
CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Graduate Professional Development Programme 21 – *Step 1* (autumn)

The Knowledge Foundation invites Sweden's university colleges and new universities to apply for funding within the *Graduate Professional Development Programme*.

The programme supports the development and implementation of second-cycle courses for working professionals. The courses should be implemented in areas where the strength and competence of the applying academic research and education environment matches the strategic needs for competence in the business sector.

In *Step 1* of the programme, the focus is primarily on analysis of the need for competence in the business sector, and how it matches the strengths of the research and education environment. Based on this analysis, an initial planning of the course offer, to be further developed and implemented in *Step 2* of the programme, is performed. In *Step 1*, a pilot round of developed courses is offered and implemented.

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The Knowledge Foundation
requires the application no later
than 3 p.m. (15:00) on
November 30, 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. 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.

Graduate Professional Development Programme

With the *Graduate Professional Development Programme*, the Knowledge Foundation wants to enable a match of well-developed research and education areas within the academy, with strategic competence needs in the business sector. The link between, on the one hand, the research and education at the university, and, on the other hand, the development and innovation of the business sector, can thus be strengthened to the benefit of both parties and the society.

Objectives and Purpose

The objective of the *Graduate Professional Development Programme* is to develop and implement business-relevant courses at advanced level for working professionals². The objective is also to improve the university's ability for educational collaboration with the business sector, and its ability to provide courses tailored to the competence development 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 *Graduate Professional Development Programme* is to provide the business sector with up-to-date scientific knowledge and

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, 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.

² Professionals with an academic qualification or equivalent real competence.

expertise, and to strengthen collaboration between the university and the business sector.

Programme design

The programme is divided into two steps. In *Step 1* (this call) the competence need within relevant parts of the business sector should be analysed and matched to the strengths and competence of the applying research and education environment. This work should result in a planned course offering of a total of 45–90 higher education credits. To ensure that the course content is driven by demands and at an appropriate level, and that the educational format meets the conditions of the target group, there must be an active engagement from several business partners already from the start. The educational forms must have a flexibility that meets the needs and conditions of working professionals, for example regarding teaching form, study pace, course length (higher education credits) and examination forms.

It is also included in *Step 1*, together with the business sector, to develop and implement courses of totally 10–15 higher education credits in a pilot round. The experience from this pilot round should be utilised in the form of an initial method description for course development in co-production.

The university's educational support services should be involved in the project so that any developmental needs in these functions relating to the development and implementation of courses for working professionals can be identified and addressed in the application to *Step 2*.

The results of *Step 1*, in terms of curriculum, methods for developing courses in co-production, flexible forms of education, and development needs of the university's educational support services, comprise the foundation for the work in *Step 2*. In *Step 2*, the entire planned course offering of 45–90 higher education credits should be further developed and implemented. Moreover, methods for course development and implementation will be compiled and documented.

Summary programme design

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

- Analysis of competence needs in the business sector and match to the strengths and competence of the applying research and education environment.
- Planning of a course offering of totally 45–90 higher education credits (which should be further developed and implemented in *Step 2*).
- Development and implementation of pilot courses of totally of 10–15 higher education credits.

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

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

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 development and competence needs in relevant parts of the business sector.
- A clear description of how well the field of competence and the needs overlap with the 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.
- A first version of method for development of second-cycle courses in co-operation with the business sector.
- A well-founded plan for achieving the required flexibility in the courses.
- A planned course offering within the area of competence covering a total of 45-90 higher education credits.
- A larger number of participating business partners prior to the application for *Step 2*.

The results from *Step 1* are required for the application to *Step 2*. A report on completed work in *Step 1* (needs assessment, courses development, etc.) must be attached to the *Step 2* application.

Who may apply?

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

To apply for funding within the *Graduate Professional Development Programme*, it is required that the current research and education environment should be well-qualified within research and education (including at advanced level), as well as within research collaboration with the business sector. A requirement is that the environment should have an ongoing, or recently completed, project within one of the larger programmes of the Knowledge Foundation, i.e., *Research Profiles*, *Synergy* or *Industrial Graduate Schools*³. The project/projects must have been ongoing for at least two years⁴ at the time of the application, and the research and education area must be closely related to the current field of competence in the business sector.

³ 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 meet the necessary conditions, may also be able to apply, even if specified conditions are not met.

⁴ *Synergy* projects must have submitted a progress report (half-time report).

Several universities may collaborate if it increases quality, business sector relevance, or in some other way makes a positive contribution to the project. If so, this should be clearly described in the application.

How should the funds be used?

The Knowledge Foundation's funds will be used for analysis, investigation and planning of the course offering that will be provided with flexible educational forms. The project also includes clarifying development needs regarding the university's support functions for flexible courses and education for working professionals and companies. In addition, pilot courses 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 Knowledge Foundation does not fund any infrastructure, such as, for example platforms etc.

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

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 agreement if the Knowledge Foundation approves the application.

University involvement

The university should report and motivate its views on and ambitions for flexible education for working professionals. This should 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 environment in the implementation of *Step 1* based on the university's ambitions.

