
CALL FOR PROPOSALS

SECOND CYCLE EDUCATION 25

Mini/Maxi

- The application should be submitted to the Knowledge Foundation before **15:00 on 17 November 2025**.
 - Funding decisions will be announced in March 2026.
-

Petter Zirath, Programme Manager
petter.zirath@kks.se, +46 (0)73-712 81 35

About the Knowledge Foundation

The Knowledge Foundation is a funder with the mission to strengthen Sweden's competitiveness. The foundation funds research and competence development at Sweden's university colleges and newer universities when it takes place in collaboration with the business sector. The Foundation's calls are open to all scientific and artistic subject areas.

Contents

| | |
|--|----------|
| The programme Second cycle education | 3 |
| Objectives of the programme..... | 3 |
| The programme's purpose and contribution to development of strong research and education environments | 3 |
| Project design | 3 |
| Programme variants | 4 |
| Terms and conditions | 4 |
| Applicants | 4 |
| Participation of the university | 4 |
| Participation of the business sector and other partners..... | 5 |
| Project duration | 5 |
| Financial framework and budgeting..... | 5 |
| Application | 6 |
| Appendices to the application | 6 |
| Appendix 1. The project's contribution to the development of the research and education environment(s) | 6 |
| Appendix 2. Project plan..... | 6 |
| Appendix 3. Project participants..... | 7 |
| Appendix 4. Qualifications..... | 7 |
| Appendix 5. Letters of intent | 8 |
| Appendix 6. Signatures from the university..... | 8 |
| Preparation and assessment | 8 |
| Formal requirements..... | 8 |
| Assessment criteria | 9 |
| Contribution to the development of the research and education environment | 9 |
| Scientific quality | 9 |
| Benefit to the business sector | 9 |
| Implementation | 9 |

The programme *Second cycle education*

The programme *Second cycle education* replaces the former programme *Avans* as of this year's call.

For Sweden to continue being a competitive country with high innovation skills, the educational offering at the country's universities and university colleges (henceforth called universities in the call text) must be of high quality, have a clear connection to the knowledge frontier, and also be relevant to the needs of the labour market. To ensure this, universities and the business sector need to engage through collaboration to analyse needs and develop relevant educational activities. By matching the subject areas of expertise of the universities with competence needs in the business sector, the relevance of the educational offering to the labour market can be ensured, and the Knowledge Foundation therefore offers the programme *Second cycle education*.

Objectives of the programme

The objective of the programme *Second cycle education* is that the applicant research and education environment together with business partners develop or further develop second cycle study programmes that address the competence needs of the business sector. The objective is also to contribute to the establishment and/or development of educational collaboration between academia and the business sector that both strengthens the educational offering at the universities and contributes to the provision of competence in the business sector.

The programme's purpose and contribution to development of strong research and education environments

The Knowledge Foundation seeks to support the building of strong research and education environments that create value for academia, business sector, and society. All the Knowledge Foundation's programmes contribute in various ways to enabling environments to establish and maintain a strong national and international scientific or artistic position in the long term, which also constitutes a profile area for the university. For more information on the Knowledge Foundation's view on strong research and education environments, go to [the Foundation's website](https://www.kks.se/en/funding-and-assessment/strong-research-and-educational-environments/)¹.

The specific purpose of the programme *Second cycle education* is to integrate the environment's research and educational activities and to create conditions for the provision of competence in the business sector.

Project design

The project will involve universities and partners from the business sector, who will work closely together to analyse and define competence needs and jointly develop or further develop second cycle study programmes.

Degree programmes that can be developed/further developed are master's programmes or the second cycle level (year 4–5) within programmes that provide a professional degree.

The developed educational offering should be quality-assured and approved in accordance with the procedures laid down by the university and should be offered free of charge as part of the university's comprehensive educational offering.

For a good fulfilment of the objectives, the following aspects should be specifically taken into account in the design of the project:

- The recruitment of students is a particularly important factor that should be a key focus. The project proposals should outline how marketing and student recruitment will be handled.

¹ <https://www.kks.se/en/funding-and-assessment/strong-research-and-educational-environments/>

- To strengthen the quality and sustainability of the degree programme, the project proposals should place a particular focus on pedagogical development.

Programme variants

To match the needs and conditions of the applicant research and education environment, the programme is offered in two variants – *Second cycle education Mini* and *Second cycle education Maxi* (further referred to as *Mini* and *Maxi* in the call text). Differences between the variants are shown in the table below.

Mini is aimed at environments who together with relevant business partners want to further develop an existing degree programme by developing/further developing one or several courses.

