



Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

GOVERNING DOCUMENT

SLU ID: SLU.ua.2026.1.1-1534

Subject area: 3. First-/second-/third-cycle education

Document type: Rules
Decision-maker: Vice-Chancellor
Organisational unit: Division of Planning
and Research Support
Decision date: 27/5/2026

Effective as of: 1/7/2026
Valid until: Further notice
Last reviewed: 27/5/2026
To be reviewed by: 30/6/2028

Document(s) repealed: Riktlinjer för utbildningen på forskarnivå 2019 (SLU ua 2018.1.1.14677), Riktlinjer för gemensam och dubbel examen inom utbildning på forskarnivå vid SLU (SLU ID.ua.2020.1.1.1-3432), Tillfällig anpassning av riktlinjer för utbildning på forskarnivå (SLU.ua.2022.1.1.1-2176), Fördjupningskurs i forskarhandledning (SLU.ua.2023.1.1.11275), and Kriterier för studieaktivitet och nettostudietid inom utbildning på forskarnivå (SLU.ua.2025.1.1-520).

Annex to: Vice-Chancellor's decision 27 May 2026 on rules for third-cycle (doctoral) education

Rules for third-cycle (doctoral) education

1. Introduction

This document describes SLU's internal rules for third-cycle (doctoral) education. The document is supplemented as needed with procedures developed in the Council for PhD Education (FUR).

Doctoral education is governed by national laws and ordinances, primarily

- Swedish Higher Education Act (1992:1434)
- Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100)
- Ordinance for the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (1993:221).

The vice-chancellor has overall responsibility for doctoral education. According to the vice-chancellor's delegation of authority, operational responsibility is mainly delegated to the faculty boards. There is one type of decision that may not be further delegated: decisions to withdraw supervision and other study resources as per Chapter 6, Section 36 of the Higher Education Ordinance.

The faculty boards, in turn, delegate most of the decision-making to the doctoral education committee or the vice dean. Decisions are taken at the faculty level on such matters as the admission of new doctoral students, changes of supervisor and how doctoral thesis defences are conducted.

The head of department is responsible for the department's doctoral education and for the study and work environment for doctoral students.

In these rules, the term *doctoral student* refers to a student who has been admitted to and is undertaking doctoral education, regardless of which degree (licentiate or doctoral degree) is the ultimate goal.

2. Recruitment, admission and support forms

Information on how recruitment and admission to doctoral studies is to be conducted can be found in [Admission regulations for third-cycle \(doctoral\) education](#) (SLU ID ua.2018.1.1.1-930).

The admission regulations also describe the support forms available to doctoral students.

3. The scope and goals of doctoral studies

3.1. Actual period of study and study activity

The actual period of study for a doctoral degree is four years (240 credits) and for a licentiate degree two years (120 credits).

If the doctoral student so requests, their doctoral studies may be undertaken on a part-time basis though at no less than half-time. Their education must thus be completed within eight years for a doctoral degree and four years for a licentiate degree (Higher Education Ordinance Chapter 7, Section 36).

The principal supervisor and the doctoral student together calculate the student's study activity (in %) each calendar semester. The number is the proportion of time devoted to doctoral education (thesis work and courses). The doctoral student's individual study plan (ISP) is updated accordingly as part of its annual review (see Chapter 4.2: Required follow-ups and milestones).

What is not included in the actual period of study?

1. Assignments that are not connected to the doctoral education, such as administration or teaching. These assignments can occur at the department, referred to as departmental duties, or at an external partner. Such assignments may not comprise more than 20 per cent of full-time work (Higher Education Ordinance Chapter 5, Section 2). Occasional shorter assignments may be included in the actual period of study. In such cases, all assignments combined may only comprise a maximum of five (5) working days in total during the entire doctoral education.

2. Doctoral student council assignments, including serving on committees and councils, as well as national and international elected or appointed positions within established doctoral student organisations.
3. Union assignments relevant to the department or position within which the education occurs.
4. Total defence service.
5. Parental leave (must be reported in Primula, part-time is converted to full working days).
6. Care of sick child (known as *VAB*) (must be reported in Primula, part-time is converted to full working days).
7. Sick leave (must be reported in Primula, part-time is converted to full working days).

