



The Center for Social Science Didactics (CSD)

SELF-EVALUATION

Periodic Research Review

Self-evaluation: CSD (Centre for Social Science Education Research) Quality Review 2022-2023

Summary

CSD is a research centre at Karlstad University (KAU) focusing on subject-specific didactics in the social science field of Geography, History, Religious Studies, and Social Studies. [CSD](#) pursues subject-specific education research and offers doctoral studies programmes, professional development training for teachers, school development initiatives, and is responsible for the Nordic journal [Nordidactica](#). As a research centre with a specific focus, CSD can bring together a wide range of expertise while retaining high research quality in relation to the epistemological, methodological, and didactic conditions of each subject. CSD's activities are therefore carried out in close cooperation with adjacent disciplines as well as school subjects.

1. Long-term goals and strategies

CSD's aim is to ensure research-based education in the social science subjects (SO) by contributing empirically and theoretically to the research field and to subject-specific didactic school development. To this end, we work strategically with international, national, and local partnerships. Characteristic of subject didactic research is the close link between theory and practice. CSD's long-term goals are specified in three-year directional research programmes ([forskningsprogram](#)).

CSD strives to be a leading actor in the academic field as well as school activities and to participate in public debate on issues of relevance to our organisation. Building an organisation capable of applying and attracting research funding and external funding of our graduate school has been central to CSD's strategy. This strategy has been successful and CSD's doctoral programmes have served to further develop the Centre. In a national perspective, the doctoral programmes have added considerable contributions to the research field and increased the number of active researchers and research qualified teachers.

It is also strategically important for CSD to develop robust networks with similar subject environments, nationally and internationally. The journal [Nordidactica](#) is the only scholarly journal of its kind in Scandinavia and of great importance in strengthening the infrastructure of SO didactics in the Nordic countries. At KAU, the research group ROSE (Research on Subject Education) is, in particular, an important partner in further deepening and broadening international networks. It is central to CSD's strategy to develop partnerships with teachers and school leaders to cooperate on research-based projects and professional development initiatives. Cooperation at all levels is enhanced through conferences and joint research applications. To achieve our objectives of high quality and external funding, a dynamic and high-quality research environment is crucial. This includes increasing the number of publications in international journals and organising seminar series, writing workshops, alumni days, and opportunities to meet visiting researchers.

An obvious strength in strategic efforts is the opportunity for methodical and long-term work. This has been possible thanks to the research strategic decisions taken by the Board of Teacher Education (LUN) and to resources allocated to enhancing didactic and other teacher

education related research by the university management. The status and establishment of didactic research at KAU is now manifested in the university's recent decision to specifically name the three areas of didactics, computer science and service research in KAU's application for profile areas. In sum, KAU has created predictability in basic funding and conditions of work, thus ensuring sustainability and innovation as well as crucial conditions for successful applications for external funding.

2. Organisation and management

2.1 CSD's organisation and research leadership

All research centres at Karlstad University are regulated through the document [Arbetsordning för forskningscentra](#) [Rules of procedure for research centres]. A research centre does not offer undergraduate level studies or employs teachers or researchers, but it coordinates research between different subjects and departments. All members of CSD are therefore employed by departments and subject units where they also teach.

CSD is led by a director and a research leader, appointed by the vice chancellor and dean for a period of three years on the recommendation of [CSD:s rådgivande kommitté](#) [advisory committee]. CSD has chosen to divide responsibilities for operations between director and research leader. In 2021-2023, Professor Gabriel Bladh is appointed as director and Professor Kenneth Nordgren as research leader. The director is responsible for finance and budget, while the research leader is responsible for research activities in terms of implementation, content, and evaluation. There is also an advisory committee with 13 members, comprising eight members from CSD and five external members. The CSD director chairs the committee. Each subject area appoints a doctorate holder member (including the chair). In addition, two members of the teaching staff (PhD degree not required) are appointed as well as two doctoral student representatives. The five external members represent the school system (one member), another university (two doctorate holders) and two third-cycle alumni. CSD's research leader and the administrative editor of *Nordidactica* are adjunct members.

The advisory committee deals with strategic issues, contributes to developing networks and the processes of evaluation and budget. It meets once every semester. To assist management in daily tasks, a working committee is yearly appointed within the advisory committee, consisting of doctorate holders from all CSD subjects and a doctoral student representative. The working committee meets once a month and has the task of supporting the director and research leader in the ongoing work at the centre. The working committee is crucial to establishing the processes of development and decision-making among the active researchers and doctoral students within CSD.

2.2 CSD's organisation at KAU

CSD belongs to [Fakulteten för humaniora och samhällsvetenskap](#) [Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences]. The second faculty at the university is the Faculty of Health, Science and Technology. CSD, like the other didactic centres at KAU (Centre for Language and Literature Education, CSL, and Science, Mathematics and Engineering Education Research, SMEER) is closely connected to teacher education, under the Board of Teacher Education ([Fakultetsnämnd för lärarutbildningen](#), LUN). Teacher education is a major programme area

at Karlstad University, comprising 25% of students at KAU. This area includes teacher programmes for preschool, primary school (F-3, 4-6 and after-school centres), lower and upper secondary subject teachers (7-9 and senior high), and vocational schools. In addition, there are teacher programmes for Bachelor and Master students. Teacher education is a matrix organisation across many departments at KAU's two faculties. LUN is responsible for organising studies and for quality assurance of education and research linked to teacher education. ([LUN har en budget för forskning](#)) LUN has a budget for teacher education, including basic funding for research centres. LUN's research council is an important arena for strategic discussions, follow-ups, and evaluation.

2.3 Conditions for research, recruitment, and research culture

Active and engaged colleagues are crucial to activities. Our aim is to offer an including environment enhancing research and development. The environment is multidisciplinary, attracting researchers and teacher from various disciplines. CSD has an annual basic funding from LUN of appr. SEK 5.5 million. A smaller part of LUN's research budget is distributed to the didactic research centres based on performance. The CSD budget specifies funding of activities in the categories of doctoral students and doctoral supervision, senior researchers (mainly application support and a special post doc support) and CSD management functions. Budgetary resources are thus principally used to strengthen the research environment and create space for development and innovation.

The annual report to LUN is a further tool for improving and evaluating research and activities. Every year, we describe, in this report, the research environment at large, publications, the use of funding, external funding, research networks, research dissemination and impact on teacher education. We also discuss how efforts progress over time. This report is yearly reviewed by LUN and compared with the reports submitted by other centres, and our results impact on the new budget. The annual report is also reviewed by the CSD advisory committee and used as a way of developing future activities.

Full-time teaching staff at Karlstad University are entitled to 20% of full-time employment for professional development, which is planned in consultation with head of department and can be used for research and professional development. The Faculty Office recurringly calls for applications for funding of time for research applications, and departments have a functioning system to support applications for promotion to docent/associate professor. CSD researchers have used both opportunities.

Recruitment is a challenge for several reasons. CSD has an uneven gender distribution with a dominance of male senior researchers. In the doctoral student groups, the gender distribution is balanced, and therefore it has been, and still is, a continued strategy to increase the proportion of female researchers and doctoral students when recruiting. There is a national shortage of senior expertise in the area. CSD strives to redress the shortage long term through doctoral studies and supporting lecturers' career development towards a PhD. This situation might lead to lock-in effects if professors and docents are mainly involved in research and supervision and have little time to teach undergraduates, while junior researchers might have so many teaching duties that there is no time to develop a research project. To counteract such a distribution of duties, CSD makes efforts to support and involve junior researchers in

various ways and ensuring that senior researchers take responsibility for undergraduate courses.

Our seminar culture, which also has a professional development function (see below), is central to maintaining good research practice and a dynamic infrastructure. Beyond CSD's own seminars, we also cooperate with the department to create opportunities regularly to discuss research applications and texts for career qualifications. Such seminars are also organised in conjunction with the research group ROSE. The department also houses expertise in research ethics to assist researchers in the department and thus also CSD.

The common denominator in CSD is the 'subject didactic' orientation for which the three-year research programmes have been directional. The conversation on this orientation needs to be sustained and produced within a structured context of seminars, writing workshops, doctoral studies and reading circles. Our website provides information of activities, as does the internal e-mail list for topical information.

[Forskningsprogram](#): Since 2008, CSD has designed three-year research programmes, which have influenced the direction and content of the centre, as well as its resource distribution. The two first programmes focused on subject didactic teacher research and conceptualisation in social science subjects. In the third programme (2016-2018, the main focus was extended to include didactic research on teaching and learning. The research approach on the practice-based subject didactics was combined with more focus on theoretical development and research methodology, and this approach was deepened in the fourth research (2019-2021). The present programme centres on concepts as didactic models and subject didactic school development (see section 4). The research programmes have been designed jointly through overnight conferences, workshops, and seminars. These activities have been rewarding and effectively developed the research culture and renewed the shared research visions for CSD's operations.

Seminars: CSD organises a higher seminar which is the hub of activities, serving several functions: Seminars are a platform for researchers and doctoral students with an interest in CSD's area to present and develop their research. Doctoral students and researchers funded by CSD are expected to regularly present work-in-progress in seminars. Research disciplines have guidelines specifying that doctoral students are required to submit work-in-progress to seminar discussion with external readers at the beginning (10%), middle (50%) and close to the end (90%) of their doctoral project to maintain sound research praxis and quality. All CSD researchers have the opportunity to present and discuss their research applications before submission with appointed readers in specially designated application seminars. The seminars are expected recurringly to offer informative and deepened themes on research methodology and theory. They also serve as a platform to review critically and develop CCSD activities. CSD has successfully completed several thematic seminar series for a longer stretch of time, usually a semester. For example, a seminar series on "The didactics of social sciences subjects in the light of sociological theories of knowledge, social realism and powerful knowledge" was arranged in spring 2015. In 2017, a seminar series on the threshold concepts was arranged in conjunction with Stockholm University, and in 2018 the seminar series focused on the Anthropocene, in autumn 2019 on design research, and in 2022 on the

theme of didactic/subject didactic models. These seminar series have involved a mix of text seminars, survey seminars and external national and international lecturers. Altogether, they have successfully created a profound and shared knowledge base for CSD in line with research programmes and have served as an arena for renewal. These themes have also constituted a foundation for several granted research applications

Doctoral student environment: CSD funds several doctoral projects, directly via budget allocation and indirectly via co-funding or research projects. Doctoral programmes with education specialisation are offered by several disciplines at KAU. CSD cooperates with several disciplines, in particular with History, Human Geography and Educational Work. This means that doctoral students are often linked to several environments. In this respect, CSD functions as a common node by being the academic environment providing subject didactic specialisation. Doctoral students are naturally represented in CSD decision-making and advisory bodies.

As described above, CSD has participated and participates in several graduate schools, which, like seminars, create conducive doctoral student environments. Monthly social gatherings with coffee and cake are another example of a meeting place for doctoral students. CSD has also invited guest researchers to inspire ongoing doctoral projects. Several externally funded industrial doctoral students have benefitted from CSD's research environment. CSD supports doctoral students' participation in national and international research conferences, which is fundamental to enhancing a research environment. Several CSD researchers serve as doctoral supervisors at other universities. There is also an ongoing cooperation between KAU/CSD and SU/Department of Teaching and Learning with focus on doctoral supervision.

