



FACULTY OF  
MEDICINE

GENERAL STUDY PLAN MEDICAL  
SCIENCE

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Research Studies Board

## **GENERAL STUDY PLAN FOR DOCTORAL STUDIES IN MEDICAL SCIENCE**

Scope: 120 credits

Qualification: Degree of Licentiate

Approved on 10 December 2018. Applies from 1 January 2019

Revised on 3 December 2019. Applies from 1 January 2020

Revised on 17 December 2020. Applies from 1 January 2021

Revised on 8 June 2021. Applies from 1 July 2021

Revised on 13 December 2022. Applies from 1 January 2023

Revised on 12 December 2023. Applies from 1 January 2024

*This is a translation of the Swedish version. In the event of any discrepancy, the Swedish version has preferential interpretation.*

## OBJECTIVES

The principal aim of doctoral programme in medical science is to train researchers who can drive development within medicine and health forwards, through their own discoveries and through the critical review and introduction of new experiences methods within the healthcare system.

### 1. THE SUBJECT

#### 1.1. Research studies subject

The subject of medical science in this context is a collective term for research that aims in different ways to promote people's health and prevent ill-health as well as mitigate and cure diseases. The subject encompasses everything from studies of cells to society such as

- medically relevant models in vitro and in vivo with perspectives from molecular genetics, chemistry, cell biology, physiology and pharmacology
- explanations of common and uncommon diseases and conditions, and the development of new diagnosis and treatment methods and as well as new types of healthcare
- the significance of lifestyle, environment, society structure, working life and the healthcare system for health at individual, group and population levels
- health-promoting interventions and knowledge about how they can be implemented
- professional and organisational developments of relevance to medical science and health science.

#### 1.2. Project

The research project is described in the individual study plan. The project is unique to each doctoral student and the individual study plan is to clearly present how the doctoral student is to acquire the knowledge and methods required to conduct the project.

## 2. LEARNING OUTCOMES

The doctoral programme shall be based fundamentally on the knowledge acquired by students in first and second-cycle courses and study programmes, or its equivalent.

In addition to the requirements for first and second-cycle courses and study programmes, the doctoral programme shall develop the knowledge and skills required to be able to undertake autonomous research (The Swedish Higher Education Act, Chapter 1, Section 9a).

For a Degree of Licentiate the doctoral student shall

### **Knowledge and understanding**

- 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.

### **Competence and skills**

- 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 the ability in both national and international contexts to present and discuss research and research findings in speech and writing and in dialogue with the academic community and society in general, and
- demonstrate the skills required to participate autonomously in research and development work and to work autonomously in some other qualified capacity.

### **Judgement and approach**

- demonstrate the ability to make assessments of ethical aspects of his or her own research
- demonstrate insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used, and
- demonstrate the ability to identify the personal need for further knowledge and take responsibility for his or her ongoing learning.

### **Local goals at Lund University**

- demonstrate knowledge of sustainable development of relevance to the subject
- demonstrate the ability to apply an international perspective in the subject
- demonstrate the ability to apply gender equality and equal opportunities perspectives in the subject

## **3. SCOPE OF THE PROGRAMME**

The scope of the doctoral programme aiming towards a licentiate degree is 120 credits – i.e. two years of full-time study or a maximum of four years of part-time study and concludes with a *Degree of Licentiate of Medical Science*. For the licentiate degree the allocation of credits for courses and literature study on the one hand and the thesis project on the other is a maximum of 60 credits for courses and literature study and a minimum of 60 credits for the licentiate thesis.

## **4. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

The requirements for admission to doctoral programme are that the applicant meets the general and specific admission requirements and

is considered in other respects to have the ability required to benefit from the course or study programme.

#### **4.1. General admission requirements**

A person meets the general entry requirements for the doctoral programme if he or she:

- has been awarded a second-cycle qualification, or
- has met 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 Research Studies Board may permit an exemption from the general admission requirements for an individual applicant, if there are special grounds.

#### **4.2. Specific admission requirements**

Specific admission requirements relate to knowledge from first and second-cycle study programmes or equivalent but may also relate to specific professional experience. In addition, there is a requirement for sufficient knowledge within the subject area for the doctoral programme.

The specific admission requirement is met by a person who has

- at least 60 credits within the subject area of medical science

Students with a first-cycle qualification obtained outside Scandinavia are to have knowledge equivalent to 3 years of studying English in upper secondary school (a pass in the exam) if they have a first language other than English.

