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## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

### Expertkompetens 22

#### Mini/Maxi

The Knowledge Foundation invites Sweden's university colleges and newer universities to apply for funding under the programme *Expertkompetens*. The programme supports the development and implementation of research-oriented educational activities at an advanced level that meet the competence needs of professionals working in the business sector.

The Knowledge Foundation aims to strengthen Sweden's competitiveness via this programme by improving the business sector's access to relevant competence development, promoting collaboration between academia and the business sector, and helping strengthen the ability of universities to manage educational activities tailored to competence development for professionals.

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Deadline for applications is  
**3.00 pm on 3 February 2023**

#### About the Knowledge Foundation

*The Knowledge Foundation is a financier with the mission of strengthening Sweden's competitiveness. The Foundation finances research and competence development at Sweden's university colleges and newer universities that is conducted in collaboration between academia and business partners. The Knowledge Foundation's calls are open for all scientific and artistic subject areas.*

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## **The programme Expertkompetens**

Continuous competence development throughout a person's working life, or lifelong learning, is a crucial piece of the puzzle in responding to the changing competence needs in the business sector. Universities and university colleges will have an important role to play in this by taking greater responsibility for the development and transition of professionals, as recently set out in the Higher Education Act. For many universities and university colleges this means the addition of a new target group of students with specific needs and circumstances. At the same time, it offers greater opportunities for collaboration with the business sector on educational issues.

The Knowledge Foundation aims to use the *Expertkompetens* programme to give university colleges and newer universities (henceforth named *universities* in the call text) the opportunity to work with companies to develop their ability to meet the needs of the business sector in terms of competence development for professionals.

### **Objectives and purpose of the programme**

The objectives of the *Expertkompetens* programme is to develop and implement business-relevant educational activities at advanced level for working professionals<sup>1</sup>. The objective of the programme is also to strengthen the long-term capacity of universities to manage educational activities tailored to professionals' competence development.

The purpose of the *Expertkompetens* programme is to strengthen the establishment and/or development of educational collaboration between universities and the business sector, and to improve long-term access to relevant research-related expertise for the business sector.

### **The programme's contribution to 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. All of the Knowledge Foundation's forms of funding contribute in different ways to enable environments to establish and maintain a strong, long-term, national and international scientific or artistic position which also constitutes a profile area for the university. In the view of the Knowledge Foundation, a strong 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 further information, go to [www.kks.se](http://www.kks.se).

The *Expertkompetens* programme specifically contributes to opportunities to cultivate and strengthen the establishment and/or development of educational activities for professionals in fields related to the environment's research orientations, thus contributing to profiling. The programme also helps build on the relationship between academia and business in areas where both parties share common knowledge interests.

### **Programme versions**

The programme is offered in two versions – *Expertkompetens Mini* and *Expertkompetens Maxi* (henceforth named *Mini* and *Maxi* in the call text). The versions assume different levels of experience and development needs in terms of educational activities for professionals in cooperation with the business sector. Applicant research and education environments choose the version deemed most appropriate based on their circumstances, but both versions require at least some established interaction with the business sector (in research or as part of regular educational provision). The versions differ mainly in terms of scope (credits), as well as project duration and funding amount.

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<sup>1</sup> Professionals with an undergraduate degree or equivalent experience from working in the business sector.

The programme primarily supports the establishment and/or development of educational activities for professionals.

The programme may also provide support for environments wishing to significantly renew or modify their existing activities, based on well-described and well-motivated reasons and ambitions, in order to strengthen the long-term sustainability of their activities. In which case this must be clearly described.

*Expertkompetens Mini* is aimed at environments that have no or little experience of providing education for professionals in partnership with the business sector, but wish to establish such an activity, or at environments that wish to significantly renew or change their existing activity (on a smaller scale).

*Expertkompetens Maxi* is aimed at environments that already have some degree of, or significant experience of, working with the business sector specifically on education for professionals, but that wish to develop this further to increase opportunities for long-term, sustainable activity, or environments that wish to substantially renew or change their existing activities (on a larger scale).

