
CALL FOR PROPOSALS

EDUCATION FOR WORKING PROFESSIONALS 25

Mini/Maxi

- The application should be submitted to the Knowledge Foundation before **15:00 on 4 February 2026.**
 - Funding decisions will be announced in May/June 2026.
-

Maria Dollhopf, Programme Manager
maria.dollhopf@kks.se, +46 (0)73-712 81 36

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 Education for working professionals	3
Objectives of the programme.....	3
The programme's purpose and contribution to development of research and education environments	3
Project design	3
Programme variants	4
Terms and conditions	5
Applicants	5
Participation of the university	5
Participation of the business sector and other partners.....	6
Project duration	7
Financial framework and budgeting.....	7
Application	7
Appendices to the application	7
Appendix 1. The project's contribution to the development of the research and education environment(s)	8
Appendix 2. Project plan.....	8
Appendix 3. Project participants.....	9
Appendix 4. Qualifications.....	9
Appendix 5. Letters of intent	10
Appendix 6. Signatures from the university.....	10
Preparation and assessment	10
Formal requirements.....	10
Assessment criteria	11
Contribution to the development of the research and education environment	11
Scientific quality	11
Benefit to the business sector	11
Implementation	12

The programme Education for working professionals

The programme *Education for working professionals* replaces the former programme *Expertkompetens* as of this year's call.

Sweden faces a series of complex societal challenges, at the same time as a rapid technological development leads to a comprehensive transformation of the business sector. Altogether, this contributes to changed and increasing needs for relevant knowledge and competence, needs that can no longer be solely met through the addition of newly graduated individuals. An increasingly important contribution will therefore be competence development of already working professionals and recurrent education during the working life.

Sweden's universities and university colleges (henceforth called *universities* in the call text) play an important role in this context by being able to offer, within their subject areas of expertise, a research-connected education offering that meets needs of the business sector. To many universities, working students is a newly added target group that prompts adaptations of the educational activities in order to meet the group's needs and conditions for education. The Knowledge Foundation therefore offers the programme *Education for working professionals* as a test bed for the development of competence-enhancing educational activities for working professionals.

Objectives of the programme

The objective of the programme *Education for working professionals* is that the applicant research- and education environment together with business partners, develops relevant forms and content for educational activities at second cycle level (or above) for working professionals¹. The objective is to strengthen the universities' long-term capacity and ability to deliver appropriately designed education activities for working students.

The programme's purpose and contribution to development of 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/)².

The specific purpose of the *Education for working professionals* programme is for the research and education environment to develop its collaboration with the business sector through competence-enhancing educational activities for working professionals. Through the programme, the applicant research and education environment may also strengthen its relationship with the business sector within subject areas related to the environment's research orientation, thus contributing to profiling.

Project design

The programme *Education for working professionals* aims to fund the development of working methods and forms for appropriate educational activities for working students. The project should entail that universities, business partners, and possibly other relevant partners, together and in close collaboration analyse and define competence needs, as well as jointly develop and test implement relevant educational activities³.

¹ Working professionals with an undergraduate degree or equivalent level of working experience.

² <https://www.kks.se/en/funding-and-assessment/strong-research-and-educational-environments/>

³ At second cycle or third cycle level (doctoral level).

The programme primarily refers to support for environments intending to start up educational activities for working professionals in collaboration with the business sector. However, the programme may also provide support to environments that already have an existing educational activity for working professionals, but who need to significantly renew it to strengthen the long-term ability. In these cases, the needs should be clearly described and will be assessed under the assessment criteria *Contribution to the development of the research and education environment*.

The project must be planned so that all developed educational activities can be test implemented on two occasions. In this way, lessons learnt from the first test implementation will be used to develop an improved educational activity for the second test implementation. The educational activities must be quality assured and approved according to established routines at the university, as well as being offered openly and free of charge to working students as part of the of the university's total educational provision.

