Doctoral Programme in the Built Environment

Guidelines for studies counted towards doctoral degrees: course type and content

Doctoral students must contact a professor whose expertise matches their research interests to agree on the courses counted towards their degree. Students are expected to prepare a study plan in advance and discuss the plan with their professor at the beginning of their studies and before making any changes to the plan. Your study plan must indicate your study objectives, the courses that you are planning to take and the content areas that you will focus on by independently reading scientific literature. The plan must also include the number of credits that you will earn and an estimated timetable. When you apply for admission and start your studies at TUT, your professor will go over your study plan to ensure that the plan enables you to develop the expertise needed to successfully complete a doctoral dissertation. You continue to revise your study plan throughout your studies. The plan will be reviewed by your supervisor at least once a year.

As you get closer towards graduation, you attach your final study plan to the Degree Requirements Form. The scientific literature that you have read independently (i.e. not the regular courses offered at TUT) is listed either on the same form or a separate sheet.

You must complete a minimum of 40 credits to receive a doctoral degree. Students who do not possess all the prerequisite knowledge and skills to successfully complete a doctorate may be required to earn more credits. The goal of the studies is to provide you with in-depth knowledge and understanding of your research area and give you a strong command of research methodologies.

The following types of studies may not be counted towards doctoral degrees: pedagogical courses that qualify the doctoral candidate to teach at the university level (with exceptions), foreign language courses (with exceptions), core courses (with exceptions), and scientific papers and other publications authored by the doctoral candidate. Courses that have already been counted towards a degree that you completed outside TUT will not be counted towards your doctoral degree at TUT (with exceptions).
Degree structure

40-credit degree structure

Applicable to all doctoral students of the programme.

Major subject studies: min. 25 credits

- Students complete major subject studies to acquire in-depth knowledge and understanding of the field of their doctoral dissertation and improve their ability to write scientific texts and create new knowledge.
- Major subject studies enable you to develop the expertise necessary for the completion of your dissertation. They provide you with advanced knowledge and understanding of the core subject areas that are directly relevant to your dissertation and help you make informed decisions throughout your studies.
- At least 50% of your major subject studies should deepen your understanding of the core subject areas directly relevant to your dissertation. No more than 50% of the studies should focus on supporting fields.
- You can earn credits in your major by reading scientific literature, taking doctoral courses, keeping a learning diary during a conference and completing other coursework approved by your supervisor. In some cases, core courses that are applicable towards doctoral degrees may also count towards your major.

General scientific studies: min. 5 credits

- Students complete general scientific studies to acquire a strong command of research methodologies. In addition to the mandatory doctoral seminar, students are strongly encouraged to complete the programme’s course on research methods, possibly an additional advanced research methods course and/or written reports that explore the research methods that are directly relevant to their dissertation.
- Mandatory course (for students admitted after 1 August 2012): TRT-90006 ‘Orientation to Doctoral Studies’ (3 credits)
- Advanced research methodology courses relevant to dissertation
- Other courses that may count towards your general scientific studies include, for example, scientific writing courses, knowledge management courses, research ethics or research philosophy courses, etc.
Types of coursework

The type of coursework that may be counted towards your doctoral degree falls into one or more of the following categories.

1. Independent reading

The literature is selected to match your research interests and study objectives and give you a broad exposure to your subject area. In this context, “literature” refers to scientific books and papers. You earn credits by completing a written assignment, essay or exam based on multiple books, articles or other reading materials that can be grouped under a clear heading. It is possible to make independent reading modules available for students who are part of a specific research group or conduct research on a specific area, so that they can easily start building a richer understanding of their research topic.

- The literature must focus on advanced scientific content. For example, you earn 1 credit by completing an analytical essay, assignment or exam that is based on a book that is approximately 135 pages long and of average difficulty. In contrast, you earn 1 credit by reading 60-80 pages of challenging scientific articles and completing an essay, assignment or exam. [It will take some 300 pages to earn 1 credit, if you read popularized science books that are directly relevant to your subject area. Doctoral students are generally discouraged from having non-scientific literature counted towards their degree.]
- All doctoral students are encouraged to gain a broad exposure to a variety of scientific texts that are relevant to their subject area.
- Doctoral students demonstrate their understanding of scientific texts by taking a written or oral exam, preparing an essay, or completing a combination of assignments and exercises. You need to agree on the options in advance with your supervisor.

2. Courses

Doctoral courses provide students with more in-depth understanding of their subject area.

- Credits are awarded for courses and seminars that are held at TUT or some other university. The courses must be offered specifically for doctoral students and focus on scientific content and the skills necessary to conduct scientific investigations. Tutorials, seminars and other courses, provided that you receive a certificate at the end of the course, are also acceptable. You must contact your professor in advance to make sure that the course may be counted towards your degree. The majority of the courses must be doctoral courses.
- You can also earn credits by completing core courses that are applicable towards doctoral degrees, provided that they are directly relevant to your primary or secondary subject area.
- Other core courses may be counted towards your doctoral degree only, if they are directly relevant to your primary or secondary subject area and of advanced level. In addition, your supervisor must provide a written statement to the Faculty Council to specify why it is important for you to complete the courses.
3. Contributions to the scientific community

Doctoral students have the opportunity to earn credits by taking an active part in scientific conferences. Credits are only awarded for conferences where the doctoral candidate is an active participant and, for example, gives a presentation based on a research paper. Additionally, students need to keep a learning diary or write an essay that is based on their conference attendance and reviewed and approved by their supervisor/instructor.

Students can receive credits only for attending scientific conferences, not practice-oriented or commercial conferences. The credits will be counted only once towards your degree. For example, credits will not be awarded for scientific articles that will also be included in your licentiate thesis or doctoral dissertation (article-based compilation thesis).

Please note! If your degree requirements have been approved previously according to the 60 or 70 credit structure, you'll have to have them approved again according to the 40 credit degree structure.