CALL FOR PROPOSALS

NU 20 – Online Education for International Positioning

The Knowledge Foundation invites Sweden's university colleges and new universities to apply for funding for the programme *Online Education for International Positioning*. The programme supports the development of online courses that contribute to the international profiling and positioning of the university's strong research and education environments.

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> We require your application no later than 3 p.m (15:00) on January 28, 2021.

Contents

About the Knowledge Foundation

The Knowledge Foundation finances research and competence development at Sweden's university colleges and new universities[1] with the purpose of strengthening Sweden's competitiveness. We provide funding when research and education activities are conducted in collaboration between academia and business partners. The aim is to build strong and profiled knowledge environments that co-produce research and education with the business sector. The Knowledge Foundation does not identify specific research areas, and calls are open for all scientific and artistic research fields.

Purpose and objective

The programme aims to contribute to the international positioning of the university's strong research and education areas by supporting the development and implementation of online education that reflects business sector needs at second and third-cycle levels.

The objective of the programme is to support the development and implementation of online courses that are internationally viable with a focus that reflects business sector needs, and which contribute to pedagogical development of online education. The programme should also aim to strengthen the integration of research and education at the universities.

Who may apply?

Sweden's university colleges and new universities may apply. The applicant organisation must be a university with degree-awarding powers (master's degrees or higher) for the subject area addressed by the application. The project manager should have a responsibility for second-cycle courses at the universities.

The Knowledge Foundation welcomes applications within all scientific and artistic research fields. When the application concerns an artistic field of research, the concept *scientific* is replaced by *artistic* in the call.

How should the funds be used?

The funds from the Knowledge Foundation should be used for the development and implementation of online courses at second and/or third-cycle levels. The planned courses must have a clearly specified objective in line with the research and education strategy of the university. The focus of the courses should reflect the business sector needs and the applied project should contribute to pedagogical development of online education.

The applied project can include development of new courses as well as further development of relevant pre-existing courses. The project plan must specify the types of

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[1] Blekinge Institute of Technology, Swedish Defence University, The Swedish School of Sport and Health Sciences GIH, Dalarna University, University of Borås, University of Gävle, University of Halmstad, Jönköping University, Kristianstad University, University of Skövde, University West, Karlstad University, Konstfack University College of Arts, Crafts and Design, Linnaeus University, Malmö University, Mid Sweden University, Mälardalen University, Royal Institute of Art, Royal College of Music, Stockholm University of the Arts, Södertörn University and Örebro University.

development work that will be done. The current research and education environment must be positioned to collaborate with companies.

The courses should be part of the university's regular course offering and its quality should be assessed and approved by the universities internal decision-making body.

In addition to the current research and education environment at the university, companies, and eventual trade associations (or equivalent), must participate in the development process to ensure relevance for the business sector. The participating companies/organisations are responsible for their own contributions to the development process.

The application may comprise a maximum of 15 credits. The maximum funding from the Knowledge Foundation is 100 000 SEK per credit (in total a maximum of 1,5 million SEK per application). The project duration should be 1-2 years.

Below is indicated the delimitations for the funding from the Knowledge Foundation.

The Knowledge Foundation funds the following:

- The development and implementation of one cycle per planned course/course module
- Costs for project leader/project management
- Costs for knowledge distribution and feedback of experiences at the university
- Costs for hiring external experts
- Costs for the use of equipment
- Costs for communication and recruitment

The Knowledge Foundation *does not* fund:

- Costs for infrastructure, such as e.g. platform costs or equivalent
- The development of validation systems, recruitment and other support functions for online education

Budgeting of funds must be in accordance with the instructions presented in the document *Guidelines on Approved Expenditures*, see www.kks.se.

The budget should present the direct costs of the project. Overhead costs should not be included. Such costs will be calculated and included in the proposed contract if the Knowledge Foundation approves the application.

University involvement

To achieve a sustainable activity, the engagement of the applicant university is of critical importance. The university's contribution must be presented in the project plan.

The project manager is responsible for the implementation of the project.

The application should also state who will be the project owner within the university. The project owner, who should have staff and budget responsibility at a senior level, has responsibility for ensuring proper conditions for implementing and monitoring the project. The project owner may be a head of department or another appropriate person, in accordance with the internal organization and delegation of the university.

Business sector involvement

The development process requires that the engagement of companies in the target group, and eventual trade associations (or equivalent), are clear and sufficiently comprehensive to assure the relevance to the business target group. The companies/trade associations (equivalent) must be responsible for their own input into the development process, e.g. participation in workshops, which must be presented in the project description. How the companies plan to participate in future implementation of courses, such as providing project-related activities and/or contributing guest lecturers, must also be presented.

By business sector, the Knowledge Foundation refers primarily to the private business sector. The concept, however, may include companies under public ownership that are active in competitive markets and where the company finances its operations in the same manner as companies in the private business sector. Hence, public subsidies or fees may not constitute a significant portion of the company's revenues. The organizations must primarily produce goods or services and may not be solely administrative enterprises. The organizations must have operations in Sweden to the extent that their engagement will generate value for the collaboration and have possibilities to integrate the results from the collaborations into their operations.

If economic or personal links exist between the companies involved, between any company and the university, or between any company and an individual researcher, this must be disclosed. The project plan must clearly indicate any personal conflicts of interest, and the individuals' various roles in the company or university must be clearly described.

Formal requirements

The application must meet the following requirements before the Knowledge Foundation will consider it for evaluation. If the application does not meet the following requirements, it will be rejected without further evaluation.