	<i>Mini</i>	<i>Maxi</i>
Experience of education for professionals in partnership with the business sector is: and educational activities for professionals are to be:	none or little established	some or significant further enhanced
<b>or</b>		
Need for substantial renewal or modification of existing activities	to a limited extent	to a greater extent
Project duration	2–3 years	4–5 years
Scope of educational activities to be developed and implemented	10–15 credits	45–60 credits
Project support	SEK 266,000/credit (= SEK 2.66–4 million)	SEK 200,000/credit (= SEK 9–12 million)
Co-producing companies involved from the start of the project	5	10
Hearing part of the evaluation	no	yes

## Project design

The projects will involve universities, companies and possibly other relevant partners working closely together to analyse and define competence needs and jointly develop and implement relevant educational activities.

- Educational activities should be based on an in-depth analysis of the competence needs of the business sector. The needs should be linked to the applicant research and education environment's scientific or artistic expertise.
- The form and content of the educational activities will be developed in close cooperation with the business sector and any other contributing partners, to ensure they satisfy the needs and circumstances of the target group.
- Overall, the educational activities must represent a significant innovation in relation to existing provision but may include both new developments and further development of existing educational provision. The educational activities must be integrated into the university's regular educational provision and be assessed, quality-assured and approved in accordance with the procedures laid down by the university.
- The scope of the developed educational activities should be 10–15 credits (*Mini*) and 45–60 credits (*Maxi*) respectively, and they should be delivered at advanced and/or postgraduate level.

- Projects should be planned so that all the educational activities developed can be carried out on two (2) occasions. This will allow feedback from the first occasion to be used to make improvements ahead of the second occasion.
- Experiences and good practice from ongoing projects within the programme will be shared in order to better achieve the objectives. The project will therefore participate in programme-wide exchanges of experience under the auspices of the Foundation. The partners involved should also evaluate and draw lessons during the course of the project, and prepare for further activities after the project has been completed. The focus of this work should be on establishing effective and appropriate forms of collaboration, development, and implementation, rather than on maintaining a specific educational content.

### **Considerations in the project design**

#### Co-production

In order to be clearly based on the needs and conditions of the business sector, the project must be conducted in co-production with the business sector. The project requires active, extensive, and continuous business involvement at several levels throughout all phases of the project.

#### Student recruitment

The recruitment of professional students is a critical factor that should be a key focus. Project proposals should outline how marketing, recruitment, validation, etc. will be handled, and include an estimate of the anticipated number of students. The recruitment procedures described should demonstrate professionalism and flexibility and the ability to test new solutions.

#### Tailored to target group

In order to attract professional students and contribute to a good student throughput, it is of utmost importance that the educational activities are designed to meet the needs and conditions of professionals. This includes the form of study, pace of study, scope, and examination methods. It is also important for the project to place particular emphasis on support for pedagogical and/or didactical customisations to the educational activities.

#### The university's ambitions

The project must have the endorsement of the university's management and work unit level (such as departmental level or equivalent), and it must be consistent with the university's long-term priorities and ambitions regarding the continuation of educational activities for professionals. The project implementation should provide good opportunities to harness and share experiences from the project within the university. The project proposals must specifically indicate how the university intends to make long-term use of the results in its continued work on the provision of competence for professionals.

#### Adequate expertise and resources

Staff expected to be involved in the project should have a skills profile and experience appropriate to the requirements of the project. Key individuals in the project should be able to devote a substantial portion of their time.

## Terms and conditions

### Applicants

Sweden's university colleges and newer universities<sup>2</sup> registered to award degrees at the relevant level (advanced and/or postgraduate level) for the subject area of the project may apply. The Knowledge Foundation's calls are open to all scientific and artistic subject areas. If the application concerns an artistic subject area, the term 'scientific' is replaced by 'artistic' in the call text. The applicant research and education environment at the university must have both experience in business-relevant research and advanced education in the relevant field of competence.

