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Guidelines for Third- cycle Education at Uppsala University

Guidelines for Third-cycle Education at Uppsala University	3
1. Goals and preconditions for third-cycle education	3
2. Responsibility for third-cycle education	4
3. Admission to third-cycle education	4
4. General study syllabuses	5
5. Individual study plans	5
6. Study financing	6
7. Extension of study financing	7
8. Supervision	8
9. Publishing dissertations	9
10. Examination and credit	9
11. Public defences and licentiate seminars	10
12. Withdrawal of resources for third-cycle students	11
13. Deregistration of third-cycle students	12

Guidelines for Third-cycle Education at Uppsala University

The Vice Chancellor of Uppsala University has established the following guidelines for third-cycle (research-level) education.

These guidelines are based on chapters 5, 6, 7, and 12 in the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100), the Ordinance (1995:938) on Study Grants, and Admissions Regulations and Rules regarding Grading in Third-cycle Education at Uppsala University, UFV 2010/472.

The guidelines delineate further conditions that apply in planning and implementing third-cycle education at Uppsala University.

1. Goals and preconditions for third-cycle education

Third-cycle education is the highest level of public education. At Uppsala University, two degrees can be attained at the research level, the doctoral degree and the licentiate degree. For the doctoral degree the net study period is to be no longer than four years, and for the licentiate degree no more than two years. Third-cycle education must be of such high quality and such a structure that individuals who have successfully completed it will be well prepared and well qualified for employment at the best universities in Sweden and abroad, in the business community, in public authorities, and in society in general. This education must be carried out in an attractive, dynamic, accepting environment marked by the highest quality, critical thinking, diversity, gender equality, openness, and democratic values.

The Qualifications Ordinance, Annex 2 to the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100), states what requirements are to be met for the respective degree (description of qualifications). The Qualifications Ordinance for the licentiate degree and the doctoral degree, respectively, establishes, among other things, a number of goals concerning knowledge and understanding, proficiencies and abilities, judgment, and academic approaches.

Doctoral degrees from Uppsala University's various faculties must be comparable in terms of level. The same must apply to licentiate degrees. Degrees must be completed within the same period of time following a combination of coursework and dissertation work.

Quality third-cycle education is predicated upon a good research environment. Doctoral candidates must be offered favourable educational conditions, supervision by competent and involved researchers, and good study conditions in general. The goal is for third-cycle students' dissertation work to constitute an important component of the department's research activities and to result in internationally competitive research.

The overarching goals for third-cycle education are thus that the newly graduated doctor or licentiate will have good qualifications for a successful career in academia or elsewhere. Among other things, this entails:

- a good subject knowledge of a research field,
- a capacity for independent and critical thinking,
- skills in scientific methods and modes of working,
- an ability to identify interesting and researchable problems,

- teaching skills and an ability to express oneself in speech and writing,
- a capacity to work in an international context, and
- a good ability to understand and deal with ethical issues in research.

Third-cycle education must be an important part of the department's research activities, which necessitates supervision by competent advisers and good general conditions for studying.

2. Responsibility for third-cycle education

Under Chapter 2, Sections 2-3 of the Higher Education Ordinance, the responsibility for third-cycle education ultimately lies with the University Board and the Vice Chancellor. By delegation, this responsibility has been assigned to the board of the disciplinary domain or of the faculty in each respective area.

The disciplinary domain board or faculty board has the overall responsibility and supervisory responsibility, but the operative responsibility lies with the department where the doctoral candidate is registered. Disciplinary domain boards, faculty boards, department boards, and supervisors are to see to it that third-cycle education is carried out with high quality and efficiency and that the rights and obligations of everyone involved are observed.

A disciplinary domain board or faculty board that has been assigned the overall responsibility for third-cycle education in an area must coordinate third-cycle education in its field of responsibility and, if suitable, establish regulations at the supradepartmental level. Departments are responsible for their implementation. The department is to decide either to establish a special body or to specially appoint one or more individuals to exercise this responsibility within the department. For instance, this responsibility may be exercised by the head of department, the deputy head of department, a specially appointed director of studies for the third cycle, or by collective assessment of the achievement of a doctoral candidate by the teaching staff.

