



Admission Regulations for Third-Cycle Education at Södertörn University

Adopted by the Governing Board on 18 February 2022. Valid until further notice from 1 July 2022.

Replaces the previous decision on Admission Regulations for Third-Cycle Education at Södertörn University, reg. no. 1604/42/2010.

Södertörn University stipulates the following, under Chapter 2, Section 2 and Chapter 6, Section 3 of the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100).

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1. Introduction

Under the Higher Education Ordinance, the university must ensure that those who intend to start a course or programme have access to the necessary information and that admissions regulations are available.¹

The *Admissions Regulations for Third-Cycle Education at Södertörn University* contains the regulations applied by the university relating to applications, eligibility, selection and admissions, as well as how decisions are made and appealed. In addition, regulations that contain more detailed requirements than those below may be adopted in the general syllabuses for each third-cycle subject area.

Information about programmes is primarily available in the general syllabuses and the university's external and internal websites, where third-cycle (doctoral) education is described in more detail. These Admission Regulations must also be published on the external website.

Swedish regulations on access to third-cycle education are in Chapter 7, Sections 34-41 of the Higher education Ordinance (1993:100).

A doctoral student is a student who is admitted to and undertaking education at third-cycle level, regardless of whether they are aiming for a licentiate or doctoral degree.

Decisions must be made in accordance with the university's established delegations of authority.

2. Student finance

2.1. General information about requirements for student finance

The university may admit applicants to third-cycle education who are employed on a doctoral studentship or who have some other form of funding for their studies, if it believes that the funding can be guaranteed during the entire period of study and that the applicant can devote enough time to their studies to enable their completion within four years in the case of a licentiate degree or eight years in the case of a doctorate.²

As a general rule, a doctoral student who is admitted to third-cycle education at the university must be funded via a doctoral studentship. Normally, these studentships are funded via the university's direct government funding for research, or by external research funding that is administrated by the university.

Regardless of the type of funding, before a decision about admission can be made, the head of the relevant school (or equivalent) is responsible for carefully evaluating the student finance and for drawing up a funding plan that covers the entire study period. Unless

¹ Chapter 6, Section 3 of the Higher Education Ordinance

² Chapter 7, Section 36 of the Higher Education Ordinance

otherwise agreed, the university is obliged to pay for supervision, a workspace and other resources for all admitted doctoral students.³

2.2. Doctoral studentships

The university applies the Swedish provisions on the employment of doctoral students found in Chapter 5, Sections 1-7 of the Higher Education Ordinance. In addition, the university's locally adopted governing document for doctoral studentships must be applied.⁴

2.3. Other forms of financing

2.3.1. External employment

Before an admission decision can be made, applicants who are employed by another employer must sign an agreement with the funding party (company, organisation, authority, other higher education institution, etcetera) for the entire period of study. The applicant must have the opportunity to read the agreement before it is signed.

The responsible manager (or equivalent) at the organisation where the applicant is employed must certify that the applicant can dedicate at least 50 per cent of their working hours to their studies, so studies can be completed within four years for a licentiate degree and eight years for a doctoral degree.

In the event that the employer cannot fulfil the funding agreement and this is due to circumstances that the university could not have predicted, the university is not obliged to assume responsibility for funding the doctoral student's continued studies. However, the relevant school should investigate opportunities for alternative student finance to allow the doctoral student to complete their studies.

2.3.2. Scholarships

Doctoral students with funding via scholarships may only be admitted in exceptional cases. In these cases, the rules and conditions specified in the Higher Education Ordinance⁵ must be considered before admission can occur, as well as the university's local regulations for the use of scholarships.⁶

A decision from the scholarship donor is required for funding via scholarship. The university must also have insight into how funding is disbursed. As part of the scholarship conditions, there may not be any demands on the doctoral student's performance or requirements for repayment if the doctoral student does not achieve the qualitative targets. The agreement between the funder and scholarship holder may not include any conditions that place the doctoral student at a disadvantage compared to other doctoral students at the university.

