

## **General syllabus for doctoral studies in Library and Information Science**

This general syllabus was first established and approved by the Research and Education Board on December 2, 2010. Revised and approved June 12, 2014 and January 19, 2017 and 2018-12-20.

### **1. AIM OF THE DOCTORAL STUDY PROGRAMME**

Library and Information Science takes as its starting point issues concerning the mediation of information and/or culture stored in some form of document. The subject area is focused on what could be described as information supply or the mediation of culture, as well as the institutions governing these processes, including libraries and other cultural document repositories. The field is closely connected to a number of other disciplines within the social sciences, the humanities and technology (Swedish Council for Planning and Coordination of Research, 1989).

The aim of the doctoral study programme is to develop the knowledge and skills required for independently pursuing research in Library and Information Science, as well as contributing to knowledge development in the discipline by completing a doctoral thesis.

Doctoral education in Library and Information Science shall develop the doctoral student's communication and teaching skills both in speech and in writing, within as well as outside of an academic context. The doctoral student should also acquire knowledge in planning, leading and carrying out research projects.

Doctoral education should provide the opportunity to develop international contacts through, for example, participation in research conferences and/or visits to other universities. The education should also promote contacts and collaborations with other organisations within relevant professional fields.

UNIVERSITY OF BORÅS  
Faculty of Librarianship, Information, Pedagogy and IT  
Swedish School of Library and Information Science

The specific aims of the education, which must be met in order to be awarded a degree of Doctor or Licentiate in Library and Information Science, are specified below, in addition to the general requirements stated in the Higher Education Ordinance and the Qualifications Ordinance.

*Knowledge and understanding*

For a Degree of Doctor, the doctoral student shall demonstrate

- broad knowledge within and a systematic understanding of the Library and Information Science field, as well as deep and current specialist knowledge within a defined area of this field,
- familiarity with scientific methodology in general and with the methodology in the field of Library and Information Science area in particular,
- in-depth insight into the possibilities and limitations of science, its role in a sustainable society and human responsibilities inherent in its use,
- in-depth insight into the central knowledge needs of the Library and Information Science area and the ability to plan research activities that can contribute to further developing the subject.

*Skills and capabilities*

For a Degree of Doctor, the doctoral student shall demonstrate

- the ability to scholarly analyses and syntheses and to independently and critically review and evaluate complex new phenomena, issues and situations
- the ability to critically, independently, creatively and with scholarly precision identify and formulate research questions, as well as plan and, with adequate methods, conduct research and other qualified tasks within given time frames, and review and assess such work,
- the ability to through one's own research contribute substantially to the development of knowledge in the form of a scholarly thesis,
- the ability to present and discuss research and research results in national as well as international contexts, orally as well as in writing and with authority, in dialogue with representatives of the scientific community as well as society in general.

*Judgement and approach*

For a Degree of Doctor, the doctoral student shall demonstrate

- the ability to identify needs of further research and show prerequisites for contributing to society's sustainable development and support others in their learning, whether in research, education as well as other qualified professional contexts,

- intellectual independence and scholarly honesty, as well as the ability to make ethical judgements relating to research,
- an understanding of and the ability to participate in multidisciplinary contexts.

## **2. ENTRY REQUIREMENTS**

In order to be admitted to the programme, according to the Higher Education Ordinance Chapter 7, the applicant is required to meet the general and specific entry requirements.

### **2.1 General entry requirements**

According to the Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 7 section 39, a person meets the general entry requirements if he or she has:

1. been awarded a master's degree (or Swedish magister)
2. satisfied the requirements for courses comprising at least 240 credits, of which at least 60 credits were awarded at the advanced level, or
3. acquired substantively equivalent knowledge in some other way in Sweden or abroad.

### **2.2 Specific entry requirements**

The specific entry requirements for admission to the doctoral study programme in Library and Information Science are that the student has:

1. at least a master's degree in the subject (or Swedish magister)
2. the proficiency in English required to be able to benefit from research literature and actively participate in seminars

The specific entry requirements also apply to candidates who have acquired substantively equivalent knowledge in some other way in Sweden or abroad.

