



Guidelines for research education (third level programmes) in the Faculty of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences

General

The goal of this document is to provide guidelines for research education within the NL faculty. The overarching purpose is to ensure high-quality education at the research education level, and thereby high-quality dissertations and high-level competencies among the Doctorate holders and licentiates who receive a degree from the faculty. The guidelines given here should therefore be viewed as a framework for the proper design of research education (i.e. third level programmes or postgraduate studies) within the disciplines and departments of the faculty; however, the guidelines also set requirements for the level of the education to some extent. Behind these obligatory elements is the fundamental idea that they are of great general significance for the quality of education across the different research disciplines within the faculty. At the same time, however, it is very important to maintain the various disciplines' unique characteristics and take into consideration their individual prerequisites. For this reason, the guidelines leave room for the disciplines to design education in an optimal manner. This can occur within the framework of the general individual study plans for the various research disciplines.

The decisions related to research education within the faculty, which were made in accordance with this document at the April 16, 2008 meeting of the Faculty Board concern specifications of certain superior decisions. For the rest, the regulations in the Higher Education Ordinance, Admission regulations for third level education programmes (PhD education) at SLU – the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, decisions from the Vice-Chancellor and other decisions that may affect research education remain applicable.

Research education at the faculty shall be conducted in observance of SLU's equal opportunities policy and international strategy.

In the guidelines, research student is used for all categories of students admitted to studies leading to licentiate and doctoral degrees at SLU.

The present document is a translation from the official Swedish document. In case there is a deviation between this document and the Swedish document, the latter is the valid document.

1. Admission

Superior decisions: See Admission regulations for third level education programmes (PhD education) at SLU – the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (Appendix 1, www.slu.se)

Faculty Board guidelines

The head of department shall submit an admission proposal to the faculty for the desired candidate.

Procedures for notification of acceptance, selection of applicants, eligibility, program information and admissions decisions shall follow the Admission rules for research education at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. The faculty's forms shall be used for application for admission to research education and individual study plan.

2. Financing

Extracts from superior decisions

Higher Education Ordinance Chapter 7 Section 36 The faculty board may only admit to third level education applicants who are given appointments as research students or are awarded research student grants. The faculty board may, however, admit applicants who have some other form of financing for their studies, if it judges that the financing can be secured for the whole of the educational programme and that the applicant will be able to devote a sufficient amount of his or her time to his or her studies to be able to complete the programme in four years in the case of a degree of Licentiate or eight years in the case of a degree of Doctor.

Higher Education Ordinance Chapter 5 Section 4 A person who has been receiving a research student grant shall upon application be employed as a research student no later than when, under the individual study plan, the equivalent of two years of full-time study remain before examination for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. This shall not, however, apply if the faculty board or a special body such as is referred to in Chapter 2, Section 5a, second paragraph, sentences three and four of the Higher Education Act (1992:1434) has decided to withdraw the resources provided to the research student under Chapter 6, Section 37 of this Ordinance or the research student grant under Section 14 of the Research Student Grants Ordinance (1995:938).
Ordinance 2006:1053.

[**Research Student Grants Ordinance Section 9** A higher education institution may decide that research student grants in certain cases is allowed only when the research student is employed as an assistant at the higher education institution. Ordinance (1998:81).]

Faculty Board guidelines

Applicants admitted to postgraduate studies shall first be given an appointment as research student. Research student grants shall be used restrictively and are approved by the Faculty Board or its delegated committee/person for a maximum period of one year. There shall be proper justification for each individual application approved.

A research student grant shall be combined with at least 20% employment. Various combinations of research student grants and employment may constitute a maximum of 120%, i.e. 20% employment combined with 80-100% grant.*

The department is responsible for providing the financing necessary for the research education to be carried out. This applies also in event of the absence of the financing anticipated by the department at the time of the research student's admission. The financial responsibility applies as long as the research student fulfils the requirements specified in the individual study plan.

*) Comment: The combination of research student grant with employment gives the research student

access to social benefits such as employment by the state, sickness and parents' allowance-based income, additional parents' allowance, contractual/occupation pension and healthcare benefits.

3. Supervision

Extracts from superior decisions

Higher Education Ordinance Chapter 6 Section 31 For each research student, the faculty board is to appoint at least two supervisors. One of them is to be appointed principal supervisor. The research student is entitled to supervision during his or her education, unless the faculty board decides otherwise pursuant to Section 37. A research student who so requests shall be allowed to change supervisor.

