

# HADOK

Handbook for doctoral students and supervisors in Care Sciences within the area of Health and Welfare with a focus on evidence-based practice



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This handbook is intended for doctoral students and supervisors in the doctoral program in Care sciences within the area of Health and Welfare with a focus on evidence-based practice, at Dalarna University. The handbook (HADOK) provides instructions and support on important information that doctoral students and supervisors need to know during the doctoral program.

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## 2. Doctoral Program in Care sciences

The doctoral program in the field of Care sciences, within the area of Health and Welfare with a focus on evidence-based practice, is one of four doctoral programs at Dalarna University. The other three doctoral programs are in the fields of Educational Work, Microdata Analysis, and Resource-Efficient Built Environment.

### 2.1 General Study Plan

Doctoral students admitted before January 1, 2023, follow the General Study Plan for the doctoral program with registry number 5.2.2-2017/745. Doctoral students admitted after January 1, 2023, follow the General Study Plan with registry number C 2022/1483. The main differences between the General Study Plans are the requirements for completed courses before the midpoint (halftime) and before the Licentiate Seminar and Doctoral defense, as well as the number of articles and manuscripts for which one must be the primary author. Both General Study Plans are available on the Staff Portal.

### 2.2 Subject: Care sciences

Care sciences is an interdisciplinary subject focused on the study of human health-related needs and problems, as well as processes, factors, and actions related to physical, mental, and social health and ill-health in various contexts and environments. The study area is broad and may include, for example, patients' and relatives' experiences of illness and care, quality of life, patient or care recipient interaction, effects of interventions, the situation of healthcare professionals, as well as the organization and management of healthcare or care. The doctoral program has an interdisciplinary perspective that characterizes the research area.

### 2.3 Area: Health and Welfare with a focus on evidence-based practice

The area addresses individuals' and society's efforts to promote people's health and social conditions, as well as the development of health and welfare work through the production of knowledge, compilation and critical review of knowledge, implementation of evidence-based knowledge, and evaluation of evidence-based practice. Evidence-based health and welfare work involves integrating the best available scientific knowledge with professional experience and the individual user's/client's/patient's situation, experience, and preferences when making decisions about interventions. Research in the field is inherently practice-oriented.

### 2.4 Objectives of the Doctoral program

A doctoral program, regardless of its focus, provides the competence to independently conduct research, specialized knowledge within a delimited part of the research area, contribute to societal development, and support the learning of others. The doctoral program in Care sciences, within the area of Health and Welfare with a focus on evidence-based practice, also aims to develop the doctoral students' ability and skills to produce evidence-based knowledge through original studies, systematic literature searches, compilation and critical review of identified scientific knowledge, how evidence-based knowledge can be implemented in the health and welfare sector, and how its application can be evaluated. Upon completion of the program, a doctoral degree/licentiate degree is awarded in the research subject of Care sciences within the area of Health and Welfare with a focus on evidence-based practice.

## 2.5 Scope in credits and time

The doctoral program comprises four years of full-time studies and culminates in a doctoral degree. After half of the time, the program can be completed with a licentiate degree. The program consists of courses and a doctoral thesis where an individual research project is carried out to generate new knowledge in a scientifically interesting and relevant area. The doctoral program for a doctoral degree consists of a total of 240 credits, distributed as 45 credits (30 mandatory and 15 elective) of doctoral-level courses and a doctoral thesis of 195 credits. The doctoral program for a licentiate degree consists of a total of 120 credits, distributed as 30 credits (22.5 mandatory and 7.5 elective) and a licentiate thesis worth 90 credits. The doctoral program for a licentiate degree corresponds to 2 years of full-time studies.

Doctoral studies can be conducted part-time, but at a minimum of 50% of full-time studies.

## 2.6 Mandatory Doctoral Courses

The course components and project work should be conducted simultaneously. The mandatory courses are offered once a year. All four courses are worth 7.5 credits, conducted in English, delivered online, and at 50% pace. The mandatory courses are as follows:

- General Science Introduction Course - conducted during the first 10 weeks of the autumn semester.
- Scientific Methods - conducted during the first 10 weeks of the spring semester.
- Systematic Literature Review, Metasynthesis, and Meta-analysis - conducted during the last 10 weeks of the autumn semester.
- Implementation Research in Health and Welfare Work - conducted during the last 10 weeks of the spring semester. (Not mandatory for a licentiate degree).

The doctoral student, in collaboration with the supervisor, chooses when and in which order it is suitable to take the courses. A good tip is to take the General Science Introduction Course and Scientific Methods before the other two.

Mandatory courses are applied for when the course registration opens. The registration form is sent to all doctoral students when applicable. The registration is sent to the Research Programmes Coordinator, Märet Brunnstedt ([mba@du.se](mailto:mba@du.se)), following the instructions on the form.

## 2.7 Elective Courses

In addition to the mandatory courses, within the subject or relevant to the research area, courses totaling 15 credits for a doctoral degree or 7.5 credits for a licentiate degree are required. The doctoral student chooses these courses in collaboration with the main supervisor. If a course is taken outside of Dalarna University, a form for transfer of credits needs to be filled out and this form can be found on the Staff webpage.

Unfortunately, there is no portal available to easily find research education courses. Sometimes, universities contact other universities when courses are available, and this information is communicated to the doctoral students. However, doctoral students usually find the courses they need by exploring different universities or through recommendations from other doctoral students.

### 3. Admission to the doctoral program

#### 3.1 Applicants and admission requirements

Prospective doctoral students can apply in the following two ways:

- The person applies for an advertised doctoral position.
- The person has proof of funding equivalent to two years of full-time doctoral studies for a licentiate degree or four years of full-time doctoral studies for a doctoral degree through funding provided by an external employer.

