

2015-09-11

GENERAL SYLLABUS FOR PHD STUDIES IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

(this is a translation of the original document in Swedish¹)

120 and 240 higher education credits

1. Subject description

The subject of business administration is focused on studying aspects of businesses and organisations in a wider sense. This includes studies in marketing, organisation & management, financial accounting, management accounting, finance & investment issues, and strategy and entrepreneurship.

2. Educational objectives

2.1 Licentiate degree

Knowledge and understanding

To obtain a licentiate degree, the student must:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the research field, including current specialist knowledge within a specified area, along with advanced knowledge of scientific methods in general and the methods of the chosen research area in particular.

Skills and abilities

- demonstrate the ability to critically, independently, creatively and with scientific rigour identify and formulate research questions, to plan and with adequate methods carry out a defined research project and other qualified tasks within

¹ If there are any differences between the Swedish and English version, it is the Swedish original document that applies. The Swedish original document: Dnr SU-302-4.1.1-0228-14

- given time frames and thereby contribute to the development of knowledge, and evaluate such work;
- demonstrate the ability in both national and international contexts to orally and in writing lucidly present and discuss research and research results in dialogue with the research community and society at large;
- demonstrate the requisite skills to independently participate in work concerning research and development or in other qualified tasks.

Judgement and approach

- demonstrate the ability to make ethical assessments in your own research;
- show insight concerning the potential and limitations of social science, its role in society and human responsibility for how it is applied;
- demonstrate the ability to identify personal needs concerning further knowledge and to take responsibility for one's own development of knowledge.

2.2 Doctoral degree

To obtain a PhD, the doctoral student must:

Knowledge and understanding

- demonstrate broad knowledge and a systematic understanding of the research area, together with detailed and current specialist knowledge within a defined part of the research area;
- demonstrate familiarity with scholarly methodology in general, and with the more specific methods concerning the student's research area.

Skills and abilities

- demonstrate an ability to engage in scholarly analysis and synthesis, as well as in independent, critical examination and assessment of new and complex phenomena, issues and situations;
- demonstrate an ability to critically, independently, creatively and with scholarly precision identify and formulate issues; to plan and, using appropriate methods, conduct research and other advanced tasks within specified time limits, and to examine and evaluate such work;
- demonstrate, in a thesis, their ability to make a substantial contribution to the development of knowledge through their own research;
- demonstrate an ability, in both national and international contexts, orally and in writing, to present and discuss research and research results with authority in dialogue with the scholarly community and society in general;
- demonstrate an ability to identify needs for further knowledge;
- demonstrate the potential to contribute to the development of society and to support other people's learning in the fields of research and education and in other advanced professional contexts.

Judgement and approach

- demonstrate intellectual independence and scholarly integrity, as well as an ability to make ethical assessments relating to research;



- demonstrate deeper insight into the potential and limitations of scholarship, its role in society and people's responsibility for how it is used.

3. Prerequisites and eligibility

3.1 Fundamental prerequisites

In order to be eligible for PhD programmes, students must have:

1. completed an advanced level degree;
2. completed courses equivalent to at least 240 higher education credits, of which at least 60 credits must be in the second cycle (master level), or;
3. acquired equivalent knowledge in another way in Sweden or elsewhere.

Anyone who has met the general entry requirements for PhD programmes by 1 July 2007 will subsequently be considered to have general eligibility for PhD programmes until the end of June 2015.

The Faculty Board may grant exceptions from the general entry requirements for individual applicants under special circumstances in accordance with HF 7:39.

3.2 Eligibility

In order to meet the special entry requirements, students must have satisfied the requirements for at least 60 credits from the second cycle in business administration, or equivalent, of which at least 15 credits comprise a thesis or equivalent degree project.

4. Admission

Admission to PhD studies shall take place mainly with the objective of achieving a PhD degree. Admissions may also be made to a part of the PhD education and ending with a licentiate. In cases where admission is to an education leading to a licentiate degree, a renewed scientific examination and analysis of the study and funding plan shall be made if the student wishes to continue towards a PhD.

The date of application is March 31 to the doctoral programme and it is advertised on Stockholm Business School and Stockholm University websites. Other types of advertising can occur.

On the department's website detailed instructions are published on what documents applicants need to submit in connection with the advertisements.

In connection with the admission, financing must be arranged for the entire study period (equivalent to four years of study). Financing is documented in a financial plan approved by the Board together with the student and supervisor.

Admissions are prepared by a committee consisting of the director of studies for the PhD programme and committee members appointed by FUN in connection with each intake.