Several universities within the Foundation's target group, and/or research institutes, may collaborate in the project if this strengthens the application and the project, but only one university may be the main applicant and contracting party vis-à-vis the Knowledge Foundation.

### Participation of the university

In order to achieve long-term and sustainable activities there must be a clear commitment from the applicant university. This applies, for example, to the prioritisation and planning of resources (such as financial and staff planning), but also to the involvement of the university's supporting functions. Education-related support functions should be actively involved already from the outset of the project to develop ways of working and procedures that support successful project implementation and enhance opportunities for continued operation on completion of the project. For example, there may be a need to develop student recruitment and admission methods, validation of prior learning and to shorten lead times for the educational activities.

The university must co-finance the project with direct funds equivalent to at least 10 percent of the amount requested from the Foundation. The university's contributions must be clearly stated in the project plan and budget.

The project manager, who must have a PhD and be employed by the main applicant university, is operationally responsible for the implementation of the project. The project manager should have solid experience in business-relevant research and in developing and implementing education at the relevant level (advanced and/or postgraduate level). There must also be an appointed project owner at the main applicant university. The project owner, who must have staff and budgetary authority at a senior level, is responsible for ensuring proper conditions for implementing and monitoring the project. The project manager and the project owner should not be the same person.

### Participation of business sector and other partners

At least five companies (within *Mini*) and at least ten companies (within *Maxi*) must be involved from the start of the project, and thus in the application, however the project requires an active, broadened, and extended cooperation with additional business partners throughout its duration. Participating business partners will contribute, among other things, by identifying competence needs, developing educational content and form, and offering expertise and experience from practical challenges. The involvement of the business sector, for example through workshops, reference groups, steering groups, etc., should be clearly detailed in the project description. The application should also indicate whether, and if so how, business partners are involved in the actual implementation of the educational activities. Please note that companies must fall within the scope of the Knowledge Foundation's

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<sup>2</sup> 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, the Royal Institute of Art, the Royal College of Music, Linnaeus University, Malmö University, Mid Sweden University, Mälardalen University, Stockholm University of the Arts, Södertörn University and Örebro University.

definition of business sector (go to [www.kks.se](http://www.kks.se)). If there is any uncertainty regarding the definition, the applicant should ask the foundation for a prior notice before submitting the application.

The business sector must, during the course of the project, jointly co-finance the project (for example in the form of working time in-kind) equivalent to at least 10 percent of the amount requested from the Foundation. This will be followed up in the project reporting.

Swedish universities outside the Foundation's target group and other relevant partners, such as trade associations, public bodies or companies that fall outside the scope of the Knowledge Foundation's definition of business sector, may also participate if they strengthen the application and the project. These partners bear their own costs in the project but cannot be counted as co-financers. The contributions of all partners must be clearly indicated in the application.

If there are financial or personal links between any partners or individuals involved, this should be stated and explained in the project plan.

### **Project duration**

The project duration should be 2–3 years for *Mini* and 4–5 years for *Maxi*.

### **Financial framework and budgeting**

Maximum funding from the Knowledge Foundation is SEK 266,000/credit within *Mini*, which means SEK 2.66–4 million, and SEK 200,000/credit within *Maxi*, which means SEK 9–12 million. These amounts do not include overhead costs (OH). An OH surcharge of 20 percent will be added and included in the contract proposal if the application is approved by the Foundation.

Funds from the Knowledge Foundation can be used for:

- Project management and collaboration with the business sector and other partners.
- In-depth analysis of the business sector's competence needs and matching them with the applicant environment's subject expertise.
- Development of educational activities, including the development of tailored educational approaches.
- Development of new working methods for e.g. communication, marketing, student recruitment, admissions, and validation – *the Knowledge Foundation will cover a maximum of 50 percent of the cost.*
- Equipment – *the Knowledge Foundation will cover a maximum of 50 percent of the cost.*
- Implementation of developed educational activities on (minimum and maximum) two occasions.
- Costs of project-related dissemination of knowledge and lessons learned.