Mutual rights and responsibilities that obtain between the department and the doctoral candidate are expressed in an individual study plan. The document *Teaching and Learning at Uppsala University* provides guidance and advice about expectations and approaches to issues regarding the respective responsibilities of teachers and students in education. In most respects, these are also applicable to the third cycle.

Instructions for the content of general study syllabuses are presented in Section 4 below. Complementary regulations regarding individual study plans are found in Section 5.

3. Admission to third-cycle education

Admission to third-cycle education must be characterized by transparency. Wherever possible, admission must also be competitive. The disciplinary domain board or faculty board that has been assigned the overall responsibility for third-cycle education in an area has the overall responsibility for the third-cycle student throughout the student's education in terms of funding, supervision, and other resources. In *Admissions Regulations and Rules regarding Grading in Third-cycle Education at Uppsala University* (AFUU), the University Board has adopted local regulations for admissions to third-cycle education (Sec. 3 AFUU). Regulations regarding acceptance and selection, among other matters, are found there.

The responsibility for admitting students and assessing the security of financing lies with the disciplinary domain board or faculty board. Delegation of this responsibility must be explicitly stated and must not be assigned to a level lower than the departmental level. Admission of third-cycle students with funding other than study grant or a salaried studentship may not be delegated.

4. General study syllabuses

Regulations regarding general study syllabuses are found in Chapter 6, Sections 26 and 27 of the Higher Education Ordinance.

Ch. 6 Sec. 26 HEO: For each subject in which third-cycle courses or study programmes are offered a general study syllabus is required. Ordinance (2010:1064)

Ch. 6 Sec. 27 HEO: A general study syllabus shall indicate the following: the main content of the study programme, specific entry requirements and any other regulations required. Ordinance (2010:1064)

The disciplinary domain board or faculty board with the overall responsibility for third-cycle education in an area determines in which subjects third-cycle education is to be provided. For each such subject there shall be a general study syllabus to stipulate the main content of the educational programme, requirements for special eligibility, and other requisite regulations. General study syllabuses must be adopted by the disciplinary domain board or faculty board with the overall responsibility for third-cycle education in an area. The syllabuses must state the ratio between dissertation work and coursework, whether it is possible to take a licentiate degree, and what is required for the respective degrees.

5. Individual study plans

The Higher Education Ordinance states the following in regard to individual study plans:

Ch. 6 Sec. 29 HEO: An individual study plan shall be drawn up for each doctoral student. This plan shall contain the undertakings made by the doctoral student and the higher education institution and a timetable for the doctoral student's study programme. The plan shall be adopted after consultation with the doctoral student and his or her supervisors.

The individual study plan shall be reviewed regularly and amended by the higher education institution to the extent required after consultation with the doctoral student and his or her supervisors. The period of study may only be extended if there are special grounds for doing so. Such grounds may comprise leave of absence because of illness, leave of absence for service in the defence forces or an elected position in a trade union or student organisation, or parental leave. Ordinance (2010:1064)

At Uppsala University, individual study plans must include information about

- the intended degree (doctoral, licentiate, or both), and, where relevant, special reasons for admission to a licentiate programme.
- a time plan for the doctoral candidate's education. The plan should include a broad plan for each year and an estimated date for defending the dissertation. It is particularly important that the formulation well describe the projected dissertation work, incl. target dates for goals or partial goals that can be followed up.

- a funding plan for the entire programme period. When funding other than a salaried studentship or a study grant is financing the project, the special considerations that obtained upon admission must be appended to the individual study plan along with, if relevant, the contract with the financier.
- planned courses, instruction, teacher training, and/or other departmental work.
- the organization of supervision, stating both scope and forms.
- the special conditions relevant to the studies, such as workplace, computer, other work tools, and whatever else is required for the programme to be pursued efficiently.

