

General Syllabus for Doctoral Education in the Area of Library and Information Science

The general syllabus was first drawn up and approved by the Research and Education Board at the University of Borås on 2010-12-02.

It was revised and adopted 2014-06-12, 2017-01-19, 2018-12-20, 2023-05-25 and 2024-06-13.

1. Area description

Library and information science includes studies of the production, organisation, storage, transmission and use of information in its material forms (documents) as well as the institutions, such as libraries, where this takes place. The subject also includes cultural, societal, and technical prerequisites for these activities, processes, and institutions, which depending on the purpose and content can be called information provision or cultural mediation. Library and information science is connected to other disciplines in the social sciences, humanities, and technology.

2. Purpose and goals of the doctoral education programme

2.1. Purpose

The purpose of the doctoral education programme is to train people who can independently conduct research in Library and Information Science and who can contribute to the development of knowledge in the subject through the preparation of a scientific thesis.

The specific goals of the programme, which must be met in order to obtain a doctoral degree in library and information science, are listed below. Otherwise, the requirements specified in the Higher Education Ordinance and the degree regulations regarding degrees at the doctoral level apply.

2.2. Objectives for doctoral degrees and licentiate degrees (Higher Education Ordinance, Appendix 2)

Knowledge and understanding

For a doctoral degree, the doctoral student must demonstrate:

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

For the licentiate degree, the doctoral student must demonstrate:

- 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.

Competence and skills

For a doctoral degree, the doctoral student must:

- 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.

For a licentiate degree, the doctoral student must:

- 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.

Judgement and approach

For a doctoral degree, the doctoral student must:

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.

For the licentiate degree, the doctoral student must:

- 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.

3. Eligibility conditions and admission requirements

In order to be admitted to the educational programme, it is required that the applicant fulfils criteria for basic and special eligibility in accordance with what is stated in the Higher Education Ordinance Ch. 7.

3.1 General entry requirements

General entry requirements mean, according to the Higher Education Ordinance Ch. 7, Section 39, the person who has:

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

3.2. Specific entry requirements

In order to be admitted to doctoral education in Library and Information Science, the following is required:

1. completed 120 higher education credits at advanced level, of which at least 60 higher education credits in library and information science or another relevant subject.
2. approved academic paper at the advanced level of at least 15 higher education credits in library and information science or with a topic relevant to library and information science.
3. sufficient knowledge of English to be able to participate in a scientific context.

Specific entry requirements are also considered to have been achieved by those who acquired equivalent knowledge in some other way within or outside the country.

4. Admission and selection

Admission to doctoral education in library and information science takes place through a special announcement and in open competition.

Selection among applicants must, according to the Higher Education Ordinance Ch. 7, take place regarding their ability to assimilate the education. In addition, access to competencies among those at the faculty who can supervise the doctoral student are considered. The ability to assimilate the education is assessed based on previous study results and other merits, the quality and relevance of the proposed thesis project, the possibility of completing the project in the time available, the applicant's independence and ability to express themselves effectively and clearly in written form.

The admissions process is handled by the Swedish School of Library and Information Science. The selection process takes place through an appropriate collegial forum. Decisions on admission to doctoral studies in Library and Information Science are made by the relevant Research Education Committee based on delegation from the Research and Education Board at the University of Borås. A doctoral student representative is to be given the opportunity to participate in the selection process and such a representative is to participate in the meeting where decisions are made.

Decisions on employment as a doctoral student are made by the Head of Department based on delegation from the Dean of Faculty and the Vice-Chancellor respectively.

5. The content and structure of the doctoral education programme

Education at the doctoral level in Library and Information Science comprises 240 higher education credits and ends with a doctoral degree. It is possible to receive a licentiate degree after 120 higher education credits if the requirements stated in the Higher Education Ordinance's system of qualifications regarding licentiate degrees are fulfilled.

Education at the doctoral level consists partly of courses and partly of one's own research work, which must lead to a scholarly thesis. Within the framework of their education, the doctoral student must regularly participate in the department's seminar activities. The doctoral student must be responsible for orally commenting on the thesis texts of other doctoral students during the course.

