Admission Regulations at the University of Skövde

– Regulations for admission to third-cycle studies

The admission regulations were finalised by the Board of Governors on the 19th of December 2018, and takes effect on the 1st of January 2019. It is to be applied to admissions to third-cycle study programmes taking place from the 1st of January 2019. If an admission has been preceded by advertising, it is applied in cases where the advertising took place on the 1st of January 2019 or later.

Registration number HS 2021/210

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1 This is a translation of the Swedish version (Antagningsordning vid Högskolan i Skövde – föreskrifter för antagning till utbildning på forskarnivå, registration number HS 2018/796). In the event of any discrepancy, the Swedish version of this document shall prevail.
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1 General

The legislative texts that regulate admissions can be found in the Higher Education Act, chapter 1, which regulates what knowledge third-cycle study programmes should be based on (section 9a), as well as delegating administrative tasks relating to study programmes that lead to a joint degree with another higher education institution (section 18), the Higher Education Ordinance, chapter 6, section 3, which states that the higher education institution must have admission regulations, and the Higher Education Ordinance, chapter 7, sections 34 – 41, which regulate admissions to third-cycle studies.

These admission regulations cites the Higher Education Ordinance’s regulations for admission to third-cycle courses and study programmes (chapter 7, sections 34 – 41) as well as the local regulations at the University of Skövde (the University).

The processes of admission to third-cycle studies and the employment of doctoral students (doctoral studentships) are largely connected. National and local regulations related to doctoral students are outlined in the Higher Education Ordinance, chapter 5, and in “Appointment procedure at the University of Skövde” [Anställningsordning vid Högskolan i Skövde].

According to current delegations of authority, decisions on admission to third-cycle courses and study programmes are made by the Dean, and decisions regarding doctoral studentships are made by the Head of School. Admission cases are prepared by the relevant director of PhD studies who, if needed, is supported by the relevant third-cycle subject coordinator. If the admission case also includes a doctoral student employment, preparation takes place in a special admission and recruitment group (see part 3). The Higher Education Ordinance’s chapter 12 states that decisions cannot be appealed.

2 Funding

National Regulations of the Higher Education Ordinance (chapter 7, sections 34 – 36):

General provisions

Section 34
The number of doctoral students admitted to third-cycle courses and study programmes may not exceed the number that can be offered supervision and otherwise acceptable conditions for study and whose studies are funded pursuant to Section 36. Ordinance (2006:1053).

Section 35
The requirements for admission to third-cycle courses and study programmes are that the applicant

1. meets the general and specific entry requirements that the higher education institution may have laid down, and

2. is considered in other respects to have the ability required to benefit from the course or study programme. Ordinance (2010:1064).
Section 36
A higher education institution may admit an applicant to third-cycle courses and study programmes who has been appointed to a doctoral studentship. The higher education institution may also admit an applicant who has some other form of funding for their studies if it 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 PhD or a doctorate in the fine, applied and performing arts.

For an applicant with funding that is a stipend, funding pursuant to item 1 of the first paragraph is regarded as guaranteed if the level of the stipend is equivalent to the pay level for doctoral students regulated by a Swedish collective agreement or standard practice in the profession, after deductions for preliminary tax at source according to the tax table equivalent to the average tax rate for municipalities and regions and which is annually published by Statistics Sweden. If the applicant will alternate staying in Sweden and another country, the requirement for the level of the stipend only applies to the time the applicant intends to stay in Sweden. Ordinance (2019:1014).

Local Regulations at the University of Skövde:

Doctoral studies are funded through employment, either in doctoral studentships or other employment at the University. Third-cycle students can, alternatively, have an employment as doctoral student or other employment with another employer. Scholarships (stipends) are not used as funding.

The school concerned is responsible for ensuring that doctoral student employees at the University have the funding secured for the duration of the intended period of study. For doctoral students employed by an employer other than the University, the Dean must ensure that there is a contract that secures funding for the duration of the period of study.

