

General syllabus for third-cycle courses and study programmes in

PSYCHOLOGY

Psykologi

This syllabus was approved on 3 May 2007 (reg. no. CF 62-240/2007)¹, ². It was last amended on 1 February 2019 (reg. no. ORU 2018/07135).

By virtue of the Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 26 (1993:100), Örebro University prescribes the following.

1 Subject description

Psychology is the study of “the mind” and behaviour, and covers all aspects of human experience. The discipline aims at describing and understanding why we think, feel and behave the way we do. Psychology therefore encompasses physiological, cognitive, emotional, behavioural and social factors in relation to environmental contexts.

The psychology department at Örebro University features three strong research environments focusing on developmental psychology, health psychology and criminal psychology. These environments provide the basis for many activities and research ranging from laboratory studies to longitudinal studies and interventions. In addition, there is research into a number of other fields such as cognition, prevention and occupational psychology.

2 Outcomes

The intended learning outcomes for the award of the degree, the qualitative targets, are evident from [annex 1](#) to this syllabus. The different components of the third-cycle study programme shall together equip the doctoral student to meet all intended learning outcomes³. The intended learning outcomes are referred to in more detail in the degree requirements in sections 5 and 6.

¹ Faculty Board of Humanities and Social Sciences

² The English translation of this general syllabus was last amended on 21 March 2019.

³ Under the new higher education system in Sweden, and in accordance with the terminology recommended by the Swedish Council for Higher Education, courses and study programmes on the doctoral level are referred to as *third-cycle courses and study programmes*. In this document, the terms *doctoral* and *third-cycle* are used interchangeably as prefixes to terms related to studies at the doctoral level and they should therefore be considered synonymous [translator’s comment].

3 Admission to the programme – entry requirements and selection etc.

Provisions on entry requirements and selection can be found in [annex 2](#) to this syllabus. For information on admission in other respects, see the admission regulations for Örebro University.

4 Programme organisation – general information⁴

There are two types of third-cycle, or doctoral, study programmes – one concluding with the doctoral degree (240 credits, corresponding to four years of full-time study) and one concluding with the licentiate degree (120 credits, corresponding to two years of full-time study).

The programmes mainly consist of courses and the writing of a doctoral or licentiate thesis. The programme components are assessed by means of course examination and the public defence of the thesis respectively. The doctoral student is expected to take an active part in seminars and other auxiliary components during their period of study. The student is further recommended to take advantage of the opportunities offered to attend guest lectures etc. at the university, and to attend and contribute to national and international conferences.

For each doctoral student, a minimum of two supervisors will be appointed, supporting the student during their studies⁵. One of them will be nominated principal supervisor. The detailed organisation of the programme shall be determined in an individual study plan.

In addition to the requirements laid down in this general syllabus, there may be special requirements for the doctoral student's programme, such as courses that are compulsory within the framework of a research school, which must be specified in the individual study plan. The credit distribution between courses/examinations and thesis should nevertheless be in accordance with the programme organisation as laid down in this general syllabus.

Credit overview

Overview of programme organisation and degree requirements	Courses/examinations, credits		Thesis, no. of credits	Total no. of credits
	Compulsory	Elective		
Doctoral degree	0	75	165	240
Licentiate degree	0	37.5	82.5	120

⁴ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Sections 4, 5, 28 and 29 and local guidelines on the organisation of third-cycle courses and study programmes

⁵ The Higher Education Ordinance stipulation that at least two supervisors be appointed for each doctoral student does not apply to doctoral students who commenced their studies before 1 July 2007. Instead, the older provision of at least one supervisor applies (point 18, transitional provisions of SFS 2006:1053).

5 Degree requirements for the Degree of Doctor, 240 credits

For the Degree of Doctor, the doctoral student must

- have received a passing grade in the examinations⁶ of the 75 credits generated by the courses listed below,
- have received a passing grade on a scholarly dissertation (doctoral thesis) corresponding to 165 credits. The thesis is to be defended orally at a public defence event⁷.