Implementing regulations according to Admission regulations for third level education programmes (PhD education) at SLU – the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (www.slu.se)

A person who is an associate professor or professor, and employed at or visiting SLU may become the principal supervisor of a research student without a specific decision to that effect. A principal supervisor who is not an associate professor at SLU must have a recognised qualification in pedagogy of supervision. SLU offers courses in pedagogy of supervision to all supervisors who do not have sufficient training. SLU also offers regular further pedagogical training courses for supervisors.

If the principal supervisor is due to retire within four years at the time a new research student is admitted, it is highly recommended that one of the deputy supervisors be an associate professor so he/she is ready to become principal supervisor upon the retirement of the first principal supervisor.

Departments must ensure that research students have a good quality study environment. The working environment for research students must meet the same standard as for university employees.

Faculty Board guidelines

In order to increase the possibility of continued supervision should the principal supervisor leave SLU or be temporarily absent, there shall be appointed at SLU at least one assistant supervisor

Both genders should be represented in the supervisory group.

The supervisors shall provide support to the research student in both practical and theoretical problems and together with the research student they shall continuously monitor the development of the studies. Follow-ups will take place through yearly revisions to the study plan (see Individual study plan). The research student shall continuously keep the supervisors abreast of the development of the studies, so that the individual study plan may be adjusted as needed.

In the event of a change of principal supervisor or a change or the new appointment of an assistant supervisor, the head of department shall make a proposal which shall be sent to the faculty administrative office for decision by the Faculty Board or its assigned delegate and for registration. The proposal shall be signed by all parties involved.

4. Individual study plan

Extracts from superior decisions

Higher Education Ordinance Chapter 6 Section 36 An individual study plan must be drawn up for each research student. The plan is to be approved by the faculty board after consultation with the research student and his or her supervisor.

The individual study plan must contain

1. a timetable for the research student's education,
2. information on the organisation of the research student's supervision,
3. a description of the other commitments that the research student and the faculty board have during the period of education, and
4. any other details needed to enable the education to be pursued effectively and efficiently all the time.

The individual study plan is to be subject to follow-up by the faculty board at least once a year. In connection with the follow-up, the research student and the principal supervisor are to inform the faculty board how the education is progressing. At this time or on some other occasion when warranted, the faculty board can make the changes that are needed in the individual study plan. The period of education may only be extended if there are special grounds for this. Such grounds may be leave of absence because of sickness, leave of absence for service in the total defence or a position of trust in trade union and student organisations, or parental leave. Before a change is made, the research student and the supervisors are to be given an opportunity to comment.

The research student and the principal supervisor are to attest in writing that they have studied the individual study plan and the changes made in it.

Faculty Board guidelines

A copy of the individual study plan shall be attached to the application for admission to research education. The faculty will ascertain that the study plan fulfils the requirements, and register the approved study plan in LADOK.

The individual study plan shall contain the following items (additional information may be included if desired):

1. The research student's personal information
2. Name, title and department of the principal and assistant supervisors
3. Date of admission to research education.
4. Anticipated date of completion
5. Type of admission (licentiate or doctoral degree)
6. Financing (wages and operational costs) and type of employment
7. Plan for operational costs of the research student's project
8. Project description (a brief first version of the study plan upon admission which can subsequently be developed in cooperation between the research student and the supervisors)
9. Anticipated research education courses (only an overview in the first version of the study plan)
10. Research school or research group participation
11. Any other commitments by the research student and the department
12. Timetable for completion of the research student's project and other studies
13. Follow-up intervals for the individual study plan
14. Confirmation of study plan (date, signature of research student, principal supervisor and head of department). The principal supervisor certifies that all members of the supervisory group have read the study plan.

Follow-up of the individual study plan shall take place at least once a year. The research student and

the supervisors are encouraged to begin the task of reviewing the study plan well before the chosen follow-up date. The revised study plan shall be signed according to point 14 above, and shall remain on file at the department. The departments shall enter into LADOK (function SA92) that the research students' individual study plans have been reviewed and approved. The faculty delegates to the Board of Research Education (FUN) the task of ensuring that yearly follow-up is conducted.

Half-time revision (i.e., when 50% of the net study time has been used) shall be carried out together by the research student, the head of the department, the supervisor and the person responsible for research education at the department. The head of the department may delegate this task to another person. The half-time revision shall result in minutes where the responsible parties provide an assessment in writing as to whether the research student's studies are proceeding in accordance with the individual study plan, and as to the feasibility of further plans for study to the doctoral examination. The head of department or his/her delegated person will decide together with the principal supervisor whether to sign and approve the follow-up. The minutes shall remain on file at the department. The faculty provides a template for the minutes.

