
CALL FOR PROPOSALS

SECOND CYCLE EDUCATION 26

Mini/Maxi

- The application should be submitted to the Knowledge Foundation before **15:00 on 16 november 2026**.
- Funding decisions will be announced in March 2027.

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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.

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The programme **Second cycle education**¹

For Sweden to continue being a competitive country with a strong capacity for innovation, 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 labour market needs. 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 and purpose 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 purpose of the programme is to integrate the environment's research with its educational offer and to allow students at the advanced level to receive education aligned with the current research frontier. The purpose is also to enhance Sweden's competitiveness by ensuring that the business sector has access to graduates at the advanced level with relevant and in-demand competences.

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 or further developed have to be one-year master's programmes, two-year master's programmes, or at the second cycle level (year 4-5) of programmes leading to a professional degree.

The developed educational offering should be integrated into the regular course offering, quality-assured and approved in accordance with the university's procedures 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 considered 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.
- 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.

¹ The programme *Second Cycle Education* has replaced the former programme *Avans*.

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

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.

The choice of programme variant must be clearly described and motivated in the application.

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, be employed by the main applicant university at the latest at the start of the project and have solid experience in developing and implementing education at the relevant level. 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. 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.

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, alternatively employment as a senior lecturer, associate senior lecturer, or professor

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 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 should, among other things, 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 and will be reviewed by the Knowledge Foundation. 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 2027, and no later than 1 November 2027.

Financial framework and budgeting

The programme 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 time 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.

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.

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

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

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

Note! 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, and normal margins (2,5 cm for all margins).

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

Maximum 2 pages. If a project is applied for jointly by several research and education environments, all environments must be described according to the instructions below (the appendix may be extended by a maximum of half a page per additional environment). To be uploaded under *Appendix 1. The project's contribution to the research and education environment(s)*.

All the Knowledge Foundation's programmes contribute in different ways to supporting the development of strong research and education environments that create value for academia, the business sector, and society. Therefore, all projects applied for must be situated within a context in which they contribute to strengthening the development and profile of the research and education environment. In this way, the environment can also become a long-term and valuable partner for the business sector. For more information on what the Knowledge Foundation means by strong research and education environments, and how such an environment can be defined, go to [the Foundation's website](#)⁸.

This appendix should be based on the group (research and education environment) within which the project will be conducted and should be prepared jointly by the management of the research and education environment and the project manager.

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

Briefly describe the research and education environment in which the project will be conducted. Tailor the description to what is most relevant in relation to the programme and the project, but include specific information on degree-awarding powers for the relevant subject area.

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

Describe the ambitions and objectives of the research and education environment for becoming a stronger environment. Justify how the project will contribute to the environment's desired development in the short and long term. Also describe in what way the project adds value in relation to previous and ongoing projects within the environment. The choice of programme variant (*Mini* or *Maxi*) must be clearly described and justified (see further information under the section "Programme variants").

Appendix 2. Project plan

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

- Describe the objectives, purpose and implementation of the project.

⁸ <https://www.kks.se/en/funding-and-assessment/strong-research-and-educational-environments/>

- Describe the subject content of the educational offering as far as known at the time of application.
- Describe how the educational offering relates to the research within the current research and education environment.
- Report whether there are any other similar subject-specific educational offerings in Sweden. If so, relate to them in order to justify the need to develop a new programme or further develop an existing programme.
- Account for whether sex and gender perspectives are relevant in the project's planned educational content and design, and if so, how these perspectives are included (more information on [the Foundation's website](#)⁹).
- Describe the project team's scientific and pedagogical expertise.
- Describe the area of expertise to be addressed in the education programmes and how it responds to identified competence needs in industry.
- Describe the participating partners and how they will be involved in the project. Explain how their needs and contributions are relevant to a broader business sector. The description should be aligned with the information provided in the letters of intent.
- Describe the pedagogical development work to be performed.
- Describe how the project will handle marketing and student recruitment.
- 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](#).¹⁰
- Describe and justify the costs included in the budget so it is clear what the costs consist of, why they are relevant to the project, and which partner will cover the costs.
- Include a timetable and an activity plan.

Appendix 3. Project participants

Appendix template for project participants (*Staff in the project*) is downloaded as an Excel file from [the Foundation's website](#)¹¹, 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 (with the exception of the project manager, whose CV must not exceed 2 pages). 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](#)¹²). Thus, all academically active participants should present a selection of the merits and

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

¹⁰ <https://www.kks.se/en/gender-equality-perspective-an-added-value-for-research-and-innovation/>

¹¹ <https://www.kks.se/en/documents/>

¹² <https://www.kks.se/en/broadened-review-of-academic-merits-and-advanced-assessment/>

experiences that are most relevant to the project and the programme form. *For example*, emanate from the following categories:

- **Education and degrees**
- **Employment and assignments**
- **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.
- **Teaching:** 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](#)¹³. 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 their 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.

¹³ <https://www.kks.se/en/documents/>

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.

- 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 degree¹⁴ 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.
- The educational offerings that are developed or further developed must be one-year master's programmes, two-year master's programmes, or at the second cycle level (year 4-5) of programmes leading to a professional degree.
- The educational offering to be developed and delivered within the project must comprise at least 7.5 credits (*Mini*) or 45 credits (*Maxi*), respectively.
- 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 1 June 2027, and no later than 1 November 2027.
- The application must be signed by the project owner and the project manager.

Assessment criteria

Contribution to the development of the research and education environment¹⁵

- To what extent are there clear and relevant descriptions of the current state of the research and education environment, as well as its ambitions and objectives for strengthening the environment?
- Considering the chosen programme variant, how well is the project's contribution to the desired development of the research and educational environment justified in the short and long term?
- Is there a sufficiently well-described justification for the choice of programme variant, and is the choice appropriate as well as relevant based on the description?

Scientific quality¹⁶

- To what extent does the planned educational offering relate to the research within the research and education environment?
- To what extent is there a clear description of similar existing subject-specific educational offerings in Sweden? If such initiatives exist, is the need for new educational offerings or the further development of existing ones well justified in relation to them?
- To what extent is there an adequate description of whether sex and gender perspectives are relevant in the project's planned educational content and design? If so, are these perspectives adequately included?

¹⁴ Doctoral degree on scientific or artistic grounds, alternatively employment as a senior lecturer, associate senior lecturer, or professor.

¹⁵ In cases where several research and education environments submit a joint application, the assessment criterion applies to each of the environments.

¹⁶ When the application concerns an artistic research domain, the concept *scientific* is replaced by *artistic* in the call.

- How appropriate is the project group's scientific and pedagogical competence in relation to the project content?

Benefit to the business sector

- How well is the competence area to be addressed in the programmes described and to what extent does the planned educational offering relate to identified competence needs of the business sector?
- How suitable is the overall composition of project partners?
- How relevant are the project partners' motivations for participating in the project, and to what extent are their needs and participation relevant to a broader target group within the business sector?
- To what extent is the involvement of the business sector adequate and sufficiently comprehensive?

Implementation

- How well is the project's implementation described and to what extent does it lead to achieving the project's objectives and purpose?
- 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?
- How appropriate is the project's organisation and management?
- 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?