To apply for the doctoral program in Health and Welfare with a focus on evidence-based practice, the applicant must meet the requirements for both basic and specific eligibility.

Basic eligibility:

- Completed an advanced-level degree.
- Fulfilled course requirements of at least 240 credits, including at least 60 credits at the advanced level.
- Acquired substantially equivalent knowledge through other means, within or outside the country.

Specific eligibility:

- Completed an advanced-level degree in nursing, social work, or a related subject relevant to the field of health and welfare.
- Completed a thesis at the advanced level within the field of health and welfare with a passing grade.
- Possesses necessary language skills in English.

#### 3.2 Admission process

Selection among applicants who meet the basic and specific eligibility criteria should be based on their ability to benefit from the education. Prospective doctoral students who meet the aforementioned requirements should submit the following documents to the director of the doctoral program in nursing:

1. Completed application form for admission to doctoral-level education.
2. Curriculum vitae (CV) including degrees, professional experience, and other relevant merits.
3. Certificates verifying completed education and eligibility for doctoral studies.
4. Funding certificate from the employer or other financier.

The prospective doctoral student and supervisor should specify the start date for commencing the doctoral program if the admission is approved. The start date (the date of the beginning of doctoral studies) is proposed jointly by the prospective doctoral student, supervisor, and employer.



The decision on admission is made by the Head of School.

Upon completion of the admission process, the doctoral student will receive from the Head of Department (avdelningschef):

- DU account (including email).
- Access card.
- Technical equipment such as a computer and mobile phone, and a room (for doctoral students employed at Högskolan Dalarna).

### 3.3 Introduction meeting

After admission, the director of the doctoral program contacts the doctoral student and the main supervisor for an initial meeting. The doctoral student, supervisor, and, if applicable, the department head can ask questions, and the director of the doctoral program provides information on where and how to find instructions and important things to know at the beginning of the doctoral student period.

## 4. Process until the establishment of an individual study plan (ISP)

### 4.1 ISP

For each doctoral student, an ISP should be established, which should include the commitments of the university and the doctoral student, as well as a timetable. The requirement for an ISP for each doctoral student is regulated in the Higher Education Ordinance. The ISP includes a research plan for the licentiate thesis or doctoral thesis, planned supervision for the upcoming year, intended courses during the doctoral program, and the planned level of activity for the entire doctoral program. The doctoral student's ISP should be established by the Head of School no later than three months after the start date of the doctoral program.

### 4.2 Research plan for the licentiate thesis/doctoral thesis

The first step in the process of completing the ISP is to develop a research plan for the licentiate thesis or doctoral thesis, which is prepared by the doctoral student and the prospective supervisors. The research plan should include: background, identified knowledge gap/problem statement, purpose, research questions, methodology, ethical considerations, significance/potential impact, and an overall timetable. The intended doctoral thesis should consist of at least three, usually four, scientific papers. The intended licentiate thesis should consist of two or more planned papers. The planned research plan should undergo a seminar review.

### 4.3 Study protocol and systematic literature review

In the doctoral program in nursing, study protocols and systematic literature reviews can be included as partial work in the licentiate thesis and doctoral thesis. • A study protocol can be included as a partial work when it involves empirical data collection in a larger project, such as a randomized controlled trial (RCT) or a similar study design included in the thesis/doctoral thesis. However, a partial work in the licentiate thesis or doctoral thesis must include some or all of the study's results (primary or secondary outcomes) presented in the study protocol.

A systematic literature review can be included as a partial work. The review typically addresses a specific question, often formulated according to the PICO structure (Population, Intervention, Control, Outcome) or PEO structure (Population, Exposure, Outcome) or similar. The review should include a meta-synthesis or meta-analysis, but systematically conducted reviews with other designs are also accepted. This literature review can be included as a partial work provided that it forms the basis of the doctoral student's project and does not involve planning projects after completing the doctoral program.

In the licentiate thesis and doctoral thesis, at least one empirically based partial work must have undergone peer review assessment and been accepted for publication.

#### 4.4 Research plan seminar

When the research plan is described by the doctoral student and supervisors, it should undergo a seminar review. The purpose of the seminar is to obtain external input on the scope, quality, and feasibility of the research plan's proposed sub-studies. The main supervisor should book the seminar with the research administrator for Health and Welfare (Lena Pettersson, [lpt@du.se](mailto:lpt@du.se)). The booking should include the title of the research project and two designated reviewers, with at least one being a senior researcher (associate professor/professor). Information about the seminar should be posted on the external calendar on the Högskolan Dalarna website by the research administrator, and it should also be sent by the doctoral student or supervisor to: [amne.ihv@du.se](mailto:amne.ihv@du.se); [amne.medicinskvetenskap@du.se](mailto:amne.medicinskvetenskap@du.se); [amne.omvardnad@du.se](mailto:amne.omvardnad@du.se); [amne.socialtarbete@du.se](mailto:amne.socialtarbete@du.se) and [fhvdoktorand@du.se](mailto:fhvdoktorand@du.se).

The doctoral student should have prepared their presentation in English, and even if only Swedish-speaking participants are present, the presentation should be held in English. The seminar itself is conducted in Swedish if only Swedish-speaking participants are present. The seminar lasts for two hours and is led by the main supervisor or assistant supervisor, while the examination is led by the appointed examiner. Digital techniques can be used to facilitate participation for those who cannot be physically present.

The doctoral student begins by presenting their research plan for approximately 15-20 minutes, preferably with the support of PowerPoint.

It is essential for the examiners to form an understanding of the content of the research project, both as a whole and in terms of the individual studies. During the seminar, it is important to create a dialogue between the examiners and the doctoral student. Feedback is provided in a balanced manner, allowing the doctoral student to respond to questions. The examiners' feedback should be seen as valuable assistance for the continued development and implementation of the research plan. The examination process takes approximately 90 minutes. Depending on the structure, other participants may be allowed to join after certain sections or at the end, which is clarified at the beginning of the examination.

