General Syllabus for Degree of Doctor in Practical Philosophy
The syllabus was confirmed by the Faculty Board of Arts at Gothenburg University on 23 November 2017. 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
Degree of Doctor in Practical Philosophy. Practical Philosophy addresses questions of norms, values and ideologies. Central research areas include moral philosophy (ethics), social philosophy (political philosophy and legal philosophy), philosophy of religions and aesthetics.

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.

1.2 Subject-specific and supplementary objectives

Knowledge and understanding
For the Degree of Doctor, the third-cycle student shall:
– demonstrate an expanded and deepened awareness of practical philosophy’s methods and central areas.

Competence and skills
For the Degree of Doctor, the third-cycle student shall:
– demonstrate the ability to independently pursue research within practical philosophy,
– demonstrate the ability to plan and conduct teaching in the field of practical philosophy,
– demonstrate the ability to plan and implement research projects,
– demonstrate the ability to produce academic publications.

Judgment and approach
For the Degree of Doctor, the third-cycle student shall:
– demonstrate a deepened understanding of the possibilities and limitations of practical philosophy, its role in society and its relationship to other disciplines.

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 Practical Philosophy requires:
1. 30 higher education credits in Practical Philosophy as a second-cycle subject, at least 15 of which must be from a degree project or equivalent knowledge,
2. the type(s) 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 Practical Philosophy 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. Theses, degree projects and any publications. These are assessed based on the following five quality criteria, of which the final two have the heaviest weighting: Suitable subject definition, relevant questioning, suitable command of the subject and structuring of the thesis, suitable use of language, formalities, academic quality, independence.

2. A project draft no more than 2,500 words in which the applicant stipulates a research domain that he/she would like to develop, justifies its relevance and discusses which theories, methods and materials would be relevant. The project draft is assessed on the basis of the following criteria: whether the research displays familiarity with previous and current research, whether the research questions are viable and grounded in current research, whether the draft is judged to be realistic, as regards its implementation at third-cycle level and whether the draft shows that it is likely the applicant will make a valuable contribution to research in the field. The project draft also provides supporting information for assessing the Department’s supervisor competence within the research domain stipulated.

3. Other documents such as letters of recommendation.

Admission and selection are also 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 Practical Philosophy 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 providing the requirements specified in the general syllabus for a Licentiate degree in Practical Philosophy 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, in which courses are to be distributed among the specific fields as described below. Each specific field may be examined by means of a combination of several different courses, which together are intended to provide both broadening and deepening of the doctoral student’s knowledge, which the objectives of third-cycle study require.

1. Pedagogy and methodology, 15 higher education credits:
   a) compulsory course in teaching and learning in higher education,
   b) other compulsory courses in pedagogy, methodology, etc.,
   c) other skills and methods training in connection with teaching and seminar activities.

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.

2. Advanced orientation in Practical Philosophy, 15 higher education credits:

The specific field covers advanced normative ethics, meta ethics, applied ethics, political philosophy, philosophy of law, the philosophy of science of the humanities and of the social sciences, aesthetics, decision theory, philosophy of religion, the history of practical philosophy, or other key branches of practical philosophy.

The content in detail is determined in consultation with the supervisor in the light of the doctoral student’s background knowledge and needs and is documented in the individual study plan.

3. Advanced orientation in Philosophy, 15 higher education credits:

The specific field entails further advanced study in the key branches of practical philosophy and/or in key branches of theoretical philosophy, e.g. knowledge theory, metaphysics, action theory, philosophy of language, philosophy of consciousness, philosophy of science, logic or the history of philosophy.

The content in detail is determined in consultation with the supervisor in the light of the doctoral student’s background knowledge and needs and is documented in the individual study plan.

4. Advanced orientation in or outside Philosophy, 15 higher education credits:
This specific field entails a broadening or deepening in key branches of philosophy (practical or theoretical), or another field of academic study that is of relevance to the doctoral student’s research focus.

The content in detail is determined in consultation with the supervisor in the light of the doctoral student’s background knowledge and needs and is documented in the individual study plan.

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

The component or aspect of it held outside of the Department are examined in the form of the accompanying course requirements being met. Additional components are examined in ways the supervisor or other examiner seem suitable, for example written examinations or take-home tasks, seminar participation, and/or practical exercises.

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 at Department seminars.

For more information, see Instructions for Third-cycle Studies at the Faculty of Arts

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.

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 doctoral 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 23 November 2017 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.