3.2. Definitive withdrawal

If the doctoral student wishes to discontinue their studies before the degree is completed, a notification of this is to be sent to the faculty office.

The doctoral student is to be informed that they will need to reapply if they wish to resume their doctoral studies at a later date. Any future admission will follow the rules and admission regulations that apply at that time.

3.3. Doctoral subject areas and general study plans

The faculty board decides, after consultation with the vice-chancellor, on the doctoral subject areas offered by the faculty.

Each doctoral subject area is to have a general study plan that briefly describes the content of the education (Chapter 6, Section 26 of the Higher Education Ordinance). The faculty board approves and establishes these study plans.

3.4. General qualitative targets

The Higher Education Ordinance's system of qualifications specifies general qualitative targets for doctoral degrees and licentiate degrees (see Annex 1) that describe the knowledge and skills that the doctoral student must have achieved upon graduation.

The principal supervisor is responsible for assessing whether the doctoral student has achieved the general qualitative targets prior to the defence of a doctoral thesis or licentiate seminar.

The overall general qualitative targets should be adapted to each doctoral student and converted into individual intended learning outcomes.

3.5. Individual intended learning outcomes

The individual intended learning outcomes are to be based on each doctoral student's situation and the character of the thesis project. The supervisor and the doctoral student together formulate the individual intended learning outcomes in the ISP. The individual intended learning outcomes are followed up when the ISP is followed up.

4. Plan and follow up of doctoral education

4.1. Individual Study Plan (ISP)

Planning and following up of doctoral education occurs through the ISP. An ISP describes the content of the education (courses, individual intended learning outcomes and thesis work), the timetable and the doctoral student's and supervisors' commitments for the coming year.

By approving the ISP, the supervisor and the doctoral student assure that they will do their best to fulfil these commitments. If a serious conflict arises between the supervisor and the doctoral student, the commitments serve as an official basis for resolving the conflict.

The principal supervisor is responsible for ensuring that an ISP is drawn up in connection with the admission of the doctoral student and that it is followed up annually.

It is the responsibility of the head of department to ensure that the ISP is agreed upon. The first time, this should be done no later than three months after the doctoral student starts their studies and thereafter the ISP should be reviewed and revised at annual follow-ups.

The faculty board is to regularly monitor how doctoral students' ISPs are followed up and revised by the departments.

4.2. Required follow-ups and milestones

Each planning and follow-up should include a discussion of the doctoral student's current knowledge and skills in relation to the intended learning outcomes.

Annual follow-up of the ISP

The annual follow-up of the ISP is to be conducted by the doctoral student and supervisor once one actual academic year has passed. The follow-up is to be based on the individual intended learning outcomes.

Mid-way review and mid-way follow-up

After two years of the actual period of study, the doctoral student is to hold a mid-way review at the department. The oral presentation is to be assessed by a person that has no conflict of interest, who is a docent or who, in the opinion of the faculty board, possesses at least equivalent academic qualifications.

Conclusions and comments from the assessor at the mid-way review are discussed in connection with the mid-way follow-up when the supervisor, doctoral student and director of studies/equivalent assess the potential for the doctoral student to achieve the qualitative targets within the specified time.

Final review

Doctoral students writing a monograph thesis hold a final review no earlier than nine months prior to the planned defence date or the licentiate seminar.

The oral presentation is to be assessed by a person that has no conflict of interest, who is a docent or who, in the opinion of the faculty board, possesses equivalent academic qualifications.

The assessor is appointed by the head of department or deputy head of department in cases where the head of department is the supervisor. The assessor may not be employed at the same department as the doctoral student. The assessor's written opinion is to be attached to the application for a doctoral defence or licentiate seminar.

5. Courses and credit transfers

5.1. Doctoral courses

Doctoral studies are to include both courses in general skills and subject-specific courses.

For a course to be included in a doctoral degree, it must:

- be a doctoral-level course
- be organised by a university
- have a course syllabus or equivalent documentation.

Other types of courses with a syllabus may be included in the degree after approval by the faculty board.

Doctoral education at SLU is to include credit-bearing studies in scientific theory and research ethics. These studies are to cover, among other things, rules regarding cheating and plagiarism. Exceptions to this requirement are possible if similar studies with relevant content and level were already included in a previous degree.

