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General syllabus for doctoral (third-cycle) studies in Soil Mechanics at Luleå University of Technology

Decided by the Chair of the Board of Faculty of Science and Technology on 5 April 2022.

1. Subject description

Swedish name: Geoteknik

English name: Soil Mechanics

Soil mechanics comprises soil material behaviour and foundation engineering, with application to civil engineering, energy and mining.

2. Programme aim and intended learning outcome

The aim of the doctoral (third-cycle) studies in Soil Mechanics at the University is to give the doctoral student specialised knowledge in Soil Mechanics, in-depth knowledge of different research methods and a good understanding of the challenges related to research and its practical application. The overall objective of the programme is that the doctoral student develops into a critical and autonomous researcher in Soil Mechanics, able to plan and carry out research projects. The doctoral student shall fulfil all the qualitative targets specified in the Higher Education Ordinance as well as in the locally decided qualitative targets, if any (see attached Annex A).

3. Admission requirements and selection

3.1 General entry requirements

An applicant meets the general entry requirements for doctoral (third-cycle) studies if he or she has been awarded a Master's (second-cycle) qualification, has satisfied the requirements for courses comprising at least 240 credits, of which at least 60 second-cycle credits, or has acquired substantially equivalent knowledge in another way, in Sweden or elsewhere (Higher Education Ordinance (2010:1064) Chapter 7 Section 39).

3.2 Specific entry requirements

No requirements in addition to the basic qualifications.

3.3 Selection

In selecting among applicants who meet the requirements, their ability to benefit from the course or the study programme shall be taken into account. However, the fact that an applicant may be credited for previous courses and study programmes or for professional or vocational experience may not alone give the applicant priority over other applicants (Higher Education Ordinance

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(2010:1064) Chapter 7 Section 41). The University's local guidelines in the Admissions procedure for doctoral (third-cycle) studies must also be applied.

The following criteria will be used in the selection of applicants for doctoral (third-cycle) studies in Soil Mechanics:

- Knowledge relevant to the project in question.
- Previous experience and knowledge of Soil Mechanics and Foundation Engineering is an additional qualification.
- Personal qualities relevant to education at post-graduate level.
- Good skills in oral and written communication in English.

4. The degree

The doctoral (third-cycle) studies lead to a Degree of Doctor. Within Soil Mechanics, a student admitted to doctoral studies has the right to be awarded a licentiate degree after having completed at least 120 credits of the programme leading to a Degree of Doctor.

4.1 Degree requirements

For a Degree of Doctor, the doctoral student shall

- have been awarded a pass grade for courses of 60 to 80 credits
- have been awarded a pass grade for a research thesis (doctoral thesis) of 160 to 180 credits.

The thesis and the courses shall together amount to 240 credits for a Degree of Doctor.

For a Degree of Licentiate, the doctoral student shall

- have been awarded a pass grade for courses of 30 to 40 credits.
- have been awarded a pass grade for a licentiate thesis of 80 to 90 credits.

The thesis and the courses shall together amount to 120 credits for a Degree of Licentiate.

4.2 Titles of degree

- After the completion of the Degree of Doctor in Soil Mechanics the doctoral student is awarded the title Doctor of Philosophy in Science.
- After the completion of the Degree of Licentiate in Soil Mechanics, the doctoral student is awarded the title **Degree of Licentiate of Science**.

A request of a title of degree other than the stipulated may be submitted in accordance with laid down guidelines.

5. Programme structure and implementation

5.1 Programme scope and structure

The doctoral (third-cycle) programme includes two blocs; courses and thesis work. The programme comprises four years (two years for the licentiate degree). In case the doctoral student has a doctoral studentship and carries out departmental duties to a certain extent (no more than 20% of the whole programme), a corresponding prolonged period may be approved.

5.2 Individual study plan and supervision

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An individual study plan outlining the implementation of the studies is drawn up for each doctoral student. The plan is established in consultation with the supervisor and is decided by the Head of Department by delegation of the Vice-Chancellor. The plan is reviewed and revised at least once a year.

The Head of Department shall appoint at least two supervisors, one of whom is appointed principal supervisor, for each doctoral student. The person appointed principal supervisor shall have at least qualifications required for appointment as a docent and be employed by the University. A principal supervisor who no longer meets the job requirements may continue as supervisor until the doctoral student completes his or her studies, by an individual agreement with the relevant department. The doctoral student is entitled to supervision during the studies, unless the Vice-Chancellor has decided otherwise in accordance with the Higher Education Ordinance (2010:1064) Chapter 6 Section 30. A doctoral student who so requests may have another supervisor (Higher Education Ordinance (2010:1064) Chapter 6 Section 28). The request does not need a justification.

5.3 Courses

The individual study plan shall specify the courses to be included in the doctoral student's education. The goal attainment is examined according to the examination procedure specified in the course syllabus. Credits may be transferred in accordance with the local guidelines in the Admissions procedure for doctoral (third-cycle) studies. Knowledge of gender equality should be ensured in both the licentiate degree and the doctoral degree, which can be done by a course or in another suitable way.

5.4 Thesis

The thesis may take the form of either a single coherent work (a monographic thesis) or a compilation comprising a number of scientific articles interrelated by an introductory summary chapter (a compilation thesis). Quality and scope requirements for the research activities do not differ between the two alternatives. The scientific articles or, as appropriate, the monograph must be of such quality that they meet reasonable requirements for publication in a peer-reviewed scientific forum.

The expectations of the research subject on the thesis, are treated for each doctoral student in their individual study plan, since such expectations depends on the project in question.

The introductory summary chapter shall include a separate section describing the doctoral student's contribution to the articles.

The doctoral thesis shall be defended at a public defence seminar. The grades for the thesis are either 'pass' or 'failed'. When grading the thesis, the content and the defence of thesis shall be taken into account. The grade of a doctoral thesis is decided by an examining committee, appointed anew for each thesis.

A doctoral student wanting to be awarded a Degree of Licentiate shall, after consultation with his or her supervisor, request approval from the responsible Head of Department. The doctoral student defends his or her licentiate thesis at a licentiate seminar after which the thesis is graded

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6. Entry into effect and interim regulations

The previous general syllabus will cease to apply for third-cycle students who are admitted to studies at third-cycle level after 2022-04-05.

If agreed between the third-cycle student and the supervisors, the new general syllabus, LTU dnr 1130-2022, may be used as a steering document for a previously admitted third-cycle student.

It must be documented in the third-cycle student's individual study plan which general syllabus that applies.

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