³ Not applicable if the vice-chancellor has decided to withdraw the doctoral student's resources in accordance with Chapter 6, Section 30 of the Higher Education Ordinance.

⁴ Regulations for Doctoral Studentships at Södertörn University, reg. no. 1094/1.1.2/2017

⁵ Chapter 1, Section 11 c, Chapter 5, Sections 4 och 4 a, and Chapter 7, Section 36, paragraph two of the Higher Education Ordinance.

⁶ Regler för användning av stipendier till studerande, forskarstuderande m fl vid Södertörns högskola (revised 25 February 2005), reg. no. 138/40/2005

If funding for a doctoral student who has been admitted on a scholarship is withdrawn during the period of study, the university is obliged to guarantee funding for the remaining period of study.

2.3.3. Other forms of employment at the university

Applicants who are employed at the university in a position other than a doctoral studentship must be able to dedicate at least 50 per cent of their working hours to their studies, so a licentiate degree can be completed within four years and a doctoral degree within eight years. This must be certified by the applicant's manager (or equivalent) before admission. The salary must be at least that of the relevant stage of the salary scale for doctoral students.

3. Announcement of vacant places on third-cycle programmes

3.1. Information about vacancies on third-cycle programmes

When a higher education institution intends to admit one or more third-cycle students, information must be provided by the higher education institution through advertising or some equivalent method.⁷

3.2. Announcement of vacancies on third-cycle programmes

Vacant places on third-cycle programmes must be announced on the university's external website, on bulletin boards and via other channels relevant to the vacancy. An advertisement or other information about such vacancies must be published at least three weeks prior to the application deadline.

This must normally occur on fixed dates during the year.

An announcement of a vacant place on a third-cycle programme that is funded through a doctoral studentship, must be preceded by a recruitment decision made in accordance with the university's delegation of authority.

Each third-cycle research area submits proposals for vacancy announcements to the research area for review. Before information about the vacancy is published, the area must ensure that the announcements are quality assured and that the regulations have been applied.

If the university announces a vacant place on a programme, and if a doctoral studentship is linked to that place, the studentship must be advertised in the same announcement. Unless otherwise stated in the advertisement, application for admission to the programme is also an application for the doctoral studentship.

3.3. Exceptions to the requirement for announcing a vacancy

Information does not need to be provided if:

⁷ Chapter 7, Section 37, paragraph two of the Higher Education Ordinance

1. the admitted doctoral student will undertake the programme as part of employment with an employer other than the university,
2. the admitted doctoral student has previously started their third-cycle programme at a different higher education institution, or
3. there are similar exceptional circumstances.⁸

4. Entry requirements and selection

4.1. General provisions on admission to third-cycle programmes

Under the provisions of the Higher Education Ordinance, the number of doctoral students admitted may be no greater than that which can be offered supervision, acceptable study conditions and who have a plan for student finance.⁹

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.¹⁰

The entry requirements must be fulfilled by the application deadline for the advertised vacancy.

4.2. General entry requirements

A person meets the general entry requirements for third-cycle courses and study programmes if they

1. have been awarded a second-cycle qualification,
2. satisfy the requirements for courses comprising at least 240 credits of which at least 60 credits were awarded in the second-cycle, or
3. 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.¹¹

A review of whether the applicant fulfils the general entry requirements must be conducted prior to the selection process and admission. Review and assessment of the knowledge considered equivalent to degrees at first and second cycle levels must be performed by people with subject expertise.

⁸ Chapter 7, Section 37, paragraph two of the Higher Education Ordinance

⁹ Chapter 7, Section 34 of the Higher Education Ordinance

¹⁰ Chapter 7, Section 35 of the Higher Education Ordinance

¹¹ Chapter 7, Section 39 of the Higher Education Ordinance

4.3. Specific entry requirements

The specific entry requirements must 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.¹²

Specific entry requirements must be stated in the general syllabus for the third-cycle subject area.