The Knowledge Foundation does not fund:

- Infrastructure costs, such as platform or similar costs.
- Costs relating to the regular activities of support functions linked to education.
- Costs of integrating educational activities into the university's regular provision.

Co-applicants in the Knowledge Foundation's target group and research institutes may be reimbursed for costs directly attributable to their participation in the project from funds granted by the Foundation. Other participating partners bear their own costs in the project.

The budget in the application must cover the entire project and include both the Knowledge Foundation's support and the contributions of the university, companies, and any other partners. It should be possible to assess the costs of the proposed activities from the project plan. During project implementation, planned activities may need to be adjusted in response to new circumstances and

experiences. Significant adjustments to the budget must be reported to and approved by the Foundation. Budgeting of funds must follow the instructions detailed in the *General Conditions* document; go to [www.kks.se](http://www.kks.se).

## Application

The application, which can be written in Swedish or English, should be submitted via the project manager's account in the Knowledge Foundation's application portal ([www.kks.se](http://www.kks.se)). Supplementary material to the application may not be submitted retrospectively.

In the application form, applicants should indicate the project title with the programme version applied for: 'Expertkompetens Mini: [Project Title]' or 'Expertkompetens Maxi: [Project Title]'

The project budget should be entered directly in the application form and should not include overhead costs (OH).

In the application form, state the city and postal code for the place where the unit within the company that will conduct the main part of the co-production is located.

In the application form, the project's main subject focus is stated based on the *Standard for Swedish Classification of Research Subjects*. For projects of an interdisciplinary nature, a maximum of three (3) different subjects can be selected.

A table of planned project participants is to be attached to the application form. From participating companies (and potentially other partners), only key participants need to be entered. Attachment template for project participants ('Staff in the project') is downloaded as an Excel file from [www.kks.se](http://www.kks.se) but must be converted and attached as a PDF file (make sure that the entire Excel spreadsheet fits on one PDF page).

## Appendices to the application

The following appendices must be attached to the application (as PDF files) in the order below. The structure of the appendices should follow the headings indicated for each appendix. Under each heading, the main characteristics of the information that the Foundation expects are stated, however applicants can provide supplementary information that is deemed appropriate based on the direction of the proposal. All body text in Appendices 1 and 2 must follow the format font Arial, font size 11 pt, single line spacing.

### **Appendix 1. The project's contribution to the host research and education environment**

*Maximum 2 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. Emanate from the group or environment where the project has its closest context. Design the description based on the following headings:

#### **1.1. The project's contribution to the development of the research and education environment**

Describe how the project will contribute to the development of the research and education environment. Connect to the objectives and purpose of the call. It must be made clear in what way the project entails added value in relation to previous and ongoing projects with funding from the Knowledge Foundation within the environment.



## 1.2 The research and education environment (or environments) in which the project will be conducted

Describe the environment's current situation and ambition.

**a) Current situation** with results from the past five years (area of activity and direction of research and education within environment, personnel composition, scientific production, development of educations, funding, collaborative and business partners, etc.).

**b) Ambition** (objectives for the further development of the environment).

### **Appendix 2. Project plan**

*Maximum 10 pages (Mini) and 20 pages (Maxi). To be uploaded under 'Project plan'.*

