

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Nordic Master Programme

Funding for the development of Nordic Master Programmes

Each project may be awarded up to 1 000 000 DKK
The deadline for applications is 14. September 2012

Nordic Master Programme is an initiative of The Nordic Council of Ministers with the aim of strengthening the position of the Nordic region as an attractive region for education and research.

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are now invited to submit proposals under the call 2012.

The objective is that HEIs in cooperation will develop joint Nordic Master Programmes of high quality which will be attractive to both Nordic and non-Nordic students.

Only HEIs from the Nordic countries (Denmark - including Greenland and Faeroe Islands, Finland - including Åland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) are eligible for financial support.

Funds have been allocated to finance at least 3 programmes (up to DKK 1 000 000 each) in 2012.

The Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU) is responsible for the administration of Nordic Master Programmes on behalf of the Nordic Council of Ministers. The application should be submitted online and the application form will be available at www.siu.no/nordicmaster.

The application deadline is Friday 14 September 2012.

Please find the call from the Nordic Council of Ministers attached.

More information is available at www.siu.no/nordicmaster.

The Nordic Council of Ministers calls for proposals to develop Nordic Master Programmes.

1. Introduction and background

The first call for Nordic Master Programmes was organized 2007 and since then altogether 16 programmes have been accepted within the initiative. The Nordic Council of Ministers sees the development of joint Nordic Master Programmes as one of several means to strengthen the Nordic region as a more coherent unit, boost its competitiveness, and attract both Nordic and non-Nordic students to study at Nordic higher education institutions (HEIs). Cooperation between HEIs in several Nordic countries will make it possible to promote the strengths of each country and provide study programmes of top international quality.

The Nordic Council of Ministers believes that the longstanding tradition of cooperation between Nordic researchers and academic institutions, the relative similarity of the Nordic countries and the high standard of their quality-assurance systems already in place, combine to provide a solid foundation for creating innovative and attractive master programmes.

2. Objectives for Nordic Master Programmes

The overall objective of the Nordic Master Programme is to retain and build upon national excellence of each individual country through cooperation between the Nordic HEIs, and thereby provide master programmes which each country alone would not be able to offer.

Other objectives are

- To **improve the relative competitiveness** of the Nordic region in higher education and thus make the region a more coherent entity
- To develop **new models for Nordic cooperation** in education
- To identify **strategically important and developing areas of academic study** through master co-operation
- To generate **specialised knowledge** in areas where expertise is needed
- To bring up an instrument **to give visibility** to individual institutions/actors as well as HEIs
- To **attract both Nordic and non-Nordic students** to study at the Nordic HEIs
- To stimulate **cooperation between HEIs and other relevant bodies both in the public and private sectors.**

3. Requirements for the projects

The collaborating HEIs should set up a joint consortium which will develop and run the master programme. Proposals should clearly state which educational institution(s) will be responsible for the application and admission procedures to the programme.

Innovative elements should be highlighted, and the extent and form of mobility required and plans for examinations should be clearly specified. The programme proposals should outline the conditions to be provided for students, for example, how virtual networks and similar arrangements will be integrated in the programme. The form and responsibility of the support (e.g. information and counseling) to the students should also be described.

The collaborating institutions are encouraged to develop inter-disciplinary study programmes. The programmes should be "joint study programmes" with graduates receiving one joint or multiple national diplomas, depending on national legislation. Applications should indicate how the consortium relates to national legislation.

The programmes must encompass 120 ECTS, in other words be two-year courses of study. The minimum course offering from each HEI involved in the consortium must amount to 20 ECTS. This is to secure concrete and active participation of all members of the consortium. Courses should be taught in English; however, exceptions can be made in special cases, ex. Courses dealing specifically with Nordic languages and culture.

The master programme must be recognized in all of the countries that are involved in the consortium, in compliance with all of their current national quality-assurance systems.

The programmes should be based on institutional commitment and on cooperation between well established and high-profile units. The cooperation must be documented by a written agreement between the participating HEIs signed by the rector of the institutions, or equivalent. It should be described how both the administrative staff and university management are involved in the process.

4. Minimum number of participating countries and institutions and their eligibility criteria

As a rule, a minimum of three HEIs from three different countries should cooperate on one Nordic Master Programme.

Only HEIs from the Nordic countries (Denmark - including Greenland and Faeroe Islands, Finland - including Åland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) are eligible for participation. The three autonomous regions each count as one country.

The consortia that receive funding should be the ones that actually implement and start the study programmes. It should be noted that funding under this call can only be used for the development phase within the Nordic Master Programmes, and it is taken for granted that the institutions which make up the consortium will be responsible for costs incurred in the actual implementation and running of the programmes.

Projects are open to all HEIs that have the right to award master degrees. In addition at least one of the institutions participating in a consortium must be able to award a third cycle degree (doctorates) within the discipline concerned.

The Nordic Council of Ministers will take a positive view of strategic partnership with other bodies in the public and private sector, e.g. enterprises.

5. Assessment criteria and evaluation committees

The quality of the content of the master programme will be assessed on the basis of the following elements:

- The objective of the master programme and its potential to contribute to the excellence and competitiveness of Nordic HEIs
- The academic quality and added value – Nordic strength – which the integrated study programme brings about, relative to what already exists in the respective disciplines in the various Nordic countries
- The extent to which the quality of the master programme can be assured
- The extent to which the master programme is linked to research within the given field
- The extent to which the master programme will be able to offer examples of “good practice” which can be disseminated
- The degree of inter-disciplinarity
- The degree of innovation in the proposed programme
- The way of co-operating with other strategic partners in the public and private sector, e.g. enterprises
- The programme’s potential for recruiting international students
- The way students and their mobility and pedagogical methods and their support are described
- The way the budget describes the allocation of the received funds

The quality of the cooperation within the consortium will be assessed on the basis of the following elements:

- How integrated/robust are the established mechanisms for cooperation (the degree of institutionalisation, regularity of meetings, clearly defined and active roles for all partners)?
- To what extent is the master programme genuinely integrated and anchored, both nationally and within the particular HEI? To what extent is the consortium capable of implementing the programme? To what extent are the administrative staff and management involved in the process?
- How clear and transparent is the structure of the master programme?
- How well developed are the common mechanisms for attracting students from countries outside the Nordic region?

Applications will be assessed by a committee made up of experts nominated by SIU in co-operation with the Nordic Council of Ministers.

6. Budget, processing, timetable and practical issues

Each programme may receive funding of up to DKK 1 000 000.

50% of the total project funding is distributed to the coordinating institution at the start of the project period. The remaining 50% will be paid when the consortium has reported on the development of the programme. Applications should clearly state how the consortium intends to employ the allocated funds. The application should also contain a tentative timetable with information about, e.g. when the programme will be launched, the number of students to be admitted, etc.

The consortium must submit an interim and a final report.

Applications must be in English and be submitted online to SIU at <http://espresso.siu.no>.

The deadline for applications is Friday 14 September 2012.

Students who apply for the programmes must be clearly informed about the conditions for acceptance and what degree they will receive at the end of their course of study.

Timetable:

1 April – 14 September 2012	Application period
15 September – 19 October 2012	Evaluation of proposals
2 November 2012	Notification of successful candidates
1 January 2013 – 31 December 2013	Time frames for organizing the programmes (project period). Programmes are expected to start up for the autumn semester 2014, pending institutional approval.
31 July 2013	Interim report describing the progress, possible problems, plans for continued work, etc.
31 March 2014	Final report on content, organisation, structure, estimated number of students, etc.

For further information, please contact:

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