Postgraduate studies at the Faculty of Medicine

The Riksdag’s decision regarding a new structure for Swedish higher education and degrees means, among other things, the following for PhD studies:

- New name – Postgraduate studies
  New Degree Ordinance with stated goals for the Degree of Doctor, respectively the Degree of Licentiate degree

- New system of credits with ECTS (1.5 x current credit). 240 ECTS for a Degree of Doctor and 120 ECTS for a Degree of Licentiate

- In part new content in the general curriculum
- Increased requirements on internationalization in the education
- Requirements on student counselling and occupational guidance
- Requirements of introductory university level education pedagogy (or equivalent) for postgraduate students who teach at the undergraduate level or advanced levels.

The Postgraduate Studies Board has decided:

1. that the following assessment foundations for selection shall be in effect upon admittance to postgraduate studies:

   - ability to benefit from postgraduate studies

2. to establish the general curriculum for postgraduate studies in accordance with the appendix.

Changes went into effect January 1, 2007 and are applied as of July 1, 2007-until further notice.

* This document has been translated into English. In case of divergence of meaning between the English and Swedish wording of this document, the Swedish wording shall prevail.
General curriculum for postgraduate studies in Medical science for doctoral students admitted up to 111231

1. Objective
The objective with the postgraduate studies at the Faculty of Medicine at Umeå University is to increase knowledge within the subject of medical science and to contribute to society’s development within this field. After a degree of Doctor or a degree of Licentiate, continued work is expected to take place within pure research at a research institute or within industry, as combined researcher and teacher within higher education, as a research competent leader within health care or industry, as a consult, etc. These different types of work organizations have different requirements. Postgraduate studies at the Faculty of Medicine at Umeå University, shall therefore provide a broad base and prepare for future research and work even beyond the individual postgraduate studies’ project.

2. Goals for the education
Postgraduate studies at the Faculty of Medicine at Umeå University shall offer the postgraduate student the possibility to develop both high, general competency within medical science and scientific methods, as well as specialized scientific competency within the research field that the dissertation project covers.

The following goals are defined in the Higher Education Ordinance’s degree ordinance (HF, appendix 2)

2.1 Degree of Doctor

Knowledge and understanding
For a Degree of Doctor the postgraduate student must:

- demonstrate broad knowledge in and a systemic understanding of the field of research, together with deep and up-to-date specialist knowledge in a defined part of the field of research; and

- demonstrate familiarity with the scholarly methods in general and with methods in the specific field of research in particular.

Skills and ability
For a Degree of Doctor the postgraduate student must:

- demonstrate an ability to engage in scholarly analysis and synthesis and in independent, critical examination and assessment of new and complex phenomena, issues and situations;

- demonstrate an ability to identify and formulate issues, critically, independently and creatively, and proceeding with scientific precision, and to plan and, using appropriate methods, conduct research and other advanced tasks within specified time limits, and to scrutinise and evaluate such work;
- demonstrate, in a dissertation, their ability to make a substantial contribution to the development of knowledge by their own research;

- demonstrate an ability to present and discuss research and research results with authority, in dialogue with the scholarly community and society in general, orally and in writing, in both national and international contexts;

- demonstrate the ability to identify his/her need for further knowledge; and

- demonstrate a potential to contribute to the development of society and support other people’s learning, both in the field of research and education and in other advanced professional contexts.

Judgement and approach

For a Degree of Doctor postgraduate students must:

- demonstrate intellectual independence and scholarly integrity and an ability to make ethical assessments relating to research; and

- demonstrate deeper insight into the potential and limitations of scholarship, its role in society and people’s responsibility for how it is used.

2.1 Degree of Licentiate

Knowledge and understanding

For a Degree of Licentiate postgraduate student must

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding in the field of research, including current specialist knowledge in a defined part of the field and a deeper knowledge of scientific methods in general and of methods in the specific field of research in particular.

