



Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

## **Study Plan for Doctoral Studies in Human Geography**

(including specialisation in Geography Education and the Research School on Sustainable Societal Transformation)

Decision:	FN 2020-03-19	Reg. no:	HS 2020/458	Replaces:		Reg.no:	HS2017/255
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 Social and Life Sciences on 2008-03-26 and is valid from this date. Revised 2011-10-24 (DEK3 74/2011), and effective from the date of decision: Adjustment to change in the *Higher Education Ordinance* 2011-01-01.

Revised 2012-11-14 (FAK3 2012/262), and effective from the date of decision: Addition with reference to the inclusion of region building and human geography education as specialisations in doctoral studies in Human Geography.

Revised 2017-02-09, and effective from the date of decision: Harmonisation of doctoral study plan in Human Geography with the specialisation human geography education and the doctoral study plan for the Research School on Region Building.

Revised 2020-03-19, and effective from the date of decision: Addressing, among other things, the name change from Research School on Regional Building to Research School on Sustainable Societal Transformation. Further updates of research fields within Human Geography. Removal of names of two cross-faculty courses.

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**

Human Geography research at Karlstad University has a clear focus on analysing the ambiguous interactions between social and spatial aspects on various geographical scales using a critical approach. Key research domains within the subject include issues of local and regional development processes, studies of landscapes, tourism and outdoor life, as well as research on geography education. In addition to the already established research domains, new research specialisations and themes have evolved in line with the development of the subject and its research. This is reflected, for instance, in research on identity, culture, mobility/migration, spatial theory, planning and urbanisation, as well as research within the field of geomeia.

Human Geography cooperates with other institutions of higher education, for example, on national third-cycle courses.

In accordance with Karlstad University's policy documents, gender equality and diversity perspectives as well as ethical considerations are addressed throughout the programme. Doctoral students are also introduced to multi-disciplinary approaches and involved in interdisciplinary experiences.

Human Geography can also be studied within the framework of Sustainable Societal Transformation and with a specialisation in Geography Education. Additions for these specialisations can be found in the text below.

Human Geography post-graduates are equipped for careers in the private as well as the public sector and can apply their knowledge and skills in planning and investigative projects in municipalities, regional bodies, national and international agencies and organisations.

## 2. Aims and Objectives

### 2.1 General objectives

The general objectives of licentiate or doctoral studies in terms of knowledge and understanding, competence and skills, and judgement and approach are specified as follows in the System of Qualifications (*Higher Education Ordinance*, attachment 2, SFS 2006:1053):

#### ***Knowledge and understanding***

*For a **degree of Licentiate** third-cycle students shall*

- *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** third-cycle students shall*

- *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.*

#### ***Competence and skills***

*For a **degree of Licentiate** third-cycle students shall*

- *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** third-cycle students shall*

- *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* third-cycle students shall

- 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* third-cycle students shall

- 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 thesis/Doctoral thesis***

*For a degree of Licentiate* the third-cycle students shall have been awarded a pass grade for a thesis of at least 60 ECTS credits.

*For a degree of Doctor* the third-cycle students shall have been awarded a pass grade for a thesis of at least 120 ECTS credits. (Higher Education Ordinance, System of Qualifications)

## **2.2 Subject specific aims**

The subject specific aims of doctoral studies in Human Geography at Karlstad University are that students shall

- demonstrate ability to apply theoretical insights and methodological skills in their own research independently and critically, particularly in the licentiate or doctoral thesis, and generally in their approach to human geography issues,
- demonstrate ability to approach international subject-specific situations by participating in international conferences, excursions abroad or studying abroad for a longer time.

In the specialisation field of *Human Geography Education*, students pursue research on the teaching and learning of geography, for example, practice-related studies of teachers, subject-specific conceptual development and teachers' school development efforts. Research is aligned to ongoing projects at the Centre for Social Studies Education (CSD) at Karlstad University.

This specialisation also requires students to approach and develop knowledge of teaching and learning geography in educational settings.

In addition to the objectives for Human Geography above, for the specialisation in *Human Geography in Sustainable Societal Transformation* students shall

- demonstrate ability to approach and develop knowledge of sustainable societal transformation in a multidisciplinary context.

The aim of doctoral studies in human geography is that students develop into critical and independent researchers with ability to plan, conduct and present a research project. Doctoral studies in human geography also prepare students for an academic career and for professional research work in private and public organisations.

### **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, sect. 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 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, sect. 39).*

#### **3.2 Special eligibility**

A person who has completed courses in human geography totalling at least 90 ECTS credits has special eligibility for admission to doctoral studies in human geography and for admission to the research school in region building.

A person who has a degree in teaching and completed 90 ECTS credits in human geography, including a degree project, has eligibility for admission to the specialisation human geography education.

A person who, in some other way in the country or abroad has acquired equivalent knowledge, also has special eligibility.

### **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 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 doctoral programme can lead to a doctoral or licentiate degree. 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 75 ECTS credits of course work. To earn a licentiate degree, the candidate is required to complete 37.5 ECTS credits of course work.

The doctoral programme can lead to a doctoral or licentiate degree. Students who have been admitted to the doctoral programme may also earn a licentiate degree.

Doctoral students are required to be present and participate in departmental activities and research environment. Beyond the requirements specified below, students are expected to participate in ongoing conversations and discussions on subject content and development, informally or in seminars (for further information, see (“Specification of Doctoral Study Requirements in Human Geography”).

### **6.1 Courses**

The “Specification of Doctoral Study Requirements in Human Geography” includes recommendations on the choice of courses at different stages. Elective courses can also be taken at other universities. The mandatory courses for doctoral studies in human geography are: introductory course 7.5 ECTS credits and an excursion abroad 7.5 ECTS credits. Students can also choose to include cross-faculty courses as part of their doctoral studies in Human Geography. Relevant courses are chosen in consultation with the advisor.

Mandatory courses for Human Geography with a specialisation in Geography Education (licentiate and doctor’s degree):

- Introduction: Geography as a Science, 7.5 ECTS credits (a variant of the subject-specific course above)
- Introduction to Subject-Specific Education, 7.5 ECTS credits
- Geography Education, 10 ECTS credits

### **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. Candidates are required to defend their licentiate thesis at a seminar and their doctoral thesis at a public examination. Further information is provided by the policy documents “Doctoral Thesis Requirements” and “Licentiate Thesis Requirements”.

In “Specification of Doctoral Study Requirements in Human Geography” special requirements of successive reports on thesis progress are stated (first-year seminar, half-way seminar and final seminar).

### **6.3 Supervision**

Doctoral students are entitled to a supervisor in accordance with the principles stated in the current policy document at Karlstad University. Doctoral students in Human geography are assigned a main supervisor and one or several assistant supervisors.

### **6.4 Individual Study Plan**

Each doctoral student must draw up an individual study plan in conjunction with their supervisors 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).

## **6.5 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. 33-34) and Karlstad University's current policy document.