



HÖGSKOLAN  
DALARNA

**General Programme Curriculum for the  
field of study: *Health and Welfare with  
Focus on Evidence-Based Practice* with  
a Doctoral Degree in the subject of *Care  
Sciences***

Decision: Doctoral Programmes Board 2017-05-23

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**DALARNA UNIVERSITY**  
**Doctoral Programmes Board**

## **1. DESCRIPTION OF THE FIELD OF STUDY**

The research degree subject *Care Sciences* is comprised primarily of the subjects Nursing, Sexual, Reproductive and Perinatal Health and Medical Science. *Care Sciences* is a multi-disciplinary subject focused on the study of people's health-related needs and problems, as well as the processes, factors and activities related to how physical, mental and social health and illness occur 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, the treatment of patients or care-recipients, the effects of interventions, health professionals' experience and perspectives, including the organisation and management of health and social care. The subject does not include biomedically-oriented research. The research degree has a multidisciplinary perspective that characterizes the research area. This means that doctoral students and researchers from subjects other than the above indicated can also be included based on the focus of the dissertation.

The field of study *Health and Welfare with a Focus on Evidence-Based Practice* concerns the work being done at both 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 of knowledge, the summary and critical appraisal of knowledge, the implementation of evidence-based knowledge and the process evaluation of evidence-based practice. Evidence-based practice in health and welfare involves applying the best available scientific knowledge in combination with professional experience and an understanding of the individual client's/patient's/user's situation, experience and preferences, in order to reach decisions on what is to be done. The research within this field is naturally oriented toward praxis.

The doctoral programme in *Care Sciences* in the field of study *Health and Welfare with a Focus on Evidence-Based Practice* aims to develop the ability and skills of the doctoral student in doing original studies, systematic literature searches, summarise and critically appraise identified scientific knowledge, how to implement evidence-based knowledge and how to evaluate the implementation. The programme also aims to develop the student's independence and ability in: the application of scientific theory; research design, research methods and data analysis using both quantitative and qualitative approaches; research ethics; and scientific presentation and communication. Upon completion of the programme, the student will be awarded a doctoral degree/licentiate degree in the subject *Care Sciences* within the field of study *Health and Welfare with a Focus on Evidence-Based Practice*.

## 2. OBJECTIVES FOR DOCTORAL STUDIES

### 2.1 General Learning Outcomes

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

#### **Doctoral degree**

##### *Knowledge and Understanding*

For the Degree of Doctor the doctoral 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 doctoral 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 doctoral 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.

#### **Licentiate Degree**

##### *Knowledge and Understanding*

For a Degree of Licentiate the doctoral 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 specialized 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 doctoral 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 doctoral 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**

Admission is to either the Licentiate Degree (120 credits) or the Doctoral Degree (240 credits). The conditions for admission to the programme are either that the applicant has been offered a doctoral position at Dalarna University or that the applicant holds another position that allows doctoral studies to be undertaken.

Doctoral positions are advertised nationally and can also be advertised internationally. Admission is on a competitive basis.

### **3.2 Qualifications**

To be admitted to the doctoral programme in *Care Sciences* in the field of study *Health and Welfare with a Focus on Evidence-Based Practice*, the applicant must meet the general entry requirements and specific entry requirements and as such has what is required to complete the doctoral programme successfully.

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

To be admitted to third-cycle level (doctoral) studies, the applicant must have

1. completed a degree at the second-cycle level (a master's),
2. successfully completed courses amounting to at least 240 credits, of which at least 60 are at the second-cycle level, or
3. in some way, either in Sweden or in another country, gained equivalent skills.

The Doctoral Programme Committee for Health and Welfare may make exceptions in terms of the general entry requirements for an individual applicant if there is good reason to do so.

### *Specific Entry Requirements*

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

1. completed a degree at the second-cycle 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 level within the field of Health and Welfare, and
3. the required linguistic skills in English.

### **3.3 Selection**

The doctoral position shall be formulated by the intended main supervisor, the Chair of the Doctoral Programme Committee for Health and Welfare, Department Director and the Human Resources Department, with consideration given to the general programme curriculum. Selection from among those candidates who meet the entry requirements shall be made based on the candidates' ability to successfully complete the doctoral programme according to the following criteria:

- previous study results with weight given to the quality of the degree project (thesis) at the second-cycle level
- the ability to communicate in both written and spoken English
- personal suitability
- other merits

Admission to the doctoral programme is processed by the intended main supervisor and/or the Director of Doctoral Programme, who rank applicants according to the selection criteria presented in the general programme curriculum.