The study plan must be signed by the doctoral candidate, supervisors, and the head of the department. The disciplinary domain board, faculty board, or the joint body for a faculty or disciplinary domain with responsibility for third-cycle education is responsible for following up and revising individual study plans at least once per year. If special difficulties can be foreseen, more frequent follow-ups and alternative approaches should be considered. Teacher training is mandatory for doctoral candidates who are to have teaching duties, and this training must either be a credited component of the individual study plan or be carried out within the framework of the doctoral candidate's departmental duties. The individual study plan is a dynamic document in which both deviations and completed stages are continuously documented. It is desirable for doctoral candidates to be offered the opportunity to have personal guidance conferences with the director of studies or an equivalent person who is not directly involved in their dissertation work.

6. Study financing

The allocation of study support is regulated in Chapter 5, Sections 3, 4, and 5 of HEO and in Sections 3 and 4 of *Admissions Regulations and Rules regarding Grading in Third-cycle Education at Uppsala University (AFUU)*.

The disciplinary domain board or faculty board assigned the overall responsibility for third-cycle education in an area has the overall responsibility for doctoral candidates throughout their period of study in terms of financing, supervision, and other resources. Further local regulations are found in Section 3 of AFUU.

Under Chapter 7, Section 36 in HEO, persons appointed to doctoral studentships or awarded doctoral grants may be admitted to third-cycle education. Uppsala University strives to make doctoral studentships the primary form of financing for third-cycle studies. However, doctoral grants may be instituted as study financing in accordance with the Ordinance (1995:938) on Doctoral Grants. Third-cycle students admitted either to complete a doctoral degree or to complete a licentiate degree must be offered a third-cycle studentship after no more than 12 months of their net study time has been used.

If special circumstances obtain, students may be admitted with so-called other financing. In such cases, the disciplinary domain board, faculty board, or a joint body for a faculty or disciplinary domain makes the admission decision. The right to decide about admitting a third-cycle student with other financing than a doctoral grant or a doctoral studentship may not be delegated. Admission of third-cycle students with other financing requires careful assessment of whether study financing can be secured for the entire period of study. The obligation to provide funding for the third-cycle student and the obligation to make other resources for the completion of the project available during the period of study must be regulated by contract or some other binding document between the

financier and the department where the third-cycle student will be working. The contract should also include guarantees that the third-cycle project will be protected from any internal reprioritizing on the part of the financier and that time can be reserved in daily activities to pursue a third-cycle programme.

Other financing in the form of scholarships or other funding must be used with restraint for third-cycle education. In no case may the level of financing fall below that of the doctoral study grant after tax. In order to determine whether funding is sufficient for the coming half year when this funding is stated in a currency other than SEK, the exchange rate that was current on January 1 and July 1 is to be used. This assessment is to be made twice yearly, and consideration must be given to any tax to be paid on the amount granted. The disciplinary domain board/faculty board or by delegation the department is responsible for providing supplementary funding to attain the prescribed level. The Human Resources Division is responsible for regulations regarding the practical administration of supplementary funding, as well as issues involving insurance, residency permits, and, if relevant, work permits.

Should financing of a third-cycle student with other financing be discontinued during the period of study, the disciplinary domain board or faculty board, or by delegation the department, will be responsible for securing support for the remainder of the study period. If a third-cycle student admitted with other financing switches to a doctoral studentship, the period of study must be adjusted so that the net study period of two or four years, respectively, of full-time study is retained. Only under the circumstances stated in Chapter 5, Section 7 of HEO may financing be provided for a period longer than a net study time of four years.

7. Extension of study financing

The length of study financing is regulated in the Higher Education Ordinance as follows:

Ch. 5 Sec. 7 HEO: Appointment to a doctoral studentship shall apply for an indefinite period, however for no longer than until a specified date and never for a period extending more than one year after the award of a PhD of a doctorate in the fine, applied and performing art.

The initial appointment may apply for no longer than one year. An appointment may be renewed for no more than two years at a time.

