



HÖGSKOLAN  
DALARNA

# **General Syllabus for the Doctoral Programme in *Care Sciences* in the field of *Health and Welfare with Focus on Evidence-Based Practice***

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**DALARNA UNIVERSITY**  
**Doctoral Programmes Board (*Forskarutbildningsnämnden – FUN*)**

**1. Description of Subject**

The doctoral (third cycle) subject *Care Sciences* has its main roots in the subject groups Nursing; Sexual, Reproductive and Perinatal Health; and Medical Science. *Care Sciences* is an interdisciplinary subject focused on the study of human health-related needs and problems as well as processes, factors and measures related to physical, mental and social health and ill health in different contexts and environments. The study area is broad and can include, for example, the experiences of patients and their relatives of illness and care, quality of life, treatment of patients or recipients of care, effects of interventions, healthcare professionals' experience and perspectives, and the organisation and management of health and social care. The subject does not include research that has a biomedical orientation. The doctoral programme has an interdisciplinary perspective that characterises the research domain. This means that doctoral students and researchers from subjects other than those stated above can also be included depending on the focus of the thesis.

The field of *Health and Welfare with Focus on Evidence-Based Practice* concerns the work being done at the individual and societal levels to promote people's health and social well-being. Further, it concerns the enhancement of health- and welfare-related work through the development, summary and critical appraisal of knowledge, the implementation of evidence-based knowledge and the evaluation of evidence-based practice. Evidence-based health and welfare is when the best available scientific knowledge is weighed alongside professional experience and the individual user's/client's/patient's situation, experience and wishes when decisions about treatment are to be made. The research in this field is by nature practical in approach.

The doctoral programme in *Care Sciences* in the field of *Health and Welfare with Focus on Evidence-Based Practice* aims to develop the ability and skills of the doctoral student to produce a base for evidence-based knowledge by way of the following: original studies; systematic literature searches; summary and critical review of identified scientific knowledge; and the determination of how evidence-based knowledge can be implemented in the health and welfare sector and of how implementation can be evaluated. Further, the programme aims to develop the student's abilities in these areas: the application of scientific theory; research design, methods and analysis using both quantitative and qualitative approaches; research ethics; and scientific presentation and communication. Upon completion of the programme, the student will be awarded either a Degree of Doctor or a Degree of Licentiate in *Care Sciences* in the field of *Health and Welfare with Focus on Evidence-Based Practice*.

## 2. LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES

### 2.1 General Learning Outcomes

In accordance with the System of Qualifications, Annex 2, Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100), the outcomes of the programme are as follows:

#### **Degree of Doctor**

##### *Knowledge and understanding*

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, and
- demonstrate familiarity with research methodology in general and the methods of the specific field of research in particular.

##### *Competence and skills*

For the Degree of Doctor, the third-cycle student shall:

- 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, and
- 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.

##### *Judgement and approach*

For the Degree of Doctor, the third-cycle student shall:

- demonstrate intellectual autonomy and disciplinary rectitude as well as the ability to make assessments of 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.

#### **Degree of Licentiate**

##### *Knowledge and understanding*

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.

### *Competence and skills*

For a Degree of Licentiate, the third-cycle student shall:

- 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, and
- demonstrate the skills required to participate autonomously in research and development work and to work autonomously in some other qualified capacity.

### *Judgement and approach*

For a Degree of Licentiate, the third-cycle student shall:

- 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, and
- demonstrate the ability to identify the personal need for further knowledge and take responsibility for his or her ongoing learning.

## **3. ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAMME**

### **3.1 General**

The document titled *Antagningsordning för Högskolan Dalarna – utbildning på forskarnivå* regulates admission to doctoral studies at Dalarna University. Admission is to either the Degree of Licentiate (120 credits) or the Degree of Doctor (240 credits). A condition for admission to doctoral studies is that the applicant has either been offered a doctoral position at Dalarna University or holds another position that allows them to undertake doctoral studies.

Doctoral positions are advertised nationally and sometimes also internationally. Admission is on a competitive basis. The Head of School (*prefekt*) makes the decision on the advertisement and employment of a doctoral student, and can also decide if the doctoral position is or is not to be advertised.

### **3.2 Qualifications**

To be admitted to doctoral studies in *Care Sciences* in the field of *Health and Welfare with Focus on Evidence-Based Practice*, the applicant must meet the general entry requirements and the specific entry requirements and is considered in other respects to have the ability required to benefit from the programme.

