Comparative research on education and educational performance, 7.5 + 7.5 ECTS

Ph. D. course

The course has one basic part (7.5 ECTS) and one extension part (7.5 ECTS).

1. Confirmation

The syllabus was confirmed by Department of Education at University of Gothenburg on 2008-12-01 to be valid from 2009-01-01.

2. Field of education

Responsible department: Department of Education

Position in the educational system: Postgraduate level

3. Entrance qualifications

All students who are registered as Ph. D. students in the educational sciences and neighbouring fields are invited to participate. In some cases pre-doctoral students may be eligible provided that it is clear that they are about to be enrolled in a Ph. D. program. International students are also welcome to participate, and it is the ambition of all courses to have students from other countries enrolled. The courses are inter- and multidisciplinary, and students enrolled in Ph. D. training outside education and educational research, for instance in fields such as media studies, psychology, applied informatics, communication sciences, youth studies etc. are encouraged to apply.

If there are more applicants than the 20 admission places available for each course, a selection will be made based on an assessment of the relevance of the student’s research plan and qualifications in relation to the objectives of the course. The selection process is carried out by the course-leaders in co-operation with the leadership of the research school.

4. Course content

Comparative research is an important, and controversial, tradition within education research – on one side linked to notions of modernisation and development, and on the other side to the power to define what is to be compared and what to do with outcomes of comparisons. We will present and discuss major research approaches and research strategies in comparative and international education studies combined with “hands-on” workshops.
Focus is on comparative education research in contemporary societies. Here, comparisons often are used for evaluating the performances of national education systems as well as schools in local districts. Thus, we will examine current discourses – on comparative education and their significance for the politics of education in terms of e.g. league tables and ranking lists, and for revising curricula. Special emphasis will be placed on issues of globalisation, power/knowledge and notions of borrowing and lending in education.

5. Learning outcomes

After completing the course the students will be able to:

• Identify major research traditions within comparative education research and their respective theoretical and methodological foundations
• Present and discuss theoretical and methodological foundations of comparative analyses of education systems and processes
• Critically analyse current discourses on comparisons and modernisation in terms of internationalisation and globalisation
• Identify and carry out preliminary analyses of available secondary data in comparative research
• Relate their research interest to current approaches within comparative education studies.

6. Required reading

List of required reading is enclosed.

7. Assessment

Active participation in all course activities is a requirement. This includes active participation in the net activities and in physical meetings. In addition, the student has to write a final essay which is examined during the second physical meeting in the first part of the course. This essay has to be posted on the course web-site no later than a week before start of the second physical meeting.

The second part of the course is an individual part in which the participant writes a research essay which is examined in a seminar

9. Grading scale

The grades are Pass or Fail.
10. Course evaluation

The results will be communicated to the students and will function as a guide for further development of the course.

11. Additional information

The course will be hosted by different research institutes with University of Gothenburg as the administrative centre. The course will have two parts. One basic part (7.5 ECTS) and one extension part (7.5 ECTS). The first part will be organised as a mix of on-line and physical seminars/meetings and will involve two three-day physical meetings. The second part is an individual course in which the participant writes a research essay within the topic of the course. This essay will be supervised by one of the teachers of the course. This essay will then be presented and examined in the context of a research seminar with the relevant expertise. All teaching and examination will take place in English.