POLICY FOR SEMINAR REVIEW OF LICENTIATE THESIS

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Period of validity  
Summary  

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Faculty of Education
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Until further notice
This governing document governs the seminar review of licentiate theses and aims to facilitate and quality assure thesis work.
Policy for seminar review of licentiate thesis

The purpose of the Policy for Seminar Review is to facilitate the work carried out by doctoral students on their licentiate theses and the department’s quality review of this thesis work in accordance with the Qualitative Targets of the Higher Education Ordinance (Swedish Code of Statutes – SFS 1993:100).

Thesis work constitutes an important part of the research conducted within the Nordic models for third-cycle courses and study programmes. The results of such work should thus be regarded as our Faculty’s contribution to the research community. Thesis work constitutes part of the course or study programme, and doctoral students must develop a critical and analytical approach and grow into their role as researcher and representative in the field of knowledge within which they are working. Reviewing and developing theses while they are being worked on thus comprises a central element and is conducted through open seminars.

Within academia, seminars are an established way of conducting qualified discussions about academic issues, and thesis seminars adhere to this tradition. Seminars of this kind thus constitute an important arena for reception into the academic community – its discourses, conditions and frames – and contribute to a meta-understanding of how discussions about academic knowledge are conducted. A central part of the substantive review is to ascertain whether individual theses are based on a defined field of knowledge and whether they generate a theoretical, methodological and/or empirical contribution in light of the same. Such a review of planned and ongoing theses constitutes an important element of third-cycle courses and study programmes for the benefit of the doctoral students themselves, the department and also for the area of knowledge being developed within the subject/discipline.

For the above reasons the licentiate thesis work is to be presented at an open seminar on at least three occasions during the period of the programme. These occasions are the planning seminar, halfway seminar and licentiate seminar (examination). The seminars held are registered in LADOK and in the doctoral student’s individual study plan.

A common opportunity is arranged for planning seminars (once per semester), while halfway seminars and licentiate seminars are arranged on a date that is convenient for the individual doctoral student. The halfway seminar is arranged and announced in the doctoral student’s research environment, between the planning and licentiate seminar. This is to afford the doctoral student an opportunity to have their work reviewed in the form of a seminar before the forthcoming examination at the licentiate seminar.
Planning seminar

A common opportunity for planning seminars is arranged (once per semester) and published by the Faculty’s coordinator for third-cycle courses and study programmes. The documentation for the conference is to comprise a written plan for the thesis, approved by the principal supervisor, which is presented at a seminar during the conference. The seminar is to serve as support for doctoral students during the initial phase of their work and should therefore be held during semester two or three following admission as a full-time student onto the programme; doctoral students with a different rate of study are to discuss their plan in semester three or four. One or more discussants, with at least the Degree of Doctor, are to be appointed prior to the seminar; they are responsible for reviewing and conducting an initial discussion of the plan submitted. The function of the discussant is to give constructive comments on the progress of the thesis. The discussant may also discuss issues and themes about which the doctoral student and supervisor have stated that they would like to invite comments.

The purpose of the planning seminar is for doctoral students to have their thesis plan reviewed and discussed. The plan is a synopsis providing a direction for the thesis. It is the academic formulation of a researchable problem in relation to a field of knowledge that is to be presented, and conceivable theoretical and methodological approaches should also be stated in relation to this. Any problems relating to research ethics should be stated together with a discussion about planning the study’s implementation.

A satisfactory assessment of the plan indicates that the department supports the thesis in principle in the form in which it has been presented. If the thesis plan is not considered to be complete, a supplement shall be submitted to the seminar leader no later than one month after the occasion of the planning seminar. The seminar leader refers the doctoral student and principal supervisor to the Qualitative Targets for Degree of Licentiate in accordance with the Higher Education Ordinance.

Practical instructions in Appendix 1
Qualitative Targets for Degree of Licentiate in accordance with the Higher Education Ordinance, Appendix 5
Halfway seminar

This seminar is arranged in the doctoral student’s primary research environment and is announced from there. The seminar should have a formative function like the planning seminar; i.e. it should comprise a supportive element of the work. For this reason, the seminar is arranged at a time that the principal supervisor considers most appropriate after consulting the doctoral student, though no later than when half a year (one year for half-time studies) remains until the proposed licentiate seminar. A discussant with at least the Degree of Doctor is to be appointed prior to the seminar. Owing to the varying nature of the licentiate thesis work, the basis of the text may appear to be different, but it should include all of the parts of the thesis in a somewhat complete form. The doctoral student introduces the seminar by giving a short summary and description of how the thesis is progressing. The discussant helps to highlight the contribution that the work could make to the field of knowledge by making constructive comments about how the work could be developed. The thesis is reviewed and discussed on the basis of how strengths can be reinforced and weaknesses dealt with.

