

NORDIC MASTER - PROGRAMME GUIDE 2017

Background of the programme

In June 2007, the Nordic Prime Ministers decided upon a new Nordic globalisation initiative with the aim to create a more competent, visible and well-being Nordic Region. The Nordic Master was one of several initiatives taken by the Nordic Council of Ministers. Six calls have since been launched, and 26 Nordic Master Programmes have been supported.

The Nordic Council of Ministers for Education and Research (MR-U) decided in June 20th 2016 on a five-year programme period 2017-2021, based on a Programme Document.

In the **Call for proposals 2017**, the Nordic Council of Ministers will support **three Nordic Master programmes**. Each programme will get a funding up to DKK 1.5 million.

Aims and objectives of the programme

In coherence with the ambitions of the Prime Ministers' Globalisation initiative in 2007, the aims and objectives of the Nordic Master programme are:

- to **internationalise higher education in the Nordic Region** through collaboration between Nordic and non-Nordic students from Europe and beyond
- to **develop and facilitate cooperation between higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Nordic Region** through systematic attention to solving hindrances and challenges in organising joint programmes
- to offer support to joint master programmes that are **based on excellence and high quality**
- to support joint programmes that are **research-based** and offer good opportunities for graduates to **careers in research as well as in non-academic working life**
- to develop collaboration between HEIs, industry and labour market in the Nordic Region
- to reach good and measurable results in **students' learning outcomes** (knowledge, competences, skills)
- to help students and other participants to **create useful networks**

Who can participate and how?

The target group for the Nordic Master programme is Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Nordic countries and their autonomous areas (Åland, Faroe Islands, Greenland). These HEIs must be **recognised by the competent national authorities** and **offer research-based education at second-cycle level** (scientific and artistic research).

The HEIs must establish a consortium of **at least three institutions** from three different Nordic countries (inclusive their autonomous areas). One of the institutions must act as a **coordinator** for the consortium. The coordinator is responsible for the application, management of grants and for reporting on behalf of the whole consortium.

The collaboration within the consortium should be **regulated by an agreement** signed by a legal representative of each partner institution (typically rector, vice-

rector, vice-chancellor or similar). The agreement shall ensure the necessary and essential support and commitment from all partners.

What is a Nordic Master programme?

The formal eligibility criteria for a Nordic Master programme are the following:

- The programme must **comply with current national regulations** in order to ensure that it meets the requirements for a Master's degree in the participating countries.
- The programmes shall be research-based and comprise 120 ECTS.
- Each participating institution shall offer at least **30 ECTS** into the programme.
- The programme includes **student mobility period of 30 ECTS** in another Nordic country or in the autonomous area thereof. The mobility can be partly arranged as **virtual mobility**.
- Successful completion of the programme leads to the award of either a **Joint Degree** (one joint diploma signed by at least two institutions) or a **Multiple Degree** (two or more diplomas from two or more institutions). The degree(s) must be **fully recognised** by competent national authorities of the countries where these HEIs are established.

Which activities are funded?

Nordic Master programmes that are ready to start and recruit students are prioritised. The support can be used to **planning, preparatory measures and/or running the programme, including support for mobility** of students (and teachers).

Planning and preparatory measures can include all kinds of activities to prepare the start of the programme and to welcoming the students.

How to apply?

Applications must be **submitted electronically** in the Espresso application and reporting system. The applications must be written in English. The deadline for submitting applications is **Friday, 29 September 2017**. Further instructions are available in the Espresso system.

All participating institutions' legal representatives must sign a **Letter of Intent**, which is to be attached to the application.

How are the applications assessed and decisions made?

