



UMEÅ UNIVERSITET

DISTRIBUTION OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THIRD-CYCLE STUDIES AT THE FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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1. Summary

It is the objective of the Faculty of Science and Technology to implement education at third-cycle level that is of high quality. The purpose of this document is to clarify the distribution of the various roles and responsibilities. This is to create the conditions for goal-oriented, systematic and continuous quality development and for safeguarding education at third-cycle level. The document sets out 12 different roles and their associated responsibilities and tasks.

2. Introduction

In the Faculty of Science and Technology, education at third-cycle level is largely decentralised and most of the responsibility for the third-cycle programmes rests with the departments. As part of the quality assurance system for education at third-cycle level, there should be a clear distribution of responsibilities between the different roles involved in the third-cycle programmes. The committee for education at third-cycle level has therefore devised this document to make this distribution of responsibility clear. The document is to be regarded as a framework that describes minimum requirements as well as recommendations for the organisation and implementation of third-cycle education. The departments should make appropriate decisions to concretise the rules wherever they identify such a need.

Questions regarding roles and responsibilities at third-cycle level shall follow superordinate rules, which also include current delegation regulations. The following formal documents have been taken into account:

- *The Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100)*,
- *Rules for studies at third-cycle level at Umeå University FS 1.1-279-18*,
- *Administrative Procedure for documentation of information in Ladok at third-cycle level at Umeå University FS 1.1.2-1603-14*,
- *Admission regulations for studies at third-cycle level at Umeå University FS 1.1-243-18*,
- *Delegation regulations for the Faculty of Science and Technology FS 1.1-1142-19*,
- *Working regulations for the Faculty of Science and Technology 1.1-2097-19*,
- *Umeå University Quality System for Education FS 1.1-1324-18*,
- *The Swedish Higher Education Act (1992:1434)*,
- *Ordinance on Students' Unions (2009:769)*.

3. Roles in education at third-cycle level

3.1. Committee for education at third-cycle level, KUF

The members of the committee, other than the chair, are appointed by the faculty board, based on proposals by the dean. The composition of the committee is as follows: five representatives of the teaching staff and up to three student representatives, who should be research students, doctoral students and/or education monitors at the student union/NTK. The third-cycle student members are appointed by the Student Union of Science and Technology (NTK).

The tasks of the committee are:

- to prepare items for the faculty board.



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- to develop education at third-cycle level and its organisation.
- to recommend the general study plans for third-cycle and licentiate degrees.
- to be responsible for the common faculty courses offered.
- to determine course descriptions/plans for common faculty courses.
- to follow up the individual study plans determined each year.
- to be responsible for overall quality control and evaluation.
- to be responsible for training of/information for heads of departments, directors of studies and examiners.
- to maintain dialogue with the student union and its doctoral student section on third-cycle education.
- to assist in ensuring third-cycle student influence at Umeå University.

3.2. The chair of the committee for education at third-cycle level

The committee chair is appointed by the dean of the faculty.

In addition to leading the work of the committee, the tasks of the chair include:

- participation in the faculty's management group.
- collaborating with heads of department and with directors of studies and examiners for third-cycle education.
- recommending leave for third-cycle students.

3.3. Examiner

There shall be an examiner and a deputy examiner for each third-cycle subject area. There shall also be at least one assistant examiner. These are appointed by the committee for education at third-cycle level at the faculty, by suggestion from the heads of department. One of the assistant examiners is also normally the deputy examiner. These are appointed by the faculty's research committee, in consultation with the committee for education at third-cycle level after proposals from the head of department. Those appointed as examiners shall have a doctoral degree and expertise in the subject. They should also be a professor or associate professor, have been a principal supervisor of doctoral students and have undergone relevant training as a supervisor. An examiner may be responsible for several subjects, provided that he or she has expertise in all of them.

The examiner has an overall responsibility for the content, quality and development of third-cycle education, including by means of quality assurance of the general syllabus.

Examiners are also responsible for:

- assisting in the planning and formulation of the first individual study plan for a new doctoral student.
- deciding on the credit transfer of course(s) that the student has taken before admission as a doctoral student (i.e. in connection with the process of admission to third-cycle programmes).
- preparing matters regarding credit transfer from the second year of the master's degree for decision by the dean.
- deciding on credit transfer of courses or the equivalent that have been taken and assessed at a higher education institution other than Umeå University.



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- deciding on credit transfer when a course/study programme (or part thereof) replaces a course (or part thereof) that is mandatory according to the general syllabus.
- make sure that the course requirements for doctoral students are met in accordance with the students' respective syllabus.

