

General syllabus for third-cycle courses and study programmes in

POLITICAL SCIENCE

Statskunskap

This syllabus was approved on 14 June 2007 (reg. no. CF 62-256/2007)^{1, 2}. It was last amended on 19 October 2022 (reg. no. ORU 2022/02080).

By virtue of the Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 26 (1993:100), Örebro University prescribes the following.

1 Subject description

Political science studies various political phenomena. Core concepts are politics, government, democracy, power and legitimacy. Political science at Örebro has a tradition of theoretical and methodological openness with a diversity in terms of the research problems selected for study. Political theory, analytical approaches and research methods are basic cornerstones of the political science doctoral programme. A doctoral student on the programme shall be able to select the topic for and focus of their thesis based on a broad knowledge of the discipline's various specialisations and research perspectives, without losing the connection to its classic research problems, concepts and theories. Political science research at Örebro University is to a great degree focusing on understanding and explaining processes of social change and reform of high relevance to how democracy as a system works and changes but also to the regeneration of democracy.

2 Outcomes

The intended learning outcomes for the award of the degree, the qualitative targets, are evident from [annex 1](#) to this syllabus. The different components of the third-cycle study programme shall together equip the doctoral student to meet all intended learning outcomes³. The intended learning outcomes are referred to in more detail in the degree requirements in sections 5 and 6.

¹ Faculty Board of Humanities and Social Sciences

² The English translation of this general syllabus was last amended on 10 November 2022.

³ In the Swedish higher education system, and in accordance with the terminology recommended by the Swedish Council for Higher Education, courses and study programmes at the doctoral level are referred to as *third-cycle courses and study programmes*. In this document, the terms *doctoral* and *third-cycle* are used interchangeably as prefixes to terms related to studies at the doctoral level and they should therefore be considered synonymous [translator's comment].

3 Admission to the programme – entry requirements and selection etc.

Provisions on entry requirements and selection can be found in [annex 2](#) to this syllabus. For information on admission in other respects, see the admissions regulations for Örebro University.

4 Programme organisation – general information⁴

There are two types of third-cycle, or doctoral, study programmes – one concluding with the doctoral degree (240 credits, corresponding to four years of full-time study) and one concluding with the licentiate degree (120 credits, corresponding to two years of full-time study).

The programmes mainly consist of courses and the writing of a doctoral or licentiate thesis. The programme components are assessed by means of course examination and the public defence of the thesis respectively. The doctoral student is expected to take an active part in seminars and other auxiliary components during their period of study. The student is further recommended to take advantage of the opportunities offered to attend guest lectures etc. at the university, and to attend and contribute at national and international conferences.

For each doctoral student, a minimum of two supervisors will be appointed, supporting the student during their studies⁵. One of them will be nominated principal supervisor. The detailed organisation of the programme shall be determined in an individual study plan.

In addition to the requirements laid down in this general syllabus, there may be special requirements for the doctoral student's programme, such as courses that are compulsory within the framework of a research school, which must be specified in the individual study plan. The credit distribution between courses/examinations and thesis should nevertheless be in accordance with the programme organisation as laid down in this general syllabus.

Credit overview

Overview of programme organisation and degree requirements	Courses/examinations, credits		Thesis, no. of credits	Total no. of credits
	Compulsory	Elective		
Doctoral degree	0	75	165	240
Licentiate degree	0	52.5	67.5	120

⁴ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Sections 4, 5, 28 and 29 and local guidelines on the organisation of third-cycle courses and study programmes

⁵ The Higher Education Ordinance stipulation that at least two supervisors be appointed for each doctoral student does not apply to doctoral students who commenced their studies before 1 July 2007. Instead, the older provision of at least one supervisor applies (point 18, transitional provisions of SFS 2006:1053).

5 Degree requirements for the Degree of Doctor, 240 credits

For the Degree of Doctor, the doctoral student must

- have received a passing grade in the examinations⁶ of the 75 credits generated by the courses listed below,
- have received a passing grade on a scholarly dissertation (doctoral thesis) corresponding to 165 credits. The thesis is to be defended orally at a public defence event⁷.

Which course/courses a doctoral student shall take is determined based on an assessment of what courses will enable them to meet the intended learning outcomes. The doctoral student plans, in consultation with the supervisor, which courses should be part of their programme. The selection is then laid down in the individual study plan.