## **5. SELECTION**

In accordance with the Higher Education Ordinance's regulations the selection between applicants is to be primarily based on an assessment of the candidates' ability to benefit from the programme. Regarding admission it is mainly the applicant's qualifications from first and

second-cycle studies that can normally be assessed. In this context, breadth, depth and relevance as well as components demonstrating autonomous work are to be taken into consideration. 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.

## 6. PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

### 6.1. Individual study plan

An individual study plan is to be drawn up for each doctoral student in conjunction with admission to doctoral studies. The study plan is to be drawn up in consultation between the doctoral student and the supervisor and thereafter be approved by the assistant head of department responsible for doctoral studies. The study plan content includes:

- a plan for the doctoral student's research assignment, the research project
- a timetable for the programme
- the obligations of the doctoral student and supervisor
- the scope and content of supervision
- information on the courses (beside compulsory courses) and the literature on which the doctoral student will be assessed
- what is otherwise needed for the programme to be conducted efficiently.

The studies are to be planned so that they can be completed on a full-time basis in two years or a maximum of four years on a part-time basis. The study plan is to be updated annually.

### 6.2. Courses

At admission to the PhD programme, the doctoral students should, as an introduction to PhD studies, do a mandatory assignment which should be certified by the supervisor (a). Furthermore, the doctoral

students are admitted to the Research School in Medical Science with a total course requirement of 13.5 credits (b). In addition to the courses within the Research School a completed Portfolio in the course Generic Knowledge and Skills worth 6 credits (c) is required. There are additional mandatory courses for those doctoral students who will perform animal experiments (d) or do teaching (e). Furthermore, it is mandatory for all doctoral students to attend a number of seminars (f).

*a) Introduction to PhD studies*

*b) Research School in Medical Science*

- i. Introduction to Research Methodology, 3 credits
- ii. Theory and practice of scientific communication, 1,5 credits
- iii. Applied statistics I, 1.5 credits
- iv. Applied statistics II, 3 credits
- v. Research ethics, 3 credits
- vi. Oral communication, 1.5 credits

*c) Generic Knowledge and Skills, 6 credits*

*d) Course in laboratory animal science (3 credits)*

The course is compulsory for all doctoral students who use laboratory animals in their thesis project and is to be carried out at the start of doctoral studies.

*e) Teaching and learning in higher education course*

For doctoral students who are going to teach, training in teaching and learning in higher education equivalent to at least 3 credits (2 full-time weeks) is compulsory.

*f) Seminars*

It is compulsory for both full-time and part-time doctoral students during at least 1.5 years of their doctoral studies to take part in at least nine seminars within the subject of medical science. This includes thesis defences, half-time reviews or equivalent. It is mandatory to attend the seminar “Writing a thesis summary”. Details of included elements are to be specified in the individual study plan, and participation is reported in the course Generic Knowledge and Skills.

### **6.3. Degree of Licentiate**

The licentiate thesis is to be the equivalent of two years of full-time study (120 credits) including time spent on courses. The licentiate thesis is to contain a number of articles or manuscripts (papers), as well as an introductory summary and is to demonstrate that the doctoral student, together with the courses, has competence corresponding to the learning outcomes of a licentiate degree.

#### **6.3.1. Papers**

For a Degree of Licentiate in Medical Science the norm is that the student has written at least one research manuscript as well as a short introductory summary. The doctoral student is to be the sole first author of the manuscript. The manuscript(s) are to carry academic weight and be structured in the form of a research article, in publishable condition and contain an indication of the journal in which the manuscript can potentially be published.

#### **6.3.2. Introductory summary**

The introductory summary is to provide an up-to-date description of the subject of the licentiate thesis and how the licentiate project fits into this. It is to be written autonomously by the doctoral student and is to demonstrate that the doctoral student has obtained specific subject knowledge. A critical description and discussion of the methods is to be included in which alternative methods are also discussed. The results are to be summarised and critically reviewed in a discussion. The text should integrate obtained results in the current field of research. It is to present what the licentiate thesis has contributed to the subject. The summary is also to include how the



results of the thesis can be utilised as well as a proposal for continued research. The doctoral students should furthermore reflect on ethical considerations.

### **6.3.3. *Assessment***

For a Degree of Licentiate the doctoral student is to have been awarded a grade of Pass in the courses included in the programme and have been awarded a grade of Pass for the licentiate thesis. The licentiate thesis is to be defended orally at a public seminar.

The doctoral student is to have carried out their research assignment in accordance with the individual study plan, which entails that he or she has

- completed and been awarded a grade of Pass in the set compulsory courses and any further courses for the doctoral programme or within the subject stated in the individual study plan
- been assessed and awarded a grade of Pass for the course Generic Knowledge and Skills
- conducted a licentiate seminar and been awarded a grade of Pass