



Guidelines for the Design of Programme Syllabuses¹

These guidelines were finalised by the Vice-Chancellor on 14 November 2017. The guidelines shall be used when designing program syllabuses that apply from the autumn semester of 2019.

Registration number HS 2021/489

¹ This is a translation of the Swedish version (Riktlinjer för utformning av utbildningsplan, registration number HS 2017/788). In the event of any discrepancy, the Swedish version of this document shall prevail.

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1 General about programme syllabuses and study programmes

Rules concerning programme syllabuses can be found in the Higher Education Ordinance (chapter 6). It makes clear that study programmes must have a programme syllabus, and that the courses of the programme must have course syllabuses. In addition, SUHF (the Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions) has issued recommendations concerning programme syllabuses².

The programme syllabus is, alongside course syllabuses and the System of Qualifications, an important document for the governance of the University's courses and study programmes. It is an important educational instrument, and, legally speaking, a regulation. A regulation has general applicability, and is legally binding for the higher education institution and the students. Significant care must therefore be taken when designing programme syllabuses.

These guidelines refer to other governing documents at the University of Skövde (the University). The governing documents are available on the University's website (www.his.se/styrdokument) and on the internal web pages (Staff Portal).

1.1 General rules and objectives

When a programme is planned as the programme syllabus is developed, it is important to take into consideration the general rules and objectives for higher education that can be found in the Higher Education Act and other national and local governing documents. The Higher Education Act states that in higher education, attention should be paid to the aspects of broadened recruitment³, ethical issues concerning research and education, research basis, sustainable development, gender equality, internationalisation, quality assurance, collaboration with surrounding society, and student influence.

The Discrimination Act includes rules stating that higher education institutions shall undertake goal-oriented work to actively promote equal rights and opportunities for students participating in or applying to the operations regardless of sex, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability or sexual orientation.

² Recommendations for Course Syllabuses, Programme Syllabuses and Grading Systems, rec 2011:1, registration number 10/118

³ The government has proposed that the Higher Education Act's text about 'promoting and broadening recruitment to higher education' be changed to 'promoting broad participation in education' from the 1st of July, 2018

The aspects sustainable development (within the framework of the digitalisation for sustainable development theme⁴) and gender equality are to be made particularly clear in programme syllabuses and course syllabuses. This is outlined in greater detail in sections 2.3 and 2.4 of this document, and in policy document Guidelines for the Design of Course Syllabuses.

1.2 Routines for the design of programme syllabuses

Decisions concerning programme syllabuses are made by the Faculty Board (new programme syllabuses) and by the Curriculum Committees (revision of programme syllabuses). Descriptions are given in “Administration Order for Programme Syllabuses” [Handläggningsordning för utbildningsplaner] and “Description of Assignment for Curriculum Committees” [Uppdragsbeskrivning för utbildningskommittéer]. Special instructions for work with programme syllabuses can be found in the staff portal.

The programme syllabus must be uniform in terms of appearance, and is created in KursInfo, the University’s local database of courses and study programmes. The description of the programme syllabus content and design in these guidelines is based on the template generated by KursInfo.

The Language Act stipulates that rules issued by a Swedish authority must be in Swedish. The programme syllabus must therefore be written in Swedish. The Swedish version of the programme syllabus is the one that is legally binding. If the programme is taught in English, the programme syllabus must be translated to English. The English version of the programme syllabus must state that it is a translation. KursInfo includes some support for the translation of programme syllabuses to English. Even if the programme syllabus is not translated, the name of the programme must be provided in both Swedish and English when it is registered in KursInfo.

1.3 Other details about the study programme

In addition to the details stated for the programme syllabus, other information about the programme, such as who is programme coordinator, prospectus text, and search terms of different kinds, is stored in KursInfo. This information is shown on the education pages of the University’s website, and on antagning.se (universityadmissions.se), for instance.

⁴ Digitalisation for Sustainable Development is the gathering theme of the Development Plan for the University of Skövde.