Based on the feedback received during the seminar, the research plan is revised.

#### 4.5 Completion of the ISP

Once the research plan has been revised by the doctoral student and the supervisor based on the examiners' feedback during the seminar, the ISP is completed. A template for the ISP and instructions for completion are available on the staff web page. Please note that the research plan should only cover 4 pages in the electronic ISP template, which corresponds to approximately 5-6 pages in a Word document. Include only the most essential references.

After the relevant fields have been completed by the doctoral student and the main supervisor, it can be sent to the Director for the doctoral program for review before signing.

When the doctoral student and supervisor are satisfied with the ISP, it is sent to the program director, who prepares the matter together with the Doctoral Program Committee for final approval by the Head of School.

#### 4.6 Approval of the ISP

The Head of School approves the ISP. During the preparation and approval process, the ISP is evaluated to determine if it has sufficient scope, content, breadth, and depth in the doctoral student's research plan, as well as course planning, with consideration for a 4-year (2-year for licentiate degree) doctoral education leading to a doctoral degree (licentiate degree).

## 5. Activity Level and Updating the Individual Study Plan

### 5.1 Activity Level

Activity level refers to the time devoted to education, i.e., to the project and courses. Dalarna University is required to report doctoral students' activity level, study financing, and degrees to Statistics Sweden (SCB) twice a year. Therefore, every six months, all doctoral students admitted to any of Dalarna University's doctoral programs must report information about their activities and funding to Ladok.

It is important for both the doctoral student and the university to keep track of the activity level. It provides information on how much of the education time the doctoral student has consumed and the remaining time, as the duration of doctoral education is limited to four or two years (net study time).

Doctoral students may receive an extension of their doctoral education period corresponding to the time they have been sick, on parental leave, caring for children, serving in the total defense forces, or holding positions of trust within labor organizations and student organizations. Vacation time should not affect the activity level. In addition to this, doctoral students may receive an extension for specific reasons. What constitutes specific reasons may vary, but, for example, supervisor problems that have negatively affected the doctoral progression work should be considered as specific reasons. The ISP should clearly indicate the activity level for each semester and the percentage of full-time equivalent that the doctoral student may have been sick, on parental leave, or similar.

For doctoral students employed by Dalarna University, reporting sick leave and parental leave in the Primula system is necessary to be eligible for an extension of the education period and the doctoral employment. Institutional service and positions of trust that warrant an extension of the doctoral education period should be reported in Retendo.

Doctoral students employed by another employer should report absences that qualify for an extension to their employer. Supporting documentation for the information provided in the ISP regarding activity should be available upon request.

## 5.2 Annual Updating of the ISP

Every year, all doctoral students admitted to the doctoral program should update their individual study plan in collaboration with the main supervisor and assistant supervisor. The ISP is a living document intended to monitor:

- Progression and when and why any deviations occur
- Planned and completed activities (courses, research projects, etc.) in the doctoral education
- Achievement of goals according to the degree regulations

The annual update of the ISP also contributes to ensuring the quality and legality of the doctoral student's research education and serves as a driving force for quality through annual evaluation.

The ISP is reviewed and signed by the doctoral student, main supervisor, and sent to the Director for the Doctoral Program for signature.

The ISP should be updated in May/June each year, except in cases where finalization or revision has occurred after January.

## 5.3 Withdrawal of the Right to Supervision and Other Resources

If the doctoral student significantly neglects their commitments according to the ISP, the main supervisor should report this to the program director, who consults with the Doctoral Program Committee and informs the Head of School for further consideration. The decision to withdraw the right to supervision and other resources from the doctoral program is made by the Vice-Chancellor of Dalarna University. The resources cannot be withdrawn during the period when the doctoral student is employed as a doctoral student. The doctoral student can apply to the Vice-Chancellor to have their right to supervision and other resources reinstated.

# 6. Supervision

## 6.1 Decision on Supervisors

In connection with the decision on admission, a preliminary main supervisor is appointed. In conjunction with the establishment of the ISP, the main supervisor and assistant supervisors are formally appointed by the Head of School. The selection of prospective supervisors should be based on competence in the research subject, methodology, pedagogy, and availability for supervision. The supervisory group consists of at least two and at most three supervisors. Exceptions can be made of having four supervisors, if justified. The main supervisor should have at least the qualification of an associate professor, and the assistant supervisors should have at least a doctoral degree. The main supervisor does not need to be employed at Dalarna University, but at least one supervisor must be. Adjunct or affiliated lecturers are not considered as employees.

## 6.2 Responsibilities of Supervisors

The supervisory group's responsibility is to support and guide the doctoral student throughout the doctoral education. The main supervisor is the person who has been offered and has taken the primary responsibility for the doctoral student's research education and progression, in consultation with the assistant supervisors. This means that the doctoral student receives the

necessary time, support, and assistance, which is deemed adequate. The assistant supervisors are responsible for the tasks agreed upon with the doctoral student and the main supervisor. In practice, this may involve an assistant supervisor taking primary responsibility for different parts of the doctoral student's education and thesis or doctoral thesis work, such as a sub-study.

### 6.3 Time and Content of Supervision

The number of supervision sessions may vary from doctoral student to doctoral student, as well as depending on the stage of the process the doctoral student is in. As a general rule, it is advisable to establish a supervision plan for the upcoming term, including the frequency of supervision sessions. The doctoral student is responsible for scheduling and conducting supervision sessions, as well as ensuring that materials for supervision are available to the supervisors in a timely manner, as agreed upon. All participants, both the doctoral student and the supervisors, should be prepared and well-informed for each supervision session. After the supervision session, the doctoral student documents the agreements reached in the form of minutes. Important agreements should be included in the ISP.