For a good achievement of the objectives, the following aspects ought to be particularly taken into account in the design of the project:

- **Adaptation of the educational activities:** The educational activities should be appropriately designed in order to meet the needs and conditions of working professionals. This applies both to subject content, form (for example study form, study pace, scope, and examination methods), and pedagogical and/or didactical adaptations. To design the educational activities in close and active dialogue with the business sector is an important component in promoting both attractiveness and high student throughput.
- **Student recruitment:** Marketing, recruitment and admission of working students are particularly important factors, that should be given great importance since they need to be adjusted to the specific target group. The forms described for this work should therefore demonstrate flexibility and the ability to try new solutions.
- **Long-term ambitions with continued activities:** The project should be planned in such a way that the educational activities will have the possibility to live on after the project period, as far as possible still aimed at working professionals. Therefore, primary focus for the continued activities should be on continuing the *working methods* and *forms* developed and tested during the project period (such as collaboration on educational matters, internal processes and lead times, educational formats, pedagogical and/or didactical adaptations etc.), rather than maintaining a specific subject content.

Programme variants

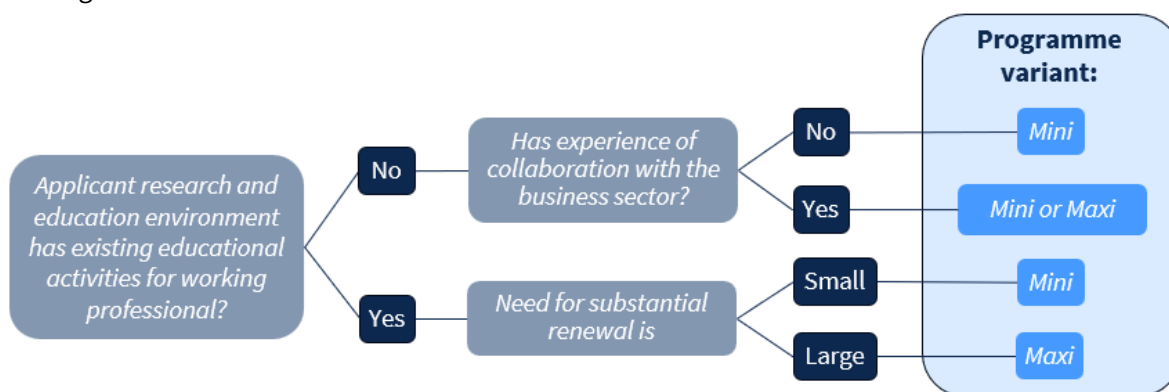
To match the needs and conditions of the applicant research and educational environment, the programme is offered in two variants – *Education for working professionals Mini* and *Education for working professionals Maxi* (further referred to as *Mini* and *Maxi* in the call text). The differences between the two variants are shown in the below table.

	Mini	Maxi
Project duration	3 years	5 years
Scope of the developed educational offering (to be tested)	20 credits	60 credits
Project funding (maximum)	SEK 5 million	SEK 12 million
Co-financing partners (from project start)	5	10
Hearing part of the assessment	no	yes

Environments aiming to start up an educational activity for working professionals should choose programme variant based on the current level of experience of collaboration with the business sector: Environments without any prior experience of collaboration with the business sector on research or

educational matters should choose *Mini*, whereas environments that already have experience of collaboration may choose between *Mini* and *Maxi* depending on the prerequisites, needs and ambitions of the environment.

Those environments that already have existing educational activities for working professionals may choose between *Mini* and *Maxi* depending on the extent of the needs for substantial renewing of working methods and forms.



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

Terms and conditions

Applicants

Sweden's university colleges and newer universities⁴ with degree-awarding powers at master's level⁵ (or above) within the subject area of the project, may apply (degree-awarding power 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

For a good fulfilment of the objectives and a long-term sustainable activity, the project should be well anchored at the university and a clear and active engagement from the applicant university is of significant importance. This applies to, for example, the prioritisation and planning of resources (such as financial resources and staff planning), but also to involvement of supporting functions of the university. Education-related support functions should already from the outset of the project be actively involved in order to challenge and develop established working methods, administrative processes and routines in order to support a successful project implementation and provide enhanced opportunities for continued educational activities for working professionals after the end of the project.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.

The project should be implemented in such a way that learnings and experiences are utilised and disseminated within the university. Another important part of experience dissemination is annual experience meetings where all ongoing projects of *Education for working professionals* (formerly *Expertkompetens*) participate and share experiences and good examples with each other.

