

Guidelines for teaching and examinations in third-cycle education

Linköping University (LiU) conducts education at basic level (first cycle), advanced level (second cycle), and research level (third cycle). This document presents **Swedish regulations** in the form of acts and ordinances that apply in Sweden to education and examinations at research level, followed by the **local regulations** that apply at LiU.

The regulations on which this document is based are mainly found in the Higher Education Act (1992:1434, HL) and the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100, HF). Other legislation and ordinances that this document refers to are: the Discrimination Act (2008:567) and the Administrative Procedure Act (2017:900).

The local regulations are based on the Swedish acts and ordinances, and describe how these are to be applied. These guidelines do not contain a complete presentation of all legal provisions that apply to education and examinations at research level: they are limited to the questions that LiU has assessed require supplementary university-wide guidelines. The faculties and the Educational Sciences area at LiU have overall responsibility for the quality, efficiency, design, provision of study syllabuses and supervision of research education. The faculties and the Educational Sciences area can, within the framework of the legal provisions relating to institutions of higher education and these guidelines, issue supplementary guidelines and procedures.

References to relevant ordinances and other important documents relating to research education are located at the end of this document.

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1 Background

1.1 The concepts of “doctoral student” and “student”

In this document, a student who is taking third-cycle education is denoted as a *doctoral student*, while the term *student* is used in several of the general descriptions of education given in HL and HF. These general descriptions may also be applicable to doctoral students unless it is specified that they are solely valid for education at first-cycle and second-cycle levels. The term *doctoral student* is used also for third-cycle students who have been admitted to take a licentiate degree.

1.2 Third-cycle degrees

Third-cycle education can lead to two degrees with different extents: the licentiate degree or the doctoral degree. LiU is not certified to award degrees on the basis of artistic expertise.

The term “examination” is used to denote all final conclusions concerning study performance. Examination is both the exercise of official authority and a component of the doctoral student’s learning process. It is important that the regulations are unambiguous in order to ensure the legal certainty of an examination. All examination is to be carried out with high quality and sound legal certainty. The concept of “legal certainty” should be understood as “predictability in judicial matters”.¹ The conditions required for it to be considered that legal certainty applies are that unambiguous regulations have been laid down, that they have been published, and that they are applied fairly and correctly.

The Discrimination Act states that it is prohibited at examinations to exercise discrimination on the basis of sex, gender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation or age (Chapter 1, Section 4, and Chapter 2, Sections 5 and 6). This must be satisfied in the design of regulations for assessment and study plans.

1.3 Quality assurance

Chapter 2, Section 4 of HL states that operations are to be arranged such that high standards are achieved in education and research. Further, it states that the available resources are to be used in an efficient manner to sustain a high standard of

¹ Frändberg, Åke (2000). Om rättssäkerhet. *Juridisk tidskrift* 2000-01, pp. 269-280.

operations, and that quality assurance is a shared concern of the personnel and students at institutions of higher education.

1.4 Good research practice

Chapter 1, Section 3a of HL states that the academic credibility and good research practice are to be upheld by the operations at institutions of higher education. The Act on Responsibility for Good Research Practice and the Examination of Research Misconduct (2019:504) contains legal provisions relating to the responsibility of the researcher and the entity responsible for research that the research is carried out in accordance with good research practice and that an independent board is to examine questions of misconduct in research. LiU itself is to examine other suspected deviations from such practice than those that are to be examined by the independent board (cf. Chapter 1, Section 17, HF). LiU has special guidelines for the management of deviations from good research practice.

2 General provisions

2.1 Establishment and discontinuation of research education subjects

Swedish regulations

A university or higher education institution entitled to award third-cycle degrees shall determine the subjects in which third-cycle courses and programmes may be offered (Chapter 6, Section 25, HF).

Local regulations

Establishment of subjects and fields of study for third-cycle education

The following conditions must be satisfied when a decision is taken to establish a subject or field of study for third-cycle education:

- There must be a research environment in which active research and seminars of good quality are carried out, relevant to the education.
- Supervisory and other resources required for the education must be available. The supervisors must have relevant knowledge of the subject and teaching expertise to supervise doctoral students.
- The title of the subject and, where relevant, the field of study, in Swedish and English, are to provide unambiguous information of its location relative to both Swedish standards (the research subjects defined by SCB)² and to international practice.