Instituting graduate schools has been an important part of the formation of third-cycle programmes. CSD has previously run two graduate schools for practising teachers, funded by the Swedish Research Council, which have contributed to the development of CSD and to the social science education field nationally. Also, important networks have been established and CSD has had regular meetings with alumni. CSD doctorate holders are presently active in the graduate school TEDOR, specifically funded by the vice chancellors for the purpose of giving lecturers at KAU the opportunity to pursue doctoral studies. CSD has also had members in the regional licentiate graduate school [FUNDIG](#) (2017-2021), jointly funded with Region Värmland. The ongoing graduate school [KÄKK](#), initiated by CSD, has a multidisciplinary perspective, and is run in conjunction with ROSE (see 3.2).

Overnight workshops, writing workshops and conferences: Every year CSD organises overnight workshops where research ideas and current issues of content and organisation are treated and discussed. In addition, there are yearly overnight workshops for co-writing and individual writing. Also, conference participation is part of building a research environment. CSD gives priority to joint participation at NOFA, the Nordic subject didactics research conference, which is an important arena for SO didactics. Otherwise, we have been able to support our doctoral students and researchers to participate in national and international conferences. International conference goers must present a paper at the conference to get a grant.

Internationalisation: Internationalisation efforts are made in four ways: 1) Active conference participation; 2) Research collaboration: [KOSS-nätverket](#) is important for developing a broader international structure of the subject didactic environment at KAU with a focus on the concepts such as *powerful knowledge* and *transformation*. The network [EBAN](#) is under construction, uniting universities in the Nordic countries on issues relating to subject didactics and knowledge in the age of Anthropocene; 3) International research applications: On the basis of the network Geocapabilities, for example, applications have been submitted to EU Horizon Europe – MSCA-DN regarding exploring what a [future 3-curriculum](#) could mean in the subjects of geography and history; 4) Inviting visiting researchers: CSD has invited, for example, Prof. Dr. Tine Bénéker, Utrecht University; Assoc. Prof. Paul Zanazanian, McGill University; Assoc. Prof. Alison Kitson, University College London; 5) In the main, internationalisation efforts are made through the researchers' subject specific networks (see below).

3. Areas of expertise

3.1 Research qualifications and staff

CSD is a research centre without employees but attracts researchers and doctoral students (see Tables 1.2 and 2.1). Our strategy to ensure research qualifications and skills among staff is to influence the recruitment process of senior researchers in our departments, encourage and enable career development and promotion of researchers and teacher educators, and through external funding of doctoral students and post doctors.

Presently, we have a group of junior researchers, making career progress, but few are recruited from other universities. We can also note that there are few qualified docents in our environment, which creates a recruitment gap between senior lecturers and professors. The age structure can, in a few years, seriously affect the academic leadership situation. In 2022, we started investing in postdoc researchers and will have two such employees during 2023. In the next period, CSD needs to increase efforts on recruitment issues and achieve balance between age, gender, and subjects. The subject areas related to CSD are situated in different development phases, which means that development needs vary and must be considered strategically. Part of this strategy involves further developing forms of combined or hybrid employment between schools and academia, which is currently discussed on the national level. Through CSD's graduate schools and partnership projects, there are networks beyond KAU involved both in research projects and teaching.

3.2 Academic partnerships, networks, and involvement

At CSD, research is pursued in the respective subject fields, between subjects and in conjunction with other subject didactic groups. As mentioned, Research on Subject-specific Education ([ROSE](#)) at KAU is a cooperation environment for subject didactic research centres. CSD actively participates in ROSE activities and CSD members serve on ROSE work committees and the management group. Within the scope of the ROSE partnership, a cooperation with an international network called Knowledge and Quality across School Subjects and Teacher Education ([KOSS](#)) has developed supported by the Swedish Research Council. The network includes subject didactic research groups originating in several

academic disciplines from KAU, Sweden, Helsinki University, Finland, and Institute of Education, UCL in England. The network investigates how teachers and education systems can make sure that school-based knowledge building can achieve its transformative potential, by exploring and investigating the shared theoretical concepts of powerful knowledge, transformation, and epistemic quality to understand the qualities on which effective teaching and learning processes rest. Two anthologies have so far been published and further publication are forthcoming.

A further important result of the ROSE cooperation is the graduate school Knowledge, Subjects and Quality in Teacher Education ([KÄKK](#)), funded by the Swedish Research Council in 2020-2025. This graduate school is a cooperation with University College West and Halmstad University College, comprising 14 doctoral students, three of whom are linked to CSD. CSD has also cooperated within the regionally funded, graduate school [FUNDIG](#), on the digitalisation of teaching, where CSD has a doctoral student. There is also cooperation with SMEER and CSL with which CSD has developed Master-level programmes of importance to the continued development of subject didactics at KAU.

With inspiration from the subject didactic perspectives on which ROSE rests, Johan Samuelsson and colleagues run a history of education project, applying subject didactic comparison. In this research, a council funded project, titled "Teachers in the borderland of elementary school, grammar school and comprehensive school", teaching in history, natural science and Swedish is compared.

On CSD's initiative, the Nordic network [EBAN](#) was formed on education in Anthropocene. The network received grants for exploratory workshops from the Research Council (VR) during 2021, and, among other things, a digital conference was arranged on the theme at KAU in January 2022. In November 2022, the network received further funding from the Research Council (RV) for 2023-2025. The aim is to deepen efforts to develop subject didactic perspectives on teaching and learning in relation to the need of knowledge and standards regarding the Anthropocene challenges such as climate change and issues of fairness and equity.

Representatives of CSD are active participants in the infrastructural networks within their respective subject fields, which regularly organise subject didactic conferences at the national level and in NOFA, which gathers subject didactic conferences at the Nordic level. Representatives of CSD are also active within various national academic committees, such as vice chair of the National committee for Geography at the Royal Science Academy, the Research Council's assessment committee in education (UVK), IFOUS' research board and subject teachers' associations. CSD researchers are frequently invited to serve as commentators, reviewers and as members of examination committees nationally and internationally, and as experts in recruitments in Nordic countries, and as reviewers of research articles internationally.

The social science subjects have, to a greater extent than the natural sciences, been formed in a national context, although the Nordic countries and their curricula and syllabi have many common features. Building a Nordic cooperation network centring on CSD themes was therefore self-evident. [Nordidactica](#) is a successful investment when it comes to

disseminating subject didactic research in the SO field at the Nordic level. The journal was established in 2011 and is owned and managed through CSD. It is an open-access peer-review journal publishing articles in the Scandinavian languages and English in four issues a year. Editorship is based on a Nordic editorial board and a rota system between the Nordic countries. *Nordidactica* has become an important part of a Nordic infrastructure for the subject didactics of the social science subjects. The journal has received publication grants from NOP-HS annually.

At subject level within CSD, there are many international academic networks. The Geography section's participation in the network [Geocapabilities](#) has led to EU applications and co-publications (e.g., Lambert, Béneker & Bladh 2021). History researchers are active in the organising of the [HEIRNET](#) conference and participate in the editorial board for the newly started journal *Historical Thinking, Culture, and Education* [HTCE](#). In Religious studies, Kristian Niemi is active nationally ([NFR](#)) as well as internationally ([NCRE](#), [ISREV](#)). Since 2019, he has also been Sweden's representative in the board of [NCI](#), and has also extensive network cooperation with and on India (see 5.1).

4. Research areas and results

4.1 Research in relation to the University's strategy and profile

The development in Swedish subject didactic research for the past 20 years needs to be understood against the backdrop of the political pressure to base teacher education on research and to bridge the gap between academia and schools. Resources allocated locally to subject didactic research therefore serve a twofold function: first, to lend scientific legitimacy and expertise to the local teacher training, thus ensuring degree-awarding powers to the respective universities, and second, to enhance the production of new knowledge. On the basis of its vision, KAU has formulated six overarching [strategiska mål](#) (strategic goals) for the period 2019-2023. CSD's activities are consistent with these strategic goals, as well as with the LUN's education and research strategy ([LUNs utbildnings- och forskningsstrategi](#)). In the latter, it is stated that "Teacher education rests on the strong educational science/subject didactic research centres CSD, CSL, SMEER and UBB, and on the research pursued in the departments". The subject didactic research centres are well established at KAU.

4.2 Research production and its impact

The research production can be described in terms of three main themes: 1) production of doctoral and licentiate thesis; 2) research projects; 3) research.

4.2.1 Third-cycle studies and impact

Third-cycle studies are central to the building of CSD as a research environment. Since the research field is young, the production of dissertations is crucial to establishing subject didactics as a research field. KAU and CSD has played an important role in this development, not least by hosting three national graduate schools in subject didactics as well as being a partner in other graduate schools. CSD has to date generated 27 licentiate theses and 9 doctoral theses ([producerat 27 licentiatavhandlingar och 9 doktorsavhandlingar](#)).

In social studies didactics, we can mention Christina Odenstad's licentiate thesis *Prov och bedömning i samhällskunskap: En analys av gymnasielärares skriftliga prov* [Tests and assessments in social studies: Analysis of upper secondary teachers' written tests], 2011, which has been downloaded from DiVA 10 748 times and, according to Google Scholar, cited 70 times (221105). Odenstad's research has been important for clarifying how social science teachers tend to test different types of learning depending on the subject content area. Odenstad has also developed textbooks on social science didactics and assessment issues. Roger Olsson's thesis *Samhällskunskap som ämnesförståelse och undervisningsämne: Prioriteringar och nyhetsanvändning hos fyra gymnasielärare*, [Subject Conceptions and Manifested Teaching in Social Studies: Four Upper Secondary School Teachers' Priorities and Use of News] from 2016 has been downloaded from DiVA 6 522 times, and according to Google Google Scholar, cited 60 times (221105). This was one of the early theses in the field and positioned social studies in a teaching perspective. Johan Sandahl's licentiate thesis, 2011, *Att ta sig an världen: Lärare diskuterar innehåll och mål i samhällskunskapsämnet* [Taking on the world: Teachers discuss content and objectives in civics] introducing the discussion of second order concepts in the didactics of social studies, has been cited 49 times (Google Scholar 221105). Two doctoral theses, among the first in the field defined as subject didactic, was Christina Osbeck's *Kränkningens livsförståelse: En religionsdidaktisk studie av livsförståelselärande* [Understanding life through victimisation: A religious education study of learning a life perspective] from 2006, downloaded from DiVA 6054 times and cited 88 times (Google Scholar 221105), and Kenneth Nordgren's *Vems är historien? Historia som medvetande, kultur och handling i det mångkulturella Sverige* [Who owns history? History as consciousness, culture, and action] 2006, cited 230 times (221105). In history didactics, Mikael Berg (2014) has contributed a thesis on teachers' understanding of history as a school subject; Hans Olofsson (2019), a "thick" theoretical and empirical analysis of teaching in lower secondary education; Joakim Wendell's thesis (2020) clarifies historical explanations; Maria Johansson's licentiate thesis (2012) is among the first to bring together "historical thinking" and the history consciousness traditions, downloaded from DiVA 13 049 times and cited 66 times (Google Scholar, 21105). An important contribution to the field of religious education is Thérèse Halvarson Britton's, licentiate thesis (2014) investigating study visits in religious education, downloaded from DiVA 10 990 times, and cited 17 times (Google Scholar 221105).

