



ÖREBRO UNIVERSITET

OFFICE FOR ACADEMIC POLICY

This is a translation of a Swedish document.  
In the event of a discrepancy, the Swedish-  
language version shall prevail.

## REGULATIONS HANDBOOK

### FOR DOCTORAL EDUCATION (THIRD-CYCLE COURSES AND STUDY PROGRAMMES) AT ÖREBRO UNIVERSITY

- Information about local and national regulations for doctoral courses and programmes

Last amended 15 January 2020

Information can also be found on the university's main webpages for doctoral education: <https://www.oru.se/english/study/doctoral-studies/>

## Introduction

The Regulations Handbook for doctoral education (third-cycle courses and programmes) at Örebro University is compiled by the Office for Academic Policy. It includes national and local regulations about courses and programmes and some commentary on these.

It is primarily intended for use by doctoral students and supervisors.

The Regulations Handbook is only published as a pdf document on the university's website, on the main pages for doctoral education. It is updated and supplemented on an ongoing basis.

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## The university's main webpages for doctoral education

Current information and forms are available on the university's main webpages for doctoral studies, <https://www.oru.se/english/study/doctoral-studies/>. Doctoral courses and other information can also be found there.

### Abbreviations and explanations

N	Science (field of research and development 1)
T	Engineering (2)
MH	Medicine and health sciences (3)
S	Social sciences (5)
H	Humanities (6)
ENT Board	Faculty Board for Business, Science and Engineering
HS Board	Faculty Board of Humanities and Social Sciences
MH Board	Faculty Board of Medicine and Health
Office for Academic Policy Student Services Human Resources (HR)	Examples of administrative units at the university
HL	The Swedish Higher Education Act (1992:1434)
HF	The Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100)

# 1 Who takes which decision at the University?

The Higher Education Act (HL) and the Higher Education Ordinance (HF) state who takes which decision at the University – the university board, vice-chancellor or a faculty board.

The *university board* has insight into all matters relating to the university and is responsible for ensuring that it fulfils all its duties. The board takes decisions such as those on admission regulations, high-importance regulations and the operating budget.<sup>1</sup>

The *vice-chancellor* is responsible for managing operations and reports to the university board.<sup>2</sup> As regards doctoral education, the vice-chancellor decides on the withdrawal of doctoral students' right to supervision and other resources. In most other cases, the vice-chancellor has delegated decision-making powers to the deputy vice-chancellor and faculty boards.

The *faculty board* (FN) is responsible for doctoral courses and programmes. One of their tasks is to plan, support and follow up academic and educational activities. The board is responsible for the quality of the courses and programmes, internationalisation and equality. It establishes general rules for doctoral education, such as general syllabuses and guidelines for the programmes' completion. The faculty board has delegated some of its tasks to the schools, including many that relate to individual doctoral students.

On being delegated the task by the faculty board, the *head of school* decides on the admission of doctoral students, supervisors and individual study plans, and may not further delegate these issues. However, decisions regarding credit transfer are often further delegated to a decision-maker at the school, eg head of subject.

The university's delegation system for educational matters is provided in brief below, but is presented in detail in the university's regulations on the delegation of authority.

## 1.1 Short summary of decision-making powers and the delegation system

A short summary is provided below for who takes which decision on the most important educational matters for doctoral students. In some cases, decision-making powers have been further delegated in writing within the school.

Further delegation may take place for the types of matters marked with V.

Type of matter	Delegated to	Comment
Admission to doctoral education	Head of school	
Appointing supervisors	Head of school	
Adoption of the doctoral student's individual study plan	Head of school	
Appointing examiners (examination)	Head of school	

<sup>1</sup> Higher Education Act, Chapter 2, Section 2, Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 2, Section 2

<sup>2</sup> Higher Education Act, Chapter 2, Section 3, Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 2, Section 3

Participation in courses and other study modules	Head of school	V
Credit transfer	Head of school	V
Appointing examiners for licentiate thesis	Head of school	
Date, time and place for licentiate seminar examiner/external reviewer at the seminar, if required	Head of school	
Time and place for public defence of doctoral thesis	Chair FN (dean)	
Appointing chair, external reviewer and examining committee for public defence	Chair FN (dean)	
Time and place for notification of public defence of doctoral thesis	Head of school	
Award of degree certificate	Chair FN (dean)	
Non-standard titles for doctoral and licentiate degrees	Chair FN (dean)	
Withdrawal of supervision and other resources for a doctoral student	Vice-chancellor	
Support to doctoral students with disabilities	Head of Student Services	
Measures in accordance with the Swedish Discrimination Act due to individual cases of reported harassment	Head of Student Services	
Doctoral studentships (appointment)	Head of school*)	
*) announcement of vacancy approved by the vice-chancellor		

### *General rules*

Decision about in which subjects doctoral education is to be offered	Deputy vice-chancellor	
General syllabuses, adoption	Faculty board	V <sup>)</sup>
Course syllabuses for courses and other study modules	Head of school	

<sup>)</sup> Chair FN may decide on issues that are not of fundamental importance or significance.

## 1.2 Who do I contact if I have questions?

If you as a doctoral student have questions that are not directly associated with your supervisors, a course coordinator or an examiner, your initial contact should be the study and research administrator for your department at the school. The administrator will help you find the right person to contact. If you are employed by the university, you can also contact Human Resources directly for issues relating to your employment.

## 1.3 Student influence

### Student representation

Students must have the right to exercise influence over their education. The university shall help students to actively participate in work to develop courses and programmes.<sup>3</sup>

Students at the university are entitled to representation when decisions are taken or there is an enquiry that is of significance for courses and programmes and the students' situation.<sup>4</sup> If such decisions are to be taken or enquiries are to be conducted by one individual, information shall be provided to a student representative and consultation take place in good time before the decision is taken or the enquiry completed. If the decision is to be taken by a group of people, students generally have the right to be represented through three members.<sup>5</sup> The same explicitly applies to the university board.<sup>6</sup>

On the basis of the above, students at ORU have the right to be represented on the faculty boards, as well as in the school management committees, where the heads of school take decisions that include matters relating to doctoral students, such as admissions and the adoption of individual study plans. Such elected positions entitle doctoral students to have their programme length extended.<sup>7</sup>

### Students' Union

Provisions relating to students' unions, membership of students' unions and the appointment of student representatives are found in Chapter 4 of the Higher Education Act and the Ordinance on Student Unions (2009:769).

## 2 Aims and purposes of doctoral education

The overall purpose of doctoral courses and programmes, in legislation referred to as *third-cycle courses and study programmes*, is stated in Chapter 1, Section 9a of the Higher Education Act, as follows:

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

In addition to the requirements for first and second-cycle courses and study programmes, third-cycle courses and study programmes shall develop the knowledge and skills required to be able to undertake autonomous research.

### Qualitative targets – intended learning outcomes

The Higher Education Ordinance also states the intended learning outcomes for doctoral courses and programmes, formulated as qualitative targets for doctoral and licentiate degrees. These targets are provided in Annex 1 to the general syllabus in each

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<sup>3</sup> Higher Education Act, Chapter 1, Section 4 a

<sup>4</sup> Higher Education Act, Chapter 2, Section 7

<sup>5</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 2, Section 14

<sup>6</sup> Higher Education Act, Chapter 2, Sections 7-8

<sup>7</sup> Guidelines for the extension of doctoral studentships due to elected positions within a student organisation (2013/706) (in Swedish only)

subject, see <https://www.oru.se/english/study/doctoral-studies/subjects-and-general-syllabus/>, as well as in the annex to the individual study plan, see <https://www.oru.se/english/study/doctoral-studies/doctoral-student/>.

### **3 Application, eligibility and selection, etc.**

#### **3.1 Admission regulations and application form**

Information about the rules for applications and admissions can be found in the university's *admission regulations*. They are available at <https://www.oru.se/english/study/doctoral-studies/how-to-become-a-doctoral-student/>.

#### **3.2 Applicants with disabilities**

Information for applicants and students with disabilities is available at <https://www.oru.se/english/study/student-services/support-during-your-studies/studying-with-disabilities/>.

We recommend that applicants who have special needs due to a disability contact the relevant administrator at Student Services in good time. This is so that the university can plan measures to facilitate the applicant's studies from an early stage.<sup>8</sup>

### **4 Programme design and content – summary**

An overview of the programme's design and content are available in the general syllabus for the subject.

There are two types of degree programmes at the doctoral level – one that leads to a doctoral degree (240 credits, equivalent to four years of full-time study) and one that leads to a licentiate degree (120 credits, equivalent to two years of full-time study).

A programme primarily comprises courses and thesis work, which are respectively examined via examination and public defence. The student is expected to actively participate in seminars and other supporting modules throughout the entire period of study. It is also recommended that the student make the most of the opportunities that are offered to visit guest lectures, etc., at the university and to participate in national and international conferences.

At least two supervisors are appointed for each doctoral student; they must provide support for the doctoral student throughout their studies. One of them is appointed principal supervisor.

The design of the study programme is decided in more detail in an individual study plan, which is to be updated on a regular basis.

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<sup>8</sup> Admissions regulations for Örebro University – third-cycle courses and study programmes (2017/00247)

## 4.1 Programmes that lead to a doctoral degree

Programmes that lead to a doctoral degree cover 240 credits, which is equivalent to four years of full-time study.<sup>9</sup> In some circumstances, studies may be conducted part-time, though no less than half-time, and the period of study shall thus be extended accordingly.

To be awarded a doctoral degree, the student must:

- pass the examinations that are part of the programme,
- receive a pass grade for a doctoral thesis of a particular scope. The doctoral thesis shall have been orally defended at a public defence.<sup>10</sup>

The scope of the thesis and the courses/examinations are provided in more detail in the general syllabus for the subject.

A student who is admitted to a doctoral programme is entitled to conclude their studies with a licentiate degree, if their studies cover at least 120 credits.<sup>11</sup>

## 4.2 Programmes that lead to a licentiate degree

Programmes that lead to a licentiate degree cover 120 credits, which is equivalent to two years of full-time study.<sup>12</sup> In some circumstances, studies may be conducted part-time, though no less than half-time, and the period of study shall thus be extended accordingly.

To be awarded a licentiate degree, the student must:

- pass the examinations that are included in that part of the programme,
- receive a pass grade for a licentiate thesis of a particular scope.<sup>13</sup>

The scope of the thesis and the courses/examinations are provided in more detail in the general syllabus for the subject.

A student who has been admitted to a licentiate programme and who wishes to continue with a doctoral degree must reapply for admission and receive a new decision on admission in order to continue their studies.

## 5 Subjects for doctoral courses and programmes

Doctoral students are admitted to a programme in a particular subject. The deputy vice-chancellor determines which subjects may offer doctoral courses and programmes.

