



Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Curriculum for doctoral studies in Psychology

(Forskarutbildning i psykologi)

Curriculum Approval

The curriculum was approved by the Faculty Board of Arts and Social Sciences on 13 September 2018 and is valid from 13 September 2018.

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.

This curriculum replaces the curriculum approved on 5 May 2011, FAK1 2011/61.

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.

Research in Psychology at Karlstad University is primarily carried out in two main areas: clinical psychology and the psychology of everyday life.

The doctoral programme in Psychology is linked to the two main research profiles but is also characterised by diversity of subject choices. Theses can deal with a wide range of fields such as health, transport, consumer, and organisation psychology.

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 in the Qualification Ordinance (Higher Education Ordinance, Annex 2).

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 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 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 ability to engage in scholarly analysis and synthesis and in independent, critical examination and assessment of new and complex phenomena, issues and situations,*
- *demonstrate 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 thesis, their ability to make a substantial contribution to the development of knowledge by their own research,*
- *demonstrate 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 ability to identify their need of further knowledge, and*
- *demonstrate 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 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 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 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**, third-cycle students shall have been awarded a pass grade for a research thesis of at least 60 ECTS credits.*

*For a degree of **Doctor**, third-cycle students shall have been awarded a pass grade for a doctoral thesis of at least 120 ECTS credits.*

(Higher Education Ordinance, Qualifications Ordinance)

Please note: In Psychology, students need to be awarded a pass grade for a licentiate thesis of at least 97.5 ECTS credits for a licentiate degree. Likewise, a pass grade for a doctoral thesis of at least 165 ECTS credits is required for a doctoral degree (see Section 6.2 "Doctoral and Licentiate Theses" below).

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 cr. are studies at master's level, or who in some other way in Sweden 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 requirements (Higher Education Ordinance, Ch. 6).

3.2 Special Eligibility

A person has special eligibility for admission to doctoral studies in Psychology who either has

- completed 120 ECTS credits with successive progression in the main field of study Psychology, or
- completed a Degree of Master of Science in Psychology or Psychotherapy, or
- acquired largely equivalent knowledge in Sweden or abroad.

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

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

Admitted students are required to attend and participate in daily departmental activities and research environment, circumstances permitting.

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 programme includes coursework as well as independent thesis work. To earn a doctoral degree, the student must complete 75 ECTS credits of coursework and a thesis of 165 ECTS credits. To earn a licentiate degree, the student is required to complete 22.5 ECTS credits of coursework and a thesis of 97.5 ECTS credits.

6.1 Courses

Subject-Specific Courses

The doctoral programme in Psychology comprises the following mandatory courses for the **Licentiate degree**

- Non-parametric statistics (7.5 ECTS cr.)
- Parametric statistics (7.5 ECTS cr.)
- Qualitative methods (7.5 ECTS cr.)

Doctoral degree

- 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.)
- Research ethics (4.5 ECTS cr.)

The examiner decides if any of the university-wide mandatory courses or subject-specific courses can be replaced by equivalent courses for the licentiate and doctoral degrees. Students choose relevant courses in consultation with the supervisor and examiner.

Doctoral seminars are organised continuously, providing the opportunity for students to present their thesis plan, articles to be submitted and the frame text of the thesis. Students are required to present 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 Theses

Doctoral students are required to write a doctoral thesis (165 ECTS cr.) for a doctoral degree or a licentiate thesis (97.5 ECTS cr.) for a licentiate degree. Theses may either be a monograph or a compilation thesis comprising previously published academic papers with an introductory chapter. Licentiate theses must be defended at a licentiate seminar. Doctoral theses are defended at a public defence. Further information is provided in the current policy documents “Regulations for the doctoral thesis and public defence” and “Regulations for the licentiate thesis.”

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

6.3 Supervision

Students admitted to the doctoral programme are entitled to supervision in accordance with the principles stated in the current policy document at Karlstad University

Upon admission, a main supervisor and co-supervisor are appointed in consultation with the student. They advise the student in the choice of research area and thesis topic and give support throughout the process. The student must maintain regular contact with the supervisors, keep them informed of the progress and consult them on design issues.

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

6.4 Individual Study Plan

Within six months of admission to the doctoral programme, each student must draw up an individual study plan in conjunction with the supervisors. The plan should include a realistic estimate of time for coursework, research, teaching, other departmental duties, and supervision. The plan should further include the problem, aim, and methodological and theoretical frames of the project.

The individual study plan is subject to continual revision (at least once a year), taking the form of written comments and corrections, if applicable.

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 Sec. 33–35) and Karlstad University's current policy documents.