

## REKTORSBREV – KoN2018

2017-09-01

Dear Colleagues,

After the summer holidays the KoN2018 process is well underway and with it arise a number of questions that are worth taking time to examine. Here are a few:

Why conduct the evaluation?

- The ultimate goal of the evaluation is to increase the quality of our research and thereby our possibilities to impact society with science-based knowledge. I encourage you to see the evaluation process as an opportunity for strategic discussions: they can stimulate the creative ideas that are the essence of excellent research and high impact.

What will be the main components of the evaluation?

- KoN2018 will include current status and future aspirations of the UoA. Current status will be seen through scientific output and its impact on society in the most recent years, future aspirations and strategies to attain them can be conveyed in the self-assessments. A focal component for this evaluation will include the UoA's capacity for collaboration.

Will there be funding from SLU for the best UoAs?

- There will be no rewards in terms of funding based on the results of the evaluation. My aim this time is that the evaluation process should have less focus on comparison of evaluation scores and more focus on strategic thinking.

Why does the SLU strategy prioritize syntheses and interdisciplinary science when the Units of Assessment are strictly regulated to be within one faculty?

- Successful cross-disciplinary science often has several strong basic-science research groups that work well together. Many times these groups are from different departments, faculties, universities, and not seldom from different countries. That a UoA is assessed in KoN2018 within one faculty does not limit the interdisciplinary of the group. The publication lists and the self-assessment will clearly show these collaborations.

Why are UoAs to meet the requirement of a minimum of ten persons of which seven are to be PhDs?

- This minimum was set in order to encourage researchers to work strategically together. Lessons from the previous KoN in 2009 showed that larger units had more favorable evaluation results. It seems though that this requirement has caused discontent. The most essential criterion in defining the UoAs' is that they constitute strong functional strategic groups. If this criterion is met they might, in some cases, be smaller than the recommended size.

I am certain that there are many more questions; the answers to many of them can be found at the [KoN2018 website](#).

Thanks to everyone who is engaged in this process so far. Once the UoAs are registered in September the next step will be designation of the evaluation panels, a process to be done together by the Deans (Ledningsrådet) and the KoN2018 Steering Committee. In October we'll ask departments and the faculties to give suggestions for expert reviewers for each panel. More information on that process will follow soon.

Sincerely,

Peter Högberg  
Vice Chancellor SLU