Supervision encompasses all work from the development of the research plan until the final version of the thesis is completed. Doctoral students are entitled to 128 hours of supervision per year, which corresponds to 7.5% of full-time. The majority of this time (5%) is usually allocated to the main supervisor, but the distribution of the total allocated time within the supervisory group may vary over time and should be indicated in the doctoral student's ISP. The Department of Health and Welfare does not provide funding for supervision time for external supervisors.

The time allocated for supervision includes:

- Supervision meetings with the doctoral student
- Preparations such as reading materials, contact via phone, email, etc.
- Participation in research seminars where the doctoral student's work is discussed
- Administration and contact with experts before and during seminars, licentiate seminars, or doctoral defense
- Participation in supervisor meetings and supervisor days.

### 6.4 Collaboration Guide

The collaboration tool is a simple document designed for doctoral students and supervisors during the doctoral program. The tool can be used as a basis for discussions throughout the doctoral education to facilitate collaboration and communication between the doctoral student and supervisor, as well as between supervisors. It is recommended to use the tool as soon as possible after admission, as it is important to discuss previous experiences, expectations, resources, and roles/responsibilities early on. The tool is preferably used at least once a year. The collaboration tool is available on the staff website of the doctoral program (Medarbetarwebben).

## 6.5 Issues in the Doctoral Student-Supervisor Relationship

It is not uncommon for problems to arise in the doctoral student-supervisor relationship during the doctoral education. The collaboration spans many years, and just like in other relationships, issues may sometimes arise. If problems occur, the doctoral student and supervisor should discuss them to find constructive solutions. In these conversations, the supervisor bears the responsibility for finding good solutions. If there are problems that the doctoral student feels unable or unwilling to discuss directly with the supervisor, contact should be made with the Director for the doctoral program. Together, the doctoral student and the Director can seek strategies to find a functional solution.

## 6.6 Change of Supervisor

Both the main supervisor and assistant supervisor roles may change during the doctoral education. There are different reasons for changing supervisors:

- The doctoral student wants to change supervisors, i.e., not have the current person as a supervisor. The doctoral student has the right to change supervisors at any time without stating a reason. Contact should then be made with the Director for the doctoral program. After a discussion with the doctoral student, a solution is found together with the doctoral student and the remaining supervisors.
- A supervisor wants or needs to terminate a supervisory role. If a replacement is needed, this can be discussed with the Director for the doctoral program if the doctoral student and the remaining supervisory group do not find a solution.
- A supervisor wants to change roles as a supervisor (main supervisor to assistant supervisor or vice versa). A change in the supervisory role should always be based on the best interests of the doctoral student and be supported by the entire supervisory group. Ideally, a change of supervisor should not occur in the last year (calendar year) before the licentiate seminar or doctoral thesis.

In cases where supervisors leave or join, the form "Change in Supervisor Lineup" should be completed and sent to the program director. In cases where a change of supervisor involves a change of the main supervisor, a new ISP (Individual Study Plan) should also be submitted to the program director, with any changes to the project plan clearly indicated. The ISP should preferably be submitted as soon as the doctoral student and main supervisor agree on the changes.

## 6.7 Supervisory Colloquium

All supervisors, both employed at the university and external supervisors, are members of the supervisory colloquium, which meets approximately twice per semester. The supervisors who receive time for doctoral student supervision from the Department of Health and Welfare are expected to participate in the supervisory colloquia.

The supervisory colloquium is a meeting forum at the Department of Health and Welfare for matters related to the doctoral education and supervision of doctoral students. The colloquium aims to promote a good learning environment and a positive climate in the doctoral education

for the doctoral students, as well as contribute to maintaining a high quality in the doctoral education.

The tasks of the supervisory colloquium are to:

- Discuss and develop supervision methodology/pedagogy.
- Contribute to the review and development of rules, guidelines, and other documents related to the doctoral education, as well as the range of courses and elective courses.
- Propose/initiate seminars and educational initiatives for supervisors and doctoral students.
- Provide space for collegial exchange of experiences between supervisors and support each other in the supervisory role.
- Provide information on current issues related to doctoral education locally and nationally (primarily through the program director and subject representatives for the doctoral subject).

## 7. Doctoral Environment

### 7.1 Follow-up Meetings

Every semester, the doctoral student has follow-up meetings with the Director for the doctoral program. In December, a dedicated time of 30 minutes is allocated for the conversation, focusing on the psychosocial study situation. In May/June, a dedicated time of 60 minutes is allocated for the conversation, focusing on the psychosocial study situation as well as the progression of the project.

### 7.2 Doctoral Student Meetings, Doctoral Colloquium, and Kick-off

Two to three times per semester, doctoral students are invited to doctoral student meetings and doctoral colloquium. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss one or more topics that may not be covered in courses or project implementation but are important for the doctoral student's learning and progression. The Director for the doctoral program and the Head of Subject for the doctoral subject are present at the doctoral student meetings. The doctoral colloquium is led by the doctoral students' representative in the student union and serves as a forum to discuss matters important to the doctoral students. Every year, the doctoral program organizes a kick-off event for all doctoral students admitted to the program. This kick-off takes place at the end of August or beginning of September and lasts for approximately two days.

### 7.3 Participation in Research Centers

At the Department of Health and Welfare, there are research centres that function as platforms for research and collaboration between the University and those active in Region Dalarna, Dalarna's municipalities, private actors in health and social care and other academic knowledge centres. In addition, there are research groups (groups that include more researchers than those for a particular project) and networks that doctoral students have access



to. As a doctoral student, you are welcome to participate in all seminars and activities. Most of the activities and seminars held within the research centers are announced on each center's website as well as on the Department of Health and Welfare's external website.

