



The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Curriculum for Doctoral Studies in Social Work

Decision:	FN 9 December 2021	Reg.no.	HS 2021/1176	Replaces:		Reg.no.	HS 2020/3
Applies from:	9 December 2021	until	further notice	Officer:	Sara Hidén		

Curriculum Approval

Approved by the Faculty Board of Arts and Social Sciences on 28 August 2008, revised by the Faculty Board of Arts and Social Sciences 9 December 2021. 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 resources.

1. General Information

Research in Social Work focuses on social problems and their consequences for the individual, groups of people and society at large, and on intervention and methods to prevent, alleviate and solve social problems. The primary research areas for Social Work at Karlstad University are Critical welfare studies, Studies on health and social vulnerability at individual and group level, and Applied welfare studies. Research is also conducted within the framework of the multidisciplinary Forum for Violence Studies and Violence Prevention. Researchers within the field of social work are active in multidisciplinary projects, research networks and research centres, both at Karlstad University and other higher education institutions.

As a doctoral student, you are encouraged to join one of Karlstad University's graduate schools, for example, the Graduate School on Sustainable Societal Transformation or the Graduate School of Health, as well as participating in the Research School in Social Work (RSSW). There are continuous discussions with other departments of social work regarding doctoral studies and research issues and collaboration with other research environments at departmental, faculty and university levels in Sweden and abroad. The department also interacts with the research and development unit FoU Välfärd Värmland, and Region Värmland and regional municipalities.

2. Aims and Objectives

2.1 General Objectives

The general outcomes 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, Annex 2, SFS 2006:1053).¹

Knowledge and understanding

For a Degree of Licentiate the third-cycle student shall

- *demonstrate knowledge and understanding in the field of research including current specialist knowledge in a limited area of this field as well as specialised knowledge of research methodology in general and the methods of the specific field of research in particular.*

For the Degree of Doctor the third-cycle student shall

- *demonstrate broad knowledge and systematic understanding of the research field as well as advanced and up-to-date specialised knowledge in a limited area of this field, and*
- *demonstrate familiarity with research methodology in general and the methods of the specific field of research in particular.*

Competence and skills

For a Degree of Licentiate the third-cycle student shall

- *demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate issues with scholarly precision critically, autonomously and creatively, and to plan and use appropriate methods to undertake a limited piece of research and other qualified tasks within predetermined time frames in order to contribute to the formation of knowledge as well as to evaluate this work*
- *demonstrate the ability in both national and international contexts to present and discuss research and research findings in speech and writing and in dialogue with the academic community and society in general, and*
- *demonstrate the skills required to participate autonomously in research and development work and to work autonomously in some other qualified capacity.*

¹ Italicised texts are quotations from the Higher Education Ordinance.

For the **Degree of Doctor** the third-cycle student shall

- demonstrate the capacity for scholarly analysis and synthesis as well as to review and assess new and complex phenomena, issues and situations autonomously and critically
- demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate issues with scholarly precision critically, autonomously and creatively, and to plan and use appropriate methods to undertake research and other qualified tasks within predetermined time frames and to review and evaluate such work
- demonstrate through a dissertation the ability to make a significant contribution to the formation of knowledge through his or her own research
- demonstrate the ability in both national and international contexts to present and discuss research and research findings authoritatively in speech and writing and in dialogue with the academic community and society in general
- demonstrate the ability to identify the need for further knowledge and
- demonstrate the capacity to contribute to social development and support the learning of others both through research and education and in some other qualified professional capacity.

Judgement and approach

For a **Degree of Licentiate** the third-cycle student shall

- demonstrate the ability to make assessments of ethical aspects of his or her own research
- demonstrate insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used, and
- demonstrate the ability to identify the personal need for further knowledge and take responsibility for his or her ongoing learning.

For the **Degree of Doctor** the third-cycle student shall

- demonstrate intellectual autonomy and disciplinary rectitude as well as the ability to make assessments of research ethics, and
- demonstrate specialised insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual 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 research 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 doctoral thesis of at least 120 ECTS credits. (*The Higher Education Ordinance, System of Qualifications*)

2.2 Subject-specific objectives

The doctoral programme in Social Work prepares students for further national and international academic careers, and also for qualified professional work requiring expertise in Social Work. The objectives below apply both to the licentiate and doctor's degree. The objectives are related to the general objectives for licentiate and doctor's degree, in order to clarify the level of each degree.

