
CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Graduate Professional Development Program 21 – step 1 (spring)

The Knowledge Foundation invites Sweden's university colleges and new universities to apply for funding for the development of second-cycle courses targeted at the business sector.

The objective is to support the development and delivering of second-cycle courses where the expertise in strong research environments matches the strategic needs for expertise in companies.

Flexible training for professionals and companies is an essential part in the development of strong academic environments.

In *Step 1* of the programme, the need for expertise in the business sector will be analysed and matched to the research and education environments at universities, and educational activities will be initiated.

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We require the application no
later than 3 p.m. (15:00) on
May 28, 2021

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About the Knowledge Foundation

The Knowledge Foundation finances research and competence development at Sweden's university colleges and new universities¹ 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

For companies to establish and maintain a leading position within its industry, it is crucial that employees have adequate education and the opportunity to continually develop their expertise. The business sector has a demand for knowledge available within the research and education environments of universities. Through second-cycle courses in cooperation with business partners, the research areas of universities can be linked with business development areas of companies. This will strengthen the link between research, education, development, and innovation to the mutual benefit of universities and companies.

The programme aims to provide skills upgrade for professionals² and companies for knowledge-intensive business development and innovation. The programme also aims to strengthen the conditions for research and education environments to position themselves as leading academic partners to knowledge intensive companies in relevant industries.

The objective is to support the development and delivering of second-cycle courses where the expertise in strong research environments matches the strategic needs for expertise in companies. The project should also result in a method for developing second-cycle courses in co-production with business partners.

Flexible training for professionals and companies is an essential part in the development of strong academic environments.

Programme design

This is a two-step initiative. *Step 1* (this call) includes analysing the needs for expertise and compiling a curriculum of 45-90 higher education credits. The educational programmes must have the flexibility to meet the needs of working professionals. This step also comprises co-production with companies to develop and deliver courses/course modules of 10-15 higher education credits. The experience from this development should be utilised in the form of an initial method description for course development in co-

¹ Blekinge Institute of Technology, Swedish Defence University, The Swedish School of Sport and Health Sciences, Dalarna University, University of Borås, University of Gävle, University of Halmstad, Jönköping University, Kristianstad University, University of Skövde, University West, Karlstads 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.

² Professionals with an academic qualification or equivalent real competence.

production. The university's educational support services should be involved in the project so that any developmental needs in these functions with regard to the development and implementation of courses for professionals can be identified and addressed in the application to *Step 2*, i.e., the main application. Project time is 1,5-2 years for *Step 1*, which is announced in spring and autumn.

The results of *Step 1*, in terms of curriculum, flexible design, and methods for developing courses through co-production, comprise the foundation for the work in *Step 2*. The complete course curriculum must be developed and implemented in *Step 2*. Moreover, the methods for developing and implementing courses must be compiled and documented.

Step 2 includes two phases:

- phase A – ongoing development and implementation
- phase B – consolidation of the activities.

The length of *Step 2* is 3-4 years.

To initiate a project, several companies in the target group must be engaged from the start. Building a sustainable programme requires broad collaboration amongst companies within a given business area. Industry associations may also provide valuable contributions towards programme development and knowledge about general developmental issues within a business area. Since the research institutes³ have experience in working with companies as well as universities, they may also be able to contribute to development within this programme and can therefore participate.

Collaboration between the academic and business actors should ensure that the content is both driven by needs and maintains an accurate level, and that the educational format is given the flexibility that meets the conditions for companies and their employees – including companies working internationally.

A well-integrated research and education activity is a prerequisite for goal fulfilment.

Program Design – Summary

Step 1 Open call for proposals – spring (project length 1,5 year) and autumn (project length 2 years)

- Studying, planning, developing, and implementing pilot courses/course modules totalling 10-15 higher education credits.

Step 2 Targeted call for proposals – autumn (project length 3-4 years)

- Phase A – continued development and implementation of courses, including development of methodology, totalling 45-90 higher education credits.
- Phase B – consolidation of the educational activities.

³ RISE, Swerim, FOI, IVL, and VTI.

Who may apply?

Sweden's university colleges and new universities authorised to award degrees at the second year master's level or higher in the proposed area of expertise may apply. 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.

To apply for funding within the programme, it is further required that the current research and education environment should be well-qualified in research and education - including at advanced level - as well as in research collaboration with industry. A requirement is that the environment should have a recently completed project, or one in progress, within one of the larger programmes of the Knowledge Foundation, i.e., *Research Profiles*, *Synergy* or *Industrial Graduate Schools*⁴. The project/projects must have been in progress for at least two years⁵ at the time of application and the research area should be closely related to the current field of competence.

Several universities and research institutes may collaborate if this increases quality, business sector relevance, or in some other way makes a positive contribution. The application should be supported by at least five companies.

How should the funds be used?

The Knowledge Foundation's funds will be used for investigating and planning courses and flexible forms of education. This also includes clarifying development needs regarding the university's support functions for flexible courses and trainings for professionals and companies. In addition, pilot courses/course modules will be developed and implemented corresponding to a total of 10-15 higher education credits. The development should be conducted in collaboration with the business sector.

The maximum funding from the Knowledge Foundation, excluding overhead costs, is related to previous experience of the programme:

- The university has not previously been granted support from the *Graduate Professional Development Program* – 3 million SEK.
- The university has previously been granted support from the *Graduate Professional Development Program*, but not the current research and education environment – 2.5 million SEK.
- The current research and education environment has previously been granted support from the *Graduate Professional Development Program* – 2.0 million SEK.