#### 7.4 Mailing List for Doctoral Students in Care sciences

To reach all doctoral students admitted to the doctoral program, the following email address can be used: [fhvdoktorand@du.se](mailto:fhvdoktorand@du.se). Communication in these emails should preferably be in English.

#### 7.5 Doctoral Representation

Doctoral students at the university have representatives in various boards, committees, and councils. There are elected doctoral student representatives in the Education and Research Board (UFN), the Doctoral Programme Board (FUN), and the Appointment Proposal Committee (AFU), and these representatives can come from any of the four doctoral programs at Dalarna University. In the Department Management (IL) and the Doctoral Program Committee (IFUU), there are doctoral student representatives from the doctoral program in Care sciences who are elected by the doctoral students.

#### 7.6 Expenses

All doctoral students receive financial support for travel to supervisors, literature, and other necessities during the doctoral program, which is referred to as the "backpack" ("ryggsäck" in Swedish). Doctoral students who are employed at Dalarna University and those who do not have a backpack funded by the employer are assigned an object number (a kind of account) upon admission. On this object number, the doctoral student receives 15,000 SEK per year if they have an activity level of at least 80% in the doctoral program. If the doctoral student has an activity level of 50%, the backpack amount is 7,500 SEK per year. In cases where an employer other than Dalarna University funds the backpack, the amount is determined by that employer.

Operating funds for the project should not be financed from the backpack funds. Supervisors have a significant responsibility to ensure that necessary resources are available for project implementation. Seeking external funding is also an important experience for the doctoral student.

#### 7.7 Personal Presentation on the Web

Throughout the doctoral program, the doctoral student should actively update their research text and personal information on their page on Dalarna University's website. Whether the doctoral student is employed or not, it is important for them to be visible and searchable as a doctoral student in Care sciences. The text should include information about educational background and the ongoing doctoral thesis work. It is also nice if the doctoral student has a photo on their personal page. The Communications Department assists with staff photography.

#### 7.8 Research Support

Dalarna University provides research support during the research process, which is gathered and presented on the Research Support page on the staff website (<https://www.du.se/sv/forskning/forskningsstod/>). Here, doctoral students and supervisors can



find a wealth of information related to research applications, handling of personal data and research data, record-keeping and archiving of documents in research projects, research communication, and financial management.

### 7.9 Mentor

It is desirable for each doctoral student to have a mentor during their doctoral education. The mentor should be a researcher with experience in doctoral education and independent of the project. The doctoral student chooses whom they want to approach as a mentor. The mentor's role is to provide external support to the doctoral student and contribute to their development as a researcher. How the mentorship is structured between the doctoral student and mentor varies, as the needs differ.

### 7.10 Buddy

A doctoral student buddy is assigned to each newly admitted doctoral student. The selection of a buddy is discussed by the program director with the doctoral student and the potential buddy. The buddy provides support and advice in being a doctoral student but not in the practical work related to any institutional duties.

### 7.11 When Problems Arise

Problems can arise at any time and for various reasons. Whom to turn to depends, of course, on the cause and nature of the problem. Supervisors, buddies, mentors, program directors, or department heads can be good sounding boards. Sometimes, however, one may need to talk to someone completely external. Doctoral students who are employed at Dalarna University can contact their department head, who can ensure that appropriate support is provided. In cases where the doctoral student is not employed at Dalarna University, they can reach out to Student Health Services at Dalarna University (<https://www.du.se/sv/studentwebb/stod-och-service/studenthalsan/studentkurator/>).

## 8. Credit Transfer of Courses

### 8.1 What is a transfer of credit?

The credit of transfer means that some of the credit-bearing course and knowledge requirements specified in the general and individual study plans are replaced by: 1) something done before admission to doctoral studies, 2) courses taken outside the university during doctoral studies, and 3) courses at the basic and advanced levels. It is usually advantageous for the doctoral student to take courses during their doctoral studies instead of accrediting something done earlier. Taking courses provides an opportunity to ask questions related to their research project and to network with other doctoral students and teachers. Additionally, the more recent the course, the more likely it is to be updated with the latest findings. In cases where the doctoral student has already met the course requirements described in the general study plan, there is no need to accredit additional courses.

### 8.2 Credit Transfer of Courses Taken Prior to Starting the Doctoral Program

If the applicant wishes to accredit courses taken before the start of doctoral studies, the doctoral student should discuss this with the main supervisor, subject coordinator, and study

director. However, courses completed before admission to doctoral studies can only be accredited if justified based on the doctoral student's upcoming research project and subject or if they correspond to one of the mandatory courses. Only courses that do not fulfill the requirements for eligibility for doctoral studies can be considered for accreditation.

### 8.3 Credit Transfer of Courses Taken during the doctoral studies

The following can be accredited:

- Courses (or part of a course) at the doctoral level completed at another institution or organization within the framework of doctoral studies are accredited to be included in the doctoral level degree.

- Courses (or part of a course) at the basic and advanced levels are accredited regardless of whether they were completed at Högskolan Dalarna or another institution to be included in the doctoral level degree.

### 8.4 Application for transfer of credits

1. The application is made by the doctoral student on a specific form. It is only possible to apply for one accreditation per form. The application must include the following attachments:
  - Description of the course's learning objectives and content (course syllabus)
  - Proof of participation and satisfactory results

The doctoral student is responsible for providing sufficient documentation for a relevant, level, and scope assessment. If there is not enough documentation, a decision on accreditation cannot be made. If the course has been completed abroad, it is the doctoral student's responsibility to provide information about the point system from the relevant country/university (as an attachment to the application). Support in the assessment can be provided by the admissions officer at the university.

