

Design

/Design/

SCB code: 60416

1 General description of the research area

The purpose of design is to explore and evaluate possible futures and to contribute to the realization of the more desirable ones, both large and small, through the creation of material and immaterial artefacts. Design practice incorporates perspectives from technology and materials, form and experience, engineering and craft, values and ethics. In design, various competencies, stakeholder groups, values, and goals intersect. Design is both a social and a material practice.

Design research encompasses the systematic production of knowledge about design concepts and design processes, knowledge to support design practice, and knowledge produced through design practice. Design is a multidisciplinary research field connected to computer and information science (e.g., human–computer interaction), mechanical engineering (e.g., production engineering, work science and ergonomics), and other engineering and natural science research fields. The field is influenced by perspectives and methods from, and includes interdisciplinary research in, the social sciences (e.g., human interaction with ICT, environmental studies within the social sciences, technology and society), the humanities (e.g., history of technology and the environment, history of ideas and learning), and the arts (e.g., architecture and art history). The research area is developing rapidly, and a growing core of its own concepts and research methods is emerging.

PhD studies in design provide the skills to independently develop conceptual, methodological, and practical contributions to the academic field of design research and to the broader design practice. Multidisciplinary academic work is a central part of the education, contributing to questioning and refining the boundaries and norms of design practice.

2 Eligibility requirements and selection

The basic eligibility requirements as well as the general principles for selection are specified in the faculty's *Study Handbook for PhD Studies*.

2.1 Specific eligibility requirements

Admission to PhD studies in the research area of Design requires completion of courses of at least 60 ECTS at the advanced level in design or an area related to the subject of the PhD studies, including an independent project (degree project or master's thesis) of at least 30 ECTS, or equivalent knowledge and skills.

3 Degree

PhD studies in Design lead to a Degree of Doctor or a Degree of Licentiate. The latter degree can also serve as a stage in the PhD studies. The Degree of Licentiate comprises 120 ECTS, of which the licentiate thesis corresponds to 60–80 ECTS, and courses of 40–60 ECTS, of which at least 34 ECTS must be at PhD level. The Degree of Doctor comprises 240 ECTS, of which the doctoral thesis corresponds to 150–180 ECTS, and courses of 60–90 ECTS, of which at least 45 ECTS must be at PhD level.

4 Goals and implementation of the PhD studies

The general goals and objectives of PhD studies are specified in the introduction to the faculty's *Study Handbook for PhD Studies*, as well as in the Higher Education Ordinance (reprinted in the *Study Handbook's* appendix A).

PhD studies in Design aim to provide the PhD student with the necessary knowledge and skills to fulfil all required degree outcomes. The studies consist of research and thesis work, courses, participation in seminars, participation in national and international conferences, participation in exhibitions and workshops, and collaboration with industry, government agencies, organisations and civil society.

The overarching aims of the PhD studies in Design are to prepare the PhD student for respectful collaboration within research groups and active participation in the scholarly community of the field, to represent academic values, and to understand the role of research in society and the relationship between scientific knowledge and societal and industrial challenges.

PhD studies in Design contribute to fulfilling the degree outcomes of the Higher Education Ordinance in the following ways:

- The PhD student acquires broad knowledge and understanding of the research area by, for example, attending breadth-oriented PhD courses, collaborating with other research environments, and teaching within the subject.
- The PhD student acquires in-depth knowledge and understanding of the research area, particularly within the thesis area, by attending advanced PhD courses, conducting independent research in one or more projects, and participating in advanced discussions at seminars and conferences.
- The PhD student develops familiarity with scientific methodology by attending PhD courses in research methodology and by planning, conducting and reflecting on his/her own research.
- The PhD student develops skills and abilities within the research area by planning and conducting research, communicating research results in national and international forums, participating in discussion and reflection on his/her own and others' research, contributing to peer review and organisation of academic events, and by regularly reflecting on his/her own learning process.
- The PhD student develops judgement and a professional scholarly approach by attending courses in ethics, participating in reflective discussions at seminars and conferences, and by demonstrating intellectual independence through writing and defending the thesis.

The studies provide the PhD student with an enhanced understanding of the potential of science to contribute to sustainable societal development. This is achieved through the faculty-wide course requirements as well as through participation in ongoing discussions, such as research seminars, and through reflection on the sustainability aspects of the PhD student's own research.

4.1 Thesis

The overall rules regarding the format, submission and grading of a thesis can be found in the faculty's *Study Handbook for PhD Studies*.

A doctoral or licentiate thesis in Design may be either a monograph or a compilation thesis. A compilation thesis consists of a summary (kappa) and a set of articles. In both formats, the overall scientific contribution is assessed, and in both cases the requirement is that the thesis contains scientific contributions that meet the standards for publication in established scientific forums.

A compilation thesis for the Degree of Doctor in Design typically includes four articles and a summary, where most articles should be accepted for publication in established scientific journals, conferences, books or other recognised forums, and the remaining articles are expected to meet reasonable requirements for acceptance.

A compilation thesis for the Degree of Licentiate in Design typically includes two articles and a summary, where at least one article has been accepted for publication, and the remaining article(s) are expected to meet reasonable requirements for acceptance.

4.2 Individual study plan

An individual study plan will be formulated for each PhD student. The detailed planning of courses and other components will be conducted in consultation with the supervisor and documented in the individual study plan (see *Study Handbook for PhD Studies*, section 5.3). The study plan should be established within one month after admission to PhD studies, and it should be revised at least once a year.

4.3 Supervision

The general regulations for supervision can be found in the *Study Handbook for PhD Studies*, section 4, and in the faculty's policy for supervision of PhD studies.

4.4 Courses

4.4.1 Faculty course requirements

Scientific theory, methodology, ethics, gender equality and sustainability

All PhD students admitted should complete mandatory courses as decided by the faculty in Scientific theory, methodology, ethics, gender equality and sustainability, or be deemed to have equivalent competencies, in order to receive a degree.

Pedagogic studies

All PhD students who teach should complete a basic course in pedagogy. At least 3 ECTS from this course should be included in the PhD studies, and any remaining credits should be counted as departmental duties (see *Study Handbook for PhD Studies*, section 5.5).

4.4.2 Subject related courses

The PhD student is recommended to take the course *Introduction to PhD Studies in Design* early in the programme. The PhD student is further recommended to take *Design Research Methodologies* and *Contemporary Themes in Design Research*.

4.4.3 Other subject-specific courses

The following components are mandatory in the PhD studies in Design: a start seminar, a half-term seminar or a licentiate seminar, and a final seminar. To reach 60% completion, a PhD student must have completed a half-term seminar or obtained a licentiate degree.

4.4.4 Accreditation

Accreditation of course credits is regulated by the *Study Handbook for PhD studies*, section 5.6.

5 Other information

5.1 Transitional provisions

Changes to the general study syllabus do not apply to those who have already been admitted to PhD studies in the research area. A change to the new general study syllabus may however be approved if both the main supervisor and the PhD student agree. In such a case, this should be documented in the individual study plan.

6 Commencement

1. The General study plan comes into force 01 11 2025.