



# **General syllabus for doctoral studies in Occupational health science, 240 hp**

*Allmän studieplan för utbildning på forskarnivå inom forskarutbildningsämnet arbetshälsovetenskap, 240 hp*

Fastställd av akademinnämnden vid Akademien för hälsa och arbetsliv

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## **1 About the general syllabus**

Each subject that provides third-cycle education must have a general syllabus (Higher Education Ordinance, chapter 6 § 26).

In addition to the regulations contained in this general syllabus, the current regulations for doctoral education at the University of Gävle are set out by:

- Higher Education Ordinance: chapter 5 (employment of doctoral students), chapter 6 (courses and study programmes) and chapter 7 (admission to courses and study programmes), annex 2 (system of qualifications)
- Admission regulations at the University of Gävle
- Routines for doctoral education at the University of Gävle
- Local degree regulations at the University of Gävle
- Local degree descriptions at the University of Gävle



## **2 Description of the doctoral subject**

Occupational health science is a multidisciplinary subject that includes different aspects of physical and mental health in working life. Good health means an experience of well-being and having the opportunity to achieve essential goals. Even those who have an illness or disability can experience good health, just as ill health can be experienced in the absence of an underlying disease. Since adults spend a large part of their time at work, the workplace is an important arena for measures that can promote health and prevent ill health. Good health also contributes to improved work performance and increased organisational benefits.

Occupational health science includes the study of health and ill health in working life, with the visionary goal of a health-promoting and sustainable working life for all. This includes positive and negative health effects of physical and mental stress in the work environment for different groups of employees, how various types of work-related ill health can be prevented, and how employment and working conditions can be organised, designed and managed for the benefit of the individual as well as for the organisation. In addition, occupational health science includes knowledge of factors at the individual and organisational level that facilitate labour market entry and return to work. Further, it includes the interaction between factors at work and during leisure that are meaningful for health, as well as how the workplace can be used as an arena to encourage employees to lead a health-promoting life outside of work. In research and development, the latest methods are applied to achieve goals, and new methods are developed when necessary.

## **3 Doctoral education outcomes**

### **3.1 Degree of Doctor**

#### **3.1.1 Outcomes from the Higher Education Ordinance**

A Degree of Doctor is awarded after the third-cycle student has completed a study programme of 240 credits in a subject in which third-cycle teaching is offered.



For the Degree of Doctor the third-cycle student shall

- demonstrate broad knowledge and systematic understanding of the research field as well as advanced and up-to-date specialised knowledge in a limited area of this field
- demonstrate familiarity with research methodology in general and the methods of the specific field of research in particular
- 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
- 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
- demonstrate intellectual autonomy and disciplinary rectitude as well as the ability to make assessments of research ethics
- 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 Degree of Doctor the third-cycle student shall have been awarded a pass grade for a research thesis (doctoral thesis) of at least 120 credits.

Specific requirements determined by each higher education institution itself within the parameters of the requirements laid down in this qualification descriptor shall also apply for a Degree of Doctor with a defined specialisation.



### **3.1.2 Local degree outcomes**

The subject has no local degree outcomes.

## **3.2 Degree of Licentiate**

### **3.2.1 Outcomes from the Higher Education Ordinance**

A Degree of Licentiate is awarded either after a third-cycle student has completed a study programme of at least 120 credits in a subject in which third-cycle teaching is offered, or after a third-cycle student has completed one part comprising at least 120 credits of a study programme intended to conclude with the award of a PhD, if a higher education institution decides that a Degree of Licentiate of this kind may be awarded at the institution.

For a Degree of Licentiate the third-cycle student shall

- 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
- 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
- demonstrate the skills required to participate autonomously in research and development work and to work autonomously in some other qualified capacity
- 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
- demonstrate the ability to identify the personal need for further knowledge and take responsibility for his or her ongoing learning



For a Degree of Licentiate the third-cycle student shall have been awarded a pass grade for a research thesis of at least 60 credits.

Specific requirements determined by each higher education institution itself within the parameters of the requirements laid down in this qualification descriptor shall also apply for a Degree of Licentiate with a defined specialisation.

### **3.2.2 Local degree outcomes**

The subject has no local degree outcomes.

## **4 Entry requirements**

### **4.1 General entry requirements**

According to the Higher Education Ordinance, chapter 7 § 39, a person meets the general entry requirements for third-cycle courses and study programmes if they have

- 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 some other way in Sweden or abroad.

