General Syllabus for Research Studies in

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES
Medie- och kommunikationsvetenskap

This syllabus was approved by the Faculty Board of Humanities and Social Sciences on 3 May 2007 (reg. no. CF 62-245/2007). This syllabus was last amended on 19 October 2010.

1 Subject description

The research study programme in media and communication studies at Örebro University is focusing on the conditions, modes, production and reception of mediated communication. In accordance with the department’s research profile and research programme, special focus is geared towards international communication, media and politics, film, public relations, risk and crisis communication, media and migration, new information technology, reception studies, as well as discourse and conversation analysis. The programme in media and communication studies provides in-depth knowledge of theoretical and methodological traditions, current research fields, and scientific methods.

2 Intended learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes of the programme, the qualitative targets, are evident from appendix 1 to this syllabus.

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

Entry requirements and the basis of assessment for the selection of students are evident from appendix 2 to this syllabus. For other admission information, see Admission Regulations for Örebro University.

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1 The syllabus is approved by virtue of the Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Sections 26-27 (SFS 1993:100)
2 Vice-chancellor’s decision 402/2010, reg. no CF 12-540/2010
3 The English translation of the general syllabus was last amended on 22 March 2013
4 General information on the programme organisation

There are two types of research study programmes – one concluding with the doctoral degree (240 credits) and one concluding with a licentiate degree (120 credits). The programmes mainly consist of courses, followed by a course examination, and the writing of a doctoral or licentiate thesis respectively. The research student is expected to take an active part in research seminars and other assigned activities during the period of study. The student is further recommended to take advantage of the opportunities to attend guest lectures etc. at the university, and to attend and contribute to national and international conferences. For each research student, a minimum of two supervisors will be appointed, one of which is nominated as the principal supervisor. The detailed organisation of the programme is determined in the individual study plan.

Credit overview

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Overview of programme organisation and qualification requirements</th>
<th>Courses/ examinations, credits</th>
<th>Thesis, credits</th>
<th>Total no. of credits</th>
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<td>Elective</td>
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<td>Doctoral degree</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licentiate degree</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

5 Qualification requirements for the doctoral degree

The programme for the doctoral degree comprises 240 credits, corresponding to four years of full-time study.

For the doctoral degree, the research student must
- have received a passing grade in the examinations of the 75 credits included in the courses listed below, in accordance with the respective course syllabus, and
- have received a passing grade on a scholarly dissertation (doctoral thesis) corresponding to 165 credits. The thesis is to be defended orally in public.

The compulsory courses for the doctoral degree comprise 45 credits in total, distributed as follows:

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4 Under the new higher education system, and in accordance with the English translation of the Higher Education Ordinance, study programmes at the research level are referred to as third-cycle courses and study programmes. In this document, these programmes and their students are referred to by using compounds of the terms research, research studies and third-cycle. These should thus be considered to be synonymous [translator’s comment].

5 The Higher Education Ordinance stipulation that at least two supervisors be appointed for each research student does not apply to research 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).

6 Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Sections 4, 5, 28 and 29

7 One credit point according to the previous credit system corresponds to one and a half credits under the new system.

8 Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 5

9 “Courses” also refers to other programme modules that in addition to the thesis generate credits.

10 Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Sections 5 and 33
- Media and Communication Studies – Traditions and Research Fields, 7.5 credits
- Methods within Media and Communication Studies, 15 credits
- Literature course, 15 credits
- Theory of Science, 7.5 credits

The elective courses comprise 30 credits in total.

6 Qualification requirements for the licentiate degree
The programme for the licentiate degree comprises 120 credits, corresponding to two years of full-time study.

For a licentiate degree, research students must
- have received a passing grade in the examinations of the 60 credits included in the courses listed below, in accordance with the respective course syllabus, and
- have received a passing grade on a scholarly thesis corresponding to 60 credits.

The compulsory courses for the licentiate degree are the same as for the doctoral degree. They comprise 45 credits in total, distributed as follows:
- Media and Communication Studies – Traditions and Research Fields, 7.5 credits
- Methods within Media and Communication Studies, 15 credits
- Literature course, 15 credits
- Theory of Science, 7.5 credits

The elective courses comprise 15 credits in total.

7 Other provisions
7.1 Required reading
The required reading in the subject area is listed in the course syllabuses for the compulsory courses.

7.2 Course selection
The research student plans, in consultation with the supervisor, which courses should be part of the programme. The selection is subsequently laid down in the individual study plan.

7.3 Half-way licentiate degree
Students admitted to the programme concluding with the doctoral degree may conclude part of their studies with a licentiate degree, if their studies comprise at least 120 credits. To obtain such a half-way degree, the same criteria apply as to programmes that are to be concluded with a licentiate degree. See above.

8 Further information
Further information about provisions for the programme can be found on the university homepage, in the section on research studies. Documents there include the

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11 Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Sections 2, 4, and 5
12 Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 5
13 Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 4, and the university’s regulations on research study programme qualifications
Admission Regulations for Örebro University and other information about national and local regulations.

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**Entry into force and transitional provisions**

The provisions in this general syllabus referring to section 3 concerning admission to the programme, shall be in effect from 15 May 2007. Other provisions in this general syllabus shall be in effect from 1 July 2007.

