

Programme description – PhD in educational sciences and humanities

The PhD programme in educational sciences and humanities encompasses two research disciplines that overlap in some areas, but which also each have their own distinctive characteristics.

Educational sciences has a particular focus on research into childhood and adolescence, learning, teaching, general education and formal education from kindergarten through to higher education, and encompasses disciplines such as pedagogy, didactics, special education, sociology, psychology and history.

The humanities focuses on research into expressions of the human mind and human society and culture in the broadest sense, both past and present, and includes disciplines such as history, religious studies, literature and languages. The PhD programme thus allows for both in-depth, specialised research within one of these areas and interdisciplinary investigations that traverse traditional boundaries.

Name of the course of study

The Norwegian name of the course of study is *Ph.d. i utdanningsvitenskap og humaniora*.

The English name is *PhD in Educational Sciences and Humanities*.

Degree

A *philosophiae doctor (PhD)* degree is conferred based on approved completion of the required coursework (the research training component), a PhD thesis, a trial lecture and public defence of the thesis.

Credits

The PhD programme comprises 180 credits. The individual education plan or progress plan must be organised such that the PhD programme is planned to be completed within the standard time frame of three years (not including any statutory leaves of absence).

Faculty

The Faculty of Arts and Education

Target group

The study programme is aimed at well-qualified candidates in relevant fields who wish to qualify for the highest level of education in this/these field(s).

Admission requirements

The general conditions for admission are set out in section 2-1 of the University of Stavanger's PhD Regulations. In addition, the following requirements apply to admission to the PhD programme in educational sciences and humanities:

- Grade B or better in weighted average from the (last) 2 years of the master's degree (normally 120 credits)
- The master's thesis (normally 20-30 credits/60-80 pages) must have a grade of B or better

In addition to the formal qualifications, importance will be attached to the quality of the proposed PhD project and relevant academic work.

Applicants who do not meet these formal criteria may exceptionally be admitted upon an overall and separate assessment of alternative, comparable basis for admission. For example, peer-reviewed publications in recent years, more recently completed courses at master's level, as well as the supervisor's documented success to help the PhD candidates finish the PhD degree can be given weight in such assessments. If necessary, it can be specified how the department/centre will follow up the PhD candidate and thereby ensure completion.

Content of the study programme

The training component of the doctoral programme shall support the work on the thesis and ensure breadth and depth in the academic and scientific education.

The PhD education mainly consists of active research work under academic supervision and includes:

- An approved research training component
- A thesis based on independent research work in active collaboration with academic supervisors and other researchers
- Collaboration with relevant research communities, in Norway and abroad
- Research dissemination related to the ongoing doctoral work

The thesis

The thesis must be an independent piece of work in accordance with international standards within the field of study. This presupposes a high academic level in terms of formulation of the research question, conceptual clarity, methodological stringency, theoretical reflection and empirical foundation, documentation, analysis, and presentation. The thesis must demonstrate how it relates critically to current national and international research in all these areas, and that it is at the forefront of the knowledge within the field. The thesis must contribute towards new academic knowledge and be at a level that warrants publication as part of the academic literature in the discipline.

The thesis must have a summary (abstract) at the beginning that gives a detailed account of the basis, approach, and cohesiveness of the thesis, as well as the main findings, and that situates the work in relation to international research in the field. The thesis may be written as either a monograph or an article-based compendium. The article-based thesis must begin with a synopsis (an introductory section called the "*kappe*").

In the "*kappe*", the candidate must explain the connection between the articles and provide an account of the background to the project and results of the work as a whole. Here, the research questions, results and conclusions from the articles must be presented in a way that demonstrates how the content of the work together constitutes a cohesive whole. Any ethical challenges or aspects encountered in the thesis work must also be discussed in the "*kappe*". Regardless of the thesis

containing one or more articles written by the candidate in collaboration with others (co-authors), the candidate must always be the sole author of the “*kappe*”.