Degrees are to include at least:

- 30 credits from courses (for a doctoral degree)
- 15 credits from courses (for a licentiate degree)

The general study plan for a specific subject area may specify a higher minimum number of course credits. For a doctoral degree, it is possible to require up to 120 credits and for a licentiate degree up to 60 credits.

5.2. Course syllabuses and course instances

The Higher Education Ordinance specifies that all doctoral courses at SLU are to have a syllabus that describes the course's level, number of credits, intended outcomes, specific entry requirements and how student performance is assessed (Chapter 6, Sections 14–15 of the Higher Education Ordinance). Courses must include a component involving independent work in which newly acquired knowledge and skills are tested and applied in an appropriate educational context.

All syllabuses for doctoral subject courses are to be approved by the faculty board. All syllabuses for courses in general skills are to be approved by the Council for PhD Education (FUR).

Approved syllabuses are registered in Ladok. Planned course instances should be registered in Ladok no later than 6 months before the start of the course.

5.3. Course grades

Exams that are part of doctoral education are assessed with the grades of either Fail or Pass as per *Sveriges lantbruksuniversitets föreskrifter (2025:1) om betygssystem för prov som ingår i utbildning på forskarnivå* (SLU's regulations on the grading system for examinations included in third-cycle (doctoral) education).

5.4. Credit transfer from courses completed prior to admission

A course completed prior to admission to doctoral studies may be credited if it is considered relevant in the ISP. Credits from previous studies are not automatically transferred. Courses that are credited in connection with admission do not affect the requirement of four years of financial support for a doctoral degree or two years for a licentiate degree.

Courses/studies that have formed the basis for a Master's degree or other equivalent, a lower degree, or that have been used to fulfil the eligibility requirements for doctoral-level education may not be credited.

5.5. Credit transfer of courses from lower level studies

Bachelor's and Master's level courses may be credited if approved by the faculty board. If transfer is approved, the number of credits are to be stated in the decision. The number of credits are adjusted with consideration given to the fact that the requirements for students at the doctoral level are higher than for students at lower levels of education.

5.6. Examiner

The same rules apply to examiners at the doctoral level as to examiners at the Master's level. SLU's requirements for Bachelor's and Master's level examiners are described in the [Education Planning and Administration Handbook, Chapter 4.5–4.6](#).

The examiner is to be employed at the department responsible for the course or that shares responsibility for the course. In the case of contract training or other forms of collaboration with another higher education institution, the examiner may be employed at the other higher education institution.

6. Supervision

6.1. Composition of the supervisor group

Upon admission, the faculty board appoints a group of supervisors for each doctoral student.

- The supervisor group is to consist of a minimum of two and a maximum of four supervisors. One of these is the principal supervisor.
- At least one of the assistant supervisors is to be employed at SLU.
- The supervisor group is to consist of both men and women.

The faculty board may grant exceptions to the above criteria if special grounds for doing so exist and if an application to do so is submitted.

The head of department and director of studies/equivalent for doctoral education should not be part of the same supervisor group.

Two individuals who have a close private relationship (for example, married, living together or close relatives) should not be part of the same supervisor group.

The doctoral student and supervisor (principal supervisor and assistant supervisor) should not have a close private relationship.

6.2 Requirements for serving as principal supervisor at SLU

The principal supervisor is to:

1. be employed as a professor or have the qualifications required for appointment as a docent;
2. have at least a 20% position at SLU;
3. be employed at the same department as the doctoral student is enrolled;
4. have documented training in serving as a supervisor that is equivalent to the training required to be appointed as a docent at SLU;
5. obtain additional training through an advanced course in researcher supervision for experienced doctoral supervisors. If the principal supervisor is to begin supervising a new doctoral student, this advanced course (or the course required to be appointed as a docent) is to have been completed within the last five years.

6.3. Requirements for serving as assistant supervisor at SLU

The assistant supervisor must have a doctoral degree.

