



The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

General syllabus for doctoral studies in Sociology

(Studieplan för utbildning på forskarnivå i sociologi)

Decision	HS FN 6 February 2025	Reg. no.	HS2025/315	Replaces	HS2016/415
Effective from	6 February 2025	until	further notice	Officer	Monica Eriksson

Syllabus approval

The syllabus was approved by the Faculty Board of Arts and Social Sciences on 2 June 2016 and revised 6 February 2025.

General stipulations for third-cycle education are provided in the Higher Education Act and in the Higher Education Ordinance. The doctoral programme is offered to the extent permitted by available funding.

1. General information

Sociology at Karlstad University has three research profiles: 1) research on relationships and everyday interactions, exploring phenomena such as transnational relationships, relationships with deceased relatives, racialisation, deception, and singlehood; 2) research on age as a social dimension in everyday life and society, through which phenomena such as ageing and technology, intergenerational relations, older people and culture, lifelong learning, and loneliness among older people are studied; and 3) research on social movements and resistance, through which issues such as the influence of activism on society and policies, challenging power relations through resistance, and everyday actions in activism are studied.

The subject also collaborates with other subjects within and outside Karlstad University in terms of doctoral courses and supervision.

In compliance with the Karlstad University gender equality policy, the gender perspective should be included in doctoral programmes.

2. Programme outcomes

2.1 General outcomes

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 1993:100):

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 a 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.*

*For a **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 a **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.*

Thesis

*For a **Degree of Licentiate**, the third-cycle student shall have been awarded a pass grade for a research thesis of at least 60 credits.*

*For a **Degree of Doctor**, the third-cycle student shall have been awarded a pass grade for a doctoral thesis of at least 120 credits.*

2.2 Subject-specific outcomes

Subject-specific outcomes for third-cycle studies in the subject of Sociology at Karlstad University comprise the following:

The aim of the doctoral programme is for the third-cycle student to acquire the ability to conduct scholarly analysis and independent research regarding social structures, processes and stakeholders. Upon completion of the programme, the third-cycle student shall therefore be able to demonstrate theoretical and methodological knowledge; demonstrate experience in both theoretical analysis and concrete research; and demonstrate in-depth knowledge of central

sociological theories and perspectives, and breadth in their understanding of societal conditions and the possibilities of sociological research.

The doctoral programme shall prepare students for a research career in academia while also providing necessary professional skills for duties outside academia, for example, as an investigator in private or public organisations.

3. Entry 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 entry requirements

A person meets the general entry requirements for third-cycle courses and study programmes if they have been awarded a second-cycle qualification, satisfied the requirements for courses comprising at least 240 credits of which at least 60 credits were awarded in the second-cycle, 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 Specific entry requirements

To meet the specific entry requirements, the applicant must have completed courses comprising at least 120 credits in sociology, of which at least 30 credits are at master's level. An applicant can also be eligible after having acquired equivalent knowledge in some other way, in the country or abroad.

4. Admission

Applications for admission to third-cycle programmes 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 is 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 the master's level. The selection is also based on how well the submitted research plan relates to at least one of the subject's research profiles, and the extent to which the applicant intends to be a physically present and active member of the subject's research environment.

6. Programme curriculum and structure

The programme concludes with a Degree of Doctor or a Degree of Licentiate. A doctoral degree requires four years of study, the equivalent of 240 credits, and a licentiate degree requires two years of study, equivalent to 120 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 60 credits of course work and a thesis comprising 180 credits. To earn a licentiate degree, the candidate must complete 30 credits of course work and a thesis comprising 90 credits.

6.1 Courses

For a **Degree of Licentiate:**

Mandatory courses in:

- Research methodology, comprising 7.5 credits
- Classical and contemporary sociological theories, comprising 7.5 credits
- Theory of science, comprising 7.5 credits

Elective courses, comprising 7.5 credits

For a **Degree of Doctor:**

Mandatory courses in:

- Research methodology comprising 15 credits, including qualitative method (7.5 credits) and quantitative method (7.5 credits)
- Classical and contemporary sociological theories, comprising 15 credits
- Theory of science, comprising 7.5 credits

Elective courses, comprising 22.5 credits

The elective courses are chosen in consultation with the supervisor and the examiner. Upon approval by the examiner, credits can be transferred from both mandatory and elective courses completed in other disciplines and/or at other universities.

6.2 Doctoral and licentiate thesis

Third-cycle students are required to write a thesis for a doctoral or a licentiate degree, either as a monograph or as a compilation thesis. The topic of the licentiate or doctoral thesis is outlined in consultation with the supervisor and the examiner.

For a doctoral degree, the compilation thesis must include four papers, of which at least two should have been approved for publication in a scientific journal with peer-review or a book. The doctoral student must be the lead author of at least two of the papers and the single author of at least one.

For a licentiate degree, the compilation thesis must include two papers, of which at least one should have been approved for publication in a scientific journal with peer-review or a book. The licentiate student must be the lead author of at least one of the papers.

The role and contributions of the student and the co-authors must be presented in an authors declaration for each paper. This can be included in each paper or in the introductory chapter.

Work with the doctoral thesis must be presented at least three times at the subject seminar:

- The doctoral student must present a thesis memorandum within 10% of the time from the start of the doctoral studies. The review is conducted by two internal reviewers.
- When 50% of the doctoral studies have been completed, the thesis work is presented at a mid-way review. The presentation should include the written material compiled within the framework of the thesis work as well as an oral presentation. An external reviewer is appointed at the mid-way review to assess the work.
- Upon completion of the thesis, a final review is held where all parts of the thesis are presented. An external reviewer is appointed at the final review to assess the work.

Work with the licentiate thesis must be presented at least two times at the subject seminar:

- The licentiate student must present a thesis memorandum within 10% of the time from the start of the doctoral studies. The review is conducted by an appointed review group.
- When 80% of the studies have been completed, the thesis work is presented at a final review. The presentation should include the written material compiled within the framework of the thesis work as well as an oral presentation. An internal or external reviewer is appointed at the final review to assess the work.

A licentiate thesis shall be defended at a licentiate seminar, and a doctoral thesis shall be presented at a public thesis defence. Further information is provided in the policy documents “Regulations Doctoral Thesis and Public Defence Procedures” and “Regulations on the Licentiate Thesis”.

6.3 Supervision

Students admitted to a third-cycle 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 supervisors. The study plan should include a realistic time plan for coursework, thesis work and supervision. It should also include an introduction to the proposed research field (thesis memorandum), problem statement, aim, methodological and theoretical frames, and relevant research ethical considerations. The individual study plan is subject to regular review (at least once a year), with comments and any revisions made in writing.

6.5 Examination

Doctoral students are assessed in accordance with the requirements of each individual course syllabus. Doctoral and licentiate theses are examined in accordance with the Higher Education Ordinance (Chap. 6, Sect. 33-34) and Karlstad University’s current regulations.

7. Additional information

Previous versions of the general syllabus have been approved:

14 June 2007, reg. no FAK3 2007/219

24 October 2011, reg. no DEK3 74/2011

12 December 2012, reg. no FAK3 2007/219

2 June 2016, reg. no HS2016/415, the general syllabus applies to doctoral students admitted as of 31 December 2015, as well as already admitted doctoral students who wish to comply with it.