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Admission regulations for third-cycle (doctoral) courses and study programmes at Luleå University of Technology

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1. Introduction

The provisions of the Higher Education Ordinance (HEO) specifiy the requirements applying to third-cycle courses and study programmes. In addition to the requirements laid down in the Higher Education Ordinance, the higher education institution must have admission regulations specifying the provisions applied by the higher education institution with regard to applications, entry requirements, selection and admission. The admission regulations are laid down by the University Board. The Vice-Chancellor decides on matters other than those referred to in chapter 2, section 2 in the Higher Education Ordinance (HEO chapter 2, section 3). The Vice-Chancellor may delegate their duties, unless otherwise specified (HEO chapter 2, section 5). The Rules of Decision-Making and of Delegation of Authority at Luleå University of Technology are laid down by the Vice-Chancellor. These rules regulate the decision-making procedures within the University and detail which parts of the University decide on different matters.

2. Admission to third-cycle courses and study programmes

2.1 General provisions

The Higher Education Ordinance

Chapter 7, 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).

At Luleå University of Technology, the following applies:
The Vice-Chancellor has delegated to the Head of Department the authority to admit applicants to third-cycle courses and study programmes. Admission to third-cycle courses and study programmes may only be granted if satisfactory conditions exist regarding funding, supervision, range of courses offered and access to a workplace, a computer and the library to allow efficient education leading to an internationally high-quality degree.

If the grounds for the funding of the studies change or cease during the period of studies for an employed doctoral student, the Head of Department is responsible for creating conditions for further funding of the studies for the employed doctoral student.

For each established subject in which third-cycle courses and study programmes are offered, a general syllabus is required. The general syllabus is laid down by the chair of the relevant faculty board. It specifies the structure and implementation of the third-cycle programme, the specific entry requirements, selection criteria, the examinations included in the third-cycle programme, and whether it is possible to complete part of the third-cycle programme with a licentiate degree.

The doctoral student should have the opportunity to devote as much of their time to the studies that the net duration of the full-time studies will be two years for a Degree of Licentiate and four years for a Degree of Doctor. For part-time studies, the net duration of the studies is maximum four years for a Degree of Licentiate and eight years for a Degree of Doctor. Admission is granted only if the studies comprise 50% or more of full time. The period of studies for a Degree of Licentiate or a Degree of Doctor cannot unofficially be extended by the student pursuing third-cycle studies without being formally admitted.

2.2 The admission procedure

The Higher Education Ordinance

Chapter 7, 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)

Chapter 7, 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)

At Luleå University of Technology, the following applies:

Vacancies for employment of doctoral students in a research subject are announced continously throughout the year without fixed announcement dates. The minimum requirement is that the announcements are posted on the University's main noticeboard and website, and that the Swedish Public Employment Service is informed about the vacant posts. Normally, the application period is three weeks.

There are laid-down guidelines for the admission of a doctoral student who is to pursue studies within the frames of an employment with an employer other than Luleå University of Technology, via external funding or via a scholarship[1] [2].

When admitting a person pursuing doctoral studies within the frames of an employment at Luleå University, no announcement of the doctoral student post is required. However, information about this is posted on the University's main noticeboard.

Luleå University of Technology admits to third-cycle courses and study programmes those students who primarily aim at a Degree of Doctor.

Studies with the goal Degree of Licentiate are mainly for professionals wishing to improve their skills through third-cycle studies. Possible admissions to studies with the goal Degree of Licentiate are granted after consultation with the Head of Department and the chair of the relevant faculty board.

Doctoral students who are admitted to and later awarded a Degree of Licentiate and who wish to pursue their studies to obtain a Degree of Doctor, must re-apply for admission to the latter part of the Degree of Doctor.

For doctoral students whose studies require them to be on site at Luleå University of Technology, the university applies the procedure to revoke the admission decision if the decision rejection of a residence permit has gained legal force before the studies begin[3]

The Vice-Chancellor has delegated to the Head of Department the duty to appoint a principal supervisor and at least one assistant supervisor. Gender balance in the supervisor group must be taken into consideration.

A person with a third-cycle qualification in a research subject may not be admitted to, nor graduate in, that same research subject despite a different specialisation within the subject.

2.3 General entry requirements

The Higher Education Ordinance

Chapter 7, section 39: A person meets the general entry requirements for third-cycle courses and study programmes if he or she:

[1] Guidelines for externally employed doctoral students and for doctoral students with external funding.
[2] Scholarships Rules at Luleå University of Technology
[3] The Administrative Procedure Act § 37 st. 2

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)

At Luleå University of Technology, the following applies:
Exemptions from the general entry requirements may be granted after the Head of Department has submitted a proposal including statements of grounds to the chair of the relevant faculty board who is then to decide on the matter.

Validation of previous professional experience is made after the Head of Department has submitted a proposal including statements of grounds to the chair of the relevant faculty board who is then to decide whether the applicant's professional experience should be deemed to have given the applicant knowledge equivalent to a degree or completed course qualifications in accordance with the qualification requirements.

A recognition of qualification is required for assessing whether the applicant's foreign studies meet the entry requirements. The Head of Department decides on the recognition of qualification after the authenticity of the documents is confirmed by the Professional Services.

2.4 Specific entry requirements

The Higher Education Ordinance

Chapter 7, 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)

At Luleå University of Technology, the following applies:
Completed courses within a particular subject/particular level/scope that are necessary to enable the doctoral student to benefit from third-cycle studies must be formulated as specific entry requirements. The doctoral student is expected to reach the qualitative target within the estimated period of studies and with good quality. Specific entry requirements too narrow may however limit the admission of doctoral students and should therefore be avoided. There is no legal basis for granting an exemption from the specific entry requirements. The level of language proficiency may be indicated as a specific entry requirement: English and/or Swedish.

2.5 Selection

The Higher Education Ordinance

Chapter 7, section 41: In selecting between applicants who meet the requirements laid down in Sections 35 and 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)

At Luleå University of Technology, the following applies:
A recruitment group appointed by the Head of Department prepares the matter. Gender balance in the recruitment group must be taken into consideration. The assessment of the applicant's knowledge, skills and abilities is carried out initially on the basis of the written documentation that is attached to the application and in which study results including the degree project are indicated. Interviews with a selection of applicants are then conducted and references (examiners/employers) contacted. The purpose of the requirement group's work is to assess the potential of the presumed doctoral student to conduct efficient studies leading to an internationally high-quality degree and to graduate within the stipulated period of studies.

A selection is required when several applicants meet the qualification requirements for admission to third-cycle courses and study programmes within the subject. The recruitment group then ranks the applicants according to their ability to benefit from the education. The general syllabus for the research subject specifies the selection criteria applied to that subject. However, the fact that an applicant is considered able to transfer credits from previous courses and study programmes or for professional experience may not alone give the applicant priority over other applicants. If applicants have equal qualifications, the underrepresented gender in the research subject will be given priority.