



Doctoral studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences

This revised version is approved by the Social Sciences Faculty Board and applies from 1 February 2022.

Documents that regulate doctoral studies at Umeå University:

- Rules for doctoral education at Umeå University (23 November 2023)
- Admission regulations for doctoral education at Umeå University (21 July 2021)
- Quality system for education at Umeå University (26 February 2019)
- Procedures for documenting information in Ladok - third-cycle at Umeå University (7 May 2019)
- The Vice-Chancellor's delegation of authority (15 September 2023)
- Procedure for the withdrawal of resources from doctoral students at Umeå University (1 January 2014)
- Procedures for managing double doctoral degrees at Umeå University (13 October 2023)
- Procedures for managing joint doctoral degrees at Umeå University (13 October 2023)

These can be downloaded [here](#).

The faculty's rules for doctoral studies and forms for funding plans, ISP and credit transfer can be downloaded [here](#).

Organisation of doctoral studies

The Vice-Chancellor decides whether to establish subjects at doctoral level at Umeå University.

- The Faculty Board at the Faculty of Social Sciences has overall responsibility for doctoral education at the faculty.
- The Dean in charge of doctoral studies has responsibility for administration and follow-up of issues related to doctoral studies at the faculty and for preparing matters in the faculty's Research Committee.
- The head of department has overall responsibility for doctoral studies at the department. Each department is to appoint an individual responsible for doctoral studies for each doctoral subject area, one or more examiners and a preparatory and processing body for doctoral studies matters whose tasks include preparing and processing admission applications for the education. The preparatory and processing body, when appropriate, can be a part of the Education Committee or the Research Committee. Doctoral students at the department are to be represented in the preparatory and processing body. Decisions, responsibility and work are divided among the head of department, the head of the doctoral studies and the preparatory and processing body as specified in the head of department's delegation of authority and possibly other policy documents.

The responsibilities of the Faculty Board

The Faculty of Social Sciences has overall responsibility for doctoral studies at the faculty and general supervision over the education can include various measures, such as annual follow-up which is normally conducted in the latter half of the spring semester. The faculty's Research



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Committee is the preparatory and planning body for matters related to doctoral studies for the Faculty Board, the Dean and/or the Dean in Charge of Doctoral Studies.

General syllabus

The Faculty Board approves and revises general syllabuses for doctoral studies.

The head of department's responsibilities

The head of department is responsible for ensuring that open positions for doctoral studies are advertised nationally and, where appropriate, even internationally and that the advertised description is approved in consultation with the Faculty Office. Advertisements are always in Swedish, but it is also good if they are also in English to facilitate international recruitment. Announcements of open positions may not be limited to internal announcements aimed at individuals closely linked to the department through current positions, previous/ongoing studies or similar.

Exceptions to this requirement for external advertising are specified in the Higher Education Ordinance Chapter 7, Section 37.

Individuals accepted for doctoral studies with a final goal of a licentiate degree and who later wish to continue their studies to attain a doctoral degree must apply for this in connection with an advertised open position in the given subject.

Entry requirements for doctoral studies

Admission to doctoral studies requires that the applicant meet both the general and the specific entry requirements. The qualification requirements for a given doctoral studies subject are listed in the syllabus for the subject, which is approved by the Faculty Board.

Consider the following when selecting applicants for open positions for doctoral studies:

- Their ability to benefit from the programme,
- Previous academic achievements, and
- The quality of any submitted research outlines and if they relate to the department's research profiles.

Use the following assessment criteria when assessing the ability to benefit from the education:

- Written and oral communication skills,
- Independence,
- Critical thinking skills,
- Analytical skills,
- Ability to perform within specified timeframes.

A student with other funding sources than a doctoral studentship may only be admitted if their qualifications are judged equivalent to the qualifications of applicants who qualify for a doctoral studentship.

Strive for gender equality when selecting applicants.



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Decisions on admission to doctoral studies

Decisions on admission to studies leading to a licentiate degree

According to Umeå University's delegation of authority, the Dean determines admission to doctoral studies with a licentiate degree as the ultimate goal, and the admission procedure states that this decision may only be taken when the applicant has requested this in writing.

Decisions on admission for a doctoral degree

The head of department decides admission to doctoral studies with a doctoral degree as the ultimate goal based on a proposal by the department's preparatory and planning body for doctoral matters. Prior to the head of department decides on the matter, the Dean is to have approved funding for the planned education.