⁴ Research and educational environments that for a long time have received several project grants within referenced programmes, or which through other experiences can be judged to have the necessary conditions, may also be able to apply even if specified conditions are not met.

⁵ For *Synergy* projects, they must have submitted a progress report (half-time report).

Budgeting of funds must comply with the instructions presented in the document *General Terms and Conditions*, see www.kks.se.

The application should not include overhead costs. Such costs will be calculated and included in the proposed contract if the Knowledge Foundation approves the application.

Expected results

Expected results from *Step 1* are:

- A detailed description of the addressed field of expertise based on an inventory and analysis of the target group companies and their development and competence needs.
- A clear description of how well the field of competence and needs overlap with the scientific strength and planned development of the research and education environment.
- Learnings and identified development needs - for the current environment and overall for the university - based on developed and implemented courses/course modules.
- A method for development and implementation of second-cycle courses in co-operation with industry (first version).
- A well-founded plan for achieving the required flexibility in the courses.
- A planned course curriculum within the area of competence covering 45-90 higher education credits.
- A larger number of participating companies prior to the application for *Step 2*.

The results from *Step 1* are required for the application to *Step 2*. To this application – the main application – must be attached a report for the work in *Step 1* (needs assessment, courses development, etc.).

University involvement

In order for a new education activity for professionals to be sustainable, demands are made on the university's education-related support functions. The university is required to support the development of forms for recruiting vocational participants, validate participants' real skills and enable lead times for development and quality assurance of new courses to be reasonable based on business needs.

The university will therefore report and motivate its views on and aspirations for flexible education for professionals. The ambitions will be presented both overall for the entire university and for the current research and education environment. Furthermore, it will be reported how the university intends to support the current environment in the implementation of *Step 1* based on the university's ambitions.

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. In this programme the project owner may be deputy vice-chancellor for education or dean of basic education.

Business sector involvement

The development work requires engagement of companies in the target group and possibly industry associations/equivalent, which is extensive enough to ensure relevance for the business target group. At least five companies should participate in the development of each course/course module. The participating companies/industry associations must cover their own contributions in the development work.

Signed letter of intent from each of the participating partners - universities, research institutes, companies, industry associations etc., should be added. The letters should briefly describe the partner's commitment, role, and contribution, as well as the motives and value for participation in the project.

For the Knowledge Foundation's definition of the business sector, see www.kks.se

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 due to formal reasons.

- The project must be in line with the purpose and objectives of the call.
- The application shall include parts and appendices according to the call instructions.
- The applying organisation must be a university within the Knowledge Foundations target group and authorised to award degrees at the second-year master's level or higher in the proposed area of expertise.
- The project owner should have overall responsibility as deputy vice-chancellor for education or dean of basic education.
- The project manager must hold a doctoral degree and be employed at the applicant university.
- The planned curriculum, which should be developed and implemented in *Step 2*, should be at advanced level and encompass 45 to 90 higher education credits.
- A description of the current research and education environment (as stated above) should be added.
- Maximum funding from the Knowledge Foundation is 2, 2.5 or 3 million SEK (as stated above).
- Signed letter of intent from each of the participating partners should be added.
- Budgeting of funds must comply with the instructions presented in the document *General Terms and Conditions*, see www.kks.se.
- The project should run for a maximum of 1.5 years (spring call).

- Any financial or personal ties must be clarified in the application.
- The earliest starting date for the project is 2021-07-01. The latest starting date for the project is 2021-09-01.
- The vice-chancellor, the project owner and the project manager must sign the application.

Evaluation

The secretariat of the Knowledge Foundation will review the applications. In addition to the formal requirements, the assessment is based on the university's overall ambitions and prerequisites for developing a sustainable advanced educational activity, as well as corresponding ambitions and prerequisites for the current research and educational environment. Furthermore, the business sector's benefit from the skills development initiative will be considered.

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

Funding decisions are made by the CEO of the Knowledge Foundation.

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 the 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 should be written in Swedish or English.

The application form should state the city and postcode for the place where each participating company will participate in the project (i.e., not necessarily the place for, for example, the head office).

The project budget is filled in directly 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 its 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 2 pages)

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. The project's benefits to the business sector and the university's ambition with flexible education for professionals (may in total not exceed 2 pages)

To be uploaded under 'Project Plan'.

a. Describe how the project supports business development (may not exceed 1 page).

Specify in particular:

- Which areas of business in Sweden have developmental needs in the field of competence and what opportunities/problems that the proposed competence development can meet. Also indicate significant development trends for identified business sectors.
- Which companies, and possibly industry associations that participate in the project from start.

b. Report and motivate the university's views on and aspirations for flexible training for professionals (may not exceed 1 page).

The ambitions will be presented both overall for the entire university, and for the current research and education environment. Furthermore, it should be reported how the university intends to support the current research and education environment in the implementation of *Step 1*, based on the university's ambitions.

4. Letter of intent (may not exceed 1 page per partner)

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 each of the participating partners - universities, research institutes, companies, industry associations etc. should be added. The letters should briefly describe the partner's commitment, role, and contribution, as well as the motives and value for supporting the project.

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

Timetable and decision

- The Knowledge Foundation must receive the application no later than 3 p.m. (15:00) on 2021-05-28.
- During June 2021, all applications will be reviewed, as stated above.
- Applications failing to meet the formal requirements or showing other deficiencies will be rejected.
- The CEO of the Knowledge Foundation will render a decision on financing, and applicants will be notified in June 2021
- After agreement signing, granted projects may commence, earliest on 2021-07-01 and latest on 2021-09-01.