



Stockholms  
universitet

# General syllabus for third-cycle programme in Geography with emphasis on Human Geography at Stockholm University

The general syllabus for the third-cycle programme in Geography with emphasis on Human Geography at Stockholm University was adopted by the Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Stockholm University on 31 May 2007 and revised on 26 August 2014.

General provisions regarding third-cycle programmes can be found in Chapters 6 and 7 of the Higher Education Ordinance (HF).

## **1. Subject description**

Human geography studies human activity from a spatial perspective. This means that human geographers are interested in social processes and their spatial aspects, such as spatial organisation, context, interaction between different locations, and space as a physical location or social construction created by social relations. Human geography is often studied within different subdisciplines, such as economic geography, population geography, historical geography, political geography, and social geography.

## **2. Programme objectives**

### **2.1. Degree of Doctor**

#### *Knowledge and understanding*

For a Degree of Doctor, the doctoral student must demonstrate the following:

- broad knowledge in, and a systematic understanding of, the field of research, together with deep and current specialist knowledge in a defined part of this field;

– familiarity with research methodology in general and the methods of the specific field of research in particular;

#### *Skills and abilities*

For a Degree of Doctor, the doctoral student must demonstrate the following:

– an ability to engage in scholarly analysis and synthesis, as well as in independent, critical review and assessment of new and complex phenomena, issues, and situations;

– an ability to identify and formulate issues critically, independently, creatively, and with scholarly precision; to plan and conduct research and other advanced tasks using appropriate methods within specified time limits; and to review and evaluate such work;

– an ability to make a substantial contribution to the development of knowledge through their own research in a thesis;

– an ability to present and discuss research and research findings with authority, in dialogue with the scholarly community and society in general, orally and in writing, in both national and international contexts;

– an ability to identify areas where further knowledge is required;

– the potential to contribute to the development of society and support other people’s learning, both in the field of research and education and in other advanced professional contexts;

#### *Judgement and approach*

For a Degree of Doctor, the doctoral student must demonstrate the following:

– intellectual independence and scholarly integrity, as well as an ability to make ethical assessments relating to research;

– insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society, and our responsibility for how it is used.

## **2.2. Degree of Licentiate**

#### *Knowledge and understanding*

For a Degree of Licentiate, the doctoral students must demonstrate the following:

– knowledge and understanding in the field of research, including current specialist knowledge in a defined part of the field, as well as advanced knowledge of research methodology in general and the methods of the specific field of research in particular;

#### *Skills and abilities*

For a Degree of Licentiate, the doctoral students must demonstrate the following:

– an ability to identify and formulate issues critically, independently, and creatively; to plan and conduct a limited research project and other advanced tasks using appropriate methods within specified time limits, thereby contributing to the production of knowledge; and to evaluate this work;

– an ability to present and discuss research and research findings clearly, in dialogue with the scholarly community and society in general, orally and in writing, in both national and international contexts;

– the skills required to participate independently in research and development and to work independently in other advanced contexts;

### *Judgement and approach*

For a Degree of Licentiate, the doctoral students must demonstrate the following:

– an ability to make ethical assessments in their own research;

– insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society, and our responsibility for how it is used;

– an ability to identify areas where further knowledge is required and to take responsibility for developing their knowledge.

## **3. Prerequisites and entry requirements**

### **3.1. General entry requirements**

A person meets the general entry requirements for third-cycle courses and study programmes if he or she has:

– been awarded a second-cycle qualification;

– satisfied the requirements for courses comprising at least 240 credits, of which at least 60 credits were awarded in the second-cycle; or

– acquired substantially equivalent knowledge in another way in Sweden or elsewhere. The Department Board may grant an exemption from the general entry requirements for an individual applicant under special circumstances.

Anyone who has met the general entry requirements for third-cycle courses and study programmes by 1 July 2007 will subsequently be considered to have general eligibility; however, no longer than until the end of June 2015.