In order for an educational activity for working professionals to be sustainable over time, demands are made on the university's education-related support functions, and hence these should be included in the project. The university needs, among other things, to support the development of forms for recruiting working professional course participants, validate participants' real skills and enable lead times for development and quality assurance of new courses to be reasonable, based on the needs and conditions of the business sector.

The project manager is responsible for the implementation of the project. The project manager within the *Graduate Professional Development Programme* must have a responsibility for second cycle courses 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 organisation and delegation of the university.

Business sector involvement

In order to build a sustainable educational activity for working professionals, a broad collaboration between the university and relevant parts of the business sector is required.

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 organisations must primarily produce goods or services and may not be solely administrative enterprises. The organisations 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 collaboration into their operations.

Within the *Graduate Professional Development Programme*, an active engagement from the business sector is required, that should be clear and sufficiently comprehensive to ensure the relevance of the courses for the target group. Therefore, at least five companies must participate in the development of each course/course module. The business partners should contribute with competence and experience from practical issues, or in other ways - through participation in workshops, reference groups, steering groups, etc. - which must be stated in the project plan. It should also be stated whether, and if so how, the business partners may be involved in the actual implementation of the courses.

To broaden the scope of the activities and include knowledge about general developmental issues within a business area, professional associations may also contribute to the project. Also, research institutes⁵, which have experience of working with both companies and universities, may participate and contribute to the development within this programme.

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.

⁵ RISE, Swerim, FOI, IVL, and VTI.

At least five companies should support the application to *Step 1* through signed letters of intent. The letters should briefly describe the partner's commitment, role, and contribution, as well as the motives and value for participation in the project. Participating companies must cover their own contributions to the project.

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 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 Foundation's target group and authorised to award degrees at master's degree level or higher in the proposed area.
- The applying research and education environment should have an ongoing or recently completed project within one of the larger programmes of the Knowledge Foundation (see above for more information).
- The project manager must hold a doctoral degree and be employed at the applicant university.
- The planned course offering, which should be developed and implemented in *Step 2*, should be at advanced level and encompass a total of 45-90 higher education credits.
- The course offering that should be developed and implemented in a pilot round in *Step 1*, should be at advanced level and encompass a total of 10-15 higher education credits.
- Participating companies must fall within the Knowledge Foundation's definition of 'business sector'.
- Maximum funding from the Knowledge Foundation is 2, 2.5 or 3 million SEK (as stated above).
- Maximum project time is two years (autumn call).
- The earliest starting date for the project is 2022-02-01 and the latest 2022-04-01.
- Any financial or personal ties must be clarified in the application.
- Signed letter of intent from each one of at least five co-producing companies should be attached.
- Budgeting of funds must comply with the instructions presented in the document *General Terms and Conditions*, see www.kks.se.
- The application should be signed by the vice-chancellor, the project owner and the project manager.

Evaluation

The secretariat of the Knowledge Foundation will evaluate the applications. In addition to the formal requirements, the assessment is based on the business sector's benefit from the project and how well the competence needs are matched by the applying research and education environment. The assessment also includes the university's and the research and education environment's respective ambitions and prerequisites for developing a sustainable educational activity at advanced level for working professionals, as well as the proposed project organisation and budget.

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 by the project manager via the Knowledge Foundation's website, www.kks.se. 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.

In the application form 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, head office), should be stated.

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 2 pages. To be uploaded under 'Project Plan'.

a) The project's benefit for the business sector

Describe how the project supports the development of the business sector (not more than 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 other partners, that participate in the project from start, their roles and in what way they should contribute with competence and experience in the development (and possibly the implementation) of the courses.

b) The university's ambitions for flexible education for working professionals

Describe and motivate the university's views on and ambitions for flexible education at advanced level for working professionals (not more than 1 page). The ambitions should be presented both overall for the entire university, and for the current research and education environment. Furthermore, based on the university's ambitions, it should be reported how the university intends to support the current research and education environment in the implementation of *Step 1*.

c) **Project organisation and budget overview**

Briefly describe the project organisation and budget (not more than 1 page).

Describe the management and organisation of the project as well as a brief activity and time plan. Include an overview of cost allocation and justify the costs.

Appendix 3: Letters 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 letters of intent from each one of the at least five participating companies should be attached. Signed letters of intent from any other participating partners (for example other universities, institutes, or professional associations) should also be attached. The letters should briefly describe the partner's commitment, role, and contribution, as well as the motives and value for supporting the project.

Appendix 4: 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'.

CV with relevant information for key persons in the project, primarily for the project manager but possibly also for other researchers/teachers involved. The CVs should include qualifications in both research and education. Completed pedagogical development projects and pedagogical skills should be clearly stated. CVs exceeding 2 pages will not be considered in the evaluation.

Appendix 5. Signatures from the university

Appendix template. 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. An appendix template for signatures 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 2021-11-30.
- Applications will be reviewed for compliance with formal requirements. Applications failing to meet the formal requirements will be rejected.
- Applications will be evaluated during December 2021.
- The CEO of the Knowledge Foundation will render a decision on financing, and applicants will be notified at the latest in the end of December.
- Granted projects may, after agreement signing, commence between 2022-02-01 and 2022-04-01.