4.2.2 Research projects and impact

Research results and impact are reported based on CSD's research programmes highlighting four project areas: 1) Subject didactic theory and conceptual development; 2) Key themes of social relevance; 3) Practice-based perspectives on research and subject didactic school development; 4) Teacher education and subject didactics in higher education (see section 6).

Subject didactic theory and conceptual development

There is a strong interest in CSD to theoretically ground subject didactic in issues of how different forms of knowledge affect the nature and conditions of school subjects epistemologically as well as linked to curricular and teaching levels. The seminar series of *powerful knowledge* was initiated by Gabriel Bladh and Martin Jakobsson in 2014 and came

to have an impact not only on CSD research but also on ROSE and the international network KOSS. A decisive source of inspiration has been Bladh's participation in the international network GeoCapabilities. Two CSD articles early discussed the concept of *powerful knowledge* in relation to subject didactics: "Geografididaktiskt" [Geography didactics] [Uhlenwinkel, A., Béneker, T., Bladh, G., Tani, S., & Lambert, D.](#) (2017) with 45 citations (Google Scholar, 221115), and "History didactics", [Nordgren, K.](#) (2017) with 82 citations (Google Scholar, 221115). Together with the research leaders of CSL, SMEER, ROSE and the visiting professor Brian Hudson from University of Sussex in England, Martin Stolare developed a theoretical framework for the research group ROSE to develop comparative subject didactic research, on the basis of Powerful Knowledge and the concepts *transformation* and *epistemic quality*, building on ideas of the French didactic tradition: [Gericke, N., Hudson, B., Olin-Scheller, C., & Stolare, M.](#) (2018) with 62 citations (Google Scholar, 221115). In conjunction with the KOSS network, the book series *Knowledge and the Curriculum* has been initiated at UCL press. In addition, two international anthologies, exploring these concepts, have been published by [Bloomsbury Publishing](#), where Martin Stolare was an editor. At present, several CSD researchers work together with colleagues at IOE in London and Helsinki University to develop ideas further. The framework is used as a basis for the graduate school KÄKK for further exploration by the doctoral students. CSD's has served as a bridge between Anglo-Saxon curriculum theory and Nordic/continental subject didactic ([Nordgren 2017](#), [Bladh, Stolare & Kristiansson 2018](#), [Gericke et.al. 2018](#), [Bladh 2020](#)). A sign of impact is that internationally leading researchers in educational science such as [Johan Muller](#) and [Zongyi Deng](#) refer to this research. Subject didactic development has also benefitted from Kenneth Nordgren and Maria Johansson's (2015) development of the framework for [Intercultural historical learning](#) (100 citations, Google scholar), as well as Nordgren's framework for analysing [historiebruk](#) [history use] from 2016 (91 citations Google scholar). A further manifestation of international impact and dissemination is that CSD researchers are invited to write in handbooks for reputable publishers: Niemi (2022) "The Place of Religion in Early Childhood Education and Care in India"* in [Routledge International Handbook of the Place of Religion in Early Childhood Education and Care](#) Nordgren (2022) "History curriculum in the Anthropocene; how should we tell the story" in [International Encyclopaedia of Education 4th Edition](#).

Key themes of social relevance

Migration and interculturality have been the subjects of research in several externally funded projects: "Historieundervisningens processer i det mångkulturella samhället 2009-2011" [History teaching processes in the multi-cultural society] in conjunction with Malmö University; The project "Det gemensamma rummet" [The common room] in conjunction with Globala gymnasiet [an upper secondary school], Historiska museet [Historical Museum] and the Swedish migration centre, funded by the Riksantikvarieämbetet [Swedish National Heritage Board] 2017-2019. In the period 2017-2021: The project funded by Swedish Institute for Educational, titled "Att utveckla undervisning i samhällsfrågor: om didaktiska val i SO-ämnena i grundskolans mellanår 4-6" [Developing teaching of social issues: on didactic choices in SO-subjects in primary education (middle years)], focusing on the theme migration.

The Anthropocene concept has been studied through two network projects funded by RV, "Utbildning i det nya normala" [Teaching in the new normal] in conjunction with Agder, Oslo, Stavanger in Norway, Copenhagen, Odense and Århus in Denmark, Helsinki in Finland, and Gothenburg in Sweden: "Vad är bildning i Antropocens tidsålder?" [What is Bildung in the age of Anthropocene?]. Exploratory workshops 2021; as well as network contributions through Education and Bildung in the Anthropocene (UBAN) 2023-2025. In 2021, CSD researchers were invited to write and comment on the Anthropocene and history teaching in the established net journal and debate forum [History weekly](#).

[Lethe-projektet](#) is an Erasmus project in conjunction with, among others, the University of Murcia, Spain. The project deals with the versatile and multicultural history of Europe for the purpose of supporting teachers' use of historical stories, which curricula in many European countries often neglect. Roger Olsson has, together with lower secondary teachers, developed the project "Samhälle och individ – En undersökning i samhällskunskapsdidaktik om elevers förståelse av nyhetshändelser" [Society and the individual: An investigation in social studies didactics of students' understanding of news events], funded by the Ander Foundation, which as the title suggests centres on the treatment of news in the classroom.

Practice-based perspectives

A great deal of CSD research is conducted in partnership with school organisers and teachers, which is in line with the objectives of LUN. These efforts can be exemplified by research projects. In 2017-2021, a project, funded by the School Research Institute was completed, titled "SO-undervisning på solidare vetenskaplig grund – att utveckla undervisning kring samhällsfrågor" [SO-teaching on firmer research-based ground: Developing societal issues]. It was carried out together with teachers at two primary schools and investigated how teaching on migration can support students' knowledge development and ability to manage future challenges. The aim was to develop tools enabling teachers to base SO teaching on current research. A further example is "Enquiry i SO-undervisningen: frågedrivna och elevaktiva modeller" [Enquiry in SO teaching: question-driven student active models], also funded by the School Research Institute 2019-2021. This project was organised as a seminar series where the teachers and researchers collaborated on planning, conducting, and evaluating enquiry teaching. The teachers tested and investigated the method in their teaching. Fifteen to twenty lower and upper secondary teachers of history, religion, and social studies participated. In cross-disciplinary projects, Johan Samuelsson has participated in highly collaborative research projects such as the VR funded "Plattformspedagoger" [Platforms Pedagogues] 2020-2023, the likewise VR funded project "Barns berättelser om bedömning och betygsättning i åk 6" [Children talking about grading and assessment in year 6]. Martin Stolare has, together with David Ludvigsson, Linköping University, received funding from the National Archives of Sweden 2018-2020 for the project "Skolbarn relaterar till historiska platser" [Pupils relating to historical places].

CSD has been active in the government project *Utbildning, lärande och forskning* (ULF) [Education, learning and research] aiming to develop cooperation between academia and the schools. The result was that CSD developed the idea of a subject didactic school development, which means that school organisers, in a different way than before, are

regarded as important in developing infrastructure and supporting teachers to teach based on subject didactic research. This direction has generated two extensive survey studies about teachers and principals' views of collegial work and lesson planning, and a VR project.

4.3 Comments

CSD combines theoretical and conceptual research with practice-related interest in developing teaching and methods. A result of the years of graduate school projects was that the research of senior researchers came second in favour of supervision and organisational concerns. In recent years, however, the degree of publishing has increased markedly, as well as the diversity of external funding. CSD has been granted funding from VR for graduate schools, projects, and networks on several occasions. The SKOLFI project was granted, and we have received grants from RJ and the National Heritage Archive as well as various regional foundations. Results are in line with KAU's and LUN's strategy to build internationally renowned environments and practice-based research with school development ambitions. A drawback for the future is the qualification gap between senior lecturers and professors, which needs to be bridged by the docent category. A further problem, as mentioned under 3.1 is the unbalanced gender distribution among senior researchers. To redress the weaknesses, we use the strategies of investing in doctoral students, post docs, and supporting efforts to earn docent qualification in conjunction with the department's strategies. Through post docs we aim to increase the number of active researchers in religious studies and geography didactics to enable a continued expansion of activities.

5. External cooperation and interaction

Maintaining quality and advancing research requires cooperation with contacts and networks between different researchers in education science and the subject didactic research fields. External cooperation can be seen as a two-way activity, in which experience and knowledge reciprocally flow between the partners. This is especially true of projects linked to practice-related research, but cooperation with authorities also generates knowledge of value to developments. Strategically, cooperation with teachers and schools in an area is given priority since this is a prerequisite for quality in practice-based subject didactic research. Likewise, cooperation with school authorities is vital as such bodies are expected to have influence on curricula and national tests, as well as dissemination of knowledge through surveys.

5.1 External cooperation and interaction

CSD's cooperation with external actors can be divided into three areas (1) cooperation with teachers and schools; (2) expertise consultancy for authorities and other organisations; (3) international cooperation.

Cooperation with teachers and schools (1) involves, for instance, extensive dissemination of research results through professional development initiatives, in-service days, and other platforms where teachers participate, discuss, and share teaching resources. Most of our projects linked to SKOLFI, VR, ULF and the QUINT/QUISST project require cooperation with schools. Quality in Social Science Teaching (QUISST) is an example of a partnership project in which local teacher educators in schools have participated in the dialogues conducted during student teachers' practical placement. CSD has also developed forms of

cooperation for various types of research circles in which teachers and researchers develop teaching together. CSD has in conjunction with the association SO-Didaktik i centrum contributed to the journal *SO-Didaktik*, and published results from the SKOLFI project and the National Heritage Archive project on the resource site [Nätverk för frågedriven undervisning](#) [Network for enquiry-driven teaching]. Regarding the ULF efforts, the focus has been on the conditions and forms for teachers' lesson planning.

CSD's practice-based research and experience from the graduate schools are expected to contribute to a government proposal for a *National profession programme for school leaders, teachers, and preschool teachers*. In support of teachers' career and professional development, CSD has since long contributed such programmes and courses. In recent years, efforts have been made to design a Master-level didactic study programme, which was launched in autumn 2022, attracting 50 first option applicants, in conjunction with the other centres CSL and SMEER. The three first programme courses are managed by CSD members.

(2) CSD has been involved in authorities' development of curricula, national tests, knowledge surveys, subject resources, and expert assignments, for example, as experts at the National Agency for Education in all SO curricular revisions for the Lgr 22. CSD researchers have assessed research applications for the School Research Institute and worked on systematic research surveys. A CSD article is the basis of the National Agency for Education's new general assessment recommendations. CSD researchers are also engaged as expert advisors to the county council's steering group for Finnskogen (geography), as reviewers of material to the Swedish Educational Broadcasting Radio (religious studies, history) or textbooks (religious studies). CSD also cooperates with the rescue services and the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) on instruction related to preparedness issues.