At the revision when 75% of the net study time has been used, particular attention should be paid as to whether the thesis can be completed within the remaining year before the dissertation. The head of department or the delegated person decides together with the principal supervisor whether to sign and approve the follow-up.

Half-time revision and the revision at 75% of the net study time are carried out in conjunction with SLU's salary agreement for research students according to the Personnel Division, which means that the department shall be notified well in advance that revision is to occur, and that a salary increase will take place if and when the head of department has given notification that the follow-up has been approved.

The head of department is responsible for ensuring that the revision and follow-up of individual study plans take place.

In the event that a research student's studies are assessed not to proceed in accordance with the individual study plan, the head of department is responsible for calling a consultation meeting without delay, to be attended by the head of department, supervisors, the research student, the person responsible for research education at the department and the faculty's director of research education. At this meeting the reasons why the studies are not proceeding according to plan shall be identified and a plan shall be worked out so that the studies may be completed on time.

The research student and supervisor will, at the time of admission to the education, discuss their co-operation in terms of aims and division of responsibility.

5. Scope of doctoral and licentiate degrees

Extracts from superior decisions

Higher Education Ordinance Appendix 2

THIRD LEVEL QUALIFICATIONS

Degree of Licentiate (Licentiatexamen)

Scope

A degree of Licentiate is obtained

either after the research student has completed an educational programme worth at least 120 higher education credits in a subject of education at the third level of higher education,

or after the research student has completed part of an educational programme designed to lead to a doctorate, this part being worth at least 120 higher education credits, if the higher education institution decides that such a degree of Licentiate can be awarded at the higher education institution.

Objectives

Knowledge and understanding

For a degree of Licentiate research students must

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding in the field of research, including current specialist knowledge in a defined part of the field and a deeper knowledge of scientific methods in general and of methods in the specific field of research in particular.

Skills and abilities

For a degree of Licentiate research students must

- demonstrate an ability to identify and formulate issues, critically, independently and creatively, and proceeding with scientific precision; to plan a limited research project and other advanced tasks and to carry them out using appropriate methods within specified time limits, so as to contribute to the development of knowledge; and to evaluate this work;
- demonstrate an ability to clearly present and discuss research and research results in dialogue with the scholarly community and society in general, orally and in writing, in both national and international contexts; and
- demonstrate the skills required to independently participate in research and development work and to work independently in other advanced contexts.

Judgement and approach

For a degree of Licentiate research students must

- demonstrate an ability to make ethical assessments in their own research;
- demonstrate insight into the possibilities and limitations of science, its role in society and people's responsibility for how it is used; and
- demonstrate an ability to identify their need of further knowledge and to take responsibility for developing their knowledge.

Scholarly essay

For a degree of Licentiate research students must have received a passing grade on a scholarly essay worth at least 60 higher education credits.

Other

For a degree of Licentiate with a certain area of specialisation more precise requirements are also to apply, as determined by each higher education institution itself within the framework of the requirements in this qualification description.

Degree of Doctor (Doktorsexamen)

Scope

A degree of Doctor is obtained after the research student has completed an educational programme of 240 higher education credits in a subject of education at the third level of higher education.

Objectives

Knowledge and understanding

For a degree of Doctor research students must

- demonstrate broad knowledge in and a systematic understanding of the field of research, together with deep and up-to-date specialist knowledge in a defined part of the field of research; and
- demonstrate familiarity with scholarly methods in general and with methods in the specific field of research in particular.

Skills and abilities

For a degree of Doctor research students must

- demonstrate an ability to engage in scholarly analysis and synthesis and in independent, critical examination and assessment of new and complex phenomena, issues and situations;
- demonstrate an ability to identify and formulate issues, critically, independently and creatively, and proceeding with scientific precision, and to plan and, using appropriate methods, conduct research and other advanced tasks within specified time limits, and to scrutinise and evaluate such work;
- demonstrate, in a dissertation, their ability to make a substantial contribution to the development of knowledge by their own research;
- demonstrate an ability to present and discuss research and research results with authority, in dialogue with the scholarly community and society in general, orally and in writing, in both national and international contexts;
- demonstrate an ability to identify their need of further knowledge; and
- demonstrate a potential to contribute to the development of society and support other people's learning, both in the field of research and education and in other advanced professional contexts.

Judgement and approach

For a degree of Doctor research students must

- demonstrate intellectual independence and scholarly integrity and an ability to make ethical assessments relating to research; and
- demonstrate deeper insight into the potential and limitations of scholarship, its role in society and people's responsibility for how it is used.