### 3. ADMISSION AND SELECTION

Admission to the doctoral study programme in Library and Information Science usually takes place through public announcements on the university's website. According to the Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 7, evaluation and selection of applicants should be based on the ability required to benefit from the programme. In addition to this, the school's competencies and supervisory resources are taken into consideration in relation to the sub-field of Library and Information Science to which the announcement is related.

As a basis for selection, applicants are required to attach the following documents to the application:

- a. Essays and degree projects, which are assessed according to the following quality criteria: knowledge and understanding of the subject studied, linguistic ability, ability to use scientific theory and method, and analytical skills.
- b. A project outline (thesis plan) in which the applicant states research interests and planned area for the thesis. The project outline is used as the basis for assessing the supervisory competences and for assessing the ability to formulate scientific problems.
- c. Documentation regarding previous studies, degrees and other qualifications.

The admission process is handled by the Research Education Board of Library and Information Science, via a delegation of the Research and Education Board at the University of Borås. Applicants are assessed and ranked by a specially appointed review board, consisting of the chairman of the Research Education Board and one or two researchers with a doctoral degree and relevant competence in the subject area. Decisions about admission to the doctoral programme are taken by the Research Education Board. Decisions about doctoral employment are taken by the Dean of Faculty, on the recommendation of the Board.

### 4. PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

The doctoral study programme in Library and Information Science comprises a total of 240 higher education credits and is concluded with the public defence of a doctoral thesis (viva). It is also possible to be awarded a Degree of Licentiate after 120 higher education credits, provided that the requirements outlined in the Higher Education Ordinance regarding Degree of Licentiates are fulfilled.

The doctoral programme consists of courses, which must be successfully passed and individual research leading to the completion of a scholarly thesis. Within this framework, doctoral students are also expected to participate in seminar activities.

The degree requires active participation in research seminars, which take place within the framework of a doctoral course comprising 7.5 higher education credits, see section 4.2 Courses.

Parts of the education may be completed at another university, with the agreement of the supervisor and examiner.

#### **4.1 Thesis work**

For a Degree of Doctor, the doctoral student must write a scholarly thesis which accounts for 180 higher education credits. The subject of the thesis is chosen in consultation with the supervisors. The thesis should be based on independent research. The thesis should either be a compilation thesis or a monograph. If the thesis or its parts are jointly written with another person, the authors' respective contributions must be discernible. A compilation thesis should contain scientific articles, of which at least two are published or approved for publication in reputed scientific, peer review journals of relevance to Library and Information Science. The doctoral student should be the sole responsible or primary author of at least two of the articles.

The doctoral thesis is subject to continuous follow-ups during the doctoral programme and is reviewed on three occasions: the thesis plan seminar, the mid-way review, and the final seminar.

In the case of a Degree of Licentiate, a thesis plan should be presented and the completed thesis defended at a seminar with a specially appointed external reviewer (opponent) from another faculty. A licentiate thesis is graded by the doctoral student's examiner.

#### **4.2 Courses**

The course component of the doctoral study programme consists of several mandatory as well as optional courses, comprising 60 higher education credits.

Previously completed courses at the master's level may be subject to credit transfer after individual assessment.

*1. Mandatory courses, 45 higher education credits*

- Theory of science and research methods (both qualitative and quantitative methods), 22.5 higher education credits
- Research seminar activities, 7.5 higher education credits
- Subject-specific courses, 10 higher education credits
- Unit focused on sustainable development, 3 higher education credits
- Handling research data, 2 higher education credits

*2. Optional courses, 15 higher education credits*

The chosen optional courses entail further specialisation within one or several of the sub-fields or research methods of the discipline. These are chosen in consultation with the supervisors.

7.5 higher education credits of the mandatory courses should consist of participation in the research seminars within the framework of a specific doctoral course. To pass this course, students must show active participation in seminars as well as actively reviewing texts in accordance with the course syllabus.

If the doctoral student wishes to be credited for course work done before admittance to the programme, this should be clearly stated in the individual study plan.