(3) Contacts with India are important for teacher and student exchanges and research. Kristian Niemi, CSD, is KAU's India coordinator. He is also Sweden's representative in the board of Nordic Centre in India. This has left its mark on didactic religion research as well as student and research exchanges as well as in student degree projects but is not restricted to the area of religion. KAU's infrastructure in India, coordinated by Niemi, has enabled practical placement and field studies for degree projects in India relating to all teacher education programmes from preschool to upper secondary levels, as well general BA programmes. The India activities have led to several international, religion education research partnerships with many Nordic countries (Sweden, Norway, and Finland), interested in benefitting from the India and Indian education expertise established at KAU.

5.2 Comments on external cooperation and interaction

Developing research activities is largely a matter of cooperation, particularly for a multi- and interdisciplinary centre in a borderland where research needs to be recognised, relevant and qualitatively strong in terms of intra- as well as inter-research conditions and norms. CSD's operations should contribute new research to the research frontier, but also be rooted in the actual needs of schools and education. This may raise questions regarding the freedom and integrity of research, not least since we periodically work with authorities in connection with curricular revision a national test designs. This is one reason for the importance of our research strategic documents, which are processed during six months in our organisation

through seminars and overnight conferences to ensure opportunities for all concerned to participate in decisions on research directions. Integrity is reflected in our efforts to identify problems that can be referred to research problems. Our task is not to evaluate if units comply with directives. A topical issue to address is the research ethical dilemma emerging in academia and school cooperation. In such projects involving participating active schools, it is our responsibility to protect respondents' integrity while also emphasising the contribution to science that teachers or school leaders provide. This type of research ethical challenges has been considered by the ULF nodes and is now explored by VR. Regarding national and international cooperation, we are supported by the faculty, the departments and LUN. CSD has the freedom to develop its research direction and we feel that LUN, our principal financier, has confidence in our activities and respect our scientific integrity. LUN's research committee continually discusses strategic choices, and we submit yearly reports to LUN. This is important to our quality development since it provides a reason to reflect on operations and displays continuity in the progress. From faculty and department managements we experience a constructive and problem-solving support of our international cooperation. There is however a development potential in the support given to major international applications. Obstacles to further development of cooperation lie in limited personnel resources. We are in a situation of many different partnerships in need of consolidation and further development of international co-authorship. There is also a clear improvement potential to increase the proportion of visiting researchers, which could enhance co-production as well as redressing the unbalanced gender distribution among senior researchers.

6. Interaction between research and education

Through their departmental belonging, CSD researchers and doctoral students are actively involved in teaching courses in various study programmes. In this way, a reciprocal interaction is created between education and research. Over time, the subject education research centres have contributed in various ways to teacher education at KAU. CSD, for example, has contributed to the primary and secondary teacher education programmes and their education core content (UVK) as well as the various bridging programmes (e.g., KPU, KPF) offered at KAU. CSD's members have also made important contributions to education at other universities, which is a result of the research and expertise produced at the centre. CSD members have also been important textbook producers. This is particularly true of subject didactic applications in the CSD's school subjects, generally an underdeveloped textbook area. CSD's history didacticians have, for example, initiated and written a history didactic textbook for use in teacher education. ([Stolare & Wendell](#) (eds.) 2018; forthcoming updated edition, 2023). CSD's researchers have participated in a corresponding textbook for geography, social studies, and religious studies, produced in conjunction with national subject didactic networks. A textbook on grading and assessing has been issued in several editions. In addition, two CSD researchers have participated in a textbook on subject teachers' profession ([Andréé, Bladh, Carlgren & Tväråna \(red\) 2021](#)).

6.1 Examples of CSD research contributions to quality in education

CSD's research and seminar environment generally also provides the opportunity to be an arena for developing the role of the teacher through qualitative collegial conversations on teaching and learning. Most CSD researchers have important roles in relation to undergraduate studies, participating in designing systematic course structures for future subject teachers as well as primary school teachers. In many cases, the CSD environment functions as a source of knowledge for developing teacher education. This applies in particular to the subject didactic perspectives and applications. The environment also provides opportunities for current overview of the field, thus ensuring that national and international course literature is updated. In several cases, our own literature is used, as mentioned above. CSD researchers also supervise degree projects and contribute to research-based quality improvement. Another example is some CSD researchers' efforts to systematically introduce micro teaching in education, with impacts on teacher training. A further topical area is the development of subject didactic models offered in teaching, for instance, further training courses in enquiry-driven teaching. In Religious studies, researchers have worked actively with [studentbaserad forskning](#) [student-based research] as a way of illustrating the purpose of research and research as an activity, but also to use students as resources. The result was the anthology *Karlstads moské: Förhandlingar om islam i Värmland* [The Mosque in Karlstad: Negotiations on Islam in Värmland], (2017).

6.2 Education contributing to CSD research

As mentioned, researchers and doctoral students affiliated to CSD, also teach at university level and some lecturers even have half-time employment at primary and secondary schools. In addition, most of their doctoral and research projects are practice-based. Some CSD researchers are involved in students' practical placement, VFU, which is an important meeting place for teacher education and professional practice. Visits to placements provide important insights giving rise to new questions and enable contacts important to practice-based research as well as teaching and school development (see e.g., Walkert et.al 2018 on VFU dialogues). CSD has a natural connection to education at all levels, which on many occasions has led to ideas for research based on school needs. Fröding Reyes's doctoral project originates in the contact between practice and research when history teachers requested knowledge about teaching history use, a virtually unresearched area. Challenges related to students' learning have also stimulated research, which in all probability will improve teaching in higher education, e.g., Björklund's (2020) doctoral thesis and Modig's article (2017), treating powerful knowledge in teaching economics to future and practising SO teachers. Williamsson's doctoral project is a further example, as it is an intervention study to explore challenges and potentials in student teachers' handling of teaching controversial issues. Courses in enquiry-driven teaching ([länk?](#)) have constituted an important meeting-place for theory and practice and to a great extent served as further training for teacher, which is thematically developed in the research project "Enquiry i SO-undervisningen" (Nordgren et al.). Some of the various CSD research programmes have focused on developing research on teaching SO in primary education (middle years). In this project, CSD scholars' cooperation with practising teachers and experiences of teaching and course development in SO teacher education became the starting points for research projects, such as the school research funded project "Att utveckla undervisning i samhällsfrågor inom grundskolans

mellanår" [Developing teaching on social studies issues in primary education] (Stolare, Bladh, Kristiansson, Blank).

6.3 Measure to strengthen the link between research and education

CSD has, through both internal and external funding given priority to supporting lecturers' opportunities to complete doctoral studies, by providing supervisors and by guaranteeing the funding for research time in employment. This applies to Blank, Modig, Williamsson, Sundqvist, Mörk, and Walkert (social studies), Magnusson (geography) and Niemi (religious studies) and entails a considerable reinforcement of the subject didactic competence in the teacher education SO area. CSD also has, in broader cooperation with SMEER and CSL, developed Master-level programmes on subject didactic school development, which we see as strategically important for the further development of subject education research at KAU. Besides being a vital arena for professional development (e.g., for senior schoolteachers), the programmes may qualify the teachers for doctoral studies.

6.4 Plans for developing the link between research, and education

The twofold strength of the link between research and education is its reciprocal benefit to both the research direction and teacher education, as well as the opportunity for competence maintenance at all levels. An important part of the direction is the development of subject didactic models. Some of these are already tested and practised in teacher education but there is room for making further efforts.

An area to develop is the ambition to more systematically and in cooperation with the VFU schools link student teachers' degree projects to issues of relevance to both the profession and ongoing research projects. The subject didactic quality is already systematically reinforced in courses together with the course convenors. A further ambition is to deepen efforts to develop subject didactic research, for instance, in conjunction with the Centre for Teaching and Learning at KAU.

7. Publication list with some comments

1. Bladh G. (2020) GeoCapabilities, Didactic analysis and curriculum thinking: furthering the dialogue between Didaktik and curriculum. *International Research in Geographical and Environmental Education*, 29(3), 206-220.
2. Johansson, M. (2021). Moving in liminal space: A case study of intercultural historical learning in Swedish secondary school. *History Education Research Journal*, 18 (1), 64-88.
3. Modig N. (2021) What do economic scholars consider powerful economic knowledge of importance for people in their private and public lives? Implications for teaching and learning economics in social studies. *Studies in Higher Education*, 46 (11), 2200-2215
4. Niemi K. (2021) Comparing Through Contrast: Reshaping Incongruence into a Mirror. *Religion & Education*, 48 (4), 458-476.
5. Nilsson, S. & Bladh, G. (2022). Thinking geographically? Secondary teachers' curriculum thinking when using subject-specific digital tools *Norddidactica: Journal of Humanities and Social Science Education* 12 (3), 171–203.
6. Nordgren K. (2019) Boundaries of historical consciousness: a Western cultural achievement or an anthropological universal? *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 51(6):779-797.
7. Nordgren K, Kristiansson M, Liljekvist Y, Bergh D. (2021) Collegial collaboration when planning and preparing lessons: A large-scale study exploring the conditions and infrastructure for teachers' professional development. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. 2021;108:103513.
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9. Stolare, M., Bladh, G. & Kristiansson, M. (2022). Supporting Teachers' Professional Development in Social Studies Education. In *International Perspectives on Knowledge and Quality: Implications for Innovation in Teacher Education Policy and Practice*. Eds. B. Hudson, N. Gericke, C. Olin-Scheller and M. Stolare. London: Bloomsbury Press. 185–204.
10. Stolare M, Ludvigsson D, Trenter C. (2021) The educational power of heritage sites. *History Education Research Journal (HERJ)*. 18(2), 264-279.

Numbers 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 are examples of international publications as the results CSDs externally funded projects.

Numbers 2, 3, 4, and 5 are examples of the publications of junior researchers and doctoral students. Most of these were published in international journals with single authorship. No 5 is an example of doctoral student and senior researcher co-authorship.

Numbers 7 and 10 are examples of interdisciplinary cooperation.

All publications are mainly in the form of journal articles while no 8 is an example of a book project.