Scholarly dissertation (doctoral dissertation)

For a degree of Doctor the research student must have received a passing grade on a scholarly dissertation (doctoral dissertation) worth at least 120 higher education credits.

Other

For a degree of Doctor with a certain area of specialisation more precise requirements are also to apply, as determined by each higher education institution itself within the framework of the requirements in this qualification description.

Faculty Board guidelines

1. Structure of the credit system

Degree of Doctor in total 240 higher education credits (HEC)

Thesis	minimum 120 HEC (120-195 HEC)
Basic and subject courses	minimum 45 HEC

Degree of Licentiate in total 120 HEC

Thesis	minimum 60 HEC (60-100 HEC)
Basic and subject courses	minimum 25 HEC

2. Thesis work

The thesis work entails the formulation of research questions and hypotheses, description of the basis of the work, e.g. planning and implementation of experiments, artists' works, literature, development of methods, sampling, inventories, analyses, written presentation, i.e. all of the work of which results will be shown in the thesis. The activities listed below may also be included as a supplement. These activities are a natural and self-evident part of the scientific training and are essential for building scientific competence. In contrast to the subject courses, these activities have no syllabus or evaluation and should thus not give separate credits.

The following activities shall be included in the doctoral study credits of the thesis work (give no course credits)

1. Report writing/published investigations
2. Writing of research grant proposals
3. Peer review
4. Participation in national/international workshops
5. Participation in national/international scientific conferences
6. Presentation of posters at national/international conferences
7. Oral presentations at national/international conferences
8. Pre-dissertation of the doctoral thesis
9. Learning techniques at another institution
10. Study travel/excursions
11. Field inventories
12. Development of measuring and sampling equipment
13. Contribution to development of methods

3. Courses

Subject courses (should constitute approx. 2/3 of the total course credits). Subject courses provide

broader and/or more in-depth knowledge of a subject. Subject courses must have a syllabus that describes any prerequisite knowledge, purpose, contents, pedagogic form, schedule and requirements for passing the examination. For literature courses, a general syllabus should be generated which is applicable for all literature courses and does not need to be re-written each time an individual course is offered. Finally, a subject course shall contain an element of individual achievement and assessment regarding performance and learning to test and apply newly attained knowledge and skills in an appropriate pedagogic format. Participation in scientific seminars at the research student's own department or another department is counted as a subject course and may constitute a maximum of 5 HEC during the time of study. Documentation of attendance at a seminar is required for the assignment of credits.

Basic courses (should constitute approx. 1/3 of the total course credits).

Basic courses provide general competence and must have a syllabus that describes any prerequisite knowledge, purpose, contents, pedagogic form, schedule and requirements for passing the examination. Basic courses shall contain an element of individual achievement and assessment regarding performance and learning to test and apply newly attained knowledge and skills in an appropriate pedagogic format. The courses recommended are primarily the research education courses at SLU arranged by the Council of postgraduate studies (FUR), but equivalent courses at other universities will also be accepted. Examples of basic courses are Philosophy of science, Research Ethics, How to write and publish a scientific paper, the basic Pedagogy course, various statistics courses and various courses on leadership and project management.

4. Thesis

The thesis may be submitted as a compilation of papers or as a monograph. The thesis should be written in English or another language relevant for the subject. A doctoral thesis in the form of a compilation of papers should be comprised of 3-5 papers. The research student shall be the first author of at least one of the papers, but should preferably be the first author of at least two papers. All papers should be of sufficiently high quality that they can be published in international, peer-reviewed scientific journals. Preferably at least one of the papers is accepted to or published in such a journal. If this is not the case, the thesis shall be subject to a preliminary examination (see point 6 below, Examination).

A licentiate thesis in the form of a compilation of papers should be comprised of 1-2 papers, of which the research student shall be the first author of at least one. All papers should be of sufficiently high quality that they can be published in international peer-reviewed scientific journals.

The comprehensive summary of a thesis in the form of a compilation of papers shall place the research student's work in an international scientific context, give a synthesis of the various papers and contain a literature review of the subject. It should also contain a short explanation written by the research student describing his/her own specific contribution to the thesis papers.

6. Examination

Extracts from superior decisions

Higher Education Ordinance Chapter 6

Public defence

Section 40 As is stated in the qualification description for the degree of Doctor, one of the requirements for a degree of Doctor is a passing grade on a scholarly dissertation (doctoral dissertation). The doctoral dissertation must have been defended orally at a public defence.

Section 41 The Vice-Chancellor is to determine the time and venue for the defence. The defence must be announced in good time. When it is announced, the doctoral dissertation is to be available at the higher education institution in a sufficient number of copies to enable a satisfactory examination of the dissertation to be made at the defence. The faculty board is to decide on the minimum number of copies in preparation for the defence and on reimbursement of costs for producing this number of copies.

