



Regulations for Third-Cycle Studies at Karlstad University

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Table of contents

1 General information	4
2 Third-cycle studies	4
2.1 Purpose and outcomes	4
2.2 Studies concluded with a Degree of Licentiate	4
2.3 Studies concluded with a Degree of Doctor	5
3 Third-cycle subject areas (disciplines)	5
3.1 General study syllabus (ASP)	5
3.2 Individual study plan (ISP)	6
4 Period and rate of study	7
4.1 Period of study	7
4.2 Rate of study — full-time and part-time studies	7
4.3 Departmental duties	7
4.3.1 Conditions	7
4.3.2 Planning of departmental duties	8
4.3.3 Teaching	8
4.3.4 Courses in higher education pedagogy for doctoral students	9
4.4 Reporting activity and funding	9
5 Admission and employment	9
5.1 Approval of a doctoral studentship	10
5.2 Recruitment	10
5.2.1 Entry requirements for third-cycle studies	11
5.2.2 Selection	11
5.3 Formal admission	12
5.4 Applicants with special needs	12
5.5 Transfer between institutions	12
5.6 Forms of employment	13
5.6.1 Employment as a doctoral student at Karlstad University	13
5.6.2 Permanent employee at Karlstad University with funding for doctoral studies at no less than 50 per cent	14
5.6.3 Non-employee of Karlstad University (e.g., industrial doctoral student)	14
5.6.4 Collaboration with other higher education institutions (joint degree/double degree)	14
5.6.5 Other forms of employment	14
5.7 Work environment, health and sick leave	15
6 Supervisor, supervision and examiner	15
6.1 Supervision in practice	16
6.2 Third-cycle examiner	16
6.3 Change of supervisor and examiner	17

7 Courses and seminars	18
7.1 <i>Courses, exams, course syllabus and evaluation</i>	18
7.1.1 Courses and course examiner	18
7.1.2 Courses in higher education pedagogy	18
7.2 <i>Credit transfer</i>	19
7.3 <i>Research seminars and other activities</i>	20
8 Summative assessment and degree	20
8.1 <i>Research thesis required for a Degree of Licentiate</i>	20
8.1.1 Thesis format	20
8.1.2 Application, place, time	21
8.1.3 Duplication and accessibility of the licentiate thesis	21
8.1.4 Chair	22
8.1.5 Assessor and external reviewer/co-assessor	22
8.1.6 Seminar	22
8.1.7 Grade	22
8.1.8 Recording of grade and completion of third-cycle studies (Degree of Licentiate)	22
8.2 <i>Doctoral thesis and public defence procedures</i>	22
8.2.1 Thesis format	22
8.2.2 Application, place, time, notification	23
8.2.3 Duplication and accessibility of the thesis	23
8.2.4 Chair	24
8.2.5 External reviewer	24
8.2.6 Composition of examining committee	24
8.2.7 Public defence proceedings	24
8.2.8 Grade	25
8.2.9 Examining committee's meeting and decision	25
8.2.10 Recording of grade and completion of third-cycle studies (Degree of Doctor)	25
8.3 <i>Degree</i>	25
9 Graduate schools	26
10 Career support and continuing professional development	27
11 Withdrawal of resources for third-cycle students	27
12 Disciplinary measures and expulsion	28
13 Decision-making mandate for third-cycle studies at Karlstad University	29
14 Disqualification	30
15 Processing of personal data	31
16 Who to contact	33

1 General information

Regulations for Third-Cycle Studies include national and local regulations pertaining to third-cycle study programmes and courses at Karlstad University. The regulations are based on the Swedish Higher Education Act¹ and the Higher Education Ordinance² and constitute an interpretation and application of the general provisions. The rules are also based on the University's Admission Regulations for Third-Cycle Studies and the University's Rules of Procedure and Delegation of Authority.

This document is intended to serve as a source for any and all regulations related to third-cycle studies at Karlstad University while serving as an easily accessible handbook in licentiate or doctoral studies for students, supervisors, examiners, or anyone else involved with third-cycle studies at Karlstad University.

There are two third-cycle programmes – one leading to a Degree of Doctor (240 credits, equivalent to four years of full-time studies) and the other to a Degree of Licentiate (120 credits, equivalent to two years of full-time studies). The programmes mainly comprise courses and work on a doctoral or licentiate thesis, which are both assessed through exams and a doctoral thesis defence or licentiate seminar.

Henceforth, “doctoral student” will refer to any student admitted to and participating in third-cycle studies, regardless of whether the objective is a Degree of Licentiate or Degree of Doctor. It will include all third-cycle students, regardless of funding or employment contract type.

2 Third-cycle studies

2.1 Purpose and outcomes

The overarching purpose of third-cycle studies is described as follows in the Swedish Higher Education Act:

Third-cycle courses and study programmes shall be based fundamentally on the knowledge acquired by students in first and second-cycle courses and study programmes, or its equivalent.

In addition to the requirements for first and second-cycle courses and study programmes, third-cycle courses and study programmes shall develop the knowledge and skills required to be able to undertake autonomous research.³

The Higher Education Ordinance specifies the intended learning outcomes formulated as qualification requirements for the Degree of Doctor and the Degree of Licentiate.⁴ The intended outcomes are listed in the general syllabus of every third-cycle subject area and are included via a link in the digital individual study plan.

2.2 Studies concluded with a Degree of Licentiate

Studies concluded with a Degree of Licentiate comprise 120 credits, equivalent to two years of full-time studies. Part-time studies may be approved but never at less than a 50% rate and always with a corresponding extension of the study duration.

¹ The Swedish Higher Education Act, SFS 1992:1434

² The Higher Education Ordinance, SFS 1993:100

³ Chap. 1 Sect. 9a Higher Education Act

⁴ Higher Education Ordinance, Annex 2

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

- have been awarded a pass grade on all exams included in the programme, and
- have been awarded a pass grade for a research thesis of at least 60 credits.

The general study syllabus for the third-cycle subject area specifies the ratio of independent study (research thesis) versus coursework.

A person admitted to studies concludes with a Degree of Licentiate who then wants to continue towards a Degree of Doctor has to reapply for admission and be formally readmitted to continue their studies. ⁵

2.3 Studies concluded with a Degree of Doctor

Studies concluded with a Degree of Doctor comprise 240 credits, equivalent to four years of full-time studies. Part-time studies may be approved but never at less than a 50% rate and always with a corresponding extension of the study duration.

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

- have been awarded a pass grade on all exams included in the programme, and
- have been awarded a pass grade on a research thesis of at least 120 credits. The doctoral thesis must have been orally defended at a public defence. ⁶

The general study syllabus for the third-cycle subject area specifies the ratio of independent study (research thesis) versus coursework.

A person admitted to studies concluded with a Degree of Doctor has the right to finish part of their studies with a Degree of Licentiate, provided that studies comprise at least 120 credits. ⁷

3 Third-cycle subject areas (disciplines)

A student is admitted to studies in a particular third-cycle subject area. The faculty board determines the subjects in which to offer third-cycle studies. Requirements and criteria for third-cycle subject areas can be found in the document specifying [the grounds for assessment in terms of the establishment or discontinuation of a third-cycle subject area at Karlstad University](#).

The third-cycle subject areas at Karlstad University are listed [here](#).

3.1 General study syllabus (ASP)

The Higher Education Ordinance stipulates that for each subject in which third-cycle studies are offered, a general study syllabus⁸ is required and determined by the faculty board. The general syllabuses are available on the University's [web pages for third-cycle studies](#).

The Higher Education Ordinance ⁹ stipulates that a general study syllabus shall indicate the following:

- *the main content of the study programme*

⁵ Admission Regulations for Third-Cycle Studies C2019/916

⁶ Chap. 6 Sect. 33 Higher Education Ordinance

⁷ Admission Regulations for Third-Cycle Studies C2019/916

⁸ Chap. 6, Sect. 26-27, Higher Education Ordinance

⁹ Chap. 6, Sect. 27, Higher Education Ordinance

- *specific entry requirements, and*
- *any other necessary regulations.*

The general study syllabus at Karlstad University shall include the following sections:

1. General description of the third-cycle subject area
2. The learning outcomes, both general and subject-specific where applicable
3. Entry requirements, general entry requirements and subject-specific entry requirements. Please note that to be listed as a specific entry requirement, it must be essential to the doctoral student's ability to achieve the intended outcome of the studies.
4. Admission
5. Selection, the assessment criteria in the admissions process that will be applied to determine the applicants' ability to successfully complete the studies
6. Content and structure
 - 6.1. Courses
 - 6.2. Licentiate and doctoral thesis
 - 6.3. Supervision
 - 6.4. Individual Study Plan
 - 6.5. Assessment

3.2 Individual study plan (ISP)

An individual study plan should be drafted for each doctoral student. The doctoral student creates the individual study plan in consultation with the supervisor and examiner. It is entered into the electronic individual study plan system for approval by the student and principal supervisor, confirmation by the head of department, review by the faculty office, and final decision by the dean (in that order). The Karlstad University intranet has [instructions](#) for how to fill out an individual study plan. The plan should include:

- the obligations of the third-cycle student and the higher education institution¹⁰
- a timetable for the doctoral student's study programme ¹¹
- information about how supervision of the doctoral student is organised
- information about the doctoral student's examiner
- information about the thesis project, its issues and its intermediate targets
- information about courses planned and other activities that do and do not entitle the doctoral student to credits
- other requirements for the studies to fulfil the outcomes.