There are a number of doctoral subject areas at the university. The list of subject areas is available on the university's main webpages for doctoral studies,

<https://www.oru.se/english/study/doctoral-studies/>.

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<sup>9</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 4-5

<sup>10</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Sections 5 and 33

<sup>11</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 5, as well as local regulations on third-cycle qualifications at Örebro University (2015/03380) (in Swedish only)

<sup>12</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Sections 4-5

<sup>13</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 5

## 6 General syllabus for a doctoral subject area

According to the Higher Education Ordinance, there must be a general syllabus for each subject in which doctoral studies are offered.<sup>14</sup> It is the faculty board that adopts it.

The general syllabus for each subject can be found on the university's main webpages for doctoral education, <https://www.oru.se/english/study/doctoral-studies/subjects-and-general-syllabuses/>.

According to the Higher Education Ordinance, a general syllabus for doctoral programmes shall state:

- the main content of the programme,
- specific entry requirements and
- other necessary regulations.<sup>15</sup>

According to the local regulations, the general syllabus shall include the following:

- the primary design of the programme,
- what applies as regards selection for admission to the programme in terms of the grounds for assessment used for examining the applicants' ability to benefit from the programme,
- the examinations included in the programme,
- the possibility to conclude part of the studies for a doctoral degree with a licentiate degree or licentiate degree in fine arts, and
- when the general syllabus or an amendment to it shall come into force and any transitional provisions.<sup>16</sup>

## 7 Individual study plan for doctoral students

### 7.1 The Higher Education Ordinance's provisions on individual study plans

An individual study plan (ISP) shall be drawn up for each doctoral student. The plan shall include:

- the obligations of the higher education institution and the doctoral student and
- a time plan for the doctoral student's studies.<sup>17</sup>

According to local regulations, the ISP shall also include:

- information about how the doctoral student's supervision is organised and
- what is otherwise necessary for studies to be conducted as efficiently as possible.<sup>18</sup>

The plan shall be adopted after consultation between the doctoral student and their supervisors.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 26

<sup>15</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 27

<sup>16</sup> Local guidelines on general third-cycle matters (2010/540) (in Swedish only)

<sup>17</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 29

<sup>18</sup> Local guidelines on general third-cycle matters (2010/540) (in Swedish only)

<sup>19</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 29

The ISP shall be regularly followed up – at least once each year<sup>20</sup> – and amended by the university as required, after consultation with the doctoral student and their supervisor. The follow-up must be done so that the doctoral student and the principal supervisor inform the university of how the studies are progressing.<sup>21</sup>

The adopted/amended ISP shall be sent or given to the doctoral student and principal supervisor, in a manner that requires them to confirm that they have read it.

## 7.2 Administration of individual study plans

The following local regulations apply to drawing up ISPs within all research fields at the university.<sup>22</sup>

- The principal supervisor is responsible for a proposal for a new or amended ISP being drawn up as described below.
- A proposal for an ISP shall be drawn up when the doctoral student is admitted to the programme, and no later than two months after studies have begun. The ISP shall be adopted as soon as possible after this.
- The form to be used for the ISP can be found on the university's main webpages for doctoral studies, <https://www.oru.se/english/study/doctoral-studies/doctoral-student/>.
- The form shall also be used for the annual follow-up and amendments to the ISP, when proposed amendments to the previous ISP are added to the form.

The head of the school to which the student is admitted adopts, follows up and amends the ISP.<sup>23</sup> The ISP shall be registered in the university records management system and archived by the school.

## 8 Programme length and rate of study

For overview and detailed information, see ORU's local guidelines for programme length etc. for doctoral students (in Swedish only), at <https://www.oru.se/english/study/doctoral-studies/doctoral-student/>

The section below provides a summary of the regulations.

### 8.1 General information about programme length and rate of study

The Higher Education Ordinance states that the period of study is equivalent to four years of full-time study for a doctoral degree and two years of full-time study for a licentiate degree.

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<sup>20</sup> Local guidelines on general third-cycle matters (2010/540) (in Swedish only)

<sup>21</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 29

<sup>22</sup> Local guidelines for drawing up individual study plans (2007/466) (in Swedish only)

<sup>23</sup> University delegations

*Programme length* refers to the amount of time during which the doctoral student is entitled to supervision and other educational resources. The programme length is the effective period of study.

Courses and programmes shall normally be studied full-time. In some circumstances, the university may permit part-time studies, but no less than half-time. The total period of study is thus extended by the equivalent amount to no more than eight or four years. If a four-year programme is conducted at half-time, the period of study is eight years.

*Rate of study* means the planned or actual degree of activity depending on the context. Read more about rate of study and part-time studies below.

### **8.1.2 Local guidelines**

ORU's local guidelines for programme length etc. for doctoral students (in Swedish only) can be found at <https://www.oru.se/english/study/doctoral-studies/doctoral-student/>

The purpose of the guidelines is to achieve the fair and lawful treatment of doctoral students on issues relating to period of study, etc., and rapid rates of student completion on programmes.

## **8.2 Programme length for doctoral students**

The programme length is to be equivalent to four years of full-time study for doctoral programmes and two years for licentiate programmes. The student financing at the university's disposal – doctoral studentships – should normally cover that period.

### **8.2.1 Start date – local guidelines**

The programme starts on the day the doctoral student starts their studies after the university has taken a formal decision to admit them to the programme. This is the start date.<sup>24</sup>

## **8.3 Deduction of period of study from programme length**

A doctoral student may have completed some of the programme previously, at ORU or somewhere else. For the doctoral student not to get double time for the programme, the university should deduct the equivalent time from the programme length.<sup>25</sup> The same applies to doctoral studentships.

### **8.3.1 Methods for deduction**

If the doctoral student has previously been admitted to doctoral education or older research courses or programmes in a relevant field at ORU or somewhere else, the length of the programme that has thus already been used should be deducted.

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<sup>24</sup> The day on which the doctoral student is able to start their programme after the admission decision has been made, eg when the position is taken up, or otherwise when the doctoral student starts on a course or when supervision begins.

<sup>25</sup> Comp. Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Sections 2, 4 and 5. For credit transfer, see Higher Education Ordinance Chapter 6, Sections 6-8

In other cases, the deducted time should be that of the equivalent studies at the doctoral level at ORU (eg a deduction for a 15-credit course is the equivalent time, 3 months).

*Exception:* If the doctoral student is assessed as having been a “shadow doctoral student”<sup>26</sup> at ORU, for that part ORU may only deduct passed courses or the equivalent that may be counted towards or for which credits may be transferred to the programme with a determined number of credits. In other words, deductions may not be made for work on a thesis or essay or other types of third-cycle studies that the person may have carried out in their role as a shadow doctoral student at ORU.

## 8.4 Extensions to programme length

According to the Higher Education Ordinance, the programme length for a doctoral student may be extended if there are special grounds, such as leave due to illness, leave of absence for service in the defence forces or an elected position in a trade union or student organisation, or parental leave.<sup>27</sup> There are equivalent provisions for doctoral studentships.<sup>28</sup>

Extension means that the time involved is not counted as part of the length of the programme, eg due to leave or the equivalent or impediments to undertake the programme, and the replacement time is therefore added at a later stage.

### 8.4.1 Grounds for extension, etc.

For details, please read ORU’s local guidelines for programme length, etc., for doctoral students on the website.

Extensions to programme length for a doctoral student, regardless of the type of financing, may be permitted with the time equivalent to the length of programme that has actually been used for leave or the equivalent, within the bounds of that stated below.

That stated in this section on extensions to programme length also applies to extensions of doctoral studentships.

- A. An extension should be granted in the following cases, unless there are specific grounds for not doing so in individual cases and other specific conditions are fulfilled.<sup>29</sup>
1. Leave because of illness, including rehabilitation.
  2. Parental leave, including leave to care for a sick child and reductions in working hours.
  3. Leave for military service.
  4. Leave for an elected position in a trade union.
  5. Leave for an elected position in a student organisation.
  6. Leave for care of relatives.
  7. Leave for completion of tasks as an elected official in municipal bodies or as a member of the Riksdag.

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<sup>26</sup> The concept of shadow doctoral student refers to a person undertaking third-cycle courses or study programmes without having been formally admitted onto a doctoral programme.

<sup>27</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 29

<sup>28</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 5, Section 7

<sup>29</sup> Guidelines on programme length for doctoral students at Örebro University (2007/430) (in Swedish only)

- B. Extensions should be permitted in accordance with the following.
1. Impediments to undertake the programme due to decisions based on the Communicable Diseases Act, the Food Act or directives issued with the support of the Food Act.
  2. Other impediments to undertake the programme due to the provision of the programme by the university.

Examples of impediments to undertake the programme under point 2 above are damage to equipment of laboratories and other facilities; lack of supervision due to supervisor's leave due to long-term illness or other shortcomings of significance to satisfactory supervision. Impediments that the university cannot reasonably be aware of should be reported without delay by the doctoral student to enable the university to take measures.

The point is not referring to extensions due to non-delivery or lack of student finance.

- C. In the following cases, extensions should be granted in some circumstances for a total of no more than six months during the programme.
1. Foreign stays with a doctoral grant from an established grant donor, if the activity is linked to the doctoral student's subject area and the stay, according to the conditions of the grant, may not entail that the length of the programme is reduced. An extension should be granted for no more than six months.
  2. Other grant stays, studies without pay from the university, some employment or some commissions, provided that the activity is not part of the doctoral student's doctoral studies but is assessed as being of decisive importance for the doctoral student's thesis work. An extension should be granted for no more than six months.
- D. Extensions may be permitted for leave from studies due to missing or inadequate study financing, to give the university and/or the doctoral student time to reflect on continued study financing for no more than three months.  
This item concerns doctoral students with private financing, eg wages from their employer or a grant.

In cases other than those stated above, extensions should not be granted.

## 8.5 Rate of study – full-time study and part-time study

As stated above, courses and programmes shall normally be studied full-time. In some circumstances, the university may permit part-time studies, but no less than half-time. The total period of study is thus extended by the equivalent amount, but to no more than eight or four years.<sup>30</sup>

Studies may be conducted part-time, in accordance with the following conditions.

### 8.5.1 Departmental duties as part of a doctoral studentship

A doctoral student may often work with teaching, other research and administration, in the form of departmental duties as part of a doctoral studentship (see section on student finance). These duties may be no more than 20 per cent of a full-time post. Within this framework, the school decides the extent to which the doctoral student will conduct

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<sup>30</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 7, Section 36 and Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 5, Section 3a

such work. See also the section on departmental duties in the section on doctoral studentships.

### **8.5.2 Part-time doctoral studentships**

Part-time doctoral studentships are only permitted if the doctoral student so requests. In addition, the chair of the faculty board shall deem this appropriate. The background is that some doctoral students wish to continue their normal professional activities in parallel with doctoral studies. The position must be for no less than 50 per cent of full-time.

