



General syllabus for third-cycle (doctoral) programmes in medical sciences at Uppsala University

Approved by the Faculty Board and Disciplinary Domain Board on 3 May 2007 (MEDFARM 2006/1602), and effective as of 1 July 2007, revised by the Research Training Committee 30 March 2010, 17 December 2013 (MEDFARM 2013/1525), 16 December 2014 (MEDFARM 2014/734), 19 November 2020 (MEDFARM 2020/1273), 22 November 2022, 12 December 2023 and 9 June 2026 (MEDFARM 2022/2593). The latest revision enters into effect on 1 July 2026.

Programme content

Third-cycle (doctoral) education aims to

- provide in-depth expertise in the field of medical sciences and specifically in the subject area of the thesis;
- prepare the doctoral student for independent research or professional activities, where strict demands are placed on methodological skills, thorough subject knowledge, and independent and critical thinking;
- ensure the doctoral student acquires strong teaching skills and a good ability to report research results both orally and in writing.

In addition, doctoral students are to be trained in line with the outcomes specified in the System of Qualifications in the Higher Education Ordinance.

Licentiate degree

A licentiate degree is awarded *either* after a doctoral student has completed a study programme of at least 120 credits in a subject in which third-cycle education is offered, *or* after a doctoral student has completed part (at least 120 credits) of a study programme intended to conclude with the award of a doctoral degree. For a licentiate degree, the doctoral student must have been awarded a pass grade on a research thesis worth at least 60 credits. An applicant may only be admitted to third-cycle education with the aim of a licentiate degree if the applicant so wishes. The name of the qualification in Swedish is *medicine licentiat i medicinsk vetenskap* and the English translation used is *Licentiate of Philosophy (Faculty of Medicine)*.

Doctoral degree

As a rule, doctoral students should be admitted with the aim of achieving a doctoral degree. A doctoral degree is awarded after the doctoral student has completed a study programme of 240 credits in a subject in which third-cycle education is offered. A half-time seminar or licentiate seminar should be held at the approximate mid-way point of studies aiming to achieve a doctoral degree. The name of the qualification in Swedish is *medicine doktor i medicinsk vetenskap* and the English translation used is *Doctor of Philosophy (Faculty of Medicine)*.

To be awarded a doctoral degree, the doctoral student must have received a pass grade on a research thesis (doctoral thesis) worth at least 120 credits. The thesis can be a compilation thesis or a monograph. The doctoral thesis must be defended at a public defence. The research task can be carried out either individually or collaboratively within or outside the department.

Course and theory components

The scope of course and theory components must correspond to at least 30 credits for a doctoral degree and at least 15 credits for a licentiate degree. For both types of degree, all compulsory third-cycle courses and components need to be completed and passed.

Compulsory courses

1. *Introduction to Doctoral Studies*, 1,5 credits

and

2a. *Introduction to Scientific Research*, 10 credits

or, instead of 2a

2b I. *Research Ethics and Philosophy of Science*, 3 credits

2b II. *Communication in Science and Education*, 3,5 credits *

2b III. *Introduction to Biostatistics*, 3,5 credits

* If a doctoral student has completed the course "*Academic Teacher Training Course*, 7.5 credits" this can replace the course "*Communication in Science and Education*".

If required by the project, the following courses are also compulsory:

- *Radiation Science*, 1.5 credits
 - *Animal Laboratory Science*, equivalent to "function A" in Swedish legislation.
- **

** This means that those doctoral students who only receive data/material from animal experiments must have taken the 1 credit course "Swedish legislation and ethics, animal welfare and 3R" *and* the theory part for each type of laboratory animal concerned.

Doctoral students who personally carry out animal experiments under supervision must *also* take the corresponding practical treatment modules.

If a doctoral student will be conducting animal experiments *independently without supervision during their conduct*, the Animal Welfare Act (2018:1192) and Chapter 6, Section 5 of the "Regulations and General Advice on Laboratory Animals" (L150 SJVFS 2019:9) direct that "real expertise" must have been demonstrated and formally assessed by a person with the necessary qualifications (but not the doctoral student's supervisor).

Compulsory components apart from formal courses

- At least one presentation (lecture or poster) at an international conference
- A half-time seminar or licentiate seminar is mandatory for a doctoral degree

Compulsory components to be given credit for a research track

- Participation in at least two of the theme days for the research track
- Courses worth at least 5 credits of relevance to the chosen research track
- The international conference (see above) must be relevant to the research track

If the above requirements are fulfilled, this is worth an additional 1.5 credits, which are reported to the study documentation system with the name of the research track.

Furthermore, if desired, the name of the research track will be added to the degree.

Elective courses and components

The remaining credits for courses up to 30 credits (doctoral degree) or 15 credits (licentiate degree) may comprise theory courses, method courses and literature courses, participation and presentations in seminar series, presentations at conventions, etc., as stated in the disciplinary domain's "Guidelines for third-cycle (doctoral) education" (MEDFARM 2020/250).

All courses and theory components included in the programme are to be specified in the individual study plan. Passed courses are to be documented in Ladok after being signed by the examiner.

Individual study plan

The individual study plan is to be reviewed annually and revised where necessary. The annual follow-up is conducted by the doctoral student and principal supervisor in consultation with other supervisors and the examiner.

A half-time seminar or licentiate seminar is mandatory. In addition to research, research students with doctoral studentships are normally required to carry out a certain amount of departmental employment (max. 20%) in the form of teaching and administration.

A person meets the general entry requirements for third-cycle education if they:

1. have been awarded a second-cycle qualification;
2. have completed course requirements comprising at least 240 credits, at least 60 credits of which were awarded in the second-cycle (including a degree project worth at least 15 credits); or
3. have acquired substantially equivalent knowledge in some other way in Sweden or abroad.

A person meets the specific entry requirements for third-cycle education if they:

1. fulfil the English 6/English Level 2 language requirement.

Applicants should attach a certificate of their successful language test to their application for admission to third-cycle education. This does not apply, however, to students who have completed upper secondary education in a Nordic country, in a country with upper secondary education corresponding to English level 6/English Level 2, or a country that has English as its official language or who have completed a higher education qualification in English.

2. have undertaken second-cycle education/equivalent that is relevant to the research field of the thesis.

Selection from among applicants

In selecting between applicants who meet the general and specific entry requirements, their ability to benefit from the programme is to be taken into account. The assessment criteria applied in making the selection are:

1. the applicant's documented subject knowledge of relevance to the field of research, as stated in the call for applications;
2. the analytical ability of the applicant, corroborated by scientific reports, academic papers, degree project or similar;
3. other documented knowledge possessed by the applicant that is important for their third-cycle education.

Transitional rules

Doctoral students who began their third-cycle education before 1 July 2007 should complete their education in line with the general study plan in effect before that date, in the subject for which the student was admitted and in line with the individual study plan established at the point of admission.

Doctoral students who so wish can change their third-cycle field to medical sciences. In such a case, the individual study plan should be revised in accordance with relevant provisions in effect after 1 July 2007 and the student should take a complete programme in line with the new study plan.