UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

Ref. No. TEOLFAK 2020/7

General Syllabus for the Third-cycle Programme in

Systematic Theology

Established by the Faculty Board on May 27, 2020
Last updated on June 2, 2026

Table of Contents

Third-cycle study programmes at the Faculty of Theology 3

Outcomes 3

Entry requirements 4

General entry requirements 5

Specific entry requirements 5

Content and structure of the study programme 5

Programme structure 5

Supervision 6

Individual study plan 7

Courses 7

Faculty-wide courses: 7

Common courses: 8

Courses specialising in Worldview Studies and Christian Theology: 9

Courses specialising in Islamic Theology: 10

Knowledge examination 12

Credit transfer 12

Dissertation and defence 13

Dissertation 13

Defence 13

Licentiate seminar 14

Degree 14

Entry into force and transitional provisions 15

Other provisions 15

Third-cycle study programmes at the Faculty of Theology

The Faculty of Theology conducts third-cycle studies in a number of subjects, each of which encompasses diverse specialisations. The interaction of subjects and specialisations constitutes a quality-enhancing element of the third-cycle courses and study programmes offered by the faculty.

Announcements regarding available places on the faculty's third-cycle study programmes are normally made on an annual basis on the websites of Uppsala University and the Department of Theology. Applicants are selected from among those who meet the entry requirements based on their ability to benefit from third-cycle studies assessed on scientific criteria.

While admissions to the Faculty of Theology are restricted to Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, students are permitted to conclude their studies with a Degree of Licentiate. The subject includes the specialisations *Worldview Studies* and *Christian Theology* or *Islamic Theology*.

Outcomes

Pursuant to the Qualification Ordinance (Annex 2 to the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance (SFS 1993:100)), for the award of a Degree of Doctor of Philosophy and Degree of Licentiate the doctoral student shall achieve the following outcomes.

Degree of Doctor of Philosophy	**Degree of Licentiate**
Knowledge and understanding	**Knowledge and understanding**
Demonstrate broad knowledge and systematic understanding of the research field as well as advanced and up-to-date specialised knowledge in a limited area of this field.	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding in the field of research including current specialist knowledge in a limited area of this field as well as specialised knowledge of research methodology in general and the methods of the specific field of research in particular.
Demonstrate familiarity with research methodology in general and the methods of the specific field of research in particular.	
Competence and skills	**Competence and skills**
Demonstrate the capacity for scholarly analysis and synthesis as well as to review and assess new and complex phenomena, issues and situations autonomously and critically.	
Demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate issues with scholarly precision critically, autonomously and creatively, and to plan and use appropriate methods to undertake research and other qualified tasks within predetermined time frames and to review and evaluate such work.	Demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate issues with scholarly precision critically, autonomously and creatively, and to plan and use appropriate methods to undertake a limited piece of research and other qualified tasks within predetermined time

	frames in order to contribute to the formation of knowledge as well as to evaluate this work.
Demonstrate through a dissertation the ability to make a significant contribution to the formation of knowledge through his or her own research.	
Demonstrate the ability in both national and international contexts to present and discuss research and research findings authoritatively in speech and writing and in dialogue with the academic community and society in general.	Demonstrate the ability in both national and international contexts to present and discuss research and research findings authoritatively in speech and writing and in dialogue with the academic community and society in general.
Demonstrate the ability to identify the need for further knowledge.	
Demonstrate the capacity to contribute to social development and support the learning of others both through research and education and in some other qualified professional capacity.	Demonstrate the skills required to participate autonomously in research and development work and to work autonomously in some other qualified capacity.
Judgement and approach	**Judgement and approach**
Demonstrate intellectual autonomy and disciplinary rectitude as well as the ability to make assessments of research ethics.	Demonstrate the ability to make assessments of ethical aspects of his or her own research.
Demonstrate specialised insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used.	Demonstrate insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used.
	Demonstrate the ability to identify the personal need for further knowledge and take responsibility for his or her ongoing learning.