### **8.5.3 Part-time with another type of funding**

For types of funding other than doctoral grants and doctoral studentships, part-time studies may be conducted in accordance with the decisions made in the funding plan and the individual study plan. It should be possible to conduct studies at an average of no less than 50 per cent of full-time throughout the length of the programme.<sup>31</sup>

## **8.6 Handling of matters relating to programme length**

Matters relating to programme length are normally handled in connection with the individual study plan, but a matter may be dealt with separately if the doctoral student or the university need to make a quick decision, eg about an extension.

Doctoral students should initially approach a study and research administrator at the school.

## **9 Student finance/provision**

### **9.1 Funding requirement**

Doctoral education is free of charge for students.<sup>32</sup> However, the Higher Education Ordinance places one requirement for student funding – that a person admitted to doctoral education shall have organised financial provision for the entire period of study. This is often called the *funding requirement*.

For the university to admit an applicant to a programme at this level, the applicant must have acceptable funding, ie financial provision. According to the Higher Education Ordinance, only applicants who will be employed on doctoral studentships may be admitted. However, applicants with another type of financing may be admitted if the university finds that funding can be guaranteed throughout the programme and that the applicant can conduct their studies at no less than half-time.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 7, Section 36

<sup>32</sup> Comp. Higher Education Act, Chapter 4, Section 4

<sup>33</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 7, Section 36

The student funding shall be described in the funding plan upon which the head of school shall decide in connection with the admission of a doctoral student.<sup>34</sup> The funding plan shall then be added to the individual study plan.

This section presents the most important types of student funding.

## 9.2 Employment on a doctoral studentship

Students with a doctoral studentship at the university are government employees, and the position is specifically designed for doctoral education.

Provisions about employment on a doctoral studentship are found in Chapter 5 of the Higher Education Ordinance.

Only a person who is being admitted or who has already been admitted to doctoral education may be employed on a doctoral studentship.<sup>35</sup>

A doctoral studentship that is advertised must be done so as a full-time position.<sup>36</sup> The applicant usually applies for employment when applying to the programme. When evaluating the application, consideration must be taken of the ability to benefit from the programme.<sup>37</sup>

The position shall be for full-time work. If a doctoral student so requests, the position may be for part-time work, but at least 50 per cent of a full-time post.<sup>38</sup>

### Part-time doctoral studentships

Applications for a part-time doctoral studentship are made in the same way as applications for full-time employment. The applicant is required to submit certificates and other information requested by the university.

For part-time cases, Human Resources shall ensure that consultation is carried out with the chair of the relevant faculty board.<sup>39</sup>

A person appointed to a doctoral studentship shall primarily be devoted to their studies. However, a person appointed to a doctoral studentship may, if the school so decides, work to a limited extent with teaching, other research, artistic research other than their own thesis project and administration at no more than 20 per cent of a full-time post. These are known as departmental duties.<sup>40</sup> Conversely, this means that the doctoral student is entitled to conduct doctoral studies worth at least 80 per cent of a full-time post and is thus protected from further limitations in the right to study. For this reason, there is no allowance for overtime work or remuneration for overtime work. Therefore, too great a proportion of departmental duties during one period must be compensated for with an equivalently smaller proportion of departmental duties in another period. It is the head of school who determines whether and to what extent a particular doctoral

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<sup>34</sup> Admissions regulations for Örebro University – third-cycle courses and study programmes (2017/00247)

<sup>35</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 5, Section 3

<sup>36</sup> Exception to the advertising requirement, see Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 5, Section 5

<sup>37</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 5, Section 5

<sup>38</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 5, Section 3 a

<sup>39</sup> See University delegations

<sup>40</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 5, Section 2

student shall undertake departmental duties. Heads of division or other managers may be leading the day-to day work, but the head of school has the overall responsibility.

Departmental duties entail part-time studies and therefore mean that the graduation date is moved back such length of time that the doctoral student has spent on this work (see the section on programme length and rate of study). Departmental duties shall be documented in the individual study plan and doctoral students should carefully document all such worked hours themselves.

Employment on a doctoral studentship shall apply until further notice, but no longer than a given date and never longer than one year after receiving a doctoral degree. The first employment period shall be for no more than one year. Employment may be extended by no more than two years at a time.

A person may be employed on a doctoral studentship for a total of no more than eight years. However, the total period of employment may be no longer than the equivalent to full-time doctoral studies of four years; two years for a licentiate degree.<sup>41</sup>

The total time of employment may be longer if there are special circumstances, such as leave due to illness, military service or elected positions in trade unions or student organisations, or for parental leave. Regulations for the extension of a doctoral studentship generally correspond to the regulations on extensions to programme length (see more about extensions in the section on programme length and rate of studies). However, it is important to note that a leave of absence from a doctoral studentship does not automatically entail an extension to the programme length and the relevant funding.

Cases regarding doctoral studentships are administered by the school and Human Resources. The head of school decides on appointments.

### 9.3 Other types of funding

According to the Higher Education Ordinance, applicants who have another type of student funding than a doctoral studentship or doctoral grant may be admitted, if the university finds

- that funding can be guaranteed throughout the length of the programme and
- that the applicant can spend the majority of their time studying so the programme can be completed in four years for a licentiate degree and eight years for a doctoral degree, that is, an average of half-time studies.<sup>42</sup>

That which is referred to as “other form of funding” in Chapter 7, Section 36 of the Higher Education Ordinance can be divided into *private funding* and *other funding via the university than a doctoral studentship*.

The foremost characteristic of *private funding* is that the doctoral student has their own funding in the form of a scholarship, student grant or wages from an employer. It is therefore tied to a particular person and cannot be used by anyone else. Prior to admission, the university shall make an assessment of the funding’s reliability.

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<sup>41</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 5, Section 7

<sup>42</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 7, Section 36

*Other funding via the university* – that is, when the doctoral student is employed for instance as a lecturer at the same university to which they are admitted – the university has assumed responsibility for student funding during the period of study and should not just assess its reliability at the time of admission. This also applies if the position is funded by a third party.

The local admissions regulations state how an applicant can prove the reliability of private funding, eg with a contract with the employer or a decision about a scholarship.

## **10 Supervision and supervisor**

At Örebro University, there are specific guidelines for supervision within doctoral studies. Additional regulations for supervision and the supervisor's role can be found in the guidelines concerning the individual study plan, the design of doctoral study programmes, general matters concerning doctoral studies, professors' continued activities as post-retirement professor, and in the local regulations on the public defence of doctoral theses at Örebro University.

### **10.1 General regulations in the Higher Education Ordinance**

The Higher Education Ordinance stipulates that doctoral students are entitled to supervision during their studies.

The number of doctoral students admitted to doctoral courses and study programmes may not exceed the number that can be offered supervision and otherwise acceptable conditions for study (Chapter 7, Section 34 HF).

Doctoral students are entitled to supervision during their studies unless the vice-chancellor has decided otherwise (Chapter 6, Section 28 HF). (See below on the withdrawal of resources for doctoral students).

The individual study plan (ISP) is adopted after consultation with the doctoral student and their supervisors. The plan is to be amended by the university to the extent required after consultation with the doctoral student and their supervisors (Chapter 6, Section 29 HF).

Supervisors are also to be given an opportunity to make representations on matters concerning the withdrawal of supervision and other resources for a doctoral student (Chapter 6, Section 30 HF).

## 10.2 Appointing and changing supervisors

### The Higher Education Ordinance

At least two supervisors shall be appointed for each doctoral student (Chapter 6, Section 28, HF).

One of them shall be nominated as the principal supervisor (Chapter 6, Section 28, HF).

A doctoral student who so requests shall be allowed to change supervisor (Chapter 6, Section 28, HF).

### Local regulations

The head of school decides on the appointment of supervisors. The decision shall be preceded by consultation with the dean if a person will be principal supervisor for more than five doctoral students.<sup>43</sup> Supervisors are normally appointed in connection with the admission decision. The decision shall be preceded by consultation with the head of subject and the committee of supervisors. The person who appoints supervisors also decides on any changes of supervisors.<sup>44</sup>

A doctoral student who wishes to change supervisor should report this directly to the head of school. A doctoral student does not need to state any reasons for a change of supervisor and does not need to take part in any discussions of the case. If the doctoral student wishes, they may start the process by talking to someone else at the university. The Office for Academic Policy can answer questions.

## 10.3 Requirements for supervisors<sup>45</sup>

### 10.3.1 General requirements

The principal supervisor shall have at least the qualifications required for appointment as a docent or equivalent academic qualifications. The assistant supervisor shall have at least a doctoral degree or equivalent academic qualifications. At least one of the supervisors shall have completed the course Supervising Research Students at Örebro University or have equivalent qualifications.

The principal supervisor shall be employed at Örebro University. Exceptions may be made to this requirement if there are grounds for this. In such cases, the person appointed assistant supervisor is to be an employee at Örebro University.

Persons with a close relationship or a family connection may not be part of the same supervisor constellation. Family connections, extended or close, (including a partner relationship) may not exist between the doctoral student and supervisors.

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<sup>43</sup> University delegations (2019/00038)

<sup>44</sup> Local guidelines for supervisors within the third-cycle programme (2019/01600) (in Swedish only)

<sup>45</sup> Local guidelines for supervisors within the third-cycle programme (2019/01600) (in Swedish only)

### 10.3.2 Exceptions to employment requirements within the Faculty of Medicine and Health

Within the field of medical sciences, the Faculty of Medicine and Health (MH) grants exceptions to the employment requirement at Örebro University for principal supervisors, to allow non-salaried docents, who lack employment status at the university, to take up the role as principal supervisors. The non-salaried docent should be linked to Örebro University through their employment at Region Örebro County.

## 10.4 The supervisor's role and tasks

The Higher Education Ordinance has no single provision on the role of the supervisor as part of a doctoral programme. Therefore, Örebro University defines the supervisor's role and tasks in the following local regulations.

### 10.4.1 Tasks entailed in the supervisor role

#### *Working towards the programme's learning outcomes*

The qualitative targets are stated in the Higher Education Ordinance and in Annex 1 to the general syllabus for each subject. A primary task for supervisors is to work towards the doctoral student being able to achieve the programme's learning outcomes.<sup>46</sup>

#### *Representing the university*

Supervisors are appointed to this role by the university and are the university's representatives in relation to the doctoral students and their studies. This means that the supervisor must be aware of the doctoral student's overall situation, both as regards their education and financing, and have good knowledge of the national and local regulations for the programme.<sup>47</sup>

#### *Assignment as supervisor as part of an appointment versus personal assignment*

If the supervisor is an employee of Örebro University, the assignment is included in the duties for their employment. If the supervisor is not an employee of Örebro University, the assignment is a personal one. The fact that somebody is required to perform their supervisory duties as part of the scope of their employment outside of ORU does not change this fact.<sup>48</sup>

#### *Drawing attention to their own and others' conflicts of interest*

The supervisor should draw attention to conflicts of interest, both their own, that of the doctoral student's other supervisors, and that of examiners, external reviewers and other relevant persons. The supervisor may have a conflict of interest in some situations, but is often the person who can discover others' conflicts of interest and protect the doctoral student.<sup>49</sup> See the specific section on conflicts of interest.

