

General Syllabus for the Third-Cycle Programme in Biblical Studies

Approved by the Research Faculty 2019-10-21

The syllabus applies to students who complete their programmes with a Licentiate or Doctoral degree. At the University College Stockholm, students are accepted primarily into programmes concluding with a Doctoral degree, but there is also the possibility to conclude with a Licentiate degree.

1. Programme Objectives

The purpose of the third-cycle programme in Biblical Studies is to educate researchers and lecturers with a high competence in the two specialisations of Old Testament/Hebrew Bible exegesis and New Testament exegesis, who are nationally and internationally competitive. The programme shall offer both breadth and depth, and include philological, historical, literary, social science, and hermeneutical perspectives.

The programme is to be based on knowledge and skills acquired by the doctoral student in first- and second-cycle programmes. It shall develop and deepen the knowledge and skills of the doctoral student in such a way that, after completion, the doctoral student will be able to independently conduct high-quality research, communicate and publish research in the scholarly community, as well as for a general audience in popular contexts, both nationally and internationally.

LICENTIATE DEGREE

The System of Qualifications specifies the objectives of the programme under three headings:

Knowledge and understanding

For a Degree of Licentiate the third-cycle student shall 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

For a Degree of Licentiate the third-cycle student shall

- 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

For a Degree of Licentiate the third-cycle student shall

- 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.

DOCTORAL DEGREE

The System of Qualifications specifies the objectives of the programme under three headings:

Knowledge and understanding

For the Degree of Doctor the third-cycle student shall

- 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, and
- demonstrate familiarity with research methodology in general and the methods of the specific field of research in particular.

Competence and skills

For the Degree of Doctor the third-cycle student shall

- 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 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 to identify the need for further knowledge and
- 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.

Judgement and approach

For the Degree of Doctor the third-cycle student shall

- demonstrate intellectual autonomy and disciplinary rectitude as well as the ability to make assessments of research ethics, and
- 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.

2. Entry Requirements and Qualifications

Admission to the third-cycle programme in Biblical Studies requires that the applicant a) fulfils the general entry requirements; b) fulfils the specific entry requirements for the research subject area and the area of specialisation applied for; c) is otherwise considered to be able to assimilate the education.

General Entry Requirements

A person meets the general entry requirements 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 Research Faculty of UCS may permit an exemption from the general entry requirements for an individual applicant, if there are special grounds.

Specific Entry Requirements

A person meets the specific entry requirements if he or she has satisfied the requirements for courses comprising at least 120 credits in the research subject area, being relevant for the programme, including a broad general course, or the equivalent, of at least 30 credits in Theology/Religious Studies.

In addition, the person must have satisfied the requirements for courses comprising at least 90 credits in Biblical Studies, of which at least 30 credits are at the second-cycle level, including a dissertation of at least 15 credits in the area of specialisation applied for.

Apart from a dissertation in the area of specialisation applied for the following terms pertain for Biblical Studies and its two areas of specialisation:

For applications in Biblical Studies, with specialisation in Hebrew Bible exegesis: Completed courses of at least 45 credits in Hebrew Bible/Old Testament exegesis with Hebrew, and at least 30 credits in New Testament exegesis with Greek.

For applications in Biblical Studies, with specialisation in New Testament exegesis: Completed courses of at least 45 credits in New Testament exegesis with Greek, and at least 30 credits in Hebrew Bible/Old Testament exegesis with Hebrew.

3. Admission

UCS admits applicants for third-cycle programmes subsequent to advertisement, application, and evaluation. Advertisements of studentships and stipends are posted on the UCS webpage at least one month before the application deadline. Information about openings shall also be distributed through the national and international networks of institutions that UCS has access to.

Applications are submitted electronically together with necessary attachments before the application deadline. Applications should be directed to the UCS Research Faculty. Late applications will not be considered.

The Research Faculty evaluates applications to doctoral study programmes within two months from the application deadline. UCS only admits as doctoral students applicants with sufficient qualifications and good prospects to complete the doctoral programme within the stipulated time frame and with excellent results. Evaluations shall be based on the applicant's previous records, with special regard to the quality of the Master's dissertation, on the research plan included in the application, and on the relationship between the proposed research project and the competence of supervisors as well as special profile areas at UCS.

UCS admits and funds doctoral students, but may also admit as doctoral students applicants with external or own funding. UCS will ensure there is reasonable and long-term funding which makes it possible for the doctoral student to complete the programme within a maximum of eight years.

4. Selection Criteria

In ranking qualified applicants, great importance is attached to the ability to assimilate scholarly literature, the capacity to do independent analyses, and the ability to clearly account for research results systematically and pedagogically in writing. Therefore, a primary tool for ranking is the assessment of an applicant's dissertation (degree projects). Applicants with several second-cycle/ Master's dissertations (degree projects) may gain priority before applicants with only one, but not necessarily – quality outweighs quantity. Although course grades in previously completed programmes are accorded certain weight, the level achieved in second-cycle/ Master's dissertations (degree projects) is crucial.

A project plan is necessary for assessing an applicant's potential for delimiting and implementing a thesis project. Evaluating it is another instrument for ranking. In a case with two equal applicants it is reasonable to accord already completed dissertations (degree projects) somewhat higher weight than a project plan.

All research subject areas require an excellent ability to assimilate scholarly literature in English. Language skills beyond English is a merit in relation to specific subject specialisation and the character and form of the dissertation project, as is credits in other subjects that are relevant for the thesis project.

