Stockholms universitet

Research Supervision - theory and practice

Semester: Spring 2026

Research Supervision - theory and practice is a professional development course for doctoral supervisors. The course is tailored to employees at Stockholm university who are assigned to supervise doctoral students and/or have some prior experience in doctoral supervision. The course requires five weeks of full-time study and is equivalent to 3 credits (3 hp)..

Participants who fulfil all course requirements are entitled to a course certificate.

Courses at the Centre for the Advancement of University Teaching (CeUL) are designed to strengthen the basic pedagogical competence required for academic teacher positions. The Research Supervision course offered by CeUL are aligned with SUHF's, the association of Swedish higher education institutions, national goals and recommendations regarding teaching and supervision competence. The course is based on research on higher education pedagogy and incorporates collegial exchange of experience.

Aim and intended learning outcomes

This course aims to provide participants with opportunities and tools to discuss, develop and critically reflect on different aspects of doctoral supervision. Upon completion, participants will be expected to:

- Critically discuss and reflect on their role and responsibilities as supervisors in relation to research on doctoral supervision, as well as in relation to issues of ethics, diversity and equality
- Reflect on how doctoral students' learning and development can be supported within their own supervisory context

Content and course activities

The course comprises four full-day seminars spread over approximately two months. The extended schedule allows participants time to reflect on course themes within their supervisory practice.

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The course combines lectures, seminars, practical exercises, and peer discussions based on assigned readings and preparatory tasks. During the course, participants are given the opportunity to reflect on what one does as a supervisor and discuss various ways to improve the supervision in order to facilitate doctoral students' learning and development. Through discussions with colleagues from different departments and academic disciplines, the course offers insights into disciplinary and local traditions. Key topics include:

- The role and responsibilities of a supervisor
- Regulations governing doctoral education at Stockholm University
- Facilitating doctoral students' learning and development
- Feedback as a tool in supervision
- Ethics, gender, and equality in supervision

Participants are encouraged to reflect on their own supervisory practices and explore ways to support doctoral students more effectively. The course also provides insight into disciplinary and institutional traditions through discussions with colleagues from diverse academic backgrounds.

Participants are expected to prepare by completing readings and assignments in advance of each session.

Compulsory activities and attendance

Participation in all course meetings is compulsory. To encourage reflection and collegial exchange, participants are expected to attend all sessions. A minimum of 75% attendance is required to obtain a course certificate. If a session is missed, a written supplementary task must be completed. In addition to active participation in the course days and the required preparatory work, assessment is based on a written reflective assignment. Participants can choose one of two tasks: either to plan, conduct, and evaluate a supervision meeting with their own doctoral student, or to write an in-depth reflection based on the observation of a supervision meeting between a supervisor/s and a doctoral student. Course assignments are expected to be completed by participants without undue assistance from generative AI. Participants who successfully complete the course assignments will receive a course certificate.

Participants with disabilities may request adapted course assignments if needed, in consultation with the course responsible well in advance of the course start.

Literature

Research supervision in theory and practice by Eva Brodin, Jitka Lindén, Anders Sonesson and Åsa Lindberg-Sand (Student literature, Lund 2016). The course book will be sent by the university mail to all participants before the first teaching session.

A literature list of additional readings will be provided at the start of the course.

Course leader/s

Maria Weurlander, Associate Professor
Department of Education Stockholm University
(Course responsible)

John Airey, Professor
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