

SLU internal guidelines for nomination to the Wallenberg Academy Fellow program

Wallenberg Academy Fellows (WAF) is a long-term program for young promising researchers in Sweden, developed by the Knut and Alice Wallenberg Foundation (KAW) in close collaboration with the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, the Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences, the Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry, the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities and the Swedish Academy. The program, which is evaluated based on excellence, is open to researchers up to 9 years after obtaining a PhD, who carries out basic research in any discipline, including medicine, natural sciences, engineering and technology, social sciences and humanities/religion. KAW has decided to announce the program in 2023, and thereafter most likely every second year.

In the call for WAF 2023, KAW invites all Swedish universities to nominate candidates to the programme, with a maximum number of nominations that depends on the university¹ and among which at least 50% must be external candidates (not active in Sweden²). Further, the university should strive for 40% of the nominations to be from the underrepresented sex. The maximum number of nominations allowed from SLU in the forthcoming call is 12. According to the foundation's guidelines, all applications submitted to WAF must be prioritized by the Vice Chancellor of the nominating university. This document describes the internal process at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) for nominating researchers to the Wallenberg Academy Fellows program.

Internal nomination process for WAF at SLU

- Once KAW has published a call for nominations to the WAF program, Grants Office, in collaboration with the Division of Planning and the faculty research officers, prepares a document with a time plan and updated information about the KAW guidelines, as well as the internal nomination process at SLU. The information is then disseminated to all department heads and research officers, as well as published on the SLU staff web.
- Each faculty invites its departments to give suggestions of internal and external candidates for WAF, by submitting pre-proposals according to the templates ("[Template for pre-proposals to WAF at SLU](#)" and "[CV template for WAF pre-proposals at SLU](#)"), to the responsible faculty research officer, latest on September 15, 2022.
- After the deadline for submission of pre-proposals, the faculties control that all formalities are met, after which they are allowed to submit an unlimited number of proposals to SLU's central prioritization group³, with the requirement that they correspond to KAW's guidelines regarding external and internal candidates (at least 50% external candidates), and an equal gender representation (at least 40/60).

¹ Information about how many nominations that is permitted for each university can be found on KAW's web site (<https://kaw.wallenberg.org/en/calls/2023-nomination-wallenberg-academy-fellows-program>)

² An external candidate must not have been employed or received scholarship funding in Sweden during the past four years.

³ The prioritization group consists of internal evaluators from SLU, with an appropriate balance regarding gender, career stage and research profiles. The group is appointed by the Vice Chancellor after nomination of candidates from the faculties, please see the document "Uppdragsbeskrivning för prioriteringsgruppen" for further information.

- SLU's internal prioritization group evaluates and ranks all pre-proposals based on KAW's assessment criteria for WAF (Appendix 1), and makes a recommendation, with accompanying motivation, on which candidates that should be nominated by the Vice Chancellor.
- The Vice Chancellor decides which candidates that will be nominated to submit a complete application to WAF.
- Grants Office contacts all candidates that have been nominated for WAF by SLU (with cc to the concerned head of departments and research officers), to provide information about the KAW guidelines, internal deadlines at SLU and the support offered by Grants Office. The reasoning for why the candidate was not nominated will be communicated to the concerned researchers.
- The head of the nominating department, in collaboration with the candidate, prepares a draft version of the Vice-Chancellor's support letter, according to the template that is distributed together with the announcement on nominated candidates. The faculties' research officers are then informed, before the support letter is signed by the Vice Chancellor.
- The nominated candidates are responsible for submitting their own application via KAW's application portal before the deadline on February 15, 2023.
- The SLU leadership encourages the faculties to use the WAF program as a strategic tool for recruiting young, promising researchers from abroad.