Section 42 The defence is to be led by a chairperson. There is to be an examiner at the defence. The chairperson and the examiner are to be appointed by the faculty board.
Grades for doctoral dissertations

Section 43 A doctoral dissertation is to be assessed with one of the grades 'fail' or 'pass', unless the higher education institution prescribes another grading system. In awarding the grade, account is to be taken of the contents of the dissertation and the defence of the dissertation.

Section 44 A grade for a doctoral dissertation is to be decided by a grading committee, which is appointed specially for each dissertation.

Section 45 A grading committee is to consist of three or five members. The faculty board is to determine the number of members and appoint them. At least one of the members of the grading committee must be appointed from among teachers coming under the area of responsibility of another faculty board or from another higher education institution. A person who has been a supervisor of the research student may not be on the committee unless there are exceptional grounds. The committee is to appoint a chairperson from among its members.

Section 46 The examiner is entitled to be present at the meetings of the grading committee and participate in the deliberations but not in the decisions. The same applies to the principal supervisor, if he or she is not a member of the committee.

Section 47 The grading committee constitutes a quorum when all members are present. The opinion that the majority agrees on is to count as the decision of the committee. The committee is to decide whether to give reasons for its decision and whether to report dissenting opinions, unless the higher education institution has issued special regulations about this.

Vice-Chancellor's decision, June 5th 1996, p. 210

[Decision to recommend the departments in Uppsala not to schedule mandatory teaching, guest lectures of honorary doctors, dissertations or docent lectures to the same day as professor installation lectures of new professors.]

Faculty Board guidelines

Announcement of defence of thesis and licentiate seminar:

The following requirements shall be fulfilled before announcing a thesis defence:

- any preliminary examination shall be completed (see below)
- the faculty's form shall be filled out correctly and in its entirety, including all attachments
- disqualification statements shall be completed (see below)

The following requirements shall be fulfilled before announcing a licentiate seminar:

- completion of an internal review corresponding to a half-time revision (see below)
- the faculty's form will be filled out correctly and in its entirety, including all attachments
- disqualification statements shall be completed (see below)

Missing or incomplete information on the announcement may result in delayed processing at the faculty administrative office and the date of the thesis defence or licentiate seminar may be postponed.

The thesis defence or licentiate seminar shall take place during the period August 15-June 15. The thesis defence/licentiate seminar must be announced to the faculty office at least 12 weeks or 6 weeks before the planned date of the defence or seminar, respectively. The deadline for announcement may be extended if it falls during the summer holiday. The date and time of the public defence must be booked with the faculty office well in advance of submission of the announcement, as no public thesis defences may take place in the NL faculty at the same time. Doctoral and licentiate theses shall be registered at the Registry office at least three weeks in advance of the public defence or the licentiate seminar. The registration shall take place during the period August 15-June 15.

Thesis defence:

In preparation for the public defence, it is recommended that a final seminar or rehearsal (pre-dissertation) be organized at the department.

A preliminary examination of the thesis shall take place

- if none of its composite papers has been accepted for publication in an international peer-reviewed scientific journal.
- if the thesis is presented as a monography

The task of the preliminary examiners is to judge whether the thesis is of sufficient quality to pass at its public defence.

The preliminary examination is performed by two persons with competence of associate professors. At least one examiner must come from another department, faculty, or university. The preliminary examiners shall be appointed by the head of department. One of the examiners may later be included as an ordinary member of the grading committee, whereas the other may become a reserve member in the committee. In the event that an examiner comes from the same department as the research student, that examiner may only be a reserve member in the committee (see below).

The preliminary examination shall take place in accordance with the Faculty's instructions, and the faculty's forms for the examination shall be used. The preliminary examination shall be performed well in advance of the research student's announcement of the public defence of the thesis, and shall be completed once the defence has been announced. The head of department and the principal supervisor are responsible for deciding the timetable for the preliminary examination and for ensuring that it is followed. The preliminary examiners' responses shall be sent to the head of department. The research student shall address any criticisms and make any necessary improvements. The principal supervisor and the research student shall provide written certification that the above has occurred. This certification and the preliminary examiners' responses shall be attached to the announcement for public defence of the thesis to the Faculty.

The preliminary examiners shall each be paid at least 3,000 SEK, to be covered by the department.