#### *Individual study plan – active participation in planning and follow-ups*

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<sup>46</sup> Local guidelines for supervisors within the third-cycle programme (2019/01600) (in Swedish only)

<sup>47</sup> Local guidelines for supervisors within the third-cycle programme (2019/01600) (in Swedish only)

<sup>48</sup> Local guidelines for supervisors within the third-cycle programme (2019/01600) (in Swedish only)

<sup>49</sup> Local guidelines for supervisors within the third-cycle programme (2019/01600) (in Swedish only)

The individual study plan (ISP) shall be adopted after consultation with the doctoral student and supervisor.<sup>50</sup> During a follow-up, the doctoral student and the principal supervisor inform the university of how studies are progressing.<sup>51</sup> The plan is to be amended by the university after the necessary consultation with the doctoral student and supervisor.<sup>52</sup> According to local regulations, the (principal) supervisor is responsible for producing a proposal for a new or revised ISP for the doctoral student. In practice, it is common for the doctoral student to start writing the proposal.<sup>53</sup> Where relevant, the doctoral student must plan their choice of elective courses in consultation with the supervisor.<sup>54</sup>

#### *The right to speak at examining committee meetings*

Local regulations state that a person who has been a supervisor may not be a member of the examining committee at the doctoral student's public defence of thesis. However, both the principal supervisor and other supervisors may be present at and participate in discussions during the first part of the examining committee meetings.<sup>55</sup>

#### *Consultation when withdrawing resources*

The supervisors must also be given the opportunity to make representations in cases relating to the withdrawal of supervision and other resources for a doctoral student.<sup>56</sup>

### **10.4.2 Tasks beyond the role of supervisor<sup>57</sup>**

#### *Examiner*

Supervisory tasks do not include any role as an examiner. A specific decision by the head of school is always necessary to appoint someone as examiner for a course, for example, or to delegate a decision about credit transfer to a teacher.

#### *Not a manager*

The role of supervisor does not mean that the supervisor is a manager for the doctoral student. For doctoral students employed at Örebro University, the head of division or school is their immediate manager.

## **11 Withdrawal of resources for doctoral students**

### **11.1 Withdrawal of supervision and other resources**

If a doctoral student significantly neglects their obligations according to the individual study plan, the vice-chancellor shall decide that the doctoral student is no longer entitled to supervision and other educational resources. The doctoral student and supervisor shall be given the opportunity to make a statement before such a decision is taken. Assessment shall be carried out on the basis of their statements and other available investigative material. The assessment must consider whether the university has fulfilled its own obligations according to the individual study plan. The decision shall be in writing and provide grounds for the decision. Resources may not be

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<sup>50</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 29

<sup>51</sup> Local guidelines on general third-cycle matters (2010/540) (in Swedish only)

<sup>52</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 29

<sup>53</sup> Local guidelines for drawing up individual study plans (2007/466) (in Swedish only)

<sup>54</sup> Local guidelines for planning the third-cycle programme (2018/05529) (in Swedish only)

<sup>55</sup> Local regulations on the public defence of doctoral theses (2014/4414) (in Swedish only)

<sup>56</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 30

<sup>57</sup> Local guidelines for supervisors within the third-cycle programme (2019/01600) (in Swedish only)

withdrawn for the period during which the doctoral student is employed on a doctoral studentship.<sup>58</sup>

#### *Consequences of withdrawn resources*

The decision means that the doctoral student is no longer entitled to supervision or to participate in courses and seminars. Nor are they entitled to continued financing via the university. However, the student retains their place on the programme and may sit examinations on already completed courses or present a licentiate or doctoral thesis. A doctoral student who fulfils the requirements for a licentiate or doctoral degree also retains the right to receive a degree certificate.

#### *Procedure when assessing a queried rate of study*

If the doctoral student's rate of study or results are queried, the head of school, supervisors or doctoral student should as soon as possible contact the analysts or legal officers at the Office for Academic Policy for advice about how to proceed.

## **11.2 Restoration of supervision and other resources**

If educational resources have been withdrawn according to the above, after applying to the vice-chancellor the doctoral student may have their right to supervision and other resources restored. The doctoral student must then present upcoming study results of notable quality and scope or in some other way show the probability that they can fulfil their remaining obligations according to the individual study plan.<sup>59</sup>

## **11.3 Appeal**

A decision to withdraw resources for a doctoral student's education and the decision that a doctoral student shall not have resources restored may be appealed to the Higher Education Appeals Board.<sup>60</sup> See further in the section on appealing decisions.

# **12 Courses and examinations**

## **12.1 Courses, examinations and syllabuses**

The programme consists of work on a doctoral or licentiate thesis, as well as courses and examinations.

The subject's general syllabus states the course requirements that apply for a degree in the subject. Some courses may be obligatory, while others are electives. The elective courses may be organised in blocks, with each block having a particular theme or focus. The scope and focus must be stated for each course or block of courses, as well as which qualitative targets the course or block is intended to support.

Within this framework, the doctoral student can undertake courses in their own subject, at a research school or other relevant courses at the university. If appropriate,

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<sup>58</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 30

<sup>59</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 31

<sup>60</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 12, Section 2, point 5

courses can be taken at another higher education institution. The choice of courses that shall be included in the programme is planned by the doctoral student in consultation with the supervisor and is decided by the head of school in the individual study plan.<sup>61</sup>

The university cannot place degree requirements on a doctoral student that are other than or additional to those stated in the general syllabus and the course syllabuses that are approved accordingly.

Syllabuses are approved by the head of school.<sup>62</sup>

### **12.1.1 Teaching and learning in higher education<sup>63</sup>**

Doctoral students who teach at Bachelor's level or Master's level must have completed 7.5 credits or five weeks' worth of courses on teaching and learning in higher education, or have acquired the equivalent knowledge in some other way.

#### *Time for courses on teaching and learning in higher education*

A doctoral student who is to teach at Bachelor's or Master's level receives training in teaching and learning in higher education as part of their position at the university, within the hours allocated for activities other than doctoral education (that is, as departmental duties within a doctoral studentship). If the course however, according to the general syllabus for the subject, may count towards doctoral education it may as an alternative be allocated within the hours for the programme. Such a decision is taken with the doctoral courses and programmes as a basis. After consultation with the student and their supervisor(s), the head of school lays down in the individual study plan which alternative shall apply.

If the course has been completed at another time than that intended (within departmental duties or otherwise), but should be included in the doctoral programme, the equivalent time should be deducted so that the doctoral student does not receive double time for completing the course (also see the section on programme length and rate of study).

## **12.2 Examination grades**

Examinations are assessed using the grades fail or pass.<sup>64</sup>

## **12.3 Examiner (examinations)**

### **12.3.1 Who may be an examiner?**

The grade shall be decided by a teacher specially appointed by the university, an examiner.<sup>65</sup>

An examiner must be a person employed as a teacher at Örebro University.

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<sup>61</sup> Local guidelines for planning the third-cycle programme (2018/05529) (in Swedish only)

<sup>62</sup> University delegations

<sup>63</sup> Local guidelines for courses on teaching and learning in higher education and supervisor training (2014/69) (in Swedish only)

<sup>64</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 32 and local regulations on grading systems for examinations part of third-cycle courses and study programmes at Örebro University (ORU 2010/540) (in Swedish only)

<sup>65</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 32

A teacher who has a conflict of interest as regards a particular doctoral student must not work with examinations taken by that doctoral student.

### 12.3.2 How is an examiner appointed?

Examiners are appointed by the head of school at which the course is given.<sup>66</sup> Notification shall be made of such a decision.

## 13 Credit transfer for course or study programme or professional or vocational experience

A student who has already completed some of their doctoral education in another form or in another place may, in some circumstances, be able to include this in their programme. The doctoral student does not need to be examined on this part of the programme again. A specific decision on credit transfer is then required by the university. The doctoral student decides whether they want to request a credit transfer.

### 13.1 The Higher Education Ordinance on credit transfer

#### Chapter 6, sections 6-8 Higher Education Ordinance

If a student at a higher education institution in Sweden has successfully completed a higher education course or study programme, she or he is entitled to transfer the credits awarded for a course or study programme at another higher education institution. This does not apply, however, if there is a substantial difference between these courses or study programmes.

The same applies for students who have successfully completed a course or study programme

1. at a university or higher education institution in Denmark, Finland, Iceland or Norway or a signatory to the Council of Europe's Convention of 11 April 1997 on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Swedish Treaty Series 2001:46), or
2. at Nordiska högskolan för folkhälsovetenskap (NHV – The Nordic School of Public Health).

A student is entitled to transfer credits from a course or study programme other than that laid down in Section 6 if the nature and extent of the knowledge and skills cited by the student are such that they correspond on the whole to the course or study programme for which the credits are to be recognised. A student may also be given credit for corresponding knowledge and skills acquired in a vocational or professional capacity.

The higher education institution shall assess whether credits can be awarded for the prior course or study programme or professional or vocational experience.

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<sup>66</sup> University delegations

## 13.2 No local regulations, individual assessment applies

The university may not decide upon local regulations for credit transfer. Decisions on credit transfer must be taken after the assessment of each case in relation to the above provisions of the Higher Education Ordinance.

## 13.3 Requests for and decisions on credit transfer

### 13.3.1 The doctoral student requests a credit transfer

The doctoral student requests in writing a credit transfer for a specific course or programme and submits the basis for this in the form of grades, certificates, excerpts from a student registry or other information necessary for the case to be assessed. Forms are available on the university's main pages for doctoral education at <https://www.oru.se/english/study/doctoral-studies/>.

### 13.3.2 Assessment

Requests for credit transfers shall be assessed according to the above provisions of the Higher Education Ordinance. To support the assessment, the intended learning outcomes for doctoral education according to the Higher Education Ordinance, as they are expressed in the general syllabus followed by the doctoral student and in the course syllabuses relevant to the case for credit transfer, are used.

### 13.3.3 Decision and appeal

The head of school decides on credit transfer, but may delegate this task to someone else, e.g. the head of subject, through a specific decision. A person who has a conflict of interest may not work on these cases; see above regarding examiners for courses and the specific section on conflicts of interest below.

Decisions about credit transfers for courses and programmes are documented in writing, whether they are granted or denied. If the decision entails a credit transfer, this is registered in Ladok. If the decision entails partly or wholly denying a credit transfer, the university shall immediately notify the doctoral student in writing and provide instructions for how to appeal.

