



Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

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Document(s) repealed: Board's decision of 6 November 2012, Section 115/12, reg. no SLU Fe.2012.4.1-3467 with admission regulations for third-cycle (doctoral) education

Annex to: Board decision of 18 February 2016, Section 13/16

Admission regulations for third-cycle (doctoral) education 2016

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

Effective date

These guidelines take effect on 1 April 2016, replacing the 2012 admission regulations (reg. no SLU ua.Fe.2012.4.4-3467).

Quotations from ordinances in this document are shown in *italics*. The decisions of the SLU Board are represented in the remaining text.

HEO Ch 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 Chap 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 as decided by the SLU Board

Upper secondary school grades equivalent to English B/English 6 are a basic requirement. Applicants who do not have a Swedish school-leaving certificate from an upper secondary school must have an internationally approved language test certificate corresponding to English 6 (TOEFL, IELTS or Cambridge ESOL) in accordance with www.universityadmissions.se/en/All-you-need-to-know1/Applying-for-studies/English-requirements/Internationally-recognized-English-test/. Exemptions from certificate requirements can be found at www.universityadmissions.se.

The faculty board will only grant exemption from the basic eligibility requirement if the applicant is able to produce evidence of a degree at Bachelor level, and an independent paper corresponding to at least 15 HEC, and whose content represents knowledge and proficiency displayed in a thesis at second-cycle level, or a relevant independent thesis of an equivalent degree of difficulty and scope. The thesis should be written in English or Swedish.

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

If specific entry requirements in the form of special occupational experience, necessary language skills or other conditions are specified in the general syllabus, the criteria applicable for assessment purposes must also be specified.

2. Advertising of places on degree programmes

HEO Chap 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 as decided by the SLU Board

All places, regardless of the source of financing, must be advertised for at least three weeks at www.slu.se.

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

- an existing licentiate degree programme is changed into a doctoral degree project before the licentiate degree has been awarded;
- the applicant is recruited by a university partner as part of contractual educational collaboration;
- the applicant has received a personal stipend.

Special conditions in research contracts can also allow for exemptions from the duty to advertise at www.slu.se.

3. Application and selection of applicants

HEO Chap 7 Section 35

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

- 1. meets the general and specific entry requirements that the higher education institution may have laid down, and*
- 2. is considered in other respects to have the ability required to benefit from the course or study programme. Ordinance (2010:1064).*

HEO Chap 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 as decided by the SLU Board

All admissions, i.e. even those not advertised, must be preceded by the application process below.

1. Application by applicant. The application must be registered by the senior registry clerk and be made on the special application form, accompanied by the following appendices:
 - a. Curriculum vitae;
 - b. Certified copies of degree certificates, register extracts from previous first and second-cycle studies at higher education institutions;
 - c. A copy of a thesis at second-cycle level, corresponding to at least 15 HEC, or other relevant independent paper of an equivalent degree of difficulty and scope;
 - d. A language test certificate corresponding to English 6, where applicable. See section 1;
 - e. If the applicant is a foreign citizen, a certified copy of the passport must be attached;
 - f. A list of reference persons and their contact information shall be attached.
2. At the request of a head of department:
 - a. relevant experts at the department will use the thesis or equivalent as a basis for assessing the applicant's ability to complete the programme and be awarded a degree within the stipulated time;
 - b. relevant experts at the department will contact reference persons to obtain further information for assessment of the applicant's ability to complete the programme and be awarded a degree within the stipulated time;
 - c. a ranking list based on the above assessments will be made. A potential credit transfer must not be grounds for giving an applicant priority over other applicants;
 - d. the top candidates' applications, including appendices, will be sent to the Division of Educational Affairs.
3. The Division of Educational Affairs:
 - a. checks the eligibility of the top candidates according to section 1. Applicants who submit applications with compulsory information missing will be informed that additional information is required;
 - b. checks the authenticity of degree certificates and language certificates;
 - c. returns applications with appendices to the department, together with certification of the applicant's eligibility and the authenticity of the attached degree and language certificates.
4. As a minimum, the top-ranked applicant shall be interviewed in accordance with the interview instructions.
5. In consultation with the proposed principal supervisor, the head of department presents a proposal for the admission of one of the applicants to the faculty board. The proposal must be made on the special application form and be accompanied by the following appendices:
 - a. The applicant's complete application, including appendices, see section 1 above in this list.
 - b. A certificate from the Division of Educational Affairs regarding the applicant's eligibility and the authenticity of the attached certificates.

