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Document(s) repealed: Decision by the SLU Board dated 18 February 2016, Section 13/16, reg. no SLU ID:ua.2016.1.1.1-438 on admission regulations for third-cycle (doctoral) education

Annex to: Decision by the SLU Board of 25 April 2018

## Admission regulations for third-cycle (doctoral) education 2018

Relevant forms and information about recruitment and admission can be found at <https://internet.slu.se/en/research-education-ema/phd-education1/recruitment-and-admission/>

### Entry into effect

These guidelines take effect on 1 July 2018, replacing the 2016 admission regulations (SLU.ua.2016.1.1.1-438).

Quotes from the ordinance are formatted as indented text in a smaller font. The decisions of the SLU Board are represented in the remaining text.

### 1. Entry requirements

According to the Higher Education Ordinance (HEO):

Chapter 7 Section 39 A person meets the general entry requirements for third-cycle courses and study programmes if he or she:

1. has been awarded a second-cycle qualification
2. has satisfied the requirements for courses comprising at least 240 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.

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

Chapter 7 Section 40: The specific entry requirements laid down shall be essential for students to be able to benefit from the course or study programme. These requirements may comprise:

1. knowledge from one or more higher education courses and study programmes or corresponding courses and study programmes

2. specific professional or vocational experience, and
3. requisite language skills or other conditions determined by the course or study programme.

*Specific entry requirements as decided by the SLU Board*

Both teaching and research are normally conducted in English, wholly or partly. The thesis must be written in English, or in Swedish if this is relevant for the subject. Consequently, upper secondary school grades equivalent to English 6 is a basic requirement, i.e. the same level normally required for Master's-level programmes. Applicants who do not have final school grades from a Swedish upper secondary school must have a certificate of competence equivalent to English 6 from an internationally recognised language test (TOEFL, IELTS or Cambridge ESOL), in accordance with the requirements described at: [www.universityadmissions.se/en/All-you-need-to-know/1/Applying-for-studies/English-requirements/Internationally-recognized-English-test/](http://www.universityadmissions.se/en/All-you-need-to-know/1/Applying-for-studies/English-requirements/Internationally-recognized-English-test/). Any exemptions from this requirement are described at [www.universityadmissions.se](http://www.universityadmissions.se).

*Exemptions from the specific entry requirements as decided by the SLU Board*

In accordance with the Higher Education Ordinance Chapter 7 Section 39, a faculty board may permit exemptions from the general entry requirements. In such cases, the applicant must provide evidence of a degree at Bachelor's level, and an independent paper corresponding to at least 15 HEC, the content of which must correspond to the knowledge and skills displayed in a degree project at second-cycle level, or a relevant independent project of similar difficulty and scope. The thesis should be written in English or Swedish.

The faculty board sets the other specific entry requirements for each third-cycle subject. These requirements must be specified in the general syllabus for the third-cycle subject.

If specific entry requirements in the form of specific professional or vocational experience, requisite skills in languages other than English or other conditions are specified in the general syllabus, the criteria used for assessment must also be specified.

## 2. Advertising of positions on doctoral programmes

According to the Higher Education Ordinance (HEO):  
Chapter 7 Section 37 Decisions relating to admissions are made by the higher education institution. A person who wishes to be admitted to a third-cycle course or study programme shall apply within the time prescribed and in compliance with the procedures laid down by the higher education institution.

When a higher education institution intends to admit one or several third-cycle students, information shall be provided by the higher education institution through advertising or some equivalent method. Information need not, however, be provided:

1. about the admission of a third-cycle student who is to complete the course or study programme within the framework of employment by an employer other than the higher education institution,
2. about the admission of a third-cycle student who has previously begun third-cycle studies at another higher education institution, or

3. if there are similar special grounds.

*Implementing regulations as decided by the SLU Board*

All positions that must be advertised according to HEO Chapter 7 Section 37 must be advertised for at least three weeks at [www.slu.se](http://www.slu.se). This duty to advertise applies regardless of the source of funding.

As long as the recruitment has been open to competition, the following special grounds can allow for exemptions from the duty to advertise at [www.slu.se](http://www.slu.se):

- there is a changeover from studies for a degree of licentiate to studies for a degree of doctor before the licentiate degree has been awarded;
- the applicant is recruited by a university partner as part of contractual collaboration on education;
- the applicant is recruited within the framework of an
  - o aid and capacity-building programme or
  - o an EU-funded programme
- the applicant has been awarded a personal scholarship.