1.4 Information about the study programme

The programme syllabus and other information must be available on the University's education pages at as early a stage as possible, and no later than when the application round for the programme instance in question opens. The information must include the form of study (on campus or distance) and teaching language (Swedish, English, or Swedish and English). The information that is published then should normally not be changed.

There is a special schedule for study administration routines on the internal web pages (staff portal).

2 Programme syllabus content and design

As per the University's template for programme syllabuses, details of the programme name in Swedish and English, the credit scope, programme code⁵, education cycle, version⁶, date when it is valid from, and date of ratification are found in the programme syllabus head. Most of the details are automatically generated by KursInfo, based on the information stated in the different parts of the programme syllabus (see below).

The programme syllabus includes the following parts/sections:

1. Name and scope of the study programme
2. General objectives (for first- and second-cycle education)
3. Programme objectives
4. Programme content (including list of all the courses of the programme)
5. Admission requirements
6. Degree
7. Approval of study programme and programme syllabus
8. Changes to the programme syllabus
9. Additional information

A description of the content and design of the parts is given under the respective headings. The headings in this part are identical to the headings of the programme syllabus.

⁵ In connection with the establishment of a study programme, it is given a programme code. The programme code is set by the Academic Affairs and Student Support Office.

⁶ Version numbers for new and revised programme syllabuses are automatically generated by KursInfo.

2.1 Name and scope of the study programme

The programme name is given here. The name must, according to the interpretation of the Language Act⁷ made by the Swedish Higher Education Authority, be in Swedish. The English translation of the name must also be stated, but only seen in the programme syllabus head. Abbreviations are not permitted in the name.

In addition, the credit scope of the programme is given. The scope must be adapted to the qualification the programme leads to. This means that first-cycle programmes normally comprise 120 or 180 credits (equivalent to the scope of a Higher Education Diploma and a Degree of Bachelor respectively), while second-cycle programmes should normally comprise 60 or 120 credits (equivalent to the scope of a Degree of Master (60 credits) and a Degree of Master (120 credits) respectively).

2.2 General objectives

The general objectives for first- and second-cycle education, as per the Higher Education Act, are stated here. The choice of cycle is determined by the level of the qualification the programme leads to. The objectives are automatically generated by the database of courses and study programmes, once the choice of cycle has been made:

Objectives for first-cycle education

Courses and study programmes on the basic level shall develop:

- ability of students to make independent and critical assessments,
- the ability of students to identify, formulate and solve problems autonomously, and
- the preparedness of students to deal with changes in working life.

In addition to knowledge and skills in their field of study, students shall develop the ability to:

- gather and interpret information at a scholarly level,
- stay abreast of the development of knowledge, and
- communicate their knowledge to others, including those who lack specialist knowledge in the field.

Objectives for second-cycle education

Courses and study programmes on the advanced level shall involve the acquisition of specialist knowledge, competence and skills in relation to courses and study programmes on the basic level, and

⁷ University Rules in Practice, Swedish Higher Education Authority, report 2014:16

in addition to the requirements for courses and study programmes on the basic level 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 considerably autonomy, or for research and development work.

2.3 Programme objectives

The national learning outcomes that apply to the qualification the programme leads to are stated here. The national learning outcomes, which are stated in the System of Qualifications (appendix to the Higher Education Ordinance), can also be found in “Local System of Qualifications at the University of Skövde” [Lokal examensordning vid Högskolan i Skövde] (www.his.se/styrdokument). If a programme leads to a double degree – a professional qualification and a general qualification – the objectives for both qualifications must be stated in the programme syllabus. The programme’s main field of study is stated as an introduction to the national learning outcomes.

In addition to the national learning outcomes, local objectives for the programme must also be stated. Local objectives can both clarify the study programme’s content and intent, and outline connections between the programme’s specific area of knowledge and various general aspects concerning quality in higher education⁸. According to the University’s development plan, each programme syllabus must, by 2022, have at least one local objective relating to the theme digitalisation for sustainable development.