The purpose of the halfway seminar is to support the doctoral student by discussing and considering different alternatives and their consequences at a combined seminar. When writing both monographs and compilation theses, it is extremely important to have a public discussion about the work while there is still time to correct and develop the theme, analyses and argumentation. The principal supervisor is to make a note of those parts of the work that need to be developed and strengthened, which will be followed up in the individual study plan.

The principal supervisor refers the doctoral student to the Qualitative Targets for Degree of Licentiate in accordance with the Higher Education Ordinance.

Practical instructions in Appendix 2
Qualitative Targets for Degree of Licentiate in accordance with the Higher Education Ordinance, Appendix 5
Licentiate seminar (examination of licentiate thesis)

Prior to the licentiate seminar, a reader at least at the level of a Reader (docent), who has been appointed by the Head of Department, shall assess whether the quality of the licentiate thesis is sufficient for the examination. Here a consideration is made of whether research issues, design, analysis, argument and conclusions are clearly put forward and communicable. The reader writes an overall assessment based on the main comments made.

The supervisors must have read the thesis and approved its acceptance at the licentiate seminar. The seminar review documentation for the reviewer and examiner comprises a complete licentiate thesis that is to be made available for reading three weeks prior to the seminar.

The licentiate thesis shall be presented and defended at a public seminar (‘licentiate seminar’) arranged at the respondent’s department and announced by the Faculty’s coordinator for third-cycle course and study programmes. The seminar is conducted in the form of a public defence with an external reviewer, who has at least a doctoral degree, and is appointed by the Head of Department. An examiner, who considers the licentiate thesis and the respondent’s defence and also issues a grade, attends the seminar. The examiner and reader may be the same person. The chair of the seminar and examiner are appointed by the Dean. The licentiate seminar is introduced by the reviewer providing a brief summary of the thesis. This is then followed by the reviewer’s public discussion and examination and discussion with the respondent, which constitutes the main part of the licentiate seminar.

Practical instructions in Appendix 3
Qualitative Targets for Degree of Licentiate in accordance with the Higher Education Ordinance, Appendix 5
Appendix 1

Practical instructions prior to planning seminar

A common opportunity for planning seminars is arranged (once per semester) and published by the Faculty’s coordinator for third-cycle course and study programmes. An application for a planning seminar is made by the principal supervisor. The seminar leader is the chair of the seminar and leads the planning seminar. After the plan has been approved and the seminar held, the seminar leader is to give written notice that the seminar has been held using a special form. If the thesis plan is not considered to be complete, a supplement shall be submitted to the seminar leader no later than one month after the occasion of the planning seminar. This form is submitted to the Faculty’s coordinator for third-cycle courses and study programmes.

The coordinator distributes the form to the department’s director of studies. The department is responsible for the seminar being registered in LADOK.

Commitments of doctoral students:

- Doctoral students who want to have their plan reviewed must have this approved by their supervisor
- Thesis plans are to be sent to the coordinator for third-cycle courses and study programmes no later than four weeks prior to the seminar, who will upload the document to GUL
- Thesis plans are to be made available for the discussant and seminar leader no later than three weeks before the seminar

Documentation for the planning seminar is to include:

- A formulation of the study’s knowledge interest and relevance to society
- A description of knowledge within the field (theoretical basis, issues, methods and results of previous studies)
- The relevance of this study to the research field
- Theoretical positioning and formulation of the study’s knowledge objects
- Theoretically/analytically justified research issues
- A concrete plan for the study in relation to the research issues
- A description of methods and possible analysis procedures
- A discussion of issues relating to research ethics

Commitments of the principal supervisor:

- The principal supervisor notifies the Faculty’s coordinator for third-cycle courses and study programmes of the planned seminar for appointment of seminar leader and announcement
- The principal supervisor is to approve the thesis plan before notification of this is given to the Faculty’s coordinator for third-cycle courses
- The principal supervisor is responsible for appointing and informing a suitable discussant
- The principal supervisor is responsible for the discussant receiving instructions for the review
Instructions for discussant:

The task of the discussant is to critically review the thesis plan submitted. The seminar is introduced by the discussant giving a brief presentation of the purpose and content of the plan and then making critical and constructive proposals for improvements. The discussant may also discuss issues and themes about which the doctoral student (and/or supervisor) has stated that they would like to invite comments.

