

Doctoral course: Introduction to academic work (7,5 ECTS credits)

Course managers/examiners: Leona Achtenhagen and Ethel Brundin

Course language: English

Prerequisites:

The course is intended for JIBS Doctoral students in Business Administration.

Education Cycle:

Third cycle, doctoral program course

Introduction:

Becoming an academic scholar requires a number of skills which are not necessarily included the undergraduate and graduate education. Embarking on a successful academic career demands doctoral students to learn the craft of writing and publishing, of teaching different audiences, and of interacting with society. In addition, academic work relies to a large degree on reciprocity, which includes the reviewing of journal submissions and applications for different posts. Many positions include research time only if external funding can be attracted. The aim of this doctoral introduction period is to support doctoral students in developing these skills. This introduction period is mandatory for all ESOL doctoral students starting their studies after August 2010.

Intended learning outcomes:

- Be able to review the relevant literature on a topic in a structured and meaningful way
- Critically assess an academic field to identify possible research problems
- Understand and master under guidance the process of developing, writing, submitting and reviewing academic articles according to international standards
- Be able to effectively develop and deliver different teaching formats
- Critically assess the content and style of presentations delivered by others
- Understand the demands of different external sources of funding on applications and how to meet them
- Get an overview of different possibilities of interacting with stakeholders outside of academia
- Get introduced to academic project work

Type of Instruction/Teaching format:

The introduction period will rely on different teaching formats, which include introductory lectures, student presentations, seminars, discussions and practical assignments.

Examination:

- Active participation in workshops
- Literature review on chosen topic
- Identification of research problem
- Writing of an academic article as well as a letter to an editor
- Reviewing two articles
- Developing and delivering a lecture
- Developing meaningful policy implications
- Application to external source of funding (in cooperation with supervisor)
- Interacting with non-academic stakeholders
- Assist senior researcher in academic project work (can be combined with literature review and/or writing an academic article)

Course evaluation:

A course evaluation will be conducted at the end of the course.

Literature:

Rudestam, K.E. & Newton, L.L. (2007): *Surviving your dissertation: A comprehensive guide to content and process*, Sage.

Additional literature for most workshops.

Course content and format¹:

Writing a literature review

After an introductory lecture to how one can go about to review relevant literature, doctoral students will write a literature review which they will receive feedback on.

Defining a research problem

Different ways of defining a research problem will be discussed and doctoral students will exercise defining theory-driven research problems based on suggested readings and/or the project they are involved in. The relevance and different ways of linking the research problem and literature review will be discussed. After this session, doctoral students have the task to refine their research problem definition in connection to the literature review.

Choosing a suitable method

An important aspect for quality in academic work is that the research problem is studied with a suitable research method. In this lecture, we will discuss which methods could match the research problems defined earlier in the course and why. As assignment related to this session, doctoral students will write the method section for their paper or research proposal.

¹ Most sessions require 4 hours in class, however some sessions may include 6-8 hours in class. Most workshops require preparations, compulsory attendance and independent course work.

Writing an academic article

Writing an academic article is almost a ‘craft’. Doctoral students are introduced to this ‘craft’, including structuring an article, framing it for a specific outlet, writing a letter to the editor. Course participants will write an article for a journal and receive feedback for improvement.

Reviewing an academic article

In this session, doctoral students will be introduced to the ‘art of reviewing’, namely how to write a developmental review. This session is linked to the previous one, and doctoral students review each others’ articles and discuss real cases of article submissions and reviews. Every participant reviews two other papers.

Journal submissions – an editor’s view

This session will provide an insight into the ‘other side’, namely what do editors look for in journal submissions. (No assignment)

Developing a lecture

Many doctoral students feel that they are ‘thrown into teaching’ without adequate preparation. This session provides some examples of how lectures can be developed and structured. Doctoral students then have the task to develop the teaching material for one lecture, which they will receive feedback on.

Conducting case seminars

The idea of case seminars is to advance students’ analytical skills by linking theory and practice, and by thinking through different possible managerial choices. This session analyzes some example of case studies and accompanying teaching instructions and practices how case seminars can be held in an effective way.

Presentation skills

In this session, doctoral students receive some tricks and hints about how to present in an effective way. Doctoral students hold the lecture or seminar developed for the previous sessions and receive feedback on the their teaching (in terms of content and delivery).

Applying for external funding

This session gives an overview of some main sources of funding within business administration. Doctoral students are encouraged to develop (in cooperation with their supervisors) an application responding to a suitable call for applications. This application will be reviewed and discussed to allow for further improvement before submission.

Writing meaningful policy implications

Often, journal articles and applications for external funding require a section on the implications of the research results for policy makers. This is typically difficult to conduct due to a lack of knowledge of how policy-making works. This session provides an introduction to policy making and how policy implications could be written in a meaningful way. The assignment related to this session requires to write a section on policy implications for either a journal article or an application for external funding.

Interacting with stakeholders outside academia

The ‘third task’ is often neglected in academic work. This session discusses different possibilities of interacting with stakeholders outside of academia. The assignment related to this session is to conduct and report on one successful interaction with non-academia related to the doctoral student’s work.

Academic project work (This project could lead to in addition up to 7,5 project credits)

The doctoral student is assigned to assist a senior researcher (professor or associate professor) in an existing project work.