Once the Faculty Board receives a proposal from the department, it or its delegate shall appoint a chairperson for the thesis defence, an opponent, and a grading committee, including a reserve member. The grading committee shall consist of three or five members. The principal supervisor or assistant supervisors may not be part of the grading committee or be chairperson at the defence. Both genders shall be represented as ordinary members of the grading committee.

The opponent shall be a Doctorate holder. The chairperson of the public defence shall be an associate professor or a professor at SLU. The members of the grading committee shall have a scientific competence equivalent to that of an associate professor. Members of the grading committee that are affiliated with a Swedish university shall be associate professors or professors. At least one member of the grading committee shall be associate professor or professor.

It is the responsibility of the person submitting the announcement of thesis defence to ascertain that the members meet these requirements before the announcement is submitted to the Faculty. For members who are not associate professors at a Swedish university, a CV and a list of publications shall be attached. The reasons justifying in detail why these members are eligible to be members in the grading committee shall also be attached.

If the grading committee consists of three members, at least one of them shall be appointed from a university other than SLU or from the non-university community. A maximum of one member may be appointed from the area of responsibility of the research student's own Faculty Board. An additional member shall be appointed as a reserve member. Reserve members may come from the same department as the research student. Ordinary members, however, may not.

If the grading committee consists of five members, at least two of them shall be appointed from a university other than SLU, or from the non-university community. A maximum of two members may be appointed from the area of responsibility of the research student's own Faculty Board. No appointment of a reserve member is necessary.

Conflicts of interest shall be taken into consideration, and no conflict of interest may exist between the research student/supervisor and the opponent or members of the grading committee. The opponent and the members of the grading committee are responsible for reporting any conflicts of interest that may exist between the supervisor and the research student. Once the opponent and the members of the grading committee have accepted their assignment they shall submit a disqualification statement which shall be attached to the announcement of the thesis defence.

The faculty administration will send instructions for the goals of the research education to the members of the grading committee before the public defence of the thesis. The chairperson of the thesis defence is responsible for informing the grading committee and the opponent of the procedure for the thesis defence. The chairperson shall be aware of the rules for public defence and grading of doctoral theses according to the Higher Education Ordinance and the decisions of the Faculty Board, and shall see to it that the grading committee observes these rules at the public defence.

The chairperson at the defence, the opponent and the principal supervisor may participate in the grading committee's deliberations but may not be present when the grading committee makes its decision.

Licentiate seminar:

An internal examination shall be performed before the licentiate seminar is announced. The examination may be performed by a Doctorate holder from the same department or from another higher education institution. The examiner shall not be supervisor for the research student or have any other conflicts of interests. A certification of the internal examination shall be attached to the announcement of the licentiate seminar. The examiner may be a member of the grading committee.

Once the Faculty Board has received a proposal from the department, the Faculty board or its delegate shall appoint a chairperson and an grading committee, including a reserve member. The licentiate thesis shall be presented orally by the research student and discussed at a public seminar

and evaluated by a grading committee consisting of three members. The members of the grading committee shall be Doctorate holders. At least one member must be appointed from another faculty. A maximum of one member may be appointed from the same department as the research student. The principal supervisor or assistant supervisors may not be member of the grading committee or preside as a chairperson at the seminar.

Both genders shall be represented as ordinary members of the grading committee.

Conflicts of interest shall be taken into consideration, and no conflict of interest may exist between the research student/supervisor and members of the grading committee. The members of the grading committee are responsible for reporting any conflict of interest that may exist between supervisors and the research student. Once the members of the grading committee have accepted their assignment, they shall submit a disqualification statement which shall be attached to the announcement of the licentiate seminar.



Admission regulations for third level education programmes (PhD education) at SLU – the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Quotations from the Higher Education Ordinance (HEO) are written in *italics*.

1. General

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. Ordinance (2006:1053).

Supervision

HEO chapter 6 section 28

At least two supervisors shall be appointed for each doctoral student. One of them shall be nominated as the principal supervisor. Doctoral students are entitled to supervision during their studies unless the vice-chancellor has decided otherwise by virtue of Section 30.

A doctoral student who so requests shall be allowed to change supervisor. Ordinance (2010:1064).

Implementing regulations adopted by the Board of SLU

A person who is an associate professor or professor, and employed at or visiting SLU may become the principal supervisor of a research student without a specific decision to that effect. A principal supervisor who is not an associate professor at SLU must have a recognised qualification in pedagogy of supervision. SLU offers a course in pedagogy of supervision in the PhD education to all supervisors who do not have sufficient training.

If the principal supervisor is due to retire within four years at the time a new research student is admitted, it is highly recommended that one of the deputy supervisors be an associate professor so he/she is ready to become principal supervisor upon the retirement of the first principal supervisor.

