



**GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET  
HANDELSHÖGSKOLAN**

Dnr U 2016/724

## **General Syllabus for Third-Cycle Programme in Economics**

**2016**

The general syllabus is approved by the faculty board of the School of Business, Economics and Law, December 15, 2016. The programme comprises 240 higher education credits and leads to the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

### **ECONOMICS AS A SUBJECT AREA**

As a subject area, economics falls in the domain of the social sciences and focuses on how resources are used in a society and what effects various economic-political measures give rise to. Economists use theory and empirical methods to study behaviour and economic relationships at micro and macro level.

### **PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES**

The central aim of the programme is to give the third-cycle student the knowledge and skills required to be able to conduct research autonomously and contribute to knowledge development in the field of economics. The student's doctoral thesis shall constitute a qualified contribution to the scientific discussion and development of knowledge in the subject area. Upon completion of the programme, the student shall be able to utilise his/her training in research, development and investigatory work in both the private and public spheres.

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, the third-cycle student shall:

- Demonstrate broad knowledge in economics, a systematic understanding of the field of research as well as deep and up-to-date specialist knowledge in a defined part of the research field.
- Demonstrate familiarity with scientific methods in general and with methods in the specific field of research in particular.
- Be able to conduct scholarly analysis and synthesis of high quality as well as to review and assess new and complex phenomena, issues and situations autonomously and critically.
- Demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate issues with scholarly precision critically, autonomously and creatively, to plan and use appropriate methods to undertake research and other qualified tasks within predetermined time frames and to review and evaluate such work.
- Demonstrate through a doctoral thesis the ability to make a significant contribution to the development of knowledge in the field of economics through his/her own research.

- Demonstrate the ability in both national and international contexts to present and discuss research and research findings authoritatively in speech and writing and in dialogue with the academic community and society in general.
- Demonstrate the ability to identify the need for further knowledge.
- Demonstrate the capacity to contribute to social development and support the learning of others both through research and education and in some other qualified professional capacity.
- Demonstrate intellectual autonomy and disciplinary rectitude as well as the ability to make assessments of research ethics.
- Demonstrate specialised insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used.

For the Degree of Doctor the student must have been awarded pass grades for third-cycle courses corresponding to 105 higher education credits as well as for a research thesis (doctoral thesis) corresponding to 135 credits.

## **ENTRY REQUIREMENTS**

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

A person meets the **general entry requirements** for third-cycle studies if he/she:

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

A person meets the **specific entry requirements** (Swedish Higher Education Ordinance Ch. 7, Sec. 40) for third-cycle studies in economics if he/she:

1. has satisfied the requirements for courses comprising at least 90 higher education credits of coursework in economics, or
2. has satisfied the requirements for courses comprising at least 30 higher education credits in economics awarded in the second cycle, or
3. has acquired substantially equivalent knowledge in some other way in Sweden or abroad.

## **APPLICATION AND SELECTION**

### **Application**

Applications for the third-cycle programme in economics shall be submitted to the Department of Economics by dates specified and according to instructions provided.

Documented qualifications and independent projects indicating the capacity of the applicant shall be enclosed with the application.

### **Selection** (Swedish Higher Education Ordinance Ch. 7, Sec. 41)

In selecting between applicants who meet the entry requirements, their ability to benefit from the programme shall be taken into account. The primary assessment criteria in this respect are:

- The applicant's analytical skills, verified through scientific reports, essays, degree projects or other such work.
- The applicant's documented knowledge within the subject field and in relation to scientific theory and methods.

An overall assessment is made of the applicant's grades, independent project and research interests. Interviews may be arranged.

Selection and admission are contingent on the Department's supervisory resources within the applicants' respective research fields. Only applicants who can be offered supervision and otherwise acceptable conditions for study as well as a funding for the full duration of the programme can be granted admission.

Admission decisions are made by the Head of Department following preparation in the Department's research and third-cycle programme board (FFUK-NEK).

### **STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE PROGRAMME**

The programme comprises 240 higher education credits (105 higher education credits of coursework and 135 higher education credits of thesis work) and normally takes eight semesters to complete (assuming that the student has sufficient pre-existing knowledge, studies on a full-time basis and utilises the instruction provided in an efficient manner).

#### **Coursework**

The first year of the programme consists of theory and methods courses with a focus on mathematics, microeconomics, macroeconomics and econometrics. All first-year courses, together corresponding to 60 higher education credits, shall normally be completed in this year and are compulsory. A first-year course may under special circumstances be replaced with another course after approval by the student examiner.