2.4 Programme content

The content of the programme is stated here. A presentation of how the programme is designed, and how this contributes to the progression of the programme shall be given. An outline of the educational breadth and depth that students will reach by following the programme’s study route shall be given. The courses of the programme must collectively contribute to the various objectives of the programme being reached (see points 2.2 and 2.3). A presentation of the connection between objectives and courses must be available in

⁸ Such aspects could be gender equality or internationalisation, for instance. See also section 1.1 of these guidelines, and Action Plan for Gender Equality Integration at the University of Skövde 2017 – 2019, and the specific action plans, connected to the University’s development plan, that exist for various areas.

a matrix format. The matrix must be continuously updated. Matrix templates are available on the internal web pages (staff portal).

A gender equality perspective must be integrated in the study programme's design and implementation. How gender equality integration takes place in the different programme courses shall be clear from the matrix.

An internationalisation perspective must be integrated in the study programme's design and implementation. Furthermore, first-cycle programmes that comprise at least 180 credits must normally be designed so that there is an option for students to study and/or have placements abroad for at least one term. These programmes should also normally include courses of at least 30 credits that are particularly suitable for incoming exchange students (students from partner universities abroad).

When planning a study route, the entry requirements and the students' chances of being admitted to the next semester must be taken into consideration. If possible, a course for which a previous programme course is an entry requirement should not be scheduled straight after it.

The description of the study route in the programme syllabus should be such that minor changes to the distribution of the courses etc. do not lead to the programme syllabus needing to be changed.

In the national System of Qualifications, all qualifications comprise an exact number of credits. Thus, the study programmes that lead to these qualifications must also comprise an exact number of credits (see point 2.1). Any support courses – such as introductory courses in computer use, or courses in preparatory mathematics – must either be integrated in the programme syllabus (separately or in other programme courses) or be completely voluntary for the students (and then not included in the programme syllabus). It must be possible to include all courses in the programme syllabus in the qualification.

All courses in the programme must be stated. The courses must be named like they are named in the course syllabuses, and reported by subject, progression level or any specialisations in the programme, or other appropriate groupings.

When the programme includes **elective** credits, it must be clear which courses students can choose from. If students can choose courses freely, these credits are **optional**.

2.5 Admission requirements

For admission to a study programme, there are certain prior knowledge requirements, i.e. admission requirements (entry requirements). The entry requirements are named general entry requirements – which are required for all higher education – and

specific entry requirements, – which apply if further prior knowledge is required for a specific programme. The general entry requirements and specific entry requirements are clear from the Higher Education Ordinance, the Swedish Council for Higher Education's rules, and the University's local admission regulations. The programme's entry requirements must agree with the entry requirements for the courses that are part of the programme.

If the programme is taught in English, English 6/English B, or equivalent knowledge must be stated as an entry requirement. In these cases, it shall also be stated how equivalent knowledge can be demonstrated:

Equivalent knowledge is normally demonstrated through an internationally recognised language test, such as IELTS or TOEFL.

KursInfo includes certain standardised ways to state entry requirements. These standards should be used to as great an extent as possible. The standards mean that entry requirements can be automatically checked in the admission system against details in other systems.

In the final part of this section, it is also stated that the entry requirements for continued studies within the programme are clear from the respective course syllabuses (automatically generated by KursInfo):

The above entry requirements concern admission to the programme. For continued studies within the programme, entry requirements for the respective courses must be met. These entry requirements are clear from the respective course syllabuses.

2.6 Degree

A study programme must lead to a qualification (degree). The title of the qualification is given under this heading. The title is regulated by the national and local Systems of Qualifications.

If the programme leads to two different qualifications, this must be stated. In cases where the programme has multiple specialisations (main fields of study), and these determine which qualification it is possible to apply for, this must be made clear in the programme syllabus.

It is also stated here that the award of a degree certificate takes place following a special application. Information about how to apply is given on the University's website. The following text is automatically generated by KursInfo:

Degrees are awarded after application. Information about how to submit an application can be found on the University's website.