5.1 The doctoral thesis (dissertation)

For the doctoral degree, the doctoral student must have written a scholarly thesis comprising 180 higher education credits. The topic for the thesis is chosen in consultation with the supervisor. The thesis must be based on an independent research project. The doctoral thesis must either be designed as a monograph, i.e. a uniform, coherent scientific work, or as a compilation thesis. A compilation thesis must contain scholarly papers (normally at least four articles) and an introductory framework, in an introductory chapter (*kappa* in Swedish). At least three of these must be published or approved for publication in scholarly collections (normally journals) that are peer reviewed and are relevant for the area of library and information science. If the thesis or parts of it are written together with another person, the doctoral student's contribution must be distinguishable. The doctoral student must stand as solely responsible or as first author on all contributions that are included in a compilation thesis.

For the licentiate degree, the doctoral student must write a scholarly thesis comprising 90 higher education credits. The licentiate thesis must either be designed as a monograph or as a compilation thesis, containing scientific articles. The student must then be the sole or first author of at least two articles, which have been published or approved for publication in journals that are peer reviewed and are relevant for the area of library and information science. The articles must also be introduced with an introductory chapter.

To ensure the doctoral student's progression through the educational programme, the thesis must be presented in several stages during the work, with mandatory presentation of the thesis plan, half-way seminar text and final seminar text.

5.2. Courses

The course part of the doctoral education consists of several sub-courses in the form of mandatory and optional course components for a total of 60 higher education credits. For the licentiate degree, the course part comprises 30 higher education credits. Previously completed courses at the master's or doctoral level can be credited after individual examination, which must be stated in the individual study plan.

5.2.1. Compulsory courses, at least 17.5 higher education credits (doctoral degree and licentiate degree)

To ensure the doctoral student's progression through the education, the compulsory course part should be completed during the first half of the doctoral education. Supervisors and examiners are responsible for supporting this. The compulsory courses must include:

- Theory of science
- Research method and methodology that treats and introduces both qualitative and quantitative methods
- Research Ethics

5.2.2. Other courses, 42.5 higher education credits (Degree of Doctor)

The remaining courses and creditable components are chosen in consultation with the supervisor. These are to be divided into three areas, which in accordance with the objectives of the postgraduate education (Higher Education Ordinance Appendix 2) aims to train the doctoral student to show:

- broad knowledge within and a systematic understanding of the research area of library and information science and its relationship to other research areas (at least 7.5 credits),
- familiarity with scientific methodology in general and with the methods of the specific research area in particular (at least 7.5 credits), and
- ability to orally and in writing with authority present and discuss research and research results in dialogue with the scientific community and society in general (at least 2.5 credits).

5.2.3. Other courses, 12.5 higher education credits (Degree of Licentiate)

The remaining courses and creditable components are chosen in consultation with the supervisor. These are to be divided into three areas, which in accordance with the objectives of the postgraduate education (Higher Education Ordinance Appendix 2) aims to train the doctoral student to show:

- knowledge and understanding in the research area (at least 3 credits)
- in-depth knowledge of scientific methodology in general and the specific research area's methods in particular. (at least 3 credits)
- ability to clearly present and discuss research and research results in both national and international contexts orally and in writing in dialogue with the scientific community and society in general (at least 2.5 credits)

The doctoral student's examiner is responsible for assessment of credited points.

5.3. Supervisor and examiner

The doctoral education committee must appoint at least two supervisors for each doctoral student, one of whom is appointed as the main supervisor (Ch. 6 § 28 Higher Education Ordinance). The principal supervisor must at least have the merit of Associate Professor/Docent or equivalent and normally be employed at the Swedish School of Library and Information Science at the University of Borås.

The supervisors must normally have undergone supervisor training.

The doctoral student is entitled to supervision to the extent of 400 clock hours (including the supervisors' preparatory work) distributed over the entire duration of the educational programme (four years full-time). Each doctoral student must follow a course of study that is continuously planned in consultation with the supervisors.