### **3.2. Specific entry requirements**

The language of instruction and supervision is either Swedish or English. Accordingly, very good knowledge of Swedish or English is required in order to meet the specific entry requirements. In addition, applicants must have taken at least 90 higher education credits in human geography or another relevant subject.

## **4. Admission**

Applications for admission to a third-cycle programme leading to a Degree of Licentiate or Degree or Doctor should be submitted to the Department Board. Applications should include grades, degree

projects from the first and second cycle, a preliminary research plan, and references. For more information, please refer to our website: [www.humangeo.su.se](http://www.humangeo.su.se).

Decisions to admit doctoral students are made by the Department Board. The announcements are prepared by the director of studies in consultation with the group of supervisors. Vacancies for doctoral studies are advertised twice a year, and the department has two fixed application dates: 1 June and 15 January. Provided that funding is available, the department will advertise vacancies on the department website in connection with these dates.

The selection of candidates is made with reference to their ability to benefit from the training, and the candidates' academic performance is considered in the assessment. Applicants should describe their proposed field of research in a preliminary research plan.

Only candidates who will be employed as doctoral students will be admitted to the programme. An applicant with another type of funding may be admitted if funding can be secured throughout the training and the applicant is able to devote enough time to the training that it can be completed within eight years for a doctoral degree or four years for a licentiate degree.

## **5. Selection**

The most important selection criterion is the candidate's ability to achieve the programme objectives described in Section 2. Special attention is given to (ranked criteria):

1. The scholarly ability previously demonstrated by the candidate in first- and second-cycle thesis projects, as well as in the preliminary research plan.
  - a. independence in the analysis and planning of previous degree projects;
  - b. problem definition and cogency, both in previous projects and in the research plan;
  - c. previously demonstrated ability to complete tasks within specified time limits;
  - d. methodological and scholarly maturity;
  - e. ability to communicate and collaborate.
2. The candidate's prior knowledge of relevant academic fields.
3. The candidate's ability to contribute to and benefit from the research environment at the Department of Human Geography.

## **6. Programme content and structure**

### **6.1. Programme structure**

The programme leading to a doctoral degree comprises 240 higher education credits: 165 credits for the thesis and 75 credits for courses. (The licentiate degree comprises 120 higher education credits: 75 credits for the thesis and 45 credits for courses.)

The third-cycle programme includes participation in the research seminars held at the department.

The doctoral student should make a presentation at a seminar at the end of the first year of study, at a midterm seminar halfway through the programme, and at a final draft seminar when the thesis is near completion.

## **6.2. Supervision and study and career guidance**

The doctoral student is entitled to supervision during the time considered necessary to complete the training, that is, eight semesters of full-time study for a doctoral degree or four semesters for a licentiate degree.

Each doctoral student should be assigned at least two supervisors, one of whom will be the principal supervisor. At least one of the supervisors should have received training in supervision or be considered by the Faculty Board to have corresponding qualifications. As a general rule, the principal supervisor should be employed by the department, or by another department or institute at the faculty. If the principal supervisor is not employed by the department, one of the other supervisors must be. All supervisors must hold a doctoral degree, and at least one of them must hold the rank of associate professor or higher.

Both the principal supervisor and the director of studies for third-cycle programmes are responsible for study and career guidance.

## **6.3. Individual study plan**

An individual study plan should be drawn up for each doctoral student. The study plan will be adopted by the department after consultation with the doctoral student and his or her supervisors. The individual study plan should include a basic contract for the entire training period and an annual review where the timetable, course credits, and the obligations of both the doctoral student and the department are specified. It should also indicate when and how progress relating to the thesis should be reported.

Prior to admission, a financial plan should be drawn up that specifies when the thesis is expected to be completed and how the training will be funded each year until graduation. As soon as possible upon admission (within three months), the doctoral student and the supervisors should specify the structure of the training in more detail.