Decisions on credit transfer may be appealed to the Higher Education Appeals Board.<sup>67</sup>

### 13.3.4 Consequences for programme length

Note that credit transfers for courses and programmes normally entail the doctoral student's programme length being reduced by the extent of the credited courses or programmes; see the section on programme length and rate of study.

## 14 Research seminars and other activities

The doctoral student is expected to participate actively in research seminars and other supporting activities during the entire programme length. It is also recommended that the doctoral student use opportunities to attend guest lectures etc. at the university and to participate in national and international conferences. Doctoral students who are

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<sup>67</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 12, Section 2, point 3

linked to research schools should participate in both their own subject's and the research school's seminars.<sup>68</sup>

## 15 Doctoral theses and public defence of theses

### 15.1 Thesis

#### 15.1.1 The Higher Education Ordinance and the doctoral thesis

To receive a doctoral degree, the doctoral student must receive a pass grade on a scholarly thesis (doctoral thesis). The thesis must be equivalent to studies worth at least 120 credits (equivalent to two years of full-time study).<sup>69</sup> More specific requirements for the thesis' scope in credits are described in the general syllabus for each subject.

#### 15.1.2 Local guidelines for doctoral theses

According to the local guidelines, the following applies to the doctoral thesis.<sup>70</sup>

##### *General information*

The purpose of the thesis is to document the doctoral student's ability to autonomously apply scholarly methods to a research issue in a particular subject. In general, work on the thesis requires further literature studies, and within the NT field laboratory work, in addition to what is included in the courses. Part of working on the thesis is following the scholarly literature in the thesis' area and participating in research seminars and other activities.

##### *The subject of the thesis*

The subject of the thesis is planned by the doctoral student in consultation with the supervisor and is stated in the individual study plan.

##### *The design of the thesis, etc.*

The doctoral thesis can be designed as either one coherent work (monograph) or as a compilation thesis based on scholarly papers. If the thesis or a paper has been authored with another person, the individual contributions must be clearly distinguishable on examination.

##### *Language*

##### *HS Board and, within the ENT Board, the School of Business*

The doctoral thesis should be written in Swedish, Norwegian, Danish or English.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Local guidelines for planning the third-cycle programme (2018/05529) (in Swedish only)

<sup>69</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 5 and Annex 2 to the Higher Education Ordinance

<sup>70</sup> Local guidelines for planning the third-cycle programme (2018/05529) (in Swedish only)

<sup>71</sup> This still also applies to the subject sport science with a didactics specialisation, which previously came under the HS and UV faculty boards

*MH Board and, within the ENT Board, the School of Science and Technology*  
The doctoral thesis should be written in English.<sup>72</sup>

If the doctoral student intends to use a language in the thesis that deviates from the above guidelines, this should be stated in the individual study plan.

#### *Summary and abstract*

A thesis that is not written in English should include a summary in English. An abstract in English should be appended to the thesis.

- *HS Board and, within the ENT Board, the School of Business*

If a thesis is written in a language other than Swedish, Norwegian or Danish, it should include a summary in Swedish.

#### *Quality review prior to the public defence of thesis*

- *HS Board and, within the ENT Board, the School of Business*

A final seminar should be held for all doctoral theses no later than three to six months before the predicted date of the public defence. An external reviewer should normally be engaged.

- *Within the ENT Board, the School of Science and Technology:*

A final seminar or other type of review should be conducted for all doctoral theses no later than three to six months before the predicted date of the public defence. An external reviewer should be engaged.

- *MH Board*

A final seminar should be held for all doctoral theses no later than three to six months before the predicted date of the public defence. An external reviewer should normally be engaged.

- *Only for compilation theses in medical science subjects:*

As a complement to the final seminar, the papers in compilation theses in medical science subjects should undergo a special prior review by the members of the examining committee before the public defence. The members are each asked to inform the university in writing by a given deadline if the doctoral student is advised against conducting the public defence of their thesis and, if so, the reasons for this. The doctoral student must be informed immediately of such a notification.<sup>73</sup>

## **15.2 Printing of doctoral theses**

### **15.2.1 Printing of thesis, compensation for printing and distribution**

When the date of the public defence is announced, a sufficient number of copies of the doctoral thesis shall be available to enable a satisfactory review of the thesis at the public defence. The university shall decide on the minimum number of copies for the public defence and meet the cost for the production of these copies at the university's Printing Office (Repro).<sup>74</sup>

A doctoral student may choose to duplicate the thesis by assigning the printing of the thesis to another printing company or publishing firm, but can then normally not be compensated for the production cost.

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<sup>72</sup> For the subject sport science with a didactics specialisation, what is said under the HS board above applies

<sup>73</sup> Local guidelines for planning the third-cycle programme (2018/05529) (in Swedish only)

<sup>74</sup> Local regulations on the public defence of doctoral theses (2014/4414) (in Swedish only)

Well in advance of the printing of the thesis, the doctoral student shall read the information found at <https://www.oru.se/english/study/doctoral-studies/thesis-production/> and contact the Printing Office Repro at Campus Services, with a view to agree on a time plan for the thesis production.

The university decides the number of copies to be produced of each thesis before its public defence.<sup>75</sup> At present, the minimum number of copies is 150.<sup>76</sup>

### 15.3 Proposals and decisions about the public defence of theses

For more detailed information, see document with information on proposals for the public defence of doctoral theses (in Swedish only) on the university's main webpages for doctoral education, <https://www.oru.se/english/study/doctoral-studies/doctoral-student/public-defence-of-doctoral-thesis-and-diploma/>.

For the public defence, the provisions laid down in the Higher Education Ordinance and the university's local regulations apply. This section contains a brief summary.

#### 15.3.1 General information about the public defence of thesis

According to the Higher Education Ordinance, the doctoral thesis shall be orally defended at a public defence.<sup>77</sup>

#### 15.3.2 Time and place for public defence of thesis<sup>78</sup>

Public defences of theses shall be held Monday to Friday during the periods

- 1 September–22 December, and
- 7 January–Friday one week before Midsummer.

The date and time are scheduled so that the announcement of a public defence of thesis (*spikningen*) can be held on time, see section 15.4.

The public defence shall take place on a university campus, unless there are special reasons to the contrary.

#### 15.3.3 External reviewer<sup>79</sup>

An external reviewer shall be appointed for the public defence of the thesis.<sup>80</sup> Here, the university has laid down criteria regarding the external reviewer's competence and affiliation.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Local regulations on the public defence of doctoral theses (2014/4414) (in Swedish only)

<sup>76</sup> Local guidelines for doctoral thesis production (2015/03381) (in Swedish only)

<sup>77</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 33

<sup>78</sup> Local regulations on the public defence of doctoral theses (2014/4414) (in Swedish only)

<sup>79</sup> Local guidelines for the appointment of members of the examining committee etc. (ORU 2018/05643) (in Swedish only)

<sup>80</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 33

<sup>81</sup> Local guidelines for the appointment of members of the examining committee etc. (ORU 2018/05643) (in Swedish only)

#### 15.3.4 Examining committee<sup>82</sup>

According to the Higher Education Ordinance, at least one of those participating in the grading of a doctoral thesis shall be someone who does not have a post at Örebro University.<sup>83</sup>

The grade for a doctoral thesis shall be determined by an examining committee appointed specially for each thesis.

The university has laid down criteria regarding the number of members in the examining committee, their competence and affiliation as well as regarding the representation of both sexes. Under these provisions, anyone who has been a supervisor of the doctoral student may for instance not be a member of the examining committee.<sup>84</sup>

#### 15.3.5 Chair at the public defence

The public defence shall be led by a chair. They shall be a teacher employed at Örebro University.<sup>85</sup> The chair at the public defence should be a professor, or if special grounds exist, a docent at the university. Anybody who has been a supervisor of the doctoral student may not be appointed chair.<sup>86</sup>

#### 15.3.6 Conflicts of interest

A conflict of interest is a circumstance that may negatively affect confidence in a particular member or official's neutrality in the processing of a particular case. The person has an interest in the case that could influence their standpoint. In other words, it is about circumstances that could *typically* lead to a person dealing with a case in a biased manner. However, this does not necessarily entail that the person actually *is* biased.<sup>87</sup>

Since an objective and impartial assessment at the public defence is of utmost importance, it is not necessarily the university, but also the doctoral student themselves, who must take measures to prevent conflicts of interest from arising at the public defence or in the handling of the public defence matter as a whole.

See further in the section on conflicts of interest below and in the document with information on proposals for the public defence of doctoral theses (in Swedish only) on the university's webpages for doctoral education, <https://www.oru.se/english/study/doctoral-studies/doctoral-student/public-defence-of-doctoral-thesis-and-diploma/>.

#### 15.3.7 Proposals for the public defence, reasons for the proposal and other information of consequence for the decision

The school shall submit a proposal for the public defence, containing the grounds for the proposal and other relevant information to enable the dean to make a decision concerning the public defence.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Local guidelines for the appointment of members of the examining committee etc. (ORU 2018/05643) (in Swedish only)

<sup>83</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 34

<sup>84</sup> Local regulations on the public defence of doctoral theses (2014/4414) (in Swedish only)

<sup>85</sup> Local regulations on the public defence of doctoral theses (2014/4414) (in Swedish only)

<sup>86</sup> Local guidelines for the appointment of members of the examining committee etc. (ORU 2018/05643) (in Swedish only)

<sup>87</sup> Strömberg, Håkan, et al, *Allmän förvaltningsrätt*, 2006 (ed 23:1) pp 85

<sup>88</sup> Local guidelines for the appointment of members of the examining committee etc. (ORU 2018/05643) (in Swedish only)

### **15.3.8 Submission of proposals for the public defence**

The proposal for the public defence is to be submitted no later than two months prior to the proposed date for the public defence. The signed original copy shall be sent by post or be submitted to Örebro University, Records Office, SE-701 82 Örebro.<sup>89</sup>

The proposal shall be put forward by the head of school. Prior to that, consultation on the proposal must have taken place within the subject.<sup>90</sup>

Before the head of school's decision, the doctoral student is required to sign the first section of the form, thereby committing to the public defence at the proposed time for the defence and confirming that the title of the doctoral thesis and other data are correct. On the form, the doctoral student is also given the opportunity to notify the university, if applicable, that they wish to receive an alternative degree title.

The form for the proposal for public defence of doctoral thesis can be found on the university's webpages for doctoral education:  
<https://www.oru.se/english/study/doctoral-studies/doctoral-student/public-defence-of-doctoral-thesis-and-diploma/>.

The proposal shall be submitted to Örebro University, Records Office, SE-701 82 Örebro. The form can be completed electronically, printed and shall be signed by the doctoral student, head of school and the official handling the matter.

