

# General Study Plan for Doctoral Studies in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures

## 1. Official approval

The General Study Plan for Doctoral Studies in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures was approved by the Faculty Board of Humanities at Stockholm University on 4 November 2014, and last revised on 2 March 2022.

The study plan is valid from 2 March 2022.

## 2. Subject description

The doctoral programme in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures consists of regionally focused multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary area studies with focus on one or several of the language and culture areas of the Middle East and North Africa. The dissertation project may include language, literature, cultural studies, or area studies. The programme is characterized by the fact that a substantial part of the material consists of both primary and secondary sources in the source language determined by the dissertation project.

## 3. Programme objectives

Admission to studies at the doctoral level in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures can only be completed with a doctoral degree. A licentiate intermediary is not an allowed element for a doctoral degree in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures.

### 3.1 Degree of Doctor

A doctoral degree will be awarded when the doctoral student has completed doctoral studies worth 240 higher education credits within one subject.

#### Knowledge and understanding

For a doctoral degree, the student must demonstrate the following:

broad knowledge in, and a systematic understanding of, the field of research, together with deep and current specialist knowledge in a delimited part of this field;

familiarity with research methodology in general and the methods of the specific field of research in particular.

#### Skills and abilities

For a doctoral degree, the student must demonstrate the following:

an ability to engage in scholarly analysis and synthesis, as well as in independent, critical review and assessment of new and complex phenomena, issues, and situations;

an ability to identify and formulate research questions critically, independently, creatively, and with scholarly precision, as well as to plan and conduct research and other qualified tasks with appropriate methods and within specified time limits, and also to review and evaluate such work;

an ability to make a substantial contribution to the development of knowledge through their own research in a thesis;

an ability, in both national and international contexts, orally as well as in writing, to present and discuss research and research findings authoritatively in dialogue with the scholarly community and society in general;

an ability to identify areas where further knowledge is required; the potential to contribute to social development and support the learning of others, both in the fields of research and education and in other qualified professional contexts.

#### Scholarly approach and capacity for judgement

For a doctoral degree, the student must demonstrate the following:

intellectual independence and scholarly integrity, as well as an ability to make assessments of research ethics;

specialized insight into the potential and limitations of research, its role in society, and our responsibility for how it is used.

#### Academic thesis (doctoral thesis)

A doctoral degree will be awarded when the doctoral student has received a passing grade on an academic thesis (doctoral thesis) worth at least 120 higher education credits.

#### Additional information

In the subject Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures, a dissertation of 180 higher education credits is required.

## 4. Eligibility and entry requirements

To be admitted to a third-cycle (doctoral) programme, it is required, according to the Higher Education Ordinance (chapter 7, sections 35, 39, and 40), that the applicant

1. has fulfilled the general entry requirements the specific entry requirements prescribed by the institution of higher education, and
2. has been assessed to have such other abilities as needed to benefit from the course or study programme.

### 4.1 General entry requirements

A person meets the general entry requirements for courses and study programmes at the doctoral level if he or she has:

- been awarded a second-cycle qualification
- satisfied the requirements for courses comprising at least 240 credits, of which at least 60 credits were awarded at masters (advanced or second-cycle) level; or
- acquired substantially equivalent knowledge in another way in Sweden or elsewhere.

The institution of higher learning may, for an individual applicant, grant exemptions from the requirement for basic eligibility, if there are special reasons. Decisions on exemptions from the requirement of basic eligibility for admission to doctoral education are made by the Board of the Faculty of Humanities on delegation from the Board for Human Science after a request from the Departmental Board.

#### 4.2 Specific entry requirements

In order to meet *the specific entry requirements*, the general syllabus for doctoral studies in the field of **Middle Eastern Cultures and Languages** stipulates that applicants must have a Master's degree comprising 120 university credits, with the main focus on Middle Eastern and North African Studies. The Master's degree must include a thesis of a total of at least 30 university credits.

The doctoral student must be able to assimilate scientific text in the relevant source language Arabic. A dissertation project devoted to linguistics or literary studies also requires the ability to assimilate literary or linguistic texts. If the dissertation project is fully or partly devoted to studies that include another foreign language, sufficient knowledge of the language in question is required.