*Research students who have begun their studies before 1 July 2007*

Research students who have begun 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 research students are awarded their qualification for the new programme.\(^{14}\)

These research students have however the option 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). It must therefore at the earliest possible opportunity be entered into each student’s individual study plan which version\(^{15}\) of the general syllabus that applied to the research student on 30 June 2007. If applicable, it is thus made clear that the qualification requirements under the earlier provisions for third-cycle courses and study programmes shall apply.

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Amendments decided on 22 February 2010 shall take effect on that same day. These amendments refer to 1) the deletion of section 7.2, second paragraph and as a result, courses for research students on teaching and learning in higher education may from then on count towards their degree, and 2) the cancellation of the democracy specialisation.

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Research students admitted before 1 January 2010 shall continue their studies according to the old provisions. Also these research students have however the right to, within the scope of the elective courses, include credits from initial training in teaching and learning in higher education in accordance with the above.

Amendments decided on by the vice-chancellor on 19 October 2010 shall take effect on 1 January 2011. These amendments are brought about by changes in the Higher Education Ordinance, but do not lead to any substantive changes in the general syllabus.

\(^{14}\) Point 1, transitional provisions for SFS 2006:1053

\(^{15}\) Refer to the version using the date when it was last updated
Appendix 1 to the general syllabus

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

Outcomes for the licentiate degree

Knowledge and understanding
For a 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 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 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.

Outcomes for the doctoral degree

Knowledge and understanding
For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy 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 of Philosophy the third-cycle student shall
– demonstrate the capacity for scholarly analysis and synthesis as well 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 of Philosophy 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.
Admission to research studies – entry requirements and selection

1 Admission requirements – Higher Education Ordinance

The Higher Education Ordinance stipulates that the number of research 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 Ordinance ¹⁶.

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 faculty board may have laid down, and
2. is considered in other respects to have the ability required to benefit from the course or study programme ¹⁷.

2 Entry requirements

2.1 General entry requirements

A person meets the general entry requirements for third-cycle courses and study programmes if he or she
1. has been awarded a second-cycle qualification,
2. has satisfied the requirements for courses comprising at least 240 credits of which at least 60 credits were awarded in the second-cycle, or
3. 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 ¹⁸.

Transitional provisions
a) A person with credits or qualifications from undergraduate programmes corresponding to the entry requirements above will also be eligible ¹⁹. Exemptions from the entry requirements may be made also in these cases, if there are special grounds.

b) A person who meets the general entry requirements for research study programmes (120 credits from undergraduate programmes or corresponding knowledge ²⁰) before 1 July 2007, will also be considered to meet the general entry requirements for third-

¹⁶ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 7, Section 34
¹⁷ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 7, Section 35
¹⁸ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 7, Section 39
¹⁹ Point 10, transitional provisions for SFS 2006:1053
²⁰ A person who has completed an undergraduate programme of at least 120 credits, or in some other way, in Sweden or abroad, has acquired substantially corresponding knowledge.
cycle courses and study programmes after that, however, until no later than the end of June 2015\textsuperscript{21}. Exemptions from this provision are not permitted.

2.2 Specific entry requirements

A person meets the specific entry requirements for third-cycle courses and study programmes in the subject if he or she has

\textit{passed courses of at least 120 credits, including an independent project on both the advanced course level\textsuperscript{22} and on the second cycle}, in media and communication studies. A person who has acquired substantially corresponding knowledge, in Sweden or abroad, also meets the specific entry requirements.

\textit{Transitional provisions}

A person \textit{with credits or qualifications from undergraduate programmes} corresponding to the entry requirements in the previous paragraph will also be eligible\textsuperscript{23}.

This primarily refers to passed courses of at least 80 credits under the previous credit system, including an independent project on both the advanced and higher advanced course levels, i.e. both the 60 and 80 credit levels, in media and communication studies.

2.3 Ability in other respects to benefit from the education

The assessment whether the applicant has such ability in other respects to benefit from the programme shall be made based on his/her education and 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 section 3 below on the assessment criteria for the selection of research students, especially concerning capability).

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 applicants\textsuperscript{24}.

\textsuperscript{21} Point 11, transitional provisions for SFS 2006:1053
\textsuperscript{22} The “advanced course level” refers to the same level of in-depth studies as under the previous higher education system. With the new credit system, the advanced course level thus refers to 61-90 credits within the main field of study.
\textsuperscript{23} Point 10, transitional provisions for SFS 2006:1053
\textsuperscript{24} Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 7, Section 41
Assessment criteria for selection

The criteria A - B aim at facilitating the determination 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 appendix 1 to this general syllabus.

A  Education and other previous activities – formal qualifications

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

Training and experience contributing to the applicant’s ability to successfully benefit from the programme applied for are considered an additional qualification.

- Education
Special emphasis is given to the scope, depth and grades of the applicant’s training within the subject area applied for, particularly the grades on written independent projects.
Emphasis is also given to the scope, depth and grades of training within other fields of great relevance to the field 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, as well as a brief outline of research interests. 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 his/her 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.

25 Local regulations on the selection of research students to third-cycle courses and study programmes etc.
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 (Chapter 7, Section 41, Higher Education Ordinance).

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 underrepresented sex among the research students within the subject area\textsuperscript{26}. Here, the underrepresented sex shall be understood to be the share of either female or male students enrolled on the subject area’s research study programme that amount to less than 40 per cent.

\textsuperscript{26} Higher Education Act (SFS 1992:1434), Chapter 1, Section 5, second paragraph; and other provisions