

Call for applications

Cross-disciplinary Thematic Groups within SLU's Interdisciplinary Academy

Call opens: Monday 16 May 2022.

Call closes: Wednesday 24 August 2022.

Who can apply: The call is aimed at all researchers at SLU holding a doctoral degree, regardless of faculty affiliation or subject focus.

Call focus: Cross-disciplinary themes within the broad field of *green transformation*.

Size of the grant: 1-2 groups of 5-10 researchers (maximum 10 in total) will be funded the equivalent of 20 percent of full-time during the project period.

Project period: 2 November 2022 to 30 June 2023, and including a final event on 30 August 2023.

About the call

The Interdisciplinary Academy is a newly established programme at SLU where the university's researchers are offered the opportunity to collaborate across disciplinary boundaries on complex issues in the broad field of green transformation.

The call welcomes groups of 5-10 researchers (maximum 10 in total) who are employed at SLU, regardless of faculty affiliation or subject specialisation, to submit proposals for *themes* that consist of questions about a scientific problem area of a complex nature and that need a cross-disciplinary approach to be managed and perhaps solved. For example, a *theme* may concern sustainable land and water use, the human-animal relationship, the relationship between land for forestry and land for food production, global food security or digitalisation for the green transformation, but the groups are encouraged to come up with their own thematic proposals.

The group, or groups, that are awarded the grant develop the theme's issues together over eight months (November 2022-June 2023). The Interdisciplinary Academy will have a programme manager with practical, theoretical and methodological knowledge and experience of cross-disciplinary collaborations, who will offer support and inspiration to the groups during the project period.

The project period ends with a forward-looking activity with an emphasis on future questions and continued research in the field.

What is a Theme?

A theme in this call is shaped around a scientific problem that requires collaboration between several disciplines. The work within the theme can be about developing perspectives, definitions, concepts, models, working methods, etc. The theme's questions may preferably be exploratory and searching, and be at a stage that makes it not mature enough for ordinary research funding. The work of the thematic groups can result in applications for larger projects or seed funds, or for different types of research communication, but do not need to do so. However, there should be clear goals for the work within the theme, and an idea of how these goals contribute to the development of knowledge and practice in the problem area.

Requirements

- All researchers who are part of a theme must be employed at SLU
- All researchers included in the theme must hold a doctoral degree
- All applicants must have a main position at a department at SLU that you can be free from the equivalent of 20% of full-time during the entire project period
- The groups should consist of researchers from at least two different science branches (natural sciences, social sciences, engineering sciences, humanities, etc.)
- It is not allowed to include more than one researcher from the same department in a theme

What is the grant used for?

Researchers who are granted funding receive compensation equivalent to 20 percent of full-time (one working day/week) from the project and are posted for that time directly on the project. No overhead for the working hours is paid to the home department. Travel and subsistence are paid for by the program for those researchers who must travel from another SLU location to participate in the working group's physical meetings (max 4500 SEK/person and occasion, against a receipt). An additional sum of a maximum of SEK 50,000/group can be applied for. The costs may relate to an activity that is considered valuable for the development of the group's work, or dissemination of the results, e.g. organising a seminar for other researchers and/or external actors, recording a film, making a study visit, printing some information material, etc.

Assessment and decision

An assessment group consisting of representatives from all four faculties at SLU, and who have documented experience of cross-disciplinary research, will assess the applications and suggest which theme/themes that will be granted resources. The assessment group can also suggest changes to the problem description and to the composition of the groups. The Interdisciplinary Academy's steering group, which consists of the dean and vice dean responsible for multi- and interdisciplinary science at the NJ faculty, as well as the programme manager for SLU Future Food, will make the final decision on which applications to approve, following the suggestions from the assessment group. In the assessment, great emphasis is placed on the design of the theme's approach, that the composition of the competence in the group is appropriate and balanced, and whether it can be considered likely that the group will achieve the goals set. In the assessment, new collaborations are rewarded higher than established ones.