Entry requirements

The requirements for admission to third-cycle courses and study programmes are that the applicant meets the general and specific entry requirements that the Faculty Board has laid down, and is considered in other respects to have the ability required to benefit from the course or study programme (SFS 2010:1064, Higher Education Ordinance Chapter 7 Section 35). The Board of the Faculty of Theology decides on regulations for specific entry requirements (AFUU § 2, RUF § 4).[1]

[1] Please see "Other provisions" at the end of this document for a list of governance documents including abbreviations.

General entry requirements

A person meets the general entry requirements for third-cycle courses and study programmes if he or she: has been awarded a second-cycle qualification; has satisfied the requirements for courses comprising at least 240 credits, of which at least 60 credits were awarded in the second-cycle; or 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 (SFS 2010:1064, Higher Education Ordinance Chapter 7 Section 39).

Specific entry requirements

Specific entry requirements for admission to a third-cycle course or study programme in Systematic Theology are:

- At least 30 higher education (HE) credits in religious studies at first or second cycle.
- A degree project of at least 15 HE credits at second cycle specialising in Systematic Theology.

For admission to third-cycle studies in Systematic Theology, specializing in the profile area Jewish Thought, the following additional requirements apply:

- The independent scholarly work must, in addition to its disciplinary focus, also have a focus on Jewish Thought. Furthermore, the applicant must possess proficiency in languages relevant to the primary source material of the proposed doctoral thesis.

Content and structure of the study programme

Programme structure

The third-cycle study programme in Systematic Theology concludes with a Degree of Doctor of Philosophy or Degree of Licentiate. The programme covers 240 HE credits for a Degree of Doctor of Philosophy and 120 HE credits for a Degree of Licentiate.

A third-cycle study programme in Systematic Theology that concludes with a Degree of Doctor of Philosophy covers four years of net study time and consists of courses totalling 90 HE credits and a doctoral dissertation of 150 HE credits.

A third-cycle study programme in Systematic Theology that concludes with a Degree of Licentiate covers two years of net study time and consists of courses totalling 60 HE credits and a licentiate thesis of 60 HE credits.

While the course component is usually completed before the dissertation component, the student is recommended to begin work on their thesis project during the first year of study. This is done by developing the project in terms of its purpose, research issues, study materials and theoretical and methodological approach, as well as the design of the planned dissertation.

Teaching takes place in the form of courses, individual and group supervision and research seminars during which the dissertation component is publicly discussed. Participation in the research seminar for the subject is compulsory.

The research seminar convenes weekly during term time. In addition to doctoral students' dissertation projects and texts written by senior researchers, there will also be discussion of texts focused on theory, methodology and research ethics.

At the research seminar, doctoral students are expected to present their own material, defend their research and review the research of others. The presented texts are reviewed in various ways. Doctoral students will sometimes be asked to review each other's texts, while on occasion external guests will be invited to join public discussions. The seminar involves various forms of public discussion, even when no specific opponent has been appointed. All of those attending the seminar are responsible for actively participating so that seminars can bear fruit and propel research projects forward.

Where necessary, joint seminars will be arranged with other research subjects at the Department of Theology and Uppsala University in order to create thematic seminars, invite guests and offer doctoral students a wider research context.

Graduate schools have been established with other higher education institutions within the subject. Graduate schools arrange meetings each semester as part of regular seminar activities. At graduate schools, doctoral students' papers are publicly discussed, teachers present new research perspectives and certain course activities are conducted.

Within the framework of ongoing, multifaceted seminar activities, the doctoral student achieves a broader perspective on the subject and is trained in a systematic understanding of the research subject as a whole. Ongoing seminar participation contributes to an understanding of scientific methodology, as well as specifically training the doctoral student's ability to present their work orally. It also actualises issues such as the possibilities and limitations of science, its societal role and responsibility for how it is put to use.

Supervision

Two supervisors will be appointed for each doctoral student: one principal supervisor, who bears the main responsibility for course work and the doctoral thesis; and one assistant supervisor. At least one of the supervisors shall be an employee of or adjunct to Uppsala University. Supervisors shall have a doctorate/
equivalent and at least one of the supervisors shall have the qualifications required for appointment to a readership (AFUU § 1).