Before the public defence of doctoral thesis or licentiate:

- after consultation with the supervisor (and if necessary with the reference group) give a recommendation to the doctoral student as to whether he or she is ready for the public defence.
- after consultation with the supervisor, propose a chair, external reviewer and examining committee (or equivalent for the licentiate) to the dean.

After the public defence of doctoral thesis or licentiate:

- decide the grade for the licentiate degree based on a proposal from the examining committee.
- based on a signed and approved decision record, sign the approved archive doctoral/licentiate thesis for Ladok registration.

Comments:

The supervisor cannot be the examiner. Where doctoral students have examiners as supervisors/assistant supervisors, these are handled by a deputy examiner. This means that the examiner and deputy examiner cannot supervise doctoral students together.

3.4. Dean

In accordance with the faculty's delegation of authority, the dean shall in particular:

- decide on admission to education at third-cycle level, with the licentiate degree as the objective.
- decide on credit transfer of the second year of the master's degree.
- decide on chair, external reviewer and examining committee (or equivalent for a licentiate)
- in the case of special reasons pursuant to the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance, decide on an extension to the appointment as doctoral student as a result of commissions of trust in trade unions or student organisations at central or faculty level.
- appoint principal supervisors not employed by the department at which the doctoral student is admitted.
- make sure that the student union each year receives information about deciding and preparatory bodies at Faculty level, and that doctoral students are offered opportunity to influence these in accordance with the Swedish Higher Education Act, chapter 2 §7.

3.5. Head of department

In accordance with the faculty's delegation of authority, the head of department shall in particular:

- decide on admission of doctoral students, including fulfilled requirements as well as the project's suitability.
- Decide on exemptions for individual applicants from the basic entry requirements for education at third-cycle level if there are special reasons (Swedish Higher Education Ordinance 7:39, may not be delegated any further than to assistant/deputy head of department).
- when credit transfer is done at the time of admission, decide whether and to what extent the doctoral students' programme length shall be reduced.



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- appoint a main and assistant supervisor plus at least one more reference person for each doctoral student. Main supervisors not employed by the department at which the student is enrolled are appointed by the Dean according to 3.4.
- decide on replacement of supervisor at the doctoral student's request or when the supervisor is no longer available to perform this assignment.
- consent to exemption from electronic publishing of a doctoral thesis for reasons of copyright.
- decide on extension of the appointment as doctoral student or period of doctoral grant because of caring for a sick child.
- where special reasons exist pursuant to the Higher Education Ordinance, decide on extension of the appointment as doctoral student due to illness, service in the defence forces or parental leave.
- make sure that the student union each year receives information about deciding and preparatory bodies at department level, and that doctoral students are offered opportunity to influence these in accordance with the Swedish Higher Education Act, chapter 2 §7.

3.6. Director of studies

The departments shall appoint a person as director of studies for education at third-cycle level. The person should be a professor or associate professor, shall have a doctoral degree, have been a principal supervisor of doctoral students and should have undergone relevant training as a supervisor. The director of studies shall provide support in various questions relating to the department's doctoral students, supervisors and examiners.

The following tasks *must* be included in the duties of a director of studies:

- prepare cases for admission to third-cycle education, including present an assessment of fulfilled requirements to the Head of department as well as the suitability of the project in regards to the third-cycle subject area.
- on the admission of doctoral students, quality-assure the individual study plans.
- introduce new doctoral students to the third-cycle course.
- in consultation with examiners, determine the annual follow up of the individual study plans.
- responsibility for ensuring that activity plans and preparations for third-cycle courses are performed each year in accordance with the quality system.
- handling referrals and other tasks in connection with third-cycle courses.
- together with examiners, being a driving force in the continuing development of quality in third-cycle education.
- make sure that the department's doctoral students appoint a representative to act as a contact to the student union as well as the faculty.
- promote collegial affiliations for doctoral students at the department.

It is also recommended that the departments include the following in the director of studies' duties:

- informing about the faculty's mandatory range of courses.
- coordinating the department's third-cycle courses.
- informing about relevant local and national rules for education at third-cycle level.
- coordinating supervisor gatherings and planning days for third-cycle education.



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3.7. Supervisors – principal supervisors, assistant supervisors

The head of department shall appoint at least two supervisors for each doctoral student. One of these shall be appointed as principal supervisor. At least one of the supervisors shall have indefinite employment at the department to which the doctoral student has been admitted and at least one of the supervisors shall be an associate professor. The principal and assistant supervisors shall have doctoral degrees and shall have taken the supervisor's course. If supervisors have not completed the supervisor's course, they shall complete it as soon as possible as the student is enrolled in the doctoral programme. Equal gender representation shall be promoted when appointing supervisors.