The Center for Social Science Didactics (CSD)

BACKGROUND DATA

Periodic Research Review

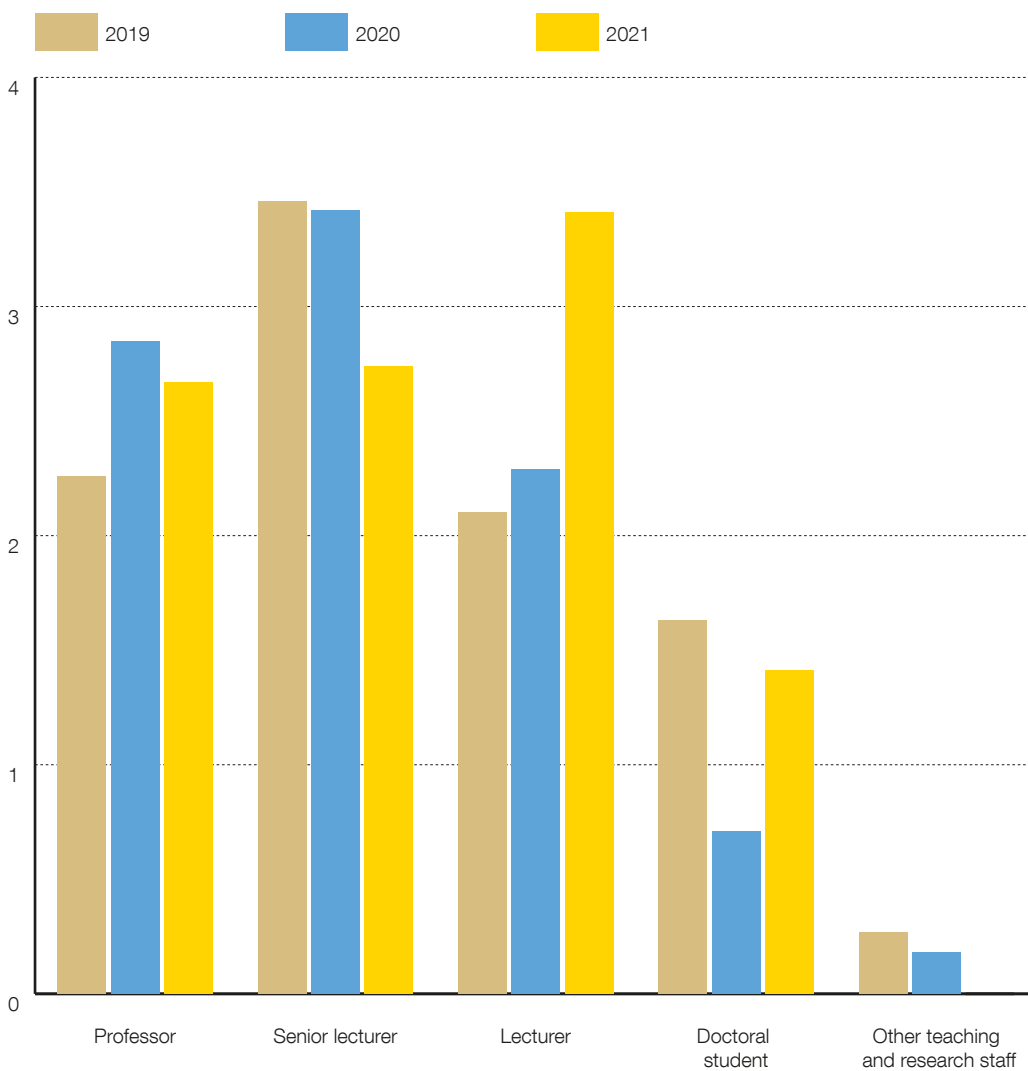
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the background data is to provide an overview of the evaluation unit, The Center for Social Science Didactics, regarding: staff, financial resources, research funding, internationalisation, bibliometrics, collaborations and utilization of research for the period of 2019-2021. Details regarding data source or possible deviation will be stated in the individual figure text.

STAFF

Table 1.1. Staff categories of the evaluation unit

The graph shows the workforce involved in research activity at the evaluation unit over a three-year period. 'Research activity' includes internal funding, external research funding and commissioned research funding. Staff categories included in the graph are professor, senior lecturer, lecturer, doctoral student and other teaching and research staff.



Source: KULI

Table 1.2. Staff at the evaluation unit (only the past year, 2021)

The table shows staff, based on position, engaged in research at CSD. The table also includes information about the department where the staff is employed.

POSITION	DEPARTMENT
PROFESSOR	
Bladh, Gabriel	Political, historical, religious and cultural sciences
Nordgren, Kenneth	Political, historical, religious and cultural sciences
Stolare, Martin	Political, historical, religious and cultural sciences
SENIOR LECTURER/READER	
Samuelsson, Johan	Political, historical, religious and cultural sciences
Plank, Katarina	Political, historical, religious and cultural sciences
SENIOR LECTURER	
Bergh, Daniel	Political, historical, religious and cultural sciences
Broman, Anders	Political, historical, religious and cultural sciences
Jakobsson, Martin	Political, historical, religious and cultural sciences
Olsson, Roger	Political, historical, religious and cultural sciences
Svanberg, Mikael	Political, historical, religious and cultural sciences
LECTURER/DEGREE OF DOCTOR*	
Niemi, Kristian	Political, historical, religious and cultural sciences
Olofsson, Hans	Political, historical, religious and cultural sciences
Wendell, Joakim	Political, historical, religious and cultural sciences
LECTURER/DOCTORAL STUDENT**	
Blanck, Sara	Political, historical, religious and cultural sciences
Magnusson, Patrik	Geography, Media and communication
Modig, Niklas	Political, historical, religious and cultural sciences
Sundqvist, Anna	Political, historical, religious and cultural sciences
Williamsson, Victoria	Political, historical, religious and cultural sciences
DOCTORAL STUDENT	
Fröding Reyes, Jenne	Political, historical, religious and cultural sciences
Holmberg, Ulrik	Political, historical, religious and cultural sciences
OTHER TEACHING AND RESEARCH STAFF	
Jakobsson, Niklas	Karlstad Business School
Klockare Ellinor	Political, historical, religious and cultural sciences

*Employed as a lecturer with a degree of Doctor.

**Employed as a lecturer and enrolled into a doctoral study programme at Karlstad University. See Table 2.1 for detailed information about discipline, year of admission, and degree of activity.

Source: KULI

THIRD-CYCLE STUDIES

Table 2.1. Doctoral students

The table contains doctoral students divided by discipline, year of admission, and degree of activity for year 2021. Industry/collaboration/external doctoral students are marked with (I).

ADMISSION SUBJECT	NAME	STUDY ACTIVITY (%) 2021V	STUDY ACTIVITY (%) 2021H	YEAR OF ADMISSION	INDUSTRY/EXTERNAL (I)
History	Jenne Fröding Reyes	60	60	2018	
History	Åsa Maria Johansson	5	13	2013	(I)
History	Ulrik Holmberg	65	85	2020	
History	Lena Almqvist-Nilsen	38	38	2020	(I)
Educational work	Niclas Modig	50	70	2020	
Educational work	Victoria Williamsson	65	69	2021	
Educational work	Sara Blanck	49	53	2017	
Educational work	Sofie Nilsson	70	7	2017	(I)
Educational work	Ludvig Sjunnesson	77	24	2020	(I)
Educational work	Anna Sundqvist	29	0	2017	
Educational work	Mattias Björklund	50	39	2020	(I)
Human geography	Patrik Magnusson	19	10	2012	

Source: Ladok

Table 2.2. Licentiate and doctoral degree

SUBJECT	NAME	DEGREE	2019	2020	2021
History	Hans Olofsson	Degree of Doctor		1	
History	Joakim Wendell	Degree of Doctor		1	
History	Kenneth Sandelin	Degree of Licentiate		1	
Educational Work	Mattias Björklund	Degree of Doctor			1
Educational Work	Sofie Nilsson	Degree of Licentiate			1
Political Science	Anneli Wiker	Degree of Licentiate	1		
Humanities and Social Sciences Education, Stockholm University	Kristian Niemi	Degree of Doctor		1	
TOTAL SUM			1	4	2

Source: Ladok

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Table 3.1 Profit and loss statement for research per year
Amounts in SEK 1 000. Using the evaluation unit's account.

	2019	2020	2021
INCOME			
Direct government funding ¹	5 200	5 531	5 850
External funding ²	216	2 479	5 493
Internal income ³	2	1	1
INCOME TOTAL	5 417	8 012	11 344
EXPENDITURE			
Staff costs⁴			
Salaries teachers	-2 939	-4 416	-5 868
Remunerations	-61	-47	-117
Salaries administration and technical staff	-	-219	-41
Other staff costs	-51	-20	-25
Other operating expenses			
Other operation expenses ⁵	-459	-1 029	-1 253
Internal costs			
Internal staff cost	-14	-47	-41
Other internal costs ⁶	-1 773	-2 432	-3 660
EXPENDITURE TOTAL	-5 298	-8 210	-11 006
TRANSFERS			
Funds for financing grants	-	-	4 739
Grants paid	-	-	-4 739
Transfers Total	-	-	-
SUBTOTAL	120	-198	339

Source: KULI/Raindance

¹ Funding allocated to the research centre CSD from the Faculties of Karlstad University originating from the Swedish government.

² Includes revenue from fees, other reimbursements and funding. Funding which can include grants from councils, other public research funding agencies, municipalities, regions and research foundations.

³ Internal transactions includes, for example, grants and/or compensations from other parts of the university or from the unit as well.

⁴ Staff costs mainly refer to costs for personel who receive salary from the unit.

⁵ Other operating expenses can include materials, costs for hired expertise, other consultants, travel costs, costs for premises of campus, depreciation etc.

⁶ Includes mainly indirect costs for the faculty and university levels, printing costs etc. The post also includes internal staff costs, lecture halls, laboratories, offices and other internal expenses.

Table 3.2. External research funding

The table shows ongoing research projects and projects granted during 2019-2021. Project titles are added as a note below the table. *Amounts in SEK 1000.*

FUNDER	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Ministry of Education and Research ¹				450	450		
Swedish Institute for Educational Research ²	1 169	1 272	1 457				
Swedish Institute for Educational Research ³				1 875	1 125	1 500	
Swedish Research Council ⁴				5 000	5 000	5 000	5 000
Swedish Research Council ⁵				-	200		
Swedish Research Council ⁶				693	695	714	718
Swedish Research Council ⁷				1 389	1 465	1 497	
Swedish National Heritage Board ⁸	950	960	970				
Swedish National Heritage Board ⁹			251				
Stiftelsen Riksbankens Jubileumsfond ¹⁰					150	275	285
Foreign NP organisation ¹¹				60	60		
Ander Foundation ¹²			220	280			
Wettergren Foundation ¹³			134				
TOTAL			3 032	9 747	9 145		

Source: Raindance

¹ULF Lärares samarbete

²Att utveckla undervisning i samhällsfrågor

³Enquiry i SO-undervisningen

⁴En forskarskola för lärarutbildare (KÄKK)

⁵Education for the new normal

⁶Levd religion

⁷Plattformspedagogik

⁸Det gemensamma rummet

⁹Skolbarn relaterar till historiska platser

¹⁰Skolans målstyrning 1919-2020

¹¹NOP-HS Publiceringsstöd

¹²Att med hjälp av nyheter utveckla elevers förståelse av samhället

¹³Finnskogen ett potentiellt världsarv

EXTERNAL RESEARCH FUNDING STATISTICS

Table 4.1. External research funding statistics

Amount applied for and granted refers to Karlstad University's share. *Amounts in SEK 1000.*

YEAR	NUMBER OF GRANT PROPOSALS SUBMITTED	SUCCESS RATE %	AMOUNT APPLIED	AMOUNT GRANTED
2019	13	46%	70 000	32 000
2020	10	30%	36 000	5 000
2021	11	36%	40 000	6 000

Source: This information is retrieved from the Podio (2019) and Raindance application portal (2020, 2021)

BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS AND REFERENCE LIST

BACKGROUND

The research activity at Karlstad University is expressed, among other things, in scientific publications. This report aims to map the publishing activity and its development over time for the CSD. The report also shows the proportion of internationally co-authored publications where at least one of the authors is affiliated with a university outside Sweden as well as the proportion of publications that are open access, i.e. freely available online.

