



PhD in Educational Sciences

Programme Description

180 ECTS

University of Inland Norway (INN)

Faculty of Education, Hamar and Lillehammer

2024

This is an abridged version. Please note that the English translation is for information purposes only. For all legal purposes, the original programme description in Norwegian is the authoritative version.

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Background

Educational research develops new knowledge about education and learning within and outside the education system, and about children's and young people's upbringing and development. The field is multidisciplinary, in that many academic disciplines contribute to the research. At the University of Inland Norway, the main research areas are humanities-based teacher education subjects and pedagogy. In both areas, issues related to diversity, inclusion and digitalisation are central.

The aim of the PhD programme is to strengthen the scientific knowledge base for teacher education programmes and for professional practice in schools, early childhood education and care institutions, and other learning arenas, and to develop new knowledge about children's and young people's upbringing, learning and *Bildung*. In this way, the PhD programme also supports the faculty's own programmes in teacher education, pedagogy and special needs education.

The compulsory theory course in the PhD programme has a common educational sciences framework and two specialisations: teacher education subjects and pedagogy with an emphasis on diversity. Pedagogy is both a disciplinary field and a teacher education subject. The other teacher education subjects correspond to school subjects or subject areas in early childhood education and care. They are based on knowledge and theories from the relevant academic disciplines and from subject didactics research. All teacher education subjects are characterised by a professional orientation and practice relevance, and by several cross-cutting perspectives.

The specialisation pedagogy with an emphasis on diversity is grounded in pedagogy as a disciplinary field and focuses on learning, education and *Bildung* in a broader societal context. Pedagogy and special needs education as disciplines address fundamental questions concerning the preconditions for learning and development, with a particular focus on diversity and a sustainable world.

Quality education and the provision of inclusive and equitable opportunities for all within a lifelong learning perspective is one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals to be achieved by 2030. The profile of the PhD programme contributes to this goal and also responds to challenges raised in national policy documents such as *Meld. St. 19 (2023–2024) Profesjonsnære utdanningar over heile landet*, *Meld. St. 5 (2022–2023) Langtidsplan for forskning og høyere utdanning 2023–2032* (e.g. the key challenge “ensuring participation and diversity”), *Lærerutdanning 2025. Nasjonal strategi for kvalitet og samarbeid i lærerutdanningene* (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017) and *Forskning, kompetansemekling og bruk. Strategi for utdanningsforskning 2020–2024* (Ministry of Education and Research, 2020).

Target group and relevance to working life

The PhD programme is a research training provision for candidates with master's degrees in subject didactics and pedagogy, candidates with five-year integrated teacher education at master's level, and others with master's degrees in subjects or fields relevant to early childhood education and care, school and other educational arenas. The programme qualifies for an academic career in teacher education, pedagogical study programmes and other higher education and research, as well as for other positions that require a high level of research

competence, including within the education sector. In this way, the programme contributes to national education policy goals of strengthening research-based professional practice and increasing the proportion of staff with a doctoral degree in the education sector and other parts of public administration.

Learning outcomes

The learning outcomes for candidates who have completed the PhD programme are the result of work on the thesis, the coursework component, participation in an active research environment, and the final doctoral examination (trial lecture and public defence). The learning outcomes are described in accordance with the third cycle (PhD level) of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, established by the Ministry of Education and Research in 2009 and later incorporated as cycle 8 in the National Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning.

A candidate who has completed the PhD programme shall have achieved the following overall learning outcomes, defined in terms of knowledge, skills and general competence:

Knowledge

The candidate:

- has, through their own research, made a significant contribution to the development of new knowledge of relevance to educational sciences, and can contribute to the development of knowledge, theory and methods within the field
- has extensive, systematic knowledge at the highest international level within the research field
- has systematic knowledge of, and can assess, the use of methods, research designs and central traditions in the philosophy of science as a basis for research and development work within educational sciences

Skills

The candidate:

- can, independently and in collaboration with others, formulate research questions, design, initiate and carry out research and development work at a high international level
- can assess and critically analyse theories and methods in the field and, on a scientific basis, challenge established knowledge and practice

General competence

The candidate:

- can conduct research with a high level of ethical awareness and academic integrity
- can disseminate research results through recognised national and international publication channels and take part in academic debates at national and international level
- can disseminate research to different user groups and contribute to increased understanding of the use of scientific methods and results, particularly within the education sector

- can assess research-based innovation processes
- can collaborate with others on the development and implementation of complex, interdisciplinary research and development projects

Admission requirements

To be admitted to the PhD programme, applicants must normally have:

A. Teacher education and a master's degree (120 ECTS) in a subject or field relevant to early childhood education and care and school,

or

B. a master's degree (120 ECTS) in pedagogy/education, subject didactics or a five-year integrated teacher education.

The master's degree or equivalent (main subject/hovedfag) must include an independent piece of work of at least 30 ECTS. The applicant must have a strong academic background. For applicants with education from a Norwegian higher education institution, the weighted average grade on the master's degree must normally be B or better. In cases where all or parts of the relevant education are assessed with the grades Pass/Fail, admission will be considered on an individual basis.

Applicants with other educational backgrounds than those covered by points A and B above may be admitted after special consideration. The same applies to applicants whose grades are weaker than those normally required for admission. This latter group must document a high likelihood of being able to complete a PhD, for example through merited, academically relevant scientific publications after completion of the master's degree.

Further rules on admission are set out in the Regulations for the Degree of Philosophiae Doctor (PhD) at the University of Inland Norway and the Supplementary Guidelines for the PhD Programme in Educational Sciences. The application for admission must include a project description containing a presentation of the project's topic, aims, research questions, theoretical framework and methodology, as well as ethical considerations.

Admission is conditional on documented funding of the PhD education, either through employment in a PhD research fellowship position or in another manner.

Duration and scope of the programme

The PhD programme is organised so that it can be completed within the nominal time of three years of full-time study (180 ECTS). One year of full-time study corresponds to approximately 1,800 working hours. For candidates employed in four-year PhD research fellowship positions with 25% other career-promoting duties, the PhD programme is distributed over four years.

The PhD programme includes a coursework component of 30 ECTS.

Content, structure and organisation

The PhD programme comprises:

- an independent research project under supervision
- a coursework component that also includes academic dissemination
- participation in active research environments – locally, nationally and internationally
- the doctoral examination (trial lecture and public defence)

The structure of the programme ensures both breadth and specialisation. The coursework component provides breadth through compulsory courses and the candidates' work with these (literature studies, learning activities and assessment forms). The compulsory courses provide insight into central topics in philosophy of science and research methodology, issues in research ethics, and a selection of thematic approaches that shed light on the theoretical perspectives of the PhD programme. The coursework component also provides experience with academic writing at PhD level and with dissemination to different audiences, both through independent work and in collaboration with others.

Thematic, theoretical and methodological specialisation is primarily ensured through work on the thesis and the final doctoral examination. The candidate's specialisation is supported by, among other things, supervision on the thesis, including searching for and using research literature, work on research ethics, and discipline-specific requirements for academic writing. Other parts of the PhD programme that support specialisation are courses in the coursework component, the candidate's work with presenting their own project in various fora, experience from mid-term and final evaluations, and participation in research groups and national and international networks.

Throughout the PhD programme, the candidates shall have access to career guidance.

Thesis work

Requirements for the independent research project

The thesis shall be an independent, scientific work that meets international standards in the field. Work on the thesis corresponds to 2.5 years of full-time study. The thesis shall contribute to the development of new academic knowledge and be of such a standard that it is suitable for publication as part of the field's scientific literature. The thesis work is carried out under individual supervision. The thesis may be written as a monograph or be article-based. Requirements for the thesis are described in more detail in the Regulations for the Degree of Philosophiae Doctor (PhD) at the University of Inland Norway and in the Supplementary Guidelines for the PhD Programme in Educational Sciences.

Participation in an active research environment

Each PhD candidate is appointed a main supervisor and one or more co-supervisors. The main supervisor will normally be employed at the Faculty of Education. PhD research fellows shall have regular contact with their supervisors and take part in an active research environment. At the Faculty of Education, the PhD research fellows are affiliated with a research group. Through the supervisory team and the research group, the PhD candidates will also become part of relevant national and international networks and present their work at various network events.

