Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

SLUkurs

Rural Development and Natural Resource Management - Master´s Programme

Version 1. Is valid between autumn 2007 and spring 2010

Programme code:
NM009

Scope:
120 ECTS

Level affiliation:
2 - Second cycle

Degree
Degree of Master of Science

Responsibe faculty:
Faculty of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences

Appendices

- Appendix for students admitted in the autumn 2007
- Appendix for students admitted in the autumn 2008
- Appendix for students admitted in the autumn 2009

1. Decision

The Board of the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) decided on 12-13 June 2006 to establish a Rural Development and Natural Resource Management – Master's programme.

The programme syllabus was approved by the Faculty Board at the Faculty of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences in 3 May 2007, to be valid from the 2007/2008 academic year. The syllabus has then been revised on 24 September, 5 November and 17 December 2007. Further revised 24 March 2010.

Students who have fulfilled all the requirements for a degree on the Rural Development and Natural Resource Management – Master's programme, corresponding to 120 credits, will be awarded the Degree Master of Science (120 credits) with a major in Rural development. The programme has the following programme code: NM009.

2. Prior knowledge and other requirements

2.1 Previous studies
Admission to the Rural development and natural resource management – Master's programme requires a first-cycle qualification comprising 180 credits and specialised studies comprising 90 credits within one of the following subjects/disciplinary domains:
- natural sciences
- social sciences

Applicants with the corresponding qualifications obtained by means of a degree from another country, or with the corresponding knowledge obtained in some other way, may also be regarded as fulfilling the specific entry requirements.

The applicant must further have a level of English equivalent to upper secondary school English B An applicant with a first-cycle qualification from SLU comprising 180 credits automatically fulfils this requirement. Special rules apply for applicants with qualifications from one of the Nordic countries and some English-speaking countries.

Specific requirements apply for admission to the various individual courses included in the programme.

3. Intended learning outcomes

3.1 General learning outcomes
According to the Swedish Higher Education Act, Chapter 1, Section 9 (Högskolelagen 1 kap, 9 §)
"Second-cycle courses and study programmes shall be based fundamentally on the knowledge acquired by students during first-cycle courses and study programmes, or its equivalent.

Second-cycle courses and study programmes shall involve the acquisition of specialist knowledge, competence and skills in relation to first-cycle courses and study programmes, and in addition to the requirements for first-cycle courses and study programmes shall:

- further develop the ability of students to integrate and make autonomous use of their knowledge
- develop the students´ ability to deal with complex phenomena, issues and situations, and
- develop the students´ potential for professional activities that demand considerable autonomy, or for research and development work. Ordinance (2006:173)."

3.2 Specific learning outcomes for a Degree of Master Science (120 credits)
The student must achieve the following learning outcomes, in accordance with the supplement to the Ordinance for Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU):

Knowledge and understanding
For a Master of Science (120 credits) students must
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding in the main field of study, including both broad knowledge of the field and a considerable degree of specialised knowledge of certain areas of the field, as well as deeper insight into current research and development work; and
- demonstrate specialised methodological knowledge in the main field of study.

Competence and skills
For a Master of Science (120 credits) students must
- demonstrate an ability to critically and systematically integrate knowledge and to analyse, assess and deal with complex phenomena, issues and situations, even when limited information is available;
- demonstrate an ability to critically, independently and creatively identify and formulate issues and to plan and, using appropriate methods, carry out advanced tasks within specified time limits, so as to contribute to the development of knowledge, and to evaluate this work;
- demonstrate an ability to clearly present and discuss their conclusions and the knowledge and arguments behind them, in dialogue with different groups, orally and in writing, in both national and international contexts; and
- demonstrate the skills required to participate in research and development work or to work independently in other advanced contexts.

Judgement and approach
For a Master of Science (120 credits) students must
- demonstrate an ability to make assessments in their main field of study, taking into account relevant scientific, social and ethical aspects, and demonstrate an awareness of ethical aspects of research and development work;
- demonstrate insight into the potential and limitations of science, its role in society and people's responsibility for how it is used; and
- demonstrate an ability to identify their need of further knowledge and to take responsibility for developing their knowledge.

3.3 Detailed learning outcomes for Rural Development and Natural Resource Management – Master's programme

Within the general objectives of a Master of Science (120 credits), SLU has specified the following learning outcomes for Rural Development and natural resource management – Master's programme

Knowledge and understanding
For a Master of Science (120 credits) degree students must
- show a level of knowledge and understanding in rural development and natural resource management, necessary to work confidently and responsibly as, for example, policy advisor or researcher in the field of rural development and natural resource management,
- demonstrate an understanding of how theoretical and analytical concepts, used in sociology, political sciences and agroecology, can be related to rural development and natural resource management,
- demonstrate an understanding of how knowledge of different scientific disciplines can be used for an integrated analysis of local and global rural contexts,
- demonstrate knowledge about potential employment market in RD-NRM,
- demonstrate specialised knowledge of: (1) Rural Development and Change, and (2) Agro-systems and Integrated Natural Resource Management,
- demonstrate knowledge of relevant and current research in rural development and natural resource management, which provides opportunities to succeed in graduate studies
- demonstrate their ability, both analytically and practically, in facilitating and managing rural development projects and performing scientific research within the field of rural development and natural resource management,

