
CALL FOR PROPOSALS

AVANS 24

Mini/Maxi

- The application should be submitted to the Knowledge Foundation before **15:00 on 19th of November 2024**.
- Funding decisions will be announced in March 2025.
- After signing of agreement, approved projects may start on 1st of June 2025, at the earliest, and on 1st of November 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 Avans

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 state-of-the-art, and be relevant to the needs of the labour market. In order to ensure this, the universities and the business sector need to engage through collaboration in needs analysis and development of relevant educational activities. By matching the subject areas of expertise of the universities against the competence needs in the business sector, the relevance of the educational offering to the labour market can be ensured.

Objectives of the programme

The objective of the Avans programme is for the applicant research and educational environment to work with business partners to 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 ability of the university to establish and/or develop educational collaboration with the business sector that both strengthens the educational offering at the universities and contributes to the provision of competence within the business sector.

The programme's purpose and 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 the society. All the Knowledge Foundation's programmes contribute in different ways to establishing and maintaining environments with 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 www.kks.se.

The specific purpose of the programme Avans is to integrate the academic environment's research and educational activities and to create conditions for the provision of competence within the business sector.

Programme versions

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

Avans Mini is aimed at environments who together with relevant business partners wants to further develop a pre-existing degree programme by developing one or several courses.

Avans Maxi is aimed at environments who together with relevant business partners wants to develop a new degree programme or wants to make a comprehensive renewal of a pre-existing degree programme.

	<i>Mini</i>	<i>Maxi</i>
Project duration	1 year	3 years
Scope	7.5–15 credits	45–120 credits
Project support	SEK 500,000	SEK 2 million
Minimum of participating partners	2	5

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

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.

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

- 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 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.
- 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.

Terms and conditions

Applicants

Sweden's university colleges and newer universities¹ with degree-awarding powers at master's² level or higher within the subject area of the project, may apply. 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

A project manager, holding a doctoral degree and employed at the university, should be operationally responsible for the implementation 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. The project manager and the project owner should not be the same person.

The university may strengthen the project by contributing with own funds in the form of co-financing. However, any co-financing, as well as its size, will not impact the assessment of the project application.

Participation of 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 www.kkk.se.

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

² 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 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 Avans programme, 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 by identifying competence needs, developing educational content, and by offering 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 partners' participation will be assessed based on the assessment criteria *Benefits to the business partners*.

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 duration of the project should be a maximum of 1 year (*Mini*) or 3 years (*Maxi*).

Financial framework and budgeting

The programme Avans refers to the funding of an educational 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 500,000 (*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 leader and other project participants employed at the applicant university. In addition to salary costs, other direct costs³ arising within the project at the applying university can be included in the budget. Within the Avans programme, the funds from the Knowledge Foundation may only be used for the development of the educational offering, and not for the course implementation itself.

Budgeting of funds must follow the instructions presented in the document *General terms and conditions for projects funded by the Knowledge Foundation* (found on www.kks.se). The application should not include overhead costs (OH). An OH surcharge of 20 percent will be added and included in the agreement proposal if the application is granted by the Foundation.

Application

The application should be submitted via the project manager's account in the Knowledge Foundation's application system *SBS Manager* (www.kks.se). 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 version applied for, that is, '*Avans Mini: [Project Title]*' or '*Avans 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.

³ See *General terms and conditions for projects funded by the Knowledge Foundation*, found on www.kks.se.

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 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 research and education environment(s) (may not exceed 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. 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. Emanate from the group or environment where the project has its closest context. Frame the description based on the below headings.

1.1. 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.

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

Describe the environment's current status and ambition.

a) Current status and results over the past five years (area of activity and direction for related research and education within the environment, degree awarding powers for the chosen subject area, staff 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 7 pages (*Mini*), or 10 pages (*Maxi*)

To be uploaded under *Appendix 2. Project plan*. The project plan must be page numbered. Any references (in legible font size) must be included within the page limit.

- 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.
- Describe the implementation of the project and describe 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 content of the educational offering subject-wise (as far as known at the time of application) and describe both how it relates to the research conducted within the research and education environment and responds to identified competence needs of the business sector.
- Describe the pedagogic development that will be implemented.
- 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 will be included (more information on www.kks.se).

- 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 www.kks.se).
- Include an activity plan and a timetable.
- Describe and justify the costs included in the budget so it is clear what the costs consist of and why they are relevant for the project.
- If the university has previously been rejected on a similar Avans application, and now reapplies, this must be stated along with comments on how the assessment panel's previous remarks are being considered in the current application.

Appendix 3. Staff in the project (appendix template)

To be uploaded under *Appendix 3. Staff in the project*.

Attach a table of planned project participants. From co-producing partners, only key participants need to be entered. Appendix 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).

Appendix 4. Qualifications (may not exceed 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 merits and advanced assessment of research and researchers (more information on www.kks.se). All academically active participants should therefore present a selection of the merits and experiences that are the 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 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, the business sector, or other societal actors, as well as communication efforts.
- **Management:** project management, activity 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:

- needs and motives for participation,

- contributions and participation in the implementation of the project, and
- expected results and benefits of participation.

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)

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.

Appendix template for signatures 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.

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 application must meet the following requirements before the Knowledge Foundation will consider it for evaluation. 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 (must be described in Appendix 1).
- The project manager must have a doctoral degree and be employed at the applicant university at the starting date 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 should be attached.
- Funds requested from the Knowledge Foundation may not exceed SEK 500,000 (*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 on 1st of June 2025, at the earliest, and on 1st of November 2025, at the latest.
- The application must be signed by the project owner and the project manager.

Assessment criteria

Strong research and education environment

- Considering the choice of programme version, to what extent is the project expected to contribute to the short- 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 status?
- To what extent is there an adequate ambition for the development of the research and education environment?

Scientific quality⁴

- To what extent does the planned educational offering relate to the research conducted within the research and education environment?
- To what extent is the pedagogical development relevant for the degree programme?
- 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 considered relevant, are these perspectives appropriately included?

Benefits to the business partners

- To what extent does the planned educational offering relate to identified competence needs of the business sector?
- To what extent is the involvement of the business sector adequately and sufficiently comprehensive?

Implementation

- How clear and realistic are the objectives of the project?
- Considering the choice of programme version, 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?
- To what extent is the activity plan and timetable well designed and realistic?
- 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 is the project's organisation, management, and staffing?
- How well on an aggregated level are the merits and experiences of the project group fulfilling the requirements for an adequate project implementation according to the project plan?
- To what extent is there an adequate description of how gender equality aspects have been considered in the composition of the project group?

⁴ When the application concerns an artistic research domain, the concept *scientific* is replaced by *artistic* in the call.