Applicants with external funding are evaluated according to the same requirements and criteria as other applicants, but are ranked only in relation to applicants in the same

group. Applicants with own funding are evaluated according to the same requirements and criteria as other applicants but are not ranked. The mere fact that an applicant fulfils the general and specific entry requirements does not guarantee admission, even when funding is available. UCS only admits applicants who are deemed to have sufficient capacity to complete a third-cycle programme with excellent results, including a thesis of high quality.

5. Contents and Design of the Programme

The third-cycle programme is comprised of courses, seminars, and exchanges, as well as supervision. The third-cycle programme includes 240 credits, which correspond to four years of full time studies, and is concluded with a doctoral degree. The approval of a doctoral degree is subsequent to the student having passed all required exams, as well as having had the doctoral thesis approved.

The third cycle programme concluding with a doctoral degree consists of an independently written scholarly thesis of 165 credits and a course part of 75 credits.

Courses

The part with courses consists of the following:

- a) Interdisciplinary Introductory Course with Advanced Philosophy of Science (5 credits).
The course introduces the doctoral student to the programme, as well as relevant and contemporary discussions of philosophy of science in relation to the research subject areas.
- b) History and Methods of the Research Subject Area (5 credits)
The purpose of the course is to give the doctoral student an informed survey of the broad research subject area constituted by Biblical Studies.
- c) Compulsory Courses in the Area of Specialisation (45 credits)
The purpose of the courses offered here is to deepen the specialised knowledge of the doctoral student, as well as his/her particular competence in the chosen area of specialisation. The compulsory courses are specified in the document "Compulsory and Elective Courses" relating to Biblical Studies.
- d) Elective Courses (20 credits)
The doctoral student may choose several different courses, for instance, a higher education pedagogical course (for teaching), the elective courses on offer, or a course adapted to principal aspects of the thesis. The student may also choose a joint course in common with another institution. The elective courses are specified in the document "Compulsory and Elective Courses" relating to Biblical Studies.

The third-cycle programme may be concluded with a licentiate degree including 120 credits. The third cycle programme concluding with a licentiate degree consists of an independently written scholarly dissertation of 60 credits and a course part of 60 credits.

The approval of a licentiate degree is subsequent to the student having passed all required exams, as well as having the licentiate dissertation approved. A one-point grading scale with the grade Pass is used to assess exams and tests. The principal supervisor is the examiner for courses in which no separate examiner has been designated.

Seminars and Exchange

Third-cycle programmes are conducted in the form of research schools with regularly recurring research seminars and seminar days with doctoral students and supervisors. Some courses and course parts are common for all doctoral students. Others are specific for the various research subject areas and areas of specialisation. Some seminars and seminar days each term are conducted in cooperation with other cooperating institutions.

UCS encourages doctoral students to participate already at an early stage of their education in research exchange and conferences of various kinds, both nationally and internationally.

Doctoral students are given opportunity, as far as possible, to participate in teaching at undergraduate level, and are strongly recommended to participate in higher education teaching courses.

Supervision

Doctoral students are assigned a principal supervisor and an assistant supervisor from the Research Faculty. A choice is made after consulting the doctoral student. The principal supervisor must have the competence level of at least associate professor (docent), and the assistant supervisor must have a doctoral degree. In cases when the doctoral student's thesis topic is of such a kind that special external competence is required, an assistant supervisor can be found at one of the institutions with which UCS has agreements of cooperation.

The principal supervisor and assistant supervisor are responsible for continuous supervision of the doctoral student, to an extent of at least 200 clock hours by the principal supervisor in the case of a doctoral degree, and 100 clock hours in the case of a licentiate degree. A doctoral student may have a change of supervisor. If the principal supervisor retires or terminates his/her employment, UCS takes responsibility for recruiting sufficiently competent replacement supervisors, so that continuity is maintained.

Individual Study Plan

Supervisors and the doctoral students jointly set up individual study plans, which are subsequently approved by the Research Faculty. The objectives of individual study plans are to structure the doctoral programme, regulate the doctoral student's work efforts, and ensure the doctoral student continuous and sufficient supervision. The plans must contain an overview and time plan for the doctoral student's work and is regularly followed up. Individual study plans are revised each academic year. The study period may be prolonged because of special reasons, such as parental leaves, positions of trust, or sick leaves.

Thesis, Licentiate Dissertation and Defence

Admission to third-cycle programmes is partly based on the applicant's research plan, but the final decision concerning topic and structure is made jointly by student and supervisor.

The doctoral thesis and licentiate dissertation may be written in Nordic languages, English, German, or French. Theses/dissertations in Swedish must contain a short summary in English, and theses/dissertations in other languages must always contain a short summary in Swedish.

Doctoral students are required regularly to present sections of their theses for discussion and review in research seminars.

Procedures for presentation, review, and assessment of the doctoral thesis and licentiate dissertation respectively, are specified in separate documents.

Theses and dissertations are graded according to the prevalent model in Sweden, in which a thesis/dissertation is awarded the grades of either Pass or Fail. It is the responsibility of the supervisor and the Research Faculty to allow the submission only of theses and dissertations which are considered to be of sufficient quality for approval.

Degree

Subsequent to completed courses and an approved thesis or dissertation, the president will award a degree certificate for the degree of Doctor of Theology or Licentiate of Theology.

5. Miscellanea

- Legislative regulations concerning third-cycle programmes: the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance, chapter 5 (employment as doctoral student), chapter 6 (educational programme), chapter 7 (access to educational programme), and appendix 2 (system of qualifications).
- UCS handbook on procedures concerning the administration of the third-cycle programmes.