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foundation
Benefitting people and society

Information and guidelines for applicants

PREPARE

Grants for educational developments at universities 2025

Facts about the call

Total amount available for granting:
Approx. DKK 30 million

Teaching faculty or educational leaders at Universities in the Danish Realm that offer educational programs within the natural or technical sciences can apply following an internal process defined by the university. This process is organised by pro-deans of education or equivalent level educational leaders at the universities. Each university has a quota for projects (see Section 1.7: Application Process). Pro-deans of education or an educational leader at a similar or higher level (also responsible for the educational programs at the university) at the universities are responsible for ensuring the applications submitted are within the amount expected.

Call opens:
6 January 2025

Call closes:
6 May 2025, 2:00 pm CEST

Applicant notification:
1 September 2025

Earliest start date:
1 October 2025

Latest start date:
30 September 2026

Review committee:
Internal NNF committee and external international peer review

Contact:

Regarding application/NORMA:
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Guidelines version 1.1

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All Grant Recipients must comply with the 'General Terms and Conditions' for grants from the Novo Nordisk Foundation (the Foundation).

The Foundation will treat all applicant and application information confidentially. Read more about how the Foundation processes personal data under 'privacy & security' in the online application system, NORMA. See how to access NORMA in section 2 of these guidelines.

You can find more information about the Foundation's application and granting process at the NORMA Help Centre. Detailed information about the different parts of the application is available in NORMA.

1 PREPARE

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of PREPARE is to enhance and expand methods for training students' creative and critical skills through science or engineering research activities at universities within the Danish Realm.

PREPARE focuses on disciplines within natural and technical science educations that align with the strategic key themes of the Novo Nordisk Foundation (NNF) Strategy and goals - Novo Nordisk Fonden. The grants will provide science and/or engineering teachers with the resources they need to implement new educational ideas and allow them to better PREPARE students to solve complex societal problems.

1.2 Areas of support

The grants support the following categories of educational developments at universities:

1. **Digital development of educations**

Educational developments aiming at, e.g.:

- Use of innovative digital platforms or learning modules to personalize learning of students or actively engage them in their competence development.
- Use of AI, XR, VR and other computer science aiding tools to improve interactivity and learning in teaching activities.
- Use of large data sets and of computer-based analyses or simulation techniques (including AI algorithms) to train digital and analytical skills of students.

2. **Research infrastructure development for educations**

Educational developments aiming at improving hands-on practice with research or translation of research and requiring establishment of e.g.:

- Makerspaces
- Teaching laboratories
- Research training at national or international research facilities (e.g. MicroMax beamline, ESS experiments, Gefion supercomputer at the Danish Centre for AI Innovation, etc.)

- Research training at industry, hospitals, municipalities

3. **Upgrade content of educations**

Educational developments via courses, summer schools or competitions to teach research on emerging areas of international relevance.
Key themes could be:

- Interdisciplinary research rooted in the natural and technical sciences
- Data science research with a focus on fundamental algorithms and interdisciplinary applications
- Technology for tomorrow's biotechnology or sustainability

1.3 Eligibility

PREPARE projects must be applied for by employees engaged in educational developments at universities and **employed at the level of assistant-, associate- or full professor and with a permanent or tenure-track contract, or alternatively with a secured employment contract for the duration of the project**. For the latter case, a statement regarding employment must be added to the mandatory support letter from the university.

Fields of teaching within the scope of PREPARE:
All areas of natural and technical science educations that align with the NNF 2030 strategic key themes (Strategy and goals - Novo Nordisk Fonden) are eligible to be applied for. Applicants are welcome to contact the Foundation to confirm if a proposed teaching development falls within the scope of PREPARE (see contact information page 2).

The primary target group of the proposed activities are bachelor and master students within natural and technical science educations at universities in the Danish Realm.

General eligibility criteria:
• The application **must include** a letter of support from the pro-dean for education or an educational leader at similar or higher level, responsible for educational programmes at the university, for each applicant or co-applicant.
• Applications **must include** an expected change model (see section 1.6).
• Applicants/Co-applicants **must be employed by a university** in the Danish Realm.
• The institution where the teaching is anchored must be a university/universities in the Danish Realm with relevant teaching activities in natural or technical science disciplines.

In addition to the specific eligibility rules listed, please check also the more general rules here: Rules for Grant Eligibility and Assessment - Novo Nordisk Fonden

1.4 Funding

A total of approx. DKK 30 million is available for grants in 2025. Grants can be awarded for up to three years, with a budget of a varying maximal amount.