Departments must ensure that research students have a good quality study environment. The working environment for research students must meet the same standard as for university employees.

2. The admission process adopted by the Board of SLU

Admission of new research students in receipt of an employment or research student grant must be advertised in accordance with the instructions in paragraph three of this document.

All admissions, i.e. also the ones financed by scholarships or other forms, must follow the following procedure:

- Evaluation and ranking of the applicants in accordance with the instructions in paragraph five of this document.
- Applicants called to interview are informed of the education programme in accordance with the instructions in paragraph seven of this document.
- The head of the department nominates a candidate for admission to the faculty board. The nomination must include
 - o written reasons based on the candidate's ability to benefit from the education programme in accordance with the instructions in paragraph six of this document;
 - o certification that the candidate meets the basic and special eligibility requirements (where applicable);
 - o an individual study plan and certification that a letter of agreement has been negotiated.
- The faculty board reviews the nomination and evaluates the financial plan, including the form and basis for funding.
- The faculty board approves admission when the instructions in paragraph seven of this document have been met.

3. Advertisement of research places

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. Ordinance (2006:1053).*

Implementing regulations adopted by the Board of SLU

Regardless of the source of funding, all research student places with an employment or research student grant must be advertised on the SLU home pages: www.slu.se. Exemption from this requirement may be granted if advertisement would hinder the recruitment of suitable research students in a research subject area, or where the terms of a research contract with an external partner necessitate exemption. Exemption from the advertisement requirement is granted by the faculty board in question.

Advertisement is not required for research student places with forms of funding other than an employment or research student grant.

Once each semester the university will organise and finance an advertisement including all research student places available at the time in national newspapers. The Vice-Chancellor is responsible for this advertisement.

4. Application

Applications for admission must be made on the form specified by each faculty board.

5. Eligibility

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. Ordinance (2010:1064).

HEO 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. Ordinance (2006:1053).*

Implementing regulations adopted by the Board of SLU

The faculty boards decide the specific eligibility requirements for each research subject area.

To grant exemption from the basic eligibility requirements, the faculty board requires the applicant to produce a bachelor's degree certificate and a written presentation of an independent project. The project must be equivalent to the knowledge and skills required for a diploma project of 15 HEC at Master of Science (One Year) level. The presentation should be written in English. The project could also be a relevant independent work which requires knowledge and skills equivalent to that required for a diploma project of 15 HEC at Master of Science (One Year) level.

These requirements are included in the general syllabus for the research subject area.

If the general syllabus for the research subject area prescribes that specific work experience or language skills are required as special eligibility requirements, the criteria for evaluation must be specified.

6. Selection among applicants

HEO 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. Ordinance (2010:1064).

Implementing regulations adopted by the Board of SLU

All faculty boards at SLU apply the same criteria when selecting among applicants. The assessment criteria are as follows.

1. A written application including a CV and other supplements the applicant wishes to rely upon.
2. One copy of a written presentation of a diploma project representing 15 HEC at Master of Science (One Year) level. If the applicant asks for exemption from basic eligibility, one copy of a written presentation of a relevant independent project with a degree of difficulty and scope equivalent to a diploma project representing 15 HEC at one-year master's level.
3. Personal references.
4. Certified knowledge of the English language equivalent to "Engelska B" (for students with Swedish education) or certified results from international tests such as TOEFL with 550 p or IELTS with 6.0).
5. An interview performed by the principal supervisor and the head of the department or equivalent. It is recommended that one of research students from the department also take part in the interview.

The selection process may be divided into two parts where only those shortlisted on the basis of criteria 1 - 4 are called to interview.

7. Decision of Admission

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. Ordinance (2006:1053).

HEO chapter 7 section 36: A higher education institution may only admit applicants to third-cycle courses and study programmes who have been appointed to doctoral studentships or awarded doctoral grants. 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 applicants 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 PhD or a doctorate in the fine, applied and performing arts. Ordinance (2010:1064).

HEO chapter 7 section 38: A higher education institution that has been entitled to award third-cycle qualifications within a field 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 field 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. Ordinance (2010:1064).

Implementing regulations adopted by the Board of SLU

The faculty board is responsible for admission and assessing the reliability of the funding for the studies. The faculty board must draw up guidelines for the funding of research studies. The guidelines must lay down criteria for the funding forms accepted by the faculty board.

If an applicant has basic eligibility, he or she cannot be admitted before having presented a degree certificate for Master of Science (One Year), Master of Science (Two Year) or a professional qualification of at least 240 HEC. If the applicant is granted exemption from the basic eligibility requirements, he/she must produce a bachelor's degree certificate.