The Doctoral Programme Committee for Health and Welfare decides on admission based on the interviews of the applicants, references and, where applicable, a written assignment from the applicants. Before deciding on admission, the following is assessed:

1. the quality and feasibility of the intended project and its relevance to the research degree subject
2. the financial plan
3. if adequate supervisory competence is available to ensure good and professional supervision

### **3.4 Supervision**

At least two supervisors shall be appointed to each doctoral student. One of the supervisors is appointed as the principal supervisor and s/he shall be competent as an associate professor or professor. Co-supervisors should have a doctoral degree. At least one of the supervisors shall be employed at Dalarna University. All supervisors must have undergone supervisor training or present a plan for the implementation of such training. The Doctoral Programme Committee for Health and Welfare initially appoints a principle supervisor in connection with admission. The Doctoral Programme Committee for Health and Welfare formally appoints the principle supervisor and co-supervisor as part of the process of approving the individual study plan (ISP), which occurs no later than three months after agreed date for the commencement of studies. A change of supervisors can occur at any time on the initiative of the doctoral student or supervisor, with the Doctoral Programme Committee for Health and Welfare taking the formal decision. Doctoral students are entitled to supervision of 128 hours per year.

## 4. PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

### 4.1 General

The doctoral degree (licentiate) comprises four (two) years of full-time study, in total 240 (120) credits. The programme comprises a course component of 45 credits, of which 30 are compulsory and 15 are electives (doctoral degree), and for the licentiate, 30 credits, of which 22.5 credits are compulsory and 7.5 credits are electives. In addition, there is a thesis component of 195 credits (doctoral degree) and 90 credits (licentiate). A person may be employed as a doctoral student for a maximum of eight years, but the period may be extended if special reasons exist (sick leave, leave of absence due to military service, elected positions within trade unions and parental leave). Doctoral students may participate in teaching and other work within the institution to a maximum of 20% of employment which is compensated by the corresponding extension of the study period.

### 4.2 Individual Study Plan (ISP) and Financial Plan

An individual study plan (ISP) that describes how the programme will be structured for the individual shall be drawn up, preferably in conjunction with admission but no later than three months after admission. The ISP is designed together by the doctoral student and his/her main supervisor and should clarify the areas of responsibility of each party, including the specific goals for the doctoral student and the expectations regarding supervision. The ISP shall include:

1. the names of the principal supervisor and the co-supervisor(s)
2. the person responsible for validation of course elements
3. a description of how supervision will be organised
4. a preliminary title for the thesis and a description of planned scientific work as well as a schedule for the doctoral programme
5. a declaration of the need for (or status) of research ethics review
6. a plan of the courses in the doctoral programme and a record of completed courses
7. a report of the amount of work carried out within the institution or other posts
8. a description of other scientific activities, such as participation in seminars, conferences and research visits to other institutes of higher education
9. a financial plan with details of any contracts with employers other than Dalarna University

The ISP is drawn up on a special form jointly by the doctoral student and principal supervisor, reviewed by the Director of Doctoral Programme and thereafter approved by the Doctoral Programme Committee for Health and Welfare. A funding plan clarifying the financial responsibility for the entire period of the doctoral student's degree should be appended to the form.

The ISP is updated and reviewed on a yearly basis, unless stated otherwise in the ISP, and is sent to the Director of Doctoral Programme who is responsible for follow-up, documentation and reporting to the Doctoral Programme Committee for Health and Welfare. If the Doctoral Programme Committee for Health and Welfare so requests, follow-up will be conducted more often than on an annual basis. Approved and revised ISPs and completed course credits will be documented and archived.

Significant deviations from the ISP may result in the doctoral student being refused access to the University's resources, in accordance with the Higher Education Ordinance. The principal supervisor shall, through the annual review process, determine whether the doctoral student is following the ISP.

If the principal supervisor determines that the student's deviation from the ISP is significant, then the Director of Doctoral Programme shall give the doctoral student the opportunity to give a written response to the supervisor's account and shall thereafter submit a report to the Doctoral Programme Committee for Health and Welfare. If the Doctoral Programme Committee for Health and Welfare determines that there is reason to withdraw resources, then such reasons shall be presented to the Vice-Chancellor for decision.

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

At approximately the mid-way point of the programme, a half time seminar will be held. The purpose of this seminar is to review the work completed to this point as well as the plan for the remaining work up to the public defence of the thesis. The seminar is advertised publicly and the reviewers are selected by the principal supervisor. The seminar is carried out with the principal supervisor acting as the chair and with two reviewers external to Dalarna University and one internal reviewer from the Health and Welfare research profile or otherwise employed within Dalarna University. At least two of the reviewers shall be Associate Professors or Professors. The reviewers, supervisors and doctoral student should meet after the seminar to summarise the discussion and to decide upon a focus for the continuing work.