This review will take up most of the seminar (1.5 hours), but a certain scope should also be allowed for a general discussion.
Appendix 2

Practical instructions prior to halfway seminar

The seminar is arranged by the doctoral student’s primary research environment or alternatively graduate school when there is at least half a year remaining until the proposed licentiate seminar. The seminar is announced by the doctoral student’s primary research environment on an appropriate date between the planning seminar and licentiate seminar. The principal supervisor, who also chairs the seminar, is responsible for the arrangements.

Commitments of doctoral students:

- documentation for the seminar is to be made available for the discussant no later than three weeks before the seminar
- the documentation is to include all parts of the licentiate thesis, at least in draft form
- the doctoral student is to introduce the seminar by giving a short summary of the thesis
- the doctoral student owns the manuscript and will decide whether those attending the review are to be afforded access to the full text.

Commitments of the principal supervisor:

- the principal supervisor initiates and announces the seminar no later than three weeks prior to the seminar
- the principal supervisor is responsible for appointing and informing a suitable discussant
- the principal supervisor is responsible for the discussant receiving instructions for the review
- the principal supervisor acts as chair during the seminar
- the principal supervisor makes written notes about the main comments and is responsible for these being followed up in the individual study plan
- the principal supervisor is to notify the department’s director of studies that the seminar has been held and is to be registered in LADOK.

Instructions for discussant:

The purpose of the seminar is to provide constructive comments that may help the doctoral student to complete the licentiate thesis. The seminar is initiated by the doctoral student providing a short summary of their thesis work. The discussant chooses (possibly in consultation with the supervisor and doctoral student) which aspects of the text are to be included for review and discussion but a requirement is that the review must contribute to the doctoral student’s choice of strategies for their continuing work. This review will take up most of the seminar (two hours), but a certain scope should also be allowed for a general discussion.
Appendix 3

Practical instructions prior to licentiate seminar

Prior to the licentiate seminar, the principal supervisor shall propose a reader, at least at the level of a Reader (docent), who assesses the full manuscript before applying for the an examination in order to assure the quality of the thesis. The Head of Department makes a decision about the appointment of a reader. The reader may also have the role of examiner at the forthcoming licentiate seminar; the Dean makes the decision on appointment of an examiner.

The licentiate thesis shall be presented and defended at a public seminar (‘licentiate seminar’) after the reader has assessed whether the quality of the thesis is sufficient. An external examiner must be present at the seminar. The seminar is announced by the Faculty’s coordinator for third-cycle courses and study programmes following a proposal by the principal supervisor. The thesis is to be formulated as a connected scholarly work in the form of a monograph or a compilation of scholarly works with an annotated and summarising chapter that integrates and synthetises the component parts. A compilation thesis means freestanding work within a connected problem area that, together with a summarising chapter, constitutes a licentiate thesis. The respondent is examined on the manuscript, which means that minor amendments may be made after the seminar before publication in GUPEA. The licentiate thesis is assessed with either the grade ‘Fail’ or ‘Pass’; the examiner issues the grade. Licentiate theses with a pass grade are registered in GUP.

The doctoral student’s commitments prior to the reader’s review:

- Doctoral students who want to have their thesis accepted for a licentiate seminar are to have the manuscript approved by their supervisor.
- A complete thesis manuscript is to be submitted to the reader for assessment.

Commitments of the principal supervisor prior to review by the reader:

- The principal supervisor proposes a reader, at least at the level of a Reader (docent), and the Head of Department makes a decision. The reader assesses a complete thesis manuscript before applying for the licentiate seminar/examination.
- The principal supervisor is responsible for the appointed reader receiving instructions for assessing licentiate theses.

Commitments of the reader:

The reader writes an overall assessment based on the main comments made during reading (one to two pages). The signed statement is sent to the doctoral student, principal supervisor and director of studies for third-cycle course and study programmes. The statement is documented at the department.

The statement must include

1) A brief description of:

- the overall theme and purpose of the thesis
- which field of knowledge is described in the thesis and also the doctoral student’s own positioning theoretically and methodologically
• knowledge object and research issues
• the study’s design, implementation and description of any material compiled
• analysis methods and overall results
• discussion

2) An overall assessment of the work’s:

• strengths: the work’s contribution to the area of knowledge, theoretically, methodically and empirically
• weaknesses and inadequacies: what further work needs to be carried out to complete the manuscript
• conclusions and recommendations, and
• opinion relative to the Qualitative Targets chosen for the Degree of Licentiate.

