



GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET  
HANDELSHÖGSKOLAN

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# General Study Plan for Third-Cycle Studies in Business Administration

Leading to a Degree of Doctor

240 higher education credits

**Department of Business Administration**

Adopted by the Faculty Board of the School of Business, Economics and Law 2024-12-04

Valid for third-cycle students admitted from spring semester 2025

This document is a translation of the Swedish original. In event of any discrepancies between the translation and the original the original prevails.

# General study plan for third-cycle studies in Business Administration leading to a degree of Doctor, 240 higher education credits.

This study plan is based on the rules in the Higher Education Ordinance (HF, SFS 1993:100) and in the University of Gothenburg's Rules and regulations for third-cycle studies – “Doktorandreglerna”.

## **1. Aim of the studies**

The programme leads to a doctoral degree in Business Administration. To obtain the degree, the doctoral student must fulfil all the following learning outcomes from the Higher Education Ordinance (SFS 1993:100, Appendix 2 – Degree Ordinance).

### **1.1 Knowledge and understanding**

For the Degree of Doctor, the doctoral student shall:

- demonstrate broad knowledge and systematic understanding of the research field as well as advanced and up-to-date specialised knowledge within a limited area of this field, and
- demonstrate familiarity with research methodology in general and the methods of the specific field of research in particular.

### **1.2 Competence and skills**

For the Degree of Doctor, the doctoral student shall:

- demonstrate the capacity for scholarly analysis and synthesis as well as to review and assess new and complex phenomena, questions at issue and situations autonomously and critically,
- demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate problems with scholarly precision critically, autonomously and creatively, and to plan and use appropriate methods to undertake research and other qualified tasks within pre-determined timeframes and to review and evaluate this work,
- demonstrate through a thesis their ability to make a significant contribution to the formation of knowledge through their own research,
- demonstrate the ability in both national and international contexts to present and discuss research and research findings authoritatively in speech and writing and in dialogue with the academic community and society at large,
- demonstrate the ability to identify the need for further knowledge, and
- demonstrate the capacity to contribute to social development and support the learning of others both through research and education and in other qualified professional contexts.

### **1.3 Judgement and approach**

For the Degree of Doctor, the doctoral student shall:

- demonstrate intellectual autonomy and disciplinary rectitude as well as the ability to make assessments of research ethics, and
- demonstrate specialised insight into the possibilities and limitations of science, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used.

### **1.4 Ensuring the fulfilment of objectives**

Objectives are examined through a combination of courses and a thesis. The Individual Study Plan (see point 6) specifies how attainment of learning outcomes.

## **2. Admission requirements**

To be eligible for admission to third-cycle studies in Business Administration, the applicant must meet both the general and specific admission requirements. In addition, the applicant must also be able to fulfil the programme learning outcomes (HF Chapter 7 Section 35).

### **2.1 General admission requirements**

Applicants must meet the following admission requirements for third-cycle studies:

- 1) Have a second-cycle degree,
- 2) Have passed courses of at least 240 credits of which at least 60 credits are second-cycle course, or
- 3) Have substantially equivalent knowledge in some other way, acquired in Sweden or abroad.

### **2.2 Specific entry requirements**

Admission to third-cycle studies in business administration requires at least 90 credits in business administration. These credits must include a degree project comprising at least 15 credits or the equivalent. An applicant who has acquired essentially equivalent knowledge in some other way in Sweden or abroad, also meets the specific entry requirements.

## **3. Admission and selection**

Admission to the third-cycle studies in Business Administration is normally granted following a special call for applications.

Selection between qualified applicants who meet the requirements for the general and specific entry requirements is made based on their ability to benefit from the programme.

The assessment criteria applied in the selection are:

- The applicant's documented subject knowledge relevant to the research field.
- The applicant's documented knowledge of scientific theory and method.
- The applicant's analytical ability, evidenced by a scientific report, thesis, degree project or similar.
- The applicant's ability to take responsibility for and manage extensive projects, evidenced by a scientific report, thesis, degree project completed within given time frames, or otherwise.