The thesis may be presented in a different form (e.g., sound, images, video, electronic forms of presentation). In this case, the theoretical and methodological basis of the work will not be apparent from the product itself, and the thesis must therefore also have an additional part, where the candidate provides a written account of the research question, the choice of theory and methods, and an assessment of the results in relation to international standards and the academic level within the field. Reference is made to the University of Stavanger’s PhD Regulations.

The training component

The training component must contain the academic and methodological training that is necessary for the work on the thesis. All PhD subjects offered by the faculty must fulfill the expectations set out in the national qualifications framework's descriptions for level 8. The faculty's doctoral committee has the overall responsibility for ensuring that the PhD program offers a wide range of PhD topics that are updated regularly. The training part within the PhD education must amount to at least 30 credits, which are distributed as follows:

- Philosophy of science and research ethics, at least 10 credits
- Research methods, at least 5 credits
- Elective methodological and/or thematic courses, 15 credits

In addition, all candidates must participate in an introductory seminar and a submission seminar and must, in accordance with section 5-2 of the Regulations for the PhD degree at the University of Stavanger, undergo a mid-term evaluation in the third or fourth semester.

Philosophy of science and ethics: The University of Stavanger offers PhD courses in the philosophy of science and research ethics that constitute the necessary number of credits.

Research methods: The University of Stavanger offers a variety of PhD courses in both quantitative and qualitative methods, research design and other specific methods. The candidates choose which courses are best suited to them in consultation with their academic supervisor.

Elective courses: These must be accredited courses at the PhD level that are relevant to the candidate’s project and can be taken at either the University of Stavanger or partner institutions and research schools. Many of these are courses on specific topics that will both help ensure the quality of the thesis work and that the candidate acquires solid knowledge about research and theoretical perspectives within their field of research.

If necessary, more loosely organised courses, called “self-study courses” (“*lesekurs*”), can be organised, where one or a handful of PhD candidates set up their own specialised syllabus and then document their knowledge of this to the person(s) responsible for the course. A separate course description must be prepared for self-study courses, explaining the content, learning outcomes and form of assessment, and must be approved by the dean, on par with all the other PhD courses.

External PhD courses: PhD courses and seminars offered at other PhD accredited educational institutions that award credits may, on application to the faculty, be approved as part of the research training component.

Research dissemination

In order to be permitted to take the doctoral examination, PhD candidates must document that they have been involved in some form of academic dissemination, such as a series of lectures or seminars, popular science works (media articles, popularised articles, lectures, etc.), and/or presentations at national or international conferences. The dissemination activities can be linked to work on compulsory assignments in the research training component or to the work on the thesis. The content of a candidate's dissemination activities must be approved by their academic supervisor in connection with the candidate applying for approval of the completed training part.

Learning outcomes

The objective of the PhD programme is for the candidate to carry out an independent piece of research work (or combined research and development work) and complete an academic thesis of high quality. In addition, the PhD candidate shall receive solid training in theory and methodology that provides depth and breadth in their own research project, and which anchors the project in a broader educational scientific framework.

Descriptions of learning outcomes

Having completed and passed the study programme, the candidate will possess the following learning outcomes:

Knowledge

The candidate will ...

- Be in the forefront of knowledge in their specific field within educational sciences and humanities and master the field's scientific theory and methods.
- Be able to assess the appropriateness and the use of different methods and analysis strategies/processes in their specific subject area and field of research.
- Be able to contribute to the development of new knowledge, new theories, methods, interpretations and forms of documentation within their subject area.

Skills

The candidate will ...

- Be able to formulate research questions and plan research and scientific development.
- Be able to carry out research and academic development work at a high international level.
- Be able to deal with complex academic issues and critically analyse and challenge established knowledge and research practices within educational sciences and humanities.

General competencies

The candidate will ...

- Be able to identify ethical issues and perform their research with academic integrity.

