

Licentiate seminar instructions

General information

In Sweden, a licentiate thesis is the result of at least two years of supervised research.

The thesis can be written either as a monograph (a coherent piece of work) or as a compilation thesis (a summary of research articles or book chapters that the doctoral student has written alone or co-authored). The doctoral student's own contribution to the different parts of a compilation thesis must be clearly distinguishable. The articles and summarising chapter must be of such quality that they meet the scholarly and formal criteria for publication in recognised international research journals.

In Sweden, the author of a licentiate thesis must defend their thesis at a licentiate seminar.

Any concerns that arise before the seminar must be addressed to the principal supervisor. These may have to do with, for example, the quality of the thesis, indications of potential plagiarism, or uncertainty regarding the doctoral student's own contribution to the articles. In some cases, it may be necessary to postpone the seminar.

The thesis is made available three weeks before the seminar, and both the external reviewer and the examiner receive one hard copy by post and one electronic copy by email.

Licentiate seminar procedures and guidelines

The licentiate seminar is led by a chair. The seminar begins with the chair presenting the author of the thesis, the external reviewer, and the examiner. The chair then gives the floor to the author, who is given the opportunity to correct any errors detected after the printing of the thesis. This initial part of the seminar should take no more than 5 minutes.

The author of the thesis then gives the floor to the external reviewer, who gives a summary of the thesis. This should take about 20 minutes.

Next, the external reviewer initiates a discussion of the thesis. The external reviewer's primary role is to lead the public discussion of the scholarly aspects of the thesis, drawing attention to both its strengths and its weaknesses. It is important that the author of the thesis should be given time to respond and otherwise take part in the discussion. It is essential that all parts of the thesis should be reviewed (introduction, purpose, background, theory, method/analysis, results, and discussion). The relationship between the different parts must also be considered. Particular attention should be paid to whether and how the thesis contributes to research in the field. Needless to say, the focus must be on the scholarly quality of the thesis. It is, however, also important to consider its communicative aspects.

In total, the discussion of the thesis takes about 1.5 hours.

The external reviewer concludes the discussion with an overall assessment (5–10 minutes) of the thesis, summarising its strengths without indicating whether a passing grade will be awarded, as this is for the examiner to decide.

The seminar ends with an open and public discussion of the thesis where the audience are invited to ask questions. Preferably, this part of the seminar should take no more than 10–15 minutes.

The public discussion and examination of the thesis should preferably provide the examiner with answers to the following questions:

- Is the problem studied relevant?
- Were appropriate methods used?
- Are the results presented in a satisfactory way?
- Are the references cited correctly?
- Do the results presented justify the conclusions?

The chair closes the seminar. The entire procedure usually takes 2 hours, but there is no minimum or maximum time limit. It is important to take the time needed for a proper discussion of the scholarly aspects of the thesis.

Assessment

After the seminar, the chair, external reviewer, and examiner gather for a meeting. The chair of the seminar is also the chair of this meeting. The examiner decides who else may be present during the meeting and which of those present are entitled to participate in the deliberations. The examiner determines the thesis grade. The thesis is assessed as Pass or Fail. The assessment must be based on the requirements for a licentiate degree. Both the content and the defence of the thesis must be considered.

HLK's research coordinator provides a template for the licentiate seminar minutes. The examiner signs the grade decision. The minutes are submitted to the research coordinator, who forwards them to the registrar for registration.

The examiner announces the thesis grade to the author of the thesis in public. The examiner also conveys the main comments from the grading meeting to the author.