A doctoral student may themselves also submit a proposal for their public defence. This should however only come into question in exceptional cases, eg if the doctoral student wishes to publicly defend their thesis but is no longer in active contact with the school or otherwise do not feel that they have the support from the school for a public defence. If so, the doctoral student can contact the Office for Academic Policy to learn how to go about requesting a public defence.

### **15.3.9 Decision on the public defence of thesis**

The decision on the date, time and venue for as well as the external reviewer, examining committee members and chair of the public defence of thesis is taken by the chair of the faculty board (dean) in question.<sup>91</sup>

### **15.3.10 Members participating in the public defence of thesis via video link**

The university may decide that one member, but not more, of the examining committee may participate in the public defence of thesis via video link, either if they at short notice are prevented from attending or as a planned measure in order for the committee to meet an adequate level of research expertise. See further in the document with information on the proposal for the public defence of doctoral thesis (in Swedish only) on the university's webpages for doctoral studies:  
<https://www.oru.se/english/study/doctoral-studies/doctoral-student/public-defence-of-doctoral-thesis-and-diploma/>

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<sup>89</sup> Local guidelines for the appointment of members of the examining committee etc. (ORU 2018/05643) (in Swedish only)

<sup>90</sup> University delegations

<sup>91</sup> University delegations

## 15.4 Announcement of public defence of thesis (*spikning*)

The announcement of the public defence of thesis means that, at a certain time and date, the university publicly notifies the time and location of the public defence and provides information about the doctoral student and the thesis. This is referred to as *spikning*.

### 15.4.1 Time<sup>92</sup>

According to local regulations, the public defence of thesis shall be announced on a weekday no later than three weeks before the public defence is to be held during the following periods:

- 15 August–22 December, and
- 7 January–Friday one week before Midsummer.

The time between a week before Midsummer and 15 August may not be counted as part of the three weeks before the public defence of thesis.

When announcing the date, a sufficient number of copies of the doctoral thesis shall be available at the university to enable a satisfactory review of the thesis at the public defence.

### 15.4.2 Announcement of public defence of thesis

At Örebro University, the announcement is made at a ceremony known as a “*spikningsceremoni*” and an electronic announcement (“*elektronisk spikning*”), as follows.

#### “*Spikningsceremoni*” – Announcement ceremony

The announcement ceremony is organised by the school. The time and place of the public defence of thesis is made public and the thesis is made available. This is traditionally done by hanging up a copy of the thesis on a specific board, making it available to the public. The ceremony shall be held at least three weeks before the public defence.<sup>93</sup>

The head of school decides on the time and place for the announcement of the public defence and the announcement ceremony that will be held.<sup>94</sup>

The time of the announcement is presented in ORU’s online calendar.

#### “*Elektronisk spikning*” – Electronic announcement

An electronic announcement is the obligatory publication of information in the DiVA<sup>95</sup> database about the public defence of thesis and the thesis – as a supplement to the announcement ceremony, see <https://www.oru.se/english/research/research-support/publishing-your-research/the-publication-database-diva/register-research-in-diva/recording-doctoral-thesis-in-diva/> (However, please see below about electronic *publication* of the entire thesis).

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<sup>92</sup> Local regulations on the public defence of doctoral theses (2014/4414) (in Swedish only)

<sup>93</sup> Local regulations on the public defence of doctoral theses (2014/4414) (in Swedish only)

<sup>94</sup> University delegations

<sup>95</sup> Guidelines for registration in the publications database DiVA (2014/00887) (in Swedish only)

*The thesis is also made available*

At the same time as the public defence is announced, the thesis shall be made available for review as a hard copy. The normal number of copies is around 120.<sup>96</sup>

*Publication of the entire thesis in DiVA*

In addition, the university recommends that doctoral students publish their theses electronically, in the DiVA database. To do this, the university must make a specific agreement with the doctoral student regarding copyright issues. Electronic publication may not replace the printed copy at the announcement, “*spikningen*”. See link to DiVA above.

*If the announcement does not take place at the right time*

If the announcement does not take place at the right time while the thesis is available for review in the prescribed number of copies, the public defence may be moved to a later date. Such a decision is taken by the chair of the faculty board (dean).

## **15.5 The examining committee’s examination of the thesis<sup>97</sup>**

### **15.5.1 Grading system**

A doctoral thesis shall be graded as either pass or fail. When grading, the content of the thesis and its defence shall be taken into account.

### **15.5.2 The examining committee’s meetings**

Detailed information about the examining committee meeting and the minutes to be kept can be found in the template document for the examining committee minutes.

Normally, the examining committee meets straight after the public defence to determine a grade for the doctoral thesis.

The examining committee meeting is in two parts. During the first part, information is obtained from the external examiner and supervisor. The second part is reserved for the examining committee’s private consultation and decision. The external reviewer and supervisor may be present and take part in the discussions only during the first part of the meeting.

Other persons may not be present at the examining committee’s meetings.

The committee shall appoint an internal chair. The examining committee is quorate when all the members are present. The majority decision will be the committee’s decision.

The committee is to provide the reasons for their decision, unless it is obviously unnecessary. If the committee has not provided the reasons for their decision and the author of the thesis requests to know, these should then, if possible, be communicated to the doctoral student (comp. Administrative Procedure Act, Section 32).

Members of the examining committee may have their reservation against the decision recorded in the minutes. If no reservation is recorded, the members are assumed to have

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<sup>96</sup> Local guidelines for doctoral thesis production (2015/03381) (in Swedish only)

<sup>97</sup> Local regulations on the public defence of doctoral theses (2014/4414) (in Swedish only)

supported the decision. A dissenting opinion shall be communicated before the decision has been issued or in some other way announced. It may for instance be communicated orally after the meeting (Administrative Procedure Act, Section 30).

The grading decision is normally announced publicly and immediately after the committee meeting. The chair of the examining committee is responsible for submitting the approved minutes, primarily to the chair of the public defence, otherwise to the study and research administrator or other member of staff at the school.

## 15.6 The public defence of thesis

The faculty boards have given recommendations concerning the public defence of the thesis, its setup and the order of agenda.<sup>98</sup>

1. The chair opens the event and extends a welcome to those attending. The author of the thesis, the thesis title, the external reviewer and the members of the examining committee are then introduced. The chair accounts for the sequence of events during the public defence.
2. The author of the thesis is given the opportunity to account for and comment on any corrections to and misprints in the thesis.
3. The external reviewer is called upon to offer a summary (max. 30 min.) of the content of the thesis. After the author has been given the opportunity to respond (10–15 minutes) a discussion opens between the two in which the external reviewer presents any queries and comments concerning method and findings. The author of the thesis is expected to give clear answers to the external reviewer's questions.

Alternative within the medical, science and engineering disciplines (former MNT board's field of responsibility): The author opens with a presentation of their thesis (max. 30 minutes). Then a discussion opens between the external reviewer and the author in which the external reviewer presents any queries and comments concerning method and findings. The author of the thesis is expected to give clear answers to the external reviewer's questions.

4. The debate is then opened up and the audience may ask questions. The chair determines the order of speakers. The author of the thesis shall be given the opportunity to respond to every contribution to the discussion.
5. The chair thanks all those taking part and declares the public defence of the thesis closed.

The examining committee convenes to determine the grade.

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<sup>98</sup> Item 6 of minutes no 2/99 of the then NT Board, HS Board/Dean's decision no 6/00

## 16 Licentiate thesis

### 16.1 Licentiate thesis

For a licentiate degree, the doctoral student must achieve a pass grade on a thesis that is equivalent to studies worth 60 credits.<sup>99</sup> More specific requirements for the thesis' scope in credits are described in the general syllabus for each subject.

#### 16.1.1 Local licentiate thesis guidelines<sup>100</sup>

According to the local guidelines, the following applies to the design of the licentiate thesis.

##### *General information about work on the thesis*

The purpose of the thesis is to document the doctoral student's ability to autonomously apply scientific methods to a research issue in a particular subject. In general, work on the thesis requires further literature studies and, in the fields of science and engineering, laboratory work, in addition to what is included in the courses. Part of working on the thesis is following the scientific literature in the thesis' area and participating in research seminars and other activities.

##### *The subject of the licentiate thesis*

The subject of the licentiate thesis is planned by the doctoral student in consultation with the supervisor and stated in the individual study plan.

##### *The design of the licentiate thesis, etc.*

The licentiate thesis can be designed either as a coherent work (monograph) or as a compilation thesis based on scholarly papers. If the thesis or a paper has been authored with another person, the individual contributions must be clearly distinguishable on examination.

##### *Language*

- HS Board and, within the ENT Board, the School of Business

The licentiate thesis should be written in Swedish, Norwegian, Danish or English.<sup>101</sup>

- MH Board and, within the ENT Board, the School of Science and Technology

The licentiate thesis should be written in English.<sup>102</sup>

If the doctoral student intends to use a language that deviates from the above guidelines, this should be stated in the individual study plan.

##### *Summary and abstract*

A licentiate thesis that is not written in English should include a summary in English. An abstract in English should be appended to the thesis.

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<sup>99</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 5

<sup>100</sup> Local guidelines for planning the third-cycle programme (2018/05529) (in Swedish only)

<sup>101</sup> This still also applies to the subject sport science with a didactics specialisation, which previously came under the HS and UV faculty boards

<sup>102</sup> For the subject sport science with a didactics specialisation, what is said under the HS board above applies

- *HS Board and, within the ENT Board, the School of Business*

If a thesis is written in a language other than Swedish, Norwegian or Danish, it should include a summary in Swedish.

## 16.2 Printing of licentiate theses

There are no regulations about whether the thesis shall be made public and thus there are no regulations about printing/copying and the financing of such reproduction as there are for doctoral theses.

The doctoral student finances the copy of the thesis that must be submitted to the examiner as well as their own copy. The thesis shall be submitted in a condition that means it is ready for examination and potential reproduction for sale.

If the thesis is to be discussed at a seminar or used in teaching in another way, the school may provide reproduction/copying of additional copies for doctoral students and others who will participate in the seminar. The participants must pay for the material, in the same way as applies to essays/dissertations on the first and second cycle. In accordance with the Fees Ordinance, charges are determined using the actual cost. This means the school cannot distribute the material for free. Using public funding for the programme to pay for reproduction is not permitted, except for copies for the reviewer/external reviewer and others who, according to a decision by the head of school, perform some duty in connection with any seminar.<sup>103</sup>

This thesis is a public and official document. The university may use one submitted copy of the thesis to produce copies for distribution on request, in accordance with the rules for official documents.

A doctoral student who so wishes, may produce copies of the thesis as a more expensive version or more copies for further distribution, but at their own cost.

If the university wishes to disseminate the thesis via the Internet (electronic publication), it must make an agreement with the doctoral student on copyright issues.