An overall assessment is made of grades, thesis and research interest. Interviews and tests may be conducted.

Admission and selection will consider the department's supervision resources in the area of the doctoral student's research specialisation. Only applicants who can be offered supervision and acceptable study conditions as well as secured study funding for the entire programme can be admitted.

Decisions on admission to doctoral studies are made by the head of department after deliberation in the department's Research and Doctoral Studies Committee (FFK).

## **4. Structure and content of the programme**

The programme consists of 60 credits of courses and a thesis of 180 credits, i.e. a total of 240 credits. It is given in the form of courses, seminars and supervision.

### **4.1 Courses**

The courses for the doctoral degree includes a total of 60 credits. The compulsory courses are 20 credits and the elective courses are 40 credits.

#### **Compulsory courses, 20 credits**

The compulsory courses include 20 credits and are normally taken during the first two semesters of the programme. Here, the doctoral student acquires theoretical and methodological knowledge and gain an insight into selected parts of the development of economic research. The doctoral student also acquires knowledge of the different parts of the research process as well as knowledge of scientific rigour, research ethics, and the role of science in society.

#### **Elective courses, 40 credits**

The elective courses include both in-depth study of business administration and a more individual in-depth study directly linked to the doctoral student's own thesis project. The courses are chosen by the doctoral student in consultation with the supervisor and the doctoral examiner. Elective courses are chosen from the courses offered by the department, university, other higher education institutions or institutes.

The course Teaching and Learning in Higher Education 1: Basic Course (PIL101), 5 credits, is compulsory for doctoral students who teach and is offered to all doctoral students at the department. The course can be included in the programme as an elective course.

Courses participants receive either the grades fail or pass. Grading for third-cycle courses is done by the appointed course examiner or doctoral examiner. If there are special reasons, an individual undertaking can be credited as part of elective courses.

### **4.2 Doctoral thesis**

As part of their studies, doctoral students must write, present and defend a thesis. The thesis is 180 credits. It may take the form of a monograph or a compilation thesis. The latter consists of several separate studies presented in article form and an introduction - often referred to as a 'kappa'.

The doctoral thesis must be based on independent scientific work. The thesis may include a previously approved licentiate thesis. This work then forms part of the thesis work and must be defended at the public defence.

The thesis shall document the doctoral student's ability to independently address a research question in the subject area in a scientific manner, and otherwise demonstrate that the doctoral student has achieved the learning outcomes linked to the writing of the thesis. The doctoral student's work on the thesis is followed up at three compulsory seminars, where evaluation of goal fulfilment is made. For a compilation thesis, independence is demonstrated by the fact that the qualitatively most central parts are sole-authored. If there are co-authors in any part of the thesis, the main supervisor must certify in writing what is the doctoral student's contribution.

Work on the thesis includes, for example, that the doctoral student becomes familiar with existing literature and methods, collects and analyses empirical data, and writes the thesis. To the extent that it

is beneficial – in dialogue with the main supervisor and examiner – courses in addition to the compulsory 60 credits can form part of the work on the thesis.

### **Planning report seminar**

The doctoral student shall prepare, present and defend a planning report at a planning report seminar at the department. In addition, each doctoral student should, if possible, be discussant on another doctoral student's planning report. The planning report is the first step in the thesis work. The report is reviewed by a discussant (at least a PhD) selected by the main supervisor. After the planning report seminar, the main supervisor shall, in consultation with the doctoral student, draw up a plan for how the thesis work will be realised.

### **Mid-way seminar**

When the main supervisor and the doctoral examiner assess that 50% of the thesis work has been completed, the doctoral student shall present their thesis manuscript at a mid-way seminar. The manuscript is reviewed by a discussant (at least a PhD) selected by the main supervisor. After the mid-way seminar, the main supervisor prepares a report that shows how the thesis work will lead to fulfilment of learning outcomes.

