of previously published papers in English. Candidates are required to defend their licentiate dissertation at a seminar and their doctoral dissertation at a public examination. Dissertations are normally written in Swedish or English. The dissertation topic is chosen in consultation with the advisor and examiner. If the dissertation is written in conjunction with another candidate, the individual contributions must be clearly indicated. Further information is provided by the policy documents “Doctoral Dissertation Requirements” and “Licentiate Dissertation Requirements”.

6.3 Supervision

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

6.4 Individual Study Plan

Upon admission, each doctoral student must draw up an individual study plan in conjunction with the advisors. 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).

6.5 Examination

Doctoral students are examined in accordance with the requirements of each individual course syllabus. Doctoral or licentiate dissertations are examined in accordance with the *Higher Education Ordinance* (Ch.6, §§ 40-47) and Karlstad University’s current policy document.