## 16.3 Examination of the licentiate thesis and seminar

The grade is determined by an examiner who is appointed by the head of the school to which the subject belongs.<sup>104</sup> For who may be an examiner, see the above section on courses and examination.

The thesis should be defended at a seminar.<sup>105</sup> The head of school decides on whether a seminar should be held and, where applicable, the time and place and any reviewer/external reviewer at the seminar.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Draft report on student costs in connection with university studies, Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, reg. no. 31-1570-02 (2004/262), p 33

<sup>104</sup> University delegations

<sup>105</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 5 referring to Annex 2 to the Higher Education Ordinance

<sup>106</sup> University delegations

## 17 Doctoral degree and licentiate degree

### 17.1 Degrees

The programme leads to a doctoral degree or a licentiate degree. If the doctoral student wishes, a licentiate degree may be awarded as a half-way degree, after they have completed at least 120 credits of a programme leading to a doctoral degree. The degree requirements are described in more detail in the general syllabus for the subject.<sup>107</sup>

### 17.2 Request for degree certificate

A doctoral student who fulfils the requirements for a doctoral degree or licentiate degree shall, on request, receive certification of this from the university.<sup>108</sup>

A form for requesting a degree certificate is available on the university's webpages for doctoral education at <https://www.oru.se/english/study/doctoral-studies/doctoral-student/public-defence-of-doctoral-thesis-and-diploma/>.

The request should be sent to Örebro University, SE-701 82 Örebro or put in the post box by the Student Services Centre in Långhuset.

Degree matters are administered by the university's Student Services, which also provides information about degrees.

The decision to reject a student's request for a degree certificate may be appealed to the Higher Education Appeals Board.<sup>109</sup>

### 17.3 Degree titles

#### 17.3.1 Degrees (first part)<sup>110</sup>

The university confers doctoral and licentiate degrees as follows.

Field of research and development <sup>111</sup>	Degree title Swedish
Science	Filosofie doktor
Engineering	Teknologie doktor or Filosofie doktor
Medicine and health sciences	Medicine doktor or Filosofie doktor
Humanities	Filosofie doktor

<sup>107</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Sections 4-5 and local regulations on third-cycle qualifications at Örebro University (2015/03380) (in Swedish only)

<sup>108</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Sections 9-11

<sup>109</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 12, Section 2, point 6

<sup>110</sup> Local regulations on third-cycle qualifications at Örebro University (2015/03380) (in Swedish only)

<sup>111</sup> Statistics Sweden/Swedish Higher Education Authority: *Standard för svensk indelning av forskningsämnen 2011* (Swedish standard classification of research subjects) (updated August 2016)

Social Sciences - jurisprudence/law - business administration, economics - other subjects	Juris doktor or Filosofie doktor Ekonomie doktor or Filosofie doktor Filosofie doktor
Humanities	Filosofie doktor

Note: for licentiate degrees, *doktor* is exchanged by *licentiat* in the table above.

A doctoral student who wants a degree title according to the above general rule does not need to do anything before they request a degree certificate.

A doctoral student who wishes to receive the alternative degree title, as above, must notify the university in the proposal for public defence of doctoral thesis. For the licentiate degree, students must notify the university no later than in the application for degree certificate. Students are not required to state their reasons for the application.

### 17.3.2 Non-standard degree titles<sup>112</sup>

#### *Exception to both the general rules and above alternative*

In individual cases, the university may decide that a doctoral student shall receive a different degree title than the one they would otherwise receive in accordance the Higher Education Ordinance, Section 2. Such a degree title is referred to as a non-standard degree title. This may be done if the doctoral student requests it in writing and if there are exceptional grounds taking into account the content of their programme. However, other degrees than those conferred by ORU may according to Section 2 not be used. The request, including the grounds for the request, shall be submitted by the doctoral student to Örebro University, Records Office, SE-701 82 Örebro; for the doctoral degree, no later than in the proposal for public defence of doctoral thesis and for the licentiate degree, no later than in the application for degree certificate.

### 17.3.3 Subject and specialisation on the degree certificate<sup>113</sup>

The subject in which the doctoral student has been admitted is stated on the degree certificate as the second part of the degree.

Eg: Doctor of Philosophy in *Biology*.

A specialisation in a subject is stated on the degree certificate as a further specification, if:

- the doctoral student requests it, and
- the specific specialisation is expressly stated in the general syllabus for the subject, and
- the doctoral student can confirm the relevant specialisation for their programme through a certificate or other means.

Eg: Doctor of Philosophy in *Biology with a Specialisation in Environmental Science*

<sup>112</sup> Local regulations on third-cycle qualifications at Örebro University (2015/03380) (in Swedish only)

<sup>113</sup> Local regulations on third-cycle qualifications at Örebro University (2015/03380) (in Swedish only)

### 17.3.4 Translation to English of degree titles<sup>114</sup>

The degree titles (first part) are translated to English on the degree certificate as follows.

<b>Degree</b> Followed by “i (subject)”	<b>Degree of...</b> Followed by “in (subject)”
Filosofie doktor Filosofie licentiat	Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Licentiate of Philosophy
Teknologie doktor Teknologie licentiat	
Medicine doktor Medicine licentiat	
Ekonomie doktor Ekonomie licentiat	
Juris doktor Juris licentiat	Doctor of Laws (LLD) Licentiate of Laws

The second part of the degree title, that is, the subject and specialisation therein, is translated in accordance with the provisions in the general syllabus for the subject.

### 17.3.5 Exemptions from the degree regulations<sup>115</sup>

Exemptions from the degree regulations may be made by the vice-chancellor or someone appointed by the vice-chancellor.

## 18 Processing of personal data

Processing of personal data at Örebro University (ORU) is in accordance with the European Parliament’s and the Council’s Regulation (EU) 2016/679, otherwise known as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

According to GDPR, all individuals are entitled to obtain, free of charge, an extract from the registry of all data that is being processed about themselves and if necessary have potential errors corrected. The applicant will then know the purpose behind the processing, which categories of personal data are being processed, to which recipients or categories of recipient the information is sent or will be sent – especially recipients from a third country or international organisations – and where the information is sourced from. The applicant also has the right to request deletion and restriction or to object to the processing of personal data. There is also the possibility of submitting a complaint to the Swedish Data Protection Authority, who is the supervisory authority.

A request for the above must be in writing, include your name and personal identity number, and be signed by you. Send your request to ORU’s data protection officer:

Data Protection Officer  
Örebro University  
SE-701 82 Örebro

<sup>114</sup> Local regulations on third-cycle qualifications at Örebro University (2015/03380) (in Swedish only)

<sup>115</sup> Local regulations on third-cycle qualifications at Örebro University (2015/03380) (in Swedish only)

If you do not personally collect the extract from the registry at ORU, the extract will be sent to your registered place of residence so that we can ensure that the information comes directly to you. Proof of identity will be checked.

ORU is responsible for ensuring that the processing of personal data is protected by appropriate technical and organisational measures. These measures must be adequate to ensure a security level that is appropriate in relation to the risk that the processing involves. The security aspects include confidentiality, accuracy, traceability and accessibility as well as an adequate level of technical protection. For example, access to data can be restricted to authorised persons, the data can be encrypted, it can be stored in specially protected environments, and it can be backed up. Personal data incidents must be reported to ORU's data protection officer.

Personal data is kept for as long as is necessary for the specific purpose of the processing and in accordance with applicable legislation and ORU's information management plan. In some cases, data is processed in cloud services outside ORU. ORU may transfer personal data to third countries outside the EU/EEA, primarily regarding international research projects.

Personal data in public official documents are processed in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of the Press Act (1949:105), the Archives Act (1990:782) and the National Archives' regulations. If there is no decision on weeding, the data shall be kept according to the Archives Act.

More information about GDPR and how Örebro University processes personal data can be found on the university's webpage:  
<https://www.oru.se/english/about-us/processing-of-personal-data-at-orebro-university/>

This concerns data not processed according to the Ordinance (1993:1153) concerning the Reporting of Higher Education Studies (see below).

#### *Doctoral studentships*

If the doctoral student holds a doctoral studentship, personal data is processed in various HR systems to the extent necessary to honour employment contracts and to meet criteria in current legislation and collective agreements. Personal data is also processed in various systems otherwise needed for ORU to exercise its prescribed responsibilities.

Categories of personal data processed include identity data (name, personal identity number, address, phone number and email address), form and scope of employment, term of employment, additional assignments and management positions, workload plans, secondary employment, salaries, taxes and social security contributions, absence, doctor's certificates, trade union memberships etc. Disclosure of data to third parties may be made, for instance in compliance with legal requirements such as the reporting of taxes and social security contributions. Organisations to which disclosures are made include the Swedish Tax Authority, Statistics Sweden (SCB), Swedish Agency for Government Employers, Swedish Social Insurance Agency, Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ), National Government Employee Pensions Board (SPV), and trade unions. A confidentiality assessment will take place before any disclosure.

Örebro University is responsible for the registry and the controller of the personal data processing. The purpose of the registry is to ensure that information about applicants for study programmes, completed studies, grades and degrees are preserved. GDPR

permits information to be disclosed to, for example, Statistics Sweden and some research funding bodies.

#### *Ladok*

Information about the doctoral student from the application form and other documentation of eligibility, as well as information about study results, are automatically processed in a specific registry for documenting higher education, Ladok. Provisions on the Ladok student registry are laid down in the Ordinance (1993:1153) concerning the Reporting of Higher Education Studies.

In the Ladok student registry, each student's identity data (name, personal identity number, address, phone number and email address) and, in addition to those data processed in the Swedish national higher education application system NyA, data on participation in courses, study programmes and examinations, study result, grades, transfer of credits for courses and study programmes or other activities, and degrees are stored. The student registry shall, in addition, contain such data that is required to facilitate the transfer of data by Örebro University to Statistics Sweden (SCB). Disclosure of data from these registries may be made to third parties, eg other higher education institutions (HEI) or the Swedish Board of Student Finance (CSN) per the list provided in the ordinance.

#### *Individual study plans*

Information about the doctoral student is also found in the individual study plan (see section on individual study plans). The same rules apply for this data as for Ladok, see above.

The doctoral student always receives a copy of the adopted and amended study plan and changed decisions linked to it, and additional information about the doctoral student is normally not added until the next amendments are made. (Therefore, the doctoral student's entitlement to an annual extract does not have great significance.)

The body responsible for the processing of personal information is Örebro University. The purpose of processing this information is to comply with the requirements in Chapter 6, Section 29 of the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100), namely that the university shall decide about individual study plans for each doctoral student.

## **19 Conflicts of interest**

A conflict of interest is a circumstance that may negatively affect confidence in a particular member or official's neutrality in the processing of a particular case. The person has an interest in the case that could influence their standpoint. In other words, it is about circumstances that could *typically* lead to a person dealing with a case in a biased manner. However, this does not necessarily entail that the person *is* actually biased.