*The project plan must be page numbered in its entirety.*

- **Introduction** – General presentation of the project and its objectives and purpose.
- **Partners and organisation** – Describe and explain the participating project partners and their respective roles, contributions and anticipated benefits. Describe and explain the management and organisation of the project and the expertise and involvement of key individuals.
- **Experiences and ambitions in business-related educational activities** – Describe overall experiences in cooperation with the business sector relating to research and educational issues, and experiences (if any) in the development of education for professionals. Describe the activities (if any) carried out (including previous projects) and their results. Based on this, explain the decision to apply for *Mini* or *Maxi*. Describe future ambitions, objectives and strategies – both at the level of the university and the environment – and how the project intends to contribute to the efficiency and sustainability of the educational activities for professionals. Describe and explain, in terms of the chosen programme version, the reasons and ambitions for applications from environments wishing to significantly renew or change their existing activities.
- **Link to business challenges and competence needs** – Provide an overall analysis of the competence needs to be addressed and how they are of strategic importance to business. Provide an estimate of student volumes from the business sector in the short and long term. Describe how the business sector and other partners have participated in the analysis. Describe how the activities continuously will maintain a high level of business relevance. Describe the scientific strengths and expertise of the host research and education environment, and indicate how they match the addressed field of competence. Account for and relate to any similar activities for professional development in Sweden in the field of competence.
- **Planned educational activities** – Describe how the project will be used to achieve synergies between the environment's research and education. Describe planned educational activities as far as known and indicate how they respond to identified competence needs of the business sector. Give details of how the activities relate to existing educational provision at the university. Describe how the educational activities will be implemented and tailored to meet the specific needs and circumstances of the target group. Give details of, and explain anticipated admissions and student throughput, as well as recruitment and marketing strategies.
- **Implementation plan** – Specify how the project implementation will allow for the development and implementation of appropriate educational activities of high quality, relevance and appeal. Specify how the business sector and other partners will be involved and cooperate in the various parts of the project. Describe how the university's support functions will be involved in the project and how any development of internal working methods and processes will take place. Specify how monitoring, learning and continuous adaptation of the

activities during the project period will take place, and how it will contribute to the development of sustainable educational activities for professionals in the longer term. Provide an overall plan of activities and timetable.

- **Budget** – Describe and explain the overall project budget, and in particular the funding from the Foundation. Indicate how the total funding is distributed between the various partners and parts of the project. Comment on and explain the budget in relation to the project content.

### **Appendix 3. CVs**

*Maximum 2 pages per person. To be uploaded under 'Attachments in accordance with the call and in the same order as stated in the call'.*

Attach CVs with relevant information about all project participants deemed to be key individuals in the project. For researchers/teachers, experience in pedagogical development and pedagogical skills at the relevant level should be specifically mentioned.

### **Appendix 4. Letters of intent**

*Maximum 1 page per partner. To be uploaded under 'Attachments in accordance with the call and in the same order as stated in the call'.*

Letters of intent from each of the companies involved from the start of the project, and potentially other partners, should be attached. The letters of intent should briefly state the company's commitment (including possible co-financing), own contributions and role in the project, as well as the incentive and value of participation. Letters of intent should either be physically signed or e-signed through, for example, GetAccept, ebox or similar systems.

### **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. The project manager's signature implies responsibility for the described implementation. The project owner and the vice-chancellor confirm by their respective signatures that the university supports the project and will participate according to the project description. The appendix template for signatures can be downloaded at [www.kks.se](http://www.kks.se). The signature appendix should either be physically signed or e-signed through, for example, eduSign, GetAccept, ebox or similar systems.

## **Preparation and evaluation**

The secretariat of the Foundation reviews if the applications comply with the formal requirements and approved applications are then assessed by an external evaluation panel based on the evaluation criteria below. The evaluation will consider, where applicable, whether the application is for a project within the *Expertkompetens Mini* or *Expertkompetens Maxi* programme. As a supplement to the written applications, hearings are held with applicants within the *Expertkompetens Maxi* programme. The evaluation panel then makes its recommendation for approval or rejection. Funding decisions are made by the Foundation's CEO (*Mini*) and the Foundation's board (*Maxi*), respectively.

### **Formal requirements**

If the application fails to comply with the requirements below, it will be rejected on formal grounds.

- The project must be in line with the objectives and purpose of the call.
- The application must include parts and appendices according to the call instructions.
- The applicant university must belong to the Knowledge Foundation's target group and be registered to award degrees for the level and subject area covered by the application.