The applications are processed by the programme administrator (Finnish National Agency for Education EDUFI). Each application fulfilling the formal eligibility criteria will be assessed by at least two evaluators appointed by EDUFI in cooperation with the Secretariat of the Nordic Council of Ministers. The evaluators make a joint proposal and based on this proposal, EDUFI will make the decision on the allocation of funds. **Applicants can expect a decision within three months after the deadline.**

Assessment criteria

The applications are assessed against the following criteria:

Relevance

- The application should include a convincing justification of the relevance of the joint programme with regard to the **objectives of the Nordic Master set by the Nordic Council of Ministers**.
- Special attention should be paid to the **learning outcomes** of the joint programmes and the competences provided in order to maximise the **employability** and/or **possibilities for further education** on PhD level for graduates from the joint programme.
- Joint programmes should include **innovative features**.
- Joint programmes should have **Nordic added value**.
- Joint programmes should have strong **links to relevant Nordic research entities and/or PhD programmes**.

Joint curriculum design

- Curriculum design should be clear and based on **learning outcomes**.
- **Teaching and assessment methods** should be relevant with regard to the learning outcomes.
- Special attention should be paid to student **mobility**, its structure and organisation, and to how the mobility is instrumental to the programme's objectives.
- Each participating partner must **contribute to the curriculum** according to their own academic strengths.
- Each partner must **commit** to the joint programme.
- Joint programmes should be **clearly integrated** in the partner institutions' degree catalogue.

Joint management

- Joint programmes should be **managed jointly by all partners**.
- **Joint bodies** are set up for the joint programme for: overall management, student selection, quality assurance, etc. **External stakeholders** and **students** should be represented.
- The **composition and mandate** of these bodies should be clear.
- Programme applications should include descriptions on both external and internal **quality assurance** systems and procedures.
- The content of the **agreement** should be described.
- **Joint programme coordination** should be integrated in all participating institutions (e.g. local coordinators).
- The consortium should have a **common policy regarding tuition fees**. It is recommended that only one price for tuition fee is set for each programme.

Students

- The students targeted by joint programmes should be **well defined**.
- The consortium should have a **clear plan** as to how and through which channels the joint programme is marketed to attract students.
- The consortium should provide easily accessible **relevant information and support** to students on, for example, the programme and the degree, the selection criteria, application process, job opportunities, practicalities.

- The consortium should secure that students in the programme can **interact with local students and the sociocultural and professional environment** at large.

Sustainability

- The consortium should have a **strategy** for medium-/long-term development/sustainability in order to sustain the programme after the Nordic Master funding ceases. **Scholarships** for students are especially important.

What are the funding rules?

If the application is approved, a grant agreement is signed between EDUFI and the coordinating institution of the consortium. The length of the grant agreement is 5 years at the most and includes a grant for planning, preparatory measures and a maximum of three student intakes.

However, if the consortium does not need any support for planning or preparatory measures, the whole grant amount can be allocated to the implementation of the programme, including mobility support for students (four intakes). This shall be indicated in the application.

Grant for preparatory measures and implementation

A maximum grant of **DKK 375,000** is allocated for **planning and preparatory measures** to a consortium of 5 or more participating HEIs. If the consortium consists of three HEIs (minimum requirement), the grant is DKK 225,000. The maximum grant for four HEIs is DKK 300,000.

The grant for the implementation of a programme is allocated annually and is usually **DKK 375,000 / academic year**. The grant amount is based on an assumption that **at least 10 students** in a cohort actually start their studies in the programme. The following grant instalments are defined on the basis of student numbers and can be adjusted accordingly but within the total maximum grant of DKK 1.5 million. The consortium can use these grants freely on any relevant activities in the implementing of the programme. There are no fixed grants for students, and the consortium can decide how to allocate the grant in the best way possible.

Payment procedures

The **first instalment** on **preparatory measures** is paid when the **signed grant agreement** is submitted to EDUFI. The first instalment for **implementation**, including support for mobility, is paid when the consortium has submitted a **signed copy of the consortium agreement** and a **list of students** that have started the programme (total number of students with nationality and gender information).

The following instalments for implementation are paid when the consortium submits a list of students that have started the programme.



Reporting and follow-up

The coordinators of the consortia are required to submit **reports on graduates** for each cohort supported by the Nordic Master.

In addition, a **final report** concerning the whole agreement period shall be submitted within 30 days after the grant agreement has expired.