Competence and skills
For a Master of Science (120 credits) students must
- identify and describe the complex, integrated socio-economical and ecological contexts of rural development and natural resource management, using relevant theoretical and analytical concepts,
- identify and formulate critical and relevant questions for scientific research and analysis,
- apply different advanced research methods for scientific analysis,
- professionally use relevant tools and methods for project management and facilitation of negotiation and communication processes,
- demonstrate an ability to evaluate their work,
- demonstrate an ability to speak and write about rural development with different target groups
- demonstrate an ability to explain and discuss their conclusions and knowledge and the arguments that form the basis for these, and
- Demonstrate the skills required to participate in research and development work

or to work independently in other advanced contexts

Judgement and approach
For a Master of Science (120 credits) students must
- Demonstrate an ability to make judgments, taking into account relevant scientific, environmental, ethical and societal aspects
- contribute to the scientific advancement of rural development and natural resource management by applying their knowledge and responding to questions
- be conscious of other values, cultures, knowledge systems, institutions and social traditions,
- demonstrate insight about the possibilities and limitations in science, and its role in the sustainable use of biological natural resources
- demonstrate an understanding of and articulate an approach that is based on objective criticism, tolerance, realism, prudence and insight into people's responsibility for how science is used
- demonstrate an ability to value their own competence in relation to the needs of the labor market and take responsibility for developing their knowledge.

4. Possibilities for further study

A student who has completed Rural Development and natural resource management – Master's programme with a Master of Science (120 credits) meets the special entry requirements for admission to further studies at the third-cycle level at SLU.

Which third-cycle subject areas are available at the Faculty of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences is specified in a supplement to the programme syllabus approved by the study programme board.

Master of Science (60 credits)
The programme also allows for the awarding of a Master of Science (60 credits) after one year of studies, including an independent project comprising 15 credits. A Master of Science (60 credits) corresponds to the general entry requirements for further studies at the third-cycle level at SLU.

5. Content and outline

5.1 Courses
Courses included in the Rural Development and Natural Resource Management – Master's programme are approved by the study programmes board. They are presented in a supplement to the programme syllabus which also contains descriptions of the programme's structure (framework timetable). The intended learning outcomes and course content are presented in the course syllabus for each course. For the independent project (degree project) there are special instructions, which are approved by the study programmes board.

5.2 Outline

Rural Development and Natural Resource Management

The programme offers students both theoretical and experience-based knowledge to be able to work internationally within academic spheres, projects and programmes concerned with the development and management of rural areas. The programme is organised around two themes: (1) Rural Development and Change, and (2) Agrosystems and Integrated Natural Resource Management. These themes comprise introductory and advanced courses, offering students a broad understanding of rural development and change as well as more specialised knowledge of its different dimensions. Students will be trained in analytical thinking and practical application, in facilitating and managing rural development projects and they will be equipped with tools for conducting scientific research.

Rural Development and Change

This theme comprises the study of socio-political dynamics of rural development. It forms an inquiry into the possibilities for collective action, necessary for the sustainable management of natural resources. It investigates how control and access over natural resources are collectively organised, and questions how people make decisions and subsequently act, based on their identity, community and other social institutions. The theme examines how formal and informal institutions of management have developed and how they function. To understand these functions and their implications sociological, developmental and political theories dealing with e.g. communication, power inequality, social deprivation, social movements and democratic decision making are utilized. Students will also be trained in how to apply their knowledge in real-life rural settings.

Agrosystems and natural resource management

Farming and food production are ecologically, economically and socially important in all societies. Worldwide there is a need for academic experts that can deal with land use systems that are complex, multifunctional and rapidly changing. This theme investigates the social, economic and environmental barriers and opportunities for sustainable agricultural production, including activities in the production of livestock, forestry products, food crops, fisheries and non-commercial ecosystem services. Some examples of subjects taken up within this theme are: agronomy in a systems ecology perspective; farm production integrated with nature conservation and production of ecosystem services; the sociology of farming and agriculture.

Learning through experience

The programme is based on learning through experience, which means that the complexity of real life situations is the starting-point for study activities. This

means that students are expected to actively participate through attendance, presentations, discussions and project work. The programme will use real-life case material, for students to test and practice their ongoing acquired knowledge and skills. Experiential learning will foster student's capacity to actively engage in action.