Discontinuation of a subject of third-cycle education

The term “discontinuation of a subject of third-cycle education” denotes that the subject is discontinued or that its content is significantly changed. The following guidelines describe how discontinuation of a subject of third-cycle education and, where relevant, a field of study is to take place:

- An impact analysis must be carried out that examines not only the consequences relating to expertise, economy and personnel that discontinuation of the subject will bring for the departments and other operational units involved, but also how the quality of the education can be assured for the doctoral students who have been admitted to the subject.
- Reasons for the discontinuation of the subject must always be given with the decision.

² Standard för svensk indelning av forskningsämnen, 2016. Swedish Higher Education Authority.

- Discontinuation means that no further doctoral students will be admitted for the subject.

2.2 General study syllabuses

Swedish regulations

For each subject in which third-cycle courses or study programmes are offered, a general study syllabus is required (Chapter 6, Section 26, HF).

The following must be specified in a general study syllabus:

- the main content of the study programme
- specific entry requirements, and
- any other regulations required (Chapter 6, Section 27, HF)

Local regulations

In addition to the contents of a general study syllabus required by the Swedish regulations, a general study syllabus at LiU must also contain:

- the name of the subject in Swedish and English, and, where relevant, specialisation within the subject (SCB code, specified by 5 digits)
- the overall structure of the study programme
- name or names of the degree or degrees that will be awarded on completion of the study programme
- reference to the aims of the degrees according to the qualifications ordinance (Annex 2 of HF) with, where relevant, locally specified requirements for the subject
- the extent of the doctoral thesis (in the case of licentiate degrees, the licentiate thesis), specified in terms of higher education credits
- the extent of other components that are part of the study programme (courses and other components, both compulsory and elective, for which higher education credits are awarded), which, together with the thesis (in the case of licentiate degrees, the licentiate thesis), are to correspond to the total extent of the study programme
- details of the grading scale applied (see Section 3.2)
- information about whether it is required, or possible, to take a licentiate degree or corresponding, for doctoral students admitted to a doctoral degree
- details about when the general course syllabus or a modification of it is to come into force and start to apply, and
- any transitional provisions that are necessary

A doctoral student is admitted at a particular point in time to the most recently determined general study syllabus for the admission.

2.3 Individual study plan

Swedish regulations

An individual study plan must be drawn up for each doctoral student. The plan shall be adopted after consultation with the doctoral student and his or her supervisors. The plan is to contain:

- the undertakings of the university and the doctoral student, and
- a timetable for the study programme of the doctoral student.

The individual study plan is to be reviewed at regular intervals, and may be amended by the university as required after consultation with the doctoral student and his or her supervisors. The period of study may be extended only if there are special grounds for doing so. Such grounds may comprise leave of absence as a result of illness, leave of absence for service in the defence forces or for an elected position within a trade union or student organisation, and parental leave (Chapter 6, Section 29, HF).

Local regulations

Contents

In addition to the contents of an individual study plan required by the Swedish regulations, an individual study plan at LiU must also contain:

- the name and personal identity number of the doctoral student
- the subject and information about the general study syllabus
- the date of decision to adopt the study plan and dates of any revisions made
- information of how it is planned that the doctoral student will obtain financial support (more details are given in Section 2.5)
- the names of the supervisors and the assignment of responsibility between them
- plans for the supervision and its structure, appropriately with specification of the number of supervision hours per term (more details are given in Section 3.3)
- information about the execution of career guidance
- access to workplace and other resources
- plans for the dissemination of results during the research education (such as publishing strategy, seminars, conferences)
- An overall description of how the learning outcomes (Annex 2 of HF) will be reached during the study programme

- information of compulsory and elective courses and other components or activities for which higher education credits are awarded and that are planned to be included in the study programme
- information about other work, such as teaching, and its extent and relationship to the study programme
- whether education in higher education teaching methods is to be included in the study programme
- the significance that educational components subject to transfer of credit have for the total duration of the study programme
- other requirements such that it is possible to conduct the study programme effectively (such as plans for seminars to follow the thesis progression, half-time seminar, final seminar, etc.).

Progression relative to the achievement of goals and the schedule is important such that both the doctoral student and the supervisors can form an opinion of whether more support is required to enable the doctoral student to satisfy the undertakings, or if resources are to be withdrawn, and in order to assess how the studies are progressing.