Commitments of doctoral student prior to licentiate seminar:

• Doctoral students who want to have their thesis accepted for a licentiate seminar are to have this approved by their supervisor after the reader has assessed whether the manuscript is ready for a licentiate seminar.
• The thesis shall be made available for the reviewer and examiner appointed no later than three weeks before the seminar.
• There must be a Swedish summary in the event that the licentiate thesis is written in a language other than Swedish. There must be an English summary if the licentiate thesis is written in Swedish.
• If the thesis contains co-authored articles, it shall be supplemented by a signed statement from one of the authors and supervisor regarding the contribution of each of the authors as guidance for the reader, reviewer and examiner.

Commitments of principal supervisor prior to licentiate seminar:

• Prior to the licentiate seminar, the supervisor is to propose an external reviewer and a chair. The Head of Department decides on the appointment of a reviewer and the date of the licentiate seminar. A copy of the decision must be attached to the request for appointment of examiner.
• The request, via a special form, for appointment of an examiner for the licentiate seminar shall be submitted to the Faculty Office no later than five weeks before the seminar. This request is sent to the Faculty’s coordinator for third-cycle courses and study programmes. The Dean makes a decision on the appointment of a chair and examiner. The examiner and reader may be the same person.
• The principal supervisor is responsible for the reviewer and examiner receiving instructions prior to the seminar.
• A meeting with the examiner, reviewer, supervisor and respondent is held immediately after the seminar. Minutes are signed by the examiner and principal supervisor at the meeting. The examiner issues the grade after the meeting.

Instructions for the reviewer prior to the licentiate seminar (examination):

The role of the reviewer is to critically review and discuss the thesis with the doctoral student at the licentiate seminar. The seminar is initiated by the reviewer providing a brief presentation of the licentiate thesis (approx. 15 min). The main part of the seminar is used to review and discuss the thesis, and time shall be made for a general discussion.
## SUMMARY OF DEGREE OF LICENTIATE Review and licentiate seminar

**Summarised time schedule:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time before the seminar</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7-8 weeks</td>
<td>Reader proposed/decision</td>
<td>Principal supervisor/Head of Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8 weeks</td>
<td>Quality of manuscript assessed</td>
<td>Reader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 weeks</td>
<td>Reviewer and date proposed/decision</td>
<td>Principal supervisor/Head of Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 weeks (semester time)</td>
<td>Application for examiner and chair/decision</td>
<td>Dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 weeks (semester time)</td>
<td>Announcement</td>
<td>Faculty’s coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 weeks</td>
<td>Thesis to reviewer and examiner</td>
<td>Respondent/principal supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Licentiate seminar</td>
<td>Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Respondent; Reviewer; Examiner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After seminar</td>
<td>Thesis published/any printing</td>
<td>Postgraduate Studies Administrator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The uncertain time estimate is due to the possibilities of the various readers, and the time estimate will be longer if the reader says in the statement that the thesis is to be reread following revision.

### Licentiate seminar

- Chair makes presentation and introduction
- The reviewer briefly summarises the licentiate thesis (approx. 15 min)
- The respondent is afforded an opportunity to comment on the reviewer’s presentation
- The reviewer’s public discussion and examination and discussion with the respondent (approx. 60 min)
- Questions from the public
- Public defence of the thesis completed
- Meeting with examiner, reviewer, supervisor and respondent; minutes signed by examiner and principal supervisor at the meeting; examiner issues grade
Appendix 5

General qualifications - Degree of Licentiate
[Licentiatexamen]

The Higher Education Ordinance (Högskoleförordningen)
Annex 2 - Qualifications Ordinance (Bilaga 2 - Examensordningen)

Scope

A Degree of Licentiate is awarded

either after a third-cycle student has completed a study programme of at least 120 credits in a subject in which third-cycle teaching is offered,
or after a third-cycle student has completed one part comprising at least 120 credits of a study programme intended to conclude with the award of a PhD, if a higher education institution decides that a Degree of Licentiate of this kind may be awarded at the institution.

Outcomes

Knowledge and understanding

For a 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 a 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 predetermined 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 in general, and
- demonstrate the skills required to participate autonomously in research and development work and to work autonomously in some other qualified capacity.

Judgement and approach

For a Degree of Licentiate the third-cycle student shall
- demonstrate the ability to make assessments of ethical aspects of his or her 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 his or her ongoing learning.

**Thesis**

For a Degree of Licentiate the third-cycle student shall have been awarded a pass grade for a research thesis of at least 60 credits.

**Miscellaneous**

Specific requirements determined by each higher education institution itself within the parameters of the requirements laid down in this qualification descriptor shall also apply for a Degree of Licentiate with a defined specialisation.