



Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

General Syllabus for Doctoral Studies in Educational Work

(Studieplan för utbildning på forskarnivå i Pedagogiskt arbete)

Decision	FN 5 February 2026	Reg. no.	HS2026/280	Replaces	HS2024/726
Effective from	5 February 2026	until	further notice	Officer	Monica Eriksson

Syllabus approval

The syllabus was approved on 5 November 2001 by the Faculty Board of Learning in School and Working Life, and revised by the Faculty Board of Learning on 9 June 2004, and by the Teacher Education Board on 12 December 2012. Revised by the Faculty Board of Arts and Social Sciences on 6 December 2017, 11 June 2020, 21 March 2024 and 5 February 2026.

The doctoral programme is offered to the extent permitted by available resources. General stipulations for doctoral programmes are provided in the Higher Education Act and in the Higher Education Ordinance.

1. General information

Educational work is an interdisciplinary, practice-oriented field of research addressing issues related to the school system and other forms of education. It encompasses the work of pupils and teachers, the socialisation and learning of children and young people inside and outside the classroom, and practical issues and phenomena central to professional educational work.

The doctoral programme in educational work is organised and conducted in close collaboration with the subject-specific education centres at Karlstad University, as well as national and international graduate schools/doctoral programmes in educational sciences.

In compliance with the Karlstad University gender equality policy, the gender perspective must be incorporated into all doctoral programmes. Doctoral students should also gain insight into interdisciplinary approaches and experience collaboration across traditional subject boundaries.

2. Programme 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 2006:1053):

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.*

Licentiate/doctoral 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.

Subject-specific outcomes in addition to the general outcomes

Knowledge and understanding

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

- *demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the relation between teaching and*

learning and individual, social and contextual conditions related to the learning process,

- demonstrate current expertise in a limited area of this field, and
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of theories and research methods relevant to the field of educational sciences.

*For a **Degree of Doctor**, the doctoral student shall*

- demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of the relation between teaching and learning and individual, social and contextual conditions related to the learning process,
- demonstrate current, in-depth expertise in a limited area of this field, and
- demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of theories and research methods relevant to the field of educational sciences.

Competence and skills

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

- demonstrate competence and skills to conduct limited research within the education system by utilising theories and research methods of relevance to the field of educational sciences.

*For a **Degree of Doctor**, the doctoral student shall*

- demonstrate competence and skills to conduct research within the education system by utilising theories and research methods of relevance to the field of educational sciences.

Judgement and approach

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

- demonstrate the ability to adopt a critical approach to the opportunities and limitations of educational sciences research, as well as its role and responsibilities regarding issues related to preschool, school and higher education, or issues related to learning processes in the working life and for people active in associations.

*For a **Degree of Doctor**, the doctoral student shall*

- demonstrate a strong ability to adopt an in-depth critical approach to the opportunities and limitations of educational sciences research, as well as its role and responsibilities regarding issues related to preschool, school and higher education, or issues related to learning processes in the working life and for people active in associations.

Doctoral studies in educational work shall prepare students for a research career in academia, as well as provide the necessary professional skills for non-academic work. Possible work areas are development and assessment work within the educational system, on both local and central levels.

An essential part of the doctoral programme is that doctoral students gain experience collaborating with other researchers, enabling them to establish both national and international connections. It is also important that doctoral students contribute to the development of a stimulating research environment at Karlstad University.

3. Entry requirements

The requirements for admission to third-cycle courses and study programmes are that the applicant meets the general and specific entry requirements, and is considered in other respects to have the ability required to benefit from the course or study programme.

3.1 *To meet the **general entry requirements**, the applicant must have been awarded a second-cycle qualification, satisfied the requirements for courses comprising at least 240 credits of which at least 60 credits were at master's level; or acquired substantially equivalent knowledge in some other way in Sweden or abroad. The faculty board may permit an exemption from the general entry requirements for an individual applicant, if there are special grounds. (Higher Education Ordinance, Chap. 6)*

3.2 Specific entry requirements

To meet the specific entry requirements for doctoral studies in educational work, the applicant must hold a Bachelor's degree in education, or in some other way have acquired equivalent knowledge, 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 are 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 the master's level, as well as the quality of other submitted academic works. Selection will also be based on the applicant's language proficiency, if the applicant will be present and participate actively in the subject's research environment, and whether the applicant's research specialisation corresponds to the expertise of available supervisors.

6. Curriculum and structure

The doctoral programme can lead to either a doctoral degree or a licentiate degree. The doctoral degree requires four years of study, the equivalent of 240 credits, and the licentiate degree two years or 120 credits. The studies include coursework as well as an independent project (licentiate or doctoral thesis). To earn a doctoral degree, the candidate must complete 90 credits of coursework and a thesis comprising 150 credits. To earn a licentiate degree, the candidate is required to complete 45 credits of coursework and a thesis comprising 75 credits.

6.1 Courses

A Degree of Licentiate requires completed courses of a total of 45 credits:

- 20.5 credits comprise mandatory basic courses:
 - Research ethics and misconduct in educational sciences, 5.5 credits
 - Information retrieval and publishing strategies, 3 credits
 - Methodology course (either in qualitative research methods or quantitative research methods), 7.5 credits
 - Philosophy of science, 4.5 credits

- 24.5 credits worth of free elective specialisation courses

A Degree of Doctor requires completion of a total of 90 credits:

- 40 credits comprise mandatory basic courses:
 - Communicating science, 4.5 credits
 - Research ethics and misconduct in educational sciences, 5.5 credits
 - Information retrieval and publishing strategies, 3 credits
 - Qualitative research methods in educational sciences, 7.5 credits
 - Quantitative research methods, 7.5 credits
 - Knowledge and learning, 7.5 credits
 - Philosophy of science, 4.5 credits
- 50 credits worth of free elective specialisation courses

Students actively participate in a general research seminar in educational work throughout their studies. In consultation with the supervisor, the students choose specialisation courses based on their academic orientation and interests.

6.2 Doctoral/licentiate thesis

Doctoral students are required to write a thesis for a doctoral or a licentiate degree. The thesis may either be a monograph or a compilation thesis comprising previously published academic papers with an introductory chapter. Candidates are required to defend their licentiate thesis at a licentiate seminar and their doctoral thesis at a public thesis defence. The thesis is normally written in Swedish or English. The thesis shall be presented a minimum of three times, at three different seminars. The first presentation is a planning seminar, the second is held during the course of the project and the third is held when the thesis is practically completed (final seminar). Further information is provided in the policy documents “Regulations for Doctoral Theses and Public Defence Procedures” and “Regulations for the Licentiate Theses”.

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. For doctoral students in Educational Work, supervision is divided into equal parts individual supervision and joint supervision seminars, in accordance with the Policy for Supervision in Education and Educational Work.

6.4 Individual study plan

At the start of the studies, the student shall draw up an individual study plan (ISP) in consultation with their supervisors. 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 assessed in accordance with the requirements of applicable course syllabi. Doctoral and licentiate theses are examined in accordance with the Higher Education Ordinance (Chap. 6, Sect. 40–47) and Karlstad University's current regulations.