The dean signs off on the individual study plan after consultation with the doctoral student and supervisor¹². The principal supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the first individual study plan is established no later than six months after the doctoral student begins their third-cycle studies, and that it is revised at least once a year. This is made by the doctoral student together with the supervisor and examiner. In case of absence due to reasons such as illness or parental leave, it may need to be updated depending on the extent. Each faculty has documents for quality assurance. ^{13 14}

Since the individual study plan concerns the obligations of each party, it also forms the basis for any actions if one of the parties does not fulfil their part of the agreement (see Chap. 12 Disciplinary measures and expulsion).

¹⁰ Chap. 6 Sect. 29 Higher Education Ordinance

¹¹ Chap. 6 Sect. 29 Higher Education Ordinance

¹² Chap. 6 Sect. 29 Higher Education Ordinance

¹³ Quality Assurance System at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences HS 2021/49

¹⁴ Quality Assurance System at Karlstad University Application at the Faculty of Health, Science and Technology HNT 2020/594

4 Period and rate of study

4.1 Period of study

For studies concluded with a Degree of Doctor, the period of study equals four years of full-time studies. For studies concluded with a Degree of Licentiate, the period of study equals two years of full-time studies.

The University makes a formal decision to admit the doctoral student to the programme. The period of study starts from the day when the doctoral student begins their studies, the so-called start date.

A doctoral student may have already completed part of their studies, for instance through courses or research deemed an acceptable part of the third-cycle studies in question. To avoid counting that time twice for the doctoral student, the University is advised to deduct an equal amount of time from the studies. A corresponding deduction will also be made from the employment period.

4.2 Rate of study — full-time and part-time studies

Doctoral studies are normally full-time. Part-time studies may be approved by the University but never at less than a 50% rate. There will be a corresponding extension of the study duration, to a maximum of eight years for doctoral studies and four years for licentiate studies.

Grounds to approve part-time studies:

- **Departmental duties within the framework of a doctoral studentship**
A doctoral student can perform duties such as teaching, other research and administration. This is referred to as departmental duties. Departmental duties may not constitute more than 20% of a full-time position¹⁵. Departmental duties are subject to an agreement between the doctoral student and the department. (See Chap. 4.3 Departmental duties)
- **Part-time doctoral studentship**
A doctoral studentship can only be made part-time at the request of the doctoral student. A part-time appointment is subject to the dean's review and approval. The appointment may not constitute less than 50% of a full-time position.¹⁶
- **Part-time studies with other forms of funding**
If the student is not funded by the doctoral studentship itself, the terms for part-time studies are established in agreements and the individual study plan. The rate of study should be at least 50% of full-time during the period of study.

4.3 Departmental duties

4.3.1 Conditions

In accordance with the Higher Education Ordinance, Chap. 5, Sect. 2

A person appointed to doctoral studentship must primarily dedicate time to their own studies. However, an employee may work to a limited extent with education, research, artistic research and administration. Before a doctorate or a doctorate in the fine, applied and performing arts has been awarded, however, duties of this kind may not comprise more

¹⁵ Chap. 5 Sect. 2 Higher Education Ordinance

¹⁶ Chap. 5 Sect. 3a Higher Education Ordinance

than 20 per cent of a full-time position.

*A doctoral studentship must be a full-time position. If a third-cycle student requests it, the position may be part-time but at no less than 50 per cent of a full-time position*¹⁷. The employment period may correspond to a maximum of four years of full-time third-cycle studies and be a total of no more than eight years¹⁸. A full-time position can thus be extended from four to five years through 20% departmental duties. Through part-time employment, possibly in combination with departmental duties, the employment period can cover up to eight years.

Work revolving education, research or administration is an opportunity for those employed as doctoral students to gain valuable experience for continued work at the University or in other professional roles. Doctoral students should therefore be offered the opportunity to engage in departmental duties. However, doctoral students have no obligation to work with other duties than their own studies and the department/subject has no obligation to offer departmental duties if there are none to offer. The doctoral student and head of department agree on any departmental duties and the scope thereof.

4.3.2 Planning of departmental duties

The director of studies, or equivalent, is responsible for planning departmental duties in consultation with the doctoral student and the principal supervisor. The planned scope of the duties should normally include the entire employment period. The scope may therefore vary both between and during the years of employment. Departmental duties may not constitute more than 30% of a full-time position during one year of employment. As an example, 30% of departmental duties during one year can be followed by six months at 20% and six months without departmental duties, within the scope of 20%.

The director of studies, or equivalent, or someone appointed by this person, can act as support for the doctoral students in their departmental work. The director of studies, or equivalent, must annually follow up and plan departmental duties for the coming year during planning meetings with the doctoral student. This can be done in connection with work planning for other members of staff.

An individual plan for the doctoral student's departmental duties must be established regarding scope and scheduling on a semester basis. The plan consists partly of an overview for the entire period of the doctoral studentship and partly of a work plan for the academic year. Departmental duties may involve teaching, research alongside thesis work or administration. Such work should aim to provide the doctoral student with valuable experience for continued work at the University or in other professional roles. Planning should be done in the workforce planning tool used by the University and also entered into the individual study plan.

4.3.3 Teaching

The doctoral student's teaching duties are planned in consultation with the director of studies, or equivalent, and should, as far as possible, be scheduled in a way that does not disadvantage the doctoral student's research work. For some, this may involve continuous teaching periods, while for others, teaching periods may be spread out throughout the year.

The content and level of the teaching must be adapted to the doctoral student's knowledge, experience and other prerequisites. Doctoral students should not normally be assigned the role of course director.

The director of studies, or equivalent, must, in consultation with the doctoral student, allocate

¹⁷ Chap. 5 Sect. 3a Higher Education Ordinance

¹⁸ Chap. 5 Sect. 7 Higher Education Ordinance

additional time for teaching components if necessary. In other respects, the doctoral student complies with the working time agreement for teachers¹⁹.

The doctoral student must have completed higher education pedagogy training ²⁰of at least 3 credits *before* teaching duties begin.

4.3.4 Courses in higher education pedagogy for doctoral students

Courses in higher education pedagogy for doctoral students are provided by the Centre for Teaching and Learning (UPE). The doctoral student selects courses in consultation with the director of studies, supervisor and examiner.

Courses in higher education pedagogy ²¹shall be included in the doctoral student's departmental duties or, following a decision by the examiner, in the third-cycle studies.

4.4 Reporting activity and funding

Karlstad University is obligated to submit information about doctoral students to Statistics Sweden. The information is also used in the University's annual report. For that reason, every doctoral student has to update their information about activity and funding in Ladok once every six months.

Activity means active study, which is to say the time that the doctoral student has spent pursuing third-cycle studies. The activity refers to the work performed in the third-cycle studies. Time spent on teaching, administration and other documented tasks is deducted from the full-time activity. Deductions are also made for sick leave, parental leave, or other forms of reported leave. 100% activity is equivalent to full-time studies (40 hours per week). In calculations for part-time activity, the percentage should signify the average number for the entire period. If the doctoral student has been inactive, the number to enter is 0%.

Funding refers to how studies have been funded during the semester. The doctoral student can have several forms of funding during the course of a semester. Funding must be reported for every doctoral student with more than 0% activity.

Funding categories at Karlstad University:

- AUH Employment outside the University, but not with a company
- DKE Doctoral studentship - external funds
- DKF Doctoral studentship - internal funds
- FTG Industrial doctoral student who is employed by a company and pursues third-cycle studies as part of the employment

- HKE Other employment with Kau — external funds
- HKF Other employment with Kau — faculty funds
- ÖVR Funding has not been secured

5 Admission and employment

It is important to distinguish between the admission of a doctoral student and the appointment to a doctoral studentship. While all doctoral students at Karlstad University are admitted to third-cycle studies, not all doctoral students are employed through doctoral

¹⁹ [Working time agreement for teachers](#)

²⁰ SUHF recommendations for third-cycle studies, REK2011:3, dnr10/106

²¹ SUHF recommendations for third-cycle studies, REK2011:3, dnr10/106

studentship appointments. A student admitted to third-cycle studies at Karlstad University could be employed by another higher education institution, or by a company or government agency.

For more information about the application, entry requirements, and admissions process, read [Karlstad University's Admission Regulations](#).²²

The admissions process contains the following steps:

1. Approval of a doctoral studentship
2. Recruitment
3. Formal admission

For more information about each step, see the respective sections below. More information is also available with regard to applicants with special needs, and to transfers from other universities. There are several forms of appointment for third-cycle students, and these are also detailed below.

5.1 Approval of a doctoral studentship

Doctoral studentships are subject to approval by the faculty board. Before the approval of a doctoral studentship, the department concerned shall give an account of the following issues:

- How funding of the studentship can be guaranteed for the whole period. *“Admission to doctoral studies requires that supervision, funding and acceptable conditions are guaranteed for the whole period of study.”*²³
- How adequate supervision can be arranged. Each doctoral student is entitled to 160 hrs of supervision per year when their degree of activity is 100%. A lower degree of activity comes with a proportional reduction in supervision.
- How other conditions of study can be arranged satisfactorily. This refers to a work station, equipment, and other resources required to complete the studies. The head of department and the dean are responsible for ensuring acceptable study conditions.
- The proposal of a principal supervisor and at least one co-supervisor. The principal supervisor must be a professor or a reader. In exceptional cases, a university teacher with a doctorate can be the proposed principal supervisor, but only if the co-supervisor is a professor or reader. Such allowances must only be made when a supervisor for instance has particular expertise of great relevance to a student's research area.
- The proposal of a professor or reader as examiner. The examiner must not simultaneously be the supervisor for the doctoral student in question.
- The proposal of a text (use the HR advertisement template) about the project, research team or third-cycle subject area (which can be used in advertising if needed), as well as selection criteria and entry requirements (specific entry requirements should be copied from the general study syllabus of the subject).