- Be able to participate in complex academic and/or multidisciplinary work tasks and projects.
- Be able to communicate research and development work and participate in debates in the field in national and international forums.
- Be able to assess the need for, initiate and drive innovation.

Relevance for working life

The doctoral degree in educational science and humanities qualifies for research activities at a high professional and academic level, and for other work in society that requires both analytical competence and social understanding and where it is necessary to master scientific methods of working and scientific insights.

The degree further qualifies for research, teaching, development, supervision and dissemination at universities and university colleges, and at other public and private institutions.

Structure of the programme

The PhD programme comprises various activities (courses and coursework requirements), distributed over the three years. In the text below, the activities are presented in their normal order.

- The final plan for the doctoral education must be approved and specified in a contract at the latest three months after admission (cf. section 1-3 (8) of the Regulations on terms and conditions of employment for research fellows (etc.)).
- A compulsory introductory seminar will be held in the first semester.
- Courses that make up the research training component are usually taken within the first three semesters.
- Dissemination activities can take place throughout the entire PhD period.
- A mid-term evaluation is held in the third or fourth semester.
- The last semesters are spent working on the thesis.

Coursework requirements

1. Approved revised project and individual education plan (PhD plan)
2. Completed mid-term evaluation
3. Annual progress reporting

Each year the candidate and academic supervisor must submit a progress report (see section 5-1 of the PhD Regulations). The reports are discussed in the doctoral committee. In the event of poor progress and/or deviation from the approved project and individual education plan (including the research training component), the doctoral committee may request additional information and/or conduct follow-up interviews with the candidate (by the vice-dean or academic supervisor), a midterm seminar, etc.

4. Completed research training component (30 credits)

- Introductory seminar (0 credits)
- PhD course in philosophy of science and research ethics (minimum 10 credits)
- Methodology course (minimum 5 credits)
- Candidates choose courses that cover the research methods they will use in their thesis work
- Elective courses (15 credits within methodology and/or thematic courses)
- Submission seminar

5. Documented research dissemination

Presentations at (national and/or international) conferences, series of lectures or seminars and, as applicable, popular science works

6. Stays abroad

Whilst not an absolute requirement, it is recommended to spend a period of at least three months overseas

Forms of examination and/or assessment

The individual course descriptions state how the PhD course or seminar will be evaluated (cf. the Regulation concerning Studies and Examinations at the University of Stavanger).

The thesis can consist of a monograph, or a compendium of articles accompanied by an introductory summary text, called the “*kappe*”, providing an account of the background, research question, theory, methodical approach, and ethical assessments, such that the thesis clearly appears to be a cohesive whole.

The faculty appoints an expert committee consisting of at least three members who will assess the thesis, the defence, and the trial lecture. The committee is composed such that both sexes are represented. At least one of its members shall not be affiliated with the University of Stavanger, and at least one of its members shall be affiliated with a foreign research institution. All the members must have a PhD or equivalent qualifications.

The PhD degree is conferred based on:

- I. An approved academic thesis
- II. Approved completion of the required coursework, including the training component
- III. An approved trial lecture on an assigned topic
- IV. Satisfactory defence of the thesis in a public defence (“disputation”)

Working and teaching methods

Independent work is the primary way of working in a PhD study. The candidates in the program will

relate to active learning environments, organized as research groups/environments, strategic program areas for research or the like. For doctoral candidates whose main affiliation is at an external institution, an agreement must be entered into between the degree awarding institution (UiS) and the cooperating institution/enterprise that regulates the candidate's working conditions and thereby ensures participation in an active research environment (cf. PhD regulations).

The forms of work and requirements in the individual PhD courses are determined by the course coordinator and must be approved by the Faculty of Arts and Education. The teaching premises must meet the University of Stavanger's and Statsbygg's standards in respect of accessibility and universal design.

Internationalisation

The PhD programme enables and encourages PhD students to spend at least three months of their study time at a recognised foreign educational or research institution where they can work on issues related to their research work and/or the thesis.