Proposal for admissions treated in FUN and decisions are made by the head of department in consultation with IS.²

5. Selection Process

Selection among applicants who meet the eligibility requirements will be made with respect to their ability to benefit from studies on the PhD level and is based on the following criteria:

- previous study results, including the independence of analysis and organisation of written work
- problem formulation, rigour in previous work and the research plan
- previously demonstrated ability to keep deadlines
- methodological and scientific maturity
- communication and interpersonal skills
- familiarity with the research area of the intended thesis
- proficiency in the English language (written and oral)

6. Structure and Content of the Studies

6.1 Programme structure

The PhD programme in business administration comprises 240 credits or four years of study for a PhD. It consists of courses (90 credits) and a dissertation (150 credits), which is defended at a public disputation. These two parts can take place simultaneously, but typically the focus is on course work during the first half of the study period. The thesis will be based on an independent scientific work in the area of business studies. When the PhD dissertation is approved, the entire training leads to the title of PhD.

In exceptional cases, there is also a possibility to take a licentiate degree after a total of 120 credits and coursework of 45 credits.

The training period may only be extended if there are specific reasons for this, such as absence due to illness, military service or work for trade unions and student organisations, or parental leave.

6.2 Supervision, including study- and work-direction

² Special rules apply to decisions on employment of students with funding other than a PhD positions (e.g., so-called industrial PhD students).

Each PhD student should be assigned at least two supervisors, one of whom is appointed the principal supervisor. The main supervisor is appointed in connection with admission and at least one supervisor will be appointed later when the thesis plan (Thesis Proposal, TP) is presented. The supervisor is appointed formally by FUN and the case is prepared by the relevant subject representative. The person appointed as principal supervisor must be employed at Stockholm Business School, or, if Stockholm Business School specifically approves it, at another department or institute within the Faculty. Unless the supervisor is employed by Stockholm Business School, one of the other supervisors should be. At least one of the supervisors must have completed training in supervision, or be judged by the Faculty Board to have equivalent qualification. All supervisors must hold a PhD degree and at least one of them shall be at least an associate professor.

Continuous supervision by the supervisors shall consist of assisting the PhD student with advice and guidance regarding the planning of studies during the study period, and together with the student the supervisors shall ensure that the studies are proceeding according to the individual study plan.

The student has the right to supervision according to what is established in the individual study plan.

If a doctoral student and supervisor cannot agree on substantial matters concerning the doctoral student's studies, the student may contact the director of studies for PhD studies for guidance and advice. In most cases, disagreements and misunderstandings are resolved through discussions. In exceptional cases it may be appropriate to end the supervision, and PhD student who requested it has the right to change supervisor. The student must then contact the director of studies for the PhD programme.

Study and work guidance will be an element of the programme.

6.3 Individual study plan

Each PhD student will lay out an individual study plan upon admission. The study plan is designed together with the student's supervisor. The plan must be submitted to the research coordinator by 30 September the first semester. A template for the study plan is available for download on the department website.

The individual plan can be viewed as a contract between the student and the institution about what should be done and when it should be done within the context of their employment.

In connection with the admission, financing will be arranged for the entire study period (equivalent to four years of study) and is documented in a financial plan.

6.3.1 Update

The supervisor shall at the end of each semester assess whether the PhD student follows the individual study plan. Any discrepancies should be discussed between the

supervisor and student, and the student must recall that significant departure from the study plan may result in the withdrawal of the right of access to university resources.

The study plan must be followed and documented at the beginning of each school year using the template for the follow-up that is available for download on the web page. The PhD student, supervisor and department head must certify in writing that they have read the individual study plan and any changes made in it. A follow-up report shall be submitted to the research coordinator no later than 15 September.

Follow-up reports should be seen as a tool to monitor the individual study plan and can be the basis for the decision regarding to what extent and in what way the student may continue to take part of the department's resources.

PhD students are entitled to keep their financing, supervision and other resources if he/she follows the individual study plan and has an activity level of at least 50%.

Regarding guidelines for the withdrawal of resources, see the existing regulations at Stockholm University.

6.3.2 Revision of the individual study plan

Certain extraordinary circumstances (such as change of thesis topic or supervisor, parental leave or longer absence, etc.) may make revising the study plan feasible. In such cases a new study plan should be set up and provide the basis for the next follow-up.

7. Course Requirements and transfer of credits

7.1 Aim and structure

The doctoral programme consists of 90 credits (ECTS) worth of courses, out of which 45 credits are mandatory courses in business administration and social science theories. The remaining 45 credits can be distributed on various optional courses. For a licentiate degree, the programme consists of courses of 45 credits, which are distributed so that at least 20 credits are mandatory courses and a maximum of 25 credits consist of optional courses.

The courses aim to help doctoral students to develop the theoretical and methodological skills required to write a doctoral thesis:

- Methods courses will increase the student's ability to conduct empirical studies and evaluate the assumptions underlying their own and others' research.
- Subject courses will increase the student's knowledge in the subject area of the thesis.
- Elective courses can be read on topics that are beyond the student's dissertation topic. Elective courses are determined in consultation between the student and supervisor. External courses provided by other institutions or universities may be credited in the programme.

Courses within the doctoral programme are graded as pass or fail.