Courses, total of 75 credits

Block I: Political theory and analytical approaches, 15 credits

The courses included in this block shall aim at both a general width and a specialisation within the subject field. The courses and examinations shall refer to outcomes D1, D3, D7, D9 and D10, annex 1.

Block II: Philosophy of science and research methods, 25-30 credits

The courses included in this block shall aim at both a general width and a specialisation within the subject field. The courses and examinations shall refer to outcomes D2, D3, D4, D9 and D10, annex 1.

The courses must include at least one course on the philosophy of science of at least 5 credits, one course on quantitative methods of at least 5 credits, one course on qualitative methods of at least 5 credits, and one course on research ethics of at least 5 credits.

Block III: Courses aiming for specific and specialised knowledge within the field selected for the thesis, 30-35 credits

The courses and examinations shall refer to outcomes D1 and D2, annex 1. The block may also refer to the part of outcome 8 that refers to supporting the learning of others, with a maximum of 7.5 credits, if the doctoral student would choose to take courses on teaching and learning in higher education.

Doctoral thesis and public defence, 165 credits

At the public defence event, the assessment of the doctoral thesis and the public defence thereof shall refer to all intended learning outcomes specified for the award of the doctoral degree, annex 1.

⁶ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 32

⁷ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Sections 5 and 33

6 Degree requirements for the Degree of Licentiate, 120 credits

The licentiate degree is the degree awarded to those who have been admitted to and successfully completed a licentiate programme. Students who have been admitted to the programme concluding with the doctoral degree have the right to apply for the award of a licentiate degree, as a half-way degree⁸. The degree requirements in this section apply to the licentiate degree both as a final and as a half-way degree.

For the licentiate degree, the doctoral student must

- have received a passing grade in the examinations⁹ of the 52.5 credits generated by the courses listed below,
- have received a passing grade on a scholarly paper (licentiate thesis) corresponding to 67.5 credits¹⁰.

Courses, total of 52.5 credits

Block I: Political theory and analytical approaches, 15 credits

The courses included in this block shall aim at both a general width and a specialisation within the subject field. The courses and examinations shall refer to outcomes D1, D3, D7, D9 and D10, annex 1¹¹.

Block II: Research methods, 15-20 credits

The courses included in this block shall aim at both a general width and a specialisation within the subject field. The courses and examinations shall refer to outcomes D2, D3, D4, D9 and D10, annex 1. The courses must include at least one course on quantitative methods of at least 5 credits, one course on qualitative methods of at least 5 credits, and one course on research ethics of at least 5 credits.

Block III: Courses aiming for specific and specialised knowledge within the field selected for the thesis, 17.5-22.5 credits

The courses and examinations shall refer to outcomes D1 and D2, annex 1.

Licentiate thesis, 67.5 credits

On the examination of the licentiate thesis, the assessment shall refer to all intended learning outcomes specified for the award of the licentiate degree, annex 1.

7 Further information

Further information about provisions for doctoral study programmes can be found on the university website. Documents there include the admissions regulations for Örebro University and other information on national and local regulations.

⁸ Örebro University's local regulations on qualifications

⁹ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 32

¹⁰ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 5

¹¹ Since the licentiate degree may constitute a half-way degree on the road to a doctoral degree, the courses intended for a licentiate degree should, in conformity with the courses intended for a doctoral degree, be linked to the outcomes for the doctoral degree, see further in the guidelines for general syllabuses for third-cycle courses and study programmes.

Entry-into-force and transitional provisions

This general syllabus shall be in effect from 1 July 2007.

Doctoral students who have commenced their studies before 1 July 2007

Doctoral students who have commenced their studies on the programme before 1 July 2007 shall continue their studies according to the new provisions for third-cycle courses and study programmes. As a principal rule, the doctoral students will be awarded their qualification from the new programme¹².

Amendments to the general syllabus approved by the Vice-Chancellor on 19 October 2010 shall take effect on 1 January 2011. These are a result of amendments to the Higher Education Ordinance, but do not lead to any factual alterations in the general syllabus.

Amendments to the general syllabus approved on 12 June 2014 shall take effect on 1 August 2014. These amendments refer to an adaptation of the general syllabus to the new template, through which, among other things, the different components of the programme are more clearly linked to the different intended learning outcomes (primarily sections 5 and 6). In connection with this, changes have also been made to the subject description (section 1) and the degree requirements (sections 5 and 6).

