



General syllabus for doctoral studies in Caring Science, 240 credits

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

Fastställd av akademinnämnden vid Akademin för hälsa och arbetsliv

Established by the Faculty Board at the Faculty of Health and Occupational Studies

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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

Caring science includes research that takes its starting point in human health, wellbeing and development on the individual, group and societal levels. It focuses on the individual within the context of care, where the practical work takes place, to promote health/wellbeing, prevent ill-health and reduce suffering. The research centers its attention on the individual, with respect for the equal value of all humans. It also contributes to knowledge about sustainable living environments, with the aim of promoting individual health in family and leisure contexts, as well as in working life. The subject also includes research on people's opportunities to apply strategies to care for and promote their health and quality of life in different living environments, and the relationships between these. Health-promoting relationships, strategies and interventions are studied, as well as preventive and treatment-focused efforts in different contexts.

The subject also includes research aiming to promote an inclusive and sustainable working life for the health and wellbeing of the individual. A working life where those with long-term ill-health, functional variations and social exclusion or vulnerability are given the opportunity to be included or to remain. This includes issues related to integration into working life, experiences of good health, development and a sense of meaningfulness in different living environments. Many people today live with long-term illness and variations in functional ability which impact their opportunities to lead a healthy life and working life. In relation to working life, the subject also includes research on leadership within the healthcare system, the organization of the healthcare system, the working environment of staff and students, work-related discrimination, health-promoting aspects, professional learning and development, and the ways in which these measures are related to staff well-being and to the quality of the organization. Preventive measures on the individual level are important aspects of research in caring science, as is research on the importance of leadership and work organization for human health.

Theoretical, methodological and applied research questions are included in the subject. Several professions, such as nurses, physiotherapists and occupational therapists are commonly represented within caring science research. The research focuses on the questions asked, not on which profession is conducting the research, but the research may also include questions related



to a specific profession. The caring science research at the University of Gävle is divided into themes that focus on relational dynamics in health and care, and within the doctoral education, these must be related to the doctoral examination area of Health-promoting working life. The themes are centered on the human in the caring practice (focusing on the individual receiving care and/or self-care and their relatives, those living with long-term ill-health, older people, the caring relationship, and a high-quality, safe care); the working environment, learning and leadership of healthcare staff (including the learning and wellbeing of nursing students), and the caring environment and technology integration.

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

In order to be accepted into doctoral education, the applicant must have authored an independent, advanced-level (second-cycle) degree project thesis of at least 15 credits, or show evidence of equivalent knowledge that is deemed to be of equal merit.

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 licentiate degree, the following is required:

- A minimum of 35 credits from completed courses
- 85 credits from an approved licentiate thesis

For a doctoral degree, the following is required:

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

7.1 Courses

7.1.1 Compulsory courses

7.1.1.1 Faculty-wide courses



Philosophy of Science and Research Ethics 5 credits

Vetenskapsteori och forskningsetik, 5 hp

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 credits

Kvantitativ och kvalitativ metodologi, 10 hp

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 credits

Seminariekurs: Kritisk diskussion av forskningslitteratur, 2,5 hp

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 credits

Muntlig forskningskommunikation med olika målgrupper i nationella och internationella sammanhang, 2,5 hp

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 doctoral education subject

Health, well-being and working life, caring science, 7.5 credits



Hälsa, välbefinnande och arbetsliv, vårdvetenskap, 7,5 hp

The aim of the course is for the doctoral student to develop their ability to critically discuss theories related to health, wellbeing and working life, and to analyze and evaluate research results on health, wellbeing and working life in connection to caring science. The course is compulsory for doctoral degree as well as licentiate degree.

Scientific theories for nursing, 7.5 credits

Vetenskaplig teoribildning av relevans för ämnet vårdvetenskap 7,5 hp

The aim of the course is for the doctoral student to develop their ability to analyze and critically discuss the relevance, possibilities and limitations of different theories within caring science. The course is compulsory for doctoral degree as well as licentiate degree.

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 caring 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 planned 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 may consist of a monograph or a compilation thesis. In the case of a compilation thesis, 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 to 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. In the case of a monograph, 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

Within the subject of caring science, compilation theses are the most common, but monographs also occur. According to the structure of a compilation thesis, the sub-studies are held together by a summary framework that relates them to one another and gives an overall description of the research area and the thesis as a whole. The thesis framework summary must also show how the thesis contributes and connects to the doctoral subject of caring science, as well as to the doctoral



examination area of health-promoting working life, within which the doctoral subject of caring science is placed.

Compilation thesis for doctoral degree

The compilation thesis commonly consists of four sub-studies (all of which must be scientific articles, or manuscripts written for the purpose of becoming scientific articles, and at least two sub-studies should be published or accepted for publication in peer-reviewed journals at the time of the public defence). In exceptional cases, three sub-studies may be sufficient, but the scope of these should be the equivalent to at least four studies of normal scope. 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.

Within the subject area of caring science at the University of Gävle, the guiding principle is that the doctoral student should be the first author of at least three of the included studies, and should have had the main responsibility for the entire publication process for at least three of the included studies.

Monograph thesis for doctoral degree

If there are good reasons, the thesis may also be in the form of a monograph, meaning that the research is presented in a single cohesive volume that is not separated into sub-studies. For a monograph thesis, the doctoral student must have produced sub-studies with the same scope and with the same scientific requirements as for a compilation thesis, and the thesis must build on and refer to these sub-studies. 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.

Compilation thesis for a licentiate degree

A compilation thesis commonly consists of two sub-studies surrounded by an introductory framework summary (also known as a thesis "kappa"). At least one study must be accepted for publication in a peer reviewed journal, and the remaining sub-studies must be deemed to be of high enough quality to be accepted for publication in peer reviewed journals. The doctoral student



must be the first author of at least one of the studies and should have had the main responsibility for the entire publication process. It must also be clearly stated how the thesis contributes and connects to the doctoral subject and the doctoral examination area.

Monograph thesis for a licentiate degree

For a monograph for a licentiate degree, the doctoral student must have produced a work of the same scope and with the same scientific demands as those 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.

8 Degree

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