The project must have a project manager who is operationally responsible for the implementation of the project. The project manager should have a doctoral degree⁶, be employed by the university at the latest at the start of the project and have solid experience in developing and implementing education at the relevant level (second cycle and/or above). 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 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](https://www.kks.se/en/co-production/)⁷.

Already from the outset of the project, and thus in the application, at least five (*Mini*), or at least ten (*Maxi*), mutually independent business actors should co-finance the project, but the project requires an active and extensive collaboration with additional business partners at several different levels throughout all phases of the project. Clarification of the criteria for co-financing business actors can be found on [the Foundation's website](https://www.kks.se/en/co-production/what-does-the-business-sector-mean/)⁸.

The business actors' total co-financing, primarily through in-kind contributions, must correspond to at least 10 percent of the amount requested from the Knowledge Foundation.⁹ For an appropriate balance in the co-production, a single business actor may not account for more than 70 percent of the total co-financing.

All co-financing business actors must attach signed letters of intent describing expected results and benefits of the participation, as well as how the co-operation in the project will take place. The letters of intent must also clearly describe the organisation's financial and resource conditions for meeting the obligations described in the project plan and budget.

Depending on the project orientation, it may be advisable, or even necessary, to additionally include other relevant project partners that do not fulfil the criteria for business actors (e.g. public sector). This in order to ensure the need and relevance of the planned educational activities to a larger and broader student group. Swedish universities outside the Foundation's target group may as well participate in the project if they strengthen the application and the project. All participating partners must attach signed letters of intent where the contributions to the project are described and motivated, but they bear their own costs in the project and these costs cannot be counted as co-financing.

Participating business partners (whether co-financers or not) should, for example, contribute with analysis and formulation of competence needs, development of educational content and form, as well as expertise and experience from practical challenges. The involvement of the partners, for example through workshops, reference groups, steering groups, etc., should be described in the project description. It should also be indicated whether, and if so how, business partners will contribute by co-production in the actual test implementation of the educational activities (as lecturers/teachers or similar).

⁶ Doctoral degree on scientific or artistic grounds.

⁷ <https://www.kks.se/en/co-production/>

⁸ <https://www.kks.se/en/co-production/what-does-the-business-sector-mean/>

⁹ Note that the study time of the working students cannot be counted as co-financing from the business sector (that is, lost working time when the employees participate in the developed educational activities).

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 3 years (*Mini*), or 5 years (*Maxi*). Projects may start no earlier than 1 September 2026, and no later than 1 February 2027.

Financial framework and budgeting

The programme *Education for working professionals* 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 5 million (*Mini*), or SEK 12 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. Within *Education for working professionals* the funds from the Knowledge Foundation may be used for the development and test implementation of the developed educational activities on two occasions (no more and no less). Within this programme where granted projects are expected to participate in programme-wide experience meetings, costs related to travels and organisation of the meetings may be included in the budget.

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](https://www.kks.se/en/funding-and-assessment/general-terms-and-conditions-for-projects/)¹⁰. 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](https://www.kks.se/en/funding-and-assessment/general-terms-and-conditions-for-projects/)¹¹. 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.

¹⁰ <https://www.kks.se/en/funding-and-assessment/general-terms-and-conditions-for-projects/>

¹¹ <https://www.kks.se/en/apply-and-report/>

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

Maximum 3 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 (including any educational activities for working professionals), 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. If the applicant environment already has existing educational activities for working professionals, experiences and results from this should be included, as well as an account for the needs that prompts the application.

Please note that the appendix should clearly state the rationale for the specific choice of the programme variant (see more details in the *Project Design* section).

Appendix 2. Project plan

Maximum 8 pages (*Mini*), or 12 (*Maxi*) (including any references). Page numbered. To be uploaded under *Appendix 2. Project plan*.

- Briefly describe the objectives and purpose of the project.
- Report whether there are any other subject-wise similar initiatives for competence development of working professionals in Sweden, and if so, relate to them.
- 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](https://www.kks.se/en/gender-equality-perspective-an-added-value-for-research-and-innovation/)¹²).
- Describe the scientific competence of the project group.
- Describe the pedagogical competences of the project group and the pedagogical and didactical development work to be carried out to meet the needs and conditions of working professionals.
- Indicate how the field of competence in the business sector matches the scientific expertise of the research and education environment.
- Present an overall analysis of the competence needs to be addressed and in what way they are of strategic importance to the business sector. Estimate the student volumes from the business sector in the short and long term.

