

KUF meeting session 24th May 2013

Participants:

Anna Valros, chair	HU-V	<u>Coordinators</u>	
Hans Henrik Dietz	HEALTH	Marianne Aarø-hansen	AU-ST
Mari Sundli Tveit	UMB	Elizabeth Jill Archer	HEALTH
Halvor Hektoen	NVH	Sari Mikkola	HU-AF
Lena Andersson-Eklund	SLU	Susanna Pakkasmaa	AU-ST
Juha Helenius	HU-AF	Pauliina Karvinen	UEF-F
Elise Norberg	AU-ST	Helena Eklund-Snäll	SLU
Björn Thorsteinsson	LBHI	Thorbjörg Valdis Kristjánsdóttir	LBHI
Heli Peltola	UEF-F	Cathrine Strømø	UMB
Grete Bertelsen	SCIENCE	Melanie Etchell	NVH
		Inge Kjær	SCIENCE
Hanna Grisum Husum	NSB	Secretary	
Marcus Andersson	NSB	Janna Koivisto	HU-V

Role of KUF in the future

The role of KUF was discussed, and it was agreed that there is no need for KUF in its current form in the future, as KUF and the Board currently discusses similar issues in parallel, which is not very effective. The alternatives suggested included replacing KUF with an expert panel only dealing with reviewing course application, or no such organ at all. KUF recommended that NOVA board can assign a working group/ad hoc group/group of external evaluators to help them with the PhD course applications if seen necessary.

Suggestion to be taken to the Board: In the future, NOVA should have only one decisive organ, eg. The Board. The Board can form ad hoc groups to aid decision making, if needed.

PhD grant criteria

Criteria for funding applications need to be very clear, especially if NOVA does not have a full time Coordinator in the future. Local coordinators usually do not have time or expertise to advice applicants.

KUF agreed that the board should define a maximum grant sum per course and also a minimum number of students. Maximum length of courses would be one week (+ distance learning part if appropriate). It was further suggested that there could be more flexibility in using the grant. eg. that the granted money could be used to pay to NOVA teachers as well, not just to external expert teachers, if well motivated. KUF also discussed the question of some courses being more expensive to organize than others (e.g. laboratory courses). This needs to be taken into account when defining a maximum grant per course.

Applications should be made easier to compile, and NOVA should accept applications for several yearly courses applied at once. Application features that were not considered necessary in the future included daily lecture schedules and CV's of external teachers. In addition, number of Nordic teachers does not need to be defined, and the Nordic dimension should be shown qualitatively, not quantitatively (eg. no need to list organisations included in the planning, but instead to show how students in several countries can benefit from the course). It is still important to include teachers from several Nordic countries in the

planning of the courses to assure that it is a genuine NOVA course and not merely a course with international students, including NOVA students. NOVA's definition of Nordic dimension should be included in the NOVA strategy and the most important focus of the application should be course content and motivation: the application needs to clearly motivate why the course needs to be organized as Nordic NOVA course. A budget would be required. It was pointed out that more flexible applications would not necessarily decrease the workload of administrative persons (local and central NOVA coordinator).

It was further suggested that the focus on networks should be reduced in the future. Networks should not be considered as a value in themselves, but as platforms for organising courses with a clear Nordic dimension. One risk with reducing the importance of networks might be that two or more courses are suggested from the same field at the same time.

Each year NOVA board would set priorities and courses would be funded based on that.

Three-step evaluation process

As KUF would not exist anymore, the application process would be different. KUF suggests three step evaluation process:

1. Official approval by the home institution (incl. eg. evaluation of the quality of the course and teachers, relevance of the topic, correct amount of ECTS credits compared to student workload). Institutions should be informed clearly about what their role is when approving applications for submission.
2. Technical approval by the NOVA Central Coordinator to make sure the practical eligibility criteria is met. Less support would be included at this stage to reduce the workload of the coordinator: if the application has deficiencies, the Central Coordinator will usually not ask the applicant to complete or improve the application, but the application will be discarded.
3. Political approval by the NOVA board to be done by the set priorities, and by evaluating the Nordic dimension of the application. The Board would not discuss the details of applications.

It was underlined that the new plan of less detailed applications, less meetings and more independent work at the institutions makes the NOVA work more demanding for the local coordinators. In this model a full time Central Coordinator of NOVA probably needed too. NSB supported the idea of a full time Central Coordinator who could use the time saved from other tasks to developing tasks of NOVA, such as updating web pages.

Decision: The above suggestions will be taken to the Board and a working group will be formed to write new criteria for funding applications and funding process. The working group will consist of the following persons: Terttu Virri, Anna Valros, Björn Thorsteinsson and a representative from Denmark. The evaluation criteria will be finalized after the board has made decisions on the new strategy. The evaluation criteria won't be changed for the call in autumn 2013.

Central Coordinator of NOVA

Tasks of the coordinator need to be defined before the decision is made whether the task will be full time or part time in the future. It is also important to note that future strategic changes in NOVA will keep the new NOVA Central Coordinator busy in the beginning, thus the contract should be full time at least for the first 1-2 years. Deleting KUF increases the work of the Central Coordinator further.

Decision: A working group will be created. First Terttu Virri and Helena Eklund Snäll describe the current tasks in detail. After the October board meeting the suggestion of future tasks will be drafted by Anna Valros, Mari Sundli Tveit, Helena Eklund Snäll and Terttu Virri. Description of tasks of the local coordinators will be defined as well.

NOVA Student Board (NSB)

The NOVA Student Board should be a committee that represents the students' voice in NOVA and its work should be more closely linked to the NOVA Board. NSB could be smaller, mainly, or only, consisting of PhD students. It could have two face-to-face meetings a year and in addition video meetings. One meeting could be a bit before the Board meeting and items of the board meeting discussed. Concrete tasks for NSB should be written. NSB has meeting on September 7 where the future role of NSB will be discussed. These ideas and the role of NSB will be further discussed in KUF video meeting on September 17, 2013, after which they will be taken to the Board.