Adoption of individual study plans

The individual study plan is to be drawn up as soon as possible after the decision of admission, and must be approved within two months of the doctoral student starting the studies. Adoption of an individual study plan requires consultation with the doctoral student and the supervisors, but the university has the final responsibility that an individual study plan is drawn up and approved, even if the doctoral student does not participate.³ In cases in which a doctoral student does not consent to the individual study plan, this should be made clear by the study plan, by, for example, a note that consultation has taken place without the doctoral student consenting to the contents.

Review and revision

An individual study plan is in general to be reviewed and revised at least once a year. Review of an individual study plan requires consultation with the doctoral student and the supervisors, but the university has the final responsibility that an individual study plan is reviewed and revised. This is the case also for doctoral students who are not active and do not participate in the review or approve the proposed revised study plan. In cases in which a doctoral student does not consent to a revised study plan, this should be made clear by the study plan, by, for example, a note that consultation

³ See a decision from the Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ) dated 26 February 2014 (Reg. no. 31-475-13). *Upprättande av en individuell studieplan och byte av handledare i utbildning på forskarnivå.*

has taken place without the doctoral student consenting to the contents. If reviews have taken place for several years without the doctoral student participating, further reviews may take place at less frequent intervals, and consideration may be made whether supervision and other resources are to be withdrawn (see Section 3.4).

The review process is a tool for both the university and the doctoral student to determine whether the studies are progressing as planned, or whether a change is necessary with respect to the undertakings of the doctoral student or the university. During the review, the relationship between the performed and planned activities of the doctoral student during the research education and the learning outcomes of the Higher Education Ordinance (for example whether an objective or parts of an objective have been achieved) is to be documented. The result of the review is to be a decision to approve an amended individual study plan. The head of department or equivalent person at the department that admitted the doctoral student has responsibility that reviews are carried out and that procedures are in place for this.

2.4 Courses taken during research education and other components awarded higher education credits

Local regulations

Both courses taken during research education and other components awarded higher education credits are to contribute to achieving the learning objectives. Courses taken during research education and other components awarded higher education credits are to be subject to examination and a grade awarded. A course syllabus should be defined for compulsory courses that are taken during research education. The course syllabus should be approved and amended at least eight weeks before the course starts. A course syllabus for a course taken during research education at LiU should contain:

- the cycle in which the course is given
- the number of credits
- learning outcomes
- a description of the principal contents of the course
- forms of assessment of the performance of the doctoral student
- grading scale (see Section 3.2),
- regulations concerning the existence and forms of compulsory components
- regulations about whether it is possible to replace a compulsory component with another assignment
- where relevant, regulations that a course is to be fully or partially examined in another language than Swedish
- regulations concerning when the course syllabus or a modification of it is to come into force and start to apply, and

- any transitional provisions that are necessary

2.5 Admission to the study programme, study financing and extension of duration

Swedish regulations – admission and duration

The Higher Education Ordinance states that the number of doctoral students admitted to research education may not exceed the number that can be offered supervision and otherwise acceptable conditions for study and whose studies are funded as specified in Section 36 (Chapter 7, Section 34, HF).

The university may admit to research education applicants who are employed as doctoral students. The university may also admit an applicant who has some other form of funding, if the university assesses that

- 1.) funding can be guaranteed during the entire period of study, and
- 2.) the applicant can devote enough time to their studies to enable their completion within four years in the case of a licentiate degree or a licentiate degree in the fine, applied and performing arts, or eight years in the case of a doctoral degree or a doctorate in the fine, applied and performing arts (Chapter 7, Section 36, first paragraph, HF).

Employment as a doctoral student shall be a full-time post. If a doctoral student so requests, the employment may be a part-time post but for no less than 50 per cent of a full-time post (Chapter 5, Section 3a, HF).

Employment as a doctoral student shall be for an indefinite period, however for no longer than until a specified date and never for a period extending more than one year after the award of a doctoral degree or a doctoral degree in the fine, applied and performing arts. – The initial appointment is for a maximum duration of one year. The employment may be subsequently renewed for a maximum of two years at each renewal. – An individual may be employed as a doctoral student for a maximum of eight years. The overall duration of employment, however, may not exceed a period that is equivalent to full-time research education for four years. For courses or study programmes to be concluded with the award of a licentiate degree or a licentiate degree in the fine, applied and performing arts the total employment period may not exceed the time corresponding to full-time research education for two years. The time spent studying by the doctoral student while not employed as a doctoral student shall be deducted from these periods. – The total period of employment may, however, exceed that stated in the third paragraph if special grounds exist. Such grounds may comprise leave of absence as a result of illness, leave of absence for service in the defence forces or for an elected position within a trade union or student organisation, and parental leave (Chapter 5, Section 7, HF).