Conflicts of interest are an issue in many contexts in doctoral education. Some types of cases may, however, be of great importance to doctoral students/applicants, that is, admission to courses and programmes and, where relevant, the choice of who will receive particular funding, adoption and amendment of individual study plans, appointing examiners and examining committees for the public defence, credit transfers for courses/programmes and professional or vocational experience, and examination of exams, licentiate theses and doctoral theses.

In public administration, conflicts of interest are regulated in Sections 16-18 of the Administrative Procedure Act (2017:900). The most important circumstances in association with education should be (a) that the case concerns the person themselves or someone close to them (as party to the matter), or that the outcome of the case can be expected to affect the person themselves or someone close to them in a significant way (Section 16, p 1), (b) that the person has participated in processing the case (Section 16, p 3), or (c) that there are other circumstances that may be seen to decrease confidence in their impartiality in the case (Section 16, p 4). The complete provisions relating to conflicts of interest are presented at the end of this section. Additionally, there is a conflict of interest if a person proposes or appoints themselves to an assignment.

A person who has a conflict of interest may not process the relevant case; they are *disqualified* from doing so.<sup>116</sup> The rules apply to anyone who is involved in processing a case, not only the person who takes a decision but also the person who prepares or presents the case in some way, by providing proposals, for example, and the person who participates in the final processing of the case, such as presenting it. However, the records administrator and the person who normally issues the decision, for example, are not normally affected by these rules.<sup>117</sup> One example of when it is possible to disregard a conflict of interest could be purely routine cases in which there is only one possible outcome.<sup>118</sup>

Anyone who knows of circumstances that could be considered as involving them in a conflict of interest must volunteer this information.<sup>119</sup> Objections about a conflict of interest may also be presented by the person who risks receiving biased treatment, or by someone else.<sup>120</sup> A conflict of interest can be reported to the next official in the hierarchy or to any other manager at the university, for example. A doctoral student who wishes to discuss a conflict of interest can also ask the university's legal officers or the Office for Academic Policy.

The consequence of a conflict of interest is that someone else should replace the person with a conflict of interest. If the issue is a specific task, such as examiner for an exam or member of the examining committee, someone else shall be assigned to it.

In a case where a person with a conflict of interest has processed a case without reporting a conflict of interest, in some circumstances the decision may be annulled.

### *Provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act*

#### *Excerpt from the Administrative Procedure Act (2017:900)*

Section 16 An individual who becomes privy to administration of a matter on behalf of the authority in a way that may affect the decision has a conflict of interest if:

1. the individual or closely-related person is a party to the matter or otherwise may be affected by the outcome to a significant extent,
2. the individual or a closely-related person is or has been a deputy or representative of a party to the matter or of someone else who may be affected by the outcome to a significant extent,
3. the individual has participated in final administration of a matter at another authority and has thereby taken a position on questions that the authority is to hear in its capacity as a higher body,

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<sup>116</sup> Administrative Procedure Act, Section 17

<sup>117</sup> Skatteförvaltningen (Swedish tax administration), *Rätt handlagt* (1989 p 113)

<sup>118</sup> Strömberg, Håkan et al, *Allmän förvaltningsrätt* (2006 (ed 23:1) p 87)

<sup>119</sup> Administrative Procedure Act, Section 18

<sup>120</sup> Strömberg, Håkan et al, *Allmän förvaltningsrätt* (2006 (ed 23:1) p 87)

4. there are other extraordinary grounds for questioning the individual's impartiality in the matter.

The authority is to disregard conflict of interest if the issue of impartiality clearly lacks importance

Section 17 An individual with a conflict of interest may not participate in administration of the matter or be in attendance when any aspect of the matter is adjudicated. The individual may nevertheless perform tasks that would occasion undue delay if left to anyone else.

Section 18 An individual who is aware of circumstances that may occasion a conflict of interest is to immediately notify the authority.

An authority is to examine any possible conflict of interest as expeditiously as possible.

The subject of the inquiry is to participate in the examination only if required for the authority to have a quorum and if no replacement can be found without occasioning undue delay.

#### *Local guidelines on the management of conflicts of interest in decision-making processes on courses and programmes*

The university's regulations on the delegation of authority provide guidelines for managing conflicts of interest in decision-making processes.

If an official who has received the right to make a decision or been delegated a task has a conflict of interest in a particular case, any deputy (*comment: deputy dean, deputy head of school, vice/deputy chair, etc.*) shall take their place. If the deputy also has a conflict of interest, the powers and decision-making right return to the person who delegated the task. The latter also applies in cases where a decision-making body is not quorate due to a conflict of interest.<sup>121</sup>

#### *Local guidelines on conflicts of interest related to public defences of theses*

The section on public defence and examination of theses refers to the faculty boards' guidelines as regards conflicts of interest in cases related to the public defence of a thesis.

## **20 Disciplinary measures and expulsion**

Disciplinary measures in instances of cheating, disruption and harassment are regulated in Chapter 10 of the Higher Education Ordinance. The consequences may be a warning or suspension. The vice-chancellor or the university's disciplinary committee makes the decision. For more information, see <https://www.oru.se/english/study/student-services/students-rights-and-responsibilities/cheating/>.

Expulsion of students due to mental illness, abuse or serious crime can be carried out in accordance with Chapter 4, Section 6 of the Higher Education Act and the Ordinance (2007:989) on the expulsion of students from higher education. A central body, the Higher Education Expulsions Board, takes the decision after the university's vice-chancellor has made a report.

Both the above types of issue are managed by the university's legal officers.

## **21 Corrections, reviews and appeals on decisions**

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<sup>121</sup> University delegations

## 21.1 Correcting a decision

A decision that contains an obvious error due to the university's or someone else's typographic error, miscalculation or similar error, may be corrected by the university.<sup>122</sup>

## 21.2 Review of a decision

The university may change a decision that it has announced as the first instance if the university finds that a decision is incorrect due to new circumstances or any other reason. If a decision is favourable to an individual party it may, however, be changed to the detriment of the party only if (a) the decision or the provisions on which it is based states that it may be revoked under certain conditions, (b) for imperative safety reasons, the decision needs to be changed immediately, or (c) if the error is due to the party having provided false or misleading information.<sup>123</sup>

The university shall change a decision that it has announced as the first instance if (a) the university finds that the decision is obviously incorrect in a significant way due to the emergence of new circumstances or for some other reason, and (b) the decision can be amended quickly and easily and without resulting in disadvantage to any individual party.<sup>124</sup>

Decisions that have been appealed may be changed by the university only in such cases referred to in the paragraph above and only if the appeal and other documentation relating to the case has not yet been submitted to the higher instance for review.<sup>125</sup>

## 21.3 Appealing a decision

### 21.3.1 Decisions which may be appealed

The following decisions by the university relating to doctoral education may be appealed to the Higher Education Appeals Board, namely

- decisions on credit transfers for education or professional or vocational activity,
- denial of a student's request for exemption from a compulsory course or module,
- decisions to withdraw resources for a doctoral student's programme in accordance with Chapter 6, Section 30, and decisions that a doctoral student will not have resources restored in accordance with Chapter 6, Section 31,
- denial of a student's request to receive a degree certificate or course certificate.<sup>126</sup>

A disciplinary committee decision on suspension and warning may be appealed in a public administrative court.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Administrative Procedure Act, Section 36

<sup>123</sup> Administrative Procedure Act, Section 37

<sup>124</sup> Administrative Procedure Act, Section 38

<sup>125</sup> Administrative Procedure Act, Section 39

<sup>126</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 12, Section 2, points 3-6

<sup>127</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 12, Section 3 referring to Administrative Procedure Act (2017:900), Section 40 a

Decisions by the university that relate to education in cases other than those named above may only be appealed if this is permitted in legislation other than the Administrative Procedure Act.<sup>128</sup>

### 21.3.2 Instructions for how to appeal

If a decision can be appealed, information about how to appeal shall be provided in an annex (instructions for how to appeal).

*Example wording of instructions for how to appeal, in this case when the decision can be appealed to the Higher Education Appeals Board:*

#### How to appeal

Should you wish to appeal the decision, address your appeal to Överklagandenämnden för Högskolan (Higher Education Appeals Board).

The appeal shall, however, be sent or submitted to Örebro University, Records Office, SE-701 82 Örebro.

In the appeal, state which decision is being appealed by providing the decision's registration number and the desired change to the decision, as well as the circumstances cited in support of the request for a change. The document shall be in writing and signed by the appellant.

The appeal must have arrived at Örebro University within three weeks of the day the appellant was notified of the decision.

### 21.3.3 Who may appeal?

A decision may be appealed by the subject of the decision if the decision has ruled against them and the decision may be appealed.<sup>129</sup>

### 21.3.4 How to appeal a decision

A decision is appealed in writing. In writing, the appellant shall state which decision is being appealed and the change in the decision that the appellant wishes to be made.

The written appeal shall be sent to Örebro University, Records Office, SE-701 82 Örebro. It must have arrived within three weeks of the day the appellant received the decision.<sup>130</sup>

## 22 Research schools

A research school is a form of collaboration in doctoral education. Different types of research schools are found at national, regional and local levels. They are not regulated through national legislation.

### 22.1 Research schools of a local or regional character

Örebro University has established and is host to a number of research schools, see <https://www.oru.se/utbildning/utbildning-pa-forskarniva/forskarskolor/> (in Swedish only).

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<sup>128</sup> Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 12, Section 4

<sup>129</sup> Administrative Procedure Act, Section 42

<sup>130</sup> Comp. Administrative Procedure Act, Section 44

A research school is established through a decision by the vice-chancellor.<sup>131</sup> They are collaborative bodies for various doctoral subject areas at the university, based on a particular theme or issue. In some cases, they include other universities, public authorities or businesses.

A doctoral student is admitted to a doctoral subject area in the normal manner, and is primarily based at the school and the subject to which they have been admitted, but part of the programme is conducted within the framework of the research school.

Courses and programmes at the research school are subject to the same rules as for doctoral education in general. The doctoral students follow the general syllabus for their subjects. There are often specific degree requirements for doctoral students linked to a particular research school. There may be other requirements for compulsory courses and elective courses and, in some cases, for the allocation of credits between the courses and thesis.

It is recommended that doctoral students who are linked to research schools participate in both their own subject's and the research school's seminars<sup>132</sup>, to support the doctoral student's links to their subject.

## 22.2 National research schools

There are also national research schools that are established by the government and are intended for collaboration between Swedish higher education institutions in a particular subject or field. Örebro University participates in some of these.

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<sup>131</sup> University delegations

<sup>132</sup> Local guidelines for planning the third-cycle programme (2018/05529) (in Swedish only)