General Syllabus for Degree of Licentiate in German

The syllabus was confirmed by the Faculty Board of Arts at Gothenburg University on 9 June 2016. 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.


A third-cycle student admitted for third-cycle studies for taking the Degree of Doctor in German is entitled to request to take the Degree of Licentiate in German provided the requirements for courses and essays specified in this syllabus are fulfilled.

Title of qualification and description of subject

This general syllabus is for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in German. The programme covers the German language and German literature in cultural and social contexts.

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 Licentiate are as follows:

Knowledge and understanding

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

– demonstrate knowledge and understanding in the field of research including current specialist knowledge in a limited area of this field as well as specialised knowledge of research methodology in general and the methods of the specific field of research in particular.

Competence and skills

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

– demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate issues with scholarly precision critically,
autonomously and creatively, and to plan and use appropriate methods to undertake a limited piece of research and other qualified tasks within pre-determined time frames in order to contribute to the formation of knowledge as well as to evaluate this work, 

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

– demonstrate the ability required to independently participate in research and development work and to independently work in other qualified activities.

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

– demonstrate the ability to make assessments of ethical aspects of their own research,

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

– demonstrate the ability to identify the personal need for further knowledge and take responsibility for their own ongoing learning.

2. Entry requirements
Admission to the programme requires that the applicant fulfil the general and specific entry requirements provided in Chapter 7 of the Swedish 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 German requires:

1. at least 30 higher education credits in German from the second cycle, including at least 15 higher education credits from a degree project, or equivalent.

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

3. Admission and selection
Admission to third-cycle studies in German 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 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. Theses and degree projects, which are assessed based on the following criteria:
   a) ability to autonomously identify and formulate relevant problems,
   b) ability to conduct an argumentation with consideration of the tenacity of the arguments,
   c) application of scientific concepts in conjunction with the analysis of the processed data,
   d) independence and originality.

2. A project draft in which the applicant describes his/her planned research project. The draft must clearly identify the research question, theoretical perspective, methods and source material. The project draft is assessed based on the following criteria:
   a) ability to formulate research questions/scientific problems,
   b) familiarity with previous and current research in the area,
   c) whether the formulated problems are linked to current research and whether they are relevant in relation to the opportunities presented by the material,
   d) whether the described methods for collection and analysis of data are adequate,
   e) whether the draft is deemed realistic with respect to feasibility within the framework of the programme,
   f) independence and originality.

The project draft forms a basis for assessment of the Department’s supervisory competence within the indicated research area.

Admission and selection are conditional on the Department’s supervisory resources within the third-cycle student’s research focus. Admission may also include interviews 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 German leading to a Degree of Licentiate comprises 120 higher education credits.

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

The student shall participate in seminar activities within the confines of her or his education. He/she shall also participate in Department-wide activities, unless there are special reasons.
4.1 Courses
The programme consists of a compulsory set of courses corresponding to 30 higher education credits. The courses may comprise faculty-wide courses, courses offered by the third-cycle student’s home department and courses at other higher education institutions.

Compulsory courses (30 higher education credits)
Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, Basic Course, 5 higher education credits
Research practices, 5 higher education credits. The course includes elements of career planning and development of project applications. Students are also required to serve as peer reviewers in connection with fellow third-cycle students’ presentation of work at a final review seminar.
Phonology, morphology and syntax or General Literary Theory, 5 higher education credits
Semantics or Theory of Literature in Germanistics, 5 higher education credits
Pragmatics or History of Literature from the Enlightenment to 1900, 5 higher education credits
Linguistic change or History of Literature from Modernism until Today, 5 higher education credits
The choice of courses when more than one alternative is given depends on the third-cycle student’s research focus and is to be decided in consultation with the respective student examiner and supervisors.

Additional information
The courses included in the programme are examined in accordance with the respective course syllabi. The modes of examination consist of written and oral tests, papers/essay or a combination of these. The grading scale comprises Pass and Fail.
If a third-cycle student requests credit transfer from previous education, this shall be specified in the individual study plan (see 6.1).
The course in teaching and learning in higher education (5 higher education credits) should be completed in the first year of the programme.

4.2 Licentiate thesis
The licentiate thesis comprises 90 higher education credits.
The third-cycle student is expected to provide regular reports on her or his thesis work. This obligation is primarily fulfilled through presentation at Department seminars.
Licentiate theses are defended at a public 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 third-cycle 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 third-cycle 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 third-cycle 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 third-cycle student who so requests is entitled to change supervisors.

6. Individual study plan
In connection with admission, an electronic individual study plan shall be drawn up by the third-cycle student and his/her supervisors in consultation with the doctoral examiner. The document must be finalised no later than two months after commencement of studies.

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

6.1 Credit transfer
When the individual study plan has been established, the third-cycle 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 third-cycle 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 Licentiate.

(ii) A third-cycle student who has completed part of his/her third-cycle education while he/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 Licentiate 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 date planned for the public defence of the thesis.

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