The second year of the programme normally consists of a course that gives an introduction to theory of knowledge and discusses a number of practical issues related to the upcoming thesis work. The student learns about the different parts of the research process, scientific rectitude, research ethics and the role of science in society. The student must also complete coursework enabling him/her to broaden or deepen his/her knowledge within the field of economics. Elective courses are primarily offered in the Department's strongest areas, which include behavioural economics, environmental economics, development economics, game

theory, labour economics, public economics and econometrics. The exact courses offered in a certain year may depend on the Department's resources and/or available course participants. Courses in other areas may also be offered, according to demand and available resources. The Department also has an ambition to offer a limited number of short courses, usually in connection with visits by external researchers.

Third-cycle students in economics may, following approval by the supervisors and student examiner, complete courses arranged as independent studies. The purpose of these courses is to enable the student to deepen his/her knowledge within a particular research field.

Third-cycle students in economics may complete one or several courses at another higher education institution as decided by the student examiner. Examination can in these cases be arranged either at the other higher education institution according to the procedures normally applied for students enrolled at that institution or as determined in consultation with the student's supervisors and examiner.

The doctoral student may be credited for previously completed higher education. Decisions related to transfer of credits are made by the Head of Department following an individual application submitted by the doctoral student. A transfer of credits shall be linked to a corresponding decision regarding a reduction of the student's period of funding. The reduction shall be documented in the individual study plan.

A course in teaching and learning in higher education corresponding to a maximum of 5 higher education credits may be applied towards the degree.

The coursework is determined by the student in consultation with his/her supervisors and examiner.

The third-cycle student is expected to primarily complete coursework in the beginning of the programme. At least 50 higher education credits of coursework should be completed in the first year. At least 90 higher education credits of coursework should be completed in the first two years. Students who fall short of this requirement must as soon as possible establish a special plan in consultation with his/her examiner for how this problem can be solved.

The student's course grades are determined by his/her examiner, using the grading scale Fail (U) and Pass (G). The examiner's grading may be based on oral examinations and assessments of written assignments. The mode of examination is selected by the examiner in consultation with the teacher(s) involved.

### **Doctoral thesis**

The doctoral thesis shall be designed as a compilation of 3-4 scholarly papers (compilation thesis). At least one of the papers must be authored by the student alone. If a doctoral thesis includes a co-authored paper, the application for the public defence thereof must include a specification of each author's contribution. The specification must be signed by the doctoral student, the co-authors and the student examiner, and is intended to inform the faculty examiner, the examination committee and the public about the work behind the thesis. A

previously examined licentiate thesis may be included in a doctoral thesis. This work will then form part of the thesis work and is to be defended accordingly.

The quality of the research presented in the doctoral thesis must be high enough to qualify for publishing in international scientific journals. However, the student is not required to have had the papers accepted for publication at the time of the public defence.

If the doctoral thesis is written in a language other than Swedish, a Swedish summary must be included and vice versa. A summarising chapter of the thesis (often called *kappa* in Swedish) is not required.

After keeping the completed thesis available at the University Library for at least three weeks of a regular autumn or spring semester, the doctoral thesis must be assessed and defended at a public defence event. The assessment is led by a faculty examiner (*opponent*) appointed by the Dean.

Following the public defence, the doctoral thesis is assigned one of the grades Pass (G) or Fail (U). The grade is determined by an examination committee appointed by the Dean on recommendation by the Department of Economics.

### **Supervision**

At least two supervisors, of whom at least one must be at the level of reader/associate professor (*docent*) or above, are to be appointed by the Head of Department within one month of the admission decision. The supervisors shall be identified in the individual study plan. One of them is to be appointed principal supervisor. When the supervisors are appointed, the third-cycle student's preferences are to be taken into consideration. At least one of the supervisors must have completed the University's training in supervision of third-cycle students or an equivalent programme at another higher education institution. The supervisors are jointly responsible to ensure that the student is offered the best possible supervision.

In connection with the transition from coursework to thesis writing, which usually occurs at the end of the second year, a new assessment is made regarding which supervisors will be most appropriate considering the focus of the student's doctoral thesis. This provision should be understood in relation to the fact that third-cycle students in economics usually do not determine a focus for their doctoral thesis until most of the coursework has been completed. At this point it is customary to replace one or several supervisors with new ones with specialist knowledge related to the focus of the thesis. When appointing new supervisors, the Head of Department considers the third-cycle student's preferences to the greatest possible extent.

