



Karlstad University
Faculty of Social and Life Sciences

Curriculum for Doctoral Studies in Nursing

Approved by the Faculty Board of Social and Life Sciences on 14 June 2007 (Reg.no. FAK3 2007/218) and is valid from 1 July 2007. Revised on and valid from 24 Oct 2011.

Curriculum Approval

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Revised on and valid from 24 Oct 2011 (DEK 74/2011).

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

Nursing was approved as a doctoral discipline at Karlstad University in 2002.

The aim of research in the field of nursing is to develop theories, methods and applications. In an essentially patient-oriented and clinic-based discipline, quality nursing care and research in the field require relevant knowledge from other fields such as science, social and behavioural science and the humanities.

As an academic discipline, nursing centres on ways of promoting health and life quality and preventing ill health. Other central research issues are the relation between patient/next-of-kin and the nurse, and the organisation and leadership of nursing.

Research groups in nursing work on the basis of the research programme “Sustainable Health and Nursing Quality”. Current areas are “Health and Life Quality”, “Nursing Quality and Safety” and “Nursing Environment and Resources”. The research programme focuses on how different groups experience health and life quality, nursing quality and safety, on the importance of leadership and organisation to nursing, care and the evidence-based environment, and on methods/interventions for improvements.

Discussions with other higher education institutions in Sweden are ongoing on doctoral studies and research issues and the department cooperates with institutions at home and abroad.

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 Objectives

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

Doctoral studies in nursing aim at preparing the students for further academic work nationally and internationally and for professions that require extensive knowledge and skills as well as scientific skills in the nursing field. Future employment can be in the academia or in research and development departments of county council, municipality, or private care centres.

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 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 earned a Master's level degree in nursing and completed courses in nursing 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 nursing. A person who, in some other way in the country or abroad has acquired equivalent knowledge, 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 study records, the quality of previously performed research or development work, especially at Master's level, language skills, the relevance of the proposed research area to the departmental research programme and 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 60 ECTS credits of course work. To earn a licentiate degree, the candidate is required to complete 30 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

Candidates are required to complete mandatory basic courses in the form of Qualitative Method 7.5 ECTS cr and Quantitative Method 7.5 ECTS cr in addition to specialisation courses. The choice of courses is based on the candidate's research interest. Courses are chosen primarily from the nursing field and in consultation with the advisor. Courses in adjacent disciplines, or offered as part of doctoral programmes at Karlstad University or at institutions at home or abroad, can also be included.

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. The department recommends the latter. 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. The dissertation can be written in Swedish, Danish, Norwegian or English. Certain parts of an article dissertation must be in English.

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. 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.