

# **General Syllabus for Ph.D. Studies in Political Science at Stockholm University**

**(this is a translation of the original document in Swedish)**

*Adopted by the Faculty of Social Sciences on 3 April 2012, Revised last time 2014-05-20*

The general syllabus for Ph.D. studies in political science is decided on by the Faculty of Social Sciences at Stockholm University. General regulations regarding Ph.D. studies can be found in the Higher Education Ordinance (Högskoleförordningen).

## **1. Description of the Field of Studies**

Political science is the scientific study of politics. Examples of subject areas include normative principles and basic political concepts, such as power, democracy, legitimacy and gender; political actors, practices and institutions in Sweden and in other countries; the organization and role of the public administration; and international politics including both state and non-state actors and processes.

## **2. Objectives for Studies**

For a Ph.D. degree, the student should achieve the following objectives:

### *Knowledge and Understanding*

- Display broad knowledge within political science and a systematic understanding of the research field as well as in-depth and up-to-date specialized knowledge within a specific part of the research field, and
- Display conversance with scientific methodology in general and with methods within the specific research field in particular.

### *Skills and Abilities*

- Display a capacity for scientific analysis and synthesis and for independent critical evaluation of new and complex phenomena, issues and situations.
- Display an ability to critically, independently, creatively and with scientific exactitude identify and formulate research questions and to plan and conduct research on the basis of appropriate methods and other qualified work within stipulated time frames and to examine and evaluate such work,
- Display, on the basis of a dissertation, an ability to make a significant contribution to the development of knowledge,
- Display an ability to present and discuss authoritatively research and research results both orally and in written form in national as well as international contexts in dialogue with the scientific community and society at large,
- Display an ability to identify needs for further knowledge, and
- Display prerequisites for being able to contribute to the development of society and to lend support to learning on the part of others within research and education as well as in other specialized professional contexts.

### *Evaluation and Approach*

- Display intellectual independence and scientific rigor as well as an ability to make ethical judgements in relation to research, and
- Display deeper insights into the prospects and limitations of science, the role of science in society and the responsibility of individuals for the manner in which science is used.

The department does not have any separate admission to licentiate studies, but rather a licentiate degree can comprise a stage in a Ph.D. degree.

For a licentiate degree, the student should achieve the following objectives:

#### *Knowledge and Understanding*

- Display knowledge and understanding within political science, including up-to-date specialized knowledge within a specific part of it, and in-depth knowledge of scientific methodology in general and of methods within the specific research field in particular.

#### *Skills and Abilities*

- Display an ability to critically, independently, creatively and with scientific exactitude identify and formulate research questions, to plan and conduct research on the basis of appropriate methods and other qualified work within stipulated time frames and thereby contribute to the development of knowledge and to evaluate this work,
- Display an ability to present and discuss competently research and research results both orally and in written form in national as well as international contexts in dialogue with the scientific community and society at large, and
- Display prerequisites for being able to make an independent contribution to research and development work and to work with other specialized contexts in an independent manner.

#### *Evaluation and Approach*

- Display an ability to make ethical judgements in relation to one's own research,
- Display insights into the prospects and limitations of science, the role of science in society and the responsibility of individuals for the manner in which science is used, and
- Display an ability to identify needs for further knowledge and to take responsibility for the knowledge developed.

### **3. Eligibility and Prerequisites**

In order to be eligible for Ph.D. studies, a student must meet the general entrance requirements as well as the special entrance requirements and must have the ability in other respects needed to complete the studies.

#### **3.1. General Entrance Requirements**

In order to meet the general entrance requirements for PhD studies, a student must have completed a degree on the Advanced Level, completed courses comprising at least 240 higher education credits, of which at least 60 higher education credits on the Advanced Level, or have in some other manner acquired the equivalent knowledge in Sweden or abroad.

The Faculty Board may grant an applicant an exemption from the general entrance requirements under special circumstances.

### *Transitional Regulations*

An applicant that meets the general entrance requirements for PhD studies prior to 1 July 2007 shall even after that time be considered to meet the general entrance requirements for PhD studies, although no longer than until the end of June 2015.

In this case, an applicant that has completed a basic higher education comprising at least 120 higher education credits, or an applicant that has in some other manner acquired the equivalent knowledge in Sweden or abroad, can be admitted to PhD studies.

### **3.2. Special Entrance Requirements**

In order to meet the special entrance requirements for PhD studies in political science, an applicant should fulfill four criteria:

- Completion of higher education studies comprising 150 higher education credits, of which at least 60 higher education credits on the Advanced Level in political science or an equivalent education,
- An independent research paper comprising at least 15 higher education credits in political science having received a passing grade,
- Completion of higher education in subjects of relevance comprising an additional 90 higher education credits, and
- Knowledge of English corresponding to at least 550 credits on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).