Courses, total of 75 credits

Which course/courses a doctoral student shall take is determined based on an assessment of what courses will enable them to meet the intended learning outcomes. The doctoral student plans, in consultation with the supervisor, which courses should be part of their programme. The selection is then laid down in the individual study plan.

At least 45 credits must derive from level A (block I-V).

0-30 credits must derive from level B (block VI-IX).

A. Courses with a focus on scientific procedure within the field of psychology, 45-75 credits in total

The courses and examinations included on level A shall refer to outcomes D1-D4 and D8-D10, see annex 1.

Block I: Scientific and professional development, at least 7.5 credits

The courses and examinations shall refer to outcomes D3, D8 and D9, annex 1.

This block of courses concerns the basic scientific approach as well as professional development. Examples of courses are: Philosophy of Science (7.5 credits), Research Ethics and Good Research Practice (3 credits) and Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (7.5 credits).

Block II: Scientific communication, at least 7.5 credits

The courses and examinations shall refer to outcomes D2, D3 and D8, annex 1.

Communication of research results are essential to science. This block of courses discusses research communication in a number of different formats such as written articles, oral presentations, poster presentations and grant applications. The courses focus on communication in relation to various target groups, e.g. a scientific journal, practitioners, or the general public. Examples of courses are: Scientific Communication in English (7.5 credits).

Block III: Statistical research methods, at least 7.5 credits

The courses and examinations shall refer to outcomes D1-D4 and D10, annex 1.

This block focuses on managing and analysing the data collected during a research project. The courses in this block emphasise correct organisation of data as well as critical thinking in the selection of statistical methods. Applying a wide variation of statistical methods is also an important focus. Examples of courses are: Quantitative Research Methods (7.5 credits), Qualitative research methods (*Kvalitativ forskningsmetodik*; 7.5 credits), Advanced quantitative statistical methods (*Avancerade kvantitativa statistiska metoder*; 7.5 credits) and Structural equation modelling (*Strukturell ekvationsmodellering*; 7.5 credits).

⁶ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 32

⁷ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Sections 5 and 33

Block IV: Research design, at least 7.5 credits

The courses and examinations shall refer to outcomes D1-D4 and D10, annex 1.

A suitable research design is crucial to addressing and answering a research question. Therefore, this block provides courses on research design in psychology. The courses provide knowledge of basic design such as longitudinal studies, group comparisons and independent evaluations. Examples of courses are: Research design for psychology (*Forskningsdesign för psykologi*; 7.5 credits) and Challenges within clinical research design (*Utmaningar inom klinisk forskningsdesign*; 7.5 credits).

Block V: In-depth studies in psychology, at least 7.5 credits

The courses and examinations shall refer to outcomes D1-D4, annex 1.

Psychology covers a range of fields. The courses in this block provide students with the opportunity to study a defined field, such as developmental psychopathology or psychotherapy research. To facilitate critical thinking and in-depth study, seminars are also an important component of this block. Examples of courses are: Developmental Psychopathology (15 credits), Psychotherapy research (*Psykoteraförskning*; 7.5 credits), International conference (1.5 credits) and Research Seminars in Psychology (1.5 credits/semester, max. 12 credits).

B. Courses with a focus on specific and specialised knowledge within a field specific to the doctoral student's specialisation, 0-30 credits in total.

The courses and examinations included on level B (block VI-IX) shall refer to outcomes D1, D2 and D9, annex 1.

Block VI: Developmental psychology, 0-30 credits

The courses and examinations shall, when relevant, refer to outcomes D1, D2 and D9, annex 1.

This block of courses focuses on the development during the various life stages and shall provide specialised knowledge within a defined area of developmental psychology.

Block VII: Health psychology, 0-30 credits

The courses and examinations shall, when relevant, refer to outcomes D1, D2 and D9, annex 1.

Psychology is intimately linked to health and disease. This block highlights the importance of psychological factors for promoting health, preventing disease and treating ill-health. It shall also provide specialist knowledge within a defined area of health psychology.