The applicant must also have such skills in English that the applicant can read and write scientific texts, as well as conduct academic discussions in English.

The eligibility requirements can also be met by those who have acquired substantially equivalent competence within or outside the country. Any corresponding assessment of the eligibility is made by the Research Committee. Decisions on admission are made by the Department Board.

### 5. Announcement and admission procedures

The Board of Supervisors at the Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies usually prepares the applications and makes selections. Decisions on the admission of applicants for postgraduate education in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures are made by the Department Board at the Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies. The Department Board cannot delegate to another body decisions concerning admission to doctoral studies. The Department Board can only admit applicants who will be employed as doctoral students.

Decisions on admittance of applicants with private funding to doctoral studies are made by the Board of the Faculty of Humanities.

For further information on how the exemptions according to (HF chap. 7, 37§) the Higher Education Ordinance is applied, reference is made to the Faculty of Humanities' rules for education and examination at postgraduate level.

The Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies announces doctoral positions, doctoral education combined with doctoral employment, normally no more than twice a year and at fixed times:

- Last day of application: 15 April to start the programme on 1 September

- Last day of application: 15 October to start the programme on 1 February

Doctoral positions are announced one month before the last day of application and applied for on Stockholm University's central recruitment system and webpage for [PhD Student Positions](#)

The application must be accompanied by a personal letter, Curriculum vitae, documentation proving general and specific entry requirements, a research plan, written work referred to in the application, and the names and contact information of two reference persons.

#### 5.1 Assessment and selection criteria

Selection from among applicants meeting the requirements set out in section 4 is to be made with reference to their ability to benefit from the programme. The selection is made by the Department Board. The selection is made with regard to the following criteria:

1. Previous education in general. Assessment of both depth and breadth of previous education.
2. Scholarly production. Based on the degree projects from the first and second cycle or other academic papers, the potential of the applicant to benefit from the education. The assessment should also take into consideration the aspect of time, that is, to what extent the applicant has shown the ability to meet his or her previous scholarly obligations within given time constraints. In addition, the extent to which the applicant provides evidence of developing academic proficiency is considered. The scholarly production is judged with regard to critical and analytical ability, independence, and creativity.
3. Research Plan. The applicant must enclose a research plan which should cover the research problem and an outline of the research project. The plan should contain problem formulations and a sketch of the implementation. The research plan is to be assessed according to relevance, originality, and feasibility within given time constraints (that is full-time work during a four-year period of doctoral studies).
4. Availability of supervision.
5. Ability to collaborate. The ability of the applicant to collaborate with others is to be determined by personal references, certificates or interviews.
6. Other. Knowledge and skills in relevant languages. Assessment of the applicant's knowledge and skills in the source language Arabic, which should also be relevant to the research plan, as well as assessment of the applicant's knowledge and skills in English. Feasibility requires that the applicant has sufficient knowledge of at least one of the source languages.

#### 6. Programme content and structure

The doctoral programme in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures consists partly of courses of 60 higher education credits, and partly of a dissertation of 180 higher education credits. 30 higher education credits correspond to one semester of full-time studies.

The programme is planned to cover four academic years of full-time doctoral studies. Students should devote themselves entirely to their studies and use tuition and supervision

efficiently. If a student requests it, they may be employed part-time, but not less than 50 per cent of a full-time employment, i. e. for a maximum period of eight years.

All students admitted to the doctoral level in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures must abide by the current general study plan. Collaborations in the form of cotutelle agreements, doctoral schools or externally funded projects can only affect the progression of studies on the individual level, as provided for by the individual study plan. The details of the studies are noted under 6.3 and in the individual study plan.

### 6.1 Individual study plan

Each active doctoral student in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures must have an individual study plan. The study plan must account for the responsibilities of the university and the student, the funding, and the timeline of the studies. The plan must be approved by the Department Board after consultation with the doctoral student and their supervisors.

The study plan must be revised at least once a year in consultation with the doctoral student and their supervisors and will be adjusted by the university as required.

