



Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Study Plan for Doctoral Studies in Media and Communication Studies

Decision:	FN 2020-03-19	Reg. no:	HS 2020/479	Replaces:		Reg. no:	FAK1 2010/43
Effective as of:	2020-03-19	until:	Until further notice	Officer:	Sara Hidén		

Study Plan Approval

The study plan was approved by the Faculty Board of Arts and Social Sciences on 2020-03-19 and is valid from this date. The research programme is offered to the extent permitted by available funding. General stipulations for research programmes are provided in the *Higher Education Act* and in the *Higher Education Ordinance*.

1. General Information

In Media and Communication Studies, focus is on the role of media in society and the conditions of media production, content and audience. Media and Communication 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 subject was allocated research funding and in 2002, Media and Communication Studies was approved as a doctoral discipline. MCS in Karlstad has two main research profiles: Geomedia and NODE (The Ander Centre for Research on News and Opinion in the Digital Era). Research students are quickly acquainted with the core of this academic conversation on current media and communication issues through research seminars.

The Subject collaborates partly with other universities and subjects within and outside of Karlstad University in terms of doctoral courses and supervision.

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/doctoral thesis

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

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

Subject specific aims

The subject specific aims of doctoral studies in Media and Communication Studies at Karlstad University are as follows:

- students shall be able to demonstrate broad knowledge of media research methodology in theory and in practice.
- students shall be able to demonstrate the ability to plan, lead, complete and publish research results nationally and internationally.
- students shall 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 shall be able to 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.

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 credits 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, Chap. 7).

3.2 Special eligibility

A person who has completed courses in Media and Communication Studies totalling at least 90 ECTS credits 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.

4. Admission

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. Selection is based on the applicant's previous study results with emphasis on the quality of the independent projects of research or investigative nature included in the education, especially at second-cycle level. In the ranking and selection of the candidates, special attention will also be paid to the proposed research area and its relevance to departmental research programme, supervision capacity and to the candidates' intention to be present and participate in the research environment.

6. Content and Outline

The research programme can lead to a doctoral or licentiate degree. A degree of doctor requires four years of study, the equivalent of 240 ECTS credits, and a degree of licentiate two years or 120 ECTS credits. The studies include course work as well as independent thesis work. To earn a degree of doctor, the candidate must complete 90 ECTS credits of course work and a thesis of 150 ECTS credits. To earn a degree of licentiate, the candidate is required to complete 45 ECTS credits of course work and a thesis of 75 ECTS credits.

6.1 Courses

The research programme comprises two types of courses: (1) subject-specific mandatory courses, (2) subject-specific specialisation courses.

Subject-specific mandatory courses

The subject-specific mandatory courses must total at least 30 ECTS credits for a degree of doctor and 22.5 ECTS credits for a degree of licentiate. The mandatory courses are decided by the professor/s in the subject and announced in special directives. The planned mandatory courses shall be included in the student's individual study plan.

Subject-specific specialisation courses

The subject-specific specialisation courses must total at least 60 ECTS credits for a degree of doctor and up to 22.5 ECTS credits for a degree of licentiate.

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 supervisor and examiner. Specialisation courses can be chosen to support the thesis and the specialised knowledge it may require.

Transfer of credits

On the approval of the examiner, course credits may be transferred for both mandatory and specialisation courses completed in Media and Communication Studies at Karlstad University, in conjunction with other subjects or at other institutions. The examiner decides if any of the basic courses can be replaced by equivalent qualifications for the respective degrees.

6.2 Doctoral and licentiate theses

Doctoral students are required to write a thesis for a doctoral or a licentiate degree, either as a monograph or as a compilation thesis. The requirements for each format is specified in a separate policy approved by Media and Communication Studies in Karlstad.

Candidates are required to defend their doctoral thesis at a public examination and their licentiate thesis at a seminar.

Theses are normally written in Swedish or English. The thesis topic is chosen in consultation with the supervisor and examiner. If the thesis is written together with others, the individual contributions must be clearly indicated. Further information is provided by the policy documents “Doctoral Thesis Requirements” and “Licentiate Thesis Requirements”.

6.3 Supervision

Doctoral students are entitled to supervisors in accordance with the principles stated in the admission regulations for research programmes 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 theses are examined in accordance with the *Higher Education Ordinance* (Ch. 6, sect. 33-55) and Karlstad University’s current policy document. The research programme in Media and Communication Studies will lead to a Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, or a Degree of Licentiate of Philosophy.