Skills and ability

For a Degree of Licentiate the postgraduate students must

- demonstrate an ability to identify and formulate issues, critically, independently and creatively, and proceeding with scientific precision; to plan a limited research project and other advanced tasks and to carry them out using appropriate methods within specified time limits, so as to contribute to the development of knowledge; and to evaluate this work;

- demonstrate an ability to clearly present and discuss research and research results in dialogue with the scholarly community and society in general, orally and in writing, in both national and international contexts; and

- demonstrate the skills required to independently participate in research and development work and to work independently in other advanced contexts.

Judgement and approach

For a Degree of Licentiate the postgraduate student must:

- demonstrate an ability to make ethical assessments in his/her own research,
- demonstrate insight into the possibilities and limitations of science, its role in society and people’s responsibility for how it is used; and
- demonstrate the ability to identify his/her need of further knowledge and to take responsibility for developing their knowledge.

3. Eligibility and prerequisites

The requirements for admission to postgraduate education are that the applicant has general admission requirements and the specific admission requirements that the faculty board may have prescribed, and is deemed to have the ability in other respects that is needed to benefit from the education (HF chapt. 7, 35 §).

3.1. General admission requirements

A person has basic eligibility for postgraduate education if he or she has taken a second level qualification, has completed course requirements of at least 240 ECTS, including at least 60 ECTS at second level or has acquired essentially corresponding knowledge in some other way in Sweden or abroad. The faculty board may permit an exemption from the requirement of basic eligibility in the case of an individual applicant, if there are special grounds (HF chapt. 7, 39 §).

A person who fulfils the requirements for basic eligibility for admission to postgraduate education, i.e., basic higher education consisting of at least 120 points or equivalent knowledge that has been acquired in another manner within or outside Sweden, will also be considered to have basic eligibility for admission to postgraduate studies, though until no later than the end of June 2015.

3.2. Specific admission requirements

In order to be admitted to postgraduate studies, it is required that the applicant has:

1. necessary knowledge from higher education or corresponding education and/or special professional experience that is assessed in relation to the research area.

2. necessary language skills in English, concerning both oral and writing skills. Assessment of these skills are made by having the intended postgraduate student present his/her research plan in English for the department’s postgraduate education group.

Specific admission requirements for each subject area can be found in the study plans. These study plans are kept at the departments and at the Dean’s office.

4. Selection

Selection from among applicants meeting the requirements shall be based on the following assessment basis:
• ability to benefit from postgraduate studies

However, the fact that an applicant is deemed able to receive credit towards the education for previous education or working activities may not alone give the applicant precedence over other applicants in the selection process (HF chapt. 7, 41 §).

Position opening for doctoral studies must be advertised. The advertisement will be posted on the university’s webpage for position opening for at least 3 weeks. The decision of selection to doctoral studies is made by the supervisor and the postgraduate studies group. This decision is then established by the head of the department.

The decision of admittance to doctoral studies for Degree of Doctor as the final goal is determined by the Postgraduate Studies Board (FUN) and the decision of admittance to doctoral studies for Degree of Licentiate as the final goal is determined by the Dean.

5. The education’s design and content

5.1. The education’s design

Postgraduate studies result in a Degree of Doctor or a Degree of Licentiate. The education shall be comprised of 240 ECTS for the Degree of Doctor and 120 ECTS for Degree of Licentiate.

Postgraduate studies that are finished with a Degree of Doctor include up to four years net study time, and are comprised of writing a PhD thesis, as well as attending courses on a postgraduate level, in total the equivalent of 240 ECTS.

Postgraduate studies that are finished with a Degree of Licentiate include up to two years net study time, and are comprised of writing a scholarly essay, as well as attending courses on a postgraduate level, in total the equivalent of 120 ECTS.

An individual study plan where financing, supervising, courses and thesis work, etc. is specified is made up for each postgraduate student. The individual study plan must be followed-up at least once a year.