Review and assessment of whether the applicant fulfils the specific entry requirements must be conducted by people with subject expertise prior to admission.

4.4. Selection

Selecting among eligible applicants must be done with regard to their ability to benefit from the programme.¹³

The higher education institution determines which assessment criteria will be used in determining the ability to benefit from the courses and study programmes. 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 give the applicant priority over other applicants.¹⁴

The basis for assessment, which primarily comprises formal qualifications and expertise, is stated in the university's regulations on the basis for assessment during selection for third-cycle programmes and in each third-cycle subject area's general syllabus.

Eligible applicants must be ranked by their ability to benefit from third-cycle programmes, after which opportunities for funding the applicants' thesis projects are assessed based on the ranking.

The selection process must be predictable and transparent as regards the applied basis for assessment.

4.5. Opportunities for credit transfer during selection

The university applies the national provisions on credit transfers that are found in Chapter 6, Sections 6-8 of the Higher Education Ordinance.

A standard credit transfer of the second year of two-year Master's degree is not permitted, and priority may not be given to applicants with two-year Master's degrees with the aim of reducing the programme to less than four years.

¹² Chapter 7, Section 40 of the Higher Education Ordinance

¹³ Chapter 7, Sections 35, 36 and the first paragraph of Section 41 of the Higher Education Ordinance

¹⁴ Chapter 7, Section 41, paragraphs two and three of the Higher Education Ordinance

Credit transfers from previous courses may not be an admission condition or linked to demands for a reduced period of study.

Credit transfers must always be initiated by the doctoral student after admission and considered individually for each course in relation to the degree requirements for third-cycle programmes.

The university's decisions on credit transfers for courses/programmes or professional activities can be appealed to the Higher Education Appeals Board.¹⁵

5. Admission procedure

5.1. General information

The objective of admission to third-cycle programmes may be either a Degree of Doctor or Degree of Licentiate, but must normally be a doctoral degree. A licentiate degree may also be a stage marker for someone who is admitted with the objective of obtaining a doctoral degree.

5.2. Applying for a programme

Applications for admissions to third-cycle programmes must primarily be done electronically via the university's online recruitment system. An application can also be submitted on paper. It must be addressed to the university and be personally signed by the applicant.

An application for a place on a programme must always include the following attachments, whether or not the application is preceded by an announcement of a vacancy:

1. letter of application
2. curriculum vitae
3. degree certificates, grades and certificates that demonstrate eligibility to apply for the third-cycle programme
4. essays at Bachelor's and Master's levels (first and second cycle) and any other scholarly works (max. three) that are relevant to the application, considering the specific entry requirements stated in the general syllabus for the third-cycle subject area.

The advertisement must state whether an application must contain additional documents (such as a research plan that presents the planned research) and additional specifications than the above, such as when applying for the Baltic and East European Graduate School (BEEGS) or other graduate schools at the university.

If the applicant has funding from somewhere other than the university, certificates, decision documents, contracts or the equivalent must be submitted to confirm the funding and that the programme can be conducted in accordance with that stated in Section 2 on student finance.

¹⁵ Chapter 12, Section 2, item 4 of the Higher Education Ordinance

5.2.1. Application deadline and opportunities for supplementary documentation

An application for a place on a programme must have been received by the university by the deadline stated in the advertisement/equivalent. For admissions without a preceding vacancy advertisement, an application may be submitted after contact and consultation with the admitting third-cycle subject area.

When applying for an advertised vacancy, applicants may supplement their application with grades and certificates that support their eligibility and/or qualifications up to ten working days after the deadline. However, this only applies provided that the education or qualifications to which the applicant refers has been completed with a pass grade by the application deadline.

5.2.2. Language requirements for the application and supporting documentation

An application for a place on a programme can be made in Swedish, English, Danish or Norwegian, unless otherwise stated in the advertisement.

Applicants with degree projects in a language other than those listed above must append them in their entirety, along with a summary of about 14,000 characters in one of the abovementioned languages.