The doctoral student retains the right to supervision throughout their studies, unless the vice-chancellor decides otherwise with the support of Chapter 6 Section 30 of the Higher Education Ordinance.

This implies that a full-time student studying for a degree of doctor of philosophy is entitled to supervision for four years and for a degree of licentiate two years. Part-time students retain the right to equivalent supervision, but limited to a maximum period of eight years. The scope of supervision should be such that the doctoral student is regularly offered the opportunity to discuss any problems with the supervisor, primarily with regard to the design and content of their dissertation.

Principal supervisors must complete supervisor training no later than during their first year as supervisors. The format and scope of such training are determined by the Faculty Board.

A doctoral student who so requests shall be allowed to change supervisor (SFS 2010:1064, Higher Education Ordinance Chapter 6 Section 28).

Individual study plan

An individual study plan shall be established for each doctoral student. The Faculty of Theology has a template showing what an individual study plan should contain. The Faculty Board has delegated the establishment of individual study plans to the Department of Theology's director of third-cycle studies or, in the event that the director of studies is themselves the supervisor, the head of department. The individual study plan shall be established in consultation with the doctoral student and her or his supervisor. Individual study plans shall be updated, revised and decided on an annual basis.

The individual study plan is reviewed at least four times a year by the advisor and the doctoral student together, including the preparation of a study plan for newly admitted students. During the review, any deviations and their causes should be noted. In the event of major deviations, the study plan should be revised during the academic year. Minor deviations should be noted in the following year's study plan.

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. Before a study programme is extended, the doctoral student and supervisors shall be afforded the opportunity express an opinion regarding the grounds for and scope of the extension.

The doctoral student, supervisors and director of third-cycle studies shall certify in writing that they have familiarised themselves with the individual study plan and the revisions made to it (Higher Education Ordinance Chapter 6 Section 29).

Courses

A third-cycle study programme in Systematic Theology that concludes with a Degree of Doctor of Philosophy consists of courses totalling 90 HE credits. The following courses are included in the study programme.

Faculty-wide courses:

- *Introduction to Doctoral Studies*, 7.5 HE credits.

  Content: This course is intended to introduce newly admitted doctoral students to third-cycle studies with regard to elements such as: academic writing, writing various types of dissertation (monographs and compilation dissertations), research ethics and seminar culture. Through the course, doctoral students familiarise themselves with the breadth of the faculty's research.

  Examination format: Active participation, written assignment.

- *Academic Teacher Training Course*, 7.5 HE credits.[2]

[2] Upon application to the Faculty Board, this course may, under certain circumstances, be substituted for another course in the general curriculum.

This course is held by the Unit for Academic Teaching and Learning at Uppsala University.

Common courses:

- *Methods and Problems in Theology*, 7.5 HE credits.

  The course includes:

  - theoretical and methodological perspectives on theology and worldview studies in the fields of politics and theology, gender theory and theology, religious theology, post-modernity and theology, postcolonial theory and theology, scientific worldviews and theology, art and theology;
  - perspectives on writing and teaching about the present-day role of systematic theology; and
  - research ethics and good research practice.

  Examination format: An assignment is written based on reading diary entries, including reflections on teaching on the theme of the course. The written assignment will then be presented orally to the examining teacher.

- *Strands in Contemporary Islamic Theology*, 7.5 HE credits.

  The course includes:
  - Islamist theology and its various expressions;
  - Islamic worldviews and contemporary theological debate; and
  - minority theology and secularism.

  Examination format: written assignment and oral presentation.

- *Strands in Contemporary Christian Theology*, 7.5 HE credits.

  The course includes:
  - an overview of significant twentieth-century theologians and theological timelines;
  - advanced study of Roman Catholic and Protestant systematics; and
  - advanced study of the lines of conflict in contemporary theological debate.

  Examination format: written assignment presented orally as a lecture using pedagogical aids.

- *Worldview Studies, Critique of Religion and Secularity*, 7.5 HE credits.