Block VIII: Criminal psychology, 0-30 credits

The courses and examinations shall, when relevant, refer to outcomes D1, D2 and D9, annex 1.

The understanding of criminal activity can be improved when it is viewed from a psychological perspective. The courses in this block underline the importance of psychological factors in the intervention, development and prevention of criminal behaviour and shall provide specialist knowledge within a defined area of criminology.

Block IX: Cognitive psychology, 0-30 credits

The courses and examinations shall, when relevant, refer to outcomes D1, D2 and D9, annex 1.

This block of courses emphasises the role of cognition in psychological adjustment and shall provide specialist knowledge within a defined area of cognitive psychology.

Doctoral thesis and public defence, 165 credits

At the public defence event, the assessment of the doctoral thesis and the public defence thereof shall refer to all intended learning outcomes specified for the award of the doctoral degree, annex 1.

6 Degree requirements for the Degree of Licentiate, 120 credits

The licentiate degree is the degree awarded to those who have been admitted to and successfully completed a licentiate programme. Students who have been admitted to the programme concluding with the doctoral degree have the right to apply for the award of a licentiate degree, as a half-way degree⁸. The degree requirements in this section apply to the licentiate degree both as a final and as a half-way degree.

For the licentiate degree, the doctoral student must

- have received a passing grade in the examinations⁹ of the 37.5 credits generated by the courses listed below,
- have received a passing grade on a scholarly paper (licentiate thesis) corresponding to 82.5 credits¹⁰.

For courses and course blocks that are identical for the licentiate and doctoral degrees, please see outcomes and descriptions in section 5¹¹.

Courses, total of 37.5 credits

Which course/courses a doctoral student shall take is determined based on an assessment of what courses will enable them to meet the intended learning outcomes. The doctoral student plans, in consultation with the supervisor, which courses should be part of their programme. The selection is then laid down in the individual study plan.

A. Courses with a focus on scientific procedure within the field of psychology, 28.5-37.5 credits in total

Block I, Scientific and professional development, at least 3 credits

Block II, Scientific communication, at least 7.5 credits

Block III, Statistical research methods, at least 7.5 credits

Block IV, Research design, at least 7.5 credits

Block V, In-depth studies in psychology, at least 3 credits

⁸ Örebro University's local regulations on qualifications

⁹ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 32

¹⁰ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 5

¹¹ Since the licentiate degree may constitute a half-way degree on the road to a doctoral degree, the courses intended for a licentiate degree should, in conformity with the courses intended for a doctoral degree, be linked to the outcomes for the doctoral degree, see further in the guidelines for general syllabuses for third-cycle courses and study programmes.

B. Courses with a focus on specific and specialised knowledge within a field specific to the doctoral student's specialisation, 0-9 credits in total

Block VI: Developmental psychology, 0-9 credits

Block VII: Health psychology, 0-9 credits

Block VIII: Criminal psychology, 0-9 credits

Block IX: Cognitive psychology, 0-9 credits

Licentiate thesis

On the examination of the licentiate thesis, the assessment shall refer to all intended learning outcomes specified for the award of the licentiate degree, annex 1.

7 Further information

Further information about provisions for doctoral study programmes can be found on the university website. Documents there include the admissions regulations for Örebro University and other information on national and local regulations.

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Entry-into-force and transitional provisions

This general syllabus shall be in effect from 1 July 2007.

Doctoral students who have commenced their studies before 1 July 2007

Doctoral students who have commenced their studies on the programme before 1 July 2007 shall continue their studies according to the new provisions for third-cycle courses and study programmes. As a principal rule, the doctoral students will be awarded their qualification from the new programme¹².

These doctoral students have however the right, should they require, to complete their studies and obtain their qualification pursuant to the earlier provisions for third-cycle courses and study programmes. This right exists until, but no later than, the end of June 2015 (point 5, transitional provisions of SFS 2006:1053).

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Changed names of courses

The name of the course *ADB och statistik* (ADB and statistics) has changed to *Univariat och multivariat statistik* (Univariate and multivariate statistics), but no change has been made in terms of content. The course may therefore, regardless of name, be used to meet both the old and new degree requirements.

