From Research to Policy for Sustainable Development

Multidisciplinary PhD-course corresponding to 5 higher education credits

Gothenburg February 3-5 and March 3-5 2015

1. Introduction

Research has an important role to play in the transition to a more sustainable society. This PhD-course aims at enhancing the PhD students’ understanding of research-policy linkages and to increase the capabilities of the PhD-students to communicate their research findings to different stakeholders. The course has been developed upon a request from the research school ClimBEco for a course on research-policy linkages that combines theory with practice. The course is also open for PhD-students outside ClimBEco.

2. Entrance qualifications and position in the educational system

The course From Research to Policy for Sustainable Development, is a PhD-course that corresponds to 5 higher education credits. To be eligible for the course the participant must be enrolled as a PhD-student. The course is particularly suitable for students that have completed or almost completed at least one of the research papers in their thesis. A maximum of 15 students will be accepted to the course in order to allow for a high level of interaction.

3. Course rationale, aim and contents

In order for research to contribute to a more sustainable development, it is critical that research results reach out to a wide audience. Researchers can take a more or less active role to ensure outreach depending on personal motivations and their institutional context. There is a growing body of scientific research on the science-policy interface, disentangling factors that facilitate or hinder the uptake of research findings into policy making processes. A traditional view mainly focusing on informing about new research findings is increasingly replaced by models stressing the importance of policy engagement and interaction for establishing more evidence based policy making. However, many efforts of research communication continue to be based on ad-hoc, intuition-driven approaches, paying little attention to research findings on what makes for effective policy and public engagement.
The aim of this course is to enhance the PhD students understanding of the research-policy linkages and to increase the capabilities of the PhD-students to communicate their research findings to different stakeholders. The course combines theory about factors facilitating or hindering the uptake of research findings in policy making processes with practical exercises. The methodology is a mix of presentations, literature seminars and assignments. Guest lectures with senior researchers, high level policy experts and journalists with vast experiences from research-policy interaction play an important part in the course.

The PhD-students will link the issues presented in the course to their PhD-thesis work as well as to the realities in their respective countries and research institutions. Experience sharing and discussions among the participants are important elements of the course.

Examples of practical assignments include: (i) Write a “Research to policy plan” for the PhD-thesis. This includes a mapping of potential stakeholders and a plan for when and how to communicate with different stakeholders; (ii) Write a policy brief based on one of the chapters in the dissertation; and (iii) Make an oral presentation of your research findings.

4. Learning outcomes

After completion of this course, the PhD-students should have:

a. Improved understanding of research-policy linkages.

b. Increased awareness about the role of universities and researchers in policy making processes and different models for policy engagement.

c. Enhanced understanding of the policy environment and entry points for policy engagement in different contexts, and specifically the policy context of the PhD student’s thesis.

d. Improved skills in communicating the results of research to policy makers and to provide policy advice to authorities/governments.

5. Course organizers

The Center for Environment and Sustainability (GMV), which is a platform for work on environmental sustainability for the University of Gothenburg and Chalmers University of Technology, is responsible for the course.

The course has been developed by researchers, policy and communication experts at GMV, the Departments of Economics and Political Science at the University of Gothenburg and the Department of Environmental System Analysis at the Chalmers University of Technology.
6. **Course format and dates**

The course will be concentrated to two 3-day sessions mixing lectures with discussions and practically oriented exercises.

The course will take place in Gothenburg on the following dates:

- Session 1: February 3-5, 2015
- Session 2: March 3-5, 2015

Participants are expected to work individually before, between and after the sessions with short assignments.

Tuition will be in English throughout the course.

7. **Required readings**

The course literature consists of a compilation of different research papers and policy materials.

8. **Examination and grading scale**

To pass the course the following must be fulfilled:

- Participation in at least 80% of the scheduled hours
- Active engagement in practically oriented exercises
- Approved research – policy plan linked to the PhD-students’ thesis work
- Approved policy brief based on a chapter in the thesis.

The grades are Pass (godkänd, G) or Fail (underkänd, U).

9. **Application**

Students which fulfill the course requirements will be admitted on a first come basis.

Applications should be submitted on-line at the [GMV website](http://www.gmv.chalmers.gu.se) before January 1st 2015.

10. **Further information**

For further information, please contact course coordinator Daniel Slunge: daniel.slunge@gu.se, phone: 031-7869205, or course examiner Anders Ekbom:anders.ekbom@gu.se.

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