Maxi is aimed at environments who together with relevant business partners want to develop a completely new degree programme or want to make a significant renewal/update of an existing degree programme.

| | Mini | Maxi |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Project duration | 1 year | 3 years |
| Scope | 7.5–15 credits | 45–120 credits |
| Project funding | SEK 0.5 million | SEK 2 million |
| Minimum of participating partners | 2 | 5 |

The choice of programme variant must be described and motivated in the project plan.

Terms and conditions

Applicants

Sweden's university colleges and newer universities² with degree-awarding powers at master's³ level or higher within the subject area of the project may apply (degree awarding powers should be clearly stated in Appendix 1). The Knowledge Foundation welcomes applications within all subject areas. When the application concerns an artistic research domain, the concept *scientific* is to be replaced by *artistic* in the call text.

Several universities within the Foundation's target group 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

The project must have a project manager who is operationally responsible for the implementation of the project. The project manager should have a doctoral degree⁴ and be employed by the university at the latest at the start of the project. At the university, there must also be an appointed project owner. The project owner, who must have staff and budget authority at a senior level at the university, is responsible for ensuring proper conditions for the implementation of the project, and for monitoring the implementation. In this programme, where the application does not need to be signed by the vice-

² Blekinge Institute of Technology, Dalarna University, Halmstad University, Jönköping University, Karlstad University, Konstfack, Kristianstad University, Linnaeus University, Malmö University, Mid Sweden University, Mälardalen University, Royal College of Music in Stockholm, Royal Institute of Art, Stockholm University of the Arts, Swedish Defence University, Swedish School of Sport and Health Sciences, Södertörn University, University of Borås, University of Gävle, University of Skövde, University West, Örebro University.

³ Degree-awarding powers at master's level (UKÄ: *masternivå*) or higher is required to ensure that good conditions prevail for a close connection between research and education within the subject area.

⁴ Doctoral degree on scientific or artistic grounds.

chancellor, the project owner should have the right of delegation to conclude agreements with the Knowledge Foundation. The project manager and the project owner should not be the same person.

Participation of the business sector and other partners

The project must be conducted in co-production with the business sector. For more information on the Foundation's view on co-production, go to [the Foundation's website](#)⁵.

The project requires a defined and sufficiently comprehensive engagement from external partners in order to ensure the relevance of the educational offering to the business sector. Thus, within *Mini* at least two, and within *Maxi* at least five, mutually independent partners must participate.

Within the programme *Second cycle education*, which has no requirements for co-financing from the business sector, all kinds of partners are welcome to participate. Participating partners may, for example, contribute with analysis and formulation of competence needs, development of educational content as well as expertise and experience from practical challenges, and they bear their own costs related to the project. The participation of all participating partners, for example through workshops, reference groups, steering groups, etc., must be clarified in the application and signed letters of intent should be attached from each of them. The relevance of the partners involved in the project, the forms of participation and the expected benefits will be assessed based on the assessment criteria *Benefit to the business sector*.

Any connections, such as financial or personal links, between for example participating partners, between any partner and university, or between any partner and individual project participant(s), must be stated and clarified in the application form and the project plan. Any dual roles must be clarified. Specify, for example, company connections, share ownership, board positions, employment, or consulting activities.

Project duration

The project duration should be a maximum of 1 year (*Mini*) or 3 years (*Maxi*). Projects may start no earlier than 1 June 2026, and no later than 1 November 2026.

Financial framework and budgeting

The programme *Second cycle education* refers to the funding of an education project conducted in co-operation with the business sector. The amount to be requested from the Knowledge Foundation may not exceed the sum of SEK 0.5 million (*Mini*) and SEK 2 million (*Maxi*).

The funds from the Foundation should primarily be used for salary costs related to working hours within the project for the project manager and other project participants employed by the applicant university(ies). In addition to salary costs, other direct costs arising within the project at the applying university(ies) can be included in the budget. The funds from the Knowledge Foundation may only be used for the development of the educational offering, and not for the course implementation itself.

Information on approved costs and instructions for budgeting of funds are available in the document *General terms and conditions for projects funded by the Knowledge Foundation*, which can be found on [the Foundation's website](#)⁶. The application should not include overhead costs (OH). An OH surcharge of 20 percent will be added by the Foundation if the application is granted.

⁵ <https://www.kks.se/en/co-production/>

⁶ <https://www.kks.se/en/funding-and-assessment/general-terms-and-conditions-for-projects/>

Application

The application should be submitted via the project manager's account in the Knowledge Foundation's application system *SBS Manager* via [the Foundation's website](#)⁷. Supplementing the application after the closing date of the call is not possible.

