



Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Programme Syllabus

Reg.no. HS 2024/1320

Risk Management in Society

Programme code:	SARHS
Programme title:	Risk Management in Society Riskhantering i samhället
Credits:	120 ECTS
Programme approval:	The programme syllabus was approved by the Faculty Board of Arts and Social Sciences on 31 October 2024, effective from the autumn semester of 2025.
Language of instruction:	Swedish and English
Education Cycle:	Second (Master's)
Degree Type:	General
Entry requirements:	Bachelor's degree of at least 180 ECTS credits in one of the main fields of study, namely the social sciences, natural sciences, technology, or health and social care. Must include an independent project of 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 programme focuses on the concept of risk management from a citizen perspective, thereby taking a multi- and interdisciplinary approach. How can we create a more safe and secure society today and for future generations? The future aspect includes a sustainability perspective with consideration to the conditions of nature. Risk management in this field is associated with threats to life, health, environment, property and societal functions. Risk management refers to the actual architecture (principles, frameworks and processes) for effectively managing the risks (for instance ISO 31000). Risk management as a science looks at the theory and practice of risk management and aims to develop knowledge of different risks, as well as methodology and evidence related to analysis and management.

The master's programme is both vocationally oriented and geared towards academic research preparation, with the intention to provide a broad understanding about risk management in society. The programme studies lay the foundation for practical risk management and systematic safety work as carried out in various sectors of society. The studies should create understanding of the conditions for risk management and how they are affected by various control systems, as well as of the differences in rules and perspectives between fields of application and sectors of society. The programme therefore opens the door to many different career choices in the public sector, the business sector and other organisations. Possible professions upon completion of the programme include safety or contingency coordinator, safety strategist and business developer, but risk management can also be an integrated duty in other positions where it is not evident from the job title.

Programme outcomes

For programme completion, students must meet the national degree requirements.

National outcomes

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 deepened 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 to clearly present and discuss their conclusions in speech and writing in dialogue with different audiences in both national and international contexts, 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) for at least 30 credits in 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 for at least 15 credits in the main field of study or the equivalent from a programme of study outside Sweden.

Programme structure

The programme covers 2 years of full-time study. Courses run two at a time simultaneously and at 50% pace, with the exception of research methodology courses and the independent project, which are at 100% pace.

This is a distance programme with mandatory on-campus sessions approximately every 10 weeks where students spend two to three days participating in lectures, seminars and group projects. Instruction is designed to support the students with their ongoing learning through interaction with each other and society at large, to encourage them to take an active role in their learning. Forms of instruction include self-assessment, peer response, case studies and project-based learning.

Internationalisation

Karlstad University wants to promote collaboration and exchange with other universities. Karlstad University has partnerships with many other universities in Sweden and abroad, and has an organisation in place to support students who want to make use of this opportunity. Students are therefore encouraged to complete part of the programme at a university abroad. The programme structure allows for studies abroad primarily during the first 10 weeks of the autumn semester in the final year.

Programme curriculum

Many issues and relations discussed in the main field of risk management are best understood and studied through different theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches. In addition to the primary discipline, the programme draws from subjects like public health science, geography, environmental studies, political science and psychology. The programme concerns studies about undesirable social events and how to manage risk through systematic work. This work commonly includes risk identification, risk analysis, risk assessment and risk mitigation, often described as a loop for continuous improvement. Different kinds of societal vulnerabilities and possible mitigative measures are studied based on different perspectives such as sustainability, equality and gender.

The programme is geared towards the societal level with an emphasis on prevention and preparation. The two extremes of everyday incidents and major disasters in part represent separate challenges in society, which are addressed thematically in special modules progressing along the two tracks of Human Safety and Natural hazards and Disaster Management in the recommended and optional courses. Both tracks focus on the vulnerability of critical functions, human health and interdependence, its determining factors and changes over time.

The master's level requires a combined focus on subject theory, for students with a different disciplinary background from their bachelor's studies, and specialisation towards a problematising approach in terms of risk management practices and theoretical foundations in preparation of research in the field, among other things.

The programme starts with an introduction to risk studies (7.5 credits) followed by gradually more specialised courses (52.5 credits) with a focus on

- everyday incidents where risk can be described in terms of injury outcome (epidemiology) and management in the form of local efforts in safety promotion or injury prevention, and
- major disasters and crises where risks in the form of threats, consequences and complex system dependencies are included.

Field-specific teaching regarding method is integrated into the courses alongside subject theory. The same applies for applications within the subject. The courses include applied theory of science and systems theory specific to the main field of study as well as methodological knowledge.

Students can freely choose optional courses provided they fulfil the admission requirements. Examples of optional courses could be other courses in risk management towards a broader or more specialised degree, or courses in other main fields of study.

The study route of the programme

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

Semester 1

Introduction to Risk Management in Society, 7.5 credits
 Human Safety I: Injury Analysis and Risk Assessment, 7.5 credits
 Natural Disaster Management 1, 7.5 credits
 Optional course, 7.5 credits

Semester 2

Human Safety II: Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion, 7.5 credits
 Natural Disaster Management 2, 7.5 credits
 Risk Management Theory, 7.5 credits
 Optional course, 7.5 credits

Semester 3

Scientific Methods for Risk Management in Society, 15 credits
 Optional course, 15 credits

Semester 4

Risk Management - Master Degree Project, 30 credits

Degree title

Degree of Master of Social Science (120 credits)
 Major: Risk Management

Filosofie masterexamen
 Huvudområde: Riskhantering

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:

7 February 2014, reg.no C 2014/173, valid from the autumn semester of 2014

26 September 2019, reg.no. HNT 2019/575, valid from the autumn semester 2020

20 January 2020, reg.no HS 2020/100, valid from the autumn semester of 2020