The PhD cohort is also an important part of participation in an active research environment. The PhD programme has its own PhD candidate forum, where new PhD research fellows are invited into a social community, and where seminars are organised on academic topics relevant to thesis work and future careers.

Quality assurance of the thesis

Regular supervision is central to quality assurance of the thesis work. Twice a year, the PhD research fellow and the main supervisor report on progress to the PhD Committee. The mid-term evaluation and the final reading (at approximately 90% completion) are key milestones in each candidate's learning trajectory and contribute to quality assurance. In these evaluations, a researcher who is not part of the supervisory team reads draft texts – normally an internal reader from INN at the mid-term stage and a reader from outside INN at the final stage.

The candidates also present their work in the local research group, at national and international research conferences, and within various research networks. Work on research ethics is part of the supervision, is addressed in all courses in the coursework component, and is also the topic of a dedicated introductory course. In addition, each PhD candidate presents their research design and reflections on research ethics in their research group before data collection is initiated.

Internationalisation

Internationalisation in the PhD programme takes many forms. The international work of the research groups and supervisory teams is fundamental, both for involving PhD candidates in international networks and through inviting guest researchers to the University and organising seminars and conferences at one of the faculty's campuses. The PhD programme welcomes international visiting PhD candidates who participate in the coursework and in research groups. Several elective courses are offered in collaboration with partners in other countries. All courses include a substantial proportion of international academic literature and are offered in English when needed. Access to international academic literature is an important part of the support provided by the university library.

Internationalisation related to the thesis work can take place in different ways. All candidates are expected to present preliminary results at international conferences, seminars, workshops or summer schools. PhD candidates who write article-based theses are encouraged to publish at least one article in English. Furthermore, the University has several international collaboration agreements on mobility that PhD candidates can use for shorter or longer stays abroad. The international office can also assist in establishing new agreements in line with the needs of individual PhD candidates.

Coursework component

Structure

The coursework component comprises 30 ECTS. Of these, 22 ECTS are compulsory, and 8 ECTS are elective in agreement with the main supervisor. PhD candidates may choose among elective courses offered by INN or among relevant doctoral courses at other higher education institutions accredited to award PhD degrees, nationally or internationally. In such cases, candidates must apply to have the courses approved as part of the coursework component.

Elective courses are offered provided that a sufficient number of students register. If this is not the case, and if equivalent courses are not offered at other institutions, the PhD candidate may, in agreement with the main supervisor, organise a reading course (supervised self-study). A reading course is a supervised self-study arrangement with a syllabus relevant to the candidate's scientific specialisation and field of study. For reading courses, both the syllabus and the essay are somewhat more extensive than in other elective courses. The possibility of taking a reading course must be approved in each case by the programme coordinator. Each PhD candidate can have only one reading course approved.

Main areas of the coursework component

The coursework component consists of the following main areas:

Course groups A–D	Scope	Compulsory / Elective
A. Philosophy of science and research ethics	8 ECTS	Compulsory
B. Educational sciences. Theoretical perspectives. Compulsory course: either B1A: Teacher education subjects and their professional orientation, or B1B: Pedagogy with diversity as a lens	11 ECTS	7 ECTS compulsory, 4 ECTS elective
C. Scientific research methods	10 ECTS	6 ECTS compulsory, 4 ECTS elective
D. Academic dissemination	1 ECTS	Compulsory

The course groups are described in more detail in the section on course descriptions.

Teaching and learning methods

Seminars are the main teaching and learning method in the coursework component. They combine independent work and collaborative learning. Normally, seminars are organised as on-campus meetings, but they may also be held online. The seminars include lectures, academic discussions, critical reflections and different types of pair or group work. Work with the courses requires a high degree of independent effort from the PhD candidates, including preparation through reading of the syllabus, active participation in the seminars and follow-up work to complete the course requirements.

The University also encourages students to process their reading and seminar content further by participating in study groups, both in preparation for and following the seminars.

The coursework component is offered in Norwegian or English, depending on needs.

Coursework requirements and final assessment

All courses have coursework requirements and a final assessment. Coursework requirements may include participation in seminars and various forms of oral presentations or written assignments, individually or in collaboration. The final assessment will normally consist of an individual written academic text. Documentation may be submitted in a Scandinavian language or in English. The grading scale used is Pass/Fail. The requirement for a passing performance corresponds to the grade B or better on the A–F scale.