The work and the location

The group(s) set up their own work and will receive support from the appointed programme manager. Commitment and active participation of the participants is a prerequisite for success. Researchers who are granted funding undertake to devote the equivalent of 20 per cent of their work time during eight consecutive months to developing the theme together with their co-applicants. The work will be carried out through nine (9) mandatory physical meetings during the project period as well as through other digital and hybrid meetings and individual work. In order to promote the cross-disciplinary work at the physical meetings, the Ullbo building on Campus Ultuna will provide the environment where creativity, discussions, group work, individual work, seminars and more can alternate and coexist.

Reporting and project finalisation

After the end of the project period, the work/theme should be reported to the steering group with a brief summary of the group's results in relation to the objectives and a discussion of the cross-disciplinary process that has been developed. The researchers are also expected to share their experiences in a workshop in the autumn of 2023 and one in the winter of 2024 with the aim of disseminating the lessons learned through the projects at SLU.

Support and inspiration in the application process

For support and inspiration in the application work, an information meeting will be held via Zoom on May 18. At this meeting, the idea, the set-up and the process are presented, but also aims at getting interested parties to start formulating relevant themes. A seminar series on cross-disciplinarity will also be held in 2022 and 2023.

Seminars:

May 18, 2022 What is interdisciplinarity and why is interdisciplinarity on all agendas right now?

May 31, 2022 Matchmaking: THEME, matchmaking and time for questions etc. 13-15

June 22, 2022: Lunch webinar with Q&A on Interdisciplinary Academy, 12-1 p.m., via zoom.

August 16, 2022: Lunch webinar with Q&A on Interdisciplinary Academy, 12-13, via zoom.

Sept 2022 How has cross-disciplinary work influenced our academic careers?

30 Nov 2022 How can you work practically with cross-disciplinarity?

Jan 2023 Successes and pitfalls - a cross-disciplinary journey

March 2023 Cross-disciplinary Applications

How to apply

The application is sent no later than August 24, 2022 to futurefood@slu.se marked with "Application IDA".

The application should be written in Swedish or English and consist of 3-4 documents with the following content:

Document 1

Description of the research problem and a strategy for how the work should be carried out in a maximum of 5 pages (excl. cover page and references) containing:

- a description of a cross-disciplinary research problem;
- a description of the group's scientific objectives during the project period in relation to the chosen problem area;
- a presentation of how the participating researchers' knowledge contributions are motivated by the theme;
- a plan for how the group intends to structure the work during the project period.

A cover page indicates the title of the theme and the names of participating researchers with department affiliation.

Document 2

Relevant CV for participating researchers of a maximum of 1 page per participant.

Document 3

A certificate from each researcher's head of department to certify that the researcher is employed at the department during the entire project period (Nov 2022-30 August 2023) but is granted leave from the department during the same period to work equivalent to 20% of full-time for the Interdisciplinary Academy provided that the application is granted.

Use the pdf form intended for the purpose.

Document 4 – (only if funds for activities are applied for)

A budget for extra costs shall be submitted only if funds for extra costs are applied for. See more information under the heading "What is the grant used for?" above. The budget, which may not contain any salary costs, is submitted on a separate sheet as a clear and simple list of partial costs in a table, containing also the summary of the costs.

Background

The Interdisciplinary Academy at SLU is established and run as a pilot project by the NJ Faculty and SLU Future Food during autumn 2022 and spring 2023 with the aim of building a long-term organisation for the development of cross-disciplinary research at SLU. Inspiration has been drawn from the Pufendorf Institute at Lund University. The hope is that the programme will lead to increasing knowledge of, and interest in, cross-disciplinary research work, strengthen the ability to process research questions from a cross-disciplinary perspective, and facilitate cross-disciplinary research collaborations between different departments. The pilot project's budget is estimated at approximately SEK 2.9 million, of which just over SEK one million is financed by the NJ faculty and SEK 1.8 million is financed by SLU Future Food.

The NJ Faculty's strategy for 2021–2025 states that cross-disciplinary approaches should be part of the work to contribute to the transition to a sustainable society. The strategy states that the faculty will "strengthen the ability to process research questions from a cross-disciplinary perspective" and to "facilitate cross-disciplinary research collaborations between different departments".

SLU Future Food is a platform that stimulates and develops cross-disciplinary research and collaborations for economically, ecologically and socially sustainable food systems.