The total duration of education for a doctoral student (and the duration of employment for a doctoral student who is employed as a doctoral student) may be extended if special grounds exist. Such grounds may comprise leave of absence as a result of illness, leave of absence for service in the defence forces or for an elected position within a trade union or student organisation, and parental leave. (This is made clear by Chapter 5, Section 7 and Chapter 6, Section 29 HF).

Swedish regulations – study finance, doctoral scholarships

A doctoral student in receipt of a doctoral scholarship shall on application be employed as a doctoral student no later than the date on which, according to the individual study plan, there remains a period of study corresponding to three years of full-time study before the award of a doctoral degree or a doctoral degree in the fine, applied and performing arts. This does not apply, however, if the vice-chancellor has decided on the withdrawal of the student's resources as specified in Chapter 6, Section 30 of this ordinance (Chapter 5, Section 4, HF).

A doctoral student in receipt of a doctoral scholarship does not need to be employed as specified in Section 4 if the scholarship is awarded within the framework of

- 1.) an aid and capacity building programme in which scholarships are an accepted form of funding with reasonable terms and conditions and the admitting higher education institution has insight into these terms and conditions and into how the scholarship is paid, or
- 2.) a programme funded by the European Union or other partnerships, in which scholarships with reasonable terms and conditions comprise an accepted form of funding and where requirements for funding through employment are a barrier to participation for the admitted higher education institution (Chapter 5, Section 4a, HF).

Local regulations

The following are available as funding possibilities at LiU:

- Employment as a doctoral student at LiU
- Other employment than as a doctoral student at LiU
- An externally funded doctoral student who is taking the education within the framework of employment at another employer than the university
- Scholarships

When the study funding does not consist of employment as a doctoral student, the financing plan is to state which social security applied in the event of, for example, sickness or parental leave that is associated with the relevant study funding. Special insurance, for example, is available for doctoral students with scholarships (See Chapter 1, Section 11c, HF).

When the funding is in the form of a scholarship, an awards decision, contract or corresponding documentation must be included in the information presented in support of a decision of admission. When the funding is in the form of employment by another employer than LiU (such as contractually agreed collaborations with other institutions of higher education that lack degree-awarding power for research education, or an employer that gives the employees the opportunity to carry out research education within the framework of the employment), a contract or agreement must be drawn up and included in the information presented in support of a decision of admission.

A department is to report every six months about the financial support and activity in the Ladok student registry (which will pass the information on to SCB) for all doctoral students.

2.6 Nature of incidental employment during research education

Swedish regulations

Persons employed as a doctoral students shall primarily devote themselves to their studies. – A person employed as a doctoral student, however, may work to a limited extent with education, research, artistic research or administration. Such employment, however, before a doctoral degree or a doctoral degree in the fine, applied and performing arts has been awarded, may not comprise more than 20% of a full-time post (Chapter 5, Section 2, HF).

Local regulations

The extent and the principal contents of such work that is carried out as incidental employment during research education is to be specified in the individual study plan, and may comprise a maximum of 20% of full-time employment, distributed throughout the period of study. Such work leads to a corresponding extension of the duration of the education and employment.

Doctoral students who teach on first-cycle or second-cycle courses must have taken, or take during the same term as the teaching started, initial education in higher education teaching methods or acquired corresponding knowledge in another manner.

2.7 Duration of study and employment when working for student influence

Swedish regulations

Students shall be entitled to exert influence over the courses and study programmes at higher education institutions. Higher education institutions shall endeavour to

enable students to play an active role in the continued development of courses and study programmes (Chapter 1, Section 4a, HL).

Local regulations

For doctoral students who are elected as representatives in various preparative and decision-making bodies within LiU, it may become relevant to extend the duration of study and employment.

The department has the right to receive compensation for costs for an extension of the duration of study or employment. A request for such compensation is to be addressed to the director of human resources, who may draw the costs for this purpose from the account for work by employee associations.

A doctoral student who is permitted to obtain credit for duties as a representative within the framework of the doctoral student post, however, shall not at the same time have the right to extension of the duration of study or employment.