In the application form, the project title should be preceded by the programme variant applied for, that is, '*Mini*: [Project Title]' or '*Maxi*: [Project Title]'.

Appendices to the application

The following appendices (as PDF files) should be attached to the application in the same order as below. The structure of the appendices must follow the headings specified for each appendix. Under each heading, the main characteristics of the information that the Foundation expects are stated. However, applicants may provide supplementary information that is deemed appropriate based on the direction of the call.

The application may be written in Swedish or in English. Note that all body text in Appendices 1 and 2 must follow the format font Arial, font size 11 pt, and single line spacing.

Appendix 1. The project's contribution to the development of the research and education environment(s)

Maximum 2 pages, see instructions below if several environments apply jointly. To be uploaded under *Appendix 1. The project's contribution to the research and education environment(s)*.

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. Frame the description based on the below headings.

If a project is applied for jointly by several environments, all environments must be described. However, the appendix may only be extended by a maximum of half a page per additional environment.

1.1. The research and education environment(s) where the project will be conducted

- Describe the environment's current status and results of the last five years, including, for example, scope and focus of research and education, staff composition, scientific output, development of educations, funding, collaborations. Degree-awarding power for the subject area of the project should be clearly stated.
- Describe the ambition and objectives for the further development of the environment.

1.2. The project's contribution to the development of the research and education environment(s)

- Describe how the project will contribute to the development of the research and education environment and its activities. The connection to the objectives and purpose of the call must be clearly stated. It must be made clear in what way the project adds value in relation to previous and ongoing projects within the environment, especially projects with the same project manager.

Appendix 2. Project plan

Maximum 7 pages for *Mini*, maximum 10 pages for *Maxi* (including any references). Page numbered. To be uploaded under *Appendix 2. Project plan*.

- Describe the objectives and purpose of the project.
- Provide an overall analysis of the competence needs that will be addressed and how they are of importance to the business sector.

⁷ <https://www.kks.se/en/apply-and-report/>

- Describe the implementation of the project and explain how it will contribute to the development of a degree programme that addresses the competence needs of the business sector.
- Describe the participating partners and how they will be involved in the project.
- Describe the subject content of the educational offering as far as known at the time of application and describe both how it relates to the research in the current research and education environment and responds to identified competence needs of the business sector.
- Describe the pedagogical development work to be performed.
- Describe how the project will handle marketing and student recruitment. Include an assessment of the number of expected students.
- Account for whether sex and gender perspectives are relevant in the project's scientific content and in the design of the project, and if so, how these perspectives are included (more information on [the Foundation's website](#)⁸).
- Describe and justify the project's organisation, management, and staffing. Account for the competence, role, and work contribution of key individuals, including individuals from participating partners. The description should relate to information provided in the budget, the appendix *Staff in the project*, and CVs.
- Account for how gender equality aspects have been considered in the composition of the project group (more information on [the Foundation's website](#)⁹).
- Describe and justify the costs included in the budget table so that it is clear what the budget items consist of and how they relate to the project objectives and planned activities.
- Include a timetable and an activity plan.
- If the university has previously been rejected on a similar application (within the programme *Avans*), this must be stated along with comments on how the assessment panel's previous remarks are being considered in the current application. This should be included within the page limit of the project plan and should not be longer than about half a page.

Appendix 3. Project participants

Appendix template for project participants (*Staff in the project*) is downloaded as an Excel file from [the Foundation's website](#)¹⁰, but must be converted and attached to the application as a PDF file (ensure that the entire Excel spreadsheet fits on one PDF page). To be uploaded under *Appendix 3. Staff in the project*.

Enter information on all planned project participants from the university (or universities) in the table. From other participating partners, only key participants need to be entered.

Appendix 4. Qualifications

Maximum 1 page per person. To be uploaded under *Other appendices*.

Attach CVs for all individuals in the project group who are crucial for the implementation of the project.

