General syllabus for third-cycle studies in Social Sciences (specialising in Educational Sciences) (240 HECs)

This syllabus was confirmed by the Faculty Board of Social Sciences at Gothenburg University on 30 February 2008, and revised by the Faculty Board of Social Sciences on 20 March 2014.

1. Objectives
The objective of the programme is for the doctoral student to develop such knowledge and skills as are required to independently conduct research within Social Sciences (specialising in Educational Sciences) and also to contribute to the formation of knowledge within the subject through the production of a research thesis.

Social Sciences (specialising in Educational Sciences) is a subject linked to teacher training and pedagogic activities that encompass both society’s political and economic structures and its organisation and the family and individual level. The subject deals with fundamental problem formulations relating to human experiences and actions, first as an individual, and second in interaction with other people and as a participant in social, cultural, political and economic social events and institutions. Social Sciences (specialising in Educational Sciences) has a given link to the content of socially oriented subjects at schools and the school subject ‘Social Studies’, but also includes the study of various structural and institutional factors relating to the organisation of education and learning in society.

Third-cycle studies in Social Sciences (specialising in Educational Sciences) also aim to develop the ability of the doctoral student to convert scientific skills and knowledge into further research work or other advanced professional work. The study programme should also develop the doctoral student’s communicative and pedagogical skills in terms of expressing themselves in speech and writing, both within and outside an academic context. The doctoral student should also have acquired knowledge of planning, leading and implementing a research project. It is mandatory for the programme that the doctoral student takes a course for 5 higher education credits (HECs) in teaching and learning in higher education within the framework of the 240 HECs encompassed by the programme.

The programme will also afford an opportunity for international contacts, e.g. in the form of participation at research conferences and/or visits to a foreign higher education institution. The specific objectives of the programme, which must be satisfied to achieve a third-cycle qualification in Social Sciences (specialising in Educational Sciences) are specified below. The requirements specified in the Higher Education Ordinance (Qualifications Ordinance) for third cycle qualifications otherwise apply.
1.1 Knowledge and understanding
For the Degree of Doctor, the doctoral student shall:
− demonstrate broad knowledge and systematic understanding of the research field of Social Sciences (specialising in Educational Sciences) as well as advanced and up-to-date knowledge in a special field chosen for the thesis, and
− demonstrate familiarity with research methodology in general and the methods of the specific field of research in particular.

1.2 Competence and skills
For the Degree of Doctor, the doctoral 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 thesis the ability to make a significant contribution to the formation of knowledge through her or his 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.

1.3 Judgement and approach
For the Degree of Doctor, the doctoral 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.

2. Entry requirements
Admission to the programme requires that the applicant fulfils the general and specific entry requirements provided in Chapter 7 of the Higher Education Ordinance.

2.1 General entry requirements
A person meets the general entry requirements under Chapter 7, Section 39 of the Higher Education Ordinance if he or she:
− has been awarded a second cycle qualification,
– has satisfied the requirements for courses comprising at least 240 HECs, of which at least 60 HECs were awarded in the second-cycle, or
– has acquired substantially equivalent knowledge in some other way in Sweden or abroad.

2.2 Specific entry requirements
Admission to third-cycle studies in Social Sciences (specialising in Educational Sciences) requires the following:
– that the applicant has satisfied the requirements for courses comprising at least 90 HECs in a social science subject.
– a teaching qualification and a second-cycle degree project comprising at least 15 HECs.
– has acquired substantially equivalent knowledge in some other way in Sweden or abroad.

According to the transitional provisions, applicants who meet the general entry requirements for admission to doctoral studies prior to 1 July 2007 have the general entry requirements for admission to third-cycle studies, though until no later than the end of 2015.