### **Internal final seminar**

The public review at the defence is preceded by an internal review. The manuscript is reviewed by a discussant (at least associate professor) selected by the supervisor. The mandatory internal final seminar should be held when the main supervisor and the doctoral examiner jointly consider that the thesis is almost ready for public defence. After the internal final seminar. The main supervisor documents to what extent the student meet learning outcomes, and make a plan for how to remedy any remaining shortcomings.

### **Defence of the thesis**

The doctoral thesis must be defended at a public defence. Prior to the presentation of the thesis, 60 credits, i.e. all courses, must be completed. A specially appointed opponent shall examine the doctoral thesis at the public defence. An examining committee assesses the thesis and its defence. The examining committee is appointed in accordance with current regulations.

A doctoral thesis is graded as fail or pass. The examining committee decides by majority vote. If the thesis is assessed as failed, this must be justified in writing.

A degree certificate is issued after the requirements for the degree have been met and upon application by the doctoral student. Further instructions regarding doctoral thesis, public defence etc. can be found in GU's doctoral student rules and at the department.

### **Other compulsory elements**

Doctoral students employed at the department shall participate in other doctoral students' compulsory seminars at the department, as well as the department's licentiate seminars and doctoral defence. As a minimum, this shall be done in the seminars given in the student's subfield. Employed doctoral students shall also actively participate in the department's general seminar activities. At least once a year, each doctoral student shall present his/her own work at a seminar, either locally, at another university or at a scientific conference.

### **4.3 Timetable**

The doctoral programme lasts four years. Full time doctoral students are required to complete mandatory seminars in accordance with this timetable.

- Planning report seminar: No later than semester 2
- Mid way seminar: No later than semester 5
- Final internal seminar: by semester 7
- Thesis defence: No later than semester 8

Departures from this plan may occur due to, for example, departmental duties, student union work, parental leave or illness. All departures from the timetable must be documented and motivated in the individual study plan.

## **5. Supervision**

The main supervisor – at least associate professor – must be appointed by the head of department no later than at the start of the doctoral programme and be specified in the individual study plan. The main supervisor must be employed at the Department of Business Administration, University of Gothenburg, and have completed the university's doctoral supervision programme or an equivalent programme at another higher education institution. In addition, at least one assistant supervisor shall be appointed. When appointing a supervisor, the doctoral student's wishes shall be considered.

The doctoral student has the right to change both main supervisor and the assistant supervisor. The request must be in writing and addressed to the head of department.

The doctoral student shall be given the opportunity for continuous contact with the supervisors for discussion and feedback during the progress of the thesis work.

A doctoral examiner shall be appointed for each doctoral student. The doctoral examiner shall, in consultation with the supervisor and the doctoral student, draw up and revise the individual study plan.

## **6. Individual study plan**

An individual study plan shall be drawn up for each doctoral student. The individual study plan shall document both plans for and completed parts of the programme. The study plan serves as a guiding instrument for the entire programme and ensures that the programme is carried out and followed up effectively.

The responsibility for making the study plan an active document lies primarily with the doctoral student and the main supervisor. The drawing up and revision of the individual study plan shall be done in consultation between the doctoral student, supervisor and doctoral examiner.

The individual study plan shall be revised at least once a year. Revision shall also take place if required by changes that have occurred in the individual doctoral student's programme and at the doctoral student's request. An individual study plan shall be established for the doctoral student no later than two months after admission to the doctoral programme and shall be drawn up in accordance with the university-wide template for individual study plans.

## **7. Transitional rules**

Doctoral students admitted to the doctoral programme at the Department of Business Administration may, by decision of the head of department, transfer to this study plan. Such a transfer is not possible for doctoral students admitted before 2007-07-01.

## **8. Additional information**

A doctoral student who originally planned to complete his or her studies with a doctoral degree shall be able to complete his or her studies with a licentiate degree if the student has passed at least 120 credits and otherwise meets the requirements for a licentiate degree.