

Thesis Design, 7.5 credits

Avhandlingsdesign, 7,5 hp

Course Code/Codes	20IK019
Subject Area	Informatics
School/equivalent	School of Business
Valid from	2019-11-28
Approved	2022-06-10
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Approved by	Head of School
Translation to English, date and signature	2022-06-10

1 Course content

The course aims to provide doctoral students exercise in designing a research plan including problem definition, specification of research questions with a clear relationship in the chosen area of research, specification of methods and goals, timetable and milestones, including specification of publications included in the thesis. The course objective is to develop the ability to make ethical assessments of the proposed thesis project.

The course includes:

- Literature study
- Design study of existing theses
- Thesis project specification
- Thesis project assessment
- Research ethics assessment

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)
- familiarity with research methodology in general (part of outcome 2)
- familiarity with the methods of the specific field of research in particular (part of outcome 2)

Competence and skills

- 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 identify the need for further knowledge (outcome 7)

Judgement and approach

- the ability to make assessments of research ethics (part of outcome 9).

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 identify and summarise the requirements for a doctoral/lic. thesis and use these to assess their own work.
- 2) Ability to identify needs for new knowledge in the selected area.
- 3) Formulate a thesis project, including specifying steps and timetable.
- 4) Ability to assess and discuss various research methods' benefits for the proposed project.
- 5) Ability to evaluate and defend various methods' benefits, and firmly establish one's project theoretically.
- 6) Ability to evaluate and defend the project's relevance to current research topics.
- 7) Ability to evaluate the ethical implications of the proposed thesis project.
- 8) Ability to identify one's own need for knowledge related to the proposed plan.

3 Reading list and other teaching material

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

Required Reading:

AIS (2019). Theories Used in IS Research.

Available via <https://aisnet.org/page/ISResearch>

Informatik (2014). General plan and requirements for Informatics research studies. Örebro University, Informatics. Available via oru.se

Örebro universitet (2020). REGULATIONS HANDBOOK FOR DOCTORAL EDUCATION
Available via oru.se

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 pages)

Vetenskapsrådet (2008) Forskningsetiska principer inom humanistisk-samhällsvetenskaplig forskning Vetenskapsrådet, Stockholm. Available from <http://www.codex.vr.se/texts/HSFR.pdf>

Resnik, D. B. (2011). What is ethics in research & why is it important. National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, 1(10), 49-70.

Further literature, such as theses, are selected based on the chosen area of research.

4 Teaching formats

Teaching on the course takes the following format:

- Lectures (required)
- Individual and group work
- Three (3) seminars (required)
- Final review (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.

- 1) Written assessment of another doctoral student's research design.
- 2) Oral assessment of another doctoral student's research design*
- 3) Presentation and defense of the one's own design proposal.
- 4) Active participation during seminars

*Oral assessment is only required when more than one student is enrolled to the course

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