



Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet  
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

**SLU Grants Office**  
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**Internal guidelines for WAF at SLU**  
29/05/2024

## **SLU internal guidelines for nomination to the Wallenberg Academy Fellows program**

The Wallenberg Academy Fellows (WAF) program is a long-term funding scheme for promising early career researchers in Sweden. WAF is funded by the Knut and Alice Wallenberg Foundation (KAW), but has been developed and is evaluated 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 in all scientific disciplines, up to nine years after obtaining their PhD. Calls for WAF is usually announced every second year.

The next call for Wallenberg Academy Fellows will open in January 2025, with submission deadline on **15 February 2025 at 13.00**. In this call, the **Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) may nominate up to twelve researchers for the program.**<sup>1</sup> At least 50% of the candidates must be external (not active in Sweden).<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the university should strive for 40% of the nominations to be from the underrepresented gender.

According to the KAW's guidelines, all applications submitted to WAF must be prioritised by the Vice Chancellor of the nominating university. This document describes the internal process for nominating researchers for WAF at SLU.

### **Internal nomination process for WAF at SLU**

- Once KAW publishes a call for nominations to the WAF program, the SLU Grants Office, in agreement with the faculties' research officers, prepares a document with a timeline, updated information about the KAW guidelines, and the internal nomination process at SLU. The information is then sent to all department heads and research officers, and published on the SLU staff web.
- Each faculty invites its departments to give suggestions for internal and external WAF candidates, who all should complete a pre-proposal according to the instructions given in Appendix 1. Please use the following links to download the templates to be used for writing a WAF pre-proposal at SLU ("[Template for pre-proposals to WAF at SLU](#)" och "[CV template for WAF pre-proposals at SLU](#)"). The pre-proposal must be sent to the nominating faculty's research officer by **September 16, 2024**, at the latest.

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<sup>1</sup> Information on the number of nominations per university can be found on KAW's website: <https://kaw.wallenberg.org/en/calls/2025-nomination-wallenberg-academy-fellows-program>.

<sup>2</sup> An external candidate must not have been employed or received scholarship funding in Sweden in the last four years.

- Each faculty is responsible for ensuring that the researchers they nominate meet all formalities. Faculties may submit an unlimited number of pre-proposals to SLU's central prioritisation group.<sup>3</sup> However, faculties must meet KAW's requirements of a minimum of 50% external candidates and an equal gender representation (at least 40/60).
- SLU's internal prioritisation group evaluates and ranks all pre-proposals based on KAW's assessment criteria for WAF (Appendix 2). The group makes a recommendation, with accompanying motivation, concerning which candidates should be nominated by the Vice Chancellor.
- The Vice Chancellor decides which candidates will be nominated by SLU for the WAF program.
- The Grants Office contacts all nominees, with the concerned heads of department and research officers in cc. Information is provided about the KAW guidelines, internal deadlines at SLU, and the support offered by the Grants Office.
- Candidates who were not nominated will be informed why their applications were not successful.
- The head of the nominating department, in collaboration with the candidate, prepares a draft version of the Vice Chancellor's support letter, according to a provided template. The Grants Office finalises the letter and informs the faculty's research officer when the document is complete, after which the support letter is signed by the Vice Chancellor.
- The application period begins on January 7, 2025. Nominated candidates are responsible for submitting their own application via KAW's application portal before the deadline of 13.00 on February 15, 2025.
- SLU's leadership encourages faculties to use the WAF program as a strategic tool for recruiting young, promising early career researchers from abroad.

### **KAW's guidelines for applications to WAF**

The Wallenberg Academy Fellows program aims to support basic research at the highest level. Its goal is to provide young researchers with a work situation that allows them to focus on research, and to address difficult and longstanding research questions. According to the announcement, 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.
- KAW has a priority to fund 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 who are nominated to WAF in the 2025 call must have obtained their PhD after January 1, 2016. Please note that eligibility is calculated from the date of the successful PhD defence and *not* the date of award. Candidates who received their PhD before 2016 can be nominated if they provide documented evidence of parental leave or long-term sick leave after completing their PhD.

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<sup>3</sup> The prioritisation group consists of internal evaluators from SLU, with an appropriate balance regarding gender, career stage, and research profile. The group is appointed by the Vice Chancellor after candidates are nominated by the faculties. Please see the document "Uppdragsbeskrivning för prioriteringsgruppen" for further information.

- Researchers appointed to the WAF program must be or become employed at the nominating university with a relevant academic position.
- KAW requires universities to co-fund WAF positions by guaranteeing that 50% of the researcher's salary is covered by the university. KAW encourages universities to fund the entire salary if possible, in order to provide researchers with larger, unencumbered research grants.
  - *According to SLU's current co-funding guidelines, as decided by the Vice Chancellor, the entire salary cost for researchers admitted to the WAF program at SLU will be centrally co-funded.*
- KAW also requires universities to co-fund the WAF program by covering indirect costs and rent exceeding the 20% maximum level that is contributed by KAW.

