



Faculty of Social and Life Sciences

Curriculum for Doctoral Studies in Political Science

within the framework of the Research School on Region Building

Approved by the Faculty Board of Social and Life Sciences on 28 October 2009 (Reg.no. FAK3 2009/293) and is valid from the autumn of 2009. 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

Doctoral studies in Political Science can lead to a Degree of Licentiate or a Degree of Doctor.

Programme places are offered to the extent permitted by available resources for supervision and funding. 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.

The region building specialisation in political science is based on three relevant social changes: Regional transformation, 'glocal' dependency and community building through networks. European states, not least Sweden, are in the process of change, which means greater roles for regional and local actors in the political arena. The previous comparatively "thin" regional level is now increasingly entrusted new duties and mandates. At the same time, the reciprocal dependence between global and local phenomena, events and processes, is apparent. More and more local events have global consequences and vice versa. Finally, there is greater collaboration between various actors and sectors of society at regional and local levels. Politics is not only formed in traditional political life but increasingly so in networks.

We are interested in the impact of these processes of change on political systems and political decisions at the local and regional level. The changes take place in a global context in which the European Union, for instance, is of utmost importance.

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

Doctoral studies in political science prepare students for a further academic career nationally/internationally as well as for qualified professional work requiring political science expertise. 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 degree of Licentiate and Doctor at Karlstad University, research students must

- demonstrate broad and deep knowledge of political science as an international discipline and research tradition,
- demonstrate specialist knowledge in a research area of political science or in an application area,
- ability to conduct research in political science and/or qualified investigatory work in political science application areas independently,

- demonstrate ability to analyse current social issues and political problems academically,
- demonstrate ability to discuss social and political issues in writing in public debate and present research results in a written, accessible form ,
- demonstrate ability to orally present, lecture on and teach general public science topics as well as their own area of expertise in the national/international academic community and public contexts,
- demonstrate ability to work in a team on different issues in knowledge producing and mediating contexts such as development and investigation work, information and education.

Doctoral students in the research school on region building must demonstrate ability to treat and develop knowledge of region building in a multi-disciplinary context.

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 been awarded a Master-level degree with a major in political science and completed courses in political science totalling at least 120 ECTS cr, of which 30 ECTS cr are earned at Master-level and include a degree project of at least 15 ECTS cr has special eligibility for admission to doctoral studies in political science. Courses in political science studied as part of degree programmes such as public administration or teacher training also give eligibility.

Students who met the general admission requirements for admission before 1 July 2007 (see section 3.3) also have special eligibility if they have completed either the C and D levels (80 credits) of political science or 60 credits in political science plus 60 credits in another humanities or social science subject. In either case, eligibility requires two completed 10-credit essays at C-level at least. Courses in political science studied as part of degree programmes such as public administration or teacher training also give eligibility.

A person who, in some other way in the country or abroad has acquired equivalent knowledge, for example in Public Administration, Planning and Environmental Studies, Modern Political History, Political Sociology, International Relations, also has special eligibility.

3.4. 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 the proposed research area, supervision capacity and to the candidates' intention to be present and participate in the research environment.

Candidates in the subject political science will be selected on the basis of their assessed capacity to successfully complete a doctoral programme in political science by attaining the objectives specified in section 2.2. Candidates submit a list of qualifications and written works for consideration. Beyond the eligibility requirements, special consideration will be given to the candidates'

- interest in research and independent analytical ability
- commitment or approach to subject
- oral and written communication skills
- teaching skills and teaching experience
- proposed research area in relation to the department's and the research school's need of research and expertise
- the need for even gender distribution among teaching and research staff with priority given to the under-represented gender when there is no or negligible difference in qualifications.

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 and a dissertation of 150 ECTS.cr. To earn a licentiate degree, the candidate is required to complete 60 ECTS credits of course work and a dissertation of 60 ECTS cr.

The research school programme consists of joint courses (see section 6.1) and a doctoral seminar at which the students present their texts for response and comments in discussion with students and advisors from all the participating disciplines as well as their own.

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. Doctoral students in the research school on region building are required to take courses related to the thematic area of the research school.

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

Mandatory courses for research school students

(for the Licentiate and the Doctors' degree)

- Thematic Introduction, 7.5 ECTS cr.
- Thematic Course on Region Building, 7.5 ECTS cr.
- Methodology (qualitative and quantitative approaches), 15 ECTS cr.

Subject specific courses

For the **Licentiate** degree, the subject-specific courses must total 22.5 credits of which 15 credits are for subject mandatory courses and 7.5 credits for sub-disciplinary courses.

For the **Doctor's** degree, the subject-specific courses must total 48 credits of which 15 credits are for subject mandatory courses, 15 credits for sub-disciplinary courses and 18 credits for specialisation courses-

Subject-specific courses in political science can be chosen for the licentiate and the doctor's degree as follows:

Mandatory courses in political science totalling 22.5 ECTS cr.:

- Political science as a discipline and research tradition: Basic issues, theoretical perspectives, methodological traditions and analytical approaches, 15 ECTS cr

Sub-disciplinary courses in political science

Courses in the empirical sub-areas of political science comprise a total of 15 ECTS cr. Students choose two or three courses that together make up 15 ECTS cr. Licentiate degree students choose a 7.5 credit course. Credits earned for similar courses at another university at home or abroad can be transferred.

Two or three out of the following four areas are chosen:

- Political ideas: Basic issues, theory, method and analytical approaches in the empirical study of political ideas and political language. Traditional subject courses 7.5 ECTS cr.
- Swedish and comparative politics: Basic issues, theory, method and analytical approaches in the empirical study of Swedish and comparative domestic policy and political systems. Traditional subject courses 7.5 ECTS cr.
- Public politics and administration: Basic issues, theory, method and analytical approaches in the empirical study of public administration structures and of policy formation and policy implementation. Traditional subject courses 7.5 ECTS cr.

Specialisation courses related to the dissertation 18 ECTS cr.

Students choose specialisation courses of relevance to the dissertation (totalling 18 ECTS cr) in consultation with the advisor and/or examiner. The specialisation courses can be in the discipline, in other disciplines or in multidisciplinary and thematic courses offered by other political science departments.

The examiner decides which courses to include in the respective degree programme. Relevant electives are chosen in consultation with the advisor and 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 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.

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.