KAW:s guidelines for applications to WAF

WAF aims to support basic research at the highest level and to provide young researchers with a work situation that provides them an opportunity to focus on research and to address difficult and longstanding research questions. The target group includes researchers early in their careers who have the potential to become the research leaders of tomorrow. According to the call text, the following guidelines apply to WAF:

- The WAF program is open to researchers in all academic disciplines, including medicine, engineering and technology, natural sciences, social sciences and humanities/religion, as well as in the interfaces between them.
- The aim of KAW is to support basic research of the highest international standard.
- The target group is researchers early in their careers, with a potential to develop into the researchers and research leaders of tomorrow.
- Candidates that are nominated to WAF in the 2023 call must have obtained their PhD after January 1, 2014. Please note that the date of the PhD considered for the calculation of the eligibility period is the date of the successful defence of the PhD degree, not the date when the degree was awarded. Candidates who received their PhD before 2014 can be nominated if they provide evidence of documented parental leave or longer sick leave after being awarded their PhD.
- Researchers who are accepted to the WAF program must be or become employed at the nominating university, which in addition needs to guarantee that the candidates will have appropriate positions.
- KAW demands that the university co-funds WAF fellows by ensuring that a maximum of 50% of the researcher's salary costs are charged to the grant. KAW further encourages the universities to finance the entire salary if possible, thus providing the researcher with a larger unencumbered research grant. In addition, the university is required to co-fund

the WAF program by covering indirect costs and rent exceeding those contributed by KAW.

- According to SLU's current guidelines for co-funding, the Vice-Chancellor has decided that the entire salary cost for researchers admitted to the WAF program at SLU, should be co-funded centrally.

Please note that researchers who have received a recruitment package as part of KAW's molecular medicine initiative (WCMM centra) or the Wallenberg AI, Autonomous Systems Program (WASP), Wallenberg AI, Autonomous Systems Program - Humanities and Society (WASP-HS), Data Driven Life Science (DDLs) or Wallenberg Initiative for Materials Science and Sustainability (WISE) cannot be nominated for a Wallenberg Academy Fellows grant.

Wallenberg Academy fellows initially receive funding from KAW during five years. The amount awarded depends on the research field in which the researcher is working, and whether the researcher was active in Sweden at the time of application, i.e. whether he or she was an internal or external candidate. In previous years, KAW has funded WAF candidates according to the following template:

	Internal candidates	External candidates
Theoretical disciplines	1 000 000 SEK/year	1 500 000 SEK/year
Experimental disciplines	1 500 000 SEK/year	2 000 000 SEK/year

- External candidates can in addition apply for a start-up grant, amounting to SEK 1 500 000, 3 000 000 or 4 500 000. The level of this additional funding is decided by the nominating university and requires a co-financing with the same amount.
- Researchers, who at the time of the nomination are working abroad, can also apply for moving expenses up to SEK 100 000.
- After the initial five years, the universities will be invited to nominate their appointed WAF researchers to compete for another five years of funding. Normally up to 40% of the originally appointed fellows can receive extension. If the support is prolonged, the fellow will be granted an additional five years of funding (SEK 1 750 000 / year), independent on research discipline.

Complete guidelines for WAF are available at <https://kaw.wallenberg.org/en/calls/nomination-wallenberg-academy-fellows-program>

KAW's assessment criteria for WAF is available in Appendix 1 and at KAW's website: <https://kaw.wallenberg.org/en/assessment-criteria-wallenberg-academy-fellows>

Time plan

Date	Responsible person/unit	Task
15 June (latest)	Grants Office	Updated information about KAW's guidelines for WAF, SLU's internal nomination process and time plan is sent out to all department heads and faculty research officers, and are in addition published on the SLU staff web.
15 September	Researcher, in agreement	Deadline for submission of pre-proposals for WAF nominations, to the respective faculty research officer.