2. The application, together with the required documents, is sent to the doctoral programmes coordinator (Märet Brunnstedt, mba@du.se), who, after review, forwards it to the main supervisor.
3. The main supervisor assesses the quality and scope of the current course, partly based on the requirements in the general study plan and partly based on what is relevant to the doctoral student's individual study plan.
4. The main supervisor checks that the course name and university credits granted on the form are correct. It is important that the names and course titles, both in English and Swedish, are correct because all approved transfer of credits will be listed on the degree certificate based on how they are named in the accreditation decision.
5. The main supervisor signs and sends it to Märet Brunnstedt, mba@du.se, who drafts the decision which is sent to the department administrator for further processing. Then the subject coordinator receives the draft, signs it if they approve the decision.

6. In case of a conflict of interest (e.g., if the head of subject is the supervisor of the doctoral student), the decision is made by the head of the department or another person appointed by the head of the department.

Decisions on accreditation can be appealed.

## 9. Seminars

Participating in seminars is a crucial and central part of the doctoral education to achieve the educational objectives. Engaging in discussions about one's own and others' manuscripts, ideas, methods, and draft applications not only enhances knowledge and understanding of the chosen research area and methods but also improves the ability to evaluate and assess new phenomena, research questions, methods, and conclusions. These seminars also provide training for doctoral students to present/describe and defend/explain their texts/methods when receiving feedback from seminar participants. By reviewing others' texts and presentations, the ability to identify weaknesses, uncertainties, and strengths increases, allowing for the provision of constructive feedback in a pleasant manner. As a doctoral student in Care sciences, there are ample opportunities to attend seminars.

### 9.1 Health and Welfare Seminars

Every other Monday, Health and Welfare conducts one to two seminars from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM. These seminars involve researchers and doctoral students presenting their manuscripts, project plans, methods, research grant applications, and more. All these seminars are open and publicly announced via the HDa website, which means that anyone interested can attend. It is during these seminars that doctoral students present their initial research plans, have their halftime seminar, defense seminar, and pre-defense seminar. All manuscripts/articles intended to be included in the doctoral thesis are also reviewed in a seminar setting, meaning most doctoral students have four seminars where their manuscripts are scrutinized. If deemed appropriate by the supervisor and the doctoral student, seminars can also be held at, for example, CKF (see below), if the doctoral student is affiliated with that institution.

Seminar bookings are made by the supervisor or doctoral student to the research administrator for Health and Welfare (Lena Pettersson, [lpt@du.se](mailto:lpt@du.se)). When booking, the project title and two selected reviewers, chosen by the supervisor, should be specified. The reviewers should include one doctoral researcher and one doctoral student. Information about the seminar is posted on the external calendar (<https://www.du.se/>) by the research administrator and should also be sent by the doctoral student or supervisor to: [amne.ihv@du.se](mailto:amne.ihv@du.se); [amne.medicinskvetenskap@du.se](mailto:amne.medicinskvetenskap@du.se); [amne.omvardnad@du.se](mailto:amne.omvardnad@du.se); [amne.socialtarbete@du.se](mailto:amne.socialtarbete@du.se) and [fhvdoktorand@du.se](mailto:fhvdoktorand@du.se).

### 9.2 Seminars at the Center for Clinical Research (CKF) Dalarna

The Center for Clinical Research (CKF) Dalarna is an interdisciplinary research center based on collaboration between Uppsala University and Region Dalarna. The center's activities aim to support clinical research in Care sciences and medical science. Seminars are held on Mondays and Tuesdays of even weeks, from 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM and 3:00 PM to 4:30 PM.

Information about CKF Dalarna's seminars is sent via email to all doctoral students in Care sciences, and everyone is warmly welcome to participate in these seminars.

## 10. Research Ethics and Research Integrity

Doctoral students and researchers have a significant responsibility towards the individuals who participate in or are affected by the research. It also entails conducting research with honesty, avoiding undue influence from personal or other interests.

### 10.1 Research Ethics

Research involving or about human subjects is governed by the Ethical Review Act (2003:460), which aims to protect individual human beings and respect human dignity in research. Most research conducted within the Department of Health and Welfare must undergo ethical review by the Ethical Review Authority (with few exceptions). All research ethics applications and decisions are recorded in the registry of the Ethical Review Authority (EPM), and these reference numbers should be included in the ISP for the doctoral student.

The responsible party for research is the principal investigator specified in the ethics application. In cases where the principal supervisor is not the main applicant in the application to the Ethical Review Authority, the responsibility still rests with the principal supervisor to ensure that the research is conducted within the framework of the approved research ethics.

For research conducted outside the borders of Sweden, the research ethics application and the decision made by the responsible authority of that country should be recorded at Dalarna University. The application and decision should be sent by email to [registrator@du.se](mailto:registrator@du.se), with the email subject line stating "Sarah Winther - ethics application."

### 10.2 Research Integrity

There is a law that regulates good research practice and the examination of misconduct in research (2019:504). The Swedish Research Council's Good Research Practice (2017) summarizes some general rules (p.8) for what constitutes good research practice:

1. You shall tell the truth about your research.
2. You shall consciously examine and disclose the foundations of your studies.
3. You shall openly disclose methods and results.
4. You shall openly disclose commercial interests and other affiliations.
5. You shall not steal research results from others.
6. You shall maintain good order in your research, including documentation and archiving.
7. You shall strive to conduct your research without harming people, animals, or the environment.
8. You shall be fair in your assessment of others' research.