The higher education institution may permit an exemption from the general entry requirements for an individual applicant, if there are special grounds.

### **4.2 Specific entry requirements**

There are no specific entry requirements to be admitted to doctoral studies in occupational health science.



## **5 Selection and admission of applicants to doctoral studies**

### **5.1 Selection**

The selection of applicants for a doctoral education position is made on the basis of the overall assessment of the applicant's ability to benefit from the education. The selection procedure is based on the following criteria for assessing the candidates:

- formal eligibility for admission to doctoral studies
- relevance and scope of educational background
- the quality of the application and, where applicable, the quality of the proposed research plan
- the quality of the applicant's projects, essays, thesis or equivalent
- experience of research-related work, with consideration of both quantity and content and/or other work experience of relevance to doctoral education
- competence and specialisation in relation to the specific doctoral education position
- ability to benefit from the doctoral education based on submitted documents, interviews and any eventual trial employment tests
- ability to contribute to the scientific environment in the research area where the doctoral education will take place
- reference referrals

During selection, the fact that an applicant is assessed as able to transfer credits from prior courses and study programmes or for professional or vocational experience may not give the applicant priority over other applicants. (Higher Education Ordinance, chapter 7 § 41).

### **5.2 Admission**

Admission to doctoral studies is made for a four-year period of full-time studies (240 credits) leading to a doctoral degree. If there are special reasons, admission may be made for only two years of full-time studies for a licentiate degree (120 credits). A doctoral student admitted for four



years of full-time study has the right, but not the obligation, to complete a licentiate degree as a step in the doctoral education.

A doctoral student may only be admitted if funding for the entire study period has been secured. For a doctoral degree, this means four years (48 months) of full-time studies or, as is often the case, five years studying at a rate of 80%. The doctoral studies may last for a maximum of eight years (studying on average at a rate of 50%). For a licentiate degree, the corresponding time periods are half of those that apply to a doctoral degree.

Additional rules and procedures for admission to doctoral studies at the University of Gävle are outlined in the University's admission regulations and the steering document *Routines for doctoral education at the University of Gävle*.

## **6 Individual study plan**

An individual study plan must be written up for all doctoral students. The individual study plan specifies the university's and the doctoral student's commitments and timeline for the doctoral student's education.

In the study plan, the doctoral student, together with the supervisor(s), develops individual learning outcomes that will help on the way to fulfilling the national degree objectives.

The individual study plan is reviewed and revised at least once a year.

## **7 Structure and content of the doctoral programme**

The programme consists of three parts; courses, compulsory seminars and a thesis. Examinations that are part of third-cycle education are graded as pass or fail.

For a doctoral degree, the following is required:

- A minimum of 60 credits from completed courses
- 180 credits from an approved doctoral thesis



For a licentiate degree, the following is required:

- A minimum of 30 credits from completed courses
- 90 credits from an approved licentiate thesis

## **7.1 Courses**

### **7.1.1 Compulsory courses**

#### ***7.1.1.1 Faculty-wide courses***

##### *Philosophy of Science and Research Ethics, 5 cr*

The course aims to provide the doctoral student with broad knowledge in the philosophy of science. The course also covers research ethics.

##### *Quantitative and qualitative research methods, 10 cr*

The course aims to provide the doctoral student with theoretical and practical knowledge in quantitative and qualitative methodologies, the most common data collection methods normally classified as quantitative and qualitative methodologies, and skills in data analysis.

##### *Seminar course: Critical discussion of scientific literature, 2,5 cr*

The aim of the course is to give the doctoral student the ability to critically and constructively discuss research and research results in his/her field of study, as well as to discuss and evaluate scientific practices in terms of scientific integrity and the role of science in society.

##### *Research communication with different target groups in national and international contexts, 2,5 cr*

The course aims to give the doctoral student the ability to independently present and discuss his/her research and research results to different target groups in national and international contexts.



### **7.1.1.2 For the third-cycle subject**

*Occupational health science, 10 cr*

The course aims to give the doctoral student a general orientation to the field of occupational health science including its breadth and boundaries, central concepts and theoretical perspectives. The course is compulsory in both licentiate and doctoral degrees.