¹² <https://www.kks.se/en/gender-equality-perspective-an-added-value-for-research-and-innovation/>

- Account for the partners who will be involved in the project – both participating business actors and possibly other partners.
- Describe the participating business actors' motives for participating in the project. Describe how their needs and participation also have a bearing on a broader target group of the businesses sector.
- Describe how the business sector will be involved in the various phases of the project and how the project continuously will maintain a high level of business relevance.
- Describe the implementation of the project.
- Specify how monitoring, learning and continuous adaptation of the activities during the project period will take place, and how the implementation will contribute to sustainable educational activities for working professionals in the longer term.
- 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](#)¹³).
- 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 an activity plan and a timetable.

If the university has previously been rejected on a similar application (within the programme *Expertkompetens*), 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](#)¹⁴, 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](#)¹⁵). 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**
- **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

¹³ <https://www.kks.se/en/gender-equality-perspective-an-added-value-for-research-and-innovation/>

¹⁴ <https://www.kks.se/en/documents/>

¹⁵ <https://www.kks.se/en/broadened-review-of-academic-merits-and-advanced-assessment/>

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 and budget

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](#)¹⁶. To be uploaded under *Other appendices*.

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 assure through their signatures that the university approves the project and will be involved according to the project description.

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. As a supplement to the written application, a hearing will be held with representatives from the project within *Maxi*. Funding decisions are made by the Foundation's CEO (*Mini*), or the Foundation's board (*Maxi*), 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.

- 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 must be clearly stated in Appendix 1).

¹⁶ <https://www.kks.se/en/documents/>

- 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.
- The educational offering to be developed and test implemented should comprise 20 credits (Mini), or 60 credits (Maxi).
- At least five (Mini), or ten (Maxi) business actors must co-finance the project from the start.
- Co-financing business actors must fulfil the criteria set by the Knowledge Foundation.¹⁷
- The business actors' total co-financing, primarily through in-kind contributions, must correspond to at least 10 percent of the amount requested from the Knowledge Foundation.
- Signed letters of intent from all participating partners must be attached.
- Funds requested from the Knowledge Foundation may not exceed SEK 5million (Mini), or SEK 12 million (Maxi) (excl. OH costs).
- The project duration must be 3 years (Mini), or 5 years (Maxi).
- Projects may start no earlier than 1 September 2026, and no later than 1 February 2027.
- The application must be signed by the vice-chancellor, 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?
- Is there a sufficiently well-described justification for the choice of programme variant, and is the choice deemed appropriate on the basis of the description? If the applicant environment already has established educational activities for working professionals – to what extent is experiences and results from this considered, and to what extent are the needs for renewal substantial?
- 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 quality¹⁸

- How well do the educational activities relate to any other subject-wise similar initiatives for competence development of working professionals in Sweden?
- 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?
- How appropriate is the project group's scientific and pedagogical competence in relation to the project content?

Benefit to the business sector

- How well does the field of competence in the business sector match the scientific expertise of the environment?
- To what extent is there a well-founded analysis of the business sector's competence needs, including estimated student volumes?

¹⁷ More information on the Foundation's website: <https://www.kks.se/en/co-production/what-does-the-business-sector-mean/>.

¹⁸ When the application concerns an artistic research domain, the concept *scientific* is replaced by *artistic* in the call.

- How relevant and appropriate is the overall partner constellation in relation to the project orientation?
- How relevant are the participating business actors' motives for participating in the project? To what extent do their needs and involvement have a bearing on a broader target group of the businesses sector?
- To what extent is the involvement of the business sector in the various phases of the project adequate and sufficiently comprehensive?

Implementation

- How well is the implementation of the project described, and to what extent does it lead to the fulfilment of the project's objectives and purpose?
- To what extent is the pedagogical and didactical development work relevant to the project?
- To what extent does the implementation allow for monitoring, learning and continuous adaptation during the project period, and to what extent does it contribute to sustainable educational activities for working professionals in the longer term?
- How appropriate is the project's organisation, management and staffing?
- 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 activity and timetable?