For further details on the drafting, management, and revision of the individual study plans, please refer to the Higher Education Ordinance chap 6, 29§ and 30§, the Regulations for Doctoral Studies at Stockholm University and the further regulations of the Faculty of Humanities. Instructions and comments on individual study plans at the Faculty of Humanities.

[http://www.su.se/polopoly\\_fs/1.251679.1444659313!/menu/standard/file/Anvisningar%20och%20kommentarer%20till%20ISP-formul%C3%A4r\\_english.pdf](http://www.su.se/polopoly_fs/1.251679.1444659313!/menu/standard/file/Anvisningar%20och%20kommentarer%20till%20ISP-formul%C3%A4r_english.pdf)

### 6.2 Supervision and other resources

At least two supervisors shall be appointed for each doctoral student, one of them being designated as the main supervisor. The doctoral student has a right to supervision during the studies until the completion of their studies, unless the vice-chancellor, with reference to the Higher Education Ordinance (chap. 6, 30§) decides otherwise.

The vice-chancellor may decide that a doctoral student is no longer entitled to supervision and other resources for doctoral studies if they to a considerable extent neglect their responsibilities as these are documented in the individual study plan. Before such a decision is made, the doctoral student and his or her supervisor must be given the opportunity to comment. The evaluation shall be made on the basis of their reports and other investigation that is available. In the assessment, it must be considered whether the university has fulfilled its own commitments according to the individual study plan. The decision must be in writing and justified (HF chap. 6, 30§). A decision on withdrawal of resources according to chap. 6, 30§ of the Higher Education Ordinance may be appealed to the Higher Education Appeals Board (HF chap 12, 2§).

If the resources for the education have been withdrawn in accordance with Chap. 6 §30 of the Higher Education Ordinance, the doctoral student may, upon application to the Vice-Chancellor, regain his or her right to supervision and other resources. The doctoral student must then, by presenting an additional study result of considerable quality and scope or in some other way, make it probable that he or she can fulfill his or her remaining obligations according to the individual study plan (HF chap. 6, 31§).

The Department Board decides on supervisors. The main supervisor must be employed at the department, and normally the other supervisor must also be employed at the department or another department at Stockholm University.

The main supervisor shall provide for the delimitations of the subject of the dissertation in such a way that the doctoral studies can be completed within the specified time of study.

On an annual basis, the supervisor and the doctoral student should review what has been accomplished in relation to the most recent individual study plan and establish a detailed schedule for the following academic year.

The supervision should amount to at least 80 working hours annually for a full-time doctoral student and be divided between the two supervisors. In the case of part-time, the supervision time is adjusted in relation to the degree of activity. The distribution of time between the main supervisor and the supervisor is determined based on the current needs. Supervision time and distribution must be stated in the individual study plan.

Supervision time for supervisors from another higher education institution is determined based on current needs and decisions are made by the Department Board on the recommendation of the Director of Doctoral Studies after consultation with the supervisors.

A doctoral student is allowed to change supervisors on request (HF chap. 6, 28§). The request shall be submitted to the Department Board. The reason for the request does not need to be stated.

In addition to supervision, the doctoral student has the right to a workplace, computer, and office materials.

Activity level and further details regarding supervision and other resources are stated in the individual study plan.

For further information, please refer to <https://www.su.se/staff/organisation-governance/governing-documents-rules-and-regulations/education/admission-regulations-for-third-cycle-study-programmes-1.270190> Stockholm University and Instructions and comments on individual study plans at the Faculty of Humanities. [http://www.su.se/polopoly\\_fs/1.251679.1444659313!/menu/standard/file/Anvisningar%20och%20kommentarer%20till%20ISP-formul%C3%A4r\\_english.pdf](http://www.su.se/polopoly_fs/1.251679.1444659313!/menu/standard/file/Anvisningar%20och%20kommentarer%20till%20ISP-formul%C3%A4r_english.pdf)

### 6.3 Courses and examinations

Course work comprises full-time studies during two semesters, i. e. 60 higher education credits. The courses should be designed to meet the objectives of the programme according to section 3.1 above.