*General Entry Requirements* (Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 7, Section 39)

An applicant meets the general entry requirements for third-cycle (doctoral) courses and study programmes if they:

1. have been awarded a second-cycle (Master's) qualification,
2. have satisfied the requirements for courses comprising at least 240 credits of which at least 60 credits were awarded in the second-cycle, or
3. have acquired substantially equivalent knowledge in some other way in Sweden or abroad.

The Head of School (*prefekt*) may grant an exemption from the general entry requirements for an individual applicant, if there are special grounds.

#### *Specific Entry Requirements*

To be admitted to third-cycle (doctoral) studies in *Care Sciences* in the field of *Health and Welfare with Focus on Evidence-Based Practice*, the applicant must have:

1. completed a degree at the second-cycle (Master's) level in Care Sciences/Nursing, Social Work or an equivalent subject related to the field of Health and Welfare
2. successfully completed a degree project (thesis) at the second-cycle (Master's) level in the field of Health and Welfare
3. the requisite language skills in English.

Eligibility and suitability testing, including equivalent validations or exemptions, is carried out by the Director of Doctoral Programme (*studierektor*) in consultation with the Head of Subject (*ämnesföreträdare*) ahead of a decision by the Head of School (*prefekt*).

### **3.3 Selection and Admission**

The advertisement for the doctoral position is formulated in such a way that it takes into account the general syllabus in consultation with, where applicable, the intended Supervisor, Director of Doctoral Programme (*studierektor*), Director of Department (*avdelningschef*) and the Office of Human Resources. The selection of applicants lies with the Director of Doctoral Programme in consultation with the intended Supervisor and the Director of Department (*avdelningschef*).

Selection among applicants who meet the entry requirements must be made by taking into account their ability to benefit from the doctoral education and must be based on the following assessment criteria:

- previous study results with special emphasis on the quality of degree projects at the second-cycle (Master's) level
- ability to communicate in both spoken and written English
- personal suitability
- other credentials

Admission to doctoral studies is processed by the Director of Doctoral Programme (*studierektor*), who, based on the selection criteria stated in this general syllabus, ranks the applicants.

The Head of School (*prefekt*) decides on admission or rejection based on what has emerged during interviews of the applicants and contact with references and, where applicable, based on assigned written work submitted by the applicants. A financial plan

that clarifies the financial responsibility for the doctoral student's entire doctoral studies period must be attached to the doctoral programme application.

Ahead of a decision on admission to doctoral studies, the following must be assessed and processed by the Director of Doctoral Programme (*studierektor*):

1. the relevance of the intended project to the third-cycle (doctoral) subject area
2. a financial plan including any agreements with other employers than Dalarna University
3. the availability of sufficient supervisor competence so that sound, professional supervision can be provided.

### 3.4 Supervision

For each doctoral student, two to three supervisors must be appointed. If special reasons exist, a fourth supervisor may be appointed. One of the supervisors is appointed to be the Principal Supervisor (*huvudhandledare*) and must be either docent or professor. The Co-supervisor (*biträdande handledare*) must hold a doctoral degree. At least one of the supervisors must be employed at Dalarna University. All supervisors must have completed supervisor training or present a plan for the completion of such training. The Head of School (*prefekt*) appoints, provisionally, the Principal Supervisor (*huvudhandledare*) at the time of admission. The Head of School (*prefekt*) formally appoints the Principal Supervisor (*huvudhandledare*) and Co-supervisor (*biträdande handledare*) at the point when the individual study plan is established, which must take place no later than three months after the start date agreed upon. A change in supervisor can take place whenever the doctoral student or supervisor initiates this. Any time there is a change in supervisor, it is the Head of School (*prefekt*) who makes the decision. Doctoral students are entitled to 128 hours of supervision per year.

## 4. PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

### 4.1 General

The Degree of Doctor (Degree of Licentiate) comprises four (two) years of full-time studies, a total of 240 (120) credits. The Degree of Doctor has a course component comprising 45 credits, of which 30 credits are for compulsory courses and 15 credits are for elective courses. The Degree of Licentiate has a course component of 30 credits, of which 22.5 credits are for compulsory courses and 7.5 credits are for elective courses. In addition, there is a thesis component of 195 credits (Degree of Doctor) and 90 credits (Degree of Licentiate).