- The project must be in line with the purpose and objective of the call.
- The application shall include parts and appendices according to the call instructions.
- The applicant university must have award-degree powers in line with the level (master's degree/postgraduate degree) and within those research and education areas covered by the application.
- The application may comprise a maximum of 15 credits.
- The maximum funding from the Knowledge Foundation is 100 000 SEK per credit (in total a maximum of 1,5 million SEK per application) to be used for the development and implementation of one cycle per planned course/course module.
- The project duration should be 1-2 years.
- Any economic or personal links between the involved companies, between any company and university or between any company and individual researcher(s), this must be disclosed on the application form, see above.

- Budgeting of funds must be in accordance with the instructions presented in the document *Guidelines on Approved Expenditures*, see www.kks.se
- The earliest starting date for the project: 2021-06-01. The latest starting date for the project: 2021-10-01.
- The vice-chancellor, project owner and the project manager must sign the application.

Evaluation

The secretariat of the Knowledge Foundation will review the applications to determine if the application complies with the formal requirements.

If the application complies with the formal requirements, an external evaluation panel will conduct an overall evaluation based on the evaluation criteria below. Funding decisions are made by the CEO of the Knowledge Foundation, based on recommendations from the external evaluation panel.

No additions or modifications to the application will be approved after submission of the application.

Evaluation criteria

Scientific quality[2]

- Is the project clearly linked to the university's research and education strategy?
- How strong is the current research and education environment in the addressed area, national and international?

Benefits to the business partners

- To what extent does the proposed project relate to the needs for development of knowledge in the business sector?
- To what extent will collaboration with the business sector impact on course development and course content?

Expected results and effects

- How is the initiative expected to contribute to the international positioning and profiling of the university's strong research and education environments?
- How is the initiative expected to contribute to pedagogical development of online education at the university?
- To which extent does the project contribute to the development of the current research and education environment?
- How well is the recruitment of students planned?
- Is the assessment of the expected number of students reasonable?

Implementation

- Is the project plan adequate in relation to project objectives?

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[2] When the application concerns an artistic field of research, the concept *scientific* is replaced by *artistic* in the call.

- Is the project plan realistic in relation to available resources?
- Is the university's commitment transparent and reasonable?
- Is company involvement adequate and sufficiently comprehensive?

Application

Applications are submitted via the Knowledge Foundation's website, www.kks.se by the project manager. This is important as the applicant's account is connected to the project and reporting of the project.

Signatures from the project manager, the project owner and the vice chancellor are required. The project manager's signature implies responsibility for described implementation. The project owner and the vice chancellor assure through their signatures that the university approves the project and will be involved according to the project description.

Applications may be written in either Swedish or English.

The project budget is filled in the application form. Note that the application should not cover overhead costs (see above).

The following appendixes (as pdf-files) should be attached to the application and in the same order as below:

1. The project's host academic environment (may not exceed 2 pages)

To be uploaded under 'Host research and education environment'.

Describe the academic environment and it´s research and education activities so the current position and future plans are shown. What is the environment's development needs, strategies and ambitions regarding research and education in collaboration?

The description should include the following headings (each heading refers to both education and research):

- current position and development needs,
- strategies and ambitions,
- main results of the past few years,
- staff composition,
- funding,
- collaboration partners (academic and non-academic).

2. The project's expected contribution to the research and education environment (may not exceed 1 page)

To be uploaded under "Host research and education environment"

Describe the strategic value of the proposed project by demonstrating how the project will support the development of the academic environment in line with the university's aspirations for collaborative research and education.

3. Project plan (may not exceed 10 pages)

To be uploaded under "Attachments in accordance with the call and in the same order as stated in the call."

The project plan should include the following:

- How the research and education aera relates to the research and education strategy of the university.
- The international position of the research and education area.
- Planned courses – focus, extent, and design.
- The positioning of the planned courses, nationally and internationally and how the project is expected to contribute to the international profiling and positioning of the university's strong research and education areas.
- The research and education area's relevance for the business sector and the companies' contributions in the project.
- The recruitment of students, admission requirements and the number of students expected.
- How the project is expected to contribute to pedagogical development of online education at the university and how the knowledge and experiences generated in the project will be apprehended.
- Planned activities and timetable.
- The allocation of costs between the different parts of the project. Describe the rationale for the costs presented in the budget and how the costs have been calculated.

4. Qualifications *(may not exceed 2 pages per person)*

To be uploaded under "Attachments in accordance with the call and in the same order as stated in the call."

CV with relevant information for relevant project staff, mainly project leader and subproject leaders. Include qualifications in both education and research.

5. Letter of intent from participating companies

To be uploaded under "Attachments in accordance with the call and in the same order as stated in the call."

Signed letter of intent from at least two companies. The participating companies describes their individual needs and their planned contributions. CVs exceeding 2 pages will not be considered in the evaluation.

6. Signatures from the university (appendix form).

To be uploaded under "Attachments in accordance with the call and in the same order as stated in the call."

The application must be signed by the vice-chancellor, the project owner and the project manager. Appendix template is downloaded from the Foundation's website, www.kks.se. Applications without signatures will not be considered.

Timetable and decisions

- The Knowledge Foundation must receive your application no later than 3 p.m. (15:00) on 2021-01-28.
- All applications will be reviewed for compliance with formal requirements. Applications failing to meet the formal requirements will be rejected. During February, the General Manager will render a decision on whether an application must be rejected for failing to meet the formal requirements
- The external evaluation panel will submit its final recommendation to the CEO of the Knowledge Foundation in April 2021.
- The Knowledge Foundation's CEO will render a decision in April 2021.
- Granted projects may commence after agreement signing, earliest 2021-06-01 and latest at 2021-10-01