- c. A preliminary individual study plan created using the common university template.
 - d. A plan describing the funding of the research forming the basis for the thesis work.
 - e. If the applicant intends to obtain a joint degree, a copy of the agreement between the parties involved in the educational collaboration must be attached. The agreement shall be drafted in accordance with the instructions given in "Guidelines for joint degrees at SLU" (SLU ua Fe.2011.3.3-4103).
 - f. If the applicant will be supported by a personal stipend, they must include a copy of the Letter of Acknowledgement that is sent to them. Only letters of acknowledgement drafted using the established template will be accepted.
 - g. If the applicant will be supported by a personal scholarship, a certified copy of the contract between the student and the donor must be attached. Section 5 of this document governs the stipends accepted at SLU.
 - h. If the applicant is employed by a company or a foreign university, a certified copy of the contract of employment or equivalent must be attached.
 - i. If a doctoral student is employed by a company, a contract (referred to as an 'industry doctoral student contract') shall be drawn up between the employer and the head of department. The contract shall specify the division of responsibility between the company and the SLU department so that the studies can be completed in the planned time frame (Chapter 7, Section 36 of the Higher Education Ordinance, see also section 5, page 7. The doctoral student and main supervisor shall approve the contract.
6. An admission decision or decision to discontinue the admission process shall be sent to all applicants.

4. Admission decisions

HEO Chap 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 Chap 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 Chap 7 Section 38

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

What is said in the first paragraph is to apply similarly at a higher education institution that in having been granted the title of university is entitled pursuant to Section 11 of Chapter 1 of the Higher Education Act (1992:1434) to award third-cycle qualifications. Ordinance (2010:1064).

Implementing regulations as decided by the SLU Board

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

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

The faculty board is responsible for carefully assessing whether planned funding of the doctoral student's living expenses is sustainable throughout the entire programme, whether via employment or a stipend.

If the planned funding of a doctoral student with a stipend, by no fault of the doctoral student themselves, fails in such a way that it makes it impossible for them to continue their studies and obtain their degree, the head of department shall, as

long as the doctoral student has fulfilled the obligations in their individual study plan, offer the student a one-year employment as a doctoral student.

Section 5 governs permitted forms of employment and financial support.

The applicant may either be admitted to a degree programme whose final objective is a degree of doctor, corresponding to 4 years' full-time study, or to a licentiate programme, corresponding to 2 years. Admission to a licentiate programme requires that the general syllabus for the third-cycle subject states that the programme can be concluded with a licentiate degree. A doctoral student who has been admitted to a licentiate programme and awarded a degree must apply to continue their studies for a degree of doctor. Following an application from the head of department, the faculty board can approve a shift from a licentiate programme to a doctoral programme. The application shall include documentation for assessing the funding as well as an individual study plan culminating in a degree of doctor.

Admission to a licentiate programme must be justified in each instance and may not occur as a matter of course.

If the student in question is approved for exemption from the basic eligibility requirements, they shall provide as a minimum a bachelor degree certificate.

5. Doctoral studentships and other means of support

HEO Chap 5 Employment

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 3 a 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 three years of full-time study before the award of a PhD or a doctorate in the fine, applied and performing arts. This does not apply, however, if the vice-chancellor has decided on the withdrawal of the student's resources pursuant to 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 (2013:525).

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 as decided by the SLU Board

Doctoral studentships are the normal form of support for doctoral students at SLU. Funding of living expenses with the help of doctoral grants is not permitted at SLU for doctoral students admitted after 1 January 2013.