The individual study plan should be reviewed by the department at least once a year. In connection with this review, the doctoral student and the supervisors should inform the department of how the training progresses, after which the department may make any necessary changes to the individual study plan. The period of study may only be extended under special circumstances, which may involve sick leave, military service, elected positions in trade unions or student organisations, or parental leave. The doctoral student and the supervisors are entitled to make a statement before any changes are made.

The doctoral student and the supervisors should jointly draw up and confirm in writing that they have read the individual study plan and any changes made to it. The individual study plan should be logged and archived at the department.

If a doctoral student has substantially neglected his or her obligations according to the individual study plan, the Faculty Board should decide that the doctoral student is no longer entitled to supervision and other resources for the training. Before such a decision is made, the doctoral student and the supervisors are entitled to make a statement. The review should be based on their accounts and other reports available to the Faculty Board. The assessment should consider whether or not the department

has fulfilled its own obligations according to the individual study plan. The decision should be reasoned and delivered in writing.

No resources may be withdrawn in advance while the doctoral student is still under employment.

## **7. Courses and credits**

A doctoral degree must include course work worth 75 higher education credits. The course component should include at least 15 credits from national research courses in human geography, 15 credits from method courses, and 4.5 credits from an introductory course. A doctoral degree in geography with emphasis on human geography must include courses in human geography, or equivalent, worth at least 40 higher education credits from the second or third cycle. Individually designed literature courses may constitute a maximum of 15 credits. Courses provided by another department or university may, upon the supervisor's or subject representative's approval, also be included in the degree.

The doctoral student's selection of courses should be approved by the director of studies, who will also assess the credit value of external courses in the human geography programme.

Individual examinations will be organised in connection with each course. These examinations are usually written, but may also be oral in exceptional cases. Courses will be examined using the grades Pass or Fail.

Credits from second-cycle courses may be transferred to the third-cycle programme, provided that the courses were not part of the entry requirements.

## **8. Thesis**

### **8.1. Thesis**

A doctoral thesis corresponds to 165 higher education credits. A licentiate thesis corresponds to 75 higher education credits.

The thesis should be written as a coherent academic work (monograph) or as a compilation of academic papers with a summary (compilation thesis). The thesis may have more than one author, but in such cases the individual contributions must be clearly distinguishable.

A compilation thesis should include a "kappa" (an introductory summary) and a number of academic papers (typically 3-5) that reflect the doctoral student's ability to meet the degree requirements.

The thesis should be written in Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, English, French, or German. The thesis should include a summary in English or Swedish.

### **8.2. Public defence seminar**

The thesis should be reviewed by a faculty examiner and defended at a public defence seminar as prescribed in the Higher Education Ordinance. The composition of the examining committee will follow the current guidelines for public defence seminars at the Faculty of Social Sciences.

### **8.3. Licentiate seminar**

The licentiate thesis should be defended at a public seminar during the semester. The faculty examiner must have a doctoral degree or equivalent expertise in the field of study.

The thesis must be available at least two weeks before the seminar. Other departments in the same discipline at Swedish universities should be notified of the thesis.

The thesis should be reviewed by a committee of three members, all of whom must have a doctoral degree. At least one member must hold the rank of professor.

The faculty examiner and examining committee will be appointed by the Department Board, based on proposals from the relevant supervisor.

## **9. Degree requirements**

In order to receive a licentiate or doctoral degree, a passing grade is required on all parts of the programme. A diploma will be issued by the Vice-Chancellor at the doctoral student's request.

The doctoral/licentiate thesis and the defence must meet all degree requirements. When writing a compilation thesis, each paper should contribute to meeting all the objectives in relation to the theme of the paper.

## **10. Additional information**

### **10.1. Transition arrangements**

Students who began their doctoral studies according to a previous general syllabus are entitled to follow either the new syllabus or the one that was in effect when they were admitted.

### **10.2. Additional information**

For links to current regulations in the Higher Education Ordinance, as well as local additions, please go to [www.samfak.su.se](http://www.samfak.su.se). Instructions relating to the general syllabus are available at [www.humangeo.su.se](http://www.humangeo.su.se).