5.2 Recruitment

All recruitment of doctoral students shall be based on selection procedures. Third-cycle studentships should always be announced. Exceptions from the announcement requirement

²² Admission Regulations for Third-Cycle Studies C2019/916

²³ Admission Regulations for Third-Cycle Studies C2019/916

can be made pursuant to the Higher Education Ordinance.²⁴ Karlstad University allows for the following exceptions:

- If the studies are to be pursued within the framework of employment elsewhere.
- If the doctoral student transfers from another higher education institution.
- If there are similar special grounds.

The position should be announced via the University's recruitment tool for a recommended minimum of three weeks before the application deadline. The advertisement should be posted in Swedish and English and include the requirements and qualifications necessary to be considered. The recruitment officer for the subject consults with the relevant HR specialist how the advertisement should be appropriately disseminated. The University welcomes domestic and international applicants.

5.2.1 Entry requirements for third-cycle studies

To be eligible for third-cycle studies, the applicant must meet both the general and specific entry requirements.

Pursuant to the Higher Education Ordinance ²⁵, a person meets the general entry requirements for third-cycle courses and study programmes if they have:

1. *been awarded a second-cycle qualification*
2. *satisfied the requirements for courses comprising at least 240 credits of which at least 60 credits were awarded in the second-cycle, or*
3. *acquired substantially equivalent knowledge in some other way in Sweden or abroad.*

The higher education institution may permit an exemption from the general entry requirements for an individual applicant, if there are special grounds.²⁶

The specific entry requirements are stated in the general study syllabus for each third-cycle subject area and must be specified verbatim in the advertisement.²⁷

General and specific entry requirements are listed in an employment profile/advertisement along with any other requirements. The University has an advertisement template for doctoral studentships, which should be used. There is also a guide available for selecting important personal qualities ([the competence library](#)).

5.2.2 Selection

To get the right candidate who is truly capable of completing the doctoral programme within the given time frame, the selection process and its various steps are very important. It is particularly important to determine beforehand which competencies are relevant and to weigh these competencies. It is the department's responsibility to ascertain the ability and suitability of the doctoral student. To assure the quality of the selection process, the recommendation is to set up a recruitment team with the right competence and experience to assess candidates. The recruitment team should be balanced in terms of gender. The team should include a professor or reader and a person with international experience. Under normal circumstances, the team should consist of 3-4 people. The team can, if necessary, consult with other members of the faculty to determine which qualifications/competencies the doctoral candidate needs to possess before drafting the advertisement. If there is a need for more members of staff to meet the applicants, an informal meeting with colleagues can be arranged in connection with the

²⁴ Chap. 7 Sect. 37 Higher Education Ordinance

²⁵ Chap. 7 Sect. 39 Higher Education Ordinance

²⁶ Chap. 7 Sect. 39 Higher Education Ordinance

²⁷ Chap. 7 Sect. 40 Higher Education Ordinance

interview.

The recruitment team assesses the eligibility of all applicants and ranks them based on the weighted selection criteria specified in the advertisement. This ensures transparency and that the final selection is based on what the recruitment team has defined as important before the start of the recruitment process. The top candidates are called for an interview, whereupon references should be contacted for the most qualified applicants. Interviewed candidates are ranked based on an overall assessment of their application documents, interviews and references, and offered the position in turn, should anybody withdraw their interest. The selection process has to be documented and justified based on the predetermined selection criteria.

A formal admission serves as the basis for the appointment.

5.3 Formal admission

The department's suggested appointment is reviewed and discussed by the relevant faculty board or the body/function to which the faculty board has delegated doctoral student admissions. Formal admission to third-cycle studies is delegated to the Committee for Third-Cycle Studies by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, and to the dean by the Faculty of Health, Science and Technology respectively. A doctoral student representative shall be given opportunity to participate in the preparatory stage. Formal admission to third-cycle studies at Karlstad University requires the dean's signature. The decision is sent to the applicant. The University HR Office is informed if the admission constitutes University employment. Admission is registered in Ladok.

The University can revoke the admission decision if the admitted candidate is unable to present a valid residence permit for doctoral studies by the start of the studies (Sect. 37, second paragraph of the Administrative Procedure Act). Such a reservation of revocation must be stated in the admission decision.

5.4 Applicants with special needs

Information for applicants with special needs can be found on the web page [Students with special needs](#).

Applicants with special needs due to a disability are recommended to reach out to the University's student support contact staff well ahead of time. Doing so helps the University draft a plan as soon as possible for how best to accommodate the applicant in their studies.

5.5 Transfer between institutions

At Karlstad University, there are a number of active doctoral students who are admitted to another university or equivalent. Provided that the majority of their duties has been undertaken at Karlstad University, the faculty board concerned may at the doctoral student's request decide that the student be transferred to Karlstad University to complete their doctoral studies and qualifications.

Such a transfer may be made on the conditions that:

- 1. the doctoral student requests a transfer. A request in writing is submitted to the appropriate faculty office.*
- 2. the doctoral student can verify admission at the faculty and university in question*
- 3. the receiving department has a funding and supervision plan and can show that the transfer is made in consultation with the university where the student is admitted. Any change in the supervision arrangement in conjunction with the transfer must be*

- specified.*
4. *the faculty dean approves the transfer.* ²⁸

These documents are sent to the appropriate faculty office for approval by the relevant faculty board or body/function to which the faculty board has delegated doctoral student admissions.

5.6 Forms of employment

Third-cycle studies are not subject to a tuition fee. The Higher Education Ordinance stipulates requirements for funding, meaning that a doctoral student must be able to secure funding for the duration of the studies.²⁹ This rule is often referred to as the *funding requirement*.

In other words, the University may not admit an applicant to third-cycle studies unless the applicant has adequate funding. Funding takes many forms, and thus there are several different forms of employment, such as employment as a doctoral student, permanent employment at Karlstad University with funding for doctoral studies at no less than 50%, and employment elsewhere with funding for doctoral studies at no less than 50%. See Sect. 4.4 for more information on forms of funding.

5.6.1 Employment as a doctoral student at Karlstad University

A doctoral studentship at Karlstad University is a government appointment especially designed for third-cycle studies (funding category DKE; DKF see Chap. 4.4). Decisions regarding the employment of doctoral students cannot be appealed and regulations regarding employment as a doctoral student are governed by the Higher Education Ordinance.³⁰ Only those who are or have been admitted to third-cycle studies may be appointed to doctoral studentships.

A doctoral studentship must be a full-time position. If a doctoral student so requests, the appointment may be a part-time position but for no less than 50% of a full-time position, provided that the supervisor approves of this structure and the dean grants the request. The total employment period for a doctoral student may, however, not exceed the time corresponding to four years of full-time third-cycle studies. Licentiate studies correspond to two years of full-time studies. The position may include departmental duties, normally in the form of teaching, at no more than 20%. In such cases, the employment period can be extended to a maximum of five years in total. Study time while the doctoral student was not appointed to a doctoral studentship shall be deducted from these periods. The period can be extended for leave of absence on special grounds, such as illness, parental leave, service in the defence forces, holding an elected position in a student organisation or union, or for assignments on a panel assessing the Swedish Higher Education Authority reviews. An extension of the employment period in other special circumstances is subject to a case-by-case assessment and the reasons must be specified in the doctoral student's individual study plan. In case of extended absence, the study plan may need to be updated.

At Karlstad University, elected positions at the University, national and international doctoral student organisations, and assignments relating to the Swedish Higher Education Authority reviews are included in the time allotted for departmental duties. The doctoral student is entitled to an extension equivalent to the time required for the assignment.³¹ If the assignment comprises more than 20% of full-time, the doctoral student shall request a leave of absence to complete it. In cases where the doctoral student receives a fee/salary from the other party, the

²⁸ Admission Regulations for Third-Cycle Studies C2019/916

²⁹ Chap. 7 Sect. 36 Higher Education Ordinance

³⁰ Chap. 5 Sect. 1-7 Higher Education Ordinance

³¹ Please refer to SUHF recommendations for extensions of doctoral students' periods of employment and study for certain elected positions.

doctoral student should take a leave of absence for the duration of the assignment.

The first employment period can be no more than one year, and the employment cannot be renewed by more than two years at a time. Employment can be funded internally, externally, or by a combination of the two.³²

Doctoral students' wage rates progress according to a local collective agreement (the four-step ladder).³³ A special form³⁴ is used to notify the HR Office when a doctoral student is moved up the ladder. The principal supervisor is obliged to fill out the form and submit it to the payroll officer.

5.6.2 Permanent employee at Karlstad University with funding for doctoral studies at no less than 50 per cent

A part-time employee has to work at least 50%. Third-cycle studies have to account for at least 50% of a full-time position. This means that a full-time lecturer can spend half of their working time pursuing doctoral studies, and a part-time lecturer working 50% can dedicate all of their working time to doctoral studies. The studies should be completed within four years for a degree of licentiate and eight years for a degree of doctor³⁵. Employment can be funded internally (funding category HKF), externally (funding category HKE) or by a combination of the two.