Special conditions in research contracts can also allow for exemptions from the duty to advertise at [www.slu.se](http://www.slu.se).

### 3. Application and selection of applicants

According to the Higher Education Ordinance (HEO):

Chapter 7 Section 35 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 higher education institution may have laid down, and
2. is considered in other respects to have the ability required to benefit from the course or study programme.

Chapter 7 Section 41 In selecting between applicants who meet the requirements laid down in Sections 35 & 36 their ability to benefit from the course of study programmes shall be taken into account.

The higher education institution determines which assessment criteria shall be used in determining the ability to benefit from the courses and study programmes.

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 applicants.

*Implementing regulations as decided by the SLU Board*

**All admissions**, including those not advertised, must be preceded by the application process below.

1. Application by applicant. The application must be registered by the head registrar and be made on the special application form, accompanied by the following appendices:
  - a. Curriculum vitae
  - b. Copies of degree certificates, register extracts from previous first and second-cycle studies at higher education institutions

- c. A copy of a degree project at second-cycle level, corresponding to at least 15 HEC, or other relevant independent project of similar difficulty and scope
  - d. A language test certificate corresponding to English 6, where applicable. See section 1.
  - e. If the applicant is a foreign citizen, a certified copy of the passport
  - f. A list of references and their contact details.
2. At the request of a head of department:
  - a. relevant experts at the department will use the degree project or equivalent as a basis for assessing the applicant's ability to complete the programme and be awarded a degree within the stipulated time;
  - b. relevant experts at the department will contact reference persons to obtain further information for assessment of the applicant's ability to complete the programme and be awarded a degree within the stipulated time;
  - c. a ranking list based on the above assessments will be made. A potential credit transfer must not be grounds for giving an applicant priority over other applicants;
  - d. the top candidates' applications, including appendices, will be sent to the Division of Educational Affairs.
3. The Division of Educational Affairs:
  - a. checks the eligibility of the top candidates according to point 1. Applicants who submit applications with compulsory information missing will be informed that additional information is required. Applicants may also need to submit certified copies of some documents.
  - b. checks the authenticity of degree certificates and language certificates;
  - c. returns applications with appendices to the department, together with an assessment of the applicant's eligibility and the authenticity of the attached degree and language certificates.
4. As a minimum, the top-ranked applicant shall be interviewed in accordance with the interview instructions.
5. In consultation with the proposed principal supervisor, the head of department presents a proposal for the admission of one of the applicants to the faculty board. The proposal must be made on the special application form and be accompanied by the following appendices:
  - a. The applicant's complete application, including appendices, see point 1 above.
  - b. An assessment from the Division of Educational Affairs regarding the applicant's eligibility and the authenticity of the attached certificates.
  - c. A preliminary individual study plan drawn up using the common university template.
  - d. A plan describing the funding of the research forming the basis for the thesis work.

- e. If the applicant intends to obtain a joint degree, a copy of the agreement between the parties involved must be attached. The agreement shall be drafted in accordance with the instructions given in "Guidelines for joint degrees at SLU" (SLU ua Fe.2011.3.3-4103).
  - f. If the applicant will be supported by a personal scholarship, they must include a copy of the letter of acknowledgement that is sent to them. Only letters of acknowledgement drafted using the SLU template will be accepted.
  - g. If the applicant will be supported by a personal scholarship, information about and contact details for the donor must be attached. Section 5 of this document governs criteria for the scholarships accepted at SLU.
  - h. If the applicant is employed by a company or a foreign university, a certified copy of the contract of employment or equivalent must be attached.
  - i. If a doctoral student is employed by a company, an agreement (referred to as an 'industry doctoral student agreement') shall be drawn up between the employer and the head of department. The agreement shall specify the division of responsibility between the company and the SLU department to ensure that the studies can be completed within the stipulated time (HEO Chapter 7 Section 36), see also section 5, page 7. The doctoral student and main supervisor shall approve the agreement.
6. A decision to admit or to discontinue the admission process shall be sent to all applicants.

#### 4. Decision on admission

According to the Higher Education Ordinance (HEO):

Chapter 7 Section 34 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 pursuant to Section 36.

