

P000170, Preparing to finalise the doctoral thesis and its kappa, 3.0 Hp

Syllabus

Finalized by: Finalized by: Jens Rommel, 2026-02-05, 2026-02-05

Level within study regulation:

Third cycle

Grading scale:

Pass / Failed

Course language:

Swedish

Entry requirements:

Registered as a doctoral student at SLU. The focus is on social sciences (including but not limited to Economics). The course is designed to be relevant for doctoral students who are beyond the half-time seminar.

Objectives:

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- Critically appraise the qualities of alternative research approaches within their field, and justify their own choices among them.
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of alternative research designs within their field, and critically reflect on their own research design.
- Identify ethical challenges arising in their own research and be able to account for their treatment in doctoral research.

- Reason for and critically reflect on the contribution to knowledge of their own doctoral research.
- Plan an effective thesis argument and corresponding structure.

Content:

This course explores the challenges of writing the summarising chapter (“kappa”) for a compilation thesis, and considers how to prepare to write it. The course clarifies the purpose of the kappa, and the significance of its strong unifying narrative.

The unifying role of the thesis narrative is considered in the context of the whole PhD research process, emphasising how it integrates the research design, gathers the main elements of research activity and outputs together, clarifies the scholarly contribution, and establishes the line of argument that this contribution relies on. The course also addresses how the thesis narrative responds to formal requirements, and how it anticipates the PhD assessment and defence.

Emphasis is placed on the relations between the kappa structure and narrative, the underlying research design, and the constituent papers. The course contents are also designed to be largely relevant for those preparing a monograph thesis.

The course is built around the work in progress of the participating doctoral students and is divided into three elements:

- **Individual preparation**, including two exercises exploring the potential argument and structure of the thesis, background reading on doctoral thesis writing, and submission of a draft thesis outline.
- **Classroom teaching block (4 days / 20 hours)**, adopting an interactive workshop format with presentations, small group and plenary discussions, collaborative exercises, and contributions from experienced supervisors and recently graduated doctoral researchers.
- **Individual and some peer-group follow-up work**, including an online tutorial with the course leader.

Participants are encouraged to consult with their supervisors throughout the course period.

Modes of assessment:

To pass the course, all of the following elements must be completed:

- Submission of a working draft kappa outline and completion of two associated exercises before the classroom block.
- Active participation in the classroom sessions.
- Attendance at an individual tutorial, including a brief oral presentation on how the student has identified and engaged with key challenges in establishing the argument and contribution of their own thesis.
- If a student has failed an examination, the examiner has the right to issue supplementary assignments. This applies if it is possible and there are grounds to do so.
- The examiner can provide an adapted assessment to students entitled to study support for students with disabilities following a decision by the university. Examiners may also issue an adapted examination or provide an alternative way for the students to take the exam.
- If this syllabus is withdrawn, SLU may introduce transitional provisions for examining students admitted based on this syllabus and who have not yet passed the course.
- For the assessment of an independent project (degree project), the examiner may also allow a student to add supplemental information after the deadline for submission. Read more in the Education Planning and Administration Handbook.

Organisation:

Department of Economics

Supplementary information**Other information:**

- The right to participate in teaching and/or supervision only applies for the course instance the student was admitted to and registered on.
- If there are special reasons, students are entitled to participate in components with compulsory attendance when the course is given again. Read more in the Education Planning and Administration Handbook.