The Foundation applies a broadened review of academic merits (more information on [the Foundation's website](#)¹¹). Thus, all academically active participants should present a selection of the merits and experiences that are most relevant to the project and the programme form. *For example*, emanate from the following categories:

- **Degrees**
- **Positions**

⁸ <https://www.kks.se/en/gender-equality-perspective-an-added-value-for-research-and-innovation/>

⁹ <https://www.kks.se/en/gender-equality-perspective-an-added-value-for-research-and-innovation/>

¹⁰ <https://www.kks.se/en/documents/>

¹¹ <https://www.kks.se/en/broadened-review-of-academic-merits-and-advanced-assessment/>

- **Research output:** select at most ten (10) research results/outputs. In addition to scientific publications, this could be for example: documented artistic merits, instrumental or product development, data set, software, patent, process or policy development, as well as implementation of research results.
- **Educational activities:** pedagogical qualification including, for example, teaching, training and supervision, education development including development of open teaching resources and learning objects (learning and teaching materials).
- **Cooperation:** with academia, business sector, or other societal actors, as well as communication efforts.
- **Management:** project management, organisational development, assessment assignments, centre management, department assignments, granted funding.

Appendix 5. Letters of intent

Approximately 1 page per partner. To be uploaded under *Other appendices*.

Signed letter of intent from each of the participating partners must be attached. Each letter of intent must include

- expected results and benefits of the participation
- contributions and participation in the implementation of the project
- ability to contribute in accordance with the project plan

Letters of intent should either be signed manually or electronically by, for example, GetAccept, ebox, or similar systems.

Appendix 6. Signatures from the university

Appendix template for signatures is downloaded from [the Foundation's website](#)¹². To be uploaded under *Other appendices*.

The application must be signed by the project manager and the project owner. The project manager's signature implies responsibility for the described implementation. The project owner assures through his/her signature that the university approves the project and will be involved according to the project description. The project owner should have the right of delegation to conclude agreements with the Knowledge Foundation.

The signature appendix should either be signed manually or electronically by, for example, eduSign, GetAccept, ebox, or similar systems.

Preparation and assessment

The application will be reviewed by the secretariat of the Knowledge Foundation to ensure that the formal requirements are met. If these are met, an external assessment panel will conduct an overall assessment based on the assessment criteria below. Funding decisions are made by the Foundation's CEO after recommendation by the external assessment panel.

Formal requirements

The following requirements must be met for the application to be considered for evaluation by the Knowledge Foundation. Applications that do not meet the requirements, will be rejected for formal reasons.

¹² <https://www.kks.se/en/documents/>

- The applicant university must belong to the Knowledge Foundation's target group and have degree awarding powers at master's level or higher for the subject area (this should be clearly stated in Appendix 1).
- The project manager must have a doctoral degree and be employed by the university at the latest at the start of the project.
- The application must include appendices according to the call instructions.
- At least 2 (*Mini*) and at least 5 (*Maxi*) external partners must participate in the project.
- Signed letters of intent from all participating partners must be attached.
- Funds requested from the Knowledge Foundation may not exceed SEK 0.5 million (*Mini*) or SEK 2 million (*Maxi*) (excl. OH costs).
- The duration of the project should be a maximum of 1 year (*Mini*) or 3 years (*Maxi*).
- Projects may start no earlier than 1st of June 2026, and no later than 1st of November 2026.
- The application must be signed by the project owner and the project manager.

Assessment criteria

Contribution to the development of the research and education environment

- To what degree is there a clear description of the current state of the research and education environment?
- To what degree is there an adequate ambition for the development of the research and education environment?
- Considering the choice of programme variant, to what extent is the project expected to contribute to the development of the research and education environment in the short and long term?

Scientific quality¹³

- To what extent does the planned educational offering relate to the research within the research and education environment?
- How appropriate is the project group's scientific and pedagogical competence in relation to the project content?
- To what extent is there an adequate description of whether sex and gender perspectives are relevant in the project's scientific content and in the design of the project? If so, are these perspectives adequately included?

Benefit to the business sector

- To what extent does the planned educational offering relate to identified competence needs of the business sector?
- How relevant is the project to the needs of the participating business actors?
- To what extent is the project expected to contribute to the benefit of a wider business sector?
- To what extent is the involvement of the business sector adequate and sufficiently comprehensive?

Implementation

- How clear and realistic are the objectives of the project?
- To what extent is the pedagogical development work relevant for the degree programme?
- Considering the choice of programme variant, how well is the recruitment of students and marketing of the degree programme described, and to what extent is there a reasonable assessment of expected students?
- How appropriate is the project's organisation and management?

¹³ When the application concerns an artistic research domain, the concept *scientific* is replaced by *artistic* in the call.

- How well do the combined merits and experiences of the project group fulfil the needs of the project implementation?
- To what extent is there an adequate description of how gender equality aspects have been considered in the composition of the project group?
- How well is the budget described and justified in the project plan and is the project plan realistic in relation to available resources?
- How appropriate and realistic is the timetable and the activity plan ?