6.4. Rules related to exceptions for supervision

- The faculty board may, in special cases, grant exceptions to the requirement for a minimum of 20% employment at SLU (item 2 under Section 6.2 above).
- The faculty board may grant exceptions to the requirement that the principal supervisor is to be employed at the doctoral student's department (item 3 under Section 6.2 above), provided that at least one assistant supervisor is employed at the department.
- The faculty board may grant exceptions to the requirement that the principal supervisor have supervisor training (item 4 under Section 6.2 above). In such cases, a training plan for this must be established in consultation with the division within the university administration that is responsible for higher education teacher training.
- Item 5 above: An equivalent course at a higher education institution other than SLU may be approved by the faculty board after consultation with the head of the division within the university administration that is responsible for higher education teacher training.
- If the principal supervisor has a fixed-term employment or is expected to retire during the doctoral student's period of study, at least one assistant supervisor must be employed at the doctoral student's department and have supervisor training.

- In the event of a leave of absence longer than six months, the faculty board is to appoint a deputy principal supervisor or ensure that the principal supervisor works at least 10%.
- If a principal supervisor terminates their employment at SLU, the faculty board is to immediately appoint a new principal supervisor.

6.5. The supervisor's responsibilities

Supervisors (both principal supervisors and assistant supervisors) are to:

- guide the doctoral student in both practical and theoretical aspects and stay informed about the scientific and practical progress of the education;
- strive to create the best possible conditions for scientific discussions among the doctoral student, the supervisor and other teaching and research colleagues;
- guide the doctoral student in terms of choice of method, literature searches and overview, publication, and national and international networks;
- have a professional approach so that gender equality is promoted and all forms of discrimination are mitigated;
- not take on more doctoral students than they can adequately supervise;
- be well informed of SLU's rules and procedures for doctoral education.

Principal supervisors are responsible for ensuring that:

- the research project, which forms the basis for the thesis work, is of good quality and has a reasonable scope;
- the education includes adequate courses;
- the education is planned and followed up according to the rules;
- the doctoral thesis and/or licentiate seminar are prepared and conducted according to the rules;
- they receive additional training in supervision and supervision educational theory with the help of courses offered by, among others, SLU.

6.6. Resigning from the role as supervisor

When undertaking the role of supervisor, the supervisor must be prepared to maintain this responsibility throughout the doctoral student's entire education. Sometimes, however, situations may arise that lead a supervisor to resign their responsibility. If the principal supervisor considers it impossible to fulfil their assignment, they must notify the head of department, who is then responsible for drawing up a proposal for a new supervisor.

The faculty board decides on a new supervisor.

6.7. The right to change supervisors

A doctoral student has the right to change principal supervisors (Higher Education Ordinance Chapter 6, section 28). The doctoral student does not have the right to choose the new supervisor but may submit requests to the head of department, who is responsible for drawing up a proposal for a new supervisor.

The faculty board decides on changes of supervisors.

6.8. Withdrawal of right to supervision and other resources

If a doctoral student substantially neglects their commitments as defined in the individual study plan, the vice-chancellor can decide that the doctoral student is no longer entitled to supervision and other educational resources.

Before such a decision is made, the doctoral student and the supervisors are to be given an opportunity to comment. The assessment is to be based on their comments and other available evidence.

The assessment is also to consider whether the higher education institution has fulfilled its commitments as defined in the ISP. The decision is to be documented in writing and include an explanation for why the decision was made.

Withdrawal of supervision and other resources requires careful consideration and should take place within the framework of a transparent decision-making process.

A decision to withdraw resources for a doctoral student as per Chapter 6, Section 30 may be appealed to the Higher Education Appeals Board.

Options for reinstatement of the right to supervision and other resources

If supervision or other resources have been withdrawn, the doctoral student can apply to the vice-chancellor for their reinstatement. For resources to be reinstated, the doctoral student must demonstrate new attained grades of sufficient quality and scope or otherwise make it likely that they can fulfil their remaining commitments defined in the ISP.

A decision to not reinstate a doctoral student's resources can be appealed to the Higher Education Appeals Board.

7. Format and scope of the thesis

7.1. Thesis format

All doctoral theses at SLU must be structured according to the library's thesis template.

The principal supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the thesis meets the requirements for good scholarly quality within the subject area.

The principal supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the thesis is checked using the plagiarism control system used by SLU.

A thesis, whether a doctoral thesis or a licentiate thesis, can be structured either as a compilation or monograph thesis.

The faculty board may decide that monograph theses are not permitted within a certain subject. Such a decision must be stated in the subject's general study plan.

A thesis is to be written in English. It may be written in Swedish if it is more relevant to the subject. A thesis is to have a short abstract in Swedish and English.