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Amendments to the general syllabus approved by the Vice-Chancellor on 19 October 2010 shall take effect on 1 January 2011. These are a result of amendments to the Higher Education Ordinance, but do not lead to any factual alterations in the general syllabus.

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¹² Point 1, transitional provisions for SFS 2006:1053

Amendments to the general syllabus approved on 10 November 2014 shall take effect on 1 December 2014. These amendments refer to a revision of the subject description in section 1, an adaptation of the general syllabus to the new template, through which, among other things, the different components of the programme are more clearly linked to the different intended learning outcomes (primarily sections 5 and 6).

Doctoral students already admitted to the programme shall complete their studies in accordance with the previous degree requirements. If requested by a doctoral student and it is deemed appropriate, provisions may be made in the individual study plan for the student to complete their studies in accordance with the new degree requirements.

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Amendments to the general syllabus approved on 1 February 2019 shall take effect on 1 March 2019. The amendment refers to (i) the scope and distribution of course requirements for the doctoral and licentiate degrees (primarily sections 5 and 6), (ii) a revised wording in the specific entry requirements (annex 2, section 2.2), as well as editorial changes.

Doctoral students already admitted to the programme shall complete their studies in accordance with the previous degree requirements. If requested by a doctoral student and it is deemed appropriate, provisions may be made in the individual study plan for the student to complete their studies in accordance with the new degree requirements.

Outcomes¹³

Outcomes for the DEGREE OF DOCTOR	Outcomes for the DEGREE OF LICENTIATE
For the Degree of Doctor, the third-cycle student shall	For a Degree of Licentiate, the third-cycle student shall
<i>Knowledge and understanding</i>	<i>Knowledge and understanding</i>
D1 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	L1 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.
D2 demonstrate familiarity with research methodology in general and the methods of the specific field of research in particular.	L2 (for the equivalent to D2, see L1, second part)
<i>Competence and skills</i>	<i>Competence and skills</i>
D3 demonstrate the capacity for scholarly analysis and synthesis as well to review and assess new and complex phenomena, issues and situations autonomously and critically,	L3 (no direct equivalent to D3)
D4 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,	L4 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,
D5 demonstrate through a dissertation the ability to make a significant contribution to the formation of knowledge through his or her own research,	L5 (no direct equivalent to D5, refer however to L4, second part)
D6 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,	L6 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
D7 demonstrate the ability to identify the need for further knowledge, and	L7 (comp. L11)
D8 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.	L8 demonstrate the skills required to participate autonomously in research and development work and to work autonomously in some other qualified capacity.
<i>Judgement and approach</i>	<i>Judgement and approach</i>
D9 demonstrate intellectual autonomy and disciplinary rectitude as well as the ability to make assessments of research ethics, and	L9 demonstrate the ability to make assessments of ethical aspects of his or her own research,
D10 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.	L10 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
	L11 demonstrate the ability to identify the personal need for further knowledge and take responsibility for his or her ongoing learning (comp. D7).

¹³ Extract from the Qualifications ordinance, annex 2, Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100)

Admission to doctoral studies – entry requirements

1 Admission requirements – Higher Education Ordinance

The Higher Education Ordinance stipulates that the number of doctoral students that may be admitted by the university may not exceed the number that can be offered supervision and otherwise acceptable conditions for study and whose studies are funded pursuant to the provisions in the Higher Education Ordinance¹⁴.

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 university may have laid down, and
2. is considered in other respects to have the ability required to benefit from the course or study programme¹⁵.

2 Entry requirements

2.1 General entry requirements

A person meets the general entry requirements for third-cycle courses and study programmes if they

1. have been awarded a second-cycle qualification,
2. have satisfied the requirements for courses comprising at least 240 credits of which at least 60 credits were awarded in the second-cycle, or
3. have 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 grounds¹⁶.

Transitional provisions

A person with *credits or qualifications from undergraduate programmes under the previous higher education system* corresponding to the entry requirements above will also be eligible¹⁷. Exemptions from the entry requirements may be made also in these cases, if there are special grounds¹⁸.