3 Supervisor, examiner, faculty examiner and examining committee

3.1 Duties of examiners for examinations of courses taken as part of research education or other components or exams awarded credits that are part of research education

Swedish regulations

Grades [for the exams that are included in the research education] are to be determined by a teacher (examiner) nominated by the university (Chapter 6, Section 32, second paragraph, HF).

An examiner is to act objectively and impartially when dealing with grading and must consider whether grounds for conflict of interest are present (cf. Sections 16-18 Administrative Procedure Act).

Local regulations

Qualified to be nominated as examiner

An examiner for studies at the level of research education is to be employed as a teacher at LiU as specified by the Rules of Appointment.⁴ Examiners for exams that are part of studies at the level of research education must possess at least a doctoral degree or corresponding scholarly qualification.

For components of the studies for which a special examiner has not been nominated, the principal supervisor will be the examiner. In cases where it is not possible or appropriate for the principal supervisor to be examiner, the director of doctoral studies (FUS) may be given this task.

An examiner who has principal employment at another institution of higher education, who is there employed as teacher and who has a doctoral degree or corresponding scholarly qualification, may be nominated examiner only if special circumstances prevail. Special circumstances may be that the expertise required is not available within LiU.

Duties of an examiner

An examiner must have high expertise within the field of study and must be well familiar with the course contents and the performance of the doctoral student.

⁴ Rules of Appointment at Linköping University.

An examiner may decide on alternative forms of examination for a doctoral student who has a disability. The doctoral student is to be given an examination alternative that is equivalent to that given to a doctoral student without any disability.

In all forms of examination, the examiner must be convinced of the performance of the individual doctoral student. Before arriving at a conclusion, an examiner may obtain information from other persons involved.

3.2 Grading systems and grading scales

Swedish regulations

Examinations that form part of research education shall be assessed in accordance with the grading system prescribed by the institution of higher education (Chapter 6, Section 32, first paragraph, HF).

The institution of higher education may issue regulations on the grading system to be used, and on public defences and grading in other respects (Chapter 6, Section 35, HF).

Local regulations

The grading scale to be used is to be specified in the general course syllabus and should also be specified in the course syllabus, in cases in which a course syllabus has been established. A two-grade grading scale is used at LiU for the assessment of courses taken during research education, licentiate theses, and doctoral theses. These grades are Pass (G) and Fail (U).

3.3 Supervision and other resources

Swedish regulations

The Higher Education Ordinance states that the number of doctoral students admitted to research education may not exceed the number that can be offered supervision and otherwise acceptable conditions for study and whose studies are funded as specified in Section 36 (Chapter 7, Section 34, HF).

At least two supervisors are to be nominated for each doctoral student, one of which is designated as principal supervisor. A doctoral student has the right to supervision during the period of study unless the vice-chancellor has decided otherwise, with the support of Chapter 6, Section 30 of the Higher Education Ordinance. – A doctoral student who so requests shall be allowed to change supervisor (Chapter 6, Section 28, HF).

Local regulations

A principal supervisor and at least one deputy supervisor are to be nominated for a doctoral student. The principal supervisor must satisfy the following requirements:

- 1.) be employed as a teacher at LiU in a position that has been assessed as remaining in place during the complete period of study of the doctoral student
- 2.) be docent or possess corresponding expertise within the relevant field of study, and
- 3.) have taken education in the supervision of research students or be able to demonstrate corresponding expertise.

An exemption from the requirement with respect to employment as a teacher of the principal supervisor may be made in the following cases:

- 1.) if the employment of the principal supervisor at LiU ends before the date on which the doctoral student completes the degree. In such cases, the principal supervisor may continue to be principal supervisor until the doctoral student completes the degree. It is recommended practice that the time remaining until the thesis defence should not be more than one year.
- 2.) if the doctoral student participates in a Swedish graduate school at which several institutions of higher education collaborate by agreement. A principal supervisor who has principal employment at another institution of higher education may be nominated, if he or she is there employed as a teacher.
- 3.) within clinical research, an employee of the regional administration at a unit that has been designated for medical research and teaching at LiU may be nominated as principal supervisor.
- 4.) in cases in which special circumstances prevail. Special circumstances may be, for example, a lack of expertise at LiU as a consequence of a rapid change in circumstances.

Deputy supervisors must have been awarded a doctoral degree or have corresponding academic expertise. Deputy supervisors may possess employment as a teacher at another institution of higher education or may be employees of, for example, a regional administration or a company. Further requirements for expertise possessed by a supervisor will be specified, where relevant, in the supplementary guidelines of the faculties and the Educational Sciences area.

