



Karlstad University  
Faculty of Social and Life Sciences

# **Curriculum for Doctoral Studies in**

## **Social Work**

Approved by the Faculty Board of Social and Life Sciences on 28 August 2008 (Reg.no. FAK3 2008/155). Revised on and valid from 24 Oct 2011 (DEK3 74/2011).

## Curriculum Approval

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

## 1. General Information

Social Work is a young research discipline at Karlstad University, but it rests on a long tradition of research and teaching in the core disciplines social care science and sociology.

Education and research in social work takes place at the Division of Social Studies, which also includes social care science and sociology. The three disciplines work closely together on supervision, research seminars and projects.

Research in the division centres on marginalisation, the elderly and conditions of ageing, social psychiatry, social vulnerability and ill-health, empowerment, emotion, organisation, ethnicity and gender. The department also interacts with other disciplines at Karlstad University and other higher education institutions in Sweden and abroad. The County Council of Värmland and municipalities in the region are also cooperation partners.

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.

## **2.2 Subject Specific Objective**

Doctoral studies in social work aim at preparing the students for an academic career nationally and internationally and for qualified professional work in the field of social work. The objectives below apply to the licentiate and the doctor's degree and are related to the general objectives stated above to clarify the level of each degree.

For a licentiate and a doctor's degree in social work at Karlstad University, candidates must demonstrate

- theoretical and methodological knowledge
- skills in theoretical analysis and practical research
- solid knowledge of central theories and perspectives in social work
- broad knowledge of central theories and the potential of research in social work.

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 150 ECTS credits.

### **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, § 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 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 higher education institution may grant an individual applicant exemption from the general eligibility (*Higher Education Ordinance*, Ch.7, § 39).

#### **3.2 Special eligibility**

A person who has completed courses in social work or related field totalling at least 120 ECTS cr, of which 30 ECTS cr are Master-level credits and include a degree project of 15 ECTS cr. has special eligibility for admission to doctoral studies in social work. A person who in some other way in the country or abroad has acquired equivalent knowledge also has special eligibility.

Students who met the general admission requirements for admission before 1 July 2007 also have special eligibility if they have completed the A to D levels in social work or related subject.

#### **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 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 licentiate degree can be seen as a step towards the doctor's degree and be included in it. 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. To earn a licentiate degree, the candidate is required to complete 60 ECTS credits of course work.

## **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.

### **General mandatory course**

For the **Licentiate** degree:

The History and Philosophy of Science, 7.5 ECTS credits

For the **Doctor's** degree:

The History and Philosophy of Science, 7.5 ECTS credits, and  
Communicating Science, 4.5 ECTS credits

### **Subject Specific Courses**

The subject specific requirements include mandatory courses and specialisation courses. For the doctor's and licentiate degree the mandatory course requirement is 30 ECTS cr. The mandatory courses comprise qualitative and quantitative method and classic and modern theories in social work. Specialisation courses for both degrees are chosen in consultation with the advisor and examiner. The candidate may have credits earned for mandatory and specialisation courses at another subject or university transferred on approval by the examiner.

## **6.2 Doctoral and Licentiate Dissertations**

Doctoral students are required to write a dissertation for a doctoral or a licentiate degree, either as a monograph or as a unified collection of previously published papers. Candidates are required to defend their licentiate dissertation at a seminar and their doctoral dissertation at a public examination. Further information is provided by the policy documents "Doctoral Dissertation Requirements" and "Licentiate Dissertation Requirements".

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

## **6.4 Supervision**

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

## **6.5 Individual Study Plan**

Each doctoral student must draw up an individual study plan in conjunction with the advisors within six months. 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 written revision (at least once a year).

## **6.6 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, §§ 33-34) and Karlstad University's current policy document.