¹⁴ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 7, Section 34

¹⁵ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 7, Section 35

¹⁶ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 7, Section 39

¹⁷ Point 10, transitional provisions for SFS 2006:1053

¹⁸ Previous transitional provision, Point 11, for SFS 2006:1053 expired at the end of June 2015.

2.2 Specific entry requirements

A person meets the specific entry requirements for third-cycle courses and study programmes in the subject if they have received a passing grade in courses of at least 90 credits, including an independent project at the Bachelor's level in psychology. A person who has acquired substantially corresponding knowledge, in Sweden or abroad, also meets the specific entry requirements.

Transitional provisions

A person with credits or qualifications from undergraduate programmes under the previous higher education system corresponding to the entry requirements in the previous paragraph will also be eligible¹⁹.

2.3 Ability in other respects to benefit from the course or study programme

The assessment whether the applicant has such ability in other respects to benefit from the programme shall be made based on prior courses and programmes taken by the applicant, on other previous activities, as well as on the essays and other independent projects of a scholarly nature that have been submitted by the applicant (compare assessment criteria in accordance with the university's regulations on the selection of doctoral students below).

3 Selection from among the applicants

In selecting between applicants, their ability to benefit from the programme shall be taken into account. The higher education institution determines which assessment criteria shall be used in determining the ability to benefit from the programme.

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 applicants²⁰.

Assessment criteria for selection²¹

The criteria A - B aim at facilitating an examination of the applicant's ability to benefit from the programme. They should therefore be relevant to the applicant's ability to later achieve the learning outcomes of the programme. The outcomes are described in annex 1 to this general syllabus.

¹⁹ Point 10, transitional provisions for SFS 2006:1053

²⁰ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 7, Section 41

²¹ Local regulations on the selection of doctoral students to third-cycle courses and study programmes etc.

A Courses, study programmes and other previous activities – formal qualifications

The assessment is based on submitted certificates and transcripts as well as on degree certificates and/or course certificates.

Completed courses and study programmes and experience contributing to the applicant's ability to successfully benefit from the programme applied for are considered an additional qualification.

- Courses and study programmes

Special emphasis is given to the scope, depth and grades of the applicant's prior courses and study programmes within the subject area applied for, particularly the grades on written independent projects.

Emphasis is also given to the scope, depth and grades of prior courses and study programmes within other fields of great relevance to the subject area applied for.

- Other previous activities

Special emphasis is given to long and independent professional and/or vocational experience of great relevance to the subject area applied for.

B Capability – demonstrated knowledge, competence and skills

The assessment is based on a consideration of the applicant's submitted essays and other written independent projects of a scholarly nature. For those applicants who at this stage are considered to be most qualified, and if it is deemed necessary, references will be taken and interviews will be carried out.

It is considered an additional qualification if the applicant demonstrates such knowledge, competence and skills that contribute to their being successfully able to benefit from the programme applied for. These are for example

- sound theoretical, analytic and methodological knowledge;
- sound ability to discuss, in writing and in speech, issues and conclusions;
- intellectual independence; and
- sound ability to carry out advanced tasks within given time frames.

Special emphasis is given to the applicant's ability to

- identify and formulate realistic and productive research problems;
- integrate knowledge and experience and apply these in ways and in contexts where they have not previously been used; and
- conduct a dialogue characterised by independence as well as by an ability to cooperate.

C Weighing up qualifications

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 (Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 7, Section 41).

When weighing up the assessment criteria A and B, the greatest emphasis is placed on criteria B, Capability.

D Gender equality

If, followed from the above, applicants are found to have equal qualifications, preference will be given to applicants of the sex that is underrepresented among the doctoral students within the subject area²². The underrepresented sex here refers to if and when the share of either female or male students enrolled on the subject area's third-cycle study programme amounts to less than 40 per cent.

²² Higher Education Act (SFS 1992:1434), Chapter 1, Section 5, second paragraph and other provisions