All doctoral students, independently of the source of study funding, have the right to supervision and acceptable conditions of study as specified by the Higher Education Ordinance. This means, among other things, that a doctoral student is to have access to the resources of the University Library, a workplace, a computer, a telephone and

an email account linked to the university.⁵ The department is responsible that a doctoral student is given access to supervision and other acceptable conditions of study, and to other resources that are required for the doctoral student to be able to achieve the learning outcomes and complete the studies in other respects. The responsibility includes providing information to the doctoral student about the education, and about research, seminar activities, and the study-social environment of which the doctoral student will be a member during the period of study.

Supervisors must have been nominated with one month of the start of the study programme. When selecting principal supervisor and deputy supervisors, aspects of gender equality are to be considered.

3.4 Withdrawal of supervision and other resources

Swedish regulations, etc.

Withdrawal and suspension of the right to supervision and other resources

If a doctoral student substantially neglects his or her undertakings in the individual study plan, the vice-chancellor shall decide that the doctoral student is no longer entitled to supervision and other study resources. Before such a decision is made, the doctoral student and the supervisors shall be given an opportunity to make representations. The case shall be considered on the basis of their reports and any other records available. The assessment shall take into account whether the higher education institution has fulfilled its own undertakings in the individual study plan. A written record of the decision shall be made, which is to include reasons for the decision. Resources may not be withdrawn for any period in which the doctoral student is employed as a doctoral student or is receiving a doctoral grant (Chapter 6, Section 30, HF).

If study resources have been withdrawn as specified in Section 30, the doctoral student may, on application to the vice-chancellor, recover his or her entitlement to supervision and other resources. The doctoral student must then demonstrate convincingly, by presenting prospective study results of considerable quality and scope or in some other way, that he or she can fulfil his or her remaining undertakings in the individual study plan (Chapter 6, Section 31, HF).

The vice-chancellor may not delegate decisions taken according to Sections 30 or 31 (Chapter 6, Section 36, HF).

⁵ Special agreements can be reached for doctoral students who have their principal place of work in a regional administration, municipality or company.

Extension of duration of study and employment

The total period of employment as a doctoral student may exceed what is normally valid if special grounds exist (cf. Chapter 5, Section 7, fourth paragraph, HF).

The period of study for a doctoral student may be extended only if there are special grounds for doing so (cf. Chapter 6, Section 29, second paragraph, HF).

The rights of a doctoral student to supervision and other resources remains until the vice-chancellor takes a decision of withdrawal as specified in Chapter 6, Section 30, HF, even if the durations of both employment and study have expired.⁶

Local regulations

Handling cases of the withdrawal of the right to supervision and other resources

A case concerning the withdrawal of the right to supervision and other resources is to be initiated by the board of the faculty or scholarly area, or by the function at the level of faculty or scholarly area to which the board has delegated the task. Initiation takes the form of registering the case with the vice-chancellor. The case is to be investigated at the level of the faculty or scholarly area. When the investigation is complete, the faculty or scholarly area is to present the case to the vice-chancellor, who will take a decision.

In order to determine whether a doctoral student has substantially neglected his or her undertakings, detailed documentation in the individual study plan is required. The doctoral student is also to be given an opportunity to make representations. A consistent statement of the events as specified below is required:

- a description of progression in the studies
- documentation that shows clearly that LiU has informed the doctoral student of what he or she is expected to do, and deadlines for such expectations
- evidence that LiU has been made it clear to the doctoral student the conditions required for continued resources for the research education
- a description of the measures LiU has taken to correct the situation
- evidence that LiU has fulfilled its undertakings as specified in the individual study plan

A case in which a doctoral student whose resources have been withdrawn and in which the doctoral student has applied to have the right to supervision and other

⁶ Decision taken by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, 19 August 2009, Reg. no. 31-1650-09.

resources reinstated is to be investigated at the level of faculty or scholarly area. When the investigation is complete, the faculty or scholarly area is to present the case to the vice-chancellor, who will take a decision.

3.5 Examination of licentiate thesis

Swedish regulations

For a Degree of Licentiate, a third-cycle student shall have been awarded a pass grade for a research thesis of at least 60 credits (Annex 2, HF).