Applicants/co-applicants may apply for the following expenses directly related to the project:

- Salary to cover own time used on the project, if executing work for the project beyond own current list of duties (e.g. embarking on a significant innovation project in teaching).
- Salary to cover time of research employees to be hired in connection with the project. For PhD students, amount of tuition fees proportional to the time hired under the project can be applied for.
- Salary for technical assistance related to the project
- Salary for teaching assistants
- Salary for project consultants
- Operating expenses: Direct expenses for developing, implementing, and operating the project, including infrastructure and equipment
- Consumables, materials, services, etc., directly related to the project.
- Travel expenses in relation to the project, e.g., conference and workshop participation and presentation of results derived from the project
- Other travel expenses that are directly related to the project, e.g., for experiments carried out in other laboratories for a limited period of time (e.g., student projects at external laboratories etc.)
- Communication and outreach in the form of conferences, books, articles, and other dissemination directly related to the project
- Bench fees: max. DKK 8,000 per month per FTE.
- Administrative expenses (up to 5% of the applicant's overall budget and included in the budget) to cover administrative expenses directly related to the project

Full-time equivalents (FTEs)
For each salary entry, please specify the FTE in years within the designated FTE field. This will indicate the proportion of a full-time position that the project funding will support for each year of the grant period. One full-time employee for one year equals 1.0 FTE.

Bench fee
Bench fee is calculated per academic employee actively working on the project. It may only be used for expenses related to the project which cannot be included within another individual budget category. Bench fee may account for a maximum of DKK 8,000 per month per FTE. The budget must specify the expenses covered by the bench fee, which may include:

- Common or shared laboratory expenses and consumables

- Laboratory utilities (electricity, gas, water)
- Maintenance of essential equipment
- Service contracts
- Technical and IT support

PLEASE NOTE that bench fee cannot cover rent, administrative support, representation, social contributions etc. A valid bench fee policy in line with the Foundation's requirements must be available at the time of application, and this official documentation from the administrating/co-applicant's institution must be provided upon request.

Administrative support
Administrative support may account for a maximum of 5% of the total budget and must be included therein. The administrative support:

- can cover expenses such as for accounting, payment of salaries, purchasing, hiring, as well as auditing and financial reporting on the project
- cannot cover administrative expenses that are not directly related to the project
- can via the host institution be shared between the institutions of the main- and co-applicant(s), as detailed in the application budget
- is not automatically included in the grant and must be stated/applied for in the application budget but should not be specified in detail

The Foundation will not award funding for:

- Commercial activities
- Overhead/indirect costs (such as rent, electricity, water and maintenance)
- Double funding of projects:
  - If the applicant has received funding for the proposed project from other sources, in part or in full, this must be accounted for in the budget, as no budgetary overlaps are allowed
  - If an identical or overlapping project proposal has been submitted to other funding institutions than the Foundation, it must be noted in the application
  - If the applicant receives funding for the project, or parts of the project, from other sources following submission of the application to the Foundation, the Foundation must be informed immediately

1.5 Language

The application and all additional materials must be submitted in English.

1.6 Including an "Expected Change Model" in the application

The application must include an expected change model that briefly outlines the educational challenge you wish to solve and how to approach this challenge.

Why use the expected change model?

The expected change model is built up so that you work back from vision and mission to deliverables and success. It helps structure your thoughts into a coherent application and explains the impact that the project will have.

Please download and use the provided Word document template to fill out the expected change model for the project: https://novonordiskfonden.dk//app/uploads/Expected-change-template-for-PREPARE-applicants.docx

The expected change should be short and concise, and uploaded as an appendix. Once completed, please upload it in pdf-format as an appendix in NORMA, under the section titled APPENDICES.

Some words about the fields in the expected change model:

Challenge:
What is the challenge or problem you observe, and you want to address with the project? e.g.:

- students do not receive enough or sufficiently personalised feedback
- students do not have sufficient hands-on practice with a research topic
- students are not taught about an emergent science topic

Vision:
How do you wish things to look like if you are successful addressing the challenge? e.g.:

- Students are motivated to complete their studies in ...
- Students graduate with a new set of skills in ...
- Students are aware their acquired competences can be applied to ...

Mission:
What activities and approach do you need to solve the challenge and reach the vision? e.g.:

- Upgrades of existing courses with new elements
- New hands-on practice activities in the laboratory
- Student projects at external facilities as part of ECTS-crediting activity

Success:
At the end of the project what does success look like in terms of, e.g.:

- Demonstrated goals of a successful course/session

- (indicative) change observed in students
- (indicative) change in teaching practices

What are your aspirations for impact beyond the project at

- student level?
- programme level?
- institutional level?

