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## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

### Avans 21

The Knowledge Foundation invites Sweden's university colleges and new universities to apply for funding for the programme *Avans*. The objective of the programme is to support the universities to work with business partners to develop second cycle study programmes. The programme aims to strengthen the university's position within the field of education, improve the supply of advanced expertise and development of the business sector and contribute towards a stronger integration of research and education at the universities.

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Petter Zirath, Programme Manager  
[petter.zirath@kks.se](mailto:petter.zirath@kks.se), 073-712 81 35

The Knowledge Foundation  
requires the application no later  
than 3 p.m (15:00) on  
January 20, 2022.

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## About the Knowledge Foundation

The Knowledge Foundation finances research and competence development at Sweden's university colleges and new universities<sup>1</sup> with the purpose of strengthening Sweden's competitiveness. The foundation provides 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 higher education with the business sector. The Knowledge Foundation does not identify specific research areas, and calls are open for all scientific and artistic fields.

## Strong research and education environments

The Knowledge Foundation seeks to support the development of strong research and education environments that create value for academia, the business sector and society. In different ways, all of the Knowledge Foundation's programmes are aimed at enabling environments to establish and maintain a strong, long-term, national and international scientific or artistic position which also contributes to the profiling of the university. In the view of the Knowledge Foundation, a strong research and education environment is one that has the capacity to develop its research and education in partnership with the business sector and takes a long-term, strategic approach to its development. For more information, see [www.kks.se](http://www.kks.se).

## Avans

The Avans programme is suitable for research and education environments aiming to strengthen the university's position within the field of education, develop business-oriented degree programmes and contribute towards an integration of research and education. By giving the university the opportunity to develop second cycle study programmes in collaboration with the business sector, benefits for both parties will be created. Research and education environments who develop their second cycle courses and study programmes will increase the opportunities in attracting new students and researchers.

## Objective and purpose

The objective of the Avans programme is for the university to work with business partners to develop second cycle study programmes that address the skills needs of the business sector.

The purpose of all the Knowledge Foundation's programmes is to build strong, business-relevant research and education environments. The specific purpose of the Avans programme is to position the education offered and to foster skills supply in the business

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

sector. It also aims to integrate the academic environment's research and education activities.

### **Programme design**

In the Avans programme, the university works with business partners to develop second cycle study programmes. This could be master's (or equivalent) programmes or new specializations – during a one- or two-year period – in programmes resulting in a professional degree. The planned degree programme can be based on development of new courses as well as further development of relevant pre-existing courses. However, the total renewal of the degree programme must be substantial.

In addition to the current research and education environment at the university, companies must participate in the development process to ensure relevance for the business sector. The planned contributions from the participating companies must be clearly described in the project plan (read more in the section *Business sector involvement*). To broaden the scope of the project and include knowledge about general developmental issues within a business area, professional associations may also contribute to the project.

The planned degree programme must have a clearly specified objective in line with the research and education strategy of the university. The project plan must specify the types of development work that will be done and how the project will contribute towards a stronger integration of research and education.

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

Maximum funding from the Knowledge Foundation is 2 million SEK, and the project may not exceed 2 years.

### **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 degree or higher) for the subject area addressed by the application.

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

### **How should the funds be used?**

The funds from the Knowledge Foundation should be used for the development of second cycle study programmes. The Knowledge Foundation's funds may not be used for course implementation and operation.

Budgeting of funds must be in accordance with the instructions presented in the document *General Terms and Conditions*, see [www.kks.se](http://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 agreement if the Knowledge Foundation approves the application.

### **University involvement**

To achieve 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 project manager must have a responsibility for second cycle courses and study programmes at the university.

The application should also state who will be the project owner at 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 project requires a defined and sufficiently comprehensive engagement from business sector partners, to ensure business sector relevance of the developed courses. At least two companies must participate in the development process, contributing with competence, experience, and information about the development needs in the business sector. The co-producing process can include participation in workshops, reference groups, steering groups - which must be presented in the project description. It should also be described how the companies plan to participate in future implementations of the courses, such as providing project-related activities, contributing with guest lecturers, offering internships etcetera. Company representatives may also be affiliated with the advisory council or equivalent for the degree programmes. The participating companies and eventual professional associations should bear their own costs related to their contributions in the project.

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 financial or personal links exist between companies involved, between any company and the university, or between any company and an individual researcher/teacher, 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. Specify, for example, shareholding, board positions, employment, or consulting.

### 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 objective and purpose of the call.
- The application shall include parts and appendices according to the call instructions.
- The project must address development of second cycle study programmes or specialisations in professional education of one or two years.
- The applying organization must be a university within the Knowledge Foundation's target group and authorized to award degrees at the second-year master's level or higher for the subject area addressed by the application.
- The project manager must hold a doctoral degree and be employed at the applicant university.
- Participating companies must fall within the Knowledge Foundation's definition of "business sector".
- Maximum funding from the Knowledge Foundation is 2 million SEK.
- Maximum project time is 2 years.
- The earliest starting date for the project: 2022-06-01. The latest starting date for the project: 2022-09-30.
- Any financial 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.
- Signed letter of intent from each of the co-producing companies (at least two companies).
- Budgeting of funds must be in accordance with the instructions presented in the document *Guidelines on Approved Expenditures*, see [www.kks.se](http://www.kks.se)
- 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**

#### Strong research and education environments

- To what extent is there a clear description of the research and education environment 's current situation, as well as its challenges?
- To what extent is there an adequate ambition and plan for the development of the research and education environment?
- What is the added value of the project for the short-term and long-term development of the research and education environment?

