



Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Programme Syllabus

Reg. no. HS 2025/90

Master programme in Educational Work – Early Childhood Education and Care

Programme code: SAFSP

Programme title: Master programme in Educational Work – Early Childhood Education and Care

Magister-/masterprogram i pedagogiskt arbete med inriktning mot förskolepedagogik

Credits: 60/120

Programme approval: The programme syllabus was approved by the Faculty Board of Arts and Social Science on 6 February 2025, effective from the autumn semester of 2025.

Language of instruction: Swedish

Education cycle: Second (Master's)

Degree type: General Degree of Master (120 credits) with the possibility of a Degree of Master (60 credits)

Entry requirements: Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Preschool Education of at least 180 credits, including a degree project comprising at least 15 credits at G2E level. Upper secondary school level Swedish 3 and English 6/A. Equivalence assessment may be made.

General information

The Master programme in Educational Work – Early Childhood Education and Care offers a comprehensive education that leads to a Degree of Master in Educational Work (60 or 120 credits). The programme is designed for students and professionals who are interested in early childhood education, research and other educational institutions. Graduates are eligible for positions with a focus on development at both management level and unit level within the national school system.

The programme offers two possible outcomes. Students can pursue a Degree of Master 60 credits or a Degree of Master 120 credits. For a Degree of Master (120 credits), students complete two projects comprising 15 credits each, one at the level of Master's 60 credits and one at the level of Master's

120 credits.

Programme outcomes

For programme completion, students must meet the national requirements for a Degree of Master (60 or 120 credits).

National outcomes for a Degree of Master (60 credits)

Knowledge and understanding

For a Degree of Master (60 credits) the student shall

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding in the main field of study, including both an overview of the field and specialised knowledge in certain areas of the field as well as insight into current research and development work, and
- demonstrate specialised methodological knowledge in the main field of study.

Competence and skills

For a Degree of Master (60 credits) the student shall

- demonstrate the ability to integrate knowledge and analyse, assess and deal with complex phenomena, issues and situations even with limited information,
- demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate issues autonomously as well as to plan and, using appropriate methods, undertake advanced tasks within predetermined time frames,
- demonstrate the ability in speech and writing to report clearly and discuss his or her conclusions and the knowledge and arguments on which they are based in dialogue with different audiences, and
- demonstrate the skills required for participation in research and development work or employment in some other qualified capacity.

Judgement and approach

For a Degree of Master (60 credits) the student shall

- demonstrate the ability to make assessments in the main field of study informed by relevant disciplinary, social and ethical issues and also to demonstrate awareness of ethical aspects of research and development work,
- demonstrate insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used, and
- demonstrate the ability to identify the personal need for further knowledge and take responsibility for his or her ongoing learning.

Independent project (degree project)

A requirement for the award of a Degree of Master (60 credits) is completion by the student of an independent project (degree project) for at least 15 credits in the main field of study.

National outcomes for a Degree of Master (120 credits)

Knowledge and understanding

For a Degree of Master (120 credits) the student shall

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding in the main field of study, including both broad knowledge of the field and a considerable degree of specialised knowledge in certain areas of the field as well as insight into current research and development work, and
- demonstrate specialised methodological knowledge in the main field of study.

Competence and skills

For a Degree of Master (120 credits) the student shall

- demonstrate the ability to critically and systematically integrate knowledge and analyse, assess and deal with complex phenomena, issues and situations even with limited information,
- demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate issues critically, autonomously and creatively as well as to plan and, using appropriate methods, undertake advanced tasks within predetermined time frames and so contribute to the formation of knowledge as well as the ability to evaluate this work,

- demonstrate the ability in speech and writing both nationally and internationally to clearly report and discuss his or her conclusions and the knowledge and arguments on which they are based in dialogue with different audiences, and
- demonstrate the skills required for participation in research and development work or autonomous employment in some other qualified capacity.