5.6.3 Non-employee of Karlstad University (e.g., industrial doctoral student)

Subject to an agreement between Karlstad University and another employer, a doctoral student employed by this employer (funding category FTG or AUH) can conduct third-cycle studies. [Agreement templates](#) and [financial templates](#) are provided by the faculty office in question. *“Another employer may refer to industry, the education system, other universities, or government agencies. The employment must cover at least 50 per cent of full-time, and doctoral studies must be conducted as half-time studies as a minimum [...] These doctoral studentships are always fully financed by external funding. In special circumstances, the vice-chancellor can make exceptions.”*³⁶

5.6.4 Collaboration with other higher education institutions (joint degree/double degree)

Subject to an agreement between Karlstad University and another higher education institution, a doctoral student can be admitted and receive either a double or a joint degree. Double degree means that the doctoral student is admitted to two higher education institutions and conducts their studies at both institutions in parallel. After completed studies, two degree certificates are awarded. Joint degree means that at least two higher education institutions provide a joint doctoral programme, which then concludes with a joint degree and a degree certificate. [Agreement templates](#) and a [description of the process](#) are provided by the faculty office in question. The form of employment may vary and include one or both universities. This type of collaboration is sometimes referred to as cotutelle.

5.6.5 Other forms of employment

Karlstad University applies strong restrictions on admitting doctoral students who are not included in the forms of funding described above. The vice-chancellor approves or rejects such applications after the dean has presented the matter in question. If such students may be

³² Admission Regulations for Third-Cycle Studies C2019/916

³³ The collective agreement is available on the University intranet under Employee & manager/My employment/Agreements & regulations/Collective agreements

³⁴ The form *Anmälan om uppflyttning i doktorandstegen* can be found on the University intranet under Medarbetare & chef/För dig som chef/Blanketter och mallar (chef), under the heading “Utbetalningar”.

³⁵ Chap. 7 Sect. 36 Higher Education Ordinance

³⁶ Admission Regulations for Third-Cycle Studies C2019/916

admitted following the approval of the vice-chancellor, their funding must be equal to that of a doctoral student employment, irrespective of form and origin.

Karlstad University does not permit the establishment of scholarships or doctoral grants to fund third-cycle studies.

5.7 Work environment, health and sick leave

All University employees, including doctoral students, are covered by the same safety net in terms of work environment, health and illness. [The health and safety guide](#) provides brief descriptions and links to more comprehensive information.

Doctoral students employed and/or working outside Karlstad University are covered by corresponding provisions at their place of work.

A doctoral student who is struggling emotionally, feels disrespected or discriminated against, is involved in a conflict, or has opinions about the work environment should primarily turn to the head of department, who is responsible for the work environment, or, if that is not appropriate, to the dean or HR Office. Another option is to contact a safety representative, labour union representative, doctoral student representative, or the occupational health service. You can find more information on the University intranet under [Work Environment and Health](#). All University employees are entitled to three anonymous sessions with a behavioural therapist from the occupational health service, if needed.

In case of short-term illness, the doctoral student reports sick leave according to the procedures of the department concerned. See more information on [Inslaget](#). For absences longer than two weeks due to illness, the doctoral student applies for compensation from the [Swedish Social Insurance Agency \(Försäkringskassan\)](#). Doctoral students can also apply for compensation in case of care of a sick child ([VAB](#)). More information and how to apply can be found on the Swedish Social Insurance Agency's [website](#). All absence must be register in Primula, except for vacation, which is automatically scheduled from Midsummer onwards.

6 Supervisor, supervision and examiner

The Higher Education Ordinance states: *The number of doctoral students admitted to third-cycle courses and study programmes may not exceed the number that can be offered supervision and otherwise acceptable conditions for study and whose studies are funded.*³⁷

At least two supervisors shall be appointed for each doctoral student. One of them shall be nominated as the principal supervisor. The doctoral student is entitled to supervision during his or her studies unless the vice-chancellor has decided otherwise with the support of Section 30.

A doctoral student who so requests shall be allowed to change supervisor. ³⁸

A principal supervisor and at least one co-supervisor shall be proposed for each doctoral student. The principal supervisor must be a professor or a reader. At least one of the supervisors must have supervisor training. In exceptional cases, a university teacher with a doctorate can be the proposed principal supervisor, but only if the co-supervisor is a professor or reader. Such allowances must only be made when a supervisor for instance has particular

³⁷ Chap. 7 Sect. 34 Higher Education Ordinance

³⁸ Chap. 6 Sect. 28 Higher Education Ordinance

expertise of great relevance to a student's research area.³⁹

Supervisors are appointed by the Committee for Third-Cycle Studies for the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, and by the dean for the Faculty of Health, Science and Technology.

The organisation and distribution of duties between supervisors is specified in the doctoral student's individual study plan.

Each doctoral student is entitled to 160 hrs of supervision per year when their degree of activity is 100%. A lower degree of activity comes with a proportional reduction in supervision. The supervision time of each supervisor must be specified in the doctoral student's individual study plan, and the total supervision time must amount to at least 10% of the doctoral student's activity.

Upon request, a doctoral student must be allowed to change supervisor. The doctoral student is not obligated to give a reason for wanting a new supervisor, nor to be part of any consultations on the matter (more information under 6.3 Change of supervisor and examiner).

6.1 Supervision in practice

Supervision is essentially a form of instruction where the goal is for the doctoral student to meet the stipulated learning outcomes for the degree as specified in the System of Qualifications of the Higher Education Ordinance as well as in the general study syllabus of the discipline. The individual study plan is a key tool in the planning and follow-up of the execution of the various parts of the third-cycle studies. The supervisors are central to guiding the doctoral student in conducting the research. They should also, together with the third-cycle examiner, support the doctoral student's choice of courses and assist the doctoral student in the administrative parts of the third-cycle studies. It is important that at least one of the supervisors supports the doctoral student regarding the overall perspective of the third-cycle studies and not just the research part.

The main supervisor is responsible for ensuring, together with the doctoral student and the examiner, that the doctoral student has an approved individual study plan within the prescribed time, that is, within six months from the start of the studies. It must be reviewed at least once per year (see 3.2 Individual study plan).

The supervisor is obligated to stay abreast of the various regulations and procedures concerning third-cycle studies. To support supervisors in their roles, Karlstad University offers courses and other activities related to third-cycle supervision.

6.2 Third-cycle examiner

For each doctoral student, a specially appointed examiner is selected as part of the admissions procedure. At the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the Committee for Third-Cycle Studies appoints the third-cycle examiner. At the Faculty of Health, Science and Technology, the dean appoints the third-cycle examiner.

The examiner should be a professor or docent and normally have a permanent position as a teacher at Karlstad University according to Karlstad University's rules of procedure. The minimum requirement is that the examiner is a permanent employee working at least 50% or a fixed-term employee contracted for at least two years working at least 50%.⁴⁰

³⁹ Admission Regulations for Third-Cycle Studies C2019/916

⁴⁰ Rules of procedure for faculty boards, the teacher education board and the organisation of the faculties stipulate duties, right to make proposals and decisions, as well as organisation. C2021/779

Third-cycle examiners are appointed for the entire study period. The third-cycle examiner and supervisor (applies to both principal and assistant supervisors) cannot be the same person. The role as third-cycle examiner includes:

- an overall responsibility for quality, quality assurance and goal attainment of the thesis as well as coursework, including annual review of the individual study plan
- deciding which courses and how many credits the doctoral student should be credited within the third-cycle studies
- deciding on transfer of credits from previous degree programmes, courses or parts of courses
- submitting the application for licentiate seminar or thesis defence as well as ensuring that the licentiate or doctoral thesis undergoes the quality review as stipulated in the individual study plan and by faculty board, and
- acting as assessor (together with the external reviewer/co-assessor) at the licentiate seminar, and, under normal circumstances, chair of the thesis defence and possibly the mid-way review.

For more information, see Chap. 8.1 and 8.2 on licentiate seminar and thesis defence.

6.3 Change of supervisor and examiner

The configuration of supervisors may need to change during the course of the studies as a consequence of departmental changes or because a doctoral student requests a new supervisor. It is possible to change principal supervisor, assistant supervisor and examiner. Assistant supervisors can be added or dismissed as long as at least one assistant supervisor remains. Decisions on change of supervisor or examiner are delegated to the Committee for Third-Cycle Studies by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, and to the dean by the Faculty of Health, Science and Technology respectively.

Changing supervisor or examiner as a result of a change in working conditions:

The head of department consults with the parties concerned and proposes a new configuration of supervisors. A form for changing the configuration of supervisors is submitted to the faculty office for further processing and approval. The office also ensures that the new configuration is entered into the ISP system.

Changing supervisor at the doctoral student's request: The doctoral student has the right to request a new supervisor pursuant to the Higher Education Ordinance, Chap. 6, Sect. 28, and applies irrespective of how or to whom the request is made. Note that the doctoral student may suggest but not demand a specific supervisor. In the event of changing supervisor at the doctoral student's request, the doctoral student shall first contact the head/deputy head of department or current supervisors to express their wish to change supervisor. If this is not considered possible, the doctoral student contacts the faculty office, which will assess the conditions for forming a new configuration of supervisors. If the conditions are deemed reasonable, the head of department promptly drafts a proposal for a new configuration of supervisors in consultation with the relevant parties. This should be done within three months at the latest. The head of department also completes and submits the necessary form for changing supervisor to the faculty office. If it is not deemed possible or appropriate for the head of department to draft a proposal, the responsibility is passed to the dean, with support from the faculty office.

