
CALL FOR PROPOSALS

NU 21 – Online Education for International Positioning

The Knowledge Foundation invites Sweden's university colleges and new universities to apply for funding for the programme *NU - Online Education for International Positioning*. The programme supports the universities to develop and run second cycle and/or third cycle online courses, in collaboration with the business sector, that will contribute to the international profiling and positioning of the university's strong research and education environments.

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The Knowledge Foundation
requires the application no later
than 3 p.m (15:00) on
January 27, 2022.

Contents

About the Knowledge Foundation.....	3
Strong research and education environments.....	3
NU – Online Education for International Positioning.....	3
Objective and purpose.....	3
Programme design.....	4
Who may apply?	4
How should the funds be used?	5
University involvement	5
Business sector involvement	6
Formal requirements	6
Evaluation	7
Evaluation criteria.....	7
Application.....	8
Appendices to the application.....	9
Timetable and decisions.....	11

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. The foundation 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 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.

NU – Online Education for International Positioning

The NU programme is suitable for strong research and education environments aiming to strengthen their international profile and position. By developing pedagogical skills and designing online courses on the second and/or the third cycle in close collaboration with the business sector, internationally competitive courses can be provided. By promoting international positioning and profiling, new contacts and collaborations can be associated to the strong research and education environment of importance to future development.

Objective and purpose

The objective of the NU programme is for the university to work with business partners to develop and run second cycle and/or third cycle online courses that address the skills needs of the business sector and position the university's educational offerings internationally. The objective is also to strengthen the university's online education provision.

The purpose of all the Knowledge Foundation's programmes is to build strong, business-relevant research and education environments. The specific purpose of the NU

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.

programme is to contribute to the international profiling and positioning of the university's strong research and education environments.

Programme design

In the NU programme, the university works with business partners to develop and run second cycle and/or third cycle online courses. The project can include development of new courses as well as further development of relevant pre-existing courses. The planned courses must have a flexibility to attract an international target group, for example regarding course length (higher education credits), rate of study and mode of assessment.

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 courses must have a clearly specified objective in line with the research and education strategy of the university. The courses must be internationally viable and contribute to an international profiling and positioning of the strong research and education environment, for example by establishing new contacts and collaborations on an international level. The project plan must therefore specify the types of development work that will be done and present a solid external analysis to assess the international position of the courses.

The project must contribute to a pedagogic and/or didactic development of online education. The development work, regarding pedagogic and/or didactic development, must be clearly specified and motivated in the project description.

The courses 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.

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.

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 of research, the concept *scientific* is replaced by *artistic* in the call text.

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 second cycle - as well as in research collaboration with industry.

How should the funds be used?

The funds from the Knowledge Foundation should be used for the development and implementation of second and/or third cycle online courses within the university's strong research and education environments.

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.
- Costs for project manager/project management.
- Costs for knowledge distribution and feedback of experiences at the university – The Knowledge Foundation will finance a maximum of 50 percent of the costs.
- Costs for hiring external experts.
- Costs for the use of equipment.
- Costs for communication - The Knowledge Foundation will finance a maximum of 50 percent of the costs.

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 *General Terms and Conditions*, 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 agreement 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 project manager has a responsibility for second cycle or third cycle courses or 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 presented how the companies plan to participate in implementation of the courses. 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 and implementation of second cycle and/or third cycle online courses.
- The applying organization must be a university within the Knowledge Foundations 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”.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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?
- To what extent will the project contribute to international profiling and positioning of the research and education environment?

Scientific quality²

- What is the scientific level of the research and education environment at the university within the area addressed in the application?
- Is the project clearly linked to the university's research and education strategy?
- To what extent will the project contribute to pedagogical development of online education at the university?
- How clear and adequate are the objectives and the expected outcomes of the project?

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 and implementation of the courses 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?
- 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 and implement the courses adequate?
- How well is the budget described and motivated?

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.

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

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.
- Planned courses – focus, extent, and design.
- The international position of the research and education area.
- External analysis of the educational area including a description of the positioning of the planned courses internationally and how the project is expected to contribute to the international profiling and positioning of the university's strong research and education areas.
- 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.
- The results and impact objectives of the project.

Benefits to the business partners

- The importance of the educational offering and its potential for the business sector.
- Business partner contributions in the development and implementation of the planned courses.

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's.
- 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 work 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. 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 2022-01-27.
- All applications will be reviewed for compliance with formal requirements. Applications failing to meet the formal requirements will be rejected. During February, 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 April 2022.
- The Knowledge Foundation’s CEO will render a decision in the beginning of May 2022 at the latest.
- Granted projects may commence after agreement signing, earliest 2022-06-01 and latest at 2022-09-30.