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Deciding Authority: The Faculty Board

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General Syllabus for Didactics at Mälardalen University

Den svenska versionen av den allmänna studieplanen har tolkningsföreträde ifall det råder oenighet om hur texten ska förstås.

The Swedish version of the general syllabus has priority in interpretation if there is disagreement about how the text should be understood.

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Third-cycle subject area Didactics

Research in Didactics examines issues about education, teaching, and learning. Didactics as a scientific field encompasses several scholarly traditions that focus on teaching practices. Didactics incorporates questions about the content of teaching, in different educational contexts, and how this content is made legitimately, i.e. those who have the power over the selection processes in teaching. Furthermore, scholarly didactics studies the formats of teaching and learning (methods and models) as well as the participants (teachers and pupils/children) and their mutual relationships. Therefore, in the field of didactics, education, teaching, learning, and socialisation processes are studied.

Purpose and objective of the third-cycle studies

The objective of the third-cycle education is that the doctoral student will develop knowledge, generic skills and an approach that is needed to independently plan, implement and present scholarly studies both orally and in writing in the didactics third-cycle subject area.

Third-cycle courses and study programmes can lead to two different qualifications, a Degree of Doctorate (240 credits equivalent to full-time study of four years) and a Degree of Licentiate (120 credits equivalent to full-time study of two years).

Through active participation in courses and work with the doctoral thesis or licentiate thesis, as well as active participation in seminar activities conducted within each third-cycle subject area, the below mentioned qualitative targets are supported at the third-cycle level according to the Higher Education Ordinance, Appendix 2 (SFS 1993:100).

Additional information

National and local regulations provide a framework for the general syllabus. In addition to the requirements in the general syllabus, doctoral students may have specific requirements for their education, for example, courses that are compulsory in the context of a research school, which must be set out in the individual study plan. The allocation between courses and thesis/academic papers must nevertheless follow the set-up of the third-cycle education.

Degree of Licentiate

Goals

Knowledge and Understanding

For a Degree of Licentiate, the doctoral student must:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding in the research domain, including current specialist knowledge in a limited area, as well as specialised knowledge of research methodology in general and of the methodology in the specific research domain in particular.

Competence and Skills

For a Degree of Licentiate, the doctoral student must:

- demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate questions with scientific accuracy, critically, independently and creatively, plan and conduct a limited research project and other qualified assignments using adequate methods within stipulated time limits and thereby contribute to knowledge development as well as evaluate this work,
- demonstrate the ability, in national as well as international contexts, to present and discuss research and research findings orally and in writing in dialogue with the scientific community and society in general, and
- demonstrate the skills required to participate independently in research and development initiatives and to work autonomously in some other qualified capacity.

Judgement and Approach

For a Degree of Licentiate, the doctoral student must:

- demonstrate the ability to make assessments relating to 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 their need for further knowledge and take responsibility for their own skills development.

Thesis

For a Degree of Licentiate, the doctoral student must have a pass grade on an academic paper which corresponds to 82.5 higher education credits.

Degree of Doctorate

Goals

Knowledge and Understanding

For a Degree of Doctorate, the doctoral student must:

- demonstrate a broad expertise and a systematic understanding of the research domain, as well as advanced and current specialist knowledge of a limited area of the research domain, and
- demonstrate familiarity with research methodology in general and with the methodology of the specific research domain in particular.

Competence and Skills

For a Degree of Doctorate, the doctoral student must:

- demonstrate the capacity for scholarly analysis and synthesis as well as review and assess new and complex phenomena, questions and situations, independently and critically,
- demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate questions with scholarly precision, critically, independently and creatively, and to plan and conduct research and other qualified tasks using appropriate methods and within predetermined time frames, and to review and evaluate such work,
- demonstrate through a thesis the ability to make a significant contribution to the development of knowledge through their own research,
- demonstrate the ability, in national as well as international contexts, to authoritatively present and discuss, orally and in writing, research and research findings 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 societal development and support the learning of others both through research and education as well as in some other qualified professional capacity.

Judgement and Approach

For a Degree of Doctorate, the doctoral student must:

- demonstrate intellectual independence and scholarly integrity as well as the ability to make assessments in 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.

Research thesis (doctoral thesis)

For a Degree of Doctorate, the doctoral student must have been awarded a pass grade in a research thesis (doctoral thesis) which corresponds to at least 165 higher education credits.

Structure of third-cycle studies

Individual study plan

For each doctoral student, an individual study plan must be established according to Chapter 6, Section 29 of the Higher Education Ordinance. The individual study plan must include the University's and the doctoral student's commitments and a timeline for the doctoral students' education. The individual study plan must define activities that provide prerequisites to reach the national as well as subject-specific qualitative targets.

The individual study plan must be regularly followed up and may be changed to the required extent by the University after consultation with the doctoral student and their supervisor.

Courses

An important aspect of third-cycle education in didactics is a requirement to take courses. Courses are selected in consultation with the principal supervisor and are documented in the individual study plan and can be taken at the University or another higher education institution.

For a Degree of Licentiate, a course component of 37.5 credits is required of which the below areas comprising 30 credits are compulsory:

- Didactics as an area of expertise and research discipline, 7.5 credits
- Theory of knowledge, 7.5 credits
- Qualitative methods, 7.5 credits *or* Quantitative methods, 7.5 credits
- Research ethics, 7.5 credits

For a Degree of Doctorate, a course component of 75 credits is required of which the below areas comprising 45 credits are compulsory:

- Didactics as a knowledge area and research discipline 15 credits
- Theory of knowledge, 7.5 credits
- Qualitative methods, 7.5 credits
- Quantitative methods, 7.5 credits
- Research ethics, 7.5 credits

Review of ongoing studies

Within the framework of third-cycle education at MDU, a doctoral student must present the ongoing doctoral studies internally, but also at public

seminars/reviews to give the scientific community and the public insight into the research that is being conducted at the University. The reviews allow the doctoral student to discuss the ongoing work and have it reviewed by internal and external senior researchers. In the subject of didactics, there are three mandatory review sessions where the doctoral student must present their project as follows:

- Planning seminar
- Mid-way review, this does not apply to doctoral students who will complete a Degree of Licentiate
- The final review.

