



COURSE SYLLABUS

Forskningsmetodik och magisterarbete i programvaruteknik för yrkesverksamma Research Methods and Master's Thesis (60 credits) in Software Engineering for Professionals 18 credits (18 högskolepoäng)

Course code: PA2584

Main field of study: Software Engineering

Disciplinary domain: Technology

Education level: Second cycle

Specialization: AIE - Second cycle, contains degree project for Master of Arts/Master of Science (60 credits)

Language of instruction: English

Applies from: 2022-01-17

Approved: 2023-03-15

Discontinued: 2024-01-12

1. Decision

This course is established by Dean 2020-06-23. The course syllabus is approved by Head of Department of Software Engineering 2023-03-15 and applies from 2022-01-17.

2. Entry requirements

Admission to the course requires at least 120 credits within the field of technology and a minimum of 2 years of professional experience in software development (shown by, for example, a work certificate from an employer).

3. Objective and content

3.1 Objective

The course aims to enable students to define, plan, conduct, and present independent scientific research work. Students are expected to apply the knowledge acquired during their education and independently immerse themselves in one or more specific sub-areas within the main subject area of software engineering. The student's goal is to, orally and in writing, report the results of their research and critically examine and oppose another thesis.

3.2 Content

The course includes the following components:

- Introduction to research
- Ethics and sustainability considerations in research
- Information retrieval (finding scientific literature)
- Evaluating empirical research
- Formulating research questions
- Selecting methods for research, data collection, and analysis
- Pre-study and defining a research project
- Planning, conducting, and reporting research
- Implementation (research work, progress tracking, and written report)
- Written opposition
- Oral presentation and defense

4. Learning outcomes

The following learning outcomes are examined in the course:

4.1 Knowledge and understanding

On completion of the course, the student will be able to:

- demonstrate a broad knowledge and understanding in software engineering,
- show substantially deeper knowledge of at least one sub-area of software engineering, including a deeper insight into current research and development,
- demonstrate deeper methodological knowledge and understanding within software engineering.

4.2 Competence and skills

On completion of the course, the student will be able to:

- demonstrate the ability to creatively, critically and independently identify and formulate scientific questions,

- demonstrate the ability to answer scientific questions using suitable methods and thereby contribute to the development of knowledge in software engineering,
- demonstrate the ability to plan, monitor and complete an independent research project within a given timeframe and supervision resources,
- demonstrate the ability to orally and in writing clearly explain and discuss his or her conclusions and the knowledge and arguments behind them, in dialogue with researchers, students at the same level in the field and lay people,
- discuss the thesis orally and in writing in English,
- demonstrate the ability to systematically and on a scientific basis apply knowledge acquired during their education, and to identify, analyze, synthesize and critically examine scientific literature.

4.3 Judgement and approach

On completion of the course, the student will be able to:

- demonstrate the ability to systematically and critically examine both their own and others' work in relation to relevant scientific, technical, organizational, societal, and ethical aspects,
- demonstrate the ability to identify their need of further knowledge and to take responsibility for their learning,
- discuss the role of scientific research in software engineering education and practice.

5. Learning activities

An academic supervisor at the university supervises each student. In addition to the academic supervisor, a student can have an external supervisor from the industry or another university.

The course runs for two semesters and is structured in two modules: (a) an introduction module and (b) the applied module. The course starts with the introductory module with seminars, and (non-graded) exercises to provide formative feedback to the student. As part of the introductory module the student conducts a prestudy and develops a project plan. The project plan is graded by the examiner supported by independent peer reviews.

The remaining time (in the applied module) consists of independent work in the form of re-planning, executing, monitoring, and reporting a thesis and an opposition against another thesis. During the work, the student should maintain an e-portfolio in the course's learning platform where they regularly inform about the status and progress of their degree project.

The examiner grades the final revised academic report after oral presentation and defense. The examiner grades the academic report based on their assessment and consideration of independent peer reviews.

The presentation and defense can only be carried out when (i) there is an approved project plan and (ii) the academic report is sufficient in its current form for presentation and defense. This assessment does not mean that examiner will approve the report since the examiner does grading after the presentation and defense of the academic report.

The project plan, oral presentation and defense, written opposition, and the academic report shall follow the instructions and templates included in the Instructions for Degree Projects provided by the Faculty of Computing.

The student is expected to be available for supervision. It is the student's responsibility to conserve supervision resources. The student is not entitled to supervision time outside term time.

A student who does not complete their thesis within the term it was commenced can get continued supervision for a limited time only and no more than six months after the course ends. The examiner has the right to end supervision when all supervision time is exhausted. However, a student is always entitled to submit their independent work for grading at subsequent examination times. A student who re-registers for the course is not entitled to renewed supervision time.

6. Assessment and grading

Modes of examinations of the course

Code	Module	Credits	Grade
2205	Project plan	3 credits	GU
2215	Presentation/Defense	1 credits	GU
2225	Thesis opposition	1 credits	GU
2235	Thesis[1]	13 credits	AF

[1] Determines the final grade for the course, which will only be issued when all components have been approved.

The course will be graded A Excellent, B Very good, C Good, D Satisfactory, E Sufficient, FX Fail, supplementation required, F Fail.

A student who has not submitted a project plan by the end of the introduction module of the course will be given the grade U on the component Project plan since he/she did not demonstrate adequate ability to perform tasks within specified timeframes.

A student, who has not submitted an academic report of sufficient quality to be presented and defended within 14 (17, 22) months from the start of the course, can at most receive grade B (C, D), since the student did not demonstrate adequate ability to perform tasks within specified timeframes.

The number of times that a student may be examined to get a passing grade on each of the examination components of the course is limited to three.

The information before a course occasion states the assessment criteria and make explicit in which modes of examination that the learning outcomes are assessed.

An examiner can, after consulting the Disability Advisor at BTH, decide on a customized examination form for a student with a long-term disability to be provided with an examination equivalent to one given to a student who is not disabled.

7. Course evaluation

The course evaluation should be carried out in line with BTH:s course evaluation template and process.

8. Restrictions regarding degree

The course can form part of a degree but not together with another course the content of which completely or partly corresponds with the contents of this course.

9. Course literature and other materials of instruction

Reference literature

1. Thesis Projects: A Guide for Students in Computer Science and Information Systems; 2nd Edition Authors: Mikael Berndtsson et al.

Publisher: Springer

Year: 2007, Pages: 162

ISBN-13: 978-1848000087

2. Experimentation in Software Engineering – An Introduction; 2nd Edition

Authors: C. Wohlin, P. Runeson, M. Höst, M.C. Ohlsson, B. Regnell, A. Wesslén

Publisher: Springer Verlag

Year: 2012, Pages: 250

ISBN-13: 978-3642290435

Other textbooks and reading material are chosen individually by the student in consultation with the supervisor.