  The course includes:

  - an overview of various modern critical standpoints on religion;

- an overview of various atheist and secularist standpoints and lines of argument; and
- an overview of modern theological standpoints with claims to be secular or atheistic.

Examination format: written assignment and oral presentation.

Courses specialising in Worldview Studies and Christian Theology:

- *Early Christianity and Late Antiquity*, 7.5 HE credits.

  The course includes:
  - the Doctrine of the Trinity and Christology during the period 100 to 700 CE;
  - Augustine theology and philosophy;
  - the interplay between ancient philosophy and the development of Christian theology; and

  Examination format: written assignment and oral examination plus lesson planning.

- *Medieval Theology*, 7.5 HE credits.

  The course includes:
  - theological thinking in Anselm of Canterbury and Pierre Abelard;
  - the theology and philosophy of High and Late Scholasticism; and
  - the meeting of Christian and Islamic theology and philosophy.

  Examination format: written assignment and oral examination.

- *From Renaissance to Enlightenment*, 7.5 HE credits.

  The course includes:
  - the importance of Renaissance humanism and the via moderna to Christian theology;
  - theology of the Reformation;
  - the development of orthodoxy; and
  - theology and critique of religion during the Enlightenment.

  Examination format: written assignment and oral examination.

- *Theology of the 19th and Early 20th Century*, 7.5 HE credits.

  The course includes:
  - Kant and Schleiermacher;
  - Romanticism's theological and philosophical ideas;
  - liberal theology;
  - Swedish theology in the early twentieth century; and
  - oral presentation to an academic audience.

Examination format: oral presentation.

- *Existential Questions and Artistic Expressions*, 7.5 HE credits.

  The course includes:
  - worldview studies and literature;
  - poetic theology and philosophy;
  - artistic expression and critique of religion; and
  - witness literature and views of humanity,

  Examination format: written assignment and oral examination plus an oral presentation of a worldview analysis of artistic expression.

- Elective course 1, 7.5 HE credits

  The course includes:
  - Choice of course and course content agreed in consultation with the supervisor. The course can be focused on literature of specific relevance to the student's dissertation or, for example, be an externally arranged course.

  Examination format: decided in consultation with the supervisor.

- Elective course 2, 7.5 HE credits

  The course includes:
  - Choice of course and course content agreed in consultation with the supervisor. The course can be focused on literature of specific relevance to the student's dissertation or, for example, be an externally arranged course.

  Examination format: decided in consultation with the supervisor.

Courses specialising in Islamic Theology:

- *Classical Islamic Theology*, 7.5 HE credits.

  The course includes:
  - Islamic monotheism;
  - the ontology and epistemology of the Qur'an;
  - early Islamic branches and movements; and
  - theology and power, the development of orthodoxy and heresiology.

  Examination format: written assignment and oral examination.

- *Islamic Theology in the Middle Period*, 7.5 HE credits.

  The course includes:

  - the development of Kalam, between revelation and philosophical method;
  - theology and logic (ibn Sina, ibn Rushd, in Tufayl, etc.);

- theology and law (al-Ghazali, ibn Taymiyya, alt. other thinkers); and
- theology and philosophy (al-Suhrawardi, etc.)

Examination format: written assignment and oral examination.

- *Post-Classical Islamic Theology until the Modern Period*, 7.5 HE credits.

The course includes:
- theological thought in Andalusia, North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia;
- between traditionalist, ethical and Sufi theological thought: sharia, mysticism, illumination and esotericism (Hanbalism, Ash'arism, Matudirism, Shi'ism, Isma'ilism, etc.);
- Ibn Taymiyya, Mulla Sadra, ibn Arabi, ibn Khaldun, al-Nablusi al-Kurani, etc.; and
- theological methods in new power constellations: sectarianism, pragmatism and syncretism.

Examination format: written assignment and oral examination.

- *Islamic Theology in the Modern Period*, 7.5 HE credits.

The course includes:
- Islamic theology and modernity, epistemological and ontological challenges;
- tensions between revelation theology and neo-traditionalism within the framework of secular nation states;
- theological reinterpretation and theological ethics in focus;
- strands of liberal and feminist thought in Islamic theology; and
- practical theology.

