



The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

General syllabus for doctoral studies in Risk and Environmental Studies

(Studieplan för utbildning på forskarnivå i Risk- och miljöstudier)

Decision	HS FN 2025-02-06	Reg.no.	HS2025/316	Replaces	HS2024/1063
Effective from	6 February 2025	until	further notice	Officer	Monica Eriksson

Syllabus approval

The syllabus was approved by the Faculty Board of Social and Life Sciences on 12 December 2012. Revised according to the dean's decision reg. no HNT 2014/1:32, 17 February 2014. Revised by the Faculty Board of Health, Science and Technology on 24 September 2015 and 25 February 2016. Revised by the Faculty Board of Arts and Social Sciences on 13 June 2024 and 6 February 2025 and effective from this date.

General stipulations for third-cycle education are provided in the Higher Education Act and in the Higher Education Ordinance. The doctoral programme is offered to the extent permitted by available funding.

1. General information

Risk and Environmental Studies is an interdisciplinary subject that developed from primarily environmental sciences, public health science and risk management. The subject is mainly focused on society's need to systematically manage different threats and risks posed to health, socially important functions and the environment. Risk and Environmental Studies includes analysis of threats as well as preparatory and preventative measures taken as part of sustainable development.

In line with university policy, postgraduate education should incorporate perspectives on equality, gender and diversity. Doctoral students are also introduced to multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary approaches and involved in interdisciplinary experiences.

The doctoral programme is offered in collaboration with various research centres and graduate schools at Karlstad University as well as other universities. Collaboration includes joint research courses and seminar activities, as well as thesis supervision.

The doctoral programme in risk and environmental studies is designed to prepare students for an academic career as well as for qualified tasks outside academia. Programme graduates are equipped to take on a variety of professional roles in public service, industry and organisations, nationally as well as internationally.

2. Programme outcomes

The general outcomes of licentiate or doctoral studies in terms of knowledge and understanding, competence and skills, and judgement and approach are specified as follows in the System of Qualifications (Higher Education Ordinance, Annex 2).

Degree of Licentiate

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.*

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.*

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.*

Degree of Doctor

Knowledge and understanding

*For a **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.*

Competence and skills

*For a **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.*

Judgement and approach

*For a **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.*

Subject-specific outcomes

Subject-specific outcomes for licentiate or doctoral studies in the subject of Risk and Environmental Studies at Karlstad University comprise the following.

Knowledge and understanding

For a **Degree of Licentiate**, the third-cycle student shall

- demonstrate a sustainability perspective

For a **Degree of Doctor**, the third-cycle student shall

- demonstrate a sustainability perspective

3. Entry requirements

The requirements for admission to third-cycle courses and study programmes are that the applicant meets the general and specific entry requirements, and is considered in other respects to have the ability required to benefit from the course or study programme.

3.1 General entry requirements

A person meets the general entry requirements for third-cycle courses and study programmes if they have been awarded a second-cycle qualification, satisfied the requirements for courses comprising at least 240 credits of which at least 60 credits were awarded in the second-cycle, or acquired substantially equivalent knowledge in some other way in Sweden or abroad. The faculty board may permit an exemption from the general entry requirements for an individual applicant, if there are special grounds. (Higher Education Ordinance, Chap. 6)

3.2 Specific entry requirements

To meet the specific entry requirements for doctoral studies in Risk and Environmental Studies, the applicant must hold a Degree of Master (60 credits), or equivalent qualifications, in a subject of relevance to Risk and Environmental Studies.

4. Admission

Applications for admission to doctoral studies are processed in accordance with the procedures prescribed by Karlstad University's admission regulations.

5. Selection

Candidates will be selected based on their assessed capacity to successfully complete a programme at the doctoral level.

The selection will be based on the applicant's previous study results with an emphasis on the quality of independent written work of a scholarly and investigatory nature, particularly at the master's level; the applicant's language proficiency; and how well the applicant's research specialisation corresponds to the discipline's existing capacity for supervision and specialisation.

6. Programme curriculum and structure

The doctoral programme leads to a Degree of Doctor or a Degree of Licentiate. The licentiate degree requires two years of study, the equivalent of 120 credits. The doctoral degree requires four years of study, the equivalent of 240 credits. The studies include course work as well as an independent project (thesis).