The submitted request must be documented in writing and registered by the person to whom the request is made. The doctoral student should be kept informed about the progress of the matter and the possibility of support from the doctoral student representative.

7 Courses and seminars

7.1 Courses, exams, course syllabus and evaluation

The studies comprise work on the doctoral or licentiate thesis and coursework including examinations.

The general study syllabus of the third-cycle subject area specifies what is required to be awarded qualifications. Some courses may be mandatory while others are electives. Individual literature courses, seminar series and conference participation may be included in the coursework at the discretion of the third-cycle study area. Mandatory courses in third-cycle studies must have course syllabi.

In this framework, doctoral students can take courses in their own discipline, within a graduate school, or any other relevant courses offered at Karlstad University. If appropriate, courses can be taken at another higher education institution. The doctoral student decides which courses to include in the studies after consultation with the supervisor and examiner, and this is specified in the individual study plan.

Course offerings at Karlstad University can be found at [Kau doctoral courses](#).

7.1.1 Courses and course examiner

Examinations that form part of third-cycle courses and study programmes shall be assessed in accordance with the grading system prescribed by the higher education institution. The grade shall be determined by a teacher specially nominated by the higher education institution (the examiner).⁴¹

One of the grades Fail or Pass shall be awarded in the assessment of exams included in third-cycle studies at Karlstad University.⁴² Every third-cycle course (with a course syllabus and course code) must have an examiner, referred to as a course examiner.

The course examiner should normally be a permanently employed teacher at the University. The minimum requirement is that the examiner is a permanent employee working at least 50% or a fixed-term employee contracted for at least two years working at least 50%. A course examiner for third-cycle studies should be a docent or professor.⁴³ Course examiners and alternate course examiners for third-cycle courses are appointed for one year by the dean after consultation with the department head. The deputy course examiner steps in if the examiner is unavailable or indisposed.

The role as third-cycle course examiner includes:

- ensuring that the examination guarantees that learning outcomes of the course are assessed
- ensuring that the performance of individual doctoral students is assessed equally and lawfully, and conforms to examination provisions at Karlstad University
- making decisions on grades and decisions on re-evaluation of grades, and
- deciding on correction of typographical errors, miscalculations, or similar oversights that pertain to grades.

7.1.2 Courses in higher education pedagogy

Doctoral students who teach at a first- or second-cycle level are expected to have completed

⁴¹ Chap. 6 Sect. 32 Higher Education Ordinance

⁴² Regulations on the grading system for exams included in third-cycle education at Karlstad University. C2024/620.

⁴³ Rules of procedure for faculty boards, the teacher education board and the organisation of the faculties stipulate duties, right to make proposals and decisions, as well as organisation. C2021/779

adequate training in higher education pedagogy or acquired the equivalent skills in some other way (see 4.3 Departmental duties). A doctoral student who is set to teach will take a course in higher education pedagogy within the scope of their employment at Karlstad University during time not allotted for third-cycle studies (meaning as part of departmental duties).

Alternatively, the course can be completed during time allotted for studies and award credits towards the degree if the discipline's general study syllabus specifies that the course can be included in the third-cycle studies, or if the examiner approves it.⁴⁴

The option that applies to each doctoral student should be included in the individual study plan.

7.2 Credit transfer

A student who has completed part of their third-cycle studies at another higher education institution is entitled to transfer the credits under certain conditions. If credit can be transferred, the doctoral student does not have to re-take examinations for that part of the studies. Credit transfer is subject to approval. The doctoral student decides whether to apply for a credit transfer.

Credit transfer is regulated by the Higher Education Ordinance:⁴⁵

If a student at a higher education institution in Sweden has successfully completed a higher education course or study programme, she or he is entitled to transfer the credits awarded for a course or study programme at another higher education institution. This does not apply, however, if there is a substantial difference between these courses or study programmes.

The same applies for students who have successfully completed a course or study programme

- 1. at a university or higher education institution in Denmark, Finland, Iceland or Norway*
- 2. at a university or other higher education institution of a signatory to the Council of Europe's Convention of 11 April 1997 on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region*
- 3. at a university or other higher education institution of a signatory to the UNESCO's Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education from 25 November 2019, or*
- 4. at the Nordic School of Public Health (NHV). Ordinance (2023:32).*

A student is entitled to transfer credits from a course or study programme other than that laid down in Section 6 if the nature and extent of the knowledge and skills cited by the student are such that they correspond on the whole to the course or study programme for which the credits are to be recognised. A student may also be given credit for corresponding knowledge and skills acquired in a vocational or professional capacity. Ordinance (2006:1053).

The higher education institution shall assess whether credits can be awarded for the prior course or study programme or professional or vocational experience.

The University may not set local rules for credit transfer. Each individual matter of credit transfer is subject to review pursuant to the Higher Education Ordinance regulations cited above.

⁴⁴ SUHF REK 2011:3 Reg. no 10/106

⁴⁵ Chap. 6 Sect. 6-8 Higher Education Ordinance

It is the responsibility of the doctoral student to draft and submit an application for credit transfer. The application must be made on the form provided.⁴⁶ On the form, the doctoral student enters the course (or equivalent) for which the credit is to be transferred, the Swedish or English translation of the course title (if applicable), the number of higher education credits (or ECTS credits) awarded for the course, and the higher education institution and country where the course was completed. The doctoral student should attach a copy of the course certificate and course syllabus or equivalent, as well as any other documents that the student would like to be considered in the matter. The decision to approve or reject credit transfer is made by the doctoral student's examiner. At the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the application is submitted to the faculty office, and at the Faculty of Health, Science and Technology, it is submitted to the doctoral student's examiner (and/or the discipline's administrator).

An application for credit transfer should be assessed pursuant to the Higher Education Ordinance stipulations above. The assessment is informed by the Higher Education Ordinance learning outcomes for third-cycle studies as expressed in the general study syllabus followed by the doctoral student and in the course syllabi relevant to the transfer.

The decision is always to be documented in writing, whether credit transfer is approved or rejected. If credit transfer is approved, the faculty administrator registers the decision in Ladok. If the application is rejected, the examiner is obligated to justify the decision. If the application is partially rejected, the examiner must specify which credits are approved and which are rejected. The rejections must be justified. If the application is completely or partially rejected, the University is required to immediately notify the doctoral student in writing and include instructions for an appeal.

A decision about credit transfer can be appealed to the Higher Education Appeals Board.⁴⁷

7.3 Research seminars and other activities

The doctoral student is encouraged to actively participate in research seminars and other constructive activities for the duration of the period of study. Doctoral students are also recommended to avail themselves of the opportunity to attend guest lectures et cetera at Karlstad University and to participate in national and international conferences, summer graduate schools, and other constructive activities outside Karlstad University. Doctoral students with graduate school connections should participate in seminars organised by the discipline and by the graduate school, as well as other constructive activities. To what extent this type of activity awards credits is stated in the general syllabus of the subject.

8 Summative assessment and degree

8.1 Research thesis required for a Degree of Licentiate

8.1.1 Thesis format

These regulations refer to the research thesis required for the Degree of Licentiate, as stipulated in the System of Qualification⁴⁸. The licentiate thesis can either be a single-topic scholarly study (monograph) or a collection of previously published academic papers with an introductory chapter (compilation thesis).

Upon assessment of a compilation thesis, the licentiate student's contributions shall be clearly distinguishable from other persons' contributions to the academic papers. The contribution

⁴⁶ The forms are available on each faculty's website

⁴⁷ Chap. 12 Sect. 2 Higher Education Ordinance

⁴⁸ Higher Education Ordinance, Annex 2

should be detailed in the licentiate thesis.

The licentiate thesis shall be written in English, Swedish, another Nordic language, or another language within the discipline's scholarly community. The thesis shall have a title and abstract (approximately 250 words) in Swedish and English, another Nordic language or another language within the discipline's scholarly community.

The licentiate thesis shall be based on independent research and be of good academic standard.

8.1.2 Application, place, time

The examiner submits an application for the licentiate seminar to the faculty office in question at least three weeks before the seminar. The application serves as the basis for the dean's decision and shall include a proposal for the chair of the seminar, who is also the examiner and reviewer, the name of the external reviewer who is also the co-assessor, as well as the author's name and the title of the thesis. If the third-cycle examiner is unable to serve as the examiner at the licentiate seminar for any reason, a special examiner shall be appointed for the licentiate thesis. In such cases, the notification task must be performed by the regular examiner. The name of the proposed special examiner shall be included when the faculty office is notified. After the decision to appoint a special examiner, he or she takes over the role of examiner for matters related to the licentiate seminar. The application shall also include information detailing the quality assurance process, including a review of the thesis in its preliminary form by qualified academic assessors who have not been involved in supervision or the research in question, at the halfway seminar, or in any other manner. There can be no conflict of interest between the external reviewer and the doctoral student or any of his or her supervisors (see Chap. 14 Disqualification). A conflict of interest form must be attached to the application. If an external reviewer and co-assessor is prevented from attending the licentiate seminar, the dean of the faculty can appoint another external reviewer and co-assessor who will replace him or her. The application form for licentiate seminars can be found on the website of the concerned faculty.