The principal supervisor is responsible for:

- preparing cases for credit transfer for courses when doctoral students are admitted to third-cycle education, before the examiner's decision.
- giving examiners a recommendation for signing archive lists for Ladok.
- planning the doctoral students' education and the items that are included, together with the doctoral student and other supervisors.
- supervising the doctoral students in their research work, together with other supervisors.
- following up on individual study plans at least once per year, together with the doctoral student and reference group. Among other things, this involves following up on how the doctoral student's education is proceeding and if needed proposing actions so that the doctoral student achieves the national qualitative targets at the pace needed to be able to conclude the courses and study programmes within the time available.

3.8. Reference group

On admission, each doctoral student shall be assigned a reference group. Normally, the supervisors and at least one other academically qualified teacher who is not linked to the doctoral student's research project shall be included. To reveal any potential concerns about communication between supervisor and doctoral student, part of the reference group meetings shall be held without the supervisors and the student respectively being present.

One tried and tested alternative at some of the faculty's departments is for the reference group to consist of two senior researchers who are not part of the body of supervisors and an experienced doctoral student.

The reference group shall:

- meet the doctoral student for at least one formal meeting per year, in connection with the follow up of the individual study plan.
- scrutinise and give feedback on how the work is progressing in relation to the doctoral student's individual study plan.
- be able to pick up signals if the project or communication between doctoral student and supervisor is not working.
- if communication between doctoral student and supervisor is not working well, observe this and propose adequate measures.
- be available to support the examiner in the recommendation of whether the doctoral student is ready for the public defence of the doctoral thesis.

The results of reference group meetings shall be documented and recorded in the individual study plan.



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3.9. Doctoral students

Each doctoral student is responsible for following the individual study plan that has been agreed with the supervisors and for quickly discussing any problems with the supervisors and, at reference group meetings, with the reference group.

Doctoral students are also responsible for:

- together with the principal supervisor, regularly following up on how the education is proceeding by documenting progress in the individual study plan and by noting whether any obstacles to achieving progress according to the ISP have arisen.
- together with the principal supervisor, identifying activities needed to ensure that the national qualitative targets for third-cycle education are met.
- actively participate in and contribute to the department's academic environment.

At each department a doctoral student shall be appointed to act as the doctoral student collective's representative at department and faculty level as well as the student union. It is recommended that the student representative also acts as chairperson for the doctoral student group and among other tasks:

- organize regular meetings of the group of doctoral students.
- propose doctoral student representatives for the department's decision making and preparatory bodies.

The department decides on the scope of the chairperson's duties, which will mean a corresponding extension of the appointment as doctoral student. The recommendation is that the doctoral student representative is compensated with at least two working days, more if other tasks are included.

3.10. Course examiners

Course examiners for courses at Umeå University shall be members of teaching staff appointed by Umeå University according to the vice-chancellor's delegation of authority. For third-cycle courses, the member of teaching staff responsible for the course is normally the course examiner. Grades for courses shall be determined by an appointed course examiner (The Higher Education Ordinance 1993:100, chapter 6, section 32). In some cases the course examiner may be the supervisor.

3.11. Examining committee

The requirements and guidelines that apply to the examining committee's composition and undertakings appear in the Higher Education Ordinance. Rules for the composition of the examining committee may be found in *Rules for studies at third-cycle level at Umeå University* FS 1.1-279-18. The proposed examining committee is given by the examiner after consultation with the principal supervisor and is finally decided by the dean of the faculty.

The examining committee decides on grades for doctoral and licentiate theses and their defence.

The task of the examining committee is to scrutinize and assess the thesis and its defence (or discussion in the case of a licentiate) on the basis of the subject's general syllabus and the national qualitative targets.



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If members have questions regarding the thesis, the doctoral or licentiate student shall be given the opportunity to answer these during the public defence of the thesis. The members of the examining committee shall actively participate in the subsequent discussion.

3.12. External reviewer

A person with a high level of academic competence in the subject of the thesis can be appointed as the faculty's external reviewer. The external reviewer shall have a doctoral degree and shall be academically qualified. The role of the external reviewer is to critically scrutinise the thesis and exhaustively discuss this with the author of the thesis during the public defence in order to present an accurate overview of the thesis' scientific contribution, and the student's ability to discuss research and research results.

The external reviewer shall not normally be active at Umeå University. Proposals for external reviewers are made by the examiners after consultation with supervisors. The dean decides on the appointment of external reviewers.