A person may be appointed to a doctoral studentship for a total of eight years. The total employment period may, however, not exceed the time corresponding to full-time third-cycle study for four years. For courses or study programmes to be concluded with the award of a licentiate degree or a licentiate degree in the fine, applied and performing art the total employment period may not exceed the time corresponding to full-time third-cycle study for two years. The time spent studying by the third-cycle student while not appointed to a doctoral studentship shall be deducted from these periods.

The total period of employment may, however, exceed that stated in the third paragraph if special grounds exist. Such grounds may comprise leave of absence because of illness, leave of absence for service in the defence forces or an elected position in a trade union or student organisation, or parental leave. Ordinance (2009:933).

Sec. 4 Ordinance on Study Grants for Third-cycle Students: A study grant may be awarded for a total of no more than four grant years and 10 months. However, it may not be awarded for a period corresponding to a full grant for two grant years and 5 months. Any study time for which the third-cycle student has not had a study grant must be subtracted from this period.

However, the study grant may be awarded for a longer period than prescribed in the first paragraph if special circumstances obtain, such as leave of absence owing to illness, for service in the total defence force, or for trustee work within union organisations and student organisations, or for parental leave. (2002:140)

Third-cycle education is the mutual responsibility of the third-cycle student and supervisors. At Uppsala University every third-cycle student must have knowledgeable and involved supervisors who continuously monitor the progress of his or her education. Both supervisors and the third-cycle student are responsible for proposing any necessary changes in the individual study plan in order for the dissertation work to be completed within the maximum net study time. However, if special circumstances obtain in the sense intended by the Higher Education Ordinance, a student's studentship may be extended.

Guidelines for extending study grants and studentships for students with trustee positions have been issued in a separate decision 2007 02 06 (UFV 2006/1028). The equivalent possibility of extension also applies to third-cycle students with other financing than studentships or study grants. Other types of leaves of absence than those regulated in the Higher Education Ordinance shall be allowed only in exceptional circumstances. For lengthy leaves of absence, such as parental leave, the possibility of the third-cycle student sustaining activity in dissertation work must be facilitated. The recommendations in Uppsala University's parental policy apply regardless of what financing the third-cycle student has.

8. Supervision

Supervision in third-cycle education is regulated in Chapter 6, Section 28 of HEO and Section 1 of *Admissions Regulations and Rules regarding Grading in Third-cycle Education at Uppsala University* (AFUU).

Ch. 6 Sec. 28 HEO: At least two supervisors shall be appointed for each doctoral student. One of them shall be nominated as the principal supervisor. Doctoral students are entitled to supervision during their studies unless the vice-chancellor has decided otherwise by virtue of Section 30.

A doctoral student who so requests shall be allowed to change supervisor. Ordinance (2010:1064)

Supervision is a vital quality issue in third-cycle education. It is therefore imperative that the scope, forms, and temporal distribution of supervision be the object of reflection and discussion in connection with the creation and revision of the individual study plan in consultation between supervisors and the third-cycle student. Resource persons such as the director of studies, the supervising teachers, and the like increase the possibility of qualifying the academic environment during the period of study and, if necessary, can function as neutral parties in discussions of the content, work modes, and results of the programme.

The concept of supervision takes on different meaning depending on the topic and orientation of the dissertation. Besides direct conference time with supervisors, the concept of supervision also encompasses the time that the supervisor devotes to reviewing and commenting on the student's texts, helping out with literature searches relating to the dissertation project, and the like. In some subjects supervision is given in experimental methodology, which can be provided by technical staff in charge of the equipment being used. Proposing and arriving at a dissertation topic is an important educational component for the third-cycle student. However, it is vital for the supervisor, as an

experienced researcher, to actively help the student in this introductory phase, so the choice can be made without unnecessary expenditure of time and so that the subject chosen can be academically addressed within the planned time frame.

The responsibilities of supervisors entail that they may face issues and problems that are not only academic in nature. This places great demands on the general competence of supervisors. At least one of the supervisors must have completed training for supervisors. University-wide training is therefore regularly arranged for this purpose. The disciplinary domain board or faculty board assigned the overall responsibility for third-cycle education should offer complementary training for supervisors. New supervisors should undergo training before the end of their first year.