Applications for approval of credit transfers from previous studies are submitted when applying for admission, and the study period will be reduced by the equivalent number of transferred credits. When applying for credit transfer of 60 credits or more, the matter is reviewed by the faculty's Research Committee and the Dean makes the final decision. Approved credits for courses are noted in the individual study plan and registered in LADOK.

Approval of funding and funding certificates

Umeå University's admission regulations for doctoral education state the following: Doctoral studies are first and foremost to be funded through **doctoral studentships** for the entire study period (i.e., equivalent to four years of full-time studies for doctoral degrees and two years of full-time studies for licentiate degrees). If a doctoral student so requests, the appointment may be a part-time post but for no less than 50 per cent of a full-time post.

Other forms of funding may be used if secured for the entire study period (i.e., equivalent to four years of full-time studies for doctoral degrees and two years of full-time studies for licentiate degrees). A serious assessment of the funding prior to admission, however, must be done and supporting information is to be documented and the funding certificate the education is to be included. The admissions regulation also specifies that individuals with employment for an indefinite period (such as lecturers, active medical doctors and nurses) may be admitted to doctoral studies for completion within eight years. In cases where an individual is admitted to doctoral studies and has another employer than Umeå University, a contract is to be drawn up that clarifies the right of the employee to conduct doctoral studies and how funding is regulated and secured.

In exceptional cases and only if the Dean permits it, **tax-free scholarships** may be used as the funding form. Scholarships may be used as a funding form for at most one year of full-time study, at which point the doctoral student must receive a doctoral studentship. Funding with external scholarships is regulated by Umeå University's *Rules for externally funded scholarships at Umeå University*. Payroll Administration takes out insurance with the Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency (*Kammarkollegiet*) for doctoral students funded with scholarships. The insurance covers the doctoral students' rights in case of sickness or parental leave.

The Dean approves **funding certificates** for the entire planned education before the head of department approves admission to doctoral studies. Templates for funding certificates can be downloaded online: <https://www.aurora.umu.se/en/organisation-and->



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[management/organisation/faculties/faculty-of-social-sciences/regulations-and-guidelines/doctoral-studies/](#). Changes to funding for doctoral students after admission decisions are added to the doctoral student's individual study plan.

When approving funding plans, the Dean determines any deviations from the doctoral students' salary scale based on proposals from the head of department. In cases with scholarship funding, the scholarship amount and funding body are to be listed in the funding plan. The Faculty Board has decided on the principles for salary supplements that can be used in such cases.

Supervision

The head of department is to appoint two supervisors, of which one is the principal supervisor, when a doctoral student begins their studies. The head of department is responsible for ensuring the supervisors have supervision hours included in their staffing plans and that at least one of the supervisors for each doctoral student has completed the training for supervisors provided by Umeå University or has been judged to have the equivalent skills or confirmed equivalent educational qualifications from another higher education institution. It is positive if supervisors of both genders supervise both men and women. If an external supervisor is hired, a contract is to be drawn up with the supervisor's home department/equivalent.

Doctoral students admitted after 1 January 2014 are to have access to a reference group. Normally, at least one person not connected to the doctoral student's research project is to be included in the reference group. The reference group is to have at least one formalised meeting per year with the doctoral student in connection with the follow-up of the individual study plan (ISP). This meeting is to be documented and each member of the reference group and the doctoral student are to sign the ISP or separate minutes from the meeting.

The Higher Education Ordinance specifies that a doctoral student has the right to supervision to the extent needed for a 240-credits education, that is to say four years for a full-time doctoral student and an equivalent amount for a part-time doctoral student, but not more than for eight years. The supervision is to be provided on a continuous basis, be adapted to existing needs and incorporated into the individual study plan.

The Regulations for doctoral education at Umeå University specify the following:

- Both supervisors are to have their PhDs and at least one of the supervisors is to be at least an associate professor (*docent*), and that at least one is to have a permanent position as a teacher at Umeå University at the department where the supervision is given.
- At least 100 clock hours per academic year and full-time doctoral student are to be divided between the principal supervisor and the assistant supervisor. Doctoral students with less employment have the right to the equivalent supervision for a maximum of 8 years, e.g., half-time doctoral students may have at least 50 clock hours per academic year.
- These supervision hours are to include the time that the supervisor and the doctoral student work with the doctoral student's education, e.g., discussions about the work and the manuscript, experiments and development discussions. The supervision hours also include time text editing, drawing up and following up the individual study plan, and planning seminars and the defence of thesis/licentiate seminar.
- Division of researcher supervision responsibilities among the Faculty Board, the department (head of department), supervisors and the doctoral student.