Normally, applicants are admitted to studies towards a doctoral degree. If an admission is to be made for studies towards a licentiate degree, the basis for this must be clearly motivated. This is to prevent a two-step model where students who intend to study for a doctoral degree are admitted to studies towards a licentiate degree in order to then possibly be allowed to continue towards a doctoral degree. A student who has been admitted to studies towards a licentiate degree and then wants to continue with studies towards a doctoral degree must make a new application that is tested in the normal way.
3 Admission and Application

National Regulations of the Higher Education Ordinance (chapter 7, sections 37 – 38):

Section 37
Decisions relating to admissions are made by the higher education institution. A person who wishes to be admitted to a third-cycle course or study programme shall apply within the time prescribed and in compliance with the procedures laid down by the higher education institution.

When a higher education institution intends to admit one or several third-cycle students, information shall be provided by the higher education institution through advertising or some equivalent method. Information need not, however, be provided:

1. about the admission of a third-cycle student who is to complete the course or study programme within the framework of employment by an employer other than the higher education institution,

2. about the admission of a third-cycle student who has previously begun third-cycle studies at another higher education institution, or

3. if there are similar special grounds. Ordinance (2006:1053).

Section 38
A higher education institution that has been entitled to award third-cycle qualifications within an area may permit a third-cycle student who has been admitted to some other university or some other higher education institution to transfer without a new admission process to the higher education institution and to continue his or her courses and study programmes and receive his or her qualification there. This only applies, however, if the third-cycle student has completed the major part of his or her third-cycle studies at the higher education institution in the area in which entitlement to award third-cycle qualifications has been granted.

What is said in the first paragraph is to apply similarly at a higher education institution that in having been granted the title of university is entitled pursuant to Section 11 of Chapter 1 of the Higher Education Act (1992:1434) to award third-cycle qualifications. Ordinance (2010:1064).

Local Regulations at the University of Skövde:

As is evident from the ordinance text, the University is the admissions authority for all education at the University, i.e. is responsible for the admission how it takes place.

When the admission of a doctoral student is to be funded through a doctoral studentship at the University of Skövde, the process takes place in the following steps:
1. Announcement

A group for admission and recruitment is formed. The group includes the relevant third-cycle subject coordinator, at least one of the intended supervisors, the relevant director of PhD studies, the relevant Head of School (or Head of Division), as well as an HR specialist. Representatives from the Student Union and the trade unions have the right to attend and to speak at the group’s meetings.

The entry requirements and assessment criteria for selection specified in the announcement must comply with the regulation of the admission procedures that are stated in these regulations and in the University’s general study plan for the relevant third-cycle study programme (see parts 4 and 5).

The following documents must be enclosed with the application:

- CV (LADOK excerpt, transcript or equivalent)
- degree certificate
- independent project (degree project(s) or equivalent)
- other documents that are determined at the relevant announcement or in the general syllabus

CVs and degree certificates must be certified. All submitted documents must be presented in original on request before registration takes place. When certifying foreign documents, the common practice in each country is applied, when applying for education at the advanced level. In uncertain cases, the Swedish Council for Higher Education is consulted.

2. Selection

The selection among the applicants that are qualified shall be made with regards to the applicants’ ability to assimilate education in the relevant subject (see part 5).

3. Admission to third-cycle study programmes

The Dean makes decisions concerning admission to current third-cycle education. Admission is preceded by a written application made on a special form supplied by the University. The relevant director of PhD studies coordinates the admission process, and also presents the case when the Dean makes the decision on admission.

In addition to the documents that are enclosed with the application, the following documents must be available as a basis for the decision on admission:

- certificate of funding
- brief description of the intended thesis project

The application is to be signed by the applicant. The main supervisor, named in the application, must confirm their role and approve the description of the thesis project by signing a specific part of the application.

4. Doctoral studentship

The Head of School makes decisions concerning employment of doctoral students (doctoral studentships).