A thesis that is the result of a joint or double degree is to be structured according to instructions from the library.

7.2. Compilation theses – scope

Requirements for compilation theses

The following minimum requirements apply to a compilation thesis for a **doctoral degree**:

1. The thesis is to include at least three papers.
2. The doctoral student is to be the first author, or equivalent, of at least two of the attached papers.
3. At least one of the attached papers must have been accepted for publication or published in a peer-reviewed international scientific journal.

The following minimum requirements apply to a compilation thesis for a **licentiate degree**:

1. The thesis is to include at least one paper.
2. The doctoral student is to be the first author, or equivalent, of at least one of the papers.

The faculty board may specify additional requirements for the thesis in the general study plan for the doctoral subject.

In addition to the thesis part (the summarising chapter, *kappa*), a compilation thesis is also to have a presentation in English and Swedish that is more intended for a general audience.

All attached papers in a compilation thesis are to be original works. A review article may be included as a paper if it is a systematic review.

Credit transfer of papers

One (1) article published before the doctoral student's admission date may, in special cases, be credited towards the degree and included in the doctoral or licentiate thesis. The faculty board decides whether papers can be credited.

7.3. Monograph thesis – scope

Requirements for monograph theses

The faculty board may set requirements for approval of monograph theses in a subject's study plan.

7.4. External preliminary review

An external preliminary review of a thesis is only required if:

1. the main supervisor considers that the thesis and the doctoral student are ready for the licentiate seminar or doctoral thesis defence even though the formal requirements are not met, or
2. the external assessor at the final seminar has strongly questioned whether the thesis can be completed according to schedule.

If either of the above apply, the principal supervisor is to apply to the faculty board for a preliminary review.

The review is to be conducted by at least two individuals with no conflicts of interest, who are docents or who, in the opinion of the faculty board, possess equivalent academic qualifications. The preliminary reviewers may not be employed at the same department as the doctoral student. One of the preliminary reviewers may be included in the examining committee at the defence.

8. Defence of doctoral thesis and licentiate seminar

8.1. Rules for doctoral defence and doctoral thesis

SLU's rules for doctoral thesis defence and grading are described in *SLU:s föreskrifter (2026:2) om disputation och betygssystem för doktorsavhandlingar* (SLU's regulations on doctoral thesis defence and grading system, summarised in Annex 2 to this document). SLU's rules for licentiate seminars are described below.

8.2. Time and place for licentiate seminars

Licentiate seminars are held between 15 August and 15 June. The faculty board may approve exemptions from this date restriction.

If the licentiate seminar is not held on one of SLU's campuses, digital attendance and participation are to be offered.

The faculty board decides on the time and place for the licentiate seminar and appoints the chair and examining committee based on a proposal from the department.

Two licentiate seminars or doctoral defences may not be held simultaneously within the same faculty.

Applications for licentiate seminars are to be received by the faculty office no later than three months prior to the planned date of the seminar.

8.3. Advertising and notification of the date of the defence

After the faculty board's decision on a licentiate seminar, the faculty office is to advertise the seminar by providing information about the time and location in an appropriate manner.

Notification of the date of the defence (*spikning*) is to be done between 15 August and 1 July. The faculty board may approve exemptions from this date restriction.

Theses are to be made public through their registering with the registrar no later than three weeks before the licentiate seminar. Upon registration, the thesis is to be electronically published and available in SLU's publication database.

After the thesis is submitted, no changes may be made other than the attachment of an errata list.

8.4. Digital participation

The doctoral student and the chair of the defence are to be physically present in the seminar room.

The members of the examining committee do not have to be physically present in the seminar room.

The faculty board is to ensure that there are replacements for the members of the examining committee if any of the original appointees are unable to fulfil their duties due to technical problems.

8.5. The examining committee and its composition

The grade for a thesis is determined by an examining committee. The examining committee is appointed specifically for each thesis.

The examining committee at a licentiate seminar is to consist of three members and one reserve member.

Each examining committee member is to have a doctoral degree. The majority of the members are to have been appointed as docents or, in the opinion of the faculty board, have equivalent academic qualifications. In special cases, the faculty board may allow a member without a doctoral degree to participate in the examining committee.

The regular members of the examining committee are to include both men and women. The faculty board may grant exemptions from this requirement if special grounds for doing so exist.