Chapter 7 Section 36 A higher education institution may admit applicants to third-cycle courses and study programmes who have been appointed to doctoral studentships. The higher education institution may, however, admit applicants who have some other form of funding for their studies if it considers that the funding can be guaranteed during the entire period of study and that the applicant can devote enough time to their studies to enable their completion within four years in the case of a licentiate degree or a licentiate degree in the fine, applied and performing arts or eight years in the case of a doctoral degree or a doctorate in the fine, applied and performing arts.

For applicants funded by scholarships, the funding according to 1 above, first paragraph, is considered guaranteed if the level of the scholarship is equal to the salary of doctoral students according to Swedish collective bargaining agreements or practice within the profession, after preliminary tax has been deducted according to the average tax rate for municipalities and county councils published annually by Statistics Sweden. If the applicant will alternate their time between

Sweden and another country, the level of funding required only applies to the periods the applicant intends to spend in Sweden. [*The translation of this paragraph is not an official translation. No official translation is available yet.*]

Chapter 7 Section 38 A higher education institution that has been entitled to award third-cycle qualifications within an area may permit a third-cycle student who has been admitted to some other university or some other higher education institution to transfer without a new admission process to the higher education institution and to continue his or her courses and study programmes and receive his or her qualification there. This only applies, however, if the third-cycle student has completed the major part of his or her third-cycle studies at the higher education institution in the area in which entitlement to award third-cycle qualifications has been granted.

What is said in the first paragraph is to apply similarly at a higher education institution that in having been granted the title of university is entitled pursuant to Section 11 of Chapter 1 of the Higher Education Act (1992:1434) to award third-cycle qualifications.

#### *Implementing regulations as decided by the SLU Board*

The faculty board decides on admission. There must be no conflict of interests between an applicant and those involved in the decision.

Admission **must** be preceded by an assessment of all relevant documents and materials (see section 3).

The faculty board is responsible for carefully assessing whether the planned funding of the doctoral student's living expenses is sustainable throughout the period of study, whether via employment or a scholarship. If the planned funding for a doctoral student:

- is a personal scholarship awarded by an external funding body, the faculty board will, in each case, assess the scholarship and the funding of a doctoral studentship appointment when, according to the individual study plan, the remaining period of study corresponds to three years of full-time study before the award of a doctorate;
- is a scholarship awarded within the framework of a capacity-building programme or an EU-funded programme, the faculty board will assess the request to be exempted from the rights of a doctoral student to be appointed to a doctoral studentship; If requested by the faculty board, supporting documents must be provided that show that scholarships are an accepted form of funding, the conditions and how the scholarship will be paid, as well as how SLU's involvement in the programme is hindered by the requirement to be appointed to a doctoral studentship;
- with a scholarship, by no fault of the doctoral student themselves, fails in such a way that it makes it impossible for them to continue their studies and obtain their degree, the head of department shall, as long as the doctoral student has fulfilled the obligations in their individual study plan, offer the student a one-year appointment as a doctoral student.

Section 5 governs permitted forms of employment and funding.

The applicant may either be admitted to a doctoral programme the final objective of which is a degree of doctor, corresponding to four years' full-time study, or to a licentiate programme, corresponding to two years. Admission to a licentiate programme requires that the general syllabus for the third-cycle subject states that the programme can be concluded with a licentiate degree. A doctoral student who has been admitted to a licentiate programme and awarded a degree must apply to continue their studies for a degree of doctor. Following an application from the head of department, the faculty board can approve a changeover from a licentiate programme to a doctoral programme. The application shall include documentation for assessing the funding as well as an individual study plan for the degree of doctor.

Admission should normally be to a doctoral programme. If there are specific grounds, admission to a licentiate programme is allowed. A justification for a decision to admit to a licentiate programme should be provided.

An applicant who is exempted from the basic entry requirements must provide, as a minimum, a Bachelor's degree certificate.

## 5. Doctoral studentships and other means of support

According to the Higher Education Ordinance (HEO):

Chapter 5 Section 3 Only those who are or have been admitted to third-cycle courses and study programmes at a higher education may be appointed to doctoral studentships.

Chapter 5 Section 3a A doctoral studentship shall be a full-time post. If a third-cycle student so requests, the appointment may be a part-time post but for no less than 50 per cent of a full-time post.