The task of the supervisors is to continuously support, discuss, read and critically review

the doctoral student's research work and to otherwise guide the doctoral student's studies and work so that the educational goals can be reached.

Doctoral students who request it have the right to change supervisors in accordance with procedures specifically established by the university.

The committee is to decide on a scientific examiner for the doctoral student. The scholarly examiner must be a professor or have been a Associate Professor/Docent in library and information science for at least four years and supervised at least one doctoral student. The examiner must be employed at the University of Borås. The examiner has overall responsibility for the doctoral student's research training and must ensure that the training meets the quality requirements.

5.4. Individual study plan

No later than three months after the doctoral student begins their doctoral education, the doctoral student and the supervisor must draw up an individual study plan. This is determined by the Research Education Committee.

According to the Higher Education Ordinance (Chapter 6), the plan must contain the university's and the doctoral student's commitments and a timetable for the doctoral student's education. The plan is to be determined after consultation with the doctoral student and the student's supervisor and examiner.

The individual study plan must be revised and determined at least once a year. The follow-up must clearly show how the education is progressing. The educational period may only be extended if there are special reasons for it. Such reasons can be leave due to illness, leave for service within the defence, or for positions of trust within trade unions, student organisations or parental leave.

The doctoral student is obliged to continuously report to the supervisor and examiner about his study activity and the progress of the work.

The individual study plan must contain a timetable with an associated financing plan for the entire education period up to the planned date for the defence.

5.5. Doctoral thesis defence and Licentiate seminar

In accordance with the Higher Education Ordinance for doctoral degrees and licentiate degrees, the thesis must be defended orally at a public doctoral thesis defence or a licentiate seminar. Before the thesis is presented at the defence, it must be reviewed by at least one doctoral researcher (normally with the merit of Associate Professor/Docent). The licentiate thesis/doctoral thesis must be publicly available no later than 15 working days before the defence/licentiate seminar.

Doctoral thesis defence: The chair, examining committee and external examiner of the public defence are appointed by the Research Education Committee on the proposal of the supervisor and the academic examiner. The chair must be at least an Associate Professor/Docent and normally the role is taken by the doctoral student's examiner. The examining committee is to consist of three or five members and one reserve. The majority of the regular members of the examining committee must be recruited from outside the University of Borås. The members of the examining committee must have at least equivalent the merit of Associate Professor/Docent. The external examiner must hold at least a doctorate and not work at the University of Borås. The equality aspect must be considered when appointing members of the examining committee.

Licentiate seminar: The chair, examining committee and external examiner of the licentiate seminar are appointed by the Research Education Committee on the proposal of the supervisor and the academic examiner. Everyone must hold at least a doctoral degree. The chair must be at least an Associate Professor/Docent and normally the role is taken by the doctoral student's examiner. Decisions on grades are made by an external reviewer. The supervisor, external examiner, reserve, and chair can be offered the opportunity to attend any deliberations. The majority of participants will be picked up from outside the Swedish School of Library and Information Science, University of Borås.

The doctoral thesis or licentiate thesis must be graded either Pass or Fail.

6. Examina

Within the doctoral education programme in library and information science, two different degrees can be obtained:

- Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Library and Information Science
- Degree of Licentiate of Arts in Library and Information Science

A total of 240 higher education credits is required for the doctoral degree, of which 60 higher education credits refer to courses and 180 higher education credits refer to own research in the form of thesis work. For the licentiate degree, a total of 120 higher education credits is required, of which 30 higher education credits refer to courses and 90 higher education credits refer to own research through thesis work.

7. Regulation of transfer

Doctoral students admitted on the basis of previous versions of the general syllabus for doctoral-level education in the field of Library and Information Science may, within a two-year period from the determination, request a transfer to the revised study plan. Questions about transfer to a new syllabus are handled and decided by the Research Education Committee and must be documented in the doctoral student's individual study plan.

8. Other

Otherwise, current legislation, as well as guidelines at the University of Borås, are to be applied. Information on current regulations is available on the university's website.