## **4. Admission**

Admission to Ph.D. studies can take place twice per year. The application deadlines are 3 March and 1 December every year. Applications in March are for admission to the Ph.D. places financed by the department. Ph.D. students with external financing can also be admitted at that time. Applications in December are only for Ph.D. students with external financing. Admission decisions for February applications are announced no later than the first half of June of that year, with Ph.D. studies beginning in Autumn Semester. Admission decisions for December applications are announced no later than the first half of December of that year, with Ph.D. studies beginning in Spring Semester. Ph.D. studies are offered to the extent that available resources allow.

Information about admission to Ph.D. studies is made available regularly on the website of the department.

### **4.1. Admission Procedures**

#### *For the applicant*

An applicant to Ph.D. studies in political science is to attach the following (in Swedish, English, Norwegian or Danish) to the application:

1. Certified copies of grades and all documentation of qualifications, including research papers, articles, reports and other scientific works.
2. An outline that provides an account of the planned research/research focus. It should present the main focus, a conceivable dissertation topic and preferably a specification of possible research problems, theory, methodology and material. This outline is not binding and may be revised in the course of the research process.

3. The names of two academic references.

#### *The admission procedures of the department*

1. The basic qualifications of the applicant to Ph.D. studies are assessed.
2. An admissions committee comprised of three to five persons (professors and associate professors) read the scientific works of all of the applicants that are judged to be qualified for admission. Interviews with the applicants can take place at this stage.
3. In conjunction with applications in February, the admissions committee submits a recommendation regarding admission to Ph.D. studies to the Council for PhD Studies (Forskarutbildningsrådet - FUR), after which the council presents a recommendation to the Board of the Department (Institutionsstyrelsen - IS) regarding admission to PhD studies. In conjunction with admission in December, the admissions committee presents the recommendation directly to the Board of the Department.
4. The Board of the Department decides on admission to PhD studies.

## **5. Selection**

Selection criteria in the evaluation of applicants are

- 1) The quality of previous written works:
  - empirical content,
  - independence in approach and analysis,
  - clarity of research design, i.e. clear research problem, clear research questions, well justified delimitations, explicit connection to theory and methodological awareness.
- 2) Prognosis for dissertation work being completed on time:
  - previously displayed ability to complete work within stipulated time frames,
  - formulation of the research problem and rigor in the research plan.

## **6. The content and structure of the education**

PhD studies in political science are structured so that the education normally requires four years of full-time study. The studies may also be structured so that they can be completed on a part-time basis within a maximum of eight years.

### **6.1. The structure of the education**

The department provides education in the form of courses, seminars and supervision for the dissertation work. The scope of the education is expressed in credits, whereby one year of full-time studies corresponds to 60 higher education credits, with the PhD degree in its entirety comprising 240 higher education credits. The credits are distributed between 75 higher education credits for courses and 165 higher education credits for the dissertation. For courses, see the Implementation Regulations for PhD studies in political science.

#### *Seminars*

PhD students are encouraged to participate actively in the higher research seminar at the department as well as in one or more of the research seminars that are connected to the research profiles at the department during the time their dissertation work is underway.

### **6.2. Supervision as well as study and professional orientation**

For each PhD student, two or more supervisors (of which at least one is to have gone through supervisor training or to have been judged by the Faculty Board to have the corresponding competence) are to be assigned. One of these is to be assigned to be primary supervisor. During the first academic year, newly admitted PhD students are to participate in a special supervisorial group with regular seminar activity, which includes three or four teachers at the department holding PhDs who are collectively responsible for supervising. During this year, the director of studies for PhD studies is formally the primary supervisor and one other researcher at the department is the assisting advisor.

Towards the end of the first academic year and when a dissertation plan has been presented at a seminar, a permanent primary supervisor and at least one assisting supervisor is to be assigned to each PhD student. When a supervisor has been assigned, the supervisor and PhD student should clarify their expectations in relation to each other and agree on forms for the supervisorial work. The decision on supervisors can be changed at the request of either the supervisor or the PhD student or for other reasons.

The supervisorial group/supervisor is to provide the student with advice and guidance as to how special courses are to be chosen and as to how the dissertation work is to be approached, planned and conducted. PhD students are to keep the supervisor informed through regular contact about the progress of the work and seek advice with regard to continued work.

The director of studies for PhD studies is responsible for informing newly admitted PhD students during the first semester about the guidelines and employment conditions related to PhD studies.

#### *Routines for study and professional orientation*

Study and professional orientation is to take place continually during the course of PhD studies through conversations with the supervisorial group and the supervisors, through alumni activity and through regular development conversations with the director of studies for PhD studies or with the executive group of the department.