Doctoral students already admitted to the programme shall complete their studies in accordance with the previous degree requirements. If requested by a doctoral student and it is deemed appropriate, provisions may be made in the individual study plan for the student to complete their studies in accordance with the new degree requirements.

Amendments to the general syllabus approved by the faculty boards on 3, 4 and 12 September 2019 shall take effect on 1 October 2019. The decision does not entail any changes in substance.

Amendments to the general syllabus on 19 October 2022 shall take effect on 1 November 2022. Doctoral students already admitted to the programme shall complete their studies in accordance with the previous degree requirements. If requested by a doctoral student and it is deemed appropriate, provisions may be made in the individual study plan for the student to complete their studies in accordance with the new degree requirements.

¹² Point 1, transitional provisions for SFS 2006:1053

Outcomes¹³

Outcomes for the DEGREE OF DOCTOR For the Degree of Doctor, the third-cycle student shall	Outcomes for the DEGREE OF LICENTIATE For a Degree of Licentiate, the third-cycle student shall
<i>Knowledge and understanding</i>	<i>Knowledge and understanding</i>
D1 demonstrate broad knowledge and systematic understanding of the research field as well as advanced and up-to-date specialised knowledge in a limited area of this field, and	L1 demonstrate knowledge and understanding in the field of research including current specialist knowledge in a limited area of this field as well as specialised knowledge of research methodology in general and the methods of the specific field of research in particular.
D2 demonstrate familiarity with research methodology in general and the methods of the specific field of research in particular.	L2 (for the equivalent to D2, see L1, second part)
<i>Competence and skills</i>	<i>Competence and skills</i>
D3 demonstrate the capacity for scholarly analysis and synthesis as well to review and assess new and complex phenomena, issues and situations autonomously and critically,	L3 (no direct equivalent to D3)
D4 demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate issues with scholarly precision critically, autonomously and creatively, and to plan and use appropriate methods to undertake research and other qualified tasks within predetermined time frames and to review and evaluate such work,	L4 demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate issues with scholarly precision critically, autonomously and creatively, and to plan and use appropriate methods to undertake a limited piece of research and other qualified tasks within predetermined time frames in order to contribute to the formation of knowledge as well as to evaluate this work,
D5 demonstrate through a dissertation the ability to make a significant contribution to the formation of knowledge through his or her own research,	L5 (no direct equivalent to D5, refer however to L4, second part)
D6 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,	L6 demonstrate the ability in both national and international contexts to present and discuss research and research findings in speech and writing and in dialogue with the academic community and society in general, and
D7 demonstrate the ability to identify the need for further knowledge, and	L7 (comp. L11)
D8 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.	L8 demonstrate the skills required to participate autonomously in research and development work and to work autonomously in some other qualified capacity.
<i>Judgement and approach</i>	<i>Judgement and approach</i>
D9 demonstrate intellectual autonomy and disciplinary rectitude as well as the ability to make assessments of research ethics, and	L9 demonstrate the ability to make assessments of ethical aspects of his or her own research,
D10 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.	L10 demonstrate insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used, and
	L11 demonstrate the ability to identify the personal need for further knowledge and take responsibility for his or her ongoing learning (comp. D7).

¹³ Extract from the Qualifications ordinance, annex 2, Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100)

Admission to research studies – entry requirements

1 Admission requirements – Higher Education Ordinance

The Higher Education Ordinance stipulates that the number of doctoral students that may be admitted by the university may not exceed the number that can be offered supervision and otherwise acceptable conditions for study and whose studies are funded pursuant to the provisions in the Higher Education Ordinance¹⁴.

The requirements for admission to third-cycle courses and study programmes are that the applicant

1. meets the general and specific entry requirements that the university may have laid down, and
2. is considered in other respects to have the ability required to benefit from the course or study programme¹⁵.

2 Entry requirements

2.1 General entry requirements

A person meets the general entry requirements for third-cycle courses and study programmes if they

1. have been awarded a second-cycle qualification,
2. have satisfied the requirements for courses comprising at least 240 credits of which at least 60 credits were awarded in the second-cycle, or
3. have 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 grounds¹⁶.

Transitional provisions

A person with *credits or qualifications from undergraduate programmes under the previous higher education system* corresponding to the entry requirements above will also be eligible¹⁷. Exemptions from the entry requirements may be made also in these cases, if there are special grounds¹⁸.

