
CALL FOR PROPOSALS

FÖRETAGSFORSKARSKOLOR 23

- Deadline for application is **15:00 on 5 February 2024**
- Decisions will be communicated to applicants in June 2024
- After signing the agreement, approved projects may start on 1 September 2024 at the earliest and on 1 March 2025 at the latest

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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 Företagsforskarskolor

The programme Företagsforskarskolor provides an opportunity to develop and strengthen the environment's doctoral education in collaboration with the business sector, which in turn contributes to profiling the environment. The collaboration that the programme enables, contributes to strengthening the relationship between academia and the business sector. This can make a positive contribution to both research and education activities at the university, as well as to the companies' activities.

Objective of the programme

The objective of the programme Företagsforskarskolor is to contribute to more individuals with a doctoral degree and to strengthen research capacity in subject areas strategic both for the academic research and education environment and for the participating business partners.

The purpose of the programme and its 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. In different ways, all the Knowledge Foundation's programmes are aimed at enabling environments to establish and maintain a strong, long-term, national, and international scientific or artistic position which also contributes to the profiling of the university. For more information on the Knowledge Foundation's view on strong research and education environments, go to www.kks.se.

The specific purpose of the Företagsforskarskolor programme is to strengthen and profile the research, as well as to strengthen the competitiveness of the business sector by enhancing the competence in companies.

Project design

The industrial graduate school should be conducted in co-production with business partners. Participating companies are to be actively involved and well-integrated in the graduate school's implementation.

The industrial graduate school should be conducted as a cohesive graduate school, and admission of doctoral students must take place as collectively as possible. Admission, registration, and examination of doctoral students should comply with participating university's existing rules. The doctoral students should be employed by a company/research institute. Only in exceptional cases may a doctoral student be employed by the university, but in these cases the reasons behind this must clearly be accounted for, along with a description of how the company affiliation is to be secured.

The objectives of a graduate school can only be achieved if it builds on, and is integrated into, one or more academic environments at the university, and is conducted in close collaboration with other graduate education. It is important for the graduate school to have a well-coherent and focused direction in order to enable close collaboration between the academic and business partners.

In their research activities, the doctoral students must be active at both the companies and the university. Each doctoral student must have a supervisor at the university as well as a supervisor or mentor at the company. The study pace for the individual doctoral student will be planned to a maximum of 80 percent working hours. The remaining working hours will consist of work at the employer.

The application can comprise the equivalent of a minimum of 6 doctoral students with the ambition to achieve a licentiate or doctoral degree, and a maximum of 15 doctoral degrees. Note the difference between doctoral students (individuals) and number of doctoral degrees where a licentiate degree corresponds to half a doctoral degree. This means that if, for example, an application includes

12 doctoral students with the ambition to obtain a doctoral degree, and 6 doctoral students with the ambition to obtain a licentiate degree, this corresponds to 18 doctoral students but a total of 15 doctoral degrees.

It is possible to develop an industrial graduate school in two steps, with two separate admission periods for doctoral students. In the first step, the equivalent of a minimum of 6 doctoral students and a maximum of 15 doctoral degrees can be admitted (according to above). After about two years, and under the condition that the graduate school can be assessed as being well established, the university may apply for funding in a second step, called Företagsforskarskolor+, for another group of at least four doctoral students. Altogether, for the two steps, funding for a maximum of 20 doctoral degrees can be applied for.

The planned duration of the industrial graduate school (step 1) should be maximum 6 years, whereas the study time for the individual doctoral student should be planned for a maximum of 5 years.

Who may apply?

Sweden's university colleges and newer universities¹ may apply, but only those with degree-awarding powers at third cycle level within the subject area of the graduate school, may apply. The Knowledge Foundation welcomes applications within all scientific and artistic fields. When the application concerns an artistic field, 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.

How should the funds be used?

The Knowledge Foundation's funding of the industrial graduate school is based on the number of doctoral students and amounts to a maximum of SEK 1.8 million per doctoral degree, and SEK 900,000 per licentiate degree.

The Knowledge Foundation's funds may be used for doctoral student salaries, supervision, and other direct costs for doctoral students, and to cover certain operational costs, as for example, costs for management and administrative functions, course development and shared activities within the framework of the graduate school. It is possible to transfer a certain part of the Foundation's funding to participating companies in order to cover parts of the doctoral student's salaries. The graduate school's total costs for management and operation shall be in the range of 25–30 percent of the total amount applied for from the Knowledge Foundation. However, this cost can be covered by funds both from the Knowledge Foundation's funding and from the university's co-financing.

Budgeting of funds must be in accordance with the instructions presented in the document *General terms and conditions for projects funded by the Knowledge Foundation*, go to www.kks.se.

The application should not include overhead costs. Such costs (20 percent) will be calculated and included in the proposed contract if the Foundation approves the application.