Judgement and approach

For a Degree of Master (120 credits) the student shall

- demonstrate the ability to make assessments in the main field of study informed by relevant disciplinary, social and ethical issues and also to demonstrate awareness of ethical aspects of research and development work,
- demonstrate insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used, and
- demonstrate the ability to identify the personal need for further knowledge and take responsibility for his or her ongoing learning.

Independent project (degree project)

A requirement for the award of a Degree of Master (120 credits) is completion by the student of an independent project (degree project) of at least 30 credits in educational work as the main field of study. The degree project may comprise less than 30 credits, however no less than 15 credits, if the student has already completed an independent project in the second cycle of at least 15 credits in educational work as the main field of study or the equivalent from a study programme outside Sweden.

Programme structure

The programme is taught at a pace of 50 % over the course of eight semesters. The programme comprises distance teaching via an online learning platform as well as on-campus meetings at Karlstad University and includes lectures, seminars and individual supervision as well as group supervision. Course outcomes and content are specified in the respective course syllabus. Generally, instruction is characterised by collegial methods through which students develop the competence and skills described in the learning outcomes. Great emphasis is placed on the student's reflections, which form the basis for discussions based on the student's questions, where the student takes an active role in teaching as well as their own learning.

The Master's level (60 credits) of the programme includes two courses comprising 15 credits each with a specialisation in early childhood education, both of which are related to a broader societal perspective with a focus on key social issues such as gender equality and sustainable development. This level also includes a general course in scientific methods (15 credits) and the independent project (15 credits). Students who are studying for a Master's degree (120 credits) then go on to taking two specialised courses comprising 15 credits each with a particular focus on early childhood education, as well as an in-depth course in scientific methods with a particular focus on early childhood education research (15 credits), in addition to a second independent project (15 credits). All courses are mandatory.

The programme offers favourable conditions for conducting practice-based and relevant research by providing the opportunity to connect the degree project(s) to development needs and development projects of relevance to the student's professional practice.

Programme curriculum

Note that titles and order of programme courses may vary from the list below.

The following courses are included in the programme:

Semester 1

The role and leadership of preschool teachers (15 credits)

The aim of the course is to shed light on the mission of preschools to teach and adhere to fundamental democratic values, related specifically to the mission, responsibility and leadership of preschool teachers.

Semester 2

Education and teaching in preschool (15 credits)

The aim of the course is to contribute to a deeper understanding of preschool education at the policy

level and preschool teaching practices.

Semester 3

Research methods in educational sciences (15 credits)

The aim of the course is to provide a deeper understanding of theoretical and methodological issues within the research field of educational work.

Semester 4

Degree project in preschool pedagogy I (15 credits)

The course consists of the students completing and defending an independent research project in educational work at Master's level (60 credits).

Students who choose to continue towards a Degree of Master (120 credits) will also take the following courses within the programme:

Semester 5

Theoretical perspectives on preschool education and teaching (15 credits)

The aim of the course is to contribute to a deeper understanding of various theoretical perspectives on preschool education and teaching.

Semester 6

Intercultural and international perspectives on preschool education and teaching (15 credits)

The aim of the course is for the students to deepen their knowledge of current perspectives on preschool education and teaching from intercultural and international perspectives, with a focus on democracy and core values.

Semester 7

Methods in early childhood education research (15 credits)

The aim of the course is for the students to deepen their knowledge of various scientific theories and methods within early childhood education as a field of research.

Semester 8

Degree project in preschool pedagogy II (15 credits)

The course consists of the students completing and defending an independent research project in educational work at Master's level (120 credits).

Degree title

Degree of Master of Social Science (60 credits)

Major: Educational Work

Degree of Master of Social Science (120 credits)

Major: Educational Work

Credit transfer

According to the Higher Education Ordinance, Chap. 6, Sect. 6–8, students have the right to transfer credits and have prior learning recognised upon approval.

Additional information

The local regulations for first and second cycle education at Karlstad University stipulate the obligations and rights of students and staff.

Previous versions of the programme syllabus have been approved:

8 December 2022, Reg.no HS 2022/1119, effective from the autumn semester of 2023.