The course part includes elements that are compulsory for all doctoral students, and elements that are chosen by each individual doctoral student in consultation with and after approval by the main supervisor. The courses must be chosen so that they contribute to giving the doctoral student a broad knowledge and a systematic understanding of the research area in an international perspective.

The design, scope and examination form of the courses must be stated in the individual study plan. Course exams are graded either Pass or Fail.

Compulsory courses, 30 higher education credits:

1. Philosophy of the Cultural Sciences, 7.5 ECTS

<https://www.su.se/doctoral-school-in-the-humanities/courses/philosophy-of-the-cultural-sciences-7-5-ects-1.645064>

2. Languages and Cultures in the Middle East and North Africa (7.5 higher education credits)

The purpose of the course is to, depending on the doctoral student's educational background, provide a deep knowledge of the languages and cultures in the region. The content of the course is thus largely determined by the dissertation project but must deal with the region's languages and cultures. The course should also include an overview of the national and international research situation in the relevant area, as well as related issues concerning data search and source material that can be linked to the region.

3. Subject-oriented course 1 (7.5 higher education credits)

The purpose of the course is, considering the study background of the doctoral student, to provide a broadened competence about languages and cultures within the region. The actual content of the course is thus largely determined by the thesis project but must deal with the languages and cultures of the region. The course should also include an overview of the current research situation within the specific field, as well as contain issues pertaining to e.g., data search and source material that can be linked to the region.

4. Subject-oriented course 2 (7.5 higher education credits)

The purpose of the course is, considering the study background of the doctoral student, to provide a broadened competence about languages and cultures within the region. The actual content of the course is thus largely determined by the thesis project but must deal with the languages and cultures of the region. The course should also include an overview of the current research situation within the specific field, as well as contain issues pertaining to e.g., data search and source material that can be linked to the region.

Other courses, 30 higher education credits:

This course component can include courses in other subjects as well as faculty courses in related subjects up to a total of 30 higher education credits. Courses that concern research methodology and theory can also be included here. Other courses must be approved by the main supervisor before they begin. The Faculty of Humanities at Stockholm University offers a number of courses at doctoral level within the framework of the Doctoral School, and this range should be taken into account in connection with the choice of courses.

Doctoral students who teach at the department must have completed or during the same semester started initial higher education pedagogical education or otherwise acquired corresponding knowledge. All doctoral students must be offered higher education pedagogical education as a scored part of the education. A maximum of 7.5 credits of the course part may

refer to higher education pedagogical education. Alternatively, doctoral students can choose to attend higher education pedagogical education within the framework of departmental work (up to 7.5 higher education credits). Which of the alternatives that the doctoral student chooses is decided in consultation with the supervisors and documented in the individual study plan.

#### 6.3.1 Credit transfer

Normally the course work should be implemented within the framework of the doctoral studies. Decisions concerning the transfer of credits from earlier education towards the fulfilment of the degree are made by the Department Board upon request by the doctoral student. Courses that have been included in the fulfilment of the requirements for basic and special eligibility cannot be credited in the doctoral degree.

If the credit is approved by the Department Board, the corresponding time, calculated in weeks, must be deducted from the net study time. A course comprising 7.5 credits corresponds to a reduction of the net study time by five weeks.

#### 6.3.2 Other mandatory elements

As an integral part of the programme, the doctoral student must participate in the department's colloquia and higher seminars throughout the education, and there gradually present the results of his/her research work.

Prior to the dissertation, the dissertation must be reviewed in three seminars during the study period. The first seminar should include a research plan and an approximate timetable (10%) and should be presented within the first year of study. The second seminar, a "mid-seminar", should be held when at least half of the dissertation is completed (50%). The third seminar should be done in a reasonable time before the final seminar and should include a complete analysis and preliminary results (80%). Finally, a final seminar is held with an opponent. Prior to the dissertation, the dissertation must also be reviewed by two researchers in accordance with the department's guidelines for dissertation.

#### 6.4 Doctoral thesis and public defense

The subject for the doctoral thesis is chosen in consultation with the supervisors at the start of the doctoral studies. A point of departure is the research plan the doctoral student submitted in the application for doctoral studies. The dissertation must show the doctoral student's ability to independently solve the chosen research task in a scientifically satisfactory way so that parts of the objectives according to section 3.1 above are met.