The doctoral student's supervisor may not be a member of the examining committee.

The proposed members are to have accepted the assignment and signed a declaration of no conflict of interest before being proposed to the faculty board.

The examining committee is to have at least one member who is not active at SLU and who is employed at a university other than SLU.

Only one member may be employed at the same department as the doctoral student.

Chair of the licentiate seminar

The chair is to be employed at SLU. The doctoral student's supervisor may not be the chair.

8.6. Examining committee meeting

The examining committee meets immediately after the public licentiate seminar. The examining committee appoints one of its members to chair the meeting.

The chair of the defence and the doctoral student's supervisor may attend the first part of the examining committee meeting but must leave the meeting when a decision on the grade is to be made.

Replacements on the examining committee are to be present at, and participate in, the decision only if the person in question is replacing a regular member.

8.7. Grade decision

A thesis is to be assessed using the grade of Pass or Fail. In assigning a grade, consideration is to be given to the content of the thesis and to its public defence.

The examining committee has a quorum when at least half of its members are present. The grade decision is based on a majority vote.

If the thesis is approved by a majority decision, a member has the right to record that they dissent but the reasons for the dissent are not to be recorded. The minutes of the examining committee are not to include any explanation for the positions taken by the committee or individual members during the discussion that leads to a decision to pass the thesis.

If the thesis is failed, the examining committee is required to explain its decision. A member has the right to record that they dissent and the reasons for this.

The meeting of the examining committee and the decision on the grade for the thesis are to be documented in the meeting minutes.

9. Degree

The Higher Education Ordinance's qualitative targets for licentiate and doctoral degrees are found in Annex 1.

9.1. Title of qualification

For a doctoral student to receive a licentiate degree in a doctoral subject, this option must be defined in the subject's general study plan.

A doctoral degree or licentiate degree can have different degree designations (for example, agronomy, veterinary medicine or forestry). At SLU, the designation normally depends on the doctoral student's undergraduate degree. If a doctoral student wishes to apply for a degree with a different designation, they can apply for a degree with a designation that is instead governed by the faculty's subject focus, provided that they have acquired sufficient specialist knowledge within the faculty's subject area. In these cases, the dean of the respective faculty decides whether this is allowed.

9.2. Applying for a degree certificate

The doctoral student applies for a degree certificate from the responsible administrative division at SLU as per provided instructions.

10. Double and joint degrees

Joint education of a doctoral student together with other universities can be designed with the goal of the doctoral student receiving a joint or double degree.

Definition of double degrees

A double doctoral degree means that a doctoral student completes their doctoral education in collaboration between two universities. At the end of the education, the doctoral student receives a degree from each of the two universities.

Definition of joint degrees

A joint doctoral degree is based on one education, a public defence of **one** doctoral thesis, and **one** degree certificate. The Higher Education Act allows Swedish higher education institutions to issue a joint degree together with foreign or other Swedish higher education institutions. The requirement is that the education has been developed and conducted jointly by the higher education institutions.

Annex 1 to Rules for third-cycle (doctoral) education (SLU ID: SLU.ua.2026.1.1-1534)

Qualitative targets as per the Higher Education Ordinance for doctoral and licentiate degrees.

Outcomes (Degree of Doctor)

Knowledge and understanding

For the Degree of Doctor the third-cycle student shall

- 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
- demonstrate familiarity with research methodology in general and the methods of the specific field of research in particular.

Competence and skills

For the Degree of Doctor the third-cycle student shall

- demonstrate the capacity for scholarly analysis and synthesis 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, 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
- demonstrate through a dissertation the ability to make a significant contribution to the formation of knowledge through his or 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 and
- 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.

Judgement and approach

For the Degree of Doctor the third-cycle 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 research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used.

Outcomes (Degree of Licentiate)

Knowledge and understanding

For a Degree of Licentiate the third-cycle student shall

- 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.

Competence and skills

For a Degree of Licentiate the third-cycle student shall

- 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
- 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
- demonstrate the skills required to participate autonomously in research and development work and to work autonomously in some other qualified capacity.

Judgement and approach

For a Degree of Licentiate the third-cycle student shall

- demonstrate the ability to make assessments of ethical aspects of his or her own 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, and
- demonstrate the ability to identify the personal need for further knowledge and take responsibility for his or her ongoing learning.