### **6.3 Individual study plan**

An individual study plan is to be worked out by the supervisor and the PhD student no later than three months after admission to PhD studies. It is to contain a description of and time plan for the research, proposed courses and planned research stays at foreign institutions of higher education. It is to include a work plan with concrete short-term interim goals for one year at a time. In addition, the forms and/or plans for financing should be clearly stated. The individual study plan is to be followed up at least once per year.

#### *Regulations for continued support*

PhD students have the right to continue to receive study financing, supervision and other support if she or he follows the individual study plan. In the event of deviations from this, the PhD student and the supervisor should discuss whether the original study plan needs to be revised. Support may not be withheld for time that a PhD student is employed in a doctoral position or is receiving a special educational grant for PhD students. If a PhD student disregards his or her commitments in accordance with the individual study plan to a significant extent, the Faculty Board can decide against a re-appointment to the doctoral position.

PhD students have the right to an extension of the time plan under special circumstances, such as sick leave, work performed in the defense sector, certain positions of trust within union organizations and student organizations or parental leave.

## **7. Courses and receiving credit**

Courses at the PhD level are comprised of both mandatory and non-mandatory courses, where the latter are selected in consultation with the supervisor. Courses in the PhD program are mainly mandatory methods courses and courses meant to contribute to a deep and broad knowledge of the field of studies. Mandatory courses are mainly taken during the first year and are defined on a separate list adopted by the Faculty Board.

PhD students can apply to receive credit as part of their PhD studies for equivalent courses passed on the advanced or PhD level. Additional information concerning receiving credit can be found in the Implementation Regulations for PhD studies (see [statsvet.su.se](http://statsvet.su.se))

## **8. Dissertation and disputation**

The dissertation is to document the PhD student's ability in relation to scientific method and presentation as well as proficiency in working independently with a scientific problem.

### **8.1. Dissertation**

The dissertation is either to be a single, cohesive scientific work (a monograph dissertation) or to be comprised of a number of scientific articles that the student has written, accompanied by an introductory summary (a compilation dissertation). There are no differences between these two forms with regard to requirements in terms of quality and scope. The dissertation is to correspond to 165 higher education credits in the PhD studies. A compilation dissertation should include a number of essays, each being of quality and scope corresponding to an article that could be approved in a peer review for a scientific journal. Similar to situations in which scientific dissertations are written jointly by two or more persons, in cases in which persons other than the author of the dissertation have contributed to one or more of the essays, the work of the individual PhD student is to correspond to 165 higher education credits and to be able to be distinguished from the work of the others. (See 'Guidelines for compilation thesis' at [www.statsvet.su.se](http://www.statsvet.su.se))

### **8.2. Disputation**

The doctoral dissertation is to be defended orally at a public disputation and assigned a grade of either pass or fail. In setting a grade, consideration is given both to the content of the dissertation and to the defense.

The opponent and the members of the examination committee are appointed by the Faculty Board. Regulations concerning the examination committee, etc. can be found in the Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6 and in the directives issued by the Faculty of Social Sciences.

### **8.3. Licentiate seminar**

The department does not have any separate admission to licentiate studies, but rather a licentiate degree can comprise a stage in a Ph.D. degree. A licentiate degree comprises a total of 120 higher education credits with a distribution of 45 higher education credits for courses

and 75 higher education credits for the dissertation. (For courses, see Implementation Regulations for PhD studies in political science)

The scientific thesis is to be critically examined at a seminar during the semester by an opponent holding at least a PhD degree and with good knowledge of subject areas and methods essential to the thesis. The thesis is to be available at the department and at the university library at least two weeks during the regular semester prior to the seminar. An announcement about the presentation of the thesis is to be sent to other departments of political science at the universities and colleges in the country.

The grade for the thesis is decided on by the examiner, or possibly by an examination committee comprised of three teachers, of which at least one is the most closely specialized professor; other members are to have competence corresponding at least to that of a PhD. The opponent and examiner or examination committee is to be appointed by the Board of the Department on the suggestion of the most closely specialized professor.

As grades for courses and the thesis, the terms “pass” and “fail” are used. The grade on the thesis is to be reported to the Faculty Board.

In other respects, the same regulations apply for licentiate degrees as for pertinent aspects of PhD studies in general.

## **9. Degrees**

A PhD degree requires:

- courses corresponding to 75 higher education credits,
- 165 higher education credits for participation in seminars and for independent research work that is presented in a dissertation,
- oral defense of the scientific dissertation at a public disputation, and
- approval of the scientific dissertation.

A licentiate degree requires:

- courses corresponding to 45 higher education credits,
- 75 higher education credits for participation in seminars and for independent research work that is presented in a scientific thesis,
- defense of the scientific thesis at a seminar, and
- approval of the scientific thesis.

## **10. Other directives**

Supplementary advice and directives are provided in special implementing regulations established by the department.