Grades [for the exams that are included in the research education] are to be determined by a teacher (examiner) nominated by the university. (Chapter 6, Section 32 HF)

Local regulations

Review before the submission of a licentiate thesis

A licentiate thesis is to have been reviewed before submission, at, for example, a seminar.

Language and summary

A licentiate thesis may be written in Swedish, English, French or German. A licentiate thesis written in Swedish is to have a summary in English, and vice versa. If the thesis has been written in French or German, summaries in both Swedish and English must be given. Further languages in which a licentiate thesis may be written will be specified, where relevant, in the supplementary guidelines of the faculties and the Educational Sciences area.

Publication and examination of licentiate theses

The examination of a licentiate thesis takes place in correlation with a publicly announced licentiate seminar. The licentiate thesis must be made available at least three weeks before the seminar. These three weeks should be under term time.

An examiner is to be nominated for a licentiate seminar. The person who has been supervisor may not be nominated as examiner. A faculty examiner and other members of the examining committee may be nominated.

The examiner is to conduct an individual assessment and determine the grade to be awarded. The examiner may determine in advance the views of the principal supervisor and, where relevant, the faculty examiner and other members of the examining committee.

The examiner, and where relevant the faculty examiner and other members of the examining committee, must all possess doctoral degrees or corresponding scholarly

expertise. Further requirements for the qualification of the examiner and, where relevant, members of the examination committee, are specified, where relevant, in the supplementary guidelines of the faculties and the Educational Sciences area.

Time and location for presentation of licentiate thesis

The presentation of a licentiate thesis should take place in term time. The presentation should normally be held during Swedish office hours and in premises at LiU. In special circumstances, the presentation of a licentiate thesis may be fully or partially carried out using video conferencing, video link or equivalent means. Special circumstances may be, for example, such circumstances that make national or international travel impossible.

3.6 Thesis defence and grading of doctoral theses

Swedish regulations

For the Degree of Doctor, the third-cycle student shall have been awarded a pass grade for a research thesis (doctoral thesis) of at least 120 credits (Annex 2, HF).

The doctoral thesis must have been defended orally at a public thesis defence. A faculty examiner (opponent) shall be appointed for this presentation (Chapter 6, Section 33, HF).

At least one of those participating in the grading of a doctoral thesis shall be someone who does not have a post at the institution of higher education awarding the degree (Chapter 6, Section 34, HF).

Local regulations

Review before thesis defence

A doctoral thesis must have been reviewed before the thesis defence, at, for example, a seminar.

Language and summary

A doctoral thesis may be written in Swedish, English, French or German. A thesis written in Swedish is to have a summary in English, and vice versa. If the thesis has been written in French or German, summaries in both Swedish and English must be given.

Public announcement (“posting”) and dissemination of thesis

The public announcement of a doctoral thesis (known as “posting”, or “spikning” in Swedish) is to take place at least three weeks before the thesis defence. It is to be preceded by confirmation from the dean that the thesis can be posted. These three weeks should be under term time.

The posting takes place through electronic registration of the thesis in the university publications database. Posting may also take place through the thesis being physically posted on the university noticeboard intended for this purpose.

In addition to the posting, a doctoral thesis is to be disseminated as follows:

- The thesis is to be sent to the (Swedish) institutions of higher education that are active within the field of study of the thesis.
- The supervisors, faculty examiner and members of the examining committee are to be sent copies of the thesis.

Thesis defence, and the composition and working methods of the examining committee

A grade for a doctoral thesis is determined by an examining committee, specifically appointed for each thesis defence. When setting the grade, consideration is to be taken to both the contents of the thesis and the public defence.

The examining committee is to consist of three or five members who must be qualified as docent, or possess corresponding scholarly expertise. At least one member of the examining committee is to be active outside of LiU. A reserve member is to be nominated, and should be able to replace any of the ordinary members. Any person who has been supervisor for the doctoral student may not be a member of the examining committee. The examining committee will select its chair from among the members. The examining committee is quorate when all members are present. If the members of the examining committee cannot reach a unanimous decision, the majority decision is to prevail. Reasons for a decision to award a Fail grade must be given.

The faculty examiner must be qualified as docent or possess corresponding scholarly expertise, and may not be active at LiU.

After the thesis defence, the examining committee is to meet to determine the grade awarded for the doctoral thesis. The faculty examiner and supervisor have the right of presence at the meeting. The faculty examiner and supervisor may not, however, participate in determining the decision of the examining committee.