¹⁴ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 7, Section 34

¹⁵ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 7, Section 35

¹⁶ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 7, Section 39

¹⁷ Point 10, transitional provisions for SFS 2006:1053

¹⁸ Since the end of June 2015, the previous transitional provision Point 11 for SFS 2006:1053 is no longer in force.

2.2 Specific entry requirements

A person meets the specific entry requirements for third-cycle courses and study programmes in the subject if they have received a passing grade in courses of at least 90 credits, including an independent project at the advanced course level¹⁹, in political science. A person who has acquired substantially corresponding knowledge, in Sweden or abroad, also meets the specific entry requirements.

Transitional provisions

A person with credits or qualifications from undergraduate programmes under the previous higher education system corresponding to the entry requirements in the previous paragraph will also be eligible²⁰.

This primarily refers to a passing grade on courses of at least 60 credits, including an independent project at the 60 credit level, under the previous credit system.

2.3 Ability in other respects to benefit from the course or study programme

The assessment whether the applicant has such ability in other respects to benefit from the programme shall be made based on prior courses and programmes taken by the applicant, on other previous activities, as well as on the essays and other independent projects of a scholarly nature that have been submitted by the applicant (compare assessment criteria in accordance with the university's regulations on the selection of doctoral students below).

3 Selection from among the applicants

In selecting between applicants, their ability to benefit from the programme shall be taken into account. The higher education institution determines which assessment criteria shall be used in determining the ability to benefit from the programme.

However, the fact that an applicant is considered able to transfer credits from prior courses and study programmes or for professional or vocational experience may not alone give the applicant priority over other applicants²¹.

Assessment criteria for selection²²

The criteria A - B aim at facilitating an examination of the applicant's ability to benefit from the programme. They should therefore be relevant to the applicant's ability to later achieve the learning outcomes of the programme. The outcomes are described in annex 1 to this general syllabus.

¹⁹ The "advanced course level" refers to the same level of progression as under the previous higher education system. With the new credit system, the advanced course level thus refers to 61-90 credits within the main field of study [translator's comment]

²⁰ Point 10, transitional provisions for SFS 2006:1053

²¹ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 7, Section 41

²² Local regulations on the selection of doctoral students to third-cycle courses and study programmes etc.

A Courses, study programmes and other previous activities – formal qualifications

The assessment is based on submitted certificates and transcripts as well as on degree certificates and/or course certificates.

Completed courses and study programmes and experience contributing to the applicant's ability to successfully benefit from the programme applied for are considered an additional qualification.

- Courses and study programmes

Special emphasis is given to the scope, depth and grades of the applicant's prior courses and study programmes within the subject area applied for, particularly the grades on written independent projects.

Emphasis is also given to the scope, depth and grades of prior courses and study programmes within other fields of great relevance to the subject area applied for.

- Other previous activities

Special emphasis is given to long and independent professional and/or vocational experience of great relevance to the subject area applied for.

B Capability – demonstrated knowledge, competence and skills

The assessment is based on a consideration of the applicant's submitted essays and other written independent projects of a scholarly nature as well as a research plan. For those applicants who at this stage are considered to be most qualified, and if it is deemed necessary, references will be taken and interviews will be carried out.

It is considered an additional qualification if the applicant demonstrates such knowledge, competence and skills that contribute to them being successfully able to benefit from the programme applied for. These are for example

- sound theoretical, analytic and methodological knowledge;
- sound ability to discuss, in writing and in speech, issues and conclusions;
- intellectual independence; and
- sound ability to carry out advanced tasks within given time frames.

Special emphasis is given to the applicant's ability to

- identify and formulate realistic and productive research problems;
- integrate knowledge and experience and apply these in ways and in contexts where they have not previously been used; and
- conduct a dialogue characterised by independence as well as by an ability to cooperate.

C Weighing up qualifications

The fact that an applicant is considered able to transfer credits from prior courses and study programmes or for professional or vocational experience may not alone give the applicant priority over other applicants (Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 7, Section 41).

When weighing up the assessment criteria A and B, the greatest emphasis is placed on criteria B, Capability.

D Gender equality

If, followed from the above, applicants are found to have equal qualifications, preference will be given to applicants of the sex that is underrepresented among the doctoral students within the subject area²³. The underrepresented sex here refers to if and when the share of either female or male students enrolled on the subject area's third-cycle study programme amounts to less than 40 per cent.

²³ Higher Education Act (SFS 1992:1434), Chapter 1, Section 5, second paragraph and other provisions