General Syllabus for Degree of Doctor in Art History and Visual Studies

The syllabus was confirmed by the Faculty Board of Arts at Gothenburg University on 16 December 2015. It is complemented with the following documents, available via the website of the Faculty of Arts (www.hum.gu.se):

Instructions for Third-cycle Studies at the Faculty of Arts.


Title of qualification and teaching and research duties

The title of qualification for the studies specified in the syllabus is Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Art History and Visual Studies. Art History and Visual Studies is aimed at the analysis and understanding of different visual forms of expression.

1. Objectives

1.1 General national objectives

According to the Qualifications Ordinance, Appendix 2 of the Higher Education Ordinance, the objectives for the Degree of Doctor are as follows:

Knowledge and understanding

For the Degree of Doctor, the third-cycle student shall:

– demonstrate broad knowledge and systematic understanding of the research field as well as advanced and up-to-date specialised knowledge in a limited area of this field, and

– demonstrate familiarity with research methodology in general and the methods of the specific field of research in particular.

Competence and skills

For the Degree of Doctor, the third-cycle student shall:

– demonstrate the capacity for scholarly analysis and synthesis as well as to review and assess new and complex phenomena, issues and situations autonomously and critically,
– demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate issues with scholarly precision critically, autonomously and creatively, and to plan and use appropriate methods to undertake research and other qualified tasks within predetermined time frames and to review and evaluate such work,

– demonstrate through a thesis their ability to make a significant contribution to the formation of knowledge through their own research,

– demonstrate the ability in both national and international contexts to present and discuss research and research findings authoritatively in speech and writing and in dialogue with the academic community and society at large,

– demonstrate the ability to identify the need for further knowledge, and

– demonstrate the capacity to contribute to social development and support the learning of others both through research and education and in other qualified professional contexts.

Judgment and approach
For the Degree of Doctor, the third-cycle student shall:

– demonstrate intellectual autonomy and disciplinary rectitude as well as the ability to make assessments of research ethics, and

– demonstrate specialised insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used.

2. Entry requirements
Admission to the programme requires that the applicant fulfils the general and specific entry requirements provided in Chapter 7 of the Higher Education Ordinance.

2.1 General entry requirements
A person meets the general entry requirements under Chapter 7, Section 39 of the Higher Education Ordinance if he or she:

1. has been awarded a second-cycle qualification, or

2. has satisfied the requirements for courses comprising at least 240 higher education credits of which at least 60 higher education credits were awarded in the second-cycle, or

3. has acquired substantially equivalent knowledge in some other way in Sweden or abroad.

2.2 Specific entry requirements
Admission to the third-cycle programme in Art History and Visual Studies requires:

1. 30 higher education credits in Art History and Visual Studies at the second-cycle level, at least 15 of which must be from a degree project, or equivalent knowledge,

2. the types of Swedish and English skills needed to be able to benefit from compulsory parts of the course and to be able to actively participate in seminars and similar activities.

3. Admission and selection
Admission to third-cycle studies in Art History and Visual Studies is normally initiated by the
Department announcing a call for doctoral studentships. Admission is conditional upon the studies being properly funded.

In selecting between applicants, their ability to benefit from the course or study programme shall be taken into account in accordance with Chapter 7 of the Higher Education Ordinance. To facilitate the selection process, the applicant must submit:

1. First- and second-cycle degree projects in Art History and Visual Studies, in addition other publications, if any. Projects and theses are to be assessed based on the following quality criteria:
   – Ability to formulate a research question relevant to the field of Art History and Visual Studies
   – Ability to structure and carry out an investigation relevant to the field of Art History and Visual Studies
   – Application of theory and method and methodological awareness
   – Analytical ability and reflexivity in relation to one’s own work
   – Independence and originality
   – Ability to communicate in writing

2. A project draft indicating the applicant’s desired focus area as well as which theories, methods and material that may come into question. The project draft is assessed based on the following quality criteria:
   – Ability to formulate a research question relevant to the field of Art History and Visual Studies
   – Familiarity with previous and current research in the area
   – Adequate choices of theory and method and methodological awareness in relation to the investigation at hand
   – Feasibility within the third-cycle study programme

An overall assessment is made of the material submitted. Admission and selection are conditional on the Department’s supervisory resources within the doctoral student’s research focus. Admission may also include an interview in addition to a review of qualifications submitted. Admission decisions are made by the Head of Department following preparation at the Department.

