



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

ESD600 Theory and Method of Research in Education for Sustainable Development, 15 credits

Teori och metod för forskning om utbildning för hållbar utveckling, 15 högskolepoäng
Second Cycle

Confirmation

This course syllabus was confirmed by Department of Education and Special Education on 2019-07-02 and was last revised on 2022-06-13 to be valid from 2022-06-13, autumn semester of 2022.

Field of education: Social Sciences 100%

Department: Department of Education and Special Education

Other participating department

Department of Pedagogical, Curricular and Professional Studies

Position in the educational system

The course is a compulsory course in the master's Program Education for Sustainable Development, University of Gothenburg.

Main field of studies

Education and Sustainability

Specialization

A1F, Second cycle, has second-cycle course/s as entry requirements

Entry requirements

At least 45 credits in the main field of studies *Education and Sustainability* or equivalent. Applicants must prove their knowledge of the English language (English 6/English B) of the Swedish Upper Secondary School or equivalent level of an internationally recognized test, for example TOEFL, IELTS.

Learning outcomes

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

Critically review research designs, including theoretical and methodological assumptions that are used to make connections with ESD.
Identify issues encountered in ESD practice or literature that recognize different perspectives.
Formulate research goals and defensible research questions aimed at better understanding and progressing ESD.
Choose an ESD-theory relevant for addressing research goals and answering research questions.
Write a research plan according to a methodological design, and reflect on participation and collaboration with others.
Engage with descriptions of research ethics, and critically reflect on how a researcher would do research ethically.

The course is sustainability-focused, which means that at least one of the learning outcomes clearly shows that the course content meets at least one of the University of Gothenburg's confirmed sustainability criteria. The content also constitutes the course's main focus.

Course content

The course builds greater understanding of the research methods used in empirical studies of ESD. This greater understanding enables students to practice developing new research plans that focus on ESD practice and scholarship, making good use of theories and research methods. The course consists of three modules which aim to develop the skills that are needed to design new research that is both methodologically sound and supported by ESD-relevant theory.

In the first module of the course, formulation of ESD research goals and questions in a scholarly manner are dealt with, inviting students to independently and critically assess whether formulated goals and questions can effectively be used in their master research plan. ESD research questions for different types of studies will be introduced. In addition, research ethics relevant to ESD research will be presented, focusing on an ethics that is (self) reflexive, respectful and in open dialogue with others. ESD research ethics should also take account of participation and collaboration with others.

In the second module of the course different theoretical and methodological designs will be addressed (e.g., large-scale investigations, discourse, text, document and policy analyses, and action research and participatory action research). With respect to research designs, students are free to focus on any research design suitable to ESD research, whether it be qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods.

The objective of module 3 is a written research plan. In their writing, students are stimulated to consider the dissertation topic and study that might be pursued under the final master thesis course in the ESD programme.

Throughout the course, students shall reflect on and take responsibility for making research approaches more socially and environmentally sustainable.

Form of teaching

The course is web-based and will take place entirely on the University of Gothenburgs' digital learning platform. Teaching is done by way of webinars, short web-based presentations, workshops and written exchanges on the discussion tool of the digital learning platform. Students are expected to undertake significant self-study. Course assignments are submitted to the digital learning platform. The course is built into three modules which are described in the course guide.

Language of instruction: English

Assessment

Assessment will be done individually through two written assignments (module 1 and 3) and taking at least two methodology design workshops (module 2). In the course there are three assessment moments where grades and credits are given: after module 1 (5 hp), after modules 2 (5 hp) and after modules 3 (5 hp).

If a student misses taking one or more methodology design workshops, they are required to go through the materials of the chosen methodology available on the digital learning platform and have to hand in either an oral presentation or a written text to show that they understand the content.

For the individually written assignment of Module 3, complementary work can be given. When complementary work is required this must be submitted within one week from the day the student is informed about it.

A student who has taken two exams in a course or part of a course without obtaining a pass grade is entitled to the nomination of another examiner. The student needs to contact the department for a new examiner, preferably in writing, and this should be approved by the department unless there are special reasons to the contrary (Chapter 6 Section 22 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

If a student has received a recommendation from the University of Gothenburg for special educational support, where it is compatible with the learning outcomes of the course and provided that no unreasonable resources are required, the examiner may decide to allow the student to sit an adjusted exam or alternative form of assessment.

In the event that a course has ceased or undergone major changes, students are to be guaranteed at least three examination sessions (including the ordinary examination session) over a period of at least one year, but no more than two years, after the course has ceased/been changed.

Grades

The grading scale comprises: Excellent (A), Very good (B), Good (C), Satisfactory (D), Sufficient (E) and Fail (F).

The assessment consists of multiple assignments in each module. The written assignment of module 1 and the workshop participation of module 2 will be graded with pass and fail. The written research plan of module 3 will be graded on an A-F scale. All assignments need a minimum of pass. The criteria for the different grades (A-F) will be specified in the course guide.

Course evaluation

Course evaluation is done in relation to the course learning outcomes and content and is done continuously during the course in the form of an individual network survey at the end of the course. The result and any changes in the course structure should be communicated to both the students who completed the evaluation and to the students who will begin the course.

Additional information

The course uses the University of Gothenburg's management learning system for different forms of digital communication. Access to a computer and the Internet is therefore required.