Examination format: oral presentation and oral examination.

- *Islamic University Theology in the European Context*, 7.5 HE credits.

Content:
- what is Islamic university theology?
- Islamic university theology at European universities and in Protestant theological contexts;
- Islamic university theology as a constructive alternative in Islamic minority contexts; and
- Islamic university theology in the light of historical minority status – for example, the Balkans.

Examination format: the course is examined through a longer written assignment presented to an academic audience; for example, the research seminar on systematic theology.

Elective course 1, 7.5 HE credits

Content:

- Choice of course and course content agreed in consultation with the supervisor. The course can be focused on literature of specific relevance to the student's dissertation or, for example, be an externally arranged course.

Examination format: decided in consultation with the supervisor.

Elective course 2, 7.5 HE credits

Content:

- Choice of course and course content agreed in consultation with the supervisor. The course can be focused on literature of specific relevance to the student's dissertation or, for example, be an externally arranged course.

Examination format: decided in consultation with the supervisor.

A third-cycle study programme in Systematic Theology that concludes with a Degree of Licentiate consists of courses totalling 60 HE credits.

Knowledge examination

Each course within the study programme concludes with a written and/or oral examination. Generally speaking, the courses are individual reading courses. Examination takes various forms: written assignment, oral presentation, oral examination, lesson planning. Graded discussions and presentations relate to either the content of course literature or problems that the doctoral student has addressed with the help of the course literature and may also include skills-training elements.

Depending on the various examination formats stated at the end of each course and in the general syllabus, some adaption may be made to the examination format to meet the specific needs of the individual doctoral student. These types of adaption are implemented in consultation with the doctoral student in the interests of achieving the qualitative target of the study programme.

Examinations are graded as either Pass (G) or Fail (F). The principal supervisor is the examiner but may delegate the examination of individual course components to the assistant supervisor or another teacher at the department/within the subject area, within the framework of assigned supervision hours. The director of third-cycle studies is the examiner for faculty-wide courses.

Credit transfer

Any decision to transfer credits from a Swedish or foreign study programme or other activity at third-cycle level is made by the examiner (principal supervisor). The signed decision is registered and archived at the department together with supporting documentation. Credit transfers must be approved by the director of third-cycle studies before they can be reported in Ladok.

Credits may be transferred from courses at another Swedish higher education institution or foreign higher education institution (regardless of study cycle), and from first and second-level courses at Uppsala University (although not if the course has been taken after the commencement of third-cycle studies) and courses at freestanding Swedish or overseas institutes or centres organised by one or more higher education institutions.

Dissertation and defence

Dissertation

For a Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, the doctoral student shall write a doctoral dissertation corresponding to 150 HE credits. This shall be based on independent research and make a significant contribution to research in the subject.

The subject of the dissertation shall be decided in consultation with the supervisors. A doctoral dissertation can be designed as either a single coherent scientific paper (monograph) or a compilation of scientific articles with a linking theme (compilation dissertation) that the doctoral student has written alone or jointly with another person.

Doctoral dissertations must be written in Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, English, German or French. The Faculty Board may permit a doctoral thesis to be written in another language. This should be notified in conjunction with admission to the third-cycle programme.

In the event that a doctoral thesis is written in a language that is not internationally accessible, a summary shall be included in such a language. In addition, a brief summary of the main points (abstract) shall be attached to the dissertation.

The quality of the doctoral dissertation shall be such that it meets reasonable requirements to be accepted for publication in a scientific forum.

The manuscript of the dissertation shall be presented at one or more research seminars or undergo a similar peer review through the department. The use of government appropriations for the printing of doctoral dissertations is governed by the rules determined by the Faculty Board.

Where applicable, this also applies to licentiate theses. A licentiate thesis corresponds to 60 HE credits and shall demonstrate the doctoral student's scientific ability to address problems that arise in the field of study.

Once a final manuscript for the dissertation is available, it shall be presented for review at the research seminar. At this seminar, an external assessor will be engaged who is familiar with the subject.