Dalarna University has a procedural policy governing how scientific misconduct or deviations from good research practice are handled (Procedural Policy for Handling Research Misconduct and Deviations from Good Research Practice). This policy states that all

individuals involved in research activities at Dalarna University are responsible for ensuring that the research process adheres to good research practice and that the data collected, compiled, and reported follow the principles accepted by the research community. Research misconduct refers to a serious deviation from good research practice in the form of fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism (FFP). Other deviations from good research practice are actions that are not classified as research misconduct but substantially damage or risk damaging the integrity of research or researchers. These actions are committed with intent or gross negligence during the planning, implementation, or reporting of research. A doctoral student or supervisor who becomes aware of suspicions of deviations from good research practice or research misconduct should immediately and in writing report this to the Vice-Chancellor, or alternatively inform the supervisor or Director for the doctoral program who will make the report.

## 11. Usage of AI

In anticipation of international, national, and Högskolan Dalarna guidelines, the following approaches are proposed for the use of artificial intelligence (AI), such as AI chatbots/generative AI, in doctoral education.

### 11.1 Permitted use of AI

1. It is allowed to use AI tools to enhance the text by identifying errors or providing suggestions for improvements, but there must be a disclosure of the tool used and how it was utilized.
2. It is allowed to use AI tools to find information and support reasoning, but the researcher/doctoral candidate must personally review the source and include accurate citations.
3. It is allowed to use AI tools to gain an overview of subject areas, but independent assessments and processing of results must be conducted, with a disclosure of the tool used and how it was employed.
4. It is allowed to use AI tools to analyze data and generate visualizations, but independent interpretations and explanations of results must be made, and there must be a disclosure of the tool used and how it was employed.
5. It is allowed to use AI tools to create images and graphics, but a description and justification of the choices made must be provided, along with a disclosure of the tool used and how it was employed.
6. It is allowed to use AI tools for translating texts.
7. It is allowed to use AI tools for transcribing audio files and translating research data, provided that no compromises are made regarding data security for sensitive material and personal information (whether the researcher/doctoral candidate uploads the audio file themselves or it is part of a contracted transcription service). Additionally, it must be ensured that the transcription is accurate, and there must be a disclosure of the tool used and how it was employed. It is important to note that any potential voice is considered personal information.

## 11.2 Not recommended use of AI

1. It is not allowed to submit an AI-generated text as one's own; this is considered plagiarism.
2. It is not allowed to use AI tools to generate answers or solutions without demonstrating personal knowledge and reasoning.
3. It is not allowed to copy answers or texts directly from AI tools without citing the source.
4. It is not allowed to use unprocessed results from AI tools in peer feedback or opposition.
5. It is not allowed to use AI tools to generate data analyses and results without being able to explain how they were generated.
6. It is not allowed to use AI tools without disclosing the tool used and how it was employed.
7. It is not allowed to share sensitive research information or copyrighted material with AI tools.

## 12. Publishing

Publishing research in the form of peer-reviewed articles is a requirement for doctoral students pursuing a compilation thesis. Most journals require a description of the contributions made by the authors of an article.

### 12.1 Author Contributions

Before the application for the Licentiate Seminar and the Doctoral defense, all doctoral students must describe their own contributions to the completion of manuscripts/articles. It is therefore beneficial to document these contributions as soon as an article is published. The contributions should be presented using a form available on staff webpage (Medarbetarwebben), clearly indicating the doctoral student's contributions in terms of design, data collection, analysis, and writing.

### 12.2 Journal Selection

Choosing a journal for a manuscript is not always easy. Supervisors are the best people to discuss journal selection with. A helpful tip is to copy the abstract of the article into services such as <https://www.journalguide.com/> or <https://jane.biosemantics.org/index.php?text=This%20is%20a%20test>, which provide suggestions for suitable journals.

It is important to note that there are many unscrupulous journals and publishers today—journals that may appear legitimate online but do not employ a scientific peer-review process, meaning that other researchers have not reviewed and commented on the manuscript. If there is any doubt about whether a journal is appropriate or not, contact Richard Borg ([rbo@du.se](mailto:rbo@du.se)) at the Library for assistance.

### 12.3 Open Access

Open Access refers to making scientific findings freely available on the internet. Dalarna University recommends that doctoral students publish in Open Access journals, and financial support is available for this purpose. More information on how to proceed can be found on the Library's page: [https://libguides.du.se/open\\_access](https://libguides.du.se/open_access).

## 13. International Exchange, Networking, and Conferences

### 13.1 International Exchange

International exchange of ideas and opportunities for collaboration is an important part of doctoral education. International cooperation provides opportunities for engaging with different environments, projects, materials, and methods. Most researchers at the School of Health and Welfare have international collaborations within specific research projects. As the main supervisor, it is important to facilitate international contacts and collaborations for the doctoral student. Doctoral students can attend courses at international institutions, participate in collaborative meetings and networks, and visit international environments relevant to the project's focus.

Through ERASMUS+, doctoral students (and supervisors) can have their expenses covered when traveling to educational institutions or companies/organizations within the EU/EEA for training purposes. Training can include study visits, courses, seminars, or workshops. To be eligible for reimbursement, one must be away for a minimum of two working days and a maximum of two months. More information on the process can be obtained from Dalarna University's external website, Internationalization at Dalarna University: <https://www.du.se/en/about-du/international-cooperation/>.

### 13.2 Participation in National and International Networks and Conferences

Networking with other researchers, both nationally and internationally, is often stimulating and rewarding. Similarly, attending conferences to listen to others and present one's own research is valuable. Doctoral students should be encouraged to participate and present their own findings at national and international conferences, congresses, workshops, or similar events each year. In addition to receiving critical feedback, attending conferences allows for networking opportunities beneficial for the doctoral student's future.

## 14. Career planning

An important aspect of doctoral education is preparing for a future career. Some doctoral students aspire to continue working in academia, while others aim to create optimal opportunities for extensive research. Some may seek to develop their work in regional or municipal settings, and for others, it could be a combination of these aspirations.