METHOD

The following tables are based on registered publications in DiVA (Digital Scientific Archive), the local publication repository where researchers, teachers and students register their research publications and essays. DiVA covers all subject areas and publication types.

Publication extraction for the years 2019-2021 has been based on the researchers' individual Kau: ID, which links them with their respective publications. The list of researchers that are included in the analyses was provided by the HR department and includes also researchers that are no longer part of the unit but were employed during 2019-2021.

The analysis includes all publications where at least one of the authors is affiliated with Karlstad University. The publication subcategories *presentation*, *poster*, *abstracts* and *“other”* have been omitted from the analysis because these entries are registered to a very varying extent by the researchers. Doctoral dissertations and licentiate theses are reported in detail in other parts of the evaluation and have therefore also been omitted here.

PUBLISHING OUTPUT

Table 5.1. Number of publications between 2019 – 2021

Shows the total number of publications researchers connected to the unit have produced between 2019-2021.

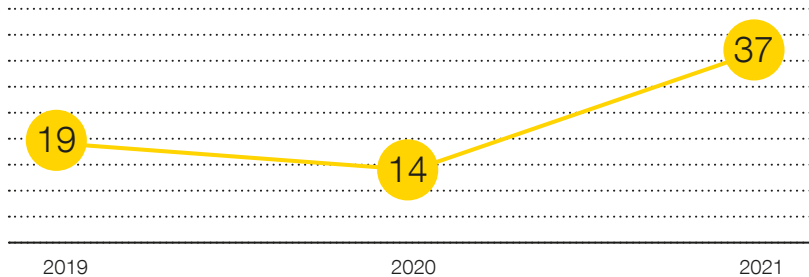


Table 5.2. Number of publications for each publication type

Shows a compilation of the unit's publications sorted by publication type and content.

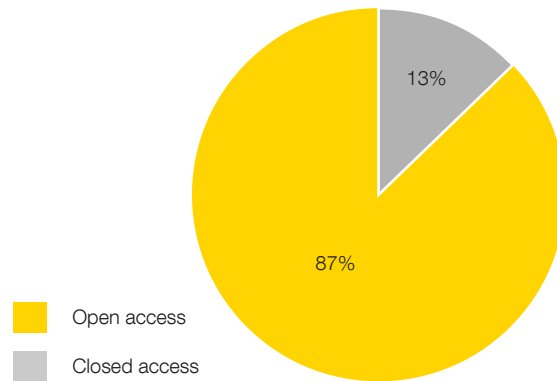
PUBLICATION TYPE	PEER-REVIEWED	SCIENTIFIC BUT NOT PEER-REVIEWED	OTHER (POPULAR SCIENTIFIC, DEBATE)
Article in journal	39	1	4
Article, review			1
Book		2	2
Chapter in book	4		12
Report	3		
Collection (Editor)			2
TOTAL	46	3	21

OPEN ACCESS

The Swedish government and many research funders demand that research that is financed with public funds needs to be published open access to make it more accessible for anyone who is interested. So far, this requirement only applies to scientific publications in journals, which is why this report focuses on the proportions of open and closed access for scientific articles.

Table 5.3. Share of peer-reviewed journal articles that are open access vs. Those that are behind paywalls

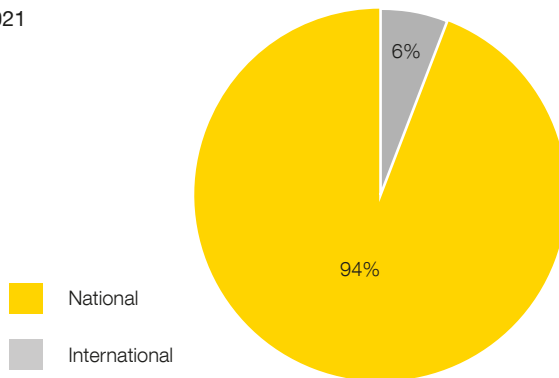
Comparison of the percentage of peer-reviewed articles that are open access and the percentage that are not.



NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CO-AUTHORSHIP

Table 6.1. National and international co-authorship 2019-2021

Comparison of the percentage of peer-reviewed articles that are open access and the percentage that are not.



INNOVATIVE IDEAS

There were no innovative ideas connected to CSD being evaluated or funded within Innovation Office Fyrklöver* during 2019-2021.

* Innovation Office Fyrklöver (Karlstad University, Linnaeus University, Mid Sweden University and Örebro University) was established by the government at the end of 2009 and is one of 14 innovation offices in Sweden.

The Background data report is produced by the Periodic research review's administrative Support group; Sofia Andersson, Lovisa Stedt, Charlotte Månsson, Karin Brattfjord, Lotta Utterberg, Magnus Åberg och Patrik Bångerijs.

December 2022



REFERENCE LIST

NOTE! The list aims to facilitate the understanding of which publications are included in the analysis. It is complete but does not follow any reference style to perfection.

ARTICLE IN JOURNAL

1. Agneta G, Joakim S, Samuelsson J. When documentation becomes feedback : tensions in feedback activity in Learning Management Systems. Umeå: Taylor & Francis Group; Education Inquiry. 2021;
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Assessment report for the Centre for Societal Science Didactics (CSD - Centrum för de samhällsvetenskapliga ämnenas didaktik) at Karlstad University

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Professor Niklas Ammert, Linnaeus University (Linnéuniversitete)

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Brief Summary

The Centre for Social Science Didactics is a vibrant hub of social studies subject didactics in terms of research, doctoral training and engagement in teacher education and school development. Its research output ranges over a wide area in the social studies subject didactics, and the three-year research programs focus on scientifically and socially relevant themes in subject didactics. CSD has been successful in getting external funding which indicates high quality. CSD has wide collaborative networks nationally and internationally. It functions flexibly and welcomes diversity of research interests in the faculty and among the PhD students. A strategic question for CSD to ponder is whether to prioritise a stronger focus, scientific ambition and strategic programs, or flexibility, extensive scope, and directive programs? The practical effects of the research programs in this context are not clear. In the background information it is not possible to see clearly the scientific resources at CSD, how the resources (research time) are distributed to researchers, and how much resources are used per annual research output. There is potential for improvement in deepening international collaboration and increasing co-authored publications. Multidisciplinarity could be cultivated more in publications. The biggest challenges are gender inequality in terms of low percentage of female researchers. In addition, that there is a gap in the number of faculty between junior researchers and professors which could be a risk in how continuity and renewal in scientific activity in CSD is guaranteed in the future. Finally, we lack information about what criteria that lies behind how research resources (time for research) are distributed between the different individuals.

1. Research and scientific development

Assessment of current level of performance

CSD has been established to do research and provide teaching in social studies education, that is, 'ämnesdidaktik' of social studies subjects. Like other fields of subject didactics, the one cultivated in CSD is diverse: it intersects between education and the academic disciplines that connect with particular school subjects, in this case history, social sciences, (human) geography and the study of religions. Further, research in subject didactics can focus on theoretical, conceptual, empirical, and design research questions. CSD operates in a territory where scientifically and societally relevant research themes are many and the demand for research-based contributions is high and one has to remain sensitive to the risk of spreading research themes too wide in relation to available resources. That being said it is clear that CSD has established itself as a major actor in the Nordic research in humanities and social science subject didactics, and its researchers are also actively contributing to research in this field internationally.

CSD has three-year long directional research programs where key areas are identified for research activities. Considering the range of research themes in social studies subject didactics the research programs can be a good strategy, making visible what is regarded as pressing needs in research and

where CSD aims to contribute. In the background material is described how a research program is formed in a process that clearly is aimed to promote its ownership in the CSD community. It is not clear, however, what is the role of the program in practical questions like resource allocation, for example. This isn't necessarily a problem as CSD clearly operates productively as a hub in research and teacher education, but we ponder if there is potential to make more use of the research program as an instrument. We will come back to this below.

In 2019–2021 the staff in CSD has published scientific and popular texts in a range of journals and books that are relevant to the didactics of social studies subjects. Some papers are on topics and are published in journals that lie further from the CSD main territory of research, but this could be taken as a positive sign of the networks and multi-disciplinary activities of the researchers. The reported output by the CSD researchers in 2019–2021 is 70 publications, 46 of which peer-reviewed. The number of peer-reviewed articles is 39, most of them in English. Considering the central place of practice-oriented research in CSD and the role of CSD as a hub in the networks of teacher education and school development it is not surprising that a large part (30 %) of the total number of publications is popular scientific publications. Note that some of the papers (6) are published in the *Nordidactica* that is based at the KaU and whose administrative board and technical editorial office are in CSD. There could be a risk of too close association between CSD and the journal but it does not seem that CSD researchers favour, or are favoured by *Nordidactica* in any greater extent. Some features of the research output will be commented also in the section on internationalisation and collaboration.

It is not feasible to assess the 'productivity' of the CSD researchers in relation to research output because the available time resource of the researchers is not clear in the background material. It appears that the CSD research record is stronger in history didactics and social science didactics than in RE didactics or geography didactics. This obviously reflects the profile of the researchers. There is research activity in RE didactics and geography didactics but there is a risk it fades away because there are few researchers in these two fields. This is a question for recruitment policy and in the background material it can be seen that CSD is aware of the challenge.

Assessment of potential for improvement

It was pointed out above that it is not clear what practical role the research programs have in CSD. How closely research activities in CSD are expected to connect with the themes in the research program is difficult to see in the report. Perhaps the research program could be made more visible so that in the three-year report the research output is placed in thematic categories that are based on the themes in the research program, to show how the points in the program have been responded to. Publications often see the daylight some time after the most intensive research period, thus it might be good to include in the report also the research program themes from the prior three-year periods, then it could be seen more clearly how the research programs have evolved and their themes have materialised in research publications.

The question of making sure that also research in RE didactics and geography didactics can thrive in the future in CSD is addressed above. CSD is aware of the question, and it can be recommended that special attention is given to it because these two fields in subject didactics research have also a lot of societal demand, due to issues like sustainable development and intercultural education, for example. These are multi-/cross-disciplinary themes but the needs from the school subjects RE and geography are likely to remain in the foreseeable future and therefore also research in their subject didactics is important. This is very much a recruitment question.

2. Academic qualifications and ensuring competence maintenance in the short and long term

Since the responsibility of the education of teachers at Karlstad University is connected to subject departments, and at the same time, the research is closely associated to subject domains and to teacher education, the university has chosen the organisational model of subject didactic centres to ensure a coherence of the didactic research. Therefore, CSD aims to ensure research-based education in the didactics of social science subjects (SO) cross-disciplinary. The aim of CSD is to contribute both theoretically and empirically to social science education in general and to subject-specific didactic school development.

The centre is multidisciplinary and brings together expertise with different academic backgrounds, including History, Religious Studies, Social Studies and Geography and subject-specific didactics. This is emphasised by the fact that no staff-members are supported by CSD. Instead, the CSD-researchers are employed by departments and subject units where they also teach. This organisation somewhat complicates the description of the CSD since twenty percent of a full-time employee is devoted to research and/or professional development, and this part is paid directly from LUN to their respective departments or subjects.