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Replacement of supervisors

The head of department is responsible for timely conducted and transparent preparation and planning and for decisions related to a doctoral student's request to replace a supervisor. When changing a supervisor, use the university-wide form. The form is available online:

<https://www.aurora.umu.se/en/organisation-and-management/organisation/faculties/faculty-of-social-sciences/regulations-and-guidelines/doctoral-studies/>. Replacing a supervisor is to be noted in the ISP and registered in LADOK.

Shared doctoral students

Matters related to compensation for supervision and other aspects for doctoral students with interdisciplinary projects that span across departments and/or faculties should be regulated in a contract. The Vice-Chancellor approves university-wide cooperations that result in double degrees or joint degrees.

Conducting doctoral education

Doctoral courses

The faculty offers doctoral courses for all doctoral students at the faculty. There are also doctoral courses at the university-wide level that are open to all of the faculties' doctoral students. Rules for entry requirements and selection for faculty-wide courses are on the website:

<https://www.aurora.umu.se/organisation-och-styrning/organisation/fakultetssidor/samhallsvetenskaplig-fakultet/utbildning/forskarutbildning/doktorandkurser/>.

Other courses, supervision and seminars are organised and conducted at the department level.

Examiners

Course grades within doctoral education are determined by a member of the teaching staff appointed by the University (examiners). The head of department appoints one or more examiners for the doctoral courses offered by the department. An examiner within doctoral education is normally to have at least the qualification of docent. Procedures for documenting information in Ladok - third-cycle at Umeå University regulates the role of examiners and their responsibilities in this process. This is available online: <https://www.umu.se/en/legal-framework/third-cycle-education>.

Approving and following up individual study plans

The national intended learning outcomes are to be adapted to each doctoral student by formulating them as individual learning outcomes. The individual learning outcomes are to be based on each doctoral student's situation and the character of the dissertation project and be documented in the individual study plan (ISP).

The doctoral student's ISP is drawn up in connection with admission to doctoral studies. The ISP is to be signed by the doctoral student, the principal supervisor, the assistant supervisor and the head of doctoral education and is approved by the head of department. As part of their responsibility for approving the ISPs, a head of department also has the right to approve a separate ISP or revise an ISP.



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Follow-up and revision of the ISP is to occur regularly throughout the study period to document what the doctoral student and the supervisor have planned and completed. It is to be followed up at least once a year, in connection with a new calendar year, by the doctoral student and the supervisor jointly and then reviewed by the head of doctoral studies and approved by the head of department. For doctoral students admitted after 1 January 2014, the principal supervisor, the doctoral student and the reference group perform a follow up of the ISP at least once a year. The head of department or the individual delegated to do so is responsible for documenting the follow-up of the ISP in LADOK.

In cases when the doctoral student and the supervisors do not agree on the formulation of the ISP, the head of department approves the plan based on input from the relevant preparatory and planning body. If the head of department is the supervisor, the Associate Dean approves the ISP after input from the relevant body.

Beyond the annual, more thorough follow-up of the ISP, the supervisor is responsible for initiating changes to the ISP as needed after consulting with the doctoral student. In case significant deviations from the plan that cannot be explained, a response plan is drawn up and followed up in the following semester. A response plan is a summary of the measures that the University takes to help the doctoral student to fulfil their commitments. This can involve such measures as adding additional supervision meetings, helping the doctoral student to split the project plan up into smaller blocks to facilitate follow-up, and providing support discussions. The response plan is written into the ISP as soon as it is drawn up, normally in connection with the annual or six-month follow-up.

The head of department reports to the Faculty each year in connection with the annual report about whether all ISPs have been followed up, contracts with external supervisors and whether all doctoral students have at least one trained research supervisor.

Credit transfers

Applications for credit transfers are to be in writing on the specific application form. The form is available online: <https://www.aurora.umu.se/en/organisation-and-management/organisation/faculties/faculty-of-social-sciences/regulations-and-guidelines/doctoral-studies/>. The recipient at the University is to write the date the form is received. Credit transfers for courses are noted and explained in the ISP.