The main rule is that the licentiate seminar shall be held as a physical meeting at Karlstad University. Following a decision by the dean, the licentiate seminar can in exceptional cases be held online (in whole or in part) or at another higher education institution, if there are special grounds. Special reasons may include that a licentiate student has conducted most of their studies at another higher education institution according to a collaboration agreement, or unforeseen events that prevent a physical seminar, such as a pandemic. For an exception to be granted, it is required that participation in the seminar can also take place digitally from Karlstad University's premises, and that the seminar takes place in a scholarly environment that ensures scholarly review and that the technical requirements for such a seminar set-up can be met.

Licentiate seminars cannot take place between the Saturday before Midsummer to 15 August, or from 22 December to 10 January.

At least three weeks before the licentiate seminar, on the same day as the application must be submitted, the time and place for the licentiate seminar are announced on the University's website, and a copy of the thesis is sent to the faculty office. The examiner shall ensure that the thesis is made available at the department and/or discipline and Karlstad University Library for at least three weeks before a grade is awarded. The faculty office sends the assessment form for the licentiate seminar and a form confirming fulfilment of all requirements for the licentiate degree to the department's faculty administrator.

8.1.3 Duplication and accessibility of the licentiate thesis

At the latest three weeks before the public seminar, the printing office shall ensure that one physical copy of the licentiate thesis is delivered to the faculty office, and five physical copies

are delivered to the University Library.⁴⁹ Electronic publication of the licentiate thesis requires the respondent to fill out and sign a publication agreement as mandated by the University Library. Pursuant to legal requirements 1993:1392 (law on legal deposit of electronic documents), the University Printing Office handles the dispatch of legal deposit copies to the legal deposit libraries (the National Library of Sweden and the university libraries in Lund, Stockholm, Uppsala, Linköping, Gothenburg and Umeå). The discipline can distribute copies of the licentiate thesis to other relevant departments in the country at its own expense. The faculty boards recommend electronic publication instead of distributing hard copies to other departments.

8.1.4 Chair

The seminar shall be chaired by a teacher who is neither responsible for grading in the doctoral programme (third-cycle examiner) nor has been one of the doctoral student's supervisors.

8.1.5 Assessor and external reviewer/co-assessor

The third-cycle examiner shall assess the licentiate thesis and the doctoral student's public defence of the thesis. An external reviewer as well as a co-assessor shall be appointed for the licentiate thesis. The external reviewer shall at least be a docent (associate professor/reader) unless there are special circumstances, be a specialist in the field, and shall not be employed at Karlstad University. If there are special circumstances, these must be justified. There can be no conflict of interest between the external reviewer and the doctoral student or any of his or her supervisors (see Chap. 14 Disqualification). A conflict of interest form must be attached to the application (see 8.1.2 Application, place, time).

8.1.6 Seminar

The licentiate thesis shall be presented at a public seminar at the discipline's department before a grade is awarded. The seminar shall be held after the thesis has been publicly available for three weeks.

After the seminar, the external reviewer/co-assessor and examiner discuss the grade. The principal supervisor can be present at the discussion, but cannot partake in the decision. The co-supervisor may also be present, if deemed appropriate.

8.1.7 Grade

The licentiate thesis is assessed by the examiner and an external reviewer/co-assessor, and one of the grades Pass or Fail is awarded.

8.1.8 Recording of grade and completion of third-cycle studies (Degree of Licentiate)

The completed assessment form for the licentiate thesis is given to the administrator who records the grade in the Ladok registry. It is then submitted to the faculty office.

A thesis awarded a passing grade shall be stored and catalogued at Karlstad University Library.

8.2 Doctoral thesis and public defence procedures

8.2.1 Thesis format

The doctoral thesis can either be a single-topic scholarly study (monograph) or a collection of previously published academic papers with an introductory chapter (compilation thesis).

Upon assessment of a compilation thesis, the doctoral student's contributions shall be clearly

⁴⁹ Checklist for PhD students – printing and electronic publishing of your doctoral/licentiate thesis (ver.240618), Kau University Library

distinguishable from other persons' contributions to the academic papers. The contribution should be detailed in the doctoral thesis.

A doctoral thesis shall be written in English, Swedish, another Nordic language, or another language within the discipline's scholarly community. The thesis shall have a title and abstract in Swedish and English, another Nordic language or another language within the discipline's scholarly community.

A doctoral thesis shall include a notification cover sheet (spikblad) with an abstract in English not exceeding 2,000 characters, including spaces.

8.2.2 Application, place, time, notification

No later than six weeks before the public defence, the examiner must notify the faculty office of the public defence through an application form. The application serves as the basis for the dean's decision and shall include proposals for the chair of the public defence proceedings, the external reviewer, members of the examining committee and an alternate member, as well as the requested time for *spikning* – notification of the date of the public defence (see 8.2.3–8.2.6). The application shall also include information detailing the quality assurance process, including a review of the thesis in its preliminary form by qualified academic assessors who have not been involved in supervision or the research in question, at the halfway seminar, or in any other way. There can be no conflict of interest between the external reviewer or members of the examining committee and the doctoral student or any of his or her supervisors (see Chap. 14 Disqualification). Conflict of interest forms must be attached to the registration. If an external reviewer or a member of the examining committee is prevented from attending the public defence, the dean of the faculty can appoint another external reviewer or committee member who will replace him/her. Forms for registration of public defence can be found on the faculty website.

The main rule is that the public defence shall be held as a physical meeting at Karlstad University. Following a decision by the dean, the doctoral defence can in exceptional cases be held online (in whole or in part) or at another higher education institution, if there are special grounds. Special reasons may include that a doctoral student has conducted most of their studies at another higher education institution according to a collaboration agreement, or unforeseen events that prevent a physical meeting, such as a pandemic. For an exception to be granted, it is required that participation in the public defence can also take place digitally from Karlstad University's premises, and that the defence takes place in a scholarly environment that ensures scholarly review and that the technical requirements for such a seminar set-up can be met.

A public defence cannot take place between the Saturday before Midsummer to 15 August, or from 22 December to 10 January.

No later than three weeks before the public defence, the time and place of the public defence shall be announced on the University website and the thesis made publicly available. The periods from the Friday immediately before Midsummer to 15 August and from 22 December to 10 January cannot be included in the three-week notification period. The dean may allow a shorter notification period in case of acute and verified illness or other special circumstances.

The faculty office sends the assessment form for the doctoral thesis and a form confirming fulfilment of all requirements for the doctoral degree to the department's faculty administrator.

8.2.3 Duplication and accessibility of the thesis

At the latest three weeks before the public defence, the printing office shall ensure that one physical copy of the doctoral thesis is delivered to the faculty office, and five physical copies

are delivered to the University Library.⁵⁰ Electronic publication of the doctoral thesis requires the respondent to fill out and sign a publication agreement as mandated by the University Library. Pursuant to legal requirements 1993:1392 (law on legal deposit of electronic documents), the University Printing Office handles the dispatch of legal deposit copies to the legal deposit libraries (the National Library of Sweden and the university libraries in Lund, Stockholm, Uppsala, Linköping, Gothenburg and Umeå). The discipline can distribute copies of the doctoral thesis to other relevant departments in the country at its own expense. The discipline decides how many copies of the doctoral thesis to print. The faculty boards recommend electronic publication instead of distributing hard copies to other departments.

At the time of notification, the thesis must be duplicated and be available at the University in the number of copies necessary to enable the academic community and the public to read the thesis before the public defence.

By the same time, the external reviewer and the members of the examining committee must each receive a copy of the thesis.

8.2.4 Chair

The chair must not have been the doctoral student's supervisor. Usually, the third-cycle examiner takes on this role.

8.2.5 External reviewer

The external reviewer shall at least be a docent (associate professor/reader) unless there are special circumstances, be a specialist in the field, and shall not be employed at Karlstad University. If there are special circumstances, these must be justified. There can be no conflict of interest between the external reviewer on one side and the doctoral student or any of his or supervisors on the other side (see Chap. 14 Disqualification).

8.2.6 Composition of examining committee

The examining committee shall have three or five members. The dean decides on the number of members and their appointment. At least one alternate member shall be appointed.

The members of the committee shall at least be docents (associate professors/readers). In special circumstances, one member who does not meet this requirement may be appointed. If there are special circumstances, these must be justified. There can be no conflict of interest between the external reviewer and the doctoral student or any of his or her supervisors (see Chap. 14 Disqualification).

Unless there are special circumstances, a majority of the members shall be recruited among teachers within the discipline elsewhere than Karlstad University. Members who are employed at Karlstad University should be recruited outside of the circle of colleagues in the subject to which the candidate belongs. If there are special circumstances, these must be justified.

The supervisor and the chair of the proceedings cannot be members of the examining committee.

Karlstad University's gender equality guidelines must be observed when appointing members to the examining committee.

8.2.7 Public defence proceedings

The public defence is an open event and chaired by a person appointed by the dean (usually the third-cycle examiner). There shall be an external reviewer appointed by the dean at the

⁵⁰ Checklist for PhD students – printing and electronic publishing of your doctoral/licentiate thesis (ver.240618), Kau University Library

public defence along with an examining committee.

At the end of the proceedings, members of the audience have the right to ask the respondent questions in the order indicated by the chair.

8.2.8 Grade

The examining committee, specially appointed for each thesis, decides on the grade to be awarded.

One of the grades Fail or Pass shall be awarded in the examination of the doctoral thesis, assessed based on the quality of the thesis and its defence.