Before anyone with a form of funding other than as described in *HEO Chapter 7, Section 36* is admitted, the appropriacy of the funding level must be assessed.

SLU accepts scholarships associated with research work that include funding of the research student's doctoral project. The net funds available to the research student must not be less than SEK 12,000 per month during the student's stay in Sweden. SLU does not accept scholarships whereby the research student may become liable to repay funding if he or she ceases to pursue the third-level education programme. SLU prefers scholarship funding to be arranged via SIDA/GLOBFORSK or a similar organisation.

Before proposals for admission of research students in receipt of a scholarship are decided on by the head of department and sent to the faculty, the suitability of the student for the third-level education programme must be assessed by the department to which the student is to be admitted. The assessment must include consideration of whether the special eligibility requirements have been met (see item 5), and application of the assessment criteria for determining the ability of the student to benefit from the third-level education programme (see item 6).

The head of department's written admission proposal must be accompanied by a certified copy of the contract between the donor and the scholarship holder. The copy is to be filed at the faculty office. All funding must be clearly evident from the contract. The contract must not include any terms limiting the ability of the scholarship holder to complete the education programme in accordance with

Swedish law and practice. The admission proposal must also be accompanied by an account of the full funding of the doctoral work, and the manner in which any supplement to the scholarship is funded. In addition, the department must have an action plan setting out measures to be taken in the event of non-payment of the scholarship, i.e., responsibility for the funding of the remainder of the education.

A student can either be admitted to a four-year third-level education programme ending in a doctoral degree or a two-year third-level education ending in a licentiate degree. Admission to a licentiate programme requires that the general syllabus for the research subject area specify the requirements for a licentiate degree. A research student admitted to the licentiate programme and examined for a licentiate degree must apply for readmission to continue towards a doctoral degree. After an evaluation of the funding for the previous two years, a research student admitted to a programme ending in a licentiate degree may be transferred by the faculty board to the third-level programme ending in a doctoral degree without readmission. Before transfer, an updated individual study plan, signed by principal supervisor, research student and head of the department, must be presented to the faculty board. The form and level of funding must also be evaluated and accepted by the faculty board.

A four-year third-level education programme ending in a doctoral degree is considered to be the norm. Hence, reasons must be given in each case of admission to a two-year third-level programme ending in a licentiate, which must not occur as a matter of course.

At the time of interview, official information about the third-level education programme and the general syllabus for the third-level research subject area must be given to the applicant.

The admission process set out in paragraph 2 must be organised in a manner permitting the faculty board to admit new research students at least once each semester; preferably in late August and late January.

All applicants must be informed of the results of the admission process not later than seven days after a decision has been taken.

8. Employment as research student

HEO chapter 5 Appointment

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. Ordinance (2006:1053).

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. Ordinance (2002:139).

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 two 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 Section 30 of Chapter 6 of this Ordinance or

of the doctoral grant pursuant to Section 14 of the Ordinance on Doctoral Grants for Doctoral Students (1995:938). Ordinance (2010:1064).

Section 5 When an appointment to a doctoral studentship is to be made in cases other than those referred to in Section 4, the ability of the student to benefit from third-cycle courses and study programmes shall be taken into account. In addition, the second and third paragraphs shall apply.

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. Ordinance (2006:1053).

Implementing regulations adopted by the Board of SLU

There is no advertising requirement where a scholarship is converted into employment.

9. Information about the third-level education programme

Each faculty board must provide information about

- the admission process;
- mandatory attachments to the application forms and the assessment criteria applying in the selection process;
- the structure of the third-level education programme, rules and guidelines for the programme;
- forms of funding for third-level education programmes;
- the general syllabuses for the research subject areas.

The university coordinates the information and makes it available on the homepage www.slu.se

10. Credit transfer

General

Credits may only be transferred if the course content fits into the education programme as presented in the individual study plan. Consequently, automatic transfer of credits from a previous education programme is not permitted.

First or second-level course in subjects that are not part of the basic eligibility requirements may be transferred after approval by the faculty board. The number of credits that may be transferred is decided when approval is given. The number of transferable credit must be adjusted in line with third-level education standards.

Credits acquired before admission to the third-level education programme may not be transferred if:

- they have contributed towards a one-year master's degree or in a similar or lower degree; or
- they are part of the basic eligibility requirements.

How to apply for credit transfer

The research student and the principal supervisor apply jointly for credit transfer to the faculty board or to a committee/body designated for the purpose by the faculty board. The application should be accompanied by course certificates and information about the content and educational level of the course.