¹ 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

University involvement

A project manager employed by the university should be responsible for the implementation of the project. The application should also state who the project owner will be at the university. The project owner, who should have staff and budget authority at a senior level at the university, has responsibility for ensuring proper conditions for implementing and monitoring the project. The project manager and the project owner should not be the same person.

The university must co-fund the project with direct funds equivalent to at least 20 percent of the amount requested from the Foundation. The university's contributions must be clearly stated in the project plan and budget. Please note that overhead costs are not to be included in the co-funding from the university.

Business sector involvement

The project must be co-produced with business partners. For more information on co-production, go to www.kks.se.

Please note that co-funding companies must fall within the scope of the Knowledge Foundation's definition of the business sector (go to www.kks.se for more details). The applicant should contact the programme manager well in advance if there is any uncertainty regarding the definition.

The business partners' contribution to the project, primarily through in-kind contributions and parts of the salary for the doctoral student, must correspond to at least the same amount requested from the Knowledge Foundation in the application. The business partners input in the project must be described and justified in the application.

The application must include letters of intent from companies corresponding to at least 60 percent of the doctoral students covered by the application. Contributions from the companies do not have to be limited to salary costs for doctoral students. In-kind contributions from the companies may also include for example mentoring/supervision costs, reimbursement for educational contributions to course programmes, and other contributions deemed to add value to the development of the doctoral students and the graduate school.

In companies with fewer than 10 employees and/or less than SEK 10 million in annual turnover (based on the most recent annual report), the motivation and prerequisites for co-financing the project according to project plan and budget must be clearly stated.

If any economic or personal links exist between the involved companies, between any company and university, or between any company and individual researcher(s), this must be disclosed. The project plan must clearly indicate any personal conflicts of interest, and the individual's various roles in the company or university must be fully described. For example, ownership of shares, board memberships, and employment/consultant work should be specified.

Formal requirements

The application must meet the following requirements before the Knowledge Foundation will consider it for evaluation. If the application does not meet the following requirements, it will be rejected without further evaluation.

- The project must be in line with the objective and purpose of the call.
- The application must include parts and appendices according to the call.
- All body text in Appendices 1 and 2 must follow the format font Arial, font size 11 pt, single line spacing.
- The applicant university must be within the Foundation's target group and have degree-awarding powers at third cycle level within the subject area of the graduate school.

- Co-funding companies must fall within the scope of the Knowledge Foundation's definition of 'business sector'.
- The project manager must have a doctoral degree and be employed at the university.
- Signed letters of intent from the co-producing companies, with detailed co-financing corresponding to at least 60 percent of the doctoral students covered by the application, should be attached.
- The total contribution from business partners, through in-kind contributions and/or monetary means, must correspond to at least the same amount as requested from the Knowledge Foundation.
- The graduate school's total costs for management and operation shall be in the range of 25–30 percent of the total amount applied for from the Knowledge Foundation. However, this cost can be covered by funds both from the Knowledge Foundation's funding and from the university's co-financing.
- The funds requested from the Knowledge Foundation may not exceed SEK 27 million.
- The start date of the project is 1 September 2024 at the earliest and 1 March 2025 at the latest.
- The duration of the project should be 6 years (for step 1). The study time for the individual doctoral student should be planned for a maximum of 5 years.
- Any financial or personal links must be clearly stated in the application.
- Budgeting of funds must be in accordance with the instructions presented in the document *General terms and conditions for projects funded by the Knowledge Foundation*, see www.kks.se.
- The vice-chancellor, project owner and the project manager must sign the application.

Assessment

The application will be reviewed by the secretariat of the Knowledge Foundation to ensure that they comply with the formal requirements.

If these are met, an assessment of the project's scientific quality will be performed by international scientific experts (peer review). Thereafter, an external assessment panel will conduct an overall assessment based on the assessment criteria below. As a supplement to the written application, a hearing is held with representatives from the project. Funding decisions are made by the Foundation's board after recommendation by the external assessment panel.

Assessment criteria

Strong research and education environment

- To what extent is project expected to contribute to 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 quality²

- What is the scientific level of the research and education environment(s) within the subject area of the graduate school?
- To what extent is the proposed research agenda for the graduate school realistic, clear, and relevant in relation to the state-of-the-art?

² When the application concerns an artistic field of research, the concept *scientific* is replaced by *artistic* in the call.

- To what extent are the objectives of the graduate school adequate and realistic?
- To what extent is there an adequate description of whether sex and gender perspectives are relevant in the project? If considered relevant, are the perspectives appropriately included in the project design and content?

Benefits to the business partners

- To what extent is the proposed graduate school expected to contribute to strengthening the business sector's research competence in the subject area?
- To what extent does the proposed graduate school relate to the needs of the business sector, and how well justified is the participation of business partners?