## **7.2 Compulsory seminars**

Detailed instructions for the mandatory seminars and public defence are stated in the steering document *Routines for doctoral education at the University of Gävle*. In addition, the doctoral student is expected to participate in faculty-wide doctoral seminars and research seminars in occupational health science throughout their entire period of study.

### **7.2.1 Introductory scientific presentation seminar**

As soon as possible after being admitted to the doctoral program, the doctoral student shall present his/her research plan at a collegial seminar including a summary of previous research in the field as well as a detailed discussion of the theoretical frame, aim, research questions, methods, and timeline for each of the eventual sub-studies.

### **7.2.2 Half-time seminar**

Students admitted to doctoral studies with a doctoral degree as the final goal shall present and defend their work at a collegial seminar when half of the study time has elapsed. Alternatively, the doctoral student can complete a licentiate seminar.

### **7.2.3 Licentiate seminar**

Students admitted to doctoral studies with a licentiate degree as the final goal shall present and defend their thesis at a public licentiate seminar.

### **7.2.4 Final seminar**

Students admitted to doctoral studies with a doctoral degree as the final goal shall have a final seminar prior to the planned public defence.



### **7.2.5 Public defence**

For a doctoral degree, the doctoral student shall write a scientific thesis and defend it at a public defence.

## **7.3 Dissertation work**

The thesis is normally a compilation thesis. In this case, the thesis consists of a number of scientific articles and an introductory framework summary (also called a thesis 'kappa') that includes a summary and synthesis of the doctoral student's work including a clear description of the scientific contribution in the research area. In a compilation thesis the doctoral student must clearly state for each study what contributions s/he made and what each of the co-authors contributed.

The thesis can alternatively be presented as a monograph, which means that the research is presented in a single cohesive volume that is not separated into individual component papers.

The thesis, as a whole or in part, should be subject to international assessment.

### **7.3.1 Qualification level for a doctoral degree**

A compilation thesis for a doctoral degree consists of 3-4 original studies. If a systematic review is included, it should normally be presented as the first paper. A review article must be a *systematic review*, *meta-analysis* or *qualitative evidence synthesis*. The introductory framework summary (thesis 'kappa') provides a coherent overall description of the research area and the research work by placing the studies in a relevant order and context in relation to each other. The kappa should also clearly state how the thesis contributes and connects to the doctoral subject and the doctoral examination area, Health-Promoting Working Life. At the time of the public defence, at least 2 of the papers must be published or accepted for publication in reputable, peer-reviewed journals. The remaining 1-2 papers should be written in manuscript format with the intention of becoming journal articles in reputable peer-reviewed journals. All papers must be of such quality that they can be accepted by the scientific community. The number of papers depends on the quality and scope of the individual articles and the total thesis as well as the doctoral student's documented contributions to each paper. As a rule, the doctoral student should be the first author of the



majority of the papers included in the thesis and should have had the main responsibility for the entire publication process for at least one of the papers.

For a monograph thesis, the doctoral student must have produced a work with the same scope and with the same scientific requirements as for a compilation thesis. The monograph must also clearly state how the thesis contributes and connects to the doctoral subject and the doctoral examination area, Health-Promoting Working Life.

### **7.3.2 Qualification level for a licentiate degree**

A compilation thesis for a licentiate degree consists of at least 2 papers. The introductory framework summary (the thesis 'kappa') provides a coherent overall description of the research area and the research work by placing the studies in a relevant order and context in relation to each other. The thesis kappa must also clearly state how the thesis contributes and connects to the doctoral subject and the doctoral examination area, Health-Promoting Working Life. At least one paper must be published or accepted for publication in a reputable peer-reviewed journal, and the other paper or papers must be deemed to be of sufficient quality to be eligible for acceptance for publication in (a) peer-reviewed journal(s). The number of papers depends on the quality and scope of the individual articles and the total thesis as well as the doctoral student's documented contributions to each paper. The doctoral student should be the first author for at least one of the papers included in the thesis, and have had the main responsibility for its entire publication process.

For a monograph for a licentiate degree, the doctoral student must have produced a work with the same scope and with the same scientific requirements as for a compilation thesis. The monograph must also clearly state how the thesis contributes and connects to the doctoral subject and the doctoral examination area, Health-Promoting Working Life.

## **8 Degree**

Degree titles are regulated by the University's degree regulations and local degree descriptions.