The student is to be offered continuous contact with the supervisors for discussion and feedback during the progression of the thesis work. Each student is entitled to a minimum of 288 hours of supervision over the course of his/her total study period. This figure includes necessary work before and after the actual meetings with the student.

The third-cycle student has the right to change any of the supervisors. The request is to be in writing and shall be presented to the Head of Department.

### **Seminars**

The third-cycle student is required to attend seminars on various topics within the field of economics. The Department organises a relatively large number of seminars with external speakers every semester. Special seminars focusing on for example financial economics, development economics, environmental economics and health economics are also arranged, as are workshops where researchers at the Department, including third-cycle students, present their current research. Each third-cycle student must attend at least 12 seminars per school year, although a considerably higher rate of participation is normally recommended. Active participation, including critical assessment, is encouraged.

The Department has allocated funding to enable third-cycle students to participate in national and international research conferences and present their research. These types of activities are to be included in the individual study plan.

### **Follow-up**

After each semester, the student examiner confers with the supervisors and third-cycle students for the purpose of following the students' progression in relation to the programme objectives. In addition, the individual study plans are to be reviewed and updated at least once a year (see below).

At the end of each school year, a workshop is arranged where all third-cycle students except those who are in their first year of the programme present research ideas and/or research results. If space allows, first-year students can also be invited to present ideas. All staff engaging in research at the Department are invited to attend the workshop.

In the third and fourth year of the programme, the students are expected to present their research continuously. A distinction is made between seminars in step 1 and 2. Step 1 seminars are rather informal, and their main purpose is to facilitate discussion of the students' research ideas, although presentation of preliminary research findings is also encouraged. At step 2 seminars, the third-cycle student is expected to be able to present a well-defined research question, a developed method, and research findings. Each third-cycle student is in normal cases expected to give two step 1 seminars during the third year of the programme and two step 2 seminars during the fourth year. When the supervisors estimate that 50 % of a student's thesis work has been completed, the student is expected to present a progress report to the supervisors' committee. A final review seminar, where the student's thesis work is reviewed, is to be held a few months prior to the estimated date of the public defence.

## **TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS**

The course credit requirement for PhD students admitted before 2016 is 120 credits whereas the thesis amounts to 120 credits.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### *Individual study plan*

Based on the course syllabus and course offerings, the third-cycle student is to plan the coming year's studies and thesis work together with his/her supervisors. An individual study plan is established to this end. The individual study plan must be established no later than two months after admission to third-cycle studies and must thereafter be revised at least once a year. This plan shall contain the undertakings made by the doctoral student and the Department as well as a timetable for the student's completion of the study programme. The individual study plan shall specify:

- The focus of the thesis work
- The examiner appointed
- The supervisors appointed as well as the extent, availability and forms of supervision planned.
- Coursework
- Time schedule and funding plan
- The third-cycle student's responsibilities in terms of teaching and administrative work at the Department, as well as how the student will be remunerated for these duties.

### *Licentiate degree*

Third-cycle students admitted to a doctoral programme have the right to conclude their studies with a licentiate degree if they have completed at least 120 higher education credits of the programme and meet all other applicable requirements. The 120 higher education credits required for a licentiate degree consist of coursework corresponding to 60 higher education credits and thesis work corresponding to 60 higher education credits.

For the Degree of Licentiate, the third-cycle student must:

- Demonstrate thorough knowledge in the field of economics, a systematic understanding of the research field as well as advanced and up-to-date specialised knowledge in a limited area of this field.
- Demonstrate familiarity with research methodology in general and the methods relevant in the field of economics in particular.
- Be able to conduct scholarly analysis and synthesis of high quality as well as to review and assess new and complex phenomena, issues and situations autonomously and critically.
- Demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate issues with scholarly precision critically, autonomously and creatively, to plan and use appropriate methods to undertake research and other qualified tasks within predetermined time frames and to review and evaluate such work.

- Demonstrate the ability in both national and international contexts to present and discuss research and research findings authoritatively in speech and writing and in dialogue with the academic community and society in general.
- Demonstrate the ability to identify the need for further knowledge.
- Demonstrate the capacity to contribute to social development and support the learning of others both through research and education and in some other qualified professional capacity.
- Demonstrate the ability to make assessments of ethical aspects of research.
- Demonstrate insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used.

For the Degree of Licentiate, the student must have been awarded pass grades for third-cycle courses corresponding to 60 higher education credits as well as for a research thesis (licentiate thesis) corresponding to 60 higher education credits.