Doctoral Programme in Built Environment

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

Students draft a study plan for postgraduate studies in cooperation with their responsible supervisors. When applying for admission you are expected to prepare a study plan and discuss it with your supervisor. The supervisor goes over it before you leave your application and at the beginning of your studies to ensure that the plan enables you to develop the expertise needed to successfully complete a doctoral dissertation.

The Planning Group of the Doctoral Programme approves the study plan when accepting your application. However, you are expected to update the study plan during your studies, revising it at least once a year together with your responsible supervisor. You must report any significant changes you make to the study plan also to the coordinator of the doctoral programme.

Your study plan must indicate:
- your study objectives,
- the study attainments that you are planning to accomplish,
- the number of credits that you will earn for each study attainment and an estimated timetable for these.

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 postgraduate studies is to provide you with in-depth knowledge and understanding of your research area and to 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 (unless the subject of the dissertation is related to pedagogy), foreign language courses or basic master’s level courses (with exceptions, see below, under Types of coursework / Courses). Study attainments already included in another degree’s requirements will not be accepted a second time. The Planning Group of the Doctoral Programme sets the general guidelines for approving postgraduate studies in the doctoral degree.

40-credit degree structure
Applicable to all doctoral students of the programme.

General academic competencies: min. 10 credits

Students complete general academic competencies to acquire a strong command of research methodologies and of research ethics.

- You are strongly encouraged to complete the Doctoral School’s courses TAUJ041a Orientation Day for Doctoral Researchers (no credits) and TAUJ035a Research Process: Managing the Doctoral Process (3 credits) or TAUJ035b Planning, Managing and Completing your Doctoral Thesis (2 credits).
- Mandatory courses (for students admitted after 1 August 2020) are TAUJ12a Research Ethics I (1 credit) or TAUJ12ab Research Ethics I (online, 1 credit) and TAUJ12e Research Ethics II (2 credits).
- Other studies that may count towards your general academic competencies include, for example, postgraduate courses on scientific writing, knowledge management, research philosophy or advanced research methodology courses relevant to your dissertation.

**Discipline- and field-specific studies: min. 25 credits**

Students complete discipline- and field-specific 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.

- Discipline- and field-specific 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 discipline- and field-specific 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 discipline- and field-specific studies by reading scientific literature, taking doctoral courses, keeping a learning diary during a conference and completing other coursework approved by your supervisor.

**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 scientific 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 can earn credits by completing a written assignment, essay or exam based on multiple books, articles or other reading materials that should 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.
- 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.
- non-scientific literature is not recommended in the independent scientific reading

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 these options in advance with your supervisor.

Once you have completed your doctoral studies (40 credits), you should fill in the “Application for Confirmation of Postgraduate Degree Requirements”, in which the scientific literature that you have read independently (i.e. not for the regular courses offered at Tampere University) is listed either on the same form or a separate sheet.

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 Tampere University 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 supervisor 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 Master level courses, provided that 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 Planning Group of the Doctoral Programme 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 or a poster based on one’s dissertation research. 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).

One conference is worth one credit. You may include a maximum of three credits for conference attendances in your degree.

4. Publishing scientific texts

Postgraduate studies may also include scientific articles or academic essays that are not written for the dissertation. In this case, the publishing process should be controlled; the supervisor follows the writing progress and gives feedback. Credits will not be awarded for early versions of articles in an article-based compilation dissertation or articles based on a monography. If the publication is based on a conference paper presented in a conference for which the student has already received a study credit (conference attendance, see section 3 above), credits will not be reissued.

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.