- The project manager must have a PhD and be employed by the applicant university.
- The educational activities must be at advanced and/or postgraduate level and must be eligible for credits.
- The applicant university must co-finance the project with at least 10 percent of the amount requested from the Foundation.
- Participating companies must fall within the scope of the Knowledge Foundation's definition of business sector (go to [www.kks.se](http://www.kks.se)) and must, during the course of the project, jointly co-finance the project with at least 10 percent of the amount applied for from the Foundation.
- Maximum funding from the Knowledge Foundation is SEK 2.66–4 million (*Mini*) and SEK 9–12 million (*Maxi*) (excl. OH).
- The project duration should be 2–3 years for *Mini* and 4–5 years for *Maxi*.
- The start date of the project is 01/06/2023 at the earliest and 01/10/2023 at the latest.
- Any financial or personal links must be clearly stated in the application.
- Budgeting of funds must follow the instructions in the *General Conditions* document; go to [www.kks.se](http://www.kks.se).
- Duly signed letters of intent should be attached from each of at least five (*Mini*) and ten (*Maxi*) co-producing companies, as well as from all other participating partners (see instructions under **Appendix 4**).
- The application must be duly signed by the vice-chancellor, the project owner, and the project manager of the applicant university (see instructions in **Appendix 5**).

### Evaluation criteria

#### Strong research and education environments

- What is the contribution of the project for the short-term and long-term development of the research and education environment?
- To what extent is there a clear description of the research and education environment's current situation?
- To what extent is there an adequate ambition for the development of the research and education environment?

#### Scientific quality<sup>3</sup>

- How well do the educational activities match the scientific strength and expertise of the applicant? How do the activities relate to other similar initiatives in Sweden and to existing educational provision?
- Does the environment have an adequate level of experience of cooperation with the business sector on education issues for the chosen programme version, and how are any results and previous experience taken into account in the design of the project?
- To what extent is the project expected to contribute to the effectiveness and sustainability of educational activities for professionals? How well does this relate to the long-term ambitions of the environment and the university? Are the reasons and ambitions for the application from environments with existing activities well-described and relevant to the chosen programme version?
- To what extent will the project be used to achieve synergies between the environment's research and education?

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<sup>3</sup> If the application concerns an artistic subject area, the term 'scientific' is replaced by 'artistic'.

### Benefits to business partners

- Is the analysis of the business sector's competence needs sufficiently clear and well-founded? Are the needs sufficiently relevant and is the assessment of student volumes from the business sector reasonable in the short and long term? Has the analysis been drawn up in a thorough and credible manner?
- To what extent are the conditions in place for effective collaboration in the project? Is the combination of project partners well aligned and do all partners contribute in a significant way and do they benefit from their participation? Is the involvement of the business sector in all aspects of the project adequate and sufficient?
- Do the planned educational activities appear to be appropriately selected and designed in accordance with the competence needs of the business sector and the needs and circumstances of the target group?

### Implementation

- How well do the skills of the project management and other key individuals match the requirements of the project, and to what extent are the conditions in place for an effective management, organisation, and coordination?
- How well is the implementation of the project described and to what extent does it allow for the development and implementation of appropriate educational activities for professionals? To what extent does the implementation allow for monitoring, learning and continuous adaptation during the project period, and how does it contribute to the development of sustainable activities in the longer term?
- Are there reasonable targets for student volume and throughput, and convincing planning in terms of student recruitment and marketing efforts? Is the involvement of the university's support functions adequate and is work on potential development of internal approaches and processes well designed?
- Is the activity and timetable well designed and realistic? Is the budget clearly presented and explained, and are the costs reasonable in relation to the project content?

### Timetable

- Applications must be received via the Knowledge Foundation's application portal no later than 3.00 pm, 03/02/2023.
- Applications will be formally reviewed in February.
- The evaluation panel evaluates each application and hearings with applicants to the *Expertkompetens Maxi* programme will be held in March/April.
- Funding decisions are made by the Foundation's CEO (*Expertkompetens Mini*) and the Foundation's board (*Expertkompetens Maxi*), respectively. Decisions will be communicated to applicants by mid-May 2023.
- After signing the agreement, approved projects may start 01/06/2023 at the earliest and 01/10/2023 at the latest.