Certificates, grades and degree certificates in other languages must be translated to Swedish or English. The translation must be done by an authorised translator.

5.3. Collegial process prior to an admission decision

Before a decision on admission can be made, an admission proposal must have been prepared by the relevant research area. Where a research area has several third-cycle subject areas, the case is first prepared by the relevant subject. When admitting doctoral students to the university's graduate schools, a representative from the relevant graduate school must be part of the collegial process. For admissions to the Baltic and East European Graduate School (BEEGS), see item 5.3.1 below.

Applicants must be assessed using the criteria stated in Section 4 above, the general syllabus for the third-cycle subject area and the university's regulations on the basis for assessment during selection for third-cycle programmes. If the advertisement of the vacancy is competitive, the assessment must be made by a specially appointed assessment group with subject expertise, which must also propose a ranking for the applicants. The assessment group is appointed by the Faculty Board (or the body to which the Faculty Board has delegated the decision-making rights) on the proposal of the relevant third-cycle subject area and research area. For admissions without preceding advertising, the equivalent assessment of the applicant must be performed by representatives from the relevant third-cycle subject area who have subject expertise, and who are appointed by the research area's steering committee on the proposal of the admitting third-cycle subject area.

The applicant's eligibility must be checked before admission, see Section 4 above.

Before a decision on admission can be made, all the conditions for admission must be fulfilled and student finance be guaranteed for the entire period of study.

People who participate in the admissions procedure must be familiar with the applicable regulations. Students must be given the opportunity to be represented in the collegial and decision-making processes, see more in Section 8 below.

5.3.1. Collegial process prior to admissions to the Baltic and East European Graduate School (BEEGS)

For admissions to the Baltic and East European Graduate School (BEEGS), a representative from the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES) must be included in the assessment group. The CBEES representative must participate in all interviews. Decisions on the final ranking are made jointly by the assessment group.

5.4. Transfer from another higher education institution

A higher education institution that has degree-awarding powers at third-cycle level in a specific area may, without a new admission process, decide that a doctoral student who has been admitted to another higher education institution may transfer to the present higher education institution to continue their studies and graduate from there. However, this only applies if the majority of the doctoral student's studies have been in the area for which the higher education institution has received degree-awarding powers.¹⁶

Transfer from another higher education institution must always be at the doctoral student's own initiative.

The head of school (or equivalent) must ensure that student finance is guaranteed for the remaining period of employment.

Decisions on transfers are made by the Faculty Board (may not be delegated) after the case has been discussed by the relevant third-cycle subject area and research area.

5.5. Admission to third-cycle programmes with the objective of a licentiate degree

Admission to third-cycle programmes for the purpose of earning a licentiate degree must be seen as an exception from the normal regulations and should receive careful consideration. Admissions may occur provided that the general syllabus for the third-cycle subject area states that the programme may lead to a Degree of Licentiate. Decisions on admission are made by the Faculty Board and may not be delegated.

5.6. Admission to continued studies following a Degree of Licentiate/licentiate stage

A doctoral student who was admitted to a licentiate programme and who, after completing their degree (or after being assessed as achieving the equivalent level), wants to continue on a doctoral programme must re-apply to be able to continue studying. If the doctoral student is funded via a doctoral studentship at the university, a vacancy must be advertised

¹⁶ Chapter 7, Section 38, paragraph one of the Higher Education Ordinance

in the usual manner so the application is competitive. Decisions on admission are made by the Faculty Board and may not be delegated.

If the doctoral student has funding other than a doctoral studentship, no preceding advertisement is necessary, but a renewed scholarly review of the continued thesis work must be made by the relevant third-cycle subject area and research area before the doctoral student's application can be granted. The head of school (or equivalent) must also ensure and certify that the doctoral student has student finance for the entirety of the remaining study period. The programme's revised objective is noted through a revision to the doctoral student's individual study plan, which is validated by the relevant steering group. The Faculty Board must be informed about the revised objective.