The course component of a Degree of Licentiate is comprised of 30 higher education credits, consisting of both mandatory as well as optional courses, suggested by the doctoral student and the supervisor and decided on by the Research Education Board.

The doctoral student's examiner is responsible for credit transfer and has the overall responsibility for the doctoral student's completion of the course component in the doctoral study programme.

### **4.3 Thesis and public defence**

The central part of the doctoral education is the writing of a scholarly thesis in which the doctoral student shall make a qualitative contribution to the knowledge in the research field.

In accordance with the Higher Education Ordinance, for a Degree of Doctor (and a Degree of Licentiate) the thesis shall be defended at a public defence for a doctoral degree while the text is reviewed in a seminar to obtain the Degree of Licentiate.

Before the defence, two internal colleagues with a doctoral degree, one of which must be an associate professor (docent), should qualitatively assess the thesis. Neither of these “green readers” can be the doctoral student’s supervisor or examiner. This pre-reading takes place once the principal supervisor has asserted that the manuscript is almost finished.

Based on the conclusions of the green reading, the Research Education Board approve the public defence and the examining committee, which should consist of three members and one supplementary member, one of whom may be employed at the University of Borås. The members of the examining committee should at least been qualified at the level of associate professor (docent). The external reviewer (opponent) should not be active at the University of Borås.

## **5. SUPERVISORS AND EXAMINER**

At least two supervisors shall be appointed for each doctoral student, one of them as the principal supervisor and one or several as co-supervisors. The principal supervisor should be either a docent or a professor, and at least one of them should have doctoral supervisory training. Both the principal and co-supervisors should be well acquainted with the subject of the thesis.

Doctoral students are entitled to a total of 400 hours of supervision (including the supervisor’s preparations), distributed over the entire period of study. All doctoral students should follow a program that is continuously updated in consultation with the supervisors, whose responsibility is to continuously support, discuss, read and critically review the doctoral students work, as well as guide them in their efforts in order to reach the intended learning outcomes.

A doctoral student who so requests has the right to change to another supervisor, according to the university’s specific routines.

The examiner has the overall responsibility for ensuring that the doctoral candidate’s work and the doctoral study programme meets the quality requirements. The examiner should be a professor of Library and Information Science, employed at the University of Borås.

## **6. INDIVIDUAL STUDY PLAN**

Within three months of admission, the doctoral student and the principal supervisor should draw up an individual study plan. The Research Education Board approves the plan.

The individual study plan shall be reviewed regularly – at least once a year – and the follow-up should clearly state what progress has been made. The doctoral student is obliged to continuously report to the principal supervisor and the Director of Studies about their study activity and work progress, as well as be knowledgeable about and comply with the rules of the department and the university.

The doctoral student, supervisor(s), examiner, and the Director of Studies should all confirm in writing that they have taken part of the individual study plan and all the possible changes, if any. The Director of Studies and the Research Education Board are responsible for the annual follow-up of the individual study plan.

### **6.1 Timetable and financial plan**

The individual study plan should contain a timetable with an associated financial plan for the entire study period until the planned date of the public defence.

## **7. EXAMINATION**

The doctoral study programme in Library and Information Science consists of two programmes, one that leads to a Degree of Licentiate and one that leads to a Degree of Doctor.

A Degree of Doctor comprises 240 higher education credits, consisting of a 60-credit course section and one approved thesis of 180 higher education credits. A Degree of Licentiate comprises 120 higher education credits, consisting of a 30-credit course section and one approved thesis of 90 higher education credits.

## 8. REGULATIONS FOR TRANSFER

Doctoral students admitted under previous versions of the General Syllabus for doctoral studies in Library and Information Science may request a transfer to the revised syllabus within a two-year period from the date of admission. Questions regarding transfer to the new syllabus are handled and decided by the Research Education Board and should be documented in the doctoral student's individual study plan.

## 9. MISCELLANEOUS

Current legislation applies, as well as guidelines adopted by the University of Borås. Current regulations are available at [www.hb.se](http://www.hb.se). Information about the Swedish

School of Library and Information Science is also available at <http://www.hb.se/en/The-Swedish-School-of-Library-and-Information-Science-SSLIS/>