

## Contemporary Research in Information Systems, 7.5 credits

### *Aktuell forskning i informatik, 7,5 hp*

<b>Course Code/Codes</b>	20IK018
<b>Subject Area</b>	Informatics
<b>School/equivalent</b>	Örebro University School of Business
<b>Valid from</b>	2014-06-01
<b>Approved</b>	2014-05-08
<b>Revised</b>	
<b>Approved by</b>	Head of School
<b>Translation to English, date and signature</b>	2015-10-19 JGY

## 1 Course content

The course aims to provide the research student training and practice in analysing and assessing doctoral theses in terms of both form and content, based on the quality standards set forth by both the scientific community in general, and with the informatics area specifically.

The course includes:

- Study of the current discussion concerning research quality in the scientific community in general, in the informatics area specifically, among the authorities regulating research, and among research funders, in Sweden and internationally.
- Analysis of four current doctoral theses, with perspective to the criteria emerging from the previous item.

## 2 Outcomes

### 2.1 The course in relation to the doctoral programme

The course shall primarily refer to the following intended learning outcomes for third-cycle courses and study programmes as described in the Higher Education Ordinance, i.e. the doctoral student shall demonstrate:

#### *Knowledge and understanding*

- broad knowledge and systematic understanding of the research field (part of outcome 1)

#### *Competence and skills*

- the capacity for scholarly analysis and synthesis (part of outcome 3)
- the capacity to review and assess new and complex phenomena, issues and situations autonomously and critically (part of outcome 3)

- the ability to identify and formulate issues with scholarly precision critically, autonomously and creatively (part of outcome 4)
- the ability to plan and use appropriate methods to undertake research and other qualified tasks within predetermined time frames (part of outcome 4)
- the ability to review and evaluate research and other qualified tasks (part of outcome 4)
- the ability to identify the need for further knowledge (outcome 7)

The intended learning outcomes are listed in the same order as in the general syllabus for the programme.

## 2.2 Intended course learning outcomes

To obtain a passing grade, the doctoral student shall demonstrate:

1. Ability to compile and analyse requirements for doctoral thesis and apply them to one's own work.
2. Ability to identify needs for new knowledge in the chosen subject area in which the doctoral thesis is to be written.
3. Ability to analyse and discuss the quality of doctoral theses in the informatics area generally, and specifically in the chosen specialisation.
4. Ability to analyse and constructively criticise, orally and in writing, specific theses in terms of the quality criteria prevalent within the scientific community.
5. Ability to assess doctoral theses in relation to relevant research issues, such as ethical implications, social relevance, accountability, and use of research results.
6. Ability to assess the relevance, limitations and opportunities of various theories and methods in doctoral projects.

## 3 Reading list and other teaching material

The following course readings and teaching material will be used on the course:

The course includes required reading on the criteria and methods for assessment of doctoral theses.

### Required Reading:

Mullins, Gerry; Kiley, Margaret (2002). 'It's a PhD, not a Nobel Prize': how experienced examiners assess research theses. *Studies in Higher Education* Volume 27, No. 4, 2002.

Available via

<http://www.uow.edu.au/content/groups/public/@web/@raid/documents/doc/uow016364.pdf>

University of London (2002). CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING PhD THESIS.

Available via <http://web.uvic.ca/gradstudies/pdf/PhDCriteria.pdf>

Robert Feldt, Tony Gorschek et al (2009) Quality Criteria for Theses

Available via <http://www.hsv.se/download/18.1dbd1f9a120d72e05717ffe3631/RFeldt.pdf>

AIS (2009) Code of Research Conduct

Available via <http://home.aisnet.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=15>

AIS (2009). Theories Used in IS Research.

Available via [http://www.fsc.yorku.ca/york/istheory/wiki/index.php/Main\\_Page](http://www.fsc.yorku.ca/york/istheory/wiki/index.php/Main_Page)

Chinneck, John W. (1999). How to Organize your Thesis.