4. Programme disposition and content
The third-cycle programme in Art History and Visual Studies comprises 240 higher education credits and leads to a Degree of Doctor. There is the option to obtain a Degree of Licentiate after 120 higher education credits, provided the requirements specified in the general syllabus for a Licentiate degree in Art History and Visual Studies are fulfilled.

The third-cycle programme consists partly of courses, which are examined incrementally, and partly of own research work, which is to lead to a scholarly thesis.

The student shall participate in seminar activities within the confines of her or his education. The doctoral student shall also participate in Department-wide activities, unless there are special reasons.

4.1 Courses
The programme consists of a course part comprising 60 higher education credits.

**Compulsory courses (37.5 HE credits)**

Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: Basic Course (5 HE credits).

Theory of Science and Research (7.5 HE credits).

Academic Writing (5 HE credits). This course provides training in the various genres of academic writing.

Research Practices (5 HE credits). This course includes elements of career planning and preparation of a project application. The course also includes the task of acting as reviewer of another doctoral student’s work at the final seminar.

Theory and Method in Art History and Visual Studies (7.5 HE credits). The course covers the theoretical and historiographical traditions and contemporary theoretical developments within Art History and Visual Studies. The course also deals with the research methods and methodological traditions of the discipline.

Excursions (7.5 HE credits). Existing art-historical environments and objects are studied on location during joint trips. The studies are accounted for at specially arranged seminars.

**Elective courses (22.5 HE credits)**

Elective courses are selected in consultation with the supervisor and the student examiner.

**Miscellaneous**

The basic course in teaching and learning in higher education (5 higher education credits) should be completed during the first year of the third-cycle studies.

Courses are examined according to the course syllabus of each course. This may be done by a written or oral exam, an essay or a combination of these possibilities. Courses are assessed with the grades Pass or Fail.

If a doctoral student requests credit transfer from previous education, this shall be specified in the individual study plan (see 6.1).

**4.2 Doctoral thesis**

The doctoral thesis comprises 180 higher education credits. It can be designed as a monograph or a compilation thesis. A licentiate thesis can be included as part of a doctoral thesis, in a revised or unaltered form.

The doctoral student is expected to provide regular reports on her or his thesis work. This obligation is primarily fulfilled through presentation of parts of the thesis or other thesis-related materials at Department seminars, normally once every semester.

The doctoral thesis is defended at a public defence seminar. Both the content and defence are considered in the assessment of the thesis. The thesis is graded with one of the grades Pass or Fail.

For more information, see *Instructions for Third-cycle Studies at the Faculty of Arts.*
5. Supervision
At least two supervisors shall be appointed for each doctoral student: one principal supervisor and one assistant supervisor. At least one of the supervisors must be employed at the University of Gothenburg, normally at the doctoral student’s home Department. At least one of the supervisors must be qualified for appointment to a readership (Docent) and at least one of the supervisors must have completed supervisor training.

The doctoral student is entitled to supervision at least as stipulated by the standard adopted by the Faculty Board (see Instructions for Third-cycle Studies at the Faculty of Arts).

A doctoral student who so requests is entitled to change supervisors.

6. Individual study plan
An electronic individual study plan, which shall be finalised by no later than two months after commencement of studies, shall be drawn up by the doctoral student and supervisor, in consultation with the student examiner, in connection with admission.

The individual study plan shall be reviewed at least once a year. The review shall clearly identify the doctoral student’s progression.

6.1 Credit transfer
When the individual study plan has been established, the doctoral student may request that credits be transferred from past successfully completed second- or third-cycle education. Credits applied to fulfil the general or specific entry requirements may not also be applied towards the third-cycle degree, but must be replaced with another course. In addition, the following applies:

(i) A doctoral student who has successfully completed a second-cycle course that is included as a compulsory or elective course at third-cycle level may request that the course be replaced with another course of the same extent in the individual study plan. This does not affect the duration of the programme for the Degree of Doctor.

(ii) A doctoral student who has completed part of her or his third-cycle education while he or she was enrolled as a third-cycle student at another higher education institution or in another subject may request that the part be applied directly to her or his degree without replacements. This reduces the duration of the study programme for a Degree of Doctor in proportion to the credits transferred.

6.2 Timetable and funding plan
The individual study plan shall include a timetable and associated funding plan for the entire period of study, up to the planned date for public defence of the thesis.

7. Transitional provisions
Doctoral students admitted before 1 January 2016 may, following consultation with supervisors and the student examiner, request permission from the Head of Department to transfer to this programme syllabus. The individual plan must then be updated.