



Faculty of Economic Sciences, Communication and IT

Curriculum for Doctoral Studies in Psychology at Karlstad University

Approved by the Faculty Board of Economic Sciences, Communication and IT on 5 May 2011
(Reg.no. FAK1 2011/61) and is valid from 5 May 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

The purpose of psychology is to understand and explain why people think, feel, react and act as they do. The focus is on the individual and individual development situated in a specific environment. An important aspect is therefore to consider an individual's thinking, feeling and acting as part of a human-environment system,

Besides general psychology Karlstad University offers a doctoral programme with an emphasis on medical psychology. This field concerns our behaviour when taken ill, when dealing with sick people and their next-of-kin and when we interact with health care colleagues.

Research in Psychology at Karlstad university is primarily carried out in two main areas: clinical evidence-based research on performance, health and care, and applied research related to consumer psychology.

Doctoral research in Psychology at Karlstad University is linked to the two main research profiles but is also characterised by diversity of subject choices. Dissertations can deal with a wide range of fields such as care and treatment, customer preference, stress, care of soldiers returning from stations abroad, sports, creativity, psychosis, group communication, gender, service, transportation, human-technology issues, disasters and emotions.

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.

NB: In the discipline psychology, students must have received a pass grade on a scholarly dissertation of at least 75 ECTS credits for a degree of Licentiate. 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.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 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

3.2. a A person has special eligibility for admission to *doctoral studies in psychology* who

- has completed courses with successive progression in psychology totalling 120 ECTS cr. or
- has a Master of Science in Psychology or a Postgraduate Diploma in Psychotherapy, or
- has acquired substantially equivalent knowledge in some other way in Sweden or abroad.

3.2.b A person has special eligibility for admission to *doctoral studies in psychology with an emphasis on medical psychology* who

- is a registered medical doctor with a speciality and has completed a master's level eligibility course in psychology, or
- has eligibility in accordance with 3.2.a and has at least five years experience of clinical work in health care requiring professional certification, or
- has eligibility in accordance with 3.2.a and has at least five years experience of development work in the pharmaceutical or bioscience industry.

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 advanced studies in psychology or equivalent, especially independent projects. The candidates' general academic record, the quality of previously performed research or development work and work experience of relevance to the doctoral programme are also considered. In the ranking and selection of doctoral candidates in psychology at Karlstad University special consideration is also given to the proposed research area in relation to supervision capacity

The successful candidates are required to attend and participate in departmental activities and research environment, circumstances permitting.

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 plus 150 ECTS credits of thesis work. To earn a licentiate degree, the candidate is required to complete 45 ECTS credits of course work and 75 of thesis 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

Mandatory components for the **Licentiate** degree in psychology:

- Non-parametric Statistics 7.5 ECTS cr,
- Parametric Statistics 7.5 ECTS cr.
- Qualitative Methods 7.5 ECTS cr.

Mandatory components for the **Doctor's** degree in psychology:

- Non-parametric Statistics 7.5 ECTS cr,
- Parametric Statistics 7.5 ECTS cr.
- Qualitative Methods 7.5 ECTS cr.
- Gender Perspectives in Psychology 3 ECTS cr.
- Theoretical Subject Specialisation 15 CTS cr.

The examiner decides if any of the general or subject-specific mandatory courses can be replaced by equivalent qualifications. Candidates choose relevant courses in consultation with the advisor and the examiner.

Doctoral seminars are arranged continuously, providing the opportunity for students to present their dissertation plan, articles to be published and the dissertation frame text. Students are required to make presentations and serve as opponents on several occasions and to participate actively in seminar discussions in the course of the programme.

6.2 Doctoral and Licentiate Dissertations

Doctoral students are required to write a dissertation for a doctoral (150 ECTS cr) or a licentiate (75 ECTS cr.) 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. Further information is provided by the policy documents “Doctoral Dissertation Requirements” and “Licentiate Dissertation Requirements”.

The dissertation, normally written in English or Swedish, should display the student’s ability to treat a problem in the field independently and academically appropriately. The doctoral dissertation is expected to meet requirements for publication in reputable science journals or monograph series. The licentiate dissertation is expected to display high academic quality and be part of a doctoral dissertation.

6.3 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 dissertation 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.

For candidates who have been admitted to doctoral studies in Psychology with an emphasis on medical psychology and who lack medical qualifications at least one advisor should have medical qualifications.

The advisors’ function is to discuss, read and critically examine the candidate’s dissertation work continuously before it is submitted to public examination. The advisor is expected to organise groups of students who are working on similar research issues. The advisor should also encourage the students to organise their own meetings to share experiences.

6.4 Individual Study Plan

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.