6. Decision-making and other issues during admission

6.1. Admission decisions

Decisions on admission are made by the Faculty Board or the body to which the Faculty Board has delegated decision-making powers.

Admissions of applicants who have a form of student finance other than a doctoral studentship must be considered with special care in order to guarantee the student's legal rights. Decisions on admission are made by the Faculty Board and may not be delegated.

Admission decisions must be documented in writing by the admitting body to guarantee the doctoral student's legal certainty during the admission process. The research area must provide a written account of who dealt with the applications and the body by which they were appointed.

6.2. Decisions on exceptions to the general entry requirements

Decisions to allow exceptions to the general entry requirements, if there are exceptional circumstances, are made by the Faculty Board or the body to which decision-making powers have been delegated. The proposal to allow an exception must be documented and justified in writing and be submitted to the decision-making body before the decision is to be made.

6.3. Adoption of the funding plan

The head of school (or equivalent) must draw up a funding plan with information about the financier and form of funding for the entire period of study for every admitted doctoral student. Student finance for employers other than the university must be confirmed through a contract, decision document and/or certification from the funding party.

6.4. Decision on employment

For doctoral studentships, the vice-chancellor must decide about employment as soon as possible after the admission decision.

6.5. Appointment of supervisors

At least two supervisors must be appointed for each doctoral student. One of them must be nominated as the principal supervisor.¹⁷

The principal supervisor must be appointed within two months of the programme starting.

6.6. Adoption of individual study plans

An individual study plan must be drawn up for each doctoral student. The plan must include the obligations of the doctoral student and the university and a timetable for the doctoral student's study programme. The plan must be adopted after consultation with the doctoral student and their supervisors.¹⁸

The relevant third cycle research area is responsible for ensuring that an individual study plan is drawn up and adopted within five months of the doctoral student starting their programme.

6.7. Notification of decisions

When a vacancy on a study programme is advertised, the university must inform all applicants whether they have been admitted or not, no later than three weeks after the admission decision has been made. When an applicant has not been admitted, they must also be informed that this decision cannot be appealed.

7. Appeals

Decisions where an applicant has not been admitted to third cycle education cannot be appealed.¹⁹

8. Student representation

Student influence is an important principle for decision-making at the university. The Higher Education Act and Higher Education Ordinance state that students have the right to exercise influence on education at higher education institutions and that higher education institutions must help students participate actively in work to develop courses and programmes.²⁰ There are also provisions stating that students have the right to representation when decisions are made and during collegial processes of importance for education or the students' situation.²¹

If decisions are made or a process is conducted by a single person, information must be provided to, and consultation occur with, a student representative well in advance of the decision or the process' completion. If a decision will be made by a group of people under

¹⁷ Chapter 6, Section 28, paragraph one of the Higher Education Ordinance

¹⁸ Chapter 6, Section 29, paragraph one of the Higher Education Ordinance

¹⁹ Cf. Chapter 12, Sections 2 and 4 of the Higher Education Ordinance.

²⁰ Chapter 1, Sections 4 and 4 a of the Higher Education Act

²¹ Chapter 2, Section 7 of the Higher Education Ordinance

Chapter 2, Section 6 of the Higher Education Act, students are entitled to representation by at least three members. However, the number of student representatives in such a group may be reduced if there are special grounds, with regard to the total number of members in the group.²² In other decision-making and preparatory bodies, students are entitled to two representatives.²³

Based on the above, students at Södertörn University are entitled to representation on, for example, the Faculty Board and the committee for research and third-cycle education, the steering groups for research areas and subject collegiums, during the processes prior to and decision-making on the admission of doctoral students.

9. Entry into effect

These regulations enter into effect on 1 July 2022. At this time, the previous *Admission Regulations for Third-Cycle Education at Södertörn University*, reg. no. 1604/42/2010, ceases to apply.

²² Chapter 2, Section 14, paragraphs one, two and three of the Higher Education Ordinance

²³ Arbetsordning för Södertörns högskola, reg. no. 3399-1.1.2-2016