Licentiate thesis

A licentiate thesis must be designed as a compilation thesis or monograph and be written in English, Swedish, Norwegian, or Danish.

A licentiate thesis that is written as a compilation thesis consists of 2 papers and a compilation part (introductory chapter of a compilation thesis – known as a *kappa* in Swedish). The papers must meet the quality requirements for publication in peer-reviewed journals. When the licentiate thesis is submitted for the licentiate seminar at least 1 of the papers must have been published or accepted. The remaining papers must be available in the shape of a complete manuscript.

The compilation part must highlight the various papers, how they are connected and what joint knowledge they have generated. The licentiate thesis, regardless of whether it is written in Swedish or English (or another Scandinavian language), must include summaries in both Swedish and English.

Doctoral thesis

A doctoral thesis must be designed as a compilation thesis or monograph and be written in English, Swedish, Norwegian, or Danish.

A compilation thesis consists of 3-5 papers and a compilation part (introductory chapter of a compilation thesis – known as a *kappa* in Swedish). The papers must meet the quality requirements for publication in peer-reviewed journals. When the thesis is presented for the thesis defence, at least two of the papers must have been published or accepted. The other papers must be available in the shape of a complete manuscript.

The compilation part must highlight the various papers, how they are connected and what joint knowledge they have generated. The thesis, regardless of whether it is written in Swedish or English (or another Scandinavian language), must include summaries in both Swedish and English.

Examination

Third-cycle courses and study programmes are concluded with a Degree of Doctorate or a Degree of Licentiate. The doctoral student who has a doctoral degree as their goal has the right, but no obligation, to graduate with a licentiate degree as a stage in the third-cycle education.

Degree of Licentiate

For a Degree of Licentiate, a total of 120 completed higher education credits are required, consisting of:

- a pass grade on courses comprising 37.5 credits,
- a pass grade on a licentiate thesis where the scope corresponds to studies of 82.5 credits

Licentiate seminar

The doctoral student must independently defend their licentiate thesis at a public defence.

The licentiate thesis will be examined by an examining committee who award a grade of Pass or Fail.

Degree of Doctorate

For a Degree of Doctorate, a total of 240 completed higher education credits are required, consisting of:

- a pass grade on courses comprising 75 credits,
- a pass grade on a doctoral thesis where the scope corresponds to studies of 165 higher education credits

Defence of the doctoral thesis

The doctoral student must independently defend their doctoral thesis at a public defence.

The doctoral thesis will be examined by an examining committee who award a grade of Pass or Fail.

Table 1. Overview of third-cycle education towards the Degree of Licentiate and Degree of Doctor in Didactics respectively.

The Table shows an overview of third-cycle education towards the Degree of Licentiate and Degree of Doctor in Didactics.

Overview of the education	Courses and higher education credits		Thesis or academic paper, higher education credits	Number of higher education credits
	Compulsory	Total number of course credits		
Degree of Doctor	45	75	165	240
Degree of Licentiate	30	37.5	82.5	120

Title of qualification

For a Degree of Doctorate

Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

For a Degree of Licentiate

Degree of Licentiate of Science

Entry requirements

General entry requirements

A person meets the general entry requirements to third-cycle education, according to Chapter 7, Section 39, of the Higher Education Ordinance if they:

1. have graduated with a qualification at master's (second-cycle) level,
2. have fulfilled course requirements of at least 240 higher education credits, of which at least 60 are at second-cycle level, or
3. have acquired equivalent knowledge in some other way in or outside Sweden.

The University may grant an exemption from the general entry requirements for an individual applicant if there are particular reasons, according to Chapter 7, Section 39 of the Higher Education Ordinance.

Specific entry requirements

To be admitted to research studies in didactics, the person must have a degree with studies comprising at least 60 credits in the field of educational sciences and have completed a thesis comprising 15 credits relevant to educational sciences. The applicant must have completed a degree project/independent project/thesis comprising at least 15 higher education credits at second-cycle level (or the equivalent). The applicant will also have gained specific entry requirements if they have acquired substantially equivalent knowledge in another way in or outside Sweden.

Selection

Selection between applicants who fulfil the entry requirements is conducted based on the applicants' prerequisites to benefit from the courses and study programme at the third-cycle level in didactics. There may be interviews with the applicants.

During the selection process, the applicant's preliminary thesis plan as well as previously completed independent projects (in particular, degree projects at second-cycle level) are reviewed with relation to independence, methodological clarity and theoretical awareness, analytical and stylistic rigour, and critical approach. A teaching degree (Master's in Education) or experience in an educational profession is also advantageous.

In addition, the availability of supervisors with a relevant research specialisation at the University, concerning the proposed thesis topic, will be considered. One condition is that the department can offer a positive research environment and supportive supervision for the doctoral student project in question.

Coming into effect and interim regulations

The present syllabus will come into effect on 1 April 2024.

Doctoral students admitted before this date have the right to follow the syllabus and examination requirements which were valid when the doctoral student was admitted.

If the doctoral student requests it and it is appropriate, it may be decided that the doctoral student can transfer to the new syllabus for continuation of the programme. Such a decision must be documented in the individual study plan.