



GÖTEBORGS
UNIVERSITET

IT FACULTY

General study syllabus
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GENERAL SYLLABUS FOR THIRD-CYCLE PROGRAMMES IN THE SUBJECT AREA

COMMUNICATION, 120–240 CREDITS, AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

Published

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Summary This general syllabus is a revision of the general study syllabus for third-cycle programmes in the subject communication, 120–240 credits, at the University of Gothenburg, decided by the IT Faculty on 11-11-2010. The general syllabus is translated from the Swedish version.

GENERAL SYLLABUS FOR THIRD-CYCLE PROGRAMMES IN THE SUBJECT AREA COMMUNICATION, 120–240 CREDITS, AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

The study syllabus was established by the IT Faculty Board at the University of Gothenburg on 11-11-2010 (registration number U 2015/636 and revised on 20-04-2022). This study syllabus applies to doctoral students admitted to third-cycle courses and study programmes in the subject area communication from 20-04-2022.

1. Title of qualification

For a licentiate degree the title of the qualification is *Degree of Licentiate of Philosophy in Communication (Filosofie licentiatexamen i ämnet kommunikation)*.

For a doctoral degree the title of the qualification is *Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Communication (Filosofie doktorexamen i ämnet kommunikation)*.

2. Subject area description

Communication is a cross disciplinary subject area with strong connections to related disciplines such as media studies, linguistics, pedagogy, and sociology. Communication consists of a number of sub areas focusing on relevant aspects of communication, including digital communication, and communication technology, organizational communication, media and journalism, political communication, intercultural communication, and interpersonal communication.

3. Programme objectives

Third-cycle courses and study programmes are to be substantially based on the knowledge that students acquire in courses and study programmes at first- and second-cycle levels. The programme objectives are to enlarge on the advanced knowledge and skills required for the doctoral student to be able to independently conduct research in the subject area communication and to contribute to the growth of knowledge in the field through the production of a research thesis.

3.1. Outcomes for a Degree of Licentiate

3.1.1. 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.

3.1.2. 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.

3.1.3. 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.

3.2. Outcomes for a degree of Doctor

3.2.1. 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.

3.2.2. 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.

3.2.3. 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.

4. Structure and content of the study programme

The study programme is structured such that studies for full-time students normally require four academic years (240 credits) towards a doctoral degree, and it consists of a course part of 90 credits and a thesis part of 150 credits. This assumes that the doctoral student is engaged in their studies full-time and actively participates in the teaching provided. There is an option to graduate with a Degree of Licentiate after two years (120 credits) consisting of a course part of 45 credits and a thesis part of 75 credits.

The coursework portion of a third-cycle study programme in the communication consists of:

- compulsory courses
- individual courses

Early on in the study programme, the doctoral student is given practice in active research work and scholarly publication. A great deal of emphasis is placed on project work, and doctoral students are encouraged to participate in various national or international conferences and research collaborations. Through participation in scholarly discussions at seminars and in project work, the student is trained gathering knowledge, developing ideas and defending them, as well as writing, critically reviewing and publishing scholarly texts.

The thesis work included in a Degree of Doctor is to be treated at three seminars – a planning seminar, mid-way seminar, and final seminar. The thesis work included in a Degree of Licentiate is to be treated at a planning seminar. If a Degree of Licentiate is taken out as a step in a complete (240 credits) third-cycle study programme, no mid-way seminar is required.

The doctoral student is expected to attend seminars and guest lectures as part of their study programme, even if these are not directly related to the student's research work or the coursework part of their degree. Unless there are special reasons for not doing so, the doctoral student is also to contribute to joint activities at the Department of Applied Information Technology.

4.1. Individual study plan

An individual study plan must be drawn up for each doctoral student. The rules for drawing up individual study plans are set out in the Rules and Regulations for Third-Cycle Studies at the University of Gothenburg – *Doktorandreglerna*.

The individual study plan shall contain planned, ongoing and completed parts of the study programme and shall function as a guiding document for the entire study programme and is to ensure that the study programme is undertaken and monitored effectively.

4.2. Supervision

For each doctoral student, at least two supervisors are to be appointed, one of which shall be the principal supervisor and the other shall be the assistant supervisor. The principal supervisor shall normally have at least the qualifications required for appointment as a docent (Reader). The rules for supervision are set out in the Rules and Regulations for Third-Cycle Studies at the University of Gothenburg – *Doktorandreglerna*.

The doctoral student is entitled to supervision throughout the period deemed necessary for the prescribed study programme of 120/240 credits, two years/four years full-time studies, and as specified in the IT Faculty's decision on the minimum level of supervision in third-cycle studies at the IT Faculty. A doctoral examiner shall also be appointed for each doctoral student.

4.3. Courses and other credit-yielding components

Third-cycle studies include a coursework part amounting to 90 credits for the Degree of Doctor and 45 credits for the Degree of Licentiate. The coursework part is comprised of a compulsory part and an individual part, which is adapted to the student's research focus, interests and knowledge profile. Courses that are part of third-cycle study programmes are to be graded as pass or fail. Examination may be in writing or oral.

4.3.1 Compulsory courses

Compulsory courses shall be specified in the individual study plan.