8.2.9 Examining committee's meeting and decision

After the public defence, the examining committee decides on the grade. The chair of proceedings, external reviewer, and principal supervisor can be present at the meeting, but cannot partake in the decision. The co-supervisor may also be present, if deemed appropriate.

The committee elects one member to chair the meeting. The committee can make a decision if all members are present. The decision applies that a majority of members agree on. If the thesis is awarded a Pass grade by majority decision, a member is entitled to have a dissenting opinion noted in the minutes without specifying the reason for this. The committee's minutes do not contain any motivation for the committee's or individual member's positions regarding the approval of the thesis.

Should the thesis fail, the committee shall justify their decision, and a member has the right to have a dissenting opinion noted in the minutes along with the reasons for this opinion.

8.2.10 Recording of grade and completion of third-cycle studies (Degree of Doctor)

The completed assessment form for the doctoral thesis and public defence along with a certificate of completed third-cycle studies is given to the administrator who records the grade in the Ladok registry. The documents are then submitted to the faculty office.

8.3 Degree

The studies are concluded with a Degree of Doctor or Degree of Licentiate. A doctoral student can claim a Degree of Licentiate as an intermediate qualification when the doctoral student has completed a section totalling at least 120 credits of studies concluded with a Degree of Doctor. Qualification requirements are specified in the discipline's general study syllabus.

A doctoral student that fulfils the qualification requirements for a Degree of Doctor or Degree of Licentiate shall upon request receive a degree certificate from the University. Karlstad University issues digital degree certificates. The *Diploma Supplement* is an attachment containing a description in English of the studies' content, nature, level, and context in the Swedish educational system. An application form for a degree certificate is available on the University's page about [degree certificates](#), *Application for third-cycle degree certificate*.

A specialised department within Central Services administers certificates and advises students on certificate-related issues.

A rejected application for a degree certificate can be appealed to the Higher Education Appeals Board.

Titles of qualifications

The following licentiate degrees are awarded at Karlstad University:

- Degree of Licentiate of Philosophy in..... (Filosofie licentiatexamen)
- Degree of Licentiate of Philosophy in..... (Ekonomie licentiatexamen)
- Degree of Licentiate of Laws in..... (Juris licentiatexamen)
- Degree of Licentiate of Philosophy in..... (Teknologie licentiatexamen)

The following doctoral degrees are awarded at Karlstad University:

- Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in..... (Filosofie doktorsexamen)
- Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in..... (Ekonomie doktorsexamen)
- Degree of Doctor of Laws in..... (Juris doktorsexamen)
- Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in..... (Teknologie doktorsexamen). ⁵¹

Subject and specialisation in the degree certificate

The discipline to which the doctoral student has been admitted is added as a suffix in the degree certificate.

Example: Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Discipline: Biology

An exception applies to the Degree of Doctor/Licentiate of Laws, which is phrased as follows:

Degree of Doctor of Laws in x (specialisation). Degree of Licentiate of Laws in x (specialisation). ⁵²

9 Graduate schools

Karlstad University's ambition to facilitate interdisciplinary interaction in our research includes third-cycle studies. There is collaboration across subjects and disciplines, for instance in the form of interdisciplinary work in the framework of graduate schools. There is collaboration between [graduate schools at Karlstad University](#), as well as graduate schools nationally and internationally.

A graduate school should contribute to a robust, creative third-cycle study environment in a wider context and provide a stimulating research environment to bolster the doctoral student's learning and development. Graduate school activities should enhance the quality and contents of supervision and studies and be viewed as a resource for doctoral students in addition to being an avenue for social activities.

Karlstad University has established several graduate schools in the arts and social sciences, as well as health, science and technology, and didactics. Graduate schools are established by order of the faculty boards. They constitute a collaborative structure for various disciplines at the University and are centred around a particular theme or problem. Other universities, government agencies, municipalities, or private businesses may be part of the collaboration.

While doctoral students are admitted to a discipline and primarily belong to that discipline, they conduct part of their research within the framework of the graduate school.

The same general provisions apply for graduate school studies as for third-cycle studies. Doctoral students follow their discipline's general study syllabus, but special provisions may apply to doctoral students tied to a specific graduate school. If there are provisions in the

⁵¹ Karlstad University System of Qualifications, C2021/766

⁵² Title of qualification Degree of Doctor of Laws/Degree of Licentiate of Laws, HS 2020/767

general study syllabus of the discipline and from the graduate school, the third-cycle examiner decides what should be included in the third-cycle programme. As a main rule, the discipline's general study syllabus should take precedence over the provisions of the graduate school, as the doctoral student is admitted to the discipline.

Karlstad University collaborates with other higher education institutions through national graduate schools. The intention is for institutions to work together and thus ultimately offer doctoral students the best possible education. There is also international collaboration through international graduate schools.

10 Career support and continuing professional development

Several sections at Karlstad University join forces to provide continuing professional development and career support for researchers. Career support is also available to third-cycle students. Initiatives include:

- Individual and career-related skills development through Karlstad University's in-house transferable skills development package for researchers, CTRIVE® 3.0. For more information: [Grants and Innovation Office \(GIO\)](#)
- Courses in applications of research (4.5 credits) and data management are specifically designed to improve the doctoral student's competitive edge in these areas. For more information: [Grants and Innovation Office \(GIO\)](#)
- A doctoral course in information retrieval and publication strategies (3 credits) covering subjects such as information seeking, evaluating information resources and search results, reference management and strategic scholarly publication, as well as copyright and Open Access. For more information: [Kau doctoral courses](#)
- Higher education pedagogy. For more information: [Kau doctoral courses](#)
- A number of seminars and initiatives for doctoral students are organised regularly. For more information: [HR Office](#)

A discussion with the supervisor and examiner about the doctoral student's post-defence future can take place in conjunction with supervision and ISP discussions.

11 Withdrawal of resources for third-cycle students

If a doctoral student substantially neglects the undertakings specified in the individual study plan, the vice-chancellor can decide to withdraw supervision and other resources from the doctoral student, pursuant to the Higher Education Ordinance.

If a doctoral student substantially neglects his or her undertakings in the individual study plan, the vice-chancellor shall decide that the doctoral student is no longer entitled to supervision and other study resources. Before such a decision is made, the doctoral student and the supervisors shall be given an opportunity to make representations. The case shall be considered on the basis of their reports and any other records available. The assessment shall take into account whether the higher education institution has fulfilled its own undertakings in the individual study plan. A written record of the decision shall be made, which is to include reasons for the decision. Resources may not be withdrawn for any period in which the third-cycle student has been appointed to a doctoral studentship or is receiving

a doctoral grant.⁵³

If study resources have been withdrawn pursuant to Section 30, the doctoral student may, on application to the vice-chancellor, recover his or her entitlement to supervision and other resources. The doctoral student must then demonstrate convincingly, by presenting prospective study results of considerable quality and scope or in some other way, that he or she can fulfil his or her remaining undertakings in the individual study plan.⁵⁴

A withdrawal of resources means that the doctoral student no longer has the right to supervision or to attend courses and seminars. The doctoral student also does not have the right to continued funding through the University. Doctoral studentships are normally fixed-term, initially one or two years extended to a total of four or five years. A doctoral student whose resources have been withdrawn has the right to remain in the University's employ until the contract has expired. There will not be an extension of the contract, however.

The student retains their studentship and may take an examination for completed coursework or submit a research paper for a Degree of Licentiate or a doctoral thesis. Doctoral students who fulfil the requirements for a Degree of Licentiate or Degree of Doctor is still entitled to a degree certificate.

It may also be necessary not to extend a doctoral studentship for other reasons, such as repeated misconduct. The doctoral student should have been made aware of the misconduct and informed of what is expected as well as the possible consequences if it continues, in line with standard procedures for misconduct.

Appeal

A decision to withdraw study resources from a doctoral student and a decision that a student is not to recover these resources can be appealed to the Higher Education Appeals Board.⁵⁵ The appeal must be submitted to the University within three weeks and clearly specify which decision is the subject for the appeal, and what action the appellant would like to see. More information is available on the University's [intranet](#).⁵⁶

12 Disciplinary measures and expulsion

Disciplinary measures for cheating, disruption, and harassment are stipulated in the Higher Education Ordinance.⁵⁷ The disciplinary measures comprise warnings and suspension.

Violations are reported to the vice-chancellor and processed by the person on the disciplinary board who prepared the case. The decision is made by the University's disciplinary board. More information about disciplinary matters is available on the University's [intranet](#).⁵⁸

The Swedish Higher Education Act⁵⁹ and Ordinance on the expulsion of students from higher education allow the expulsion of a student if the student suffers from a mental disorder, abuses alcohol or drugs, or is found guilty of a serious crime.⁶⁰ A central board, the Higher Education Expulsions Board, decides on the matter following a report from the vice-chancellor

⁵³ Chap. 6 Sect. 30 Higher Education Ordinance

⁵⁴ Chap. 6 Sect. 31 Higher Education Ordinance

⁵⁵ Chap. 12 Higher Education Ordinance

⁵⁶ Support & service/Legal counselling/Appeals

⁵⁷ Chap. 10 Higher Education Ordinance

⁵⁸ Our KAU/Central committees/Disciplinary committee and disciplinary matters

⁵⁹ Chap. 4 Sect. 6 Swedish Higher Education Act

⁶⁰ Ordinance on the expulsion of students from higher education, SFS 2007:989.

of the University. Expulsions are processed by the University Legal Affairs Office.

Expulsion from studies means that the doctoral student no longer retains their place on the third-cycle programme.