3. Admission and selection
Admission to third-cycle studies in Social Sciences (specialising in Educational Sciences) is normally initiated through a special call for doctoral studentships.
In selecting between applicants, her or his ability to benefit from the programme shall be taken into account in accordance with Chapter 7 of the Higher Education Ordinance. To facilitate the selection process, the applicant must submit:
– a project draft in which the applicant stipulates her/his research interests. The draft must include the following: a description of the chosen problem area and also an account of the academic and extracurricular reasons for studying this. The project area’s link to the subject as well as the problem area’s relevance to pedagogic professional activity and teacher training should be stated. A draft of the research project’s implementation must be presented.
– essays and theses which are assessed in accordance with usual scientific quality criteria. A balance is then made of the ability for problem formulation, theoretical connection, methodical awareness, analytical ability and presentation skills.
– CV, course grades and other certificates referred to by the applicant. The assessment takes account of good testimonials and credentials in fields relevant to research with Social Sciences (specialising in Educational Sciences).

Admission decisions are made by the head of department.

4. Disposition and content of the programme
Third-cycle studies in Social Sciences (specialising in Educational Sciences) comprise 240 HECs and lead to a Degree of Doctor. There is an option to obtain a Degree of
Licentiate after completing 120 HECs, providing the requirements specified in the Higher Education Ordinance’s Qualifications Ordinance for a Degree of Licentiate are fulfilled.
Third-cycle studies consist partly of courses, which are examined incrementally, and partly of own research work, which is to lead to a research thesis.
The doctoral student is also expected within the confines of her or his education to participate in seminar activities within the University that are relevant to the doctoral student.

A doctoral student may transfer credits awarded from previous courses and study programmes. A decision concerning credit transfer and consequent deduction from the time spent studying is to be made, following an individual application from the doctoral student, by a head of department in conjunction with the drawing up of an individual study plan, though no later than six months after the plan has been drawn up. Credit transferred shall be linked to a decision concerning deduction in funding time that, in terms of time, corresponds to the course credit transferred. The deduction must be documented in the individual study plan. No more than two years’ credit transfer, with associated deduction, may be allowed.

4.1 Courses
The programme comprises a course component of 90 HECs, of which:
− at least 30 HECs in scientific methods
− at least 5 HECs in teaching and learning in higher education
− completed requirements for courses in accordance with the compulsory course requirements imposed by the Centre for Education Science and Teacher Research (CUL Graduate School) at the University of Gothenburg.

Other courses are determined in consultation with the supervisor.

4.2 Doctoral theses and public defences
The core component of the studies is the drafting of a research thesis where the doctoral student is to advance knowledge within the research field. The doctoral student is expected to provide regular reports on her or his thesis work via seminars. The thesis may be structured as a compilation thesis or a monograph.

An external reader will be engaged for the half-time and/or final review seminar. The thesis or licentiate thesis must be defended at a public defence or seminar in accordance with the rules concerning the Degree of Doctor and Degree of Licentiate respectively laid down in the Higher Education Ordinance.

5. Supervision
At least two supervisors shall be appointed for each doctoral student: one principal supervisor and one assistant supervisor. At least one of the supervisors must be qualified to at least the level of reader (docent) and at least one of the supervisors must have
completed supervisor training. A doctoral examiner shall also be appointed for each
doctoral student. The doctoral examiner must be qualified to at least the level of reader
(docent) and be employed at the University of Gothenburg.

The doctoral student is entitled to supervision as stipulated by the individual study plan.
A doctoral student who so requests is entitled to change supervisor.

6. Individual study plan
An individual study plan shall be drawn up for each doctoral student in conjunction with
admission. Completed parts of the programme shall be reported in the individual study
plan and forthcoming parts shall be documented. The study plan shall function as a
steering instrument for the entire programme and ensure that the programme is being
conducted and followed up effectively. The study plan is to be adopted by the head of
department following consultation with the doctoral student, supervisor and doctoral
examiner. The head of department is responsible for the individual study plan being
reviewed and followed up at least once per year. The review shall clearly identify the
doctoral student's progression. The doctoral student, supervisor, doctoral examiner and
head of department must certify in writing that they have read and understood the
individual study plan and any amendments made to it.

6.1 Timetable and funding plan
The individual study plan shall include a timetable and an associated funding plan for
the entire period of study, up to the date planned for public defence of the thesis.

7. Other
Reference is otherwise made to applicable legislation, guidelines issued by the
University of Gothenburg and the Faculty of Social Sciences together with
implementing provisions for the CUL Graduate School at the University of Gothenburg.