Available via <http://www.sce.carleton.ca/faculty/chinneck/thesis.html>

Grönlund, Åke (2008). General plan and requirements for Informatics research studies. Örebro University, Informatics.

Grönlund, Åke (2008). Thesis Quality Requirement, PhD and Licentiate. Örebro University, Informatics.

Webster, Jane & Watson, Richard T. (2002). Analyzing the Past to Prepare for the Future: Writing a Literature Review MIS Quarterly, 26/2, pp. xii-xxi, 9.

The course includes reading and analysis of four current theses. These are collected from the current discussion in the informatics field and are updated each time the course is offered.

Additional reading may be included.

## 4 Teaching formats

Teaching on the course takes the following format:

- Lectures (required).
- Individual and group work of analysing essays.
- Four (4) discussion seminars, one for each essays (required).
- A final seminar where research students' essays are presented and discussed (required).

## 5 Examination

The course is assessed through an examination consisting of the components listed below. The individual components are not graded separately but together they provide the basis for assessment and grading.

Examination consists of the following individual components:

- Written assessment of four (4) theses.
- Composition of a reflective essay and presentation at the examination seminar.

*For examinations consisting of several examination components, the following applies:* If during the course it is concluded that a doctoral student is unable to complete a certain examination component, the examiner may set a substitute assignment provided that circumstances do not reasonably allow for the course component to be completed at a later date during the run of the course.

## 6 Grades

Examinations on third-cycle courses and study programmes are to be assessed according to a two-grade scale with either of the grades 'fail' or 'pass' (local regulations).

The grade shall be determined by a teacher specifically nominated by the higher education institution (the examiner) (Higher Education Ordinance).

To obtain a passing grade on examinations included in the course, the doctoral student is required to demonstrate that he/she attains the intended course learning outcomes as described in section 2.2. Alternatively, if the course consists of multiple examinations generating credit, the doctoral student is required to demonstrate that he/she attains the outcomes that the examination in question refers to in accordance with section 5.

A student who has failed an examination is entitled to a retake.

If an examination consists of several examination components, and a student fails an examination component, the examiner may, as an alternative to a retake, set a make-up assignment with regard to the examination component in question.

A doctoral student who has failed an examination twice for a specific course or course element is entitled, upon his/her request, to have another examiner appointed to determine the grade.

## **7 Admission to the course**

### **7.1 Admission requirements**

To gain access to the course and complete the examinations included in the course, the applicant must be admitted to a doctoral programme at Örebro University.

### **7.2 Selection**

Selection between applicants who have been admitted to doctoral programmes at Örebro University and who otherwise meet the admission requirements as listed above is made according to the following order of precedence:

- 1) Applicants from informatics
- 2) Research students admitted in the Research School in Technology-Mediated Knowledge Processes
- 3) Applicants from the School of Business
- 4) Applicants admitted to research study programmes at Örebro University.

If no other selection criteria are specified in this section, priority shall be given to applicants with a lower number of course credits left before the award of their degree over applicants with a higher number of remaining course credits. Should two or more students have equal number of credits, selection will be done through the drawing of lots. This also applies within any selection groups listed unless otherwise stated.

### **7.3 Other applicants than doctoral students admitted at Örebro University**

Other applicants than doctoral students admitted at Örebro University may be given access to the course on the grounds of provisions for and/or agreements regarding contracted courses, joint degrees, national graduate schools or cooperation in other respects with other universities.

Any decisions on what such other applicants may be given access to the course are made separately and on the basis of the provisions and/or agreements that occasion the student to apply for the course.

## **8 Transfer of credits for courses, study programmes and other experience**

Provisions on the transfer of credits can be found in the Higher Education Ordinance and on the university's webpage.

## **9 Other information**

The language of tuition may be English or Swedish, depending on the participants' language skills. The literature is mainly in English.

Research students who have been admitted to a course have the right to receive tuition and/or supervision for the duration of the time period specified for the particular course to which they were accepted. After that, the right to receive tuition and/or supervision expires.

## **Transitional provisions**