Please note that researchers who have received a recruitment package as part of the Foundation's Molecular Medicine Initiative (WCMM centra), Wallenberg AI, Autonomous Systems Program (WASP), Wallenberg AI, Autonomous Systems Program - Humanities and Society (WASP-HS), Data Driven Life Science (DDLS), Wallenberg Centre for Quantum Technology, (WACQT) or Wallenberg Initiative for Materials Science and Sustainability (WISE) cannot be nominated for a Wallenberg Academy Fellows program.

Wallenberg Academy fellows initially receive funding from KAW for five years. The amount awarded depends on the research field, and whether the researcher was active in Sweden at the time of application (i.e. whether they applied as an internal or external candidate). According to the announcement, KAW will fund fellows as indicated below:

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

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

Complete guidelines for WAF are available at <https://kaw.wallenberg.org/en/calls/2025-nomination-wallenberg-academy-fellows-program>

KAW's assessment criteria for WAF is available in Appendix 2 and at KAW's website: <https://kaw.wallenberg.org/en/assessment-criteria-wallenberg-academy-fellows>

## Timeline

Date	Responsible person/unit	Task
15 June (latest)	Grants Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sends updated information about KAW's guidelines for WAF, SLU's internal nomination process, and timeline to all department heads and faculty Research Officers.</li> <li>• Publishes this information on the SLU staff web.</li> </ul>
16 September	Researcher, in agreement with department head and the faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deadline for applicants to submit pre-proposals for WAF to the faculty research officer, with the head of department in cc.</li> <li>• The department head is responsible for ensuring that the applications comply with prevailing faculty strategies.</li> </ul>
14 October	The faculties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculties submit their candidates' pre-proposals to the Grants Office, via <a href="mailto:Ansok-KAW@slu.se">Ansok-KAW@slu.se</a>.</li> <li>• Each faculty's candidates must meet the requirements of a minimum of 50% external candidates and a minimum 40% of the under-represented gender.</li> </ul>
15-31 October	Prioritisation group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The prioritisation group makes a proposal to the Vice Chancellor on which candidates that should be nominated for WAF.</li> </ul>
1-11 November	Vice Chancellor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Vice Chancellor decides which candidates will be invited to submit a complete application to KAW.</li> </ul>
12 November (latest)	Grants Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contacts the candidates nominated for WAF by SLU with relevant department head and research officer in cc.</li> <li>• Provides information on the KAW guidelines, internal deadlines at SLU, and the support offered by the Grants Office.</li> <li>• Communicates decisions and rationales to candidates whose applications were not selected.</li> </ul>
12 November-15 February	Researcher + Grants Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nominated candidates complete their WAF applications with support from the Grants Office and the nominating department/faculty.</li> </ul>
24 January	Head of department, in agreement with the researcher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate on a proposed text for the Vice Chancellor's support letter (according to a template provided)</li> <li>• Send the draft letter to <a href="mailto:Ansok-KAW@slu.se">Ansok-KAW@slu.se</a>.</li> </ul>
24 January	Researcher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submits a complete budget proposal to <a href="mailto:frank.sterner@slu.se">frank.sterner@slu.se</a> for approval.</li> </ul>
10 February	Vice Chancellor, Grants Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Grants Office sends out support letters signed by the Vice Chancellor to the nominated WAF candidates (from <a href="mailto:Ansok-KAW@slu.se">Ansok-KAW@slu.se</a>).</li> </ul>
15 February by 13.00	Researcher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deadline to submit the final WAF application to KAW. The candidates are responsible for submitting their own applications via the KAW application portal.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>E-mails a copy of the final application to <a href="mailto:Ansok-KAW@slu.se">Ansok-KAW@slu.se</a>, with the research officer of the nominating faculty in cc.</li> </ul>
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## Contact information

Name	Role	E-mail	Phone
Caroline Grabbe, Grants Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KAW:s contact person at SLU</li> <li>Research coordinator with main responsibility for KAW applications</li> </ul>	caroline.grabbe@slu.se	+46-72-236 56 70
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## **Appendix 1. Instructions for pre-proposals in support of nomination to the Wallenberg Academy Fellows (WAF) program at SLU**

According to the KAW guidelines, all applications submitted to WAF must undergo an internal prioritisation process at the nominating university. At SLU, this is achieved by a process in which interested researchers submit a pre-proposal for WAF. This application is first assessed at the faculty level, and then by a specially appointed prioritisation group that is tasked with recommending which candidates should be nominated by the Vice Chancellor.