9. Publishing dissertations

Doctoral dissertations must be available at the University Library in the number of copies necessary to allow satisfactory review of the dissertation at least three weeks prior to its public defence. The period from June 15 to August 15 may not be counted in this period of availability. Dissertations must also be sent to every department in the country with research and third-cycle education in the academic field to which the topic of the dissertation belongs, so that it is available there at least two weeks prior to the public defence of the dissertation. Shorter periods of availability for the complete printed doctoral dissertation and the digital version of the announcement sheet and the framing summary of portfolio dissertations may be granted by the dean or a supradepartmental body only if extraordinary circumstances obtain.

For licentiate theses, the period of availability prior to the licentiate seminar is equivalent to that for doctoral dissertations. If the student was admitted with the goal of terminating his or her studies with a licentiate degree, an announcement sheet must be digitally published.

By decision from 2002-05-14 (UFV 2002/779), all announcement sheets and the framing summaries of portfolio dissertations must be published digitally in the University's dissertation database. Information about the digital version of announcement sheets and portfolio dissertation summaries should be disseminated throughout Sweden and abroad.

Publication of dissertations as well as their printing and distribution must be arranged in such a way as not to exceed the net study period of our years for the doctoral degree and two years for the licentiate degree. The delay of publication that may occur in connection with patenting must not render it impossible to uphold the normal net period of study.

10. Examination and credit

Obligatory components of third-cycle programmes are examined in the manner presented in the Higher Education Ordinance. The disciplinary domain board or faculty board assigned the overall responsibility for third-cycle education in an area must, if necessary, issue complementary regulations regarding the examination of obligatory components. Other regulations must be stated in the general study syllabus for the third-cycle subject. Under University regulations, examinations included in third-cycle education shall be assessed using the grades of Pass or Fail.

In connection with admissions, but also later in the programme, issues of transferring credit may arise. The possibility of transferring credit must not constitute an advantage in connection with assessing qualifications for admission. Application to transfer credit is made at the initiative of the applicant. Assessment of the amount of credit to be transferred must be performed on a course-by-course basis. Routine transfers of multiple courses, for example in the form of the fifth year of a master programme, a so-called block transfer, are prohibited. In order to ensure the progressivity of

the programme, the number of credits to be transferred must be assessed in relation to the original scope of the course. Transfers must not be linked to demands for a shortened period of study. The requirement of secure financing for a net study period of four years remains inviolated. Decisions regarding credit transfers are made according to regulations adopted by the disciplinary domain board/faculty board.

11. Public defences and licentiate seminars

Regulations for the public defence of doctoral dissertations are found in Chapter 6, Sections 33-35 of the Higher Education Ordinance and are complemented in *Admissions Regulations and Rules regarding Grading in Third-cycle Education at Uppsala University* (AFUU).

Ch. 6 Sec. 33 HEO: The qualification descriptors for PhD's and doctorates in the fine, applied and performing arts lay down that an approved doctoral thesis is required for the award of these degrees. The doctoral thesis shall be presented and defended orally in public. A faculty examiner (*opponent*) shall be appointed for this presentation. Ordinance (2010:1064)

Ch. 6 Sec. 34 HEO: At least one of those participating in the grading of a doctoral thesis shall be someone who does not have a post at the higher education institution awarding the degree. Ordinance (2010:1064)

Ch. 6 Sec. 35 HEO: A higher education institution may issue regulations on the grading system to be used and on public defences and grading in other respects. Ordinance (2010:1064)

The Vice Chancellor has decided to delegate the right to determine the time and place of the public defence to the chairperson of the disciplinary domain board or faculty board with the overall responsibility for third-cycle education in an area. This decision must be made public at least three weeks prior to the public defence. The public defence and licentiate seminar may take place during semesters and during the summer break with the exception of the period from June 15 to August 15.