For the licentiate degree the following is required:

- 20 credits in methodology and theory in the subject area communication

For the doctoral degree the following is required:

- 30 credits in methodology and theory in the subject area communication

For licentiate degree, and doctoral degree the following is also required:

- 5 credits in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, or alike
- 3 credits in Research Ethics, or alike
- 10 credits in seminar course at the Department of Applied Information Technology

4.3.2 Individual courses

For profiling within the subject area, the principal supervisor in consultation with the doctoral student and the doctoral examiner decide on individual courses. Individual courses may include individual reading

courses as well as relevant optional third-cycle courses at the University of Gothenburg, or other higher education institutions. The individually designed coursework part of third-cycle studies is specific to each doctoral student and is to be specified in the individual study plan.

4.3.3 Other credit-yielding components

There may be other credit-yielding components in a third-cycle study programme (e.g. a research ‘placement/internship’ such as conference participation, organisation of conferences, and writing articles). Other credit-yielding components are determined in consultation with the supervisor and the doctoral examiner and are to be specified in the individual study plan.

4.4. Thesis and defence of doctoral thesis

Central to third-cycle studies is the authoring of a research thesis (licentiate thesis/doctoral thesis) in which the doctoral student is to advance the knowledge in the research field. For a Degree of Licentiate and Degree of Doctor, the doctoral student is to carry out a research project and write an academic paper/thesis describing this project.

In studies up to the Degree of Licentiate, the research project is of limited scope, but should nevertheless be given a form that leads to internationally publishable results. Both a licentiate thesis and a doctoral thesis can take the form of a monograph or a compilation thesis containing a number of peer-reviewed texts such as journal articles, book chapters, and conference contributions. In a compilation thesis, the individual texts are to be summarised in an introductory chapter which ties the individual contributions together and discusses and draws conclusions about the whole of the thesis. The individual texts may have been co-authored with the principal supervisor, assistant supervisor, or other persons. At least one of the texts must have the doctoral student as the principal author. If the thesis work is carried out as part of a team/research project, the doctoral student’s contributions must be clearly described.

External reviewers from similar subject areas are to be used at the mid-way and/or final seminars. The mid-way seminar is to be held at the latest when the remaining period of study corresponds to a maximum of two years of full-time study towards the Degree of Doctor. The final seminar is to be held when the doctoral examiner assesses that the thesis work is nearing its final phase.

In accordance with the rules set out in the Higher Education Ordinance for the Degree of Doctor and the Degree of Licentiate, the doctoral thesis/licentiate thesis is to be examined and defended orally in public or, for the Degree of Licentiate, at a final licentiate seminar. When submitting a licentiate thesis, the Head of Department decides on the timing of the seminar and appoints the examiners. For a doctoral thesis, the Dean decides on the timing of the presentation and public defence of the doctoral thesis.

The licentiate thesis/doctoral thesis is graded as fail or pass. The grade for a licentiate thesis is normally decided by a doctoral examiner. If for any reason the doctoral examiner cannot grade the thesis, the Dean can either appoint another examiner or an examining committee in accordance with the rules for doctoral theses. Grades for doctoral theses are decided by an examining committee. The Dean appoints the members of the examining committee.

5. Entry and admission requirements

In order to be admitted to third-cycle studies, the applicant must fulfil the general entry requirements and any specific entry requirements in accordance with Chapter 7 of the Higher Education Ordinance.

5.1. General entry requirements

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

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

The Dean of the IT Faculty may grant individual applicants an exemption from the general entry requirements for third-cycle studies if there are special reasons for doing so.

5.2. Specific entry requirements

In addition to the general entry requirements for third-cycle studies, specific entry requirements may be applied. Specific entry requirements shall be absolutely essential for the doctoral student to be able to benefit from the third-cycle course or study programme (Higher Education Ordinance Chapter 7 Section 40). The specific entry requirements for admission to third-cycle studies in communication are:

- Master degree (or Magisterexamen) in communication, or in related subject,
- Fulfilment of course credits of minimum 90 credits in communication, or related subjects (e.g. cognitive science, psychology, philosophy, linguistics, sociology, pedagogy, and media studies), or
- Fulfilment, in Sweden or abroad, of essentially similar knowledge

6. Admission and selection

Admission to third-cycle studies is decided by Head of Department. The following rules and regulations apply:

- Rules and Regulations for Third-Cycle Studies at the University of Gothenburg – *Doktorandreglerna*,
- Admission Regulations for Third-Cycle Studies at the University of Gothenburg.

When there are more applicants than the number of places advertised, a selection must be made. According to Chapter 7 Section 41 of the Higher Education Ordinance, the selection shall take into account the ability of the applicants to benefit from the course or study programme. A selection is based on the following criteria:

- Documented subject knowledge in the research field of communication
- Documented academic knowledge in scientific theory and methodology, and
- Documented ability to perform scientific research work.

7. Additional information

Issues of relevance to this syllabus is governed by the Higher Education ACT, Higher Education Ordinance, and rules and regulations at the University of Gothenburg, the IT Faculty, and the Department of Applied Information Technology. Information about these governing rules are accessible at <https://www.gu.se/en/it-faculty>.

Assessment and evaluation

Follow up and assesment of the quality in doctoral education at the Department of Applied Information Technology is done according to the *Policy of Quality Assurance and Quality Development of Education at University of Gothenburg*.

7.1. Transitional provisions

Doctoral students admitted to the older syllabus in the subject communication (registration number U 2015/636) may be transferred to the revised syllabus in the subject communication (registration number GU 2022/1235). Admittance to the older syllabus (registration number U 2015/636) gives entry to the revised syllabus (registration number GU 2022/1235). A transfer will not change the study time used. The course requirements defined in the revised syllabus is valid for doctoral students applying for transfer.