5.2. Content

5.2.1 Courses

Degree of Doctor / Degree of Licentiate

Postgraduate courses are included in postgraduate studies. The Faculty of Medicine implemented new requirements for postgraduate students admitted from January 1st 2008. Postgraduate students shall achieve a knowledge requirement equivalent to at total of 30 ECTS for a degree of Doctor and 15 ECTS for a degree of Licentiate. 30 ECTS will be achieved by compulsory postgraduate courses (15 ECTS/19.5 ECTS), other postgraduate courses and other credit giving items such as active participation in the department's seminars and journal clubs, participation in national/international conferences with a presentation of the postgraduate student’s results,
research visit with another research group at another university and participation in university level pedagogy courses.

It is obligatory for those admitted to postgraduate studies from and including January 1, 2003 to take the introductory course in research ethics and postgraduate students admitted from and including July 1, 2006 take the entire introductory block for postgraduate studies. In addition a course in basic principles in laboratory animal science is obligatory if laboratory animals are included in any of the student's sub-projects. Application for counting the introductory block must take place before the time of the postgraduate student's admission. Send the application directly to the course leader, certificates of earlier studies must be attached.

Evaluation: For the courses within postgraduate studies there are achievement tests or equivalent tests which are assessed with one of the following grades; pass or fail. The grade is determined by a specifically designated teacher (examiner).

5.2.2 Doctoral thesis / Licentiate thesis

The doctoral thesis / licentiate thesis must be comprised of a collection of scientific articles with an introduction to and a summary of these (doctoral thesis), or as a comprehensive, connected scientific work (doctoral thesis on a unified theme). The doctoral student needs to be first author of at least 1 publication (this applies only to doctoral students admitted from January 1st, 2010).

The doctoral thesis must be defended orally at a public defence. It is assessed with one of the following grades; pass or fail. When determining the grade, the committee shall take into consideration the contents of the thesis and the defence of this.

The licentiate thesis must be defended orally at a public seminar. It is assessed with one of the following grades; pass or fail. When determining the grade, the committee shall take into consideration the contents of the thesis and the defence of this.

6. Follow-up

Follow-up of postgraduate students

The Faculty of Medicine has the overarching responsibility for postgraduate studies at the faculty, while the department where the postgraduate student is admitted has the responsibility for the individual postgraduate student's education. The postgraduate student's progress is consequently a responsibility that lies with both the faculty and the department, even if the main responsibility when it's about the education itself, in the first case belongs to the main supervisor. Information about the postgraduate student's activity during the current term must be noted in LADOK by the respective department at the latest by June 30 respectively December 31.

The Postgraduate Studies Board is responsible on behalf of the faculty to follow-up on the postgraduate student's progress. This is done through a yearly follow-up of the individual curriculum. The annual follow-up is carried out by the responsible department the 1st and 3rd year. FUN is responsible for carrying out the follow-up the 2nd and 4th year. The interim seminar
makes up an important part of the follow-up of the postgraduate student’s progress. The interim seminar is obligatory (provided that the postgraduate student does not take a licentiate degree instead).

The responsibility that the interim seminar takes place rests, in contrast to the licentiate seminar, entirely on the department. A certificate that confirms that the interim seminar has been done must be sent to FUN along with the statement by the appointed review group.

After the 4th year, FUN examines the Application for public defence of thesis.

7. Degree

The Degree of Doctor is achieved after the postgraduate student has completed the postgraduate studies of 240 ECTS and thereby has received the grade pass on those tests that are included in the education as well as authored and at a public defence defended a PhD thesis, which is approved by the examination board.

The Degree of Licentiate is achieved after the postgraduate student has completed the postgraduate studies of 120 ECTS and thereby has received the grade pass on those tests that are included in the education as well as authored and at a seminar defended a licentiate thesis, which is approved by the examination board.

The diploma is issued after an application is filed with the Student Services / Degree Evaluation Office.

8. General instructions

Existing regulations for postgraduate studies are taken from:

- Higher Education Ordinance (HF): chapt 5, (Employment as Doctoral Student) and chapt. 6 (The Education) and chapt. 7 (Admission to Education), appendix 2 (Degree Ordinance)
- The admission ordinance for postgraduate studies at Umeå University (dnr 500-1168-11)
- Local degree ordinance at Umeå University (dnr 540-3839-06)
- The Faculty of Medicine’s PhD Student Handbook