Career planning aims to create the best conditions for mapping out one's future career. Therefore, it is beneficial to start thinking early about what one needs to equip oneself with. This may involve choosing courses, collaborating with partners, engaging in teaching, and gaining experiences such as applying for research funding, writing on one's CV, and setting up



a profile on platforms like LinkedIn or ResearchGate. The primary responsibility for career planning rests with the doctoral student, and the best support can often be obtained from supervisors, as they are well-positioned to guide doctoral candidates and facilitate various activities. In the Individual Study Plan (ISP), there is a specific section for Career Planning. Even if it is marked off after one year, it is advisable to have a discussion between the doctoral student and the supervisor annually, perhaps in conjunction with the ISP revision.

There are also courses available for doctoral students in career planning at institutions such as Karolinska Institute and Uppsala University.

## 15. Halftime Seminar, Kappa Seminar, Thesis presentation, and Pre-Defense

All doctoral students are required to conduct a midway seminar, a draft seminar, as well as a thesis presentation. However, these seminars are not evaluative, meaning that the doctoral student is not assessed as pass or fail. The purpose of these seminars is to provide support for the continuation of the doctoral work.

### 15.1 Halftime Seminar

The purpose of a halftime seminar is to review and evaluate the progress of the thesis and provide support for the ongoing thesis work. Additionally, it aims to give the doctoral student experience in the roles of respondent and opponent during a defense. The halftime seminar (excluding the licentiate degree) takes place when half of the doctoral program's duration has been completed, regardless of whether there are any manuscripts to present or not.

Guidelines for the appointment of reviewers, the review process, implementation, and protocols are available on the staff website.

### 15.2 Kappa (narrative framework)

The first part of the thesis is the narrative framework, commonly referred to as the "kappa." The kappa serves as an introduction to the papers and presents the research questions and overall findings in a comprehensive context. The kappa should be able to be read as a standalone scientific text and should not include any copying of text, figures, or tables from the individual papers.

The kappa is typically written in English. At Dalarna University, Uppsala University's template for the kappa is used. There are free courses available, which have been highly recommended by previous doctoral students, on using the template. Information about the thesis template, the template course, and more can be found on the Library's research support page at Dalarna University's website: <https://www.du.se/en/library/research-support-and-publishing/>.

### 15.3 Kappa seminar

During the kappa seminar, the kappa is reviewed by three reviewers, preferably including one doctoral student. The kappa seminar lasts for two hours.



#### 15.4 Thesis Presentation (Spikning)

Thesis presentation, or "spikning" in Swedish, is an academic ritual that signifies the public availability of a thesis or licentiate thesis during the presentation of a licentiate or doctoral thesis. The thesis is made accessible to everyone three weeks before the licentiate seminar or defense, and from that point onwards, it should be available for anyone who wishes to read it. The thesis presentation is conducted electronically, and the library staff handles the electronic process. Doctoral students in Care sciences also physically display their licentiate thesis or doctoral thesis on the "thesis presentation tree" at the library.

#### 15.5 Pre-defense

A few weeks before the public defense, a pre-defense is held. The purpose of the pre-defense is to allow the doctoral student to practice explaining and describing important aspects of the doctoral thesis, defending its merits, and also demonstrating a critical approach. At this seminar, "examiners" are selected to act as opponents. It is advantageous for the examiners at this seminar to be those who reviewed the thesis kappa, as they are familiar with the doctoral thesis, but the doctoral student/supervisor can also choose others. The pre-defense is scheduled in the same way as other seminars within the field of Health and Welfare.

### 16. Licentiate Thesis and Licentiate Seminar

The licentiate thesis is typically structured as two or more scientific articles with a brief introductory narrative that also serves as an introduction to the subject of the thesis. The general study plan (ASP) that the doctoral student is enrolled in regulates the requirement for the number of manuscripts in which the student is the first author, as well as the number of accepted empirical works.

Instructions for application, selection of grading committee, pre-examination, implementation, and grading protocol can be found on the staff web portal. During the pre-examination, the grading committee provides a collective recommendation on whether the licentiate seminar is recommended or not, based on their assessment of whether the sub-articles meet the scope and quality corresponding to the knowledge objectives of two years of full-time studies. The doctoral program funds approximately 50 copies of the thesis, depending on the expected demand. The cost of potential color printing should be discussed with the head of department. Travel and accommodation expenses for the examining committee are covered by the School of Health and Welfare. A description of expenses covered by the School of Health and Welfare is available from the Director of the doctoral program.

### 17. Doctoral Thesis and Defense

The doctoral thesis should typically be composed of several scientific articles with a kappa (introductory narrative) in Swedish or English. The doctoral thesis should consist of at least three, usually four, scientific works. However, it is the scientific quality and the doctoral student's independent contribution to knowledge development that are assessed, not the number of articles in the doctoral thesis. The general study plan (ASP) that the doctoral student is enrolled in regulates the requirement for the number of manuscripts in which the student is the first author, as well as the number of accepted empirical works.

Instructions for application, selection of opponent, grading committee, chairperson, pre-examination, implementation, and grading protocol can be found on the staff web portal. During the pre-examination, the examining committee provides a collective recommendation on whether the defense is recommended or not, based on their assessment of whether the papers meet the scope and quality corresponding to the knowledge objectives of four years of full-time studies. The School of Health and Welfare funds 100 copies of the doctoral thesis. Additional copies are financed by the doctoral student. The cost of potential color printing should be discussed with the Director for the doctoral program, with the decision made by the Head of School. The opponent is provided with a compensation of SEK 10,000, funded by the School of Health and Welfare. Travel and accommodation expenses for the grading committee are also covered by the School. Members of the examining committee do not receive any fees. A description of expenses covered by the School of Health and Welfare is available from the Director for the doctoral program.