Doctoral dissertations are to be graded by an examination board that is specially appointed for each individual dissertation. An examination board is to consist of three or five members, the majority of whom must come from outside the department to which the doctoral candidate belongs. Persons who have served as supervisors of the doctoral candidate may not be included in the examination board, unless extraordinary circumstances obtain, and only upon decision of the Vice Chancellor. The board selects one of its members to serve as chair. The faculty examiner has the right to attend the meeting of the examination board and to participate in its deliberations but not in its decision. The same applies to the supervisor, unless he or she is a member. The examination board has a quorum when all members are present. The opinion of the majority of the members is the opinion of the board. The board decides whether its decision is to be justified in writing and whether dissenting opinions are to be accounted for.

The disciplinary domain board, faculty board, or joint body for a faculty or disciplinary domain with responsibility for third-cycle education determines the forms for licentiate seminars in its respective area.

12. Withdrawal of resources for third-cycle students

Ch. 6 Sec. 30 HEO: If a doctoral student substantially neglects his or her undertakings in the individual study plan, the vice-chancellor shall decide that the doctoral student is no longer entitled to supervision and other study resources. Before such a decision is made, the doctoral student and the supervisors shall be given an opportunity to make representations. The case shall be considered on the basis of their reports and any other records available. The assessment shall take into account whether the higher education institution has fulfilled its own undertakings in the individual study plan. A written record of the decision shall be made, which is to include reasons for the decision.

Resources may not be withdrawn for any period in which the third-cycle student has been appointed to a doctoral studentship or is receiving a doctoral grant. Ordinance (2010:1064).

If a doctoral student substantially neglects his or her undertakings in the individual study plan, resources for that individual's third-cycle education shall be withdrawn. Such a decision should be taken in cases where the third-cycle student is not pursuing his or her education in accordance with the individual study plan, for example if the third-cycle student, despite adequate supervision and requisite resources for the planned work does not demonstrate the ability to complete the education in a reasonable manner. In cases where the deviation is significant, the head of department or the equivalent person shall direct both the third-cycle student and supervisors to submit written statements.

Withdrawing resources requires painstaking assessment and must be done in such a manner that the reasons for and against withdrawing supervision and other resources are clearly stated. Matters involving the withdrawal of resources must be handled with respect and due consideration of the privacy of the third-cycle student.

If the third-cycle student has significantly neglected his or her undertakings according to the study plan, the head of department or the equivalent person shall propose to the disciplinary domain board, faculty board, or joint body for the faculty or disciplinary domain with the responsibility for third-cycle education that it take measures and, if necessary, request that the Vice Chancellor withdraw the resources. The decision to withdraw resources is made by the Vice Chancellor following scrutiny of the matter in the disciplinary domain board or faculty board with the overall responsibility for third-cycle education in an area.

Ch. 6 Sec. 31 HEO: If study resources have been withdrawn pursuant to Section 30, the doctoral student may, on application to the vice-chancellor, recover his or her entitlement to supervision and other resources. The doctoral student must then demonstrate convincingly, by presenting prospective study results of considerable quality and scope or in some other way, that he or she can fulfil his or her remaining undertakings in the individual study plan. Ordinance (2010:1064).

Requests to regain supervision and other resources are submitted to the head of department or the equivalent person, who will hand over the matter to the disciplinary domain board, faculty board, or joint body for the faculty or the disciplinary domain with the responsibility for third-cycle education, together with his or her own statement, for decision by the Vice Chancellor.

The situation of a third-cycle student having been deprived of the right to resources is not the same as deregistration. The third-cycle student may continue to pursue studies but entirely on his or her own. The third-cycle student is still admitted and may announce to the disciplinary domain board or faculty board with the overall responsibility for third-cycle education in the area his or her intention of submitting a dissertation.

Decisions to withdraw resources for a third-cycle student pursuant to Chapter 6, Section 30 and decisions not to reinstitute resources for a third-cycle student pursuant to Chapter 6, Section 31 may, under Chapter 12, Section 2, Paragraph 5, be appealed to the Higher Education Appeals Board.

13. Deregistration of third-cycle students

Deregistration of a third-cycle student is done at the request of the student and involves situations when the third-cycle student has terminated his or her studies. Students who wish to resume the programme must re-apply for admission.