A person may be employed as a doctoral student for a total of no more than eight years. This may be extended if special reasons exist (for example, sick leave, service in the armed forces, positions in trade unions and parental leave). The doctoral student may be involved in teaching and may perform other departmental duties to a maximum of 20% of their total study time and must be compensated with a corresponding extension of study time.

### 4.2 Individual Study Plan

An individual study plan that describes the structure of the programme must be drawn up. The individual study plan is designed jointly by the doctoral student and their Principal

Supervisor (*huvudhandledare*) and must clarify the responsibilities of each party and the timetable for the doctoral student's studies, as well as specific goals for the doctoral student and the scope of the supervision. The individual study plan must, when being established, include:

1. the names of the Principal Supervisor (*huvudhandledare*) and the Co-supervisor (*biträdande handledare*)
2. a description of how supervision will be organised
3. a preliminary title of the thesis, a description of the planned academic work, and a timetable for the doctoral student's studies
4. a description of the research ethics review
5. a plan showing which doctoral courses are to be included and a record of completed courses
6. the degree of activity in doctoral studies
7. a report of the amount of departmental duties/other positions
8. a description of other academic work, such as participation in seminars, conferences and research stays at other higher education institutions

The individual study plan is drawn up on a special form by, jointly, the doctoral student and the Principal Supervisor (*huvudhandledare*). It is then prepared by the Director of Doctoral Programme (*studierektor*), after which it is put to approval by the Head of School (*prefekt*) no later than three months after the start date.

The individual study plan is to be reviewed and adjusted annually unless otherwise stated in the individual study plan, and it is to be sent to the Director of Doctoral Programme (*studierektor*), who ensures review and reporting to the Head of School (*prefekt*). The Director of Doctoral Programme or Head of School can request that a review take place more frequently than once per year.

Significant deviations from the individual study plan may result in the doctoral student being denied access to university resources, as outlined in the Higher Education Ordinance. At the annual review, the Principal Supervisor (*huvudhandledare*) must assess and document whether the doctoral student is following the individual study plan.

If the Principal Supervisor (*huvudhandledare*) deems that a deviation is significant, then the Director of Doctoral Programme (*studierektor*) must allow the doctoral student the opportunity to address, in writing, the supervisor's report and then report to the Head of School (*prefekt*). If the Head of School decides there is reason to withdraw resources, then the matter must be handed to the Vice-Chancellor (*rektor*) for a decision.

### **Half-time seminar**

A half-time seminar (*halvtidsseminarium*) will be held after the doctoral student has reached the half-way point in their studies. The student must have completed and received a pass in at least two compulsory third-cycle courses.

The purpose is to review the work to date and the plan for the remaining work until the time of the defence. The half-time seminar is publicly advertised, and reviewers are appointed by the Principal Supervisor (*huvudhandledare*). It is conducted with the Principal Supervisor (*huvudhandledare*) acting as chairperson and with two reviewers external to Dalarna University and one internal reviewer. The reviewers must be either Docents or Professors unless there are special grounds to permit otherwise. The

reviewers, supervisor and doctoral student meet after the seminar to summarise and decide on the focus for continuing work.

#### 4.3 Doctoral/Licentiate Thesis

The design of the doctoral thesis is such that it is a compilation thesis with a series of scientific articles and a summarising chapter (*ramberättelse*) in Swedish or English. The doctoral thesis should be made up of at least three, usually four, scientific articles; however, it is the academic quality and the independent contribution of the doctoral student to the development of knowledge that is assessed, not the number of articles. The doctoral student must be the first author of at least three articles. At least two articles must have been accepted for publication or have been published in an international peer-reviewed scientific journal, of which at least one article must be based on an empirical study.

The design of the licentiate thesis is such that it has two or more scientific articles with a short summarising chapter (*ramberättelse*) that also serves to introduce the subject of the thesis. The doctoral student must be the first author of at least one article. At least one article must be based on an empirical study and have been accepted for publication or have been published in an international peer-reviewed scientific journal.

In both the doctoral thesis and licentiate thesis, a study protocol (*studieprotokoll*) for a large empirical data collection may be included on condition that at least one empirical study based on the protocol is also included. No more than one systematic review (*systematisk översikt*) can be included and counted as an article provided that it forms the basis of the doctoral student's project and is not about the planning of the project after the doctoral student has completed their studies.

All scientific articles in the compilation thesis as well as the summarising chapter (*ramberättelse*) in the thesis should be discussed regularly at seminars throughout the doctoral programme. At least a couple of articles should also have been presented at scientific conferences, national and international.