Chapter 5 Section 4 A student in receipt of a doctoral grant shall on application be appointed to a doctoral studentship no later than the date on which according to the individual study plan there remains a period of study corresponding to three years of full-time study before the award of a PhD or a doctorate in the fine, applied and performing arts. This does not apply, however, if the vice-chancellor has decided on the withdrawal of the student's resources pursuant to Chapter 6 Section 30.

Chapter 5 Section 4 a A student in receipt of a scholarship is not entitled to be appointed to a doctoral studentship in accordance with Section 4 if the scholarship is awarded within the framework of

1. an aid and capacity-building programme where scholarships are an accepted form of funding with reasonable conditions and the admitting higher education institution is aware of the scholarship conditions and how it is paid, or
2. an EU-funded programme or other collaborations, where scholarships with reasonable conditions are an accepted form of funding and where the requirement of funding throughout the appointment prevents the admitting higher education institution from taking part.

*[The translation of this paragraph is not an official translation. No official translation is available yet.]*

Chapter 5 Section 5 When an appointment to a doctoral studentship is to be made, the ability of the student to benefit from third-cycle courses and study programmes shall be taken into account.

If an appointment to a doctoral studentship is to be made in connection with admission to a study programme, the provisions of the second and third paragraphs of Section 41 of Chapter 7 on determination of the assessment criteria and the prohibition of preferential treatment shall apply.

The higher education institution shall provide information about vacant positions in the form of advertising or some equivalent procedure so that those who are interested in appointment to a doctoral studentship may notify the higher education institution of their interest within a stipulated period. Information need only be provided, however, if appointment to a doctoral studentship is to be made in connection with admission to a study programme and pursuant to Section 37 of Chapter 7 information shall be provided in connection with admission.

According to the public service agreements for the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (2018 - Funding 4:1 item 18), scholarships intended to be an alternative to salary or other form of funding for doctoral students may not be paid out of central government funding. The term 'central government funding' means funding for research and for third-cycle degree programmes, as well as other government funding allocated via a government agency.

*Implementing regulations as decided by the SLU Board*

Doctoral studentships are the normal form of support for doctoral students at SLU. Financing studies with the help of a doctoral grant or private means is not allowed.

In addition to doctoral studentships, the following means of funding are permitted:

- a) Other forms of employment at SLU: accepted only if a contract is drawn up between the doctoral student and the head of department. The contract shall ensure that the time allocated for third-cycle studies as part of the employment is sufficient for the studies to be completed within the stipulated time (HEO Chapter 7 Section 36).
- b) Employment with another employer (company, university or other government agency). If a contract is drawn up between the employer, doctoral student and head of department, doctoral students may be admitted using this form of funding. The contract shall ensure that the time allocated for third-cycle studies as part of the employment is sufficient for the studies to be completed within the stipulated time (HEO Chapter 7 Section 36). Doctoral students from international universities taking part in research projects funded by Sida must be employed by their home university. The contract between Sida, SLU and the foreign universities governs the funding of the doctoral students' financial support and other costs.
- c) Scholarships  
SLU accepts funding through scholarships until such a date when, according to the individual study plan, the remaining period of study corresponds to three years of full-time study before the award of a doctorate, and only if:
  - SLU is aware of the scholarship conditions and how it is paid;
  - the scholarship does not have any provisos concerning the academic performance of the doctoral student. Only terms stating that the scholarship may be prematurely withdrawn if supervisory



resources are withdrawn from the student under HEO Chapter 6 Section 30 are acceptable.

- one or more scholarships together amount to at least a net funding level corresponding to the SLU doctoral student salary agreement after reduction of preliminary tax, when the student is in Sweden;
- it is not paid from central government funding (see public service agreement), i.e. funding for research and for third-cycle degree programmes, as well as other government funding allocated via a government agency;
- the agreement between donor and scholarship recipient does not contain any provisions which:
  - limit the recipient's ability to complete the programme according to Swedish law and practice;
  - entail worse study conditions for the doctoral student compared to the conditions that apply to other doctoral students at the university;
  - infringe on the universities' right to determine how the education is carried out or examined;
  - require the university or supervisor to report planning, contents or implementation of the individual doctoral student's education to the stipend donor;
  - require work performance before, during or after the third-cycle studies.