

SASTO, Master of Science Programme (One Year) in Societal Resilience and Comprehensive Defence, 60 credits

Magisterprogram i samhällsresiliens och totalförsvar, 60 högskolepoäng

Second-cycle programme requiring previous university studies / Program med akademiska förkunskapskrav och med slutlig examen på avancerad nivå

Decision

The programme syllabus was approved by Faculty Board of Social Sciences on 2026-03-19 (U 2026/154). The syllabus comes into effect 2026-10-15 and is valid from the autumn semester 2027.

Programme description

The programme leads to a Degree of Master (60 credits) with a main field of study in Societal Resilience and Preparedness Studies. Within the broad interdisciplinary main field of study, the programme focuses on issues relating to society's resilience – its ability to prevent and withstand severe stresses, crises and, ultimately, war – as well as its capacity and conditions for managing these stresses.

The programme is based on the premise that the present day is characterised by parallel and partly conflicting trends in security policy. Developments in Europe over the last decade have meant a return to a security logic defined in territorial and military terms. At the same time, the security threat landscape is more complex than before and the stresses on society are multifaceted. The dividing lines between war, crisis and peace are becoming increasingly blurred.

Another central premise of the programme is that both the challenges facing modern societies and the capacity to address these challenges are, in all material respects, conditioned by inter- and transnational relationships. Issues of governance, external engagement/collaboration and organisation must therefore be understood from a multi-level perspective, which, in a European context, encompasses dynamics at EU and NATO levels. Interdependencies and strategic vulnerabilities (regarding critical infrastructure, security of supply and supply chains) are blurring the boundary between domestic and foreign policy.

The programme consists of two semesters of full-time study. The first semester begins with an overarching course on the theme of comprehensive defence and societal resilience, which introduces both contemporary developments in comprehensive defence from a European comparative perspective and research in the field. The course also includes some historical contextualisation, as well as legal elements. This is followed by three in-depth courses that address the programme's field of study based on three central themes. The first of these courses focuses on the importance of communication for societal resilience and comprehensive defence, and also addresses issues of disinformation and psychological defence. The course also examines the role of the individual in comprehensive defence. The second thematic course focuses on international and transnational arrangements for security policy governance and external engagement/collaboration, with a focus on the EU and NATO, but also addresses the more general question of how the global political order affects individual societies' ability to work on societal resilience. The third of the advanced thematic courses takes as its starting point the intersection between politics and economics and analyses issues relating to the development of globalisation from a security policy perspective, with a particular focus on interdependencies, strategic vulnerabilities and supply security.

The programme's second semester begins with a fourth advanced course on the theme of innovation and technological development from a security policy perspective. This is followed by a methodology course worth 7.5 credits. The programme concludes with a degree project worth 15 credits. The degree project involves an independent analysis of a research question within the field of societal resilience and comprehensive defence.

The programme's structure and teaching methods aim to develop the ability to carry out advanced analytical work. Given the programme's focus on issues of societal resilience in the broadest sense, the potential job market for graduates with a degree from this programme is also very large, in both the public and private sectors. Within the latter, the programme addresses activities and processes found at all levels of administration, from local to international. Potential employers include companies, civil society organisations, public authorities and administrations of various kinds as well as international organisations.

Goals

Pursuant to the Higher Education Ordinance, for a Degree of Master (60 credits) the student shall demonstrate the following:

Knowledge and understanding

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

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding in the main field of study Societal Resilience and Preparedness Studies, 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 Societal Resilience and Preparedness Studies.

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 Societal Resilience and Preparedness Studies, 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.

Course information

The programme comprises a total of 60 credits, spread across seven courses as listed below. The programme includes a dedicated methodology course (7.5 credits). In addition to this, teaching in methodology and philosophy of science equivalent to 7.5 credits is incorporated into the programme's other courses.

Term 1

Comprehensive Defence and Societal Resilience (7.5 credits)

Communication, (Dis)information and Psychological Defence (7.5 credits)

Multilevel Security Governance: the EU, NATO and Global Dynamics (7.5 credits)

Interdependencies and Vulnerabilities in a Globalised World (7.5 credits)

Term 2

Innovation and Technological Development from a Security Policy Perspective (7.5 credits)

Research Methods (7.5 credits)

Degree Project (15 credits)

Degree

Degree titles

Degree of Master of Science (60 credits) in Societal Resilience and Comprehensive Defence

Main field of study: Societal Resilience and Preparedness Studies

Filosofie magisterexamen i samhällsresiliens och totalförsvär

Huvudområde: Samhällsresiliens- och beredskapsstudier

Entry requirements and selection method

Entry requirements

The equivalent of a Swedish Bachelor's degree with a major (i.e. at least 90 ECTS credits) in a main field of study within the social sciences, economics or law (or equivalent).

A good command of spoken and written English, equivalent to English 6/B (advanced) from a Swedish upper secondary school, is a requirement.

Selection method

The applicant's estimated capacity to complete the programme is the overall criterion for selection. During the selection process, particular consideration is given to previous study results (grades on courses and especially the degree thesis for the Bachelor's degree). An individual statement of purpose (according to programme-specific instruction) is also taken into account.

Other information

The language of instruction for the programme is English.