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2 Entry requirement assessments are outlined in more detail in part 4
4 Entry Requirements

4.1 General Entry Requirements

National Regulations of the Higher Education Ordinance (chapter 7, section 39):

Section 39
A person meets the general entry requirements for third-cycle courses and study programmes if he or she:

1. has been awarded a second-cycle qualification

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

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

The higher education institution may permit an exemption from the general entry requirements for an individual applicant, if there are special grounds. Ordinance (2010:1064).

Local Regulations at the University of Skövde:

When general entry requirements are examined, it shall be assessed whether the applicant has achieved such width and depth in their education that it can form the foundation for third-cycle studies.

Exemption from the general entry requirements can be granted to applicants who have not completed all parts of an education comprising at least 240 credits, but whose completed education includes second-cycle courses comprising at least 60 credits, including an independent project related to the intended third-cycle studies.

When foreign qualifications are assessed, the Swedish Council for Higher Education’s principles for the evaluation of foreign higher education qualifications should be used.

4.2 Specific Entry Requirements

National Regulations of the Higher Education Ordinance (chapter 7, section 40):

Section 40
The specific entry requirements laid down shall be essential for students to be able to benefit from the course or study programme. These requirements may comprise:

1. knowledge from one or more higher education courses and study programmes or corresponding courses and study programmes

2. specific professional or vocational experience, and

3. requisite language skills or other conditions determined by the course or study programme. Ordinance (2006:1053).
Local Regulations at the University of Skövde:
Specific entry requirements shall be clear from the general syllabus for the respective subjects (Higher Education Ordinance, chapter 6, section 27).

For specific entry requirements, first- and second-cycle education that is necessary, in a certain subject and on a certain level/to a certain extent, for third-cycle studies to be conducted, may be required. In addition, English language skills that are good enough for the student to benefit from compulsory English language literature, and write and defend their thesis in English may be required. Requirements for Swedish language skills may be set. The skill normally required is equivalent to upper secondary school courses English 6/English B and/or Swedish 3/ Swedish B, or Swedish as a Second Language 3/Swedish as a Second Language B.

5 Ranking and Selection

National Regulations of the Higher Education Ordinance (chapter 7, sections 41):

Section 41
In selecting between applicants who meet the requirements laid down in Sections 35 & 36 their ability to benefit from the course or the study programme shall be taken into account.

The higher education institution determines which assessment criteria shall be used in determining the ability to benefit from the courses and study programmes.

However, the fact that an applicant is considered able to transfer credits from prior courses and study programmes or for professional or vocational experience may not alone give the applicant priority over other applicants. Ordinance (2010:1064).

Local Regulations at the University of Skövde:
The selection among applicants who meet the entry requirements should be made with consideration for their ability to benefit from the education in the subject of the relevant study programme. The assessment criteria – which should be clear from the general syllabus – should be relevant to the applicants’ chances of reaching the goals of the degree. The goals are outlined in the Higher Education Ordinance, appendix 2, the University’s Local System of Qualifications, as well as the general syllabus.

An interview with the applicant and/or contact with previous teachers, employers or other references should be carried out as part of the selection process.

The final sentence of section 41 aims to ensure that the possibility of credit transfer doesn’t, in practise, become a condition for admission to third-cycle study programmes, and that applicants who are deemed to be able to achieve a doctoral degree in less than four years are not systematically given priority. It also aims to counteract a system with so-called shadow doctoral students. It does not, however, exclude the possibility that an applicant with possible
credit transfer still beats applicants without this possibility, if they are otherwise deemed to have a greater ability to benefit from the study programme.

6 Taking Effect

This admission regulations take effect on the 1st of January 2019. It is to be applied to admissions to third-cycle study programmes taking place from the 1st of January 2019. If the admission has been preceded by advertising, it is used in cases where the advertising took place on the 1st of January 2019 or later. The revision replaces the previous admission regulations finalised by the Vice-Chancellor in January 2013 (registration number HS 2011/12-54).