For a **Degree of Licentiate and Doctor** in Social Work at Karlstad University, students must demonstrate:

- theoretical and methodological knowledge
- skills in theoretical analysis and practical research
- solid knowledge of central theories and perspectives in social work
- broad knowledge of central theories and the potential of research in social work.

For a **degree of Licentiate** students must have received a pass grade on a scholarly thesis of at least 82.5 ECTS credits. For a **degree of Doctor** the third-cycle students shall have been awarded a pass grade for a doctoral thesis of at least 165 ECTS credits.

3. Qualification requirements

To be eligible for third-cycle studies, the applicant is required to meet the general and University-specific entry requirements and must be considered to have the ability required to benefit from the studies (Higher Education Ordinance, Chap. 7, Sect. 35).

3.1 General Eligibility

To meet the general entry requirements, the applicant must have been awarded a master level qualification; satisfied the requirements for courses comprising at least 240 credits of which at least 60 credits were at master level; or acquired substantially equivalent knowledge in some other way in Sweden or abroad. A higher education institution may permit an exemption from the general entry requirements for an individual applicant, if there are special grounds. (Higher Education Ordinance, Chap. 7 Sect. 39)

3.2 Special Eligibility

To meet the specific entry requirements, the applicant must have completed courses comprising at least 120 ECTS credits in Social Work or an adjacent subject, of which at least 30 credits were at master level and included an independent project (degree project) for at least 15 credits. An applicant can also be eligible after having acquired equivalent knowledge in some other way, in the country 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

Candidates will be selected based on their assessed capacity to successfully complete a programme at the doctoral level. The selection will be based on the applicant's previous study results with an emphasis on the quality of independent written work of a scholarly and investigatory nature, particularly at a master level. Weight will also be given to the applicant's research specialisation and the capacity of available supervisors at the department, and the extent to which the applicant intends to be a physically present and active member of the research environment.

6. Content and Outline

The doctoral programme can lead to a doctoral or licentiate degree. The doctor's degree requires four years of full-time study, the equivalent of 240 ECTS credits, and the licentiate degree two years of full-time study or 120 ECTS credits.

The studies include course work as well as an independent project (licentiate or doctoral thesis). To earn a doctoral degree, the candidate must complete 75 ECTS credits of course work and a thesis comprising 165 ECTS credits. To earn a licentiate degree, the candidate is required to complete 37.5 ECTS credits of course work and a thesis comprising 82.5 ECTS credits.

6.1 Courses

Cross-faculty courses for all doctoral students at Karlstad University must be included in the programme to the extent required by local regulations.

General cross-faculty courses

General cross-faculty courses may be included, e.g. Research Ethics 4.5 ECTS credits, Communicating Science 4.5 ECTS credits.

Subject-specific courses

For a doctoral degree, the subject specific courses must comprise 75 ECTS credits, including mandatory course work of 45 ECTS credits. For a licentiate degree the subject specific courses must comprise 37.5 ECTS credits, including mandatory course work of 20 ECTS credits.

Mandatory courses for **Degree of Doctor**

- Research methodology 20 ECTS cr, including a minimum of qualitative method 7.5 ECTS cr and of quantitative method 7.5 ECTS cr.
- Social science theory and social science research orientation 25 ECTS cr.

Mandatory courses for **Degree of Licentiate**

- Research methodology 10 ECTS cr, including a minimum of qualitative method 5 ECTS cr and of quantitative method 5 ECTS cr.
- Social science theory and social science research orientation 10 ECTS cr.

6.2 Doctoral and Licentiate Thesis

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 in the policy documents “Regulations Doctoral Thesis and Public Defence Procedures” and “Regulations on the Licentiate Thesis”. The topic of the licentiate or doctoral thesis is chosen in consultation with the supervisor and the examiner. If the thesis is produced in collaboration with others, the individual candidate’s contribution must be clearly indicated.

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

6.4 Individual Study Plan

Within six months of admission to the doctoral programme, each doctoral student must draw up an individual study plan in consultation with their supervisor. The plan should include a realistic time plan for coursework, thesis work and supervision. It should also include 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), with potential written comments and corrections.

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). Furthermore, doctoral and licentiate theses are also regulated by Karlstad University’s policy documents.