Implementation

- Is the graduate school appropriately planned, and is the plan realistic in relation to budget and available resources?
- Is the management and organisation of the graduate school expedient and well designed?
- To what extent do participating companies actively contribute to the implementation of the industrial graduate school (supervising, course development, teaching, etc.)?
- How well on an aggregated level are the merits and experiences of the project group fulfilling the requirements for an adequate 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?

Application

The application should be submitted via the project manager's account in the Knowledge Foundation's application system (www.kks.se). Supplementation of the application after the closing date of the call is not possible.

Applications should be written in English to enable international peer review.

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.

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.

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 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 (as pdf-files) should be attached to the application and in the same order as below. The structure of the appendices must follow the headings specified for each appendix. 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.

NOTICE: 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 research and education environment (may not exceed 2 pages, see below for more information if the project is planned in collaboration between several environments)

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. When a project is planned in collaboration between several environments all environments shall be included, however, the appendix may only be extended by half a page per additional environment. Start 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 purpose and the goals of the call. It must be made clear in what way the project entails added value in relation to previous and ongoing projects within the environment, especially projects with the same project manager.

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 the environment, personnel composition, scientific production, development of educations, funding, collaborative and business partners etc.)

b) Ambition and objectives for the further development of the environment.

Appendix 2. Project plan (may not exceed 25 pages, the project plan must be page numbered in its entirety)

To be uploaded under *Project plan*.

If the university has been previously rejected on a similar application within the programme Företagsforskarskolor, and reapplies, this must be stated along with comments on how the previous assessment panel's aspects are handled within the current application.

The focus of the graduate school

- Describe the research field that the graduate school is addressing and the position of the applicant university's within the field in a national and international perspective.
- Describe and motivate the research agenda and how this relate to the state-of-the-art.
- Specify objectives for the graduate school, in the short and long term, (if possible, time-specific, and quantitative). The objectives should be based on the following aspects: the doctoral students, the university's development of the research and education environment, co-production, other.
- Account for whether sex and gender perspectives are relevant in the project design and content, and if so, how these will be included (more information on www.kks.se).

Company participation

- State which companies are expected to participate in the graduate school and their roles, needs and contributions.
- Describe the relevance the orientation of the graduate school has to the business sector.
- Describe overarching objectives for the business sector.

Implementation of the project

- Describe the planned activities in the graduate school. Include recruitment of doctoral students, joint activities, supervision, course offering and development of courses, publication and internationalisation strategy. Include a risk analysis to identify obstacles/pitfalls and describe how these will be handled.
- Describe the project's management and organisation, such as project management, administrative support, and steering group. In the steering group (5-7 persons), the majority, including the chairman, must come from the business sector, and the rest from academia. One of the doctoral students shall be included in the steering group. Describe the different parties' roles and responsibilities.
- Describe and motivate the staffing of the project. It should be stated how much time key personnel are planned to participate in the project. The supervision capacity of the graduate school should also be clarified. Refer to *Staff in the project*.
- Describe the participating partners' contribution to the project, and how they are complementary in terms of competence.
- Account for how gender equality aspects have been considered in the composition of the project group (more information on www.kks.se).

Timetable

Describe the overall timetable for the graduate school.

Planned doctoral student projects

Include information about planned doctoral projects in the following table format:

Doctoral student (name or NN)	Project	University	Company	Employer	Planned study pace	Environment/Institution, Third cycle subject area	Progression at start (%)	Planned degree (licentiate/ PhD)

Project budget

Describe and justify the estimated costs in the budget. Work efforts from persons accounted for in the budget should be described. Specify how large part of the budget that is allocated for the management and operation of the graduate school. Describe the co-financing from the companies.

Appendix 3. Qualifications (may not exceed 1 page per person)

To be uploaded under *Attachments in accordance with the call and in the same order as stated in the call*.

Attach CVs for individuals crucial for the implementation of the project. Include merits of relevance in relation to the project using the following selection of headings (more information on www.kks.se):

- **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 development, data set, software, patent, process or policy contributions, and implementation of research results.
- **Teaching:** the full diversity of academic teaching, training and supervision activities, education development including open teaching resources.

- **Cooperation:** with academia, business and other societal actors including communication efforts
- **Leadership:** project management, activity development, assessment assignments, centre management, department assignments, etc.

Appendix 4. Letters of intent

To be uploaded under *Attachments in accordance with the call and in the same order as stated in the call.*

Signed letter of intent, regarding at least 60 percent of the number of doctoral students covered by the application, must be attached from each of the co-producing companies. Each letter of intent must include the company's:

- needs and motives for participation,
- contributions and participation in the implementation of the project,
- expected results and benefits of participation,
- co-financing (total amount must be stated)

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

Appendix 5. Signatures (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 assure through their signatures that the university approves the project and will be involved according to the project description.

Appendix template is downloaded from the Foundation's website, www.kks.se. The signature appendix should either be signed manually or electronically by, for example, eduSign, GetAccept, ebox or similar systems.