	with department head and the faculty	The department head is responsible for ensuring the application's compliance with prevailing faculty strategies. A copy of the pre-proposal should be sent to the head of the nominating department.
14 October	The faculties	The faculties submit their pre-proposals for nomination of WAF candidates to the Division of Planning, via Ansok-KAW@slu.se . Together, the candidates must meet the requirements of a minimum of 50% external candidates and minimum 40% of the under-represented gender.
15-31 October	Prioritization group	The prioritization group makes a proposal to the Vice Chancellor on which candidates that should be nominated to the WAF program.
1-10 November	Vice Chancellor	The Vice Chancellor decides which candidates that will be nominated to submit a complete application to KAW.
11 November	Grants Office	Grants Office contacts all candidates that have been nominated for WAF by SLU (with cc to the concerned head of department and research officer), to provide information on the KAW guidelines, internal deadlines at SLU and the support offered by Grants Office. The reasoning for why the candidate was not nominated will be communicated to the concerned researchers.
12 November-15 February	Researcher + Grants Office	Nominated WAF candidates complete their WAF applications, with support from Grants Office and the nominating department/faculty.
25 January	Head of department, in agreement with the researcher	Proposed text for the Vice Chancellor's support letter, according to the template, is sent to Ansok-KAW@slu.se .
25 January	Researcher	A complete budget proposal is submitted to frank.sterner@slu.se , for approval.
8 February	Vice Chancellor	The Division of Planning sends out support letters signed by the Vice Chancellor to the nominated WAF candidates, from Ansok-KAW@slu.se .
15 February	Researcher	Deadline for submitting the final WAF application to KAW. The candidates are responsible for submitting their own applications via the KAW application portal, as well as e-mailing a copy of the final application to Ansok-KAW@slu.se , with cc to research officer of the nominating faculty.

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Appendix 1 – KAW:s assessment criteria for WAF

Background

- The program is open to researchers in all academic disciplines: medicine, engineering and technology, natural sciences, social sciences and humanities/religion, as well as the interfaces between them. The target group is researchers early in their careers with the potential to develop into the researchers and research leaders of tomorrow.
- The objective of this program is to support basic research at the highest level and is thus evaluated based on scientific excellence.
- Those who are nominated in 2023 must have received their PhDs after 1 January 2014.

Evaluation process

- All assessment of nominations is handled under strict confidentiality. This means that information about the evaluation process, besides the information below, must not be disclosed to any third party.
- The selection process is implemented in five different evaluation panels: medicine; engineering and technology; natural sciences; social sciences; and humanities/religion). The panels are appointed by the Academies and have broad academic expertise.
- The five panels evaluate and rank incoming nominations. The ranking lists is then submitted to KAW, which decides on the number of grants that will be awarded in each discipline.
- WAF proposals are evaluated based on scientific excellence, following the five-grade assessment scale used by the European Research Council (ERC), i.e.:
 - 0 = Insufficient, 1 = Good, 2 = Very good, 3 = Excellent, 4 = Outstanding
- The work includes thorough evaluation of the written documentation as well as personal interviews and consultations with external, international reviewers.

Implementation

- Four overall criteria will be applied to the nominee assessment.
 - i) The aspects given most weight will be *academic quality, originality and feasibility of the proposed research program.*
 - ii) Evaluated thereafter are *academic results attained previously* followed, in turn, by *assessment of the nominee's potential as an independent researcher and assessment of the nominee's potential as a research leader.*

- In their assessment of *scientific quality, originality and feasibility of the proposed research program*, the review panels must take into account the following subsidiary criteria (with no internal ranking):
 - The quality of the research program, its degree of innovativeness and its significance in terms of research development.
 - Feasibility: can the research be carried out at the nominating university? Do the right infrastructure, resources and context exist?
 - Documented academic quality of research carried out by the nominee to date.

- Under the criterion of *academic results attained previously*, the review panels will (again without internal ranking) consider the following subsidiary criteria:
 - Publications: quality from an international perspective and quantity
 - National and international awards
 - Documented academic breakthroughs
 - Positions held
 - A postdoctoral research stay (or equivalent) is expected for all nominees in medicine, engineering and technology, natural sciences, and social sciences.

- *Assessment of the nominee's potential as an independent researcher* consists in appraising, as far as possible, the nominee's potential for development as a researcher, mainly based on the criteria and subsidiary criteria presented above and also on the personal interview. *The nominee's potential as a research leader* is assessed, for the areas where this is relevant, on the basis of the following subsidiary criteria (without internal ranking):
 - Professional positions and positions of trust held
 - Leadership training courses attended and appraised leadership capacity
 - Communicative ability

Additional information

- According to KAW's guidelines for both individual and project grants, only basic research is supported and scientific excellence is the only evaluation criteria.

- All funding types, including WAF, apply the rule that if a female and male researcher receive equal scoring in the evaluation of scientific excellence, the underrepresented gender is prioritized.

- The researcher's total funding can, in specific cases, be applied as a boundary criterion, which means that if two researchers receive the same scientific grade, the research group's total financing in relation to research plan can be decisive.