Deliverables:
Deliverables include concrete outputs that are necessary to achieve success, e.g.:

- developed and tested curriculum or course design
- courses/sessions held
- establishment of physical or virtual environment
- evaluation plan and deliverables thereof
- dissemination to peers

Assumptions:
Does your intervention rest on evidence/experience, is the project dependent on external factors? e.g.:

- The proposed project meets a student demand
- Access to buildings etc. or upgrading of rooms is feasible
- Commitment of research and teaching competences at the institution or across institutions/faculties
- Long-term commitment of institution
- Evidence of success of a new teaching method adopted by the project

1.7 Application process

The application process consists of two phases. **Phase I: Selection at university level** starts when the call opens and is managed by the main applicant university. **Phase II**: **External peer-reviews and evaluation in NNF** begins after the submission deadline, where the NNF manages the external peer-reviews and evaluation.

Phase I:

Selection of projects benefiting one university
The applicant university is responsible for organising a process for selecting up to 5 relevant projects based on suggestions from teaching committees and teaching faculty. The total amount of funding requested by the submitted projects benefiting the university should be within the following quota:

Maximum Budget Quota by University
DTU DKK 15 million
KU DKK 15 million
AU DKK 10 million
AAU DKK 10 million
SDU DKK 10 million
ITU DKK 8 million
RUC DKK 8 million
FU (University of the Faroe Islands): DKK 5 million

Selection for joint projects (projects with co-applicants)
In addition to the projects within the university quota, it is also possible for two or more universities to jointly propose up to 5 projects that will benefit all the collaborating universities). The total budget for all joint projects (projects with co-applicants) proposed by each main applicant university cannot exceed DKK 15 million.

It is **the responsibility of each applicant/co-applicant university** to ensure that the number of applications and the total budget applied for by the submission deadline adheres to the guidelines and budget quota.

Notice that all applications must have a letter of support from the pro-dean for education or an educational leader at a similar or higher level (also responsible for the educational programs at the university) for each applicant or co-applicant.

Please note that questions regarding the process of submission should be directed to the applicant/co-applicant university's pro-dean for education or educational leader at similar or higher level, responsible for educational programmes at the respective university.

Phase II:

External peer-reviews and evaluation in NNF
The NNF will conduct an evaluation of the applications based on international external peer-review, using experts in the relevant fields. The evaluation criteria are described in section 1.8.

Once all applications have been assessed, applicants will be notified about the grant decisions. Notification e-mails will be sent from norma-noreply@novo.dk to the e-mail address used when creating a profile in NORMA.

Process overview:

1.8 Assessment criteria

In Phase II, an internal NNF committee and international peer reviewers will assess the applications primarily based on the following criteria:

- Quality and novelty of the project
  - *Alignment with the purpose of the instrument*
  - *Educational research results or pedagogical motivation behind the project*
  - *Originality*
- Impact
  - *Expected change to the target group e.g. impact to the study or teaching environment at the institution(s) where the project takes place*
  - *Project description's alignment to the Expected Change*
  - *Expected size of the target group*
- Execution and evaluation
  - *Plan for collecting the data and evaluating the success or failure of the project*
  - *Dissemination plan for the results of the project*
- Environment and Collaboration
  - *Relevance and quality of the applicant/co-applicant institution and of the collaborating institutions/organizations involved in the project (e.g. from didactics/learning centers at university)*
- Qualifications of the applicants and co-applicants
  - *How qualified are the applicant, co-applicants and partners to carry out the project successfully (eg. Established and documented record of successful teaching and teaching development, of successful research in science or engineering education, university pedagogy training, etc.)*

We expect all projects to **reach the students within the first year from the project start**.

Please consider these criteria carefully when writing the application.

2 The application and grant management system NORMA

2.1 Creating and submitting an application

The Foundation uses the application and grant management system NORMA: https://norma.novonordiskfonden.dk

If you do not have a user profile in NORMA, you can create one by clicking **Register** on the login page. The main applicant should only have one user profile. Please use your work e-mail address for registration.

The registered user who submits an application will be legally responsible for the truthfulness of the content of the application.

You can find guidance on how to create and submit an application at: NORMA Help Centre.

If you experience technical problems and cannot find a solution in the NORMA Help Centre, please contact NORMA Support: norma-support@novo.dk.

3 Application content

This section provides guidelines on the content required in the sections of the online application form for this call. Detailed information about the different parts of the application is available in NORMA.

3.1 Applicant

The **Applicant** tab pertains to information about all those involved in an application, meaning the main applicant or contact person applying on behalf of an institution as well as any co-applicants (please note this section should address the evaluation criteria covering the qualifications and capacity of the applicant).