Annex 2 to Rules for third-cycle (doctoral) education (SLU ID: SLU.ua.2026.1.1-1534)

Summary of SLU's regulations on doctoral thesis defence and grading system.

1. In addition to the provisions of the Higher Education Ordinance, the following applies to the grading system, the public defence and the grading of doctoral theses.

Time and place of the defence

2. The public defence takes place between 15 August and 15 June. The faculty board may grant an exemption from these dates.

3. If the public defence is not held in a venue on one of SLU's campuses, digital participation must be possible.

4. The faculty board decides on the time and place of the public defence and appoints the chair, the examining committee and the external reviewer following a proposal from the department.

5. Two public defences or licentiate seminars may not be held simultaneously within the same faculty.

6. An application for a public defence must be received by the faculty office no later than three months before the planned date of the public defence.

Notification, publication and registration of doctoral theses

7. Following the faculty board's decision on the public defence, the faculty office publicises the event by announcing the time and venue in an appropriate manner.

8. All doctoral theses must be included in the series Acta Universitatis Agriculturae Sueciae, ISSN 1652-6880. This also applies to theses resulting from a joint degree or a double degree.

9. The thesis must be made public (spikning, notification of the date of the defence of a doctoral thesis) between 15 August and 1 July. The faculty board may grant an exemption from these dates.

Doctoral theses must be made public by registering them with the registrar no later than three weeks before the public defence. At the time of registration, the thesis must be published electronically and available in SLU's publication database.

Once the thesis has been posted, no changes may be made to it, but a list of errata may be attached.

Digital participation

10. The doctoral student and the chair of the public defence must be physically present in the defence venue.

The external reviewer and the members of the examining committee do not need to be physically present in the defence venue.

The faculty board ensures that substitutes are available for the external reviewer and the members of the examining committee, should any of those originally appointed be unable to fulfil their duties due to technical problems.

The examining committee and its composition

11. The grade for a doctoral thesis is decided by an examining committee. The examining committee is appointed specifically for each thesis.

12. The examining committee consists of three or five members. Where the committee has three members, a reserve member is appointed. The reserve member may be employed at the same department to which the doctoral student belongs.

All members of the examining committee must hold a doctoral degree. The majority of them must be appointed as docents or possess equivalent academic competence as assessed by the faculty board. In exceptional cases, the faculty board may permit a member without a doctoral degree to sit on the examining committee.

Both women and men must be represented as full members of the examining committee. The faculty board may grant exemptions where there are special reasons.

The doctoral student's supervisor may not be a member of the examining committee.

The proposed members must have accepted the appointment and signed a declaration of no conflict of interest before being proposed to the faculty board.

The examining committee for the public defence must include at least one member who is not employed at SLU and who is employed at a higher education institution other than SLU.

Only one member may be employed at the same faculty, but not the same department, as the doctoral student.

External reviewer and chair of the defence

13. The external reviewer must hold a doctoral degree. The proposed candidate must have accepted the appointment, have no conflict of interest and have submitted a declaration of no conflict of interest before the application is submitted to the faculty board.

14. The chair of the public defence must be employed at SLU. The doctoral student's supervisor may not act as chair.

The meeting of the examining committee

15. The examining committee meets immediately after the public defence. The committee appoints one of its members to chair the meeting.

The chair of the public defence, the external reviewer and the doctoral student's supervisor may attend the first part of the examining committee's meeting but must leave the meeting when a decision on the grade is to be taken.

Substitutes on the examining committee attend and participate in the decision only if the person in question is standing in for a full member.

Grading

16. The doctoral thesis is assessed with one of the grades Pass or Fail. When awarding the grade, consideration is given to the content of the thesis and the public defence.

17. The examining committee has a quorum when all members are present. Decisions on grades are taken by a majority vote.

If the thesis is approved by a majority decision, a member is entitled to record a dissenting opinion, but not the reasons for that dissenting opinion. The examining committee's minutes must not contain any justification for the positions taken by the committee or individual members during the discussion leading to the decision to approve the thesis.

If the thesis is rejected, the examining committee must give reasons for its decision. A member is entitled to record that they held a dissenting opinion and the reasons for it.

18. The examining committee's meeting and its decision on the grade for the thesis are documented in minutes.