

## Criteria for study activity and actual period of study within doctoral education

*Translated attachment to Vice-Chancellor's decision (2017-12-13).*

### General information on course/programme length

Doctoral courses and programmes that lead to a Degree of Doctor comprise an actual period of study of four years. This corresponds to 240 credits (2 years/120 credits for a Degree of Licentiate). During their actual period of study, doctoral students write their thesis and take doctoral courses. Tasks that are not part of the doctoral students' courses and programmes, but which are carried out in parallel with their studies, mean that the maximum permitted period of study becomes longer than four years (i.e. the course and programme calendar time is extended).

Courses and programmes are planned by the supervisor and doctoral student with the help of the individual study plan (ISP). The plan is adjusted to the conditions of the thesis project as well as the doctoral student's individual knowledge and skills. This is done in order for the doctoral student to be able to meet all the qualitative targets within the time frame of the doctoral studies. As the person responsible for doctoral courses and programmes, the head of department is tasked with ensuring that the ISP, together with a reasonable time plan, correctly describe the supervisor's and doctoral student's commitments, and that they can be fulfilled in regard to the department's prerequisites. If that is the case, the head of department approves the ISP.

SLU's doctoral students are financially supported during their time at the university. A majority are financially supported by becoming employed as doctoral students. The employment means a stable social and financial situation during their doctoral studies. Others have different types of employment at SLU, at partner organisations or are given scholarships. Being financially supported through an employment does not always involve an even pace of study. Taking a doctorate is individual. For some doctoral students, it goes quicker and for others it takes longer to reach their goal. Just as with other education levels, it is the result, not the work effort, that counts.

Once per semester, SLU must report the study activity of all admitted doctoral students and how they are financially supported (through employment, scholarships, etc.). This information is entered into the national student registry Ladok. The actual period of study is registered, and Ladok must therefore display how much of the time the doctoral student is entitled to has expired.

### What is not included in the actual period of study?

According to the Higher Education Ordinance (HEO) Chapter 6, Section 29: "The period of study may only be extended if there are special grounds for doing so. Such grounds may comprise leave of absence because of illness, leave of absence for service in the defence forces or an elected position in a trade union or student organisation, or parental leave. Ordinance (2010:1064)." Based on this legislation, SLU has decided that time spent on the activities below are not included in the actual period of study:

1. Continuous tasks from the department or external partners, etc. (e.g. teaching at first-cycle and second-cycle level) that are not a part of the ISP but are included in the student's doctoral studies.
2. Temporary tasks from the department or external partners, etc. (e.g. teaching at first-cycle level) that, according to the ISP, are not a part of the doctoral student's studies. Tasks that take 5 work days or less may be included in the actual period of study.
3. Tasks from the PhD Council.
4. Trade union tasks that are relevant to doctoral studies at a department or to an employment.
5. Serving in the Swedish Total Defence.
6. Parental leave.
7. Care of a sick child (VAB).
8. Sick leave (longer than 1 continuous week or more than 7 workdays during a six-month period, provided that a doctor's certificate is submitted).

### Recommended procedure for calculating the actual period of study

1. Activities included in doctoral courses and programmes are stated in the ISP.
2. The doctoral student enters, with the help of an SLU-approved template for calculation of net study time, the type and extent of activities performed that are not included in their studies but which are carried out in parallel with these.
3. The doctoral education administrator at the department or equivalent provides the principal supervisor with instructions, Ladok excerpts and the Ladok report form in ample time before every six-month Ladok report.

4. The principal supervisor and doctoral student review how much time has been spent on their courses and programmes during the past six months. This is done by reviewing the doctoral student's personal records and other relevant information regarding sick leave, etc. When they have reached a consensus, they both sign the Ladok report.
5. The head of department reviews and approves the Ladok report for registration. If the principal supervisor and the doctoral student do not reach a consensus, the head of department decides on the actual period of study in their place.
6. An authorised Ladok administrator registers the Ladok report.