It is expected that the candidate's PhD supervisor(s) and/or the closest academic community and colleagues contribute with suggestions to relevant destinations, researchers, and institutions. If it is not possible to arrange such a stay, the faculty may approve other arrangements that ensure the PhD candidate gains deeper insight into and gets in contact with (alternative) academic/research environments and traditions related to the issues addressed in the thesis (cf. section 4-2 of the PhD Regulations).

Language of instruction

Teaching and academic supervision will be in Norwegian or English.

The thesis ought preferably to be written in Norwegian or English (Danish and Swedish are also accepted). If the candidate wants to submit their thesis in another language, or in two different languages, this must be stated in the revised PhD plan and will be assessed separately.

The trial lecture and public defence will normally be held in the language of the thesis. If the candidate wishes to use a different language during the trial lecture and public defence, this must be stated and justified when applying to have the thesis assessed for the degree PhD.

Quality assurance and evaluation of the programme

The PhD in educational sciences and humanities is covered by the University's quality system.

Compulsory activities to assess the quality and progress of doctoral projects:

1. Assessment of the project description in connection with approval of a revised project and individual education plan (final PhD plan)
2. Assessment of the status of the project and/or research process half-way through the work on the thesis, in the form of a mid-term evaluation

- 3. Annual progress reporting
- 4. Regular evaluation of PhD courses

The PhD administration summarises the feedback from the participants on a course and from the people with academic responsibility for the course and submits a written report to the doctoral committee, addressed to the academic leader. The evaluation forms the basis for annual revision of the portfolio of courses.

A programme report is written every year. The programme report is incorporated into the faculty's quality report.

Within the programme, PhD candidates must normally be represented on the committees that work on issues pertaining to the research training programme. In addition, the doctoral committee at the faculty has a representative for the PhD candidates.

From 2018, the Department of Research at the University of Stavanger conducts an annual (online) survey where PhD candidates who have completed their doctoral study are given the opportunity to comment on matters related to general satisfaction, working conditions, academic supervision, research environment, mobility (stays abroad), the research training component and the PhD courses on offer, achievement, motivation, and career plans. The candidates also answer questions on whether they have experienced situations that were challenging in terms of research ethics.

An annual academic report is prepared for the doctoral committee based on these reports, evaluations, and assessments.

Overview of the course of the study programme

The PhD programme includes various activities (courses and coursework requirements), distributed over the three years, as shown in the table below.

	1st academic year/semester		2nd academic year		3rd academic year	
	1	2	3	4	5	6
The research process	Revision of project description		Midway evaluation			
Seminars	Introductory seminar					Submission seminar
Compulsory courses and seminars	Philosophy of science + research ethics					
Elective methodology and/or thematic courses	←————→					
Research dissemination		←.....→				→
Work on the thesis		←————→				

Credits

Courses that result in credits normally require written documentation in the form of a paper and/or the equivalent. The table below is only a guide and indicates a suggested correlation between the number of teaching days, required reading, documentation, and credits.

Days of teaching	Suggested scope of literature	Course with documentation: Number of pages in paper	Total amount of work	No. of credits
1 day course	100–150 pages	2–3 pages	25–30 working hours = 4 days' work	1 credit
2 days	200–300 pages	3–5 pages	About 8 days' work	2 credits
3 days	300–400 pages	5–7 pages	About 12 days' work	3 credits
4 days	400–500 pages	7–10 pages	About 16 days' work (just over 3 weeks)	4 credits
etc.				

According to the guidelines from Universities Norway (UHR) and the International ECTS scale, one credit equals a normal workload of between 25 and 30 hours of work. In addition, reference is made to section 3.8 of the Norwegian Universities and University Colleges Act, which states that the academic year is normally 10 months (approx. 40 weeks or approx. 1500 hours, and 37.5 hours per week) and that a full academic year must be equivalent to 60 credits. The most common form of documentation is an academic text or “paper”.