Considerations of conflict of interest must always be taken when selecting the faculty examiner for a thesis defence and the composition of the examining committee. When appointing the examining committee, aspects of gender equality are also to be considered.

Time and location of the public defence

The thesis defence should take place during term time. The thesis defence should normally be held during Swedish office hours and in premises at LiU. In special circumstances, the thesis defence may be fully or partially carried out using video conferencing, video link or equivalent means. Special circumstances may be, for example, such circumstances that make national or international travel impossible.

3.7 Protocols for licentiate seminar and for thesis defence

Swedish regulations

For each decision in a case, a document is to be drawn up that demonstrates:

- 1.) the date of the decision
- 2.) the contents of the decision
- 3.) who has taken the decision
- 4.) who has participated in preparing the case, and
- 5.) who has been present at the final handling without participating in the decision (Section 21, Government Agencies Ordinance [2007:515], and Section 31, Administrative Procedure Act).

Local regulations

A protocol for a licentiate seminar is to contain information about the examiner and, where relevant, the person or persons who participated as faculty examiner or member of the examining committee. The examiner is to sign the decision. In this case, it is not required to have a person prepare the case for decision.

A protocol for a thesis defence is to contain information about the members of the examining committee and the identity of the chair, and the person who participated as faculty examiner. All members of the examining committee are to sign the decision. In this case, it is not required to have a person prepare the case for decision.

3.8 Reassessment/change of decision

Swedish regulations

An appeal against a decision about a grade cannot be filed. This is a consequence of Chapter 12, Sections 2 and 4, HF. A doctoral student does, however, have the possibility to request reassessment (change) of the decision. It is not permitted to set a time limit for the reception of such a request.

If an examiner finds that a decision on a grade is obviously incorrect owing to new circumstances or for some other reason, he or she shall change the decision, if this can be done quickly and easily and if it does not mean lowering the grade (Chapter 6, Section 24, HF [analogous application for research education] and Section 38, Administrative Procedure Act).

A government agency may change a decision that it has passed down as first decision-making body, if it considers that the decision is in error as a consequence of new circumstances or for some other reason. A decision whose character is beneficial for an individual may, however, be changed to the detriment of the individual only if [...] 3. the error is a consequence of the party having presented false or misleading information (Section 37, Administrative Procedure Act).

Local regulations

When a doctoral student requests reassessment (change) of a grade for a course taken during research education, the request must always receive a decision (acceptance or rejection). A decision of reassessment (change) of a grade should normally be taken by the same examiner as made the initial grading decision. If this is not possible, someone else may make the decision. This person must, however, be designated as examiner for the course.

Reassessment (change) of a pass grade for a licentiate essay or doctoral thesis that is of detriment to the doctoral student is to take place with great care and solely in fully unambiguous cases. Change to the detriment of a doctoral student may become relevant if a doctoral student has submitted incorrect or misleading information. Such a change in this case takes place with the support of Section 37 of the Administrative Procedure Act. Examples of misleading information are misconduct and deviations from good research practice.

A decision of reassessment (change) of a grade should normally be taken by the same examiner (for a licentiate essay) or examining committee (for a doctoral thesis) as made the initial grading decision. If this is not possible, another examiner or examining committee may be appointed to take the decision. This person or these persons must, however, be designated as examiner or examining committee.

If an examiner or examining committee is considering changing a decision to the detriment of a doctoral student, consultation should take place with an employee at the Legal Office. Before a decision of reassessment (change) is made, the doctoral student must be given the opportunity to make a statement.

4 More information

Discrimination Act (2008:567)

Higher Education Act (1992:1434)

Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100)

Administrative Procedure Act (2017:900)

Act on Responsibility for Good Research Practice and the Examination of Research Misconduct (2019:504)

The LiU document (in Swedish) *Riktlinjer för hantering av avvikelser från god forskningssed* provides information about the management of cases of research misconduct and other deviations from good research practice at LiU.

The LiU document (in Swedish) *Hantering av nära relationer mellan medarbetare* provides information about how close relationships between co-workers and between doctoral students and supervisors are to be managed at LiU.

Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ), *Granskning av individuella studieplaner för doktorander*, report 2015:23.

Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ), *Rättssäker examination*, guidelines, fourth edition, 2020.

The Swedish Research Council, *Good Research Practice*, report 2017.

All European Academies (ALLEA), *The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity*, 2018.