To earn a licentiate degree, the candidate is required to complete 35 credits of course work and a thesis comprising 85 credits.

To earn a doctoral degree, the candidate must complete 60 credits of course work and a thesis comprising 180 credits.

6.1 Courses

Subject theory courses for a Degree of Licentiate must total at least 20 credits, and at least 22.5 credits for a Degree of Doctor. Methodology courses for a Degree of Licentiate must total at least 7.5 credits, and at least 15 credits for a Degree of Doctor.

The following courses, or equivalent, are mandatory.

General cross-faculty courses

For a Degree of Licentiate

- Philosophy and theory of science for doctoral students, 4.5 credits
- Research ethics for doctoral students, 3 credits

For a Degree of Doctor

- Philosophy and theory of science for doctoral students, 4.5 credits
- Research ethics for doctoral students, 3 credits
- Communicating science, 4.5 credits

Subject theory courses

- Problematisation and research planning in risk and environmental studies, 7.5 credits
- Theories, concepts and methods in risk and environmental studies, 10 credits
- Active conference participation, including individual presentation, and active participation, including individual presentation, at the Risk and Environmental Studies Research Seminar, 2-5 credits. Scope and specialisation are decided in consultation with the supervisor and examiner.

Methodology courses

Scope and specialisation are decided in consultation with the supervisor and examiner. Students are advised to select cross-faculty courses.

Optional courses

Optional courses are selected based on thesis topic and/or methodological needs.

Additional information

The examiner determines if any of the cross-faculty courses or subject-specific courses can be replaced with an equivalent course for a Degree of Licentiate or Doctor. The examiner also decides on any adjustments for doctoral students who belong to a specific graduate school. The relevant optional courses are selected in consultation with the supervisor and the examiner.

Doctoral seminars are held on a regular basis. The doctoral student is expected to actively participate in the discussions during the seminars throughout the doctoral programme. The doctoral student is also expected to participate actively at national and international scientific conferences in their research area.

6.2 Licentiate and doctoral theses

Third-cycle students are required to write a thesis for a doctoral or a licentiate degree, either as a monograph or as a compilation thesis. The department recommends the latter. Candidates are required to defend their licentiate thesis at a seminar and their doctoral thesis at a public examination. Further information is available in applicable policy documents for Karlstad University. The topic of the licentiate or doctoral thesis is chosen in consultation with the supervisor and the examiner. Compilation and licentiate theses should have an introductory chapter written in Swedish or English. The separate papers of the thesis shall be written in English and published, or in script form intended for publication, in international scholarly journals with a peer review system. Monographs and licentiate theses should be written in Swedish or English.

6.3 Supervision

Admitted students are entitled to a supervisor in accordance with the current admission regulations for third-cycle education at Karlstad University.

6.4 Individual study plan

At the start of the studies, the student shall draw up an individual study plan (ISP) in consultation with their supervisors. The plan should include a realistic time plan for coursework, thesis work and supervision.

The plan should also include an introduction to the proposed research field and relevant ethical considerations.

It should also include an introduction to the proposed research field, problem, aim, methodological and theoretical frames.

The individual study plan shall use the form or system approved by the university.

The individual study plan is subject to continual review (at least once a year). If this results in changes in terms of timetable or project plan, the individual study plan must be revised.

Further information is provided by the policy document “Rutiner för kvalitetssäkring av forskarutbildningen inom Risk- och miljöstudier, Karlstads universitet” (Routines for quality assurance of postgraduate education in risk and environmental studies, Karlstad University).

Goal attainment of the doctoral programme, concluding with a Degree of Doctor, shall be reviewed on two occasions during the course of the programme in connection with the mid-way review and the final seminar. For a Degree of Licentiate, the review is made in connection with the licentiate seminar.

6.5 Examination

Doctoral students are assessed in accordance with the requirements of each individual course syllabus. Licentiate and doctoral theses are assessed in accordance with the Higher Education Ordinance (Chap. 6, Sect. 33-35) and applicable regulations at Karlstad University.