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

Other forms of employment at SLU: accepted only if a contract is drawn up between the doctoral student and the head of department. The contract shall ensure that the time allocated for third-cycle studies as part of the employment is sufficient for the studies to be completed within the planned time (Chapter 7, Section 36 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

Employment with another employer (company, university or other government agency). If a contract is drawn up between the employer, doctoral student and head of department, doctoral students may be admitted using this form of funding. The contract shall ensure that the time allocated for third-cycle studies as part of the employment is sufficient for the studies to be completed within the planned time (Chapter 7, Section 36 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

Doctoral students from international universities participating in research projects funded by SIDA are usually employed at their home universities. The contract between SIDA, SLU and the international universities governs the funding of the doctoral students' living expenses and other costs.

The financing of studies through private wealth is not permitted.

Stipends

Government directive for the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences – Funding conditions:

Stipends intended to be an alternative to salary or other form of study funding for doctoral students may not be funded out of central government funding. 'Central government funding' refers funding for research and for third-cycle degree programmes, as well as other government funding allocated via a government agency.

A certified copy of the contract between the donor and the stipend recipient shall be kept by the faculty office.

SLU only accepts stipends that have no provisos concerning the academic performance of the doctoral student. Only terms stating that the stipend may be prematurely withdrawn if supervisory resources are withdrawn from the student under Chapter 6, Section 30 of the Higher Education Ordinance are acceptable.

Only stipends providing net financial support of at least SEK 16,000 per month when the doctoral student is in Sweden are accepted.

The contract between donor and stipend recipient may not contain any provisions which:

- limit the recipient's ability to complete the programme according to Swedish law and practice;
- entail worse study conditions for the doctoral student when compared to the conditions that apply to other doctoral students at the university;
- infringe on the universities' right to determine how the education is carried out or examined;
- require the university or supervisor to report planning, contents or implementation of the individual doctoral student's education to the stipend donor.

Stipends from Swedish stipend donors may not include provisions from the donor regarding work performance before, during or after the third-cycle studies.

SLU Board

DECISION

SLU ID: SLU.ua 2016.1.1.1-438

18/2/2016

Distribution list

Admission regulations for third-cycle (doctoral) education 2016

Decision

The Board decides

to confirm, as of 1 April 2016, the admission regulations for third-cycle studies according to the appendix to this decision, and

to repeal, as of 1 April 2016, the Board's decision of 6 November 2012, Section 115/12, reg. no SLU Fe.2012.4.1-3467 regarding admission regulations for third-cycle studies.

Presentation of the matter

In accordance with Chapter 6, Section 3 of the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100), the university shall have admission regulations approved by the Board. The admission regulations include the provisions that SLU applies regarding eligibility, application, selection and admission, funding and how decisions are made

Reasons for the decision

According to a previous decision, the existing admission regulations were to be revised at the end of 2015. Experiences of the last few years have shown a need for clearer instructions when admitting doctoral students funded by foreign stipends.

The decision's meaning and assessed consequences

In addition the admission regulations being adjusted to match legislative changes, some changes have been made that affect doctoral students funded by foreign stipends.

So far, the rule is that if a stipend fails (through no fault of the doctoral student), the head of department shall, where finances allow, offer the doctoral student a doctoral studentship. In the proposed admission regulations, the provision: *where finances allow* has been omitted. The change means that a head of department must, before admitting a doctoral student, have a plan for how potential employment as a doctoral student shall be funded.

The lowest accepted level of net funding that a stipend leads to has also been raised from SEK 13,000 to SEK 16,000 per month when the doctoral student is in Sweden. The new level corresponds to the level that SIDA applies to its bilateral programmes. The level is higher than what a doctoral student with a doctoral grant has at their disposal after taxes, but lower than the entry level salary after tax for employment as a doctoral student.

Finally, the proposal specifies four requirements that SLU does not accept in contracts between stipend recipients and donors. The aim is to avoid contract that limit the stipend recipient's education quality or infringes on SLU's right to organise the education as it sees fit. The changes are in line with the Association of Swedish Higher Education's recommendations "Stipendiefinansierad forskarutbildning – kartläggning och förslag till rekommendationer" [Stipend-financed doctoral studies – investigation and proposed recommendations] (26/10/2015, REV 2 ref 14/077).

This matter has been decided on by the Board after a presentation by Deputy Vice-Chancellor Lena Andersson-Eklund. The case has also been prepared by Principal Administrative Officer Lotta Hansson.

Rolf Brennerfelt

Lena Andersson-Eklund

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