Quality assurance of the coursework component

Courses are evaluated in line with the University's quality assurance system, and the results are used for further development of the study programme. The main part of the evaluation is carried out by participants at the end of each course, based on the course's learning outcomes. A student representative and the course coordinator then meet with the PhD Committee to discuss the evaluation. The evaluations form part of the programme's quality reports.

Admission to individual courses

All candidates admitted to the PhD programme have admission to the programme's courses and priority of place. If there is spare capacity, others may be admitted to individual courses. Unless otherwise stated in the course announcement, priority is given first to PhD candidates admitted to other PhD programmes at INN and at other institutions, and then to staff at INN who hold a relevant master's degree and are engaged in research.

Course descriptions

Course group A: Course in scientific theory and research ethics (8 ECTS)

In this course, candidates further develop their insight into topics and concepts in philosophy of science that are relevant to educational research/educational sciences. They will also acquire knowledge about research ethics, the relationship between science and society, and the relationships between science, power and normativity.

Possible methodological implications and consequences of different theoretical positions or problem formulations in educational research are critically discussed. The specific theories addressed may vary from one course instance to another.

Course group B: Educational sciences. Theoretical perspectives (7 ECTS + 4 ECTS)

This course group comprises one compulsory course (7 ECTS) and one elective course (4 ECTS). The theoretical specialisation in educational sciences is taken either through **B1A: The professional focus of teacher education sciences. Theoretical perspectives**, or through **B1B: Pedagogy with diversity as a lens. Theoretical perspectives**. The course group reflects and conveys the specific profile of the PhD programme, while the elective course allows each PhD candidate to work with more specific theories and issues to support their thesis work. Issues in research ethics are addressed in all courses from the perspective of educational sciences.

The compulsory course includes a joint seminar providing a common educational sciences platform across the two specialisations, where current educational sciences perspectives are discussed. The seminar corresponds to 1 ECTS. Participation is a coursework requirement in both specialisations.

The PhD programme is interdisciplinary in that it covers all teacher education subjects as well as pedagogy as a discipline. For this reason, several elective courses have been developed and tailored to different groups of PhD candidates. The elective courses are designed to provide equivalent learning outcomes, coursework requirements and forms of assessment. Approved elective courses are listed by title below.

Previously approved elective courses in course group B

As of 01.08.2024:

- B2 Kulturteoretiske og dekonstruktive perspektiver på lærerutdanningsdidaktikk – 4 ECTS
- B3 Språkdidaktikk med vekt på kunnskapstilegnelse gjennom et andrespråk – 4 ECTS
- B4 Regions- og livssynsdidaktikk – 4 ECTS
- B5 Moderne litteraturteori med særlig vekt på diktart- og sjangerproblematikken – 4 ECTS
- B6 (4 stp) og B20 (2 stp) Vitenskapelig publisering i profesjonsrettede lærerutdanningsfag – 4/2 ECTS
- B7 Politikk og litteratur, arbeiderdiktning, littérature engagée – 4 ECTS
- B8 Learner Corpus Research – 4 ECTS
- B9 Utforskning av læreroppfatninger. Litteratur- og språkdidaktiske perspektiver – 4 ECTS
- B10 Internasjonale perspektiver på læreres profesjonsutvikling – 4 ECTS
- B11 Å re-konseptualisere barn, barndom og barnehagepraksiser: Filosofiske og teoretiske perspektiver for barnehageprofesjon og barnehageforskning – 4 ECTS
- B12 Literacy theories and practices in kindergarten and schools with an emphasis on reading in multilingual contexts – 4 ECTS
- B13 (4 stp) og B16 (2 stp) Quality education in linguistically and culturally diverse schools – a global perspective – 4/2 ECTS
- B14 Second and foreign language teaching and learning – 4 ECTS
- B15 Læremiddelforskning. Historiske og teoretiske perspektiv – 4 ECTS
- B17 21 century sociolinguistic perspectives on language and multilingualism – 4 ECTS
- B18 Samtidsperspektiver på religion i samfunn og utdanning – 4 ECTS
- B19 Theories and perspectives on the role of literature in the English language learning classroom – 4 ECTS
- B21 (4 stp) og B22 (2 stp) Fagdidaktikk i lys av profesjonsperspektiv – 4/2 ECTS
- B23 Queerteoretiske perspektiver: musikk, populærkultur og utdanning – 4 ECTS
- B24 Teoretiske perspektiver på barnehagelærer-profesjonalitet og barnehagelærerutdanning – 4 ECTS
- B25 Digitalization and practices of inclusion – 2 ECTS
- B26 Tverrvitskaplege teoretiske perspektiv på barn, barndom og barnekultur i barnehageprofesjonen – 4 ECTS
- B27/B28 Flerkulturell pedagogikk i barnehage, skole og lærerutdanning – 4/2 ECTS
- B29 Music Education and Social Theory – 4 ECTS
- B30 Classroom discourse and professional development – 4 ECTS
- B31 Inclusive and equitable education in light of newer theories from indigenous research – 4 ECTS

