



FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Master Programme in Psychology with a Focus on the Future and Global Survival

*Masterprogram i psykologi med inriktning
framtid och global överlevnad*

Programme code: VAPFO

Credits: 120

Education level: Second cycle

Degree type: General qualification

Language of instruction: Swedish

Approved by

Faculty Board of Arts and Social Sciences, 04 June 2026

Effective from

Spring semester 2027

Entry requirements

Degree of Bachelor comprising at least 180 credits, including at least 90 credits in psychology with an independent project of at least 15 credits at G2E level, or equivalent.

In addition, upper secondary level Swedish 3 or Swedish as a second language 3, and English 6

or

Swedish level 3, Swedish as a second language level 3, and English level 2.

General information

The programme provides both broad and specialised knowledge in psychology, with a particular focus on survival. The overarching theme of the courses included in the programme is the future and global survival. Our world is facing a number of problems and threats, some of a more local character and some with a potentially global impact. This includes problems and threats such as social and economic injustice, famine, and destruction of ecosystems. Climate change, with its potential for catastrophic impacts, is a global threat that has been widely discussed in recent years. Many of these threats could have major implications in terms of, for example, scarce food supply or migration flows. Even less dramatic events could lead to major disruptions in normal societal operations. From a wider perspective, there are also more dramatic plausible events, such as terror attacks and acts of war. In a worst-case scenario, a nuclear war would cause incalculable damage to the living environment. The programme focuses on knowledge of the psychological processes that control these issues, the large coordinated resources required as a response, and how or by what means it is possible to make a difference at different levels. The courses included in the programme convey the importance of sustainable development and gender equality, especially in components about inner motivation, development and readiness to change.

The programme aims to prepare students for both further studies at the doctoral level, as well as for professional work in various roles that require a psychological focus, such as investigative and planning work, analyses of societal needs, crisis and disaster preparedness, and supply of raw material and food. Possible employers include local governments/municipalities, county administrations, research institutions, the Swedish Civil Defence and Resilience Agency (MCF), civil defence and the armed forces, as well as private companies, non-profit associations and charity organisations.

Programme outcomes

For programme completion, students must meet the national outcomes for a Master's Degree as well as specific local outcomes.

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 need for further knowledge and take responsibility for his or her ongoing learning.

Degree project

A requirement for the award of a Degree of Master (120 credits) is completion by the student of an independent project of 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.

Local outcomes

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

- demonstrate insight into the complex issues surrounding human decision-making and behaviour in relation to other disciplines in the transition to a sustainable society, and
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the meaning of inner psychological insight and development for the implementation of lasting behavioural change.

Programme structure

This is a full-time, distance-based degree programme with teaching via online platforms. Instruction is in the form of teaching in real time according to a fixed schedule, as well as recorded material. During the course of the programme, there will be seminars, workshops, guest lectures with both national and international lecturers, and a number of practical components conducted individually outdoors. There will also be regular group projects, during which the individual student keeps a logbook with his/her own reflections for the purpose of acquiring a critical review of his/her own practice in relation to the theories included in the course literature. The programme concludes with an independent project (Master's thesis).

In semester 1, students focus on the global challenges and how psychology can provide an understanding of climate, environmental and resource issues and the efforts required to solve future threats. This is followed by a course on how research can be assessed and any difficulties involved in assessing facts and truth-value. The semester concludes with specialised studies in crisis and disaster psychology and global trends.

Semesters 2 and 3 focus on specialised studies in scientific theory, skills and current research. Emphasis is on opportunities and solutions to the problems of the future, and how psychology as a science has a role to play. An advanced course in scientific methods is included in semester 3.

In semester 4, the programme concludes with an independent project where the students have the opportunity to demonstrate and expand their knowledge of theory and empirical research methods within their chosen subject area.

Programme curriculum

Note that the programme courses listed may have somewhat different titles or be offered in a different order than stated below.

Semester 1

- Introduction to psychology, sustainability, and global challenges, 7.5 credits
- The psychology of decision making and critical evaluation, 7.5 credits
- Crisis and disaster psychology, 7.5 credits
- Outlook on life and global trends, 7.5 credits

Semester 2

- The role of nature and ecopsychology, 7.5 credits
- Sustainable leadership, 7.5 credits
- Positive psychology and salutogenic perspective, 7.5 credits
- Conflict management, 7.5 credits

Semester 3

- Positive behavioural change, 7.5 credits
- Scientific projects about the future and global survival, 7.5 credits
- Scientific methods in psychology - advanced level, 15 credits

Semester 4

- Independent project (Master's thesis), 30 credits

Title of qualification

Degree of Master of Science (120 credits)

Major: Psychology

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.

A previous version of the programme syllabus has been approved: 8 September 2023, reg. no. HS 2023/680, effective from the spring semester 2024