Considering economy, the Background material as well as the Self-Evaluation informs us that 5,5 MKr from LUN is supporting the Director and the Research leader of CSD, doctoral students and postdoc positions. But the Self-Evaluation material does not inform us of the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) of the employees other than that the Director and Research leader exploits (about 15% of their respective appointment) and about 10% each for supervision.

Concerning graduate students their research activities are given in the Background material. An observation is that their time for research varies considerably, and is on average just under 50%. A question arises if these are their additional duties as part of CSD, or only associated with their respective departments.

We have used the Background data to visualise the distribution of different employee categories at CSD (in total 22 persons) (Figure 1).

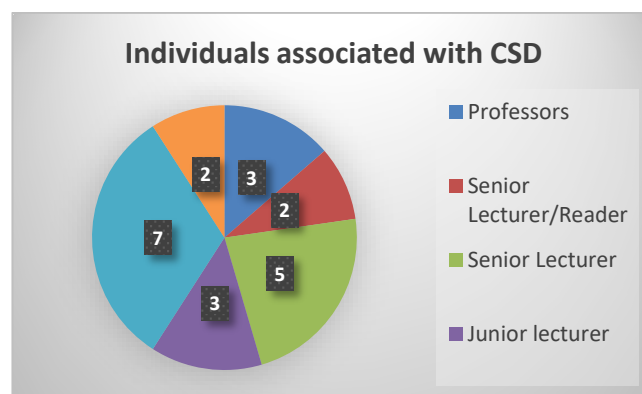


Figure 1. The distribution between different categories of individuals associated with CSD.

In terms of academic qualification there are three professors and two Senior Lecturers/Readers. The staff also include five Senior Lecturers, three Lecturers with a PhD from 2020, and seven Graduate Students. However, the list that the evaluation committee received from CSD did not contain any information on time spent on, for example, supervision by the senior researchers within and without CSD. It would be valuable to get an estimation of the proportion of time spent on different activities at CSD for all employees in the Self-evaluation. It may be hard to estimate, but it also illustrates the

problem in evaluating a centre with this type of mosaic structure. Further, regarding the two people referred to as "others", their duties are not specified. It becomes a challenge to evaluate a centre that does not have its own employees because it then becomes a challenge to measure what is the result of each individual researcher. In addition, there is a grey zone as to whether research is conducted within the centre or if the results are communicated or used within CSD despite funding being placed somewhere else.

Assessment of current level of performance

The research result and impact of CSD has focused on *Practice based perspectives on research and subject didactic school development*, but also in *Subject didactic theory and conceptual development*, *Key themes of social relevance* and in *Teacher education and subject didactics in higher education* (Self-evaluation section 4.1.1.). CSD has a competence in those areas. Based on Figure 1 the composition of the centre is relatively well balanced between senior and junior positions and among the different themes, but there are some challenges to consider, of which some are mentioned In the Self-Evaluation.

1. The age structure and the recruitment gap between junior researchers and professors can in a few years affect the academic leadership. Professors and docents are to a large degree involved in research: A question arises, do the junior researchers have so many teaching duties that they have no time for competence development? KaU makes efforts to support and involve junior researchers in projects, and reserves 20% of full-time employment for professional development of lecturers, but this is often not enough time to develop research projects and do an academic research career.
2. There is a national shortage of senior expertise in the research area of CSD, which leads to internal recruitment of junior researchers. This, in turn, might lead to that research methods and research focus are not being developed. The area of expertise that the staff brings is important for the research of the centre. These areas are related to subject-didactic issues mainly in history and social science. However, Religious studies and Geography didactics are represented by only a few persons.
3. The activity grade of the research students appears to be low. There are explanations for this in the self-report. Many of them are Lecturer/graduate students or teachers in schools. This places high demands on the research students' ability to focus on their project and leads to delays in completion of their PhD degree.
4. To simplify the evaluation, an improvement in a future Self-Evaluation would be to clarify how much "time" for research that is allocated to CSD (see also section 6).
5. Of the four projects mentioned above, the development, but not the research in *Teacher education and didactics in higher education* is not discerned. Also considering the growing emphasis on lifelong learning in society, it might be important to invest more research in higher education teacher education in the CSD. Such attempts might also broaden the research perspectives and the multidisciplinary of CSD.
6. Finally, the uneven gender distribution at CSD is illustrated in Figure 2. This will be further discussed under paragraph 5).

Assessment of potential for improvement

For the centre to continue to be successful it is important that the centre management and researchers have available time to dedicate to writing applications for external funding. One explicit development strategy for dealing with the recruitment gap between junior researchers and professors has been to "train" junior researchers in the application processes for funding. This is probably a successful strategy and should be continued. However, this means that there is a need

for enough administrative capacity and available time to be able to carry out this task. Other skills that should be trained are co-writing papers and project leadership.

Since CSD has no own employees the strategy of the centre is to ensure research qualifications and skills by influencing the recruitment processes of researchers at different levels in the participating discipline departments. An issue is that CSD's interests compete with subject institutions' need for researchers and teacher education's need for teachers. CSD has already started the recruitment by employing three junior Lecturers (degree of doctors). A recommendation is to give those enough research time and funding to enable their career development.

The research themes that the centre has outlined have different degrees of maturity. The senior researchers (albeit well-qualified) are largely their own products. The self-assessment lacks a reflection on the risks of this. One recommendation is that it is important to recruit senior researchers who can bring expertise and other perspectives to the centre area. Experiences from other universities and environments are enriching. Therefore, CSD needs to make some strategic decisions on whether the centre should strengthen its competence in specific areas that need reinforcement.

Practice based perspectives on research and subject didactics in schools appear to be a strong and growing profile of CSD. We encourage this development. The centre should also consider if Geography and Religious Studies are areas to develop. If so, these areas need recruitment. One possible way is to find further funding (internal and external) for strategic postdoc positions and guest professors. With a more international perspective the possibilities increase to find suitable persons for senior positions, both from expertise, gender, and age perspectives. Finally, a balance in gender must be seriously considered in future recruitment.

3. Organisation, leadership and management

Assessment of current level of performance

Karlstad university has a Hierarchical and decentralised organisation (linjeorganisation) where decisions are made by the Vice Chancellor, the dean or the head of department.

Research centres are organised in order to facilitate cooperation across organisational boundaries. The Vice chancellor makes the decision of establishing a research centre on recommendation of the faculty board. The applications describe a number of activities and formalities regarding aim, scope, funding, connections to department etc, but there is no external and no international review of the applications. Neither is there a required level of scientific quality. The aim and purpose with research centres is to facilitate and develop cooperation across departmental and faculty boundaries. An observation is that there is no explicit ambition to promote, develop or expand excellent research, but to develop cooperation.

A research centre at Karlstad university has no employee and accordingly not responsibility for personnel or salaries, but decides on budget regarding expenses, conferences, seminars etc. The centre is hosted by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and the researchers are employed at the faculty. At the same time CSD is funded by the Board of Teacher Education (LUN) and activities, results and quality are evaluated and assessed by (LUN). This means that CSD has a dual principalship. There are potential problems when employment and funding are separated, for example there could be conflicting goals and interest when teaching and research duties are planned by the faculty and time for research is allocated by the Board of Teacher Education. However, neither senior researchers nor the university senior management express difficulties or problems.

Follow up and evaluation is based on yearly activity reports from CSD and key figures, for example publications and external funding. The main information is, however, qualitative measures such as development, networks, collaboration and impact. The results of the research centres at Karlstad university are compared to each other and based on the comparison the Board of Teacher Education could redistribute funding. There is no international benchmarking where the centres are assessed in relation to similar research environments in other countries.

CSD collaborates with the larger research centre ROSE (Research On Subject-specific Education), an arena for collaboration between research centres in subject didactics at Karlstad university. ROSE is the platform for organising international networks and graduate schools. According to the senior researchers at CSD, ROSE is a very important collaboration.

The leadership of CSD is divided between a director and a research leader. The director has a mainly administrative responsibility and decides on budget and financial issues. The research leader is responsible for research activities regarding content, performing and follow up (evaluation). This divided responsibility seems appropriate and reasonable.

The CSD centre and the senior management is supported by an advisory committee with 13 members (eight from CSD and five external members). The advisory committee meets twice a year, focusing on strategic issues, and contributes to development of networks evaluation and budget. There is also a working committee with representatives from the subjects of the centre and a doctoral student in order to assist the management. The representation of PhD-students is clarified, which is crucial. Junior researchers and PhD-students express a natural involvement in the centre. A reflection is that the managing organization is rather extensive in relation to the structure and size of the centre considering that the centre has no employment responsibilities. Another reflection is that the advisory committee has many members. Despite the extensive number, there is no international member of the advisory committee. The directors explain that it is because of potential language matters. We recommend international representation in the advisory committee, because inspiration and proposals from the international research community would contribute to the development of the centre.

Assessment of potential for improvement

A general question regarding research centres at Karlstad university and requirements concerning quality and accomplishment/performance remains. There is no assessment by national or international experts when centres are decided and there are no minimum requirements. Our interpretation is that research centres are established based on researchers employed at the university. There is no explicit ambition to strengthen a research profile or to promote excellent research. However, International assessment would set a high level of quality and it would also provide benchmarking that could inspire further development.

When it comes to management some preconditions of personnel resources are not specified. It is not clarified how much "time" for research that is allocated to or used by the centre. The background data says that 2,6 full time-equivalents of professors work with research rated activities at the centre. If you add research time for senior lecturers approximately 5,3 full time-equivalents of senior researchers are active in CSD.

There is no description or explanation of how research funding is allocated to researchers within the centre. Distribution could be based on a) academic title, b) accomplishments (for example publications) or c) research plans or internal applications. All the models could be reasonable, but this is not clarified.

CSD has been successful regarding external funding. The success rate is about 40% each year, which seems to be a remarkably high rate. The CSD management reflects on success factors and stresses the importance of stability in funding from the university over time. This is explained as a foundation for developing research projects and preparing applications, which requires time. It is also possible for researchers to apply for additional resources (time) for applications from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. Additional factors could be careful preparations and collaboration among colleagues. Junior researchers are not expected or pushed to apply for external funding until they are well prepared.

4. Collaboration, utilisation and impact of research

Assessment of current level of performance

CSD has a wide network of contacts in its field, both nationally and internationally, and CSD researchers have been actively involved in national and international collaboration. At the national level can be noted the diverse regional and national networks with stakeholders in school development and teacher education; these are discussed in a further section in this evaluation. In research CSD is a prominent actor in its field, with close contacts, among others, with the research community of social studies didactics in the Department of Subject Didactics at the University of Stockholm. The graduate school KÄKK Kunskap, ämnen och kvalitet i lärarutbildning och klassrum, funded by the Swedish Research Council from 2020 onwards and run in collaboration with the ROSE community and the Högskolan i Halmstad and the Högskolan Väst, also testifies of the vibrant collaborative networks of CSD. At the international level CSD researchers, as part of the ROSE research community, have actively collaborated with the UCL and the University of Helsinki in the network KOSS Knowledge and Quality across School Subjects, resulting in an edited volume by the UCL Press, on the theoretical questions of powerful knowledge. A central part of the national and international collaboration in CSD is connected to the journal Nordidactica that was mentioned earlier.