Based on the discussion that takes place at the final seminar, the head of subject and the supervisors, in consultation with the reviewer, will decide whether a public defence can take place. Unless special reasons exist, a minimum of 80 course credits must have been earned before a public defence can be made.

Defence

A doctoral dissertation shall be defended orally and in public. The time and place of the defence is decided by the Faculty Board. The public defence shall be announced in good time (no later than three weeks) through electronic posting.

At the time of registration, the doctoral dissertation shall be available at the University in sufficient copies to make it possible to conduct a satisfactory review of the dissertation at the defence.

A chairperson shall be appointed to chair the defence. An opponent shall also be appointed. Decisions regarding the appointment of the chairperson, opponent and examining committee are made by the Faculty Board.

A doctoral thesis shall be assessed with one of the grades Pass (G) or Fail (F). When grading, due consideration shall be given to the content of the dissertation and to the defence of the dissertation. The grade for a doctoral thesis shall be decided by the examination committee, which is appointed specifically for each dissertation.

For further information on dissertations and defences, please refer to the Guidelines for Third-cycle Courses and Study Programmes at the Faculty of Theology.

Licentiate seminar

Licentiate thesis shall be publicly discussed at a research seminar on the subject. The thesis shall be available for a period of three weeks prior to the date it is defended at the seminar. The announcement of the public discussion shall also be made no later than three weeks in advance on the department's notice board and notified to the Faculty of Theology in Uppsala and to any other relevant departments that conduct third-cycle studies. The opponent for the public discussion of a licentiate thesis is appointed by the Board of the Faculty of Theology based on a proposal from the head of subject. Under normal circumstances, the opponent is the head of subject. If the head of subject has been the student's supervisor, the head of subject will appoint another examiner, usually a teacher of that subject or another subject at the Department of Theology. The examiner must at the least be qualified for appointment to a readership. The grade is set by the examiner after the public seminar and having obtained the opinion of the opponent.

Degree

The Faculty of Theology may award the third-cycle qualifications *Degree of Licentiate* and *Degree of Doctor of Philosophy* in Systematic Theology. Under certain circumstances, the Faculty Board may, upon application by a doctoral student—which must be submitted to the Board no later than the Faculty Board meeting that takes place prior to the notification of the public defence—grant an exemption for the completion of a Doctor of Philosophy (Faculty of Theology) or Licentiate degree. The English name for the degree is *Doctor of Philosophy (Faculty of Theology*).

The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Faculty of Theology) is achieved once the doctoral student has completed a third-cycle study programme of 240 higher education credits in Systematic Theology and has thus received the grade Pass for the examinations included in the programme and written and publicly defended a doctoral dissertation that has been approved by the examination committee.

The Degree of Licentiate in Systematic Theology is achieved once the doctoral student has completed a study programme of 120 higher education credits in Philosophy of Religion and has thus received the grade Pass for the examinations included in the programme and written and at a seminar publicly defended a licentiate thesis that has been approved by the examiner.

Degree certificates are issued by Uppsala University by application to the Graduation Office.

Entry into force and transitional provisions

The present general syllabus for third-cycle programmes enters into force on 1 December 2020 (TEOLFAK 2020/07). The previous general syllabus ceases to apply to doctoral students admitted to third-cycle programmes on or after 1 September 2020. Doctoral students admitted prior to this date can choose to either follow the existing general syllabus or switch to the new syllabus during a transitional period, although no later than 2028.

The general syllabus was last updated by the Faculty Board on June 2, 2026.

Other provisions

Statutory provisions applicable to third-cycle courses and study programmes can be found in:

- the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance (SFS 1993:100), Chapter 5 (rules on the employment of doctoral students), Chapter 6 (regulations for all courses and study programmes), and Chapter 7 (describes the admission process).
- Guidelines for Third-Cycle Studies at Uppsala University (RUF), ref. no. UFV 2022/728.
- Admission Rules and Grading Regulations for Third-cycle Courses and Study Programmes at Uppsala University (AFUU), ref. no. UFV 2022/729.
- Guidelines for Third-cycle Courses and Study Programmes at the Faculty of Theology, ref. no. TEOLFAK 2020/81.