Course group C: Scientific research methods (6 ECTS + 4 ECTS)

This course group consists of one compulsory and one elective course. The compulsory course, **C1 Research methods in educational sciences** (6 ECTS), provides breadth, while the elective courses (4 ECTS) offer specialisation.

The compulsory course addresses qualitative and quantitative methods, with emphasis on their use in exploring issues in educational sciences. Different methodological, methodical and research ethical issues are presented and discussed. Attention is also given to how different research methods are used in empirical studies of education. Through the courses, PhD

candidates critically analyse methodological and research ethical issues in selected studies and present and discuss methodological questions relevant to their own thesis work.

The elective courses provide a basis for specialisation in methodological and methodical approaches of particular relevance to the field and to the candidate's own thesis. Taken together, the courses cover a broad range of qualitative and quantitative approaches, while addressing research ethics. Approved elective courses are listed by title below.

Previously approved elective courses in course group C

As of 01.08.2024:

- C2 Kvalitative metoder med vekt på intervju og aksjonsforskning – 4 ECTS
- C3 Kvantitative metoder med vekt på survey og effektstudier – 4 ECTS
- C4 Kvantitative metoder med vekt på korpuslingvistikk – 4 ECTS
- C5 Kvalitative metoder med vekt på etnografi og etnografisk utdanningsforskning – 4 ECTS
- C6 Research methods in studies of literacy and literacy teaching – 4/2 ECTS
- C7 Den litterære hendelse og lesningens etikk – 2 ECTS
- C8 Diskursteori og –metode – 4 ECTS
- C9 Analytiske metoder i nyere barne- og ungdomslitteraturforskning – 4/2 ECTS
- C10 Courses in scientific research methods – qualitative approaches – 3 ECTS (for external candidates; cannot be combined with C1)
- C11 Netnografi som forskningsmetode – 4 ECTS
- C12, C13 Researching digital literacy practices – 4/2 ECTS
- C14 Kvalitative metoder med vekt på kritisk realisme – 2 ECTS

Course group D: Academic dissemination (1 ECTS)

PhD candidates shall gain experience in disseminating themes and results from their own thesis work. To pass the course, the candidate must document at least one presentation of thesis findings at an international scientific conference and at least one dissemination activity aimed at users or the general public. User-oriented dissemination may target, for example, teachers, school leaders or trade unions, while public dissemination addresses the wider public, e.g. through different types of media. The user-oriented or public dissemination can be in different formats, such as an oral lecture, a newspaper article, a podcast, or different activities online or in social media.

- Course code: 2PRLU50
- Course title (Nynorsk): Fagleg formidling
- Course title (English): Professional communication
- The course is at PhD level and is compulsory for PhD candidates in Educational Sciences.

Learning outcomes

On completion of the course, the PhD candidate will have achieved the following learning outcome:

General competence

The candidate:

- can disseminate research results at scientific conferences and to different user groups

Content

- The PhD candidate presents results from their thesis work at an international scientific conference.
- The PhD candidate carries out at least one user-oriented or public dissemination activity based on the thesis results.

Final assessment

To pass the course, the PhD candidate must document:

- one presentation of results from the thesis work at a scientific conference, and
- one user-oriented or public dissemination activity based on results from the thesis.