7.2 Mandatory courses, 45 credits

The PhD student must complete the following required courses:

- Introduction to the research process, 7.5 credits
- Problem formulation, 7.5 credits
- Qualitative Methods, 7.5 credits
- Quantitative Methods, 7.5 credits
- Advanced theory within the thesis topic area, 7.5 credits
- Philosophy of Science, 7,5 credits

The basic rule is that these courses should be taken at Stockholm Business School at Stockholm University. If the course is not provided by Stockholm Business School, the student is expected to find similar courses at other universities, in consultation with their supervisors.

PhD students participating in research schools and other cooperation programmes can follow their course programme, if they have a similar content.

7.3 Elective courses, 45 credits

Within these credits, the PhD student can take:

- Elective courses at the PhD level offered at Stockholm Business School, other institutions within Stockholm University, or at other universities. Within these courses, university pedagogy courses of a maximum of 15 credits provided by Stockholm University or equivalent may be included. In addition, courses in academic English of a maximum of 7.5 credits may be included, as well as active participation in the department's joint research seminars.
- Individual courses for their supervisor to the extent of a maximum of 15 credits. The learning objectives and reading list for these courses should always be reviewed and approved by the director of studies for the doctoral programme. For PhD students with the director of studies as their main supervisor, the corresponding review is done by one of the professors at Stockholm Business School.
- Relevant courses of a maximum of 30 credits at an advanced level may be counted in the graduate programme (not the master's dissertation or courses at the basic level credited within the master's programme). Please note that a qualifying course cannot be included. Credit transfer is decided by the director of studies for PhD studies after the suggestion by the supervisor. Credit transfer and its scope should be determined as early as possible, but not later than three semesters after the student has been admitted to the PhD programme. The courses that the student wishes to be credited are documented in the individual study plan and deducted from the PhD programme. If a PhD student has been credited for 30 credits from the master's programme, their study time and funding is reduced by one semester. If a PhD student has been credited for 7.5

credits from the master's programme, their study time and funding is reduced by one month.

Elective courses are selected in consultation with the supervisor.

8. Thesis and public defence

8.1 Thesis

The central purpose of PhD studies is the authorship of a scientific dissertation with the aim of conducting research that aids in the progression of scientific development within one's area of choice.

There are basically two ways to write a doctoral thesis: to write a monograph or writing a compilation thesis. The thesis can be written in either Swedish or English. Requirements for the quality and scope of research effort do not differ between the two forms. The thesis should correspond to 150 credits in the doctoral programme.

A monograph is a text written as a cohesive unit with a beginning and an end, which differs from a compilation thesis. A monograph is written individually and is usually about 200 pages long. The compilation thesis consists of a number of scientific articles and an introductory overview ("kappa"). The introduction can also include reinforcements concerning, e.g., choice of method or the choice of a theoretical framework as the article format often does not allow discussions of this kind. A compilation thesis contains, as a rule of thumb, four articles where at least two are written by the student alone. It is not uncommon for PhD students trying to get their articles published in scientific publications (journals and books) but there is no requirement that the articles should be published and, similarly, it is not definite that your dissertation will be approved just because it contains published articles.

The licentiate thesis, which should be equivalent to about half the doctoral thesis work, may consist of scientific papers with an integrative summary, or alternatively a monograph.

Dissertation manuscripts should be presented at one or more research seminars and undergo external review as arranged by Stockholm Business School. This applies, to a certain extent, for licentiate theses also.

Every dissertation shall be accompanied by a brief English-language abstract. If it is written in Swedish, it shall have a summary in English. If it is written in English, it must have a summary in Swedish. If it is written in any other language, it shall have a summary in both English and Swedish.

8.2 Public defence

The doctoral thesis must be defended orally at a public defence seminar and will be awarded a grade of Pass or Fail. The grading process will consider both the content and the defence of the thesis.

A faculty examiner and examining committee will be appointed by the Faculty Board, based on proposals from the main supervisor.



The faculty examiner should be an associate professor or professor; however, under special circumstances, a person without qualifications as an associate professor may be appointed. The faculty examiner should have no affiliation with the doctoral student or the thesis.

Regulations regarding the examination committee, assessment, etc., can be found in the instructions issued by the Faculty Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences.

All course credits must be completed before the thesis defence takes place.

8.3 Licentiate seminar

Stockholm Business School has no special admission to a licentiate programme, but a licentiate may in exceptional cases be part of a PhD.

The licentiate thesis is defended orally at a public seminar arranged by the University. The grade is either Pass or Fail. Grading will take into account the content of the thesis and its defence.

Regulations regarding the examination committee, assessment, etc., can be found in the instructions issued by the Faculty Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences.

All course credits must be completed before the thesis defence takes place.

9. Degree requirements

The licentiate degree is achieved after completing all requirements for an education of 120 Higher Education Credits on the PhD level. A doctoral degree is achieved after completing a doctoral education of 240 Higher Education Credits.

10. Additional information

For further information, please refer to legal provisions and educational guidelines for Stockholm University, Social Sciences Faculty, and Stockholm Business School.