Before submitting your application, carefully read KAW's application guidelines for WAF and consider the following;

- Wallenberg Academy Fellows is a program open to researchers up to nine years after PhD, who are working in any scientific discipline. Candidates that are nominated to WAF in the 2025 call must have obtained their PhD after January 1, 2016. Eligibility is calculated from the date of the successful PhD defence, not the date when the degree was awarded.
- Candidates who successfully defended their PhD thesis before 2016 can be nominated if they provide documented evidence of parental leave or long-term sick leave after being awarded their PhD.
- Nominated candidates should focus on research of basic scientific nature and demonstrate a strong potential to become future research leaders.
- Researchers who are nominated to WAF should work in areas that are in line with the priorities of SLU, the faculty, and the nominating department, and be considered to have the qualifications necessary to pursue an academic career at SLU.
- Discuss the candidate's profile and project idea with the head of the intended host department well in advance of submitting the pre-proposal. It is the responsibility of the department head to ensure that the candidate's research is in line with the faculty's strategy.

### **Guidelines for completing your WAF pre-proposal at SLU**

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The pre-proposal should be written in **English** and submitted as a **compiled PDF**, consisting of the following parts, as indicated below:

#### **1. Wallenberg Academy Fellows pre-proposal form at SLU**

- The pre-proposal form can be downloaded from the SLU staff web ([here](#)).
- The form is to be used as a title page and includes basic information about the applicant and their research area, together with an assurance that the head of department is aware of and supports the application.

#### **2. Project description (max. 2 pages, excluding references)**

- Provide a clear and concise overview that describes the proposed project (including aims/objectives, significance, and methodology/implementation). Make sure to answer the following questions:

- i) What are the overall aims and objectives of the project? Which is the most important research question that the project addresses?
  - ii) In what way will the project move the relevant research field forward (go beyond state of the art)?
  - iii) What basic scientific knowledge will the project contribute? Why is this knowledge important?
  - iv) In what way is the project ground-breaking and bold? Define and motivate which novel research questions and/or methods that will be asked and/or developed.
  - v) How will the aims of the project be achieved?
- Use at least 2 cm margins and font size 11 (Times New Roman, Calibri or Arial).
  - Figures and tables are allowed.
  - References can be added on top of the allowed 2 pages for the project description (max. 1 page)

### **3. CV (max. 2 pages)**

- The researcher's scientific/academic merits, i.e. a CV containing the person's name, full contact details, social security number, education, positions held, prizes and awards, and postdoctoral stays, if relevant.
- For inspiration, please consult our separate template for how to structure a CV and publication list for an application to WAF ([here](#)).

### **4. Publication list**

- A complete list of publications in peer-reviewed journals, with the ten most significant publications clearly marked.
- For scientific areas to which it is applicable, include the researcher's h-index (Web of Science, Scopus or Google Scholar) together with the number of publications and citations that the h-index is based on. Google Scholars preferably use Harzing's Publish or Perish.
- For nominations in the fields of humanities, a complete list of the researcher's published work should be enclosed.

### **5. Background and expertise of the nominated candidate (max. 1 page)**

- Describe the nominated researcher's background and expertise, as well as how they would fit into the proposed research environment.
- This section should include a summary of the researcher's strengths and qualities, potential to become a future research leader, as well as highlights from their research and CV.

### **6. Strategic significance (max. 1 page)**

- Describe how the proposed research and candidate is of strategic importance for SLU, as well as for Sweden from an international perspective.

The pre-proposal should be written **in English, compiled as a single PDF**, and sent to the **Research Officer of the nominating faculty**, no later than **September 16, 2024**.

## Appendix 2 – KAW:s assessment criteria for WAF

### Background

- The WAF program is open to researchers in all academic disciplines: medicine, engineering and technology, natural sciences, social sciences and humanities/religion, as well as the intersections between them.
- The target group is early career researchers 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 international standard. Applications are hence evaluated based on scientific excellence.
- Candidates nominated in 2025 must have received their PhDs after January 1, 2016.

### Evaluation process

- All assessment of nominations is strictly confidential. Information about the evaluation process, besides the information below, must not be disclosed to any third party.
- There are 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 the nominated applications. The ranking lists are then submitted to KAW, which decides 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 assessment includes thorough evaluation of the written documents, 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*.
  - iii) Followed by *assessment of the nominee's potential as an independent researcher*.
  - iv) Finally, *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 consider the following subsidiary criteria (with no internal ranking):
  - The quality of the research program, its degree of innovation, 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 consider the following subsidiary criteria (again without internal ranking):
  - 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 of an appraisal, as far as possible, of the nominee's potential for development as a researcher. The evaluation is 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 (with no internal ranking):
  - Professional positions and positions of trust held.
  - Leadership training courses attended and appraised leadership capacity.
  - Communication skills.

#### **Additional information**

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