#### Scientific quality<sup>2</sup>

- Is the project clearly linked to the university's research and education strategy?
- How well is the depth and progression, and the pedagogic and didactic considerations of the degree programme described?
- To what extent is the planned degree programme integrated with the research environment?
- To what extent will the project strengthen the university's position within the field of education at a national level?
- How clear and adequate is the objective/objectives of the course programme?

#### 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?
- Is the companies' planned involvement in the development of the degree programme and its future implementation adequately and sufficiently comprehensive?

#### Implementation

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

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<sup>2</sup> When the application concerns an artistic field of research, the concept *scientific* is replaced by *artistic* in the call.

- How well is the recruitment of students planned and is the assessment of the expected number of students reasonable?
- Is the competence and capacity of the project management to develop the degree programme adequate?
- How well is budget described and motivated?

## Application

Applications are submitted via the Knowledge Foundation's website, [www.kks.se](http://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 directly in the application form. Note that the application should not cover overhead costs.

## Appendices to the application

The following appendices (as pdf-files) should be attached to the application and in the same order as below. The structure of the appendices must follow the headings specified for each appendix.

### **Appendix 1. Description of host research and education environment and project contribution (may not exceed 3 pages)**

*To be uploaded under 'Description of host research and education environment and project contribution'.*

This appendix should be written jointly by the head of the research and education environment and the project manager. The nature and scope of the description and the development plan will vary depending on the stage the environment has reached in its development journey. For example, new or early-stage environments do not need to report results going back five years if this is not feasible. Instead, these should describe the results relevant to the current situation of the environment.

#### **1.1. The research and education environment (or environments) in which the project will be run**

Describe the environment in terms of the parameters that best illustrate the ambition, current situation, challenges and plan.

**a) Ambition** (what is to be achieved in the ongoing development of the environment, objectives?)



**b) Current situation** (area of activity, research groups, research focus, education focus, staff composition, funding, collaborative and business partners, etc.) and results for the last five years (scientific output, development of courses, capacity building, funding, etc.)

**c) Challenges** (what are the most important development needs that must be addressed for the development of the environment? Take into account education, research and collaboration with the business sector.)

**d) Plan** (how is the ambition to be achieved, strategy?)

### **1.2. Added value of the project for the research and education environment**

Describe how the proposed project adds value for the research and education environment and enhances its development in line with the stated ambition and plan. Indicate in particular how the project will help to strengthen and/or develop the research and/or education concerned, and the cooperation with the business sector. Also describe how the project will add value given previous and ongoing projects, especially projects with the same project manager.

### **Appendix 2. Project plan** (may not exceed 10 pages)

*To be uploaded under "Project plan".*

The project plan should include the following and have the headings below:

#### **Scientific quality**

- How the research and education area relates to the research and education strategy of the university.
- Subject content including description of how depth and progression at second cycle level should be achieved, as well as educational and didactic considerations.
- Description of how the degree programme will be integrated with the research environment.
- External analysis of the educational area including a description of how the project will strengthen the university's position within the field of education at a national level.
- The results and impact objectives of the degree programme.

#### **Benefits to the business partners**

- The importance of the educational offering and its potential for the business sector.
- Business partner contributions in the project and their planned contributions in the future implementation and operation of the degree programme.

#### **Implementation**

- The recruitment of students, admission requirements and the number of students expected.

- The organization and management of the project. Describe how the project participants will complement each other.
- Planned activities and timetable.
- The needs and the development work that motivates funding.
- 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.

**Appendix 3. Curriculum vitae for key persons (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.”*

Curriculum vitae with relevant information for relevant project staff, mainly project manager and subproject managers. The CVs should include qualifications in both research and education. Pedagogical development projects and pedagogical skills should be clearly described (CVs exceeding 2 pages will not be considered in the evaluation).

**Appendix 4. Letter of intent from participating companies (may not exceed 1 page per company)**

*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. If the application includes other participants (for example professional associations), they need to hand in a signed letter of intent too. The letters should briefly describe the partner’s commitment, role, and contribution, as well as the motives and value for supporting the project.

**Appendix 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 vice-chancellor, the project owner and the project manager. Appendix template is downloaded from the Foundation’s website, [www.kks.se](http://www.kks.se). Applications without signatures will not be considered.

**Timetable and decisions**

- The Knowledge Foundation must receive the application no later than 3 p.m. (15:00) on 2022-01-20.
- All applications will be reviewed for compliance with formal requirements. Applications failing to meet the formal requirements will be rejected. During January, the CEO 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 March 2022.
- The Knowledge Foundation's CEO will render a decision in the beginning of April 2022 at the latest.
- Granted projects may commence after agreement signing, earliest 2022-06-01 and latest at 2022-09-30.