Each credit transfer applied for by a doctoral student occurs after a documented individual assessment of the doctoral student's knowledge and skills in relation to the education for which the individual wants to transfer credits. A routine acceptance of credit transfers is not allowed.

Examiners decide in writing on credit transfers based on the documentation provided in the application for the credit transfer. Rejections are to be explained and the student is notified of the right to appeal. The application and the decision documents are to be registered. Decisions on credit transfers can be appealed to the Higher Education Appeals Board.

Extension of doctoral studentships

In addition to national regulations and the Vice-Chancellor's delegation of authority, the following applies for extending employment as a doctoral student. Extension is only allowed until the defence of thesis and is to be funded by the department/faculty. (This applies to all types of extensions, i.e., illness, parental leave, military service or as an elected union representative). The



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head of department approves extensions for illness, military service, as an elected union or student representative and parental leave for care of children and is responsible for documenting the approved extension in the ISP. The detailed rules for this are available online in the document Rules for doctoral education at Umeå University: <https://www.umu.se/en/legal-framework/third-cycle-education/>.

Withdrawn supervision and other resources

Withdrawal of the right to supervision and other resources is initiated by the head of department, who applies to the Dean to withdraw resources. The University's rules and procedures for this are available online: <https://www.umu.se/en/legal-framework/third-cycle-education/>.

Time and place for defence of thesis

The doctoral student is to book a preliminary time for defence of their thesis with the Faculty Office no later than 12 weeks before the preferred date, which is to be held during the semester. The doctoral student applies for permission to defend their thesis no later than 8 weeks before the defence by submitting "Form for requesting the Dean set a time and location for defence of doctoral thesis" to disputera@diarie.umu.se. The doctoral student is to have completed all course credits before submitting the application for defence of doctoral thesis.

Time and place for licentiate seminars

The head of department approves the time and place for the licentiate seminar, which is to be held during the semester, and provides information on where to post the licentiate thesis. The doctoral student is to have completed all course credits before the application for the time of the licentiate seminar is submitted.

Proposed members of the Examining Committee, the chair and the external reviewer at a doctoral thesis defence and licentiate seminar

The head of department submits proposals for the Examining Committee, the chair and the external reviewer no later than eight weeks prior to the date of the defence. The proposal is to follow Umeå University's rules for defence of doctoral thesis (see Section 7 in Rules for doctoral education at Umeå University, reg. no. FS 1.1-334-21)

The head of department/director is responsible for ensuring the information in the form is correct (contact information, title, doctoral thesis title etc.). The proposal is submitted to the Faculty Office of Social Sciences which processes the matter prior to approval by the Dean. The Vice-Chancellor appoints the Examining Committee, chair and external reviewer for licentiate seminars at the Umeå School of Business, Economics and Statistics.

The proposal is to strive for gender equality, both in the composition of the Examining Committee and with a holistic view of the entire discipline, i.e., the Examining Committee, external reviewer, chair and deputy members are to be appointed with the ambition of having a gender balance.

Before the proposal is submitted, potential conflicts of interest are to be identified. A conflict of interest exists if the external reviewer or a member of the Examining Committee can be biased or where there are special circumstances that can damage faith in an individual's impartiality in the matter, such as family relations or friendship or previous close cooperation through joint publishing or supervision.



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Holding the defence of doctoral thesis

The defence of doctoral thesis is to be an oral and public defence of the doctoral thesis and is normally held in person at Umeå University. An in-person defence of doctoral thesis can, however, be held with digital components. The Dean's decision on "Time and place of defences of doctoral theses at the Faculty of Social Sciences" (reg. no. FS 1.1-2664-21) defines forms and terms for defences of doctoral theses with digital components.



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Annex 1

Entry requirements and selection to faculty-wide doctoral courses

- Admission to and commenced doctoral studies at the end of the application period qualify students to the courses (consult the research registry in LADOK)
- First admission priority is given to doctoral students from the Faculty of Social Sciences at Umeå University.
- Second admission priority is given to doctoral students from other faculties at Umeå University in the order that applications were submitted.
- Third admission priority is given to doctoral students from other high education institutions in the order that applications were submitted.