

General syllabus for third-cycle courses and study programmes in

Criminology

Kriminologi

This syllabus was approved on 10 June 2021 (ORU 2021/03273)¹. It was last amended on 10 June 2025 (ORU 2025/00700)^{2, 3}.

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

1 Subject description

Criminology is a multi- and interdisciplinary subject that focuses on the development and causes of criminal behaviour, as well as on criminal policy interventions to prevent and stop crime. Criminology also includes victimology, that is, research on those who are victims of crime. The subject draws on and integrates theoretical frameworks and methodological concepts and approaches from various disciplines in order to understand individual, contextual, and societal processes that are implicated in the development of crime and its consequences.

The doctoral programme in criminology at Örebro University focuses on the causes of individual and contextual variations in criminal behaviour, as well as on the consequences of committing and/or being a victim of crime. In part, the subject area involves applied research with a focus on risk assessment, prediction, as well as on prevention and safety and security enhancing intervention. The doctoral studies are pursued in one of the subject area's three research fields: biopsychosocial criminology, developmental and life course perspective criminology, or stalking and intimate partner violence.

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

¹ Faculty Board of Humanities and Social Sciences

² Faculty Board of Humanities and Social Sciences

³ The English translation of this general syllabus was last amended on 12 August 2025.

intended learning outcomes⁴. The intended learning outcomes are referred to in more detail in the degree requirements in sections 5 and 6.

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 information⁵

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 studies⁶. 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	60	180	240

⁴ 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 at 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 on the doctoral level and they should therefore be considered synonymous [translator's comment].

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

⁶ 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).

Licentiate degree	0	30	90	120
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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 examinations⁷ of the 60 credits generated by the courses listed below,
- have received a passing grade on a scholarly dissertation (doctoral thesis) corresponding to 180 credits. The thesis is to be defended orally at a public defence event⁸.

Elective courses, total of 60 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 35 credits shall be from level A (includes Block I and II) and at least 15 credits shall be from level B (includes Block III). The remaining 10 credits can be selected from either level A or level B.

A. Within level A, courses are selected that focus on scholarly practice of relevance to the criminology field, in total 35–45 credits

The courses and examinations included in level A refer to outcomes D1–D4, D6 and D8–D10, see annex 1.

Block I: Scholarly practice and communication, at least 20 credits

The courses and examinations included in this block shall refer to outcomes D2, D3, D6, D8, D9 and D10, see annex 1.

This block refers to a basic scholarly approach. Courses included in this block shall address the need for knowledge of ethics and the philosophy of science. Examples of courses are: Philosophy of Science (7.5 credits) and Research Ethics and Good Research Practice (5 credits).

Within Block I, students can also select courses and components that aim to develop science communication skills and abilities, such as writing papers, preparing oral presentations, poster presentations, and writing grant applications. These courses and components focus on communication geared at different target groups, for example, scientific journals, practitioners within the field, or the general public. Examples of courses/components are: Research Communication in Practice (4 credits), Research Communication, Researcher's Role in Society (3.5 credits), research seminars in criminology (3 credits/semester), and presentations at international research conferences (1.5 credits/conference).

The two components research seminars and presentations at international research conferences may each be completed more than once during the course of the programme. The credits awarded for these components may, however, not exceed 7.5 credits in total.

⁷ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 32

⁸ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Sections 5 and 33

Block II: Research methods, at least 15 credits

The courses and examinations included in this block shall refer to outcomes D1–D4, D6, D9 and D10, see annex 1.

Within Block II, students select courses on research methods, including research design and qualitative and/or quantitative research methods. Examples of courses and components are:

Quantitative Methods of Analysis (7.5 credits) and Qualitative Method (7.5 credits).

B. Within level B, courses are selected that aim to provide specific and in-depth knowledge within a field of relevance to the doctoral student's thesis topic, in total 15–25 credits.

The courses and examinations included in level B (Block III) shall refer to outcomes D1 and D2, annex 1.

Within Block III, courses are selected that cover core aspects within criminological theory or empirical research, for example, causes and consequences of crime, prevention, victimology, criminological theory (classical and critical), and criminal policy. Examples of courses are: Introduction to Research in Criminology (5 credits), and Measures in the Experimental Lab: Behaviour, Body and Brain (7.5 credits).

The reading of research literature made in direct connection with the writing of the doctoral thesis is not part of the course components. Instead, it is included in the 180 credits generated by the thesis.

Doctoral thesis and public defence, 180 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 degree⁹. 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 examinations¹⁰ of the 30 credits generated by the courses listed below,
- have received a passing grade on a scholarly paper (licentiate thesis) corresponding to 90 credits¹¹.

⁹ Örebro University's local regulations on qualifications

¹⁰ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 32

¹¹ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 5

For courses and course blocks that are identical for the licentiate and doctoral degrees, please see outcomes and descriptions in section 5¹².

Elective courses, total of 30 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 15 credits shall be from level A (includes Block I-II) and at least 7.5 credits shall be from level B (includes Block III). The remaining 7.5 credits can be selected either from level A or from level B.

A. Within level A, courses are selected that focus on scholarly practice within criminology, in total 15–22.5 credits.

Block I: Scholarly practice and communication, at least 7.5 credits

Block II: Research methods, at least 7.5 credits

B. Within level B (Block III), courses are selected that aim to provide specific and in-depth knowledge within a field of relevance to the doctoral student's thesis topic, in total, 7.5–15 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 2021. There are no previous versions of this general syllabus and consequently no transitional provisions.

The amendment approved on 10 June 2025 shall take effect on 1 September 2025. The amendment refers to changes in the subject description (section 1) and the course structure (sections 5 and 6). In terms of sections 5 and 6, the changes in question have been made to reflect the courses available within the subject area and faculty more clearly.

Doctoral students already admitted shall complete their studies in accordance with the previous degree requirements. If requested by a doctoral student and it is

¹² 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.

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 grounds.

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

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 60 credits, including an independent project of 15 credits at the master's level in criminology or in subjects of relevance to the doctoral programme in criminology. 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 eligible¹⁸.

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 applicants¹⁹.

Assessment criteria for selection²⁰

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.

¹⁸ Point 10, transitional provisions for SFS 2006:1053

¹⁹ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 7, Section 41

²⁰ 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, as well as a research plan. 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 area²¹. 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.

²¹ Higher Education Act (SFS 1992:1434), Chapter 1, Section 5, second paragraph and other provisions