Normally, there is no reference to the study programme in the degree certificate. For some programmes, however, such a reference may be made. In these cases, the following is stated in the programme syllabus:

A reference to the study programme can, if the student so requests, be written on the first page of the degree certificate. For such a reference, the student must have completed their studies completely in accordance with the programme syllabus. Exemptions from the requirement for studies completely in accordance with the programme syllabus are made in cases where a student has studied abroad as per approved planning. It must then be clear from the planning that the requirements for reference to the study programme have been met.

2.7 Approval of programme and programme syllabus

The decision-making body, study programme establishment date, and the ratification date for the programme syllabus are stated here. It must also be clear from which semester the programme syllabus applies. If the programme syllabus replaces a previous programme syllabus, this must also be made clear. The ratification date for the previous programme syllabus is automatically generated by KursInfo.

2.8 Changes to the programme syllabus

Students have a right to complete their studies in a study programme according to the programme syllabus that applied during the semester when they began their studies. This requires that the programme structure is adhered to, and that there is no approved leave from studies. If a student is continuing their studies following approved leave from studies, they must follow the programme syllabus that applies during the semester when they take up their studies again. If significant changes to the programme syllabus have been made, the student should contact the study and career counsellor to plan an individual study route.

We also reserve the right to change the programme syllabus and its courses, within the framework of the programme objectives. More major revisions of programme syllabuses normally apply from the next programme commencement, and do not affect students already following the programme.

The following text is automatically generated by KursInfo under this heading:

The programme studies are carried out in accordance with the current programme syllabus in effect at the time when the studies were initiated, provided that the structure of the programme is followed and that no leave of studies has been granted.

In the event of continued studies after a period of approved leave of studies, the student is to follow the programme syllabus in effect the term that the student resumes his/her studies. If substantial changes to the programme syllabus have been made, the student may contact a student and career counsellor in order to set up an individual study plan.

Reservations are made for the fact that the programme syllabus and its courses are subject to change, within the framework of the objectives of the programme.

2.9 Additional information

Information related to teaching language shall be given under the Additional Information heading. The following standard texts can be selected in KursInfo:

- The teaching is conducted in Swedish. Some teaching in English may take place.
- The teaching is conducted in English.
- The teaching is conducted in Swedish and English. For certain courses (or parts of courses), the teaching is conducted in English only.

If the teaching language is Swedish, some parts, such as a few lectures, may be given in English. Most of the teaching – and all examinations – within the programme must, however, be in Swedish. In cases where English is stated as the teaching language, all teaching within the programme must be offered in English, as foreign students may be recruited to these programmes. If teaching is in both Swedish and English, i.e. if certain courses (or course modules) are taught entirely in English, this must be clearly stated in the programme information (see below).

Further information about the programme is given on the University's website, education pages (www.his.se/utbildning) ahead of each programme instance. Information about collaboration within the programme with another higher education institution or other external party, programme location other than Skövde, teaching language (if the teaching language is English, or Swedish and English), and whether the programme is offered as any kind of distance learning is given here. Reference to this information shall be made under the Additional Information heading. The reference is made with the help of a standard text in KursInfo:

Further information about the study programme will be available on the University's web pages prior to a programme start.

Reference must also be made to the national and local governing documents that govern the University's operations. The reference is automatically generated by KursInfo:

National and local regulations for higher education are available on the University's website.

Information about follow-up of the programme (programme evaluation) taking place must also be given under this heading. The standard text is automatically generated by KursInfo:

During the programme, as well as after its completion, there are follow-ups. The main purpose of these follow-ups is to contribute to improvements of the programme. The students' experiences and views constitute one of the criteria for the follow-up and are gathered by means of programme evaluations. The students will be informed of the results of the follow-up and any decisions regarding actions that are to be taken.

3 Taking effect

These guidelines take effect on 14 November 2017, replacing guidelines from 4 October 2016, registration number HS 2016/732. The guidelines are to be used when designing program syllabuses that apply from the autumn semester 2019.