There is no doubt that the national and international networks are supportive of the scientific output of CSD researchers, for example in publications. However, considering the wide range of international networks there are surprisingly few co-authored international publications. This is discussed further in another section of this report where also possible development ideas in this topic are outlined.

Impact from research is difficult to measure in teacher education and subject didactics. The impact that CSD regionally and nationally has on teacher education and school development is generated in collaboration with schools and other stakeholders in response to the schools' needs. CSD is continuously engaged in numerous partnerships in school development and teacher education, hence it is reasonable to conclude that CSD is seen as a valuable partner which indirectly suggests the impact of its contribution is high. In the self-evaluation report the tension between academic integrity and the need to be responsive to society's needs is reflected upon, thus there is awareness in CSD of the complexity of aiming at an "impact".

Regarding the measuring of the impact in the scientific field the challenge is only marginally smaller. The self-evaluation report is given quantitative data on how much attention in the form of uploads, citations and visits on the Internet some CSD-based research output has gotten. Such information gives an idea of the dissemination of the research output but as the selected output is from the last 10 years (section 4.2.) it appears a bit scattered. On the other hand it is clear that the significance of

scientific publication often can be assessed only in the long run. In the discussion with CSD researchers it was clear they are aware of the challenges of measuring and presenting impact.

It is worth pointing out that the great majority (87 %) of the publications by CSD during the period that is evaluated here is open access. Considering the potential for higher impact that open access publications has this seems like a good policy of publishing also in the future.

Assessment of potential for improvement

Considering the diverse networks where CSD is involved there is potential for productive research and teaching collaboration also in the future. But there is the question of whether to prioritise a more open and diversity-friendly or a more focused and specialised approach in research activities, both alternatives having their pros and cons. It needs to be discussed in CSD if there is a need for a more focused investment in strategic collaborative partnerships that are geared towards promoting international excellence in some particular research area.

Also when the measuring of impact is bound to remain difficult it might be useful to include in the self-evaluation reports information about the researchers' participation in national and international conferences (papers, keynote lectures). This information may not be available in the research portal comprehensively for all the researchers but surely can be asked from them separately. Further, information about the activities of CSD researchers as reviewers, editors, editorial board members, examiners of doctoral thesis and reviewers of research applications could be in the self-evaluation report as it would also shed light on the impact that CSD has. What may be more difficult to find is information on how texts authored by CSD researchers are used as course literature at universities but that would also be a relevant form of impact to note. In the background material it seems steps in this direction are taken in the current result period.

5. Internationalisation, gender equality, research integrity and multidisciplinary collaboration

Assessment of current level of performance

CSD has extensive international contacts; conferences, networks for collaboration, international applications and invited guest researchers. The established collaboration with University College London (UCL) and University of Helsinki seems productive and important. Considering the international networks and relations it is striking that few (only 6%) publications are co-authored with international colleagues. The CSD management is aware of the problem and reflects that co-authoring is often a result of joint projects and that CSD has not participated in international projects. The evaluation panel recommends activities to increase international collaborations resulting in co-authoring. Co-authoring is a manifest result of real collaboration and confirms that research has been performed together. Besides, it would likely increase international relevance for CSD's publications and results.

CSD was established in 2006. There is a palpable imbalance when it comes to the number of women and men in the centre with only one woman among the 13 senior researchers.

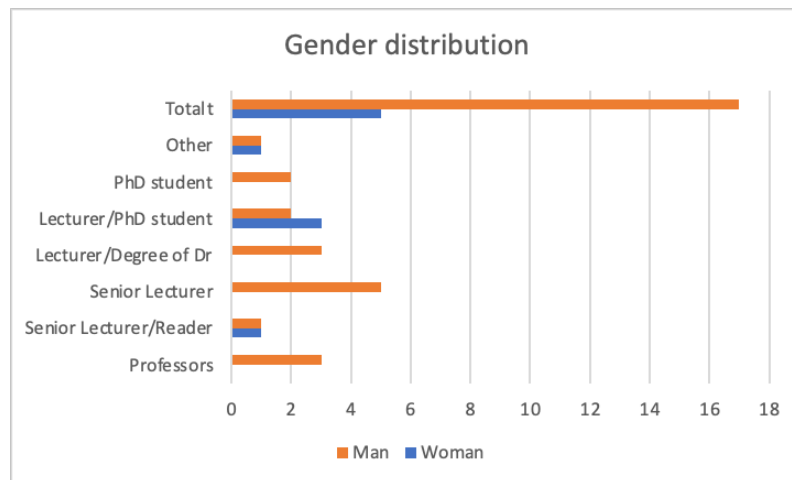


Figure 2. Gender distribution CSD

The imbalance could partly be explained by the fact that the number of female senior researchers in social studies didactics is lower, but it does not explain the extraordinary imbalance. CSD and the university have no clear plan to handle this issue. The centre discusses that guest researchers could be a way to recruit also female researchers. Guest researchers could also widen perspectives on theory, method, content and open for new networks. We recommend that the university or the faculty produce a plan for more female senior researchers to CSD.

In addition to the quantitative aspect of gender imbalance among researchers, it is also important to ensure equal preconditions regarding internal research funding and academic positions within the centre. Decisions must be based on academic merits and skills (skicklighet och förtjänst, 9§ RF). The documents for this evaluation do not describe how research funding is allocated to individual researchers and therefore this matter cannot be assessed.

CSD-researchers collaborate with schools in projects involving pupils and teachers. This kind of “research close to practice”, just as all research on and with human beings, presupposes research integrity and requires ethical considerations. In the self evaluation CSD describes the difficult balance between protecting respondents’ integrity and keeping the importance of research contribution in mind. Ethical discussions take place at the CSD seminars, where issues could be raised and where experiences could be shared. We recommend that research ethics should be stressed early in researchers’ careers as well as in compulsory parts of PhD-studies.

Assessment of potential for improvement

Multidisciplinary (and interdisciplinary) corporations are outspoken aims when the university establishes a research centre. CSD operates to a large extent within a multidisciplinary environment and a multidisciplinary scientific context. The academic disciplines are coordinated in common research programmes, CSD organises common seminars and joint projects. Subject didactics studies and research is “by nature” cross- or multidisciplinary with a merger of subject disciplines and education/pedagogy. However, it is not very easy to identify multidisciplinary in the scientific outcome, for example in the titles of the publications of CSD. One way to promote and deepen multidisciplinary could be to further develop common research questions and common perspectives for analysis. Another aspect is that almost all the CSD researchers are affiliated to the Department of Political, Historical, Religious, and Cultural Studies, only two come from other departments (Dept of Geography and Media; Business School). Considering the multi- and cross-disciplinary ambition of the CSD it could be that a few more researchers affiliated to the Department

of Geography and Media, or Department of Educational Sciences, could give surplus value in CSD as a strategic “investment” in new research collaboration opportunities. It appears this is recognised also within CSD. The collaboration within ROSE could be a platform for further development of interdisciplinary cooperations.

6. Connection between education and research

A main goal for the centre is to have a close connection to the source of knowledge for teacher education perspectives and subjects. The researchers and PhD-students at CSD are involved in teaching courses in various programs. Thereby they are contributing as experts to other programs and provide opportunities for current overview of the subject specific didactic field. Most of them have also participated in the development of courses for subject teachers and school teachers' education. The connection between education and research is therefore, in that sense, good. However, the research in the subject didactics of higher education, especially regarding teacher education, appear not to be in the focus other than indirectly.

Assessment of current level of performance

The CSD associated staff is engaged in educational activities through their educational duties at their home departments and through their research perspectives. Subject didactics in schools appear to be a strong and growing profile of CSD and ideas for research are often based on school needs and practice-based perspectives on research. They are teaching at the university, at teacher education, and some of the PhDs and junior lecturers are teaching half time at primary and secondary schools. In addition to teaching subject specific courses the researchers at CSD are involved in the educational core content of VFU and are supervisors at the teacher program degree projects. This ensures the connection between education and research.

Three of the CSD theses are based on school needs by developing subject didactic models for learning such as student-based research, enquiry driven teaching, and introduction of micro teaching in education. Some of the researchers have produced textbooks, as for example in History didactics and participated in textbooks for geography, social studies, and religious studies. In addition, the centre has developed courses for practising teachers in Enquiry driven teaching, which has constituted an important link between theory and practise.

CSD scholars and practising teachers have started collaborative school projects. This work should be continued.

Cooperation with other didactic centres at KaU, such as SMEER and CSL, have resulted in various collaborations. It has, for example, resulted in science education environments for teaching such as Master education with a common entrance and two profiles (Natural science and History and social science). This initiative is impressive and will hopefully secure future graduate students at CSD by qualifying school and university teachers for subject specific educational doctoral programs. The collaboration has also resulted in joint applications with other universities for graduate schools such as KÄKK. Together, this also appears to support subject education research as a potential profile for KaU.

Assessment of potential for improvement

The efforts to further develop subject didactic models is commendable and will probably shape more practice-oriented research projects and collaborations. A risk is, however, that the rich involvement in the training of teachers or in teaching in school can create a conflict between

research time and teaching time. Further, more focused investment in supporting subject-specific teacher education didactics at university level would be desirable.

CSD's didactic expertise can possibly also be utilized by stakeholders such as the Swedish Antiquities Authority, Science Centres, Museums, the County Administrative Board. If of interest, the potentially resulting collaborative teaching projects might as well be utilized for future didactic research.

7. Concluding assessment and recommendations for continued development

Assessment of current level of performance

CSD is a vibrant hub of social studies subject didactics in terms of research, doctoral training and engagement in teacher education and school development. However, due to deficiencies in the available documentation, it is a bit difficult to determine the scientific resources at CSD.

The research output of CSD staff ranges over a wide area in social studies subject didactics, and the three-year research programs focus on scientifically and socially relevant themes in subject didactics. The research centre has been successful regarding external funding, which indicates high quality.

CSD has wide collaboration and contact networks regionally, nationally and internationally. CSD functions flexibly and welcomes diversity of research interests in the staff and among the doctoral students. Initiatives that should be supported are, for example, the collaboration that recently resulted in a joint Master's course for teaching with a common entry.

Assessment of potential for improvement

The organisational structure of CSD appears to have functioned well but it has some inherent risks. One example of risk with the dual affiliation is the orientations of the necessary recruitments. Another difficulty is to clearly see how resources (time for research) are distributed to researchers and how much resources are being used per annual research output.

In the staff there are very few at the level between senior and junior researchers which is a risk in terms of how continuity and renewal in scientific activity in CSD is guaranteed in the future. In particular the situation in geography didactics and RE didactics appears precarious because of the very small personal resources in those areas. Also the under-representation of female researchers is an issue that needs to be addressed.

The multi-disciplinary potential in the KaU/ROSE is perhaps not yet in full use as much as it could. Also the extensive international contacts could be cultivated more in research and publications as well as in the organisation of