13 Decision-making mandate for third-cycle studies at Karlstad University

The Swedish Higher Education Act and the Higher Education Ordinance specify the University's decision-making mandates. Many duties and decisions have been delegated to the faculty board, vice-chancellor, or other officials and bodies. Always refer to the University's Rules of Procedure and Delegation of Authority for each specific case. Below is a brief summary of the decision-making mandates of various bodies.

- *The University board* supervises all of the University operations and assumes responsibility for the fulfilment of its mandate. The board's mandate includes decisions about the admission procedure, key directives, and the University's budget.
- *The vice-chancellor* is directly accountable to the board. The vice-chancellor has a mandate in certain overarching third-cycle study matters, such as the grading system or degree regulations. The vice-chancellor also has the mandate to withdraw the right to supervision and other resources from doctoral students. The vice-chancellor has delegated the decision-making mandate in some matters to the faculty board.
- *The faculty board* is responsible for third-cycle studies. An overarching task is the planning, support, and follow-up of research and teaching. The faculty board is responsible for educational quality, internationalisation, and gender equality. The faculty board determines general rules for third-cycle studies, such as general study syllabi and guidelines for the execution of the studies. The faculty board in turn has delegated certain tasks to the dean or committee for third-cycle studies.
- *The Committee for Third-Cycle Studies* approves the course syllabus for the third-cycle studies. At the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the committee approves the admission of doctoral students and appoints supervisors and examiners.
- *The dean* makes decisions regarding the admission of doctoral students, individual study plans, and appoints the examining committee and external reviewer. At the Faculty of Health, Science and Technology, the dean also appoints supervisors and examiners.

Student influence

Students, in this instance doctoral students, shall be entitled to exert influence over the studies. The University shall endeavour to enable students to play an active role in the continued development of courses and study programmes, and have representation in decisions-making or deliberations that affect the studies and situation of the students. For that reason, there are student representatives on the faculty boards, the Board of Teacher Education, and on other drafting and decision-making bodies whose issues include third-cycle student matters. Such elected positions are not included in the third-cycle studies, but are planned within the framework of departmental duties. More substantial assignments may require a leave of absence.⁶¹

Doctoral students have the opportunity to influence their own third-cycle studies by participating in discipline meetings and meetings for doctoral students and supervisors in the

⁶¹ Please refer to SUHF recommendations for extensions of doctoral students' periods of employment and study for certain elected positions.

respective disciplines.

14 Disqualification

Disqualification means that there are special circumstances that may affect the trust in a person's ability to partake in a decision process without bias. The person has a vested interest in the matter that could affect their position.

Possible disqualification on the grounds of bias is frequently considered in third-cycle studies, for instance in the admissions process, funding allocation, approval and changes of an individual study plan, appointment of examiners and examining committees, credit transfer and assessment of professional equivalency, and assessment of examinations and the licentiate and doctoral thesis.

Disqualification protocol is stipulated in the Administrative Procedure Act: ⁶²

A person charged with handling a matter on behalf of a government agency is considered to have a conflict of interest

- 1. if the matter concerns themselves or someone close to them, or if they or someone close to them can expect extraordinary advantage or detriment from the outcome*
- 2. if they or anyone close to them is or has been the legal representative of someone that the matter concerns or of anyone that can expect extraordinary advantage or detriment from the outcome of the matter*
- 3. if they have taken part under the auspices of a subordinate authority in the final handling of a matter concerning the same material issue and thus have already formed an opinion on issues now to be decided on by a superior agency, or*
- 4. if there is some other special circumstance that is likely to undermine confidence in their impartiality in the matter.*

Disqualification shall be disregarded where the question of impartiality is obviously of no importance.

A person who is disqualified may not handle the matter or be present when the matter is decided on. They may, however, take those steps that cannot be made by someone else without an inconvenient delay.

Anyone who knows of any circumstance that could constitute their disqualification is obliged to disclose it on their own motion.

A disqualified person may not participate in preparation, deliberation, assessment, or presentations, or in any way handle the matter in question. Some personnel are normally not subject to these provisions, for instance the registrar or administrator processing the decisions.

Anyone who knows of any circumstance that could constitute their disqualification is obliged to disclose it on their own motion. An issue of disqualification can also be raised by someone else, such as the doctoral student or a colleague. Issues of disqualification should be reported to the immediate superior at the University. If a doctoral student wishes to discuss possible

⁶² Sect. 16–18 Administrative Procedure Act

disqualification, they can turn to the University's legal office.

As a consequence, a replacement has to fill the disqualified person's position. If a person with a conflict of interest is found to have handled a matter without disqualifying themselves, the decision made may in some cases be overturned.

In connection with a licentiate seminar or public defence it is important that there is no conflict of interest between the external reviewer or members of the examining committee and the doctoral student or any of his or her supervisors. There may be no conflict of interest between the examiner and the doctoral student. Both the third-cycle examiner at Karlstad University and the external reviewer and members of the examining committee need to consider and certify that there is no conflict of interest.

- Scholarly collaborations or co-productions within the last five years are grounds for disqualification. This includes co-authored articles, books, and joint applications for research funding.
- If the collaboration is deemed a close collaboration, the window for what is considered a conflict of interest can be longer than five years.
- Exceptions from the five-year rule can be made if it is a collaboration between many participants (multi-center study). This is assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- The relation between supervisor and doctoral student is always considered grounds for disqualification, regardless of time passed.
- It could also be considered a conflict of interest when a person participates in the assessment of a candidate employed at the same department (especially small and medium sized departments) or similar financial unit.
- Any circumstances concerning family members (partners, parents, children, siblings) or other persons with close ties to the doctoral student or his/her supervisor are considered conflicts of interest.
- Obvious friendship, animosity or disagreements are also grounds for disqualification.

In case of uncertainty, contact one of the University's legal officers.

15 Processing of personal data

Karlstad University acts as data controller and processes personal data in compliance with the applicable data protection legislation.

Personal data is retained as long as is necessary based on the purpose of the processing and in accordance with applicable legislation and the Karlstad University information management plan. Some data is processed in cloud services outside the University. The university may transfer personal data to a third country, i.e., a country outside of the EU/EEA when cloud services are used or in matters regarding international research projects.

Personal data in official documents is handled in compliance with the Freedom of the Press Act⁶³ the Archives Act⁶⁴ and provisions as stipulated by the National Archives of Sweden.⁶⁵ If there is no official decision to clear the records, compliance with Archives Act dictates that the information be retained.

This applies to data not processed according to the Ordinance on the Reporting of Studies in

⁶³ The Freedom of the Press Act, (1949:105)

⁶⁴ The Archives Act (1990:782)

⁶⁵ <https://riksarkivet.se/foreskrifter-och-regler>

Higher Education (1993:1153, see below).

Doctoral studentship

The personal data of people employed as doctoral students is processed in various HR system to the degree that is necessary to fulfil the terms in the employment contract and requirements stipulated in laws and collective agreements, and in any other systems required for Karlstad University to fulfil its mandate. Categories of personal data processed include identity information (name, personal identity number, address, phone number, and email), employment type and scope, period of employment, additional assignments and supervisory roles, service planning, side jobs, salary, taxes and social security contributions, absences, medical certificates, labour union memberships, et cetera. Data may be made available to third parties, for example to fulfil legal requirements regarding the reporting of taxes and social security contributions. Data is made available to, for instance, the Swedish Tax Agency, Statistics Sweden, the Swedish Agency for Government Employers, the Swedish Social Insurance Agency, the Swedish Higher Education Authority, the National Government Employee Pensions Board, and labour unions.

A confidentiality assessment is done before data is made available.

Karlstad University is responsible for the filing and processing of personal data. Data is filed to ensure the preservation of information about applicants, completed studies, grades, and degrees awarded. GDPR allows for some instances where data can be made available, such as to Statistics Sweden and funders of research.

Ladok

The doctoral student's data from the application and certain diplomas as well as information about study results will be automatically processed in a student administration system called Ladok. Provisions applicable to the system are specified in the ordinance.⁶⁶

The personal data of each student is stored in the administrative database Ladok (name, personal identity number, address, telephone number and email address) along with information including participation in courses and programmes and examinations, results, grades, transferred credits or recognition of prior experience, and degrees obtained. Ladok also needs to store the information Karlstad University needs to supply to Statistics Sweden.

The ordinance allows for data from these databases to be made available to third parties, e.g., other higher education institutions and the Swedish Board of Student Finance.

Individual study plans

The individual study plan also contains the doctoral student's data. The same rules apply for ISPs as for Ladok (see above).

The doctoral student always receives a copy of the finalised and revised study plans, and of any other decisions in connection to it. Additional information about the student is generally not entered until the next revision.

Karlstad University is responsible for the processing of personal data. Data is processed to fulfil the requirement in the Higher Education Ordinance stipulating that the University shall set individual study plans for each doctoral student.⁶⁷ An approved individual study plan is

⁶⁶ The Ordinance on the Reporting of Studies in Higher Education (1993:1153)

⁶⁷ Chap. 6 Sect. 29 Higher Education Ordinance

considered a public document.

16 Who to contact

For questions that are not directly related to the supervisor, course coordinator, or examiner, the doctoral student's primary point of contact is the discipline's faculty administrator. The administrator can refer you to the right person. Questions concerning the formal part of the third-cycle studies, admissions, individual study plan, rules, etc., can be directed to faculty office staff. Questions concerning employment should be directed to the HR Office.