Interdisciplinary approach
Innovative analyses and solutions are necessary to reflect through the complex issues of rural development. An interdisciplinary approach is, for this reason, essential for students undertaking studies in rural development in order to affect change. Rural Development and Natural Resource Management allows students to combine knowledge from various disciplines and to reason beyond existing paradigms. To realise an interdisciplinary approach, RD-NRM will integrate its courses with other master programmes at the SLU and utilise existing networks and relations with other universities in Sweden and abroad.

International focus
The goal of this programme is to have an international focus. Having an international focus will attract students from Sweden and beyond Sweden, bringing together students with diverse cultural and academic experiences. Such a learning environment will stimulate students to look beyond their own background. This focus is reflected in the curriculum, which analyses problems of rural development and change, and natural resource management in a global context. It will expose students to different rural contexts, ranging from Nordic countries to tropical settings. This approach is undertaken to enable students to familiarise themselves with dissimilar contexts, yet apply similar methods for creative and innovative analyses. The curriculum will be taught in English to foster an international milieu.

Training and skills acquisition
The programme provides students with the academic skills necessary to work independently and responsibly in a global context. Examples of such skills are: scientific writing and presentation; critiquing; project management and assessment; literature research; qualitative and quantitative methods; communication and facilitation; and philosophy of science.

The Curriculum
Based on this teaching philosophy the curriculum will consist of core and advanced courses. Core courses are compulsory and will introduce students to the different concepts of rural development and natural resource management and equip them in with basic skills. Further in-depth exploration of different subjects is offered in clusters of advanced courses. From these clusters students can construct their

individual study profile. Advanced courses will be offered by the Department of Urban and Rural Development, but will also include courses from other departments within and outside the SLU.

Both the core and advanced courses will apply teaching methods that are based on learning by doing. They will require active student involvement in attendance, presentations, written assignments, debates, analysing scientific (articles, case studies, interviews) and non-scientific materials (movies, newspapers, internet), individually or in groups. The courses will be organised by teacher teams to ensure that subjects will be analysed from a range of disciplines.

The first year
In the first year students are introduced to the complex socio-economical and ecological context of rural development and resource management. They will develop an understanding of rural problems in their changing and complex socio-economical and ecological context and train basic academic skills.

The second year
In the second year students get prepared for their major thesis work. Students are trained in using quantitative and qualitative research methods, and they have to write and present their research plan for the major thesis. Furthermore, students will pursue advanced knowledge within one of the two themes, either: (1) Rural Development and Change, or: (2) Agro-systems and Integrated Natural Resource Management.

6. Examination

Each course includes one or several tests. The terms U, 3, 4 or 5 are used for grading the courses, unless there is an exemption decision. Grading criteria are described in a supplement to each syllabus.

Grades are determined by an examiner appointed by SLU. General rules and guidelines for assessment and grading can be found in the "Internal rules for grading and examination rights" and in "Regulations for education in first and second cycle at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU)".

7. Degree

7.1 Degree awarded after completion of the study programme (120 credits)
A Master of Science (120 credits) with rural development as the main field, as described in the programme syllabus for Rural Development and Natural Resource Management – Masters's programme, is awarded to students who complete the course requirements (pass courses) of 120 credits according to the following:

• at least 30 credits for courses with specialised study in rural development (second cycle A1N, A1F/D)
• at least 30 credits for an independent project (degree project / second cycle A2E/E) in rural development
• a maximum of 15 credits may be for courses passed during the first cycle

Course requirements further include:
• at least 80 credits programme courses according to the approved study plan
• an independent project within rural development according to the approved study plan and instructions for the programme

In addition the student must have a Degree of Bachelor or professional qualification of at least 180 credits.

A student who fulfils the requirements for a Master of Science (120 credits) will, upon request, receive a degree certificate. The degree certificate will state that the student has been awarded a Master of Science (120 credits) with a major in rural development.

The degree certificate will also state that the requirements have been fulfilled according to the programme syllabus for Rural Development and Natural Resource Management – Master's programme. Detailed course requirements are shown in the study plan, which is approved by the study programme board and presented in a supplement to the programme syllabus.

7.2 Other degrees the student may be awarded after finishing the study programme
The courses included in Rural Development and Natural Resource Management – Master's programme also allow for the awarding of the following degrees on condition that SLU's demands for general qualifications are fulfilled:

• Master of Science (60 credits) with Rural development as the main field
• Master of Science (120 credits) with Rural development as the main field (not linked to the programme).

8. Miscellaneous

8.1 Credit transfer
Credits for courses from another higher education institution, in Sweden or abroad, may be transferred and recognised in the degree. Credits may be deducted if there is significant overlap between the courses passed at SLU and the external courses the student wishes to include in the degree. Credit transfer cannot be done if there is a considerable difference between the courses.

Credit transfer requests are considered on an individual basis. Once transfer has been approved, equivalent knowledge and skills acquired professionally may also be recognised.

Students admitted to Rural Development and Natural Resource Management – master's programme 2007 are entitled to have all course grades according to the previous two-grade system in their degree certificates.