#### **4.3 Thesis**

The doctoral thesis shall normally comprise a series of scientific articles, together with a chapter that provides a framing narrative that also serves as an introduction to the topic of the thesis, and which can be written in Swedish or English. The doctoral thesis should consist of at least three, and usually four, scientific articles, but it is the scientific quality of the articles and the doctoral student's independent contribution to the development of knowledge that is assessed, not the number of articles in the thesis. The doctoral student shall be the first author of at least two articles. At least two articles shall be accepted for publication or published in peer-reviewed scientific journals. It is also possible for a doctoral thesis to take the form of a monograph.

The licentiate thesis normally comprises two or more scientific articles together with a short chapter that provides a framing narrative that also serves as an introduction to the topic of the thesis, and which can be written in Swedish or English. The doctoral student shall be the first author of at least one article. At least one article shall be accepted for publication or published in a peer-reviewed scientific journal. It is also possible for a licentiate thesis to take the form of a monograph.

All scientific articles in a thesis as well as the framing chapter, or all the chapters where the thesis is a monograph, should be presented and discussed at seminars throughout the period of postgraduate study. At least two articles from the thesis should also have been presented at scientific conferences nationally and internationally.

Following a proposal from the principal supervisor and confirmation that there is no conflict of interest, the Doctoral Programme Committee for Health and Welfare shall

appoint the chairperson, the examination committee including potential replacements for committee members and the external discussant (opponent) for the student's defence of the thesis. The chair and the three members of the examination committee shall be associate professors or professors, the external discussant should have obtained a doctorate at least. At most one member of the examination committee can be employed at Dalarna University. All published/accepted articles and all manuscripts included in the thesis, or the whole work if a monography, shall be reviewed by the examination committee prior to the defence. The committee members should provide individual judgements on whether the various parts of the thesis are of sufficient scope and quality to meet the learning objectives for four or two years full-time study, as appropriate. The examination committee submits a summative recommendation to the Director of Doctoral Programme as to whether the doctoral student's work is judged to be of satisfactory quality and scope that it can proceed to a public defence. A positive recommendation does not imply that the thesis will be approved at the defence.

The framing chapter/monography shall be reviewed by at least two reviewers at a seminar. Before the thesis is submitted for printing, the Director of Doctoral Programme shall check the framing chapter/monography for plagiarism.

The Doctoral Programme Committee for Health and Welfare shall decide on the date and time, location, chairperson, opponent, examination committee members and their potential replacements for the public defence of the thesis at the latest three months before the defence of the thesis takes place.

#### **4.4 Course Component**

Courses taken by the doctoral student can be provided by Dalarna University or other higher education institutions. The objectives of the course, its content and the number of credits awarded on completion of the course should be specified in a written syllabus. Courses that lack specified credits may be assessed and accepted by transfer of credits. The courses that are to be included in the doctoral programme must be specified in the ISP. The courses are divided into compulsory and elective courses. For every doctoral student, a senior researcher employed at Dalarna University examiner will be appointed by the Doctoral Programme Committee for Health and Welfare to have responsibility for validating the courses.

#### **Doctoral Degree**

A doctoral degree comprises a course component of 45 credits, of which 30 credits are for compulsory courses.

#### **Compulsory Courses:**

- 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 chosen based on the needs of the doctoral student and the focus of the thesis.



**Licentiate Degree**

The licentiate degree comprises a course component of 30 credits, of which 22.5 credits are for compulsory courses.

Compulsory Courses:

- 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. EXAM REQUIREMENTS**

Both doctoral studies and licentiate studies conclude with a public defence of the thesis. For the degree to be awarded, the student must have received a pass grade for all the courses included in the doctoral programme as well as for the doctoral/licentiate thesis and for its defence.

The Doctoral Studies Coordinator checks that the course requirements have been met for a doctoral degree or licentiate degree, as appropriate. The Director of Doctoral Programme ratifies that all courses are completed.

**Doctoral degree**

To be awarded a doctoral degree, the student requires 240 credits, of which at least 45 are from courses and the remaining 195 credits are for a doctoral thesis. The thesis will be presented orally in English or Swedish at a public defence led by a chairperson and involving an external discussant (opponent), and is assessed by an examination committee. The thesis and defence of the thesis are graded as pass or fail.

**Licentiate degree**

To be awarded a licentiate degree, the student requires 120 credits, of which 30 are from courses and the remaining 90 credits are for a licentiate thesis. The thesis will be presented orally in English or Swedish at a public defence led by a chairperson and is assessed by an examination committee. The thesis and defence of the thesis are graded as pass or fail.