# Ethics in Social Science Research

**Credit points:** 4,5/7,5 hp

**Responsible department:** The Department of Social Work

**Main Field of Study:** Social Science

**Nivå:** PhD studies

**Grading scale:** Fail-Pass

**Established by:** The syllabus was established by the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Umeå University, in 2018-03-12, and is valid from 2018-07-01.

**Language**: Swedish or English.

**Admittance to the course**

Applicants are required to be registered at a PhD program at the Faculty of Social Sciences at Umeå University. If there are vacancies, students from other faculties can also be admitted.

**The aim of the course**

The PhD students are expected to acquire good knowledge of laws and regulations regarding ethics in research and to develop a professional approach towards ethics in research.

**Content**

With focus on the Social Sciences, the course deals with the following subjects: research and researchers’ ethics, research ethical vetting, ethical aspects and dilemmas in research practice, responsibility issues, scientific malpractice, claims of authorship and contemporary publishing patterns.

The course is based in ongoing discussions within the research society and observes current Swedish and international development of rules and regulations regarding research ethics, and highlights issues related to the practice of the various Social Science disciplines.

The first module of 4.5 credits focus on basic research and researchers’ ethics. Themes include observation and interviews with children and young people; internet research; the study of vulnerable groups; practices of publication; data storage and management of large data, and the continuous responsibilities of researchers.

A second module of 3 credits consists of elective in-depth workshops. Within this module the student can choose among the mentioned themes.

In both modules the students have the opportunity to view and discuss their own thesis projects from a research ethical perspective.

**Design and instruction**

The course is divided into two modules; 4,5 credits and 3 credits. The forms of teaching and learning are lectures, workshops, and seminars.

**Examination**

Module 1 can be studied and examined as an independent course (4.5 credits). Module 2 (3 credits) can only be studied in conjunction with the first module. After examination of both modules, the doctoral student is credited 7.5 credits.

Module 1, 4.5 credits: Active participation in compulsory seminars, as well as approved written assignment.

Module 2, 3 credits: Active participation in compulsory workshops, as well as approved oral and written examinations.

If participants cannot attend examinations, completion of extra assignments are required. To pass the entire course, all parts of the examination must be approved.

**Expected learning outcomes**

Upon successful completion of the first module, students are expected to

* demonstrate good knowledge of laws and regulations in relation to research ethics.
* apply ethical arguments on Social Science research problems, from the perspectives of both research and researcher’s ethics.

Upon successful completion of the second module, students are also expected to

* demonstrate ability to problematize and critically reflect on ethical problems in Social Science research.