The student must have completed the compulsory courses successfully before the defence application or notification of a licentiate seminar is submitted. Exceptions may be made if there are special grounds to do so.

Following a proposal from the Principal Supervisor (*huvudhandledare*) and confirmation that there is no conflict of interest, the Doctoral Programmes Board (*Forskarutbildningsnämnden*) appoints the chairperson for the defence/licentiate seminar; the examining committee; a substitute in the examining committee; and the opponent for the defence/licentiate seminar. The chairperson and the three members of the examining committee must be docents or professors, and the opponent must have at least a Degree of Doctor. One member of the examining committee must be employed at Dalarna University. The published/accepted articles and all manuscripts included in the thesis must be reviewed by the intended examining committee. The members of the examining committee should individually state whether they think that the articles meet the scope and quality that correspond to the knowledge outcomes of four (or two) years of full-time study. The examining committee issues a summative recommendation to the Director of Doctoral Programme (*studierektor*). A positive recommendation at the preliminary review does not mean that the thesis will receive a pass at the defence/licentiate seminar. The



response from the review is determined by whether or not the work of the doctoral student is deemed to be of such quality and scope that it can be presented at a defence/licentiate seminar.

The summarising chapter (*ramberättelse*) must be reviewed by at least two reviewers at a seminar. Before the thesis is submitted for printing, the Director of Doctoral Programme (*studierektor*) conducts a plagiarism check of the summarising chapter (*ramberättelse*).

The Doctoral Programmes Board (*Forskarutbildningsnämnden*) decides on the time/date, location, chairperson for the defence/licentiate seminar, opponent, examining committee members and substitutes for the defence/licentiate seminar no later than three months before the defence/licentiate seminar.

#### **4.4 Courses**

Courses can be provided by Dalarna University or other higher education institutions. There must be a written syllabus that states the course outcomes, content and number of credits. Courses that are to be included in the doctoral programme must be specified in the individual study plan. Courses are divided into compulsory courses and elective courses. Credit transfer for courses and other education is prepared by the Head of Subject (*ämnesföreträdare*) for Care Sciences, with a decision by the Head of School (*prefekt*).

#### ***Degree of Doctor***

The Degree of Doctor consists of a course component comprising 45 credits, of which 30 credits are compulsory courses. Compulsory courses are as follows:

- General Principles of Scientific Work: Introductory Course, 7.5 credits
- Scientific Methods, 7.5 credits
- Systematic Review, Meta-Synthesis and Meta-Analysis, 7.5 credits
- Implementation Research in Health and Welfare Practice, 7.5 credits

Elective courses are selected based on the needs of the doctoral student and the specialisation of their thesis.

#### ***Degree of Licentiate***

The Degree of Licentiate consists of a course component comprising 30 credits, of which 22.5 credits are compulsory courses. Compulsory courses are as follows:

- General Principles of Scientific Work: Introductory Course, 7.5 credits
- Scientific Methods, 7.5 credits
- Systematic Review, Meta-Synthesis and Meta-Analysis, 7.5 credits

### **5. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS**

Degree requirements at Dalarna University are regulated by *Regler för examination på forskarnivå vid Högskolan Dalarna*. Doctoral studies conclude with a defence/licentiate seminar. For the degree, the doctoral student must receive a pass on the courses included in their studies and for the doctoral or licentiate thesis as well as the defence/licentiate seminar.

The Doctoral Programmes Coordinator (*forskarutbildningssamordnare*) checks that the course requirements have been met for the Degree of Doctor/Degree of Licentiate. The Director of Doctoral Programme (*studierektor*) certifies that the student has completed all the courses.

### **Degree of Doctor**

The Degree of Doctor requires 240 credits, of which 45 credits are obtained in the course component and the remaining 195 credits are for a doctoral thesis. The defence (*disputation*), which is conducted orally in either English or Swedish, is led by a chairperson with the participation of an opponent and assessment by an examining committee. Based on an assessment, the thesis and its defence receive either a Pass or a Fail.

### **Degree of Licentiate**

The Degree of Licentiate requires 120 credits of which 30 credits are obtained in the course component and the remaining 90 credits are for a licentiate thesis. The thesis must be presented orally in English or Swedish at a public seminar. The licentiate seminar is headed by a chairperson with the participation of an opponent and is assessed by an examining committee. Based on an assessment, the thesis and its defence receive either a Pass or a Fail.