The dissertation is to be designed – according to the regulations of the Faculty of Humanities - either as a uniform scholarly work (monograph) or as an assemblage of 3-5 academic papers written by the doctoral student alone or together with another person and with an introductory and concluding framework text (kappa) of these (compilation thesis).

The research task and the results achieved are to be presented in such a way that the thesis (including the sections in the compilation thesis) qualitatively reaches a level commensurable with requirements for acceptance to a scholarly series or peer-reviewed journal.

The dissertation must include studies of source material in the primary language.



The following further requirements must be met for approval of the thesis:

- The thesis is a result of independent scholarship which contributes significantly to the development of knowledge.
- The purpose of the thesis, the research questions and the appropriate methods are clearly specified and motivated.
- The method is applied accurately.
- Previous scholarship is described in such a way that it is clearly separated from the contribution of the doctoral student in the research field.
- The source material is described and the way the material has been delimited is specified and explained.
- The notes, references, tables, and diagrams etc. are accurately employed according to high scholarly standards.
- The thesis is clearly and consistently organized.
- The thesis is acceptable in terms of language use.
- The results achieved are summarized.

#### Further criteria for a compilation thesis

A compilation thesis should consist of 3-5 peer-reviewed academic papers and with an introductory and concluding framework text (kappa) of these. For summary dissertations, all of the above-mentioned articles (three) must have been published or approved for publication in peer-reviewed academic journal. Any articles not yet accepted must be judged to be of such quality that they are considered publishable. The examination takes place through a presentation at a final seminar.

If there are co-authored articles, the doctoral student's own contribution must be clearly distinguishable, and the doctoral student must be the primary author of at least three articles.

The published articles used in the thesis may not be changed in the compilation thesis (except for possible errata). All additions, problematizations and conclusive final discussion must be included in the framework text (kappa).

The framework text (kappa) must be written by the doctoral student themselves. In the framework text (kappa), it must be clearly stated what is the doctoral student's own contribution in the articles and, where applicable, what are the contributions of other authors.

#### Language

A dissertation produced in the doctoral programme in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures must be written in English or Swedish. A doctoral dissertation written in Swedish must contain a summary in English and a dissertation written in English must contain a summary in Swedish.

The summary must be so detailed that a reader without knowledge of the dissertation language must have a clear idea of the purpose and main content of the dissertation, the scientific method used, and the results achieved. References must be made to the various chapters of the dissertation. The doctoral student's main supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the summary is given the prescribed content. Assessment of the summary must be included in the assessment of the entire dissertation when grading. Regardless of the language in which the dissertation is written, a brief summary of the primary language within the dissertation project - Japanese, Chinese, or Korean - must also be included.

Each doctoral dissertation must be accompanied by a brief English-language abstract comprising a maximum of 2 000 characters, including spaces.

The abstract must:

- state the title of the dissertation, the language in which the dissertation is written, the author and the university and department;
- reproduce the content of the dissertation according to the outline problems, methods and results;
- be provided with keywords and other information relevant to literature search in automated information systems

#### Doctoral thesis and public defense

For a doctoral degree in Asian languages and cultures, an approved doctoral dissertation is required, which must be defended orally in a public disputation. The dissertation must be in English or Swedish. A doctoral thesis is examined and defended orally at a public disputation. The examination is led by a specially appointed discussant (opponent) for each dissertation. The thesis and the public defense are assessed by a grading committee appointed specifically for each thesis. At least one person in the grading committee must be from another institute of higher learning.

A doctoral thesis is given either of the grades Pass or Fail. Both the content of the dissertation and the public defense of the dissertation are considered when grading. For further information about the dissertation, please refer to the *Guidelines for Disputation* at the Faculty of Humanities.

#### 7. Transition arrangements

Those admitted to doctoral studies in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures according to an earlier study plan have, after consultation with the main supervisor and the Director of Doctoral Studies, the right to apply to the Department Board to have their studies transferred to and completed according to the now current, revised study plan. The individual study plan must then be updated.

(This is a translation of the Swedish original text.)