In the **Applicant details tab**, please provide information according to following instructions:

- **Personal Details.** Fill in information in 'Most Recent Degree' and 'Date of Degree'. The remaining information in this section is pre-loaded from the applicant's profile.
- **Current institution**. Enter the contact details of your current workplace.
- **Experience.** Please provide a brief CV (Maximum 4000 characters, including spaces) including details of educational (e.g. teaching, supervision, teaching development) and research experience.
- **Publications.** Please include the 10 most relevant publications for evaluating your merits.
- **Summary of own research.** (Maximum 2,000 characters, including spaces): Make a short summary of your teaching activities or research leading up to the present proposal. Include what is most relevant to evaluate the feasibility of the project under your lead. Please also state if you have completed a university pedagogy course in Denmark or have completed a similar teaching qualification course abroad.
- **Previous and Current Grants from the Foundation**. Information about grant received from the NNF as an applicant or co-applicant within the past five years are preloaded from the applicant's profile. If any grants are missing, they can be added. Please summarize briefly how any of the grants are related to the current application.

A list of any incorrect or incomplete entries will be generated at the top of the screen when you click SUBMIT. Clicking one of these error messages will take you to the relevant field. Amending incorrect or incomplete entries can be time-consuming, so **we recommend submitting applications well before the deadline**.

3.2 Co-applicant(s)

Co-applicants can be invited, if the project is a joint project. Co-applicants are collaborating universities that are participating in organising and implementing the project and will be allocated a part of the grant. The project description should clearly describe the role of all co-applicants, and how the project will benefit all the collaborating universities. The budget should clearly indicate the co-applicants' allocation of the total budget.

Co-applicants must be invited through NORMA by the main-applicant and subsequently enter their details in the system. Please follow the instructions in NORMA on how to invite co-applicants to your application.

Please note that co-applicants can read, edit and upload information into the application portal, **but only the main applicant is able to submit the final application.**

Inviting co-applicants can be time-consuming.
Please invite any co-applicant(s) as soon as possible and well in advance of the submission deadline.

3.3 Institution

Please provide information about the institution, , where the grant will be administered. This institution is where the applicant will be employed during the grant period, and the institution that will ultimately be responsible for administering and allocating the grant, including budgeting, financial reporting and staff supported by the grant.

It can take up to five working days to register a new administrating institution in NORMA.
The application cannot be submitted before the institution has been registered.

3.4 Proposal

Describe the project using the fields in the **Proposal** tab.

PROJECT TITLE
Please provide a short title for the application

BRIEF PROJECT DESCRIPTION
(Maximum 2,000 characters, including spaces, line breaks and special characters).
Please provide a structured summary stating
- the educational challenge and its implications
- the project purpose and proposed activities
- expected results
- what project success looks like

Please note that the summary may be shared with potential external peer reviewers to determine their eligibility in reviewing the application.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
(maximum 10,000 characters, including spaces, line breaks and special characters).

We advise that you fill the project description following the expected change model logic you upload together with the application.

Please provide details of e.g.:
- Objectives of the project
- Background and state-of-the-art
- Main hypotheses or assumptions
- Originality of the project
- Methods and technologies, details of the proposed activities
- Expected outcomes and impact
- Comments on possible risks in the project
- Collaboration partners
- How the proposed project will complement the strategic priorities of the applicant/co-applicant University

Please describe how you plan to evaluate the impact of the project and share the knowledge about the outcomes of the project with peers at university level.

ILLUSTRATION UPLOADS
A maximum of four illustrations can be uploaded here.

The following file formats for illustrations are accepted in the system: JPG, JPEG, PNG and BMP. The maximum accepted size for each illustration is 50 MB and 1050*1650 pixels.

LITERATURE REFERENCES

Please provide the reference information for the literature cited in the project description (maximum 8,000 characters, including spaces, line breaks and special characters).
If not applicable, please fill in N/A.

3.5 Budget

Enter the project grant period, and the budget template will become available.
Only budget information submitted via the **Budget** tab will be considered in the review process. Any additional budget information attached under **Appendices** (or any other tabs) will not be considered.

3.6 Appendices

All uploads must be in PDF format. NORMA automatically places these uploads at the end of the application. Appendices other than those specified here are not permitted and will not be included in the evaluation.

Mandatory appendices, to be submitted with the application

- Support letter from pro-dean for education or educational leader with similar educational responsibility at the applicant university.
- Support letter from pro-dean for education or educational leader with similar educational responsibility at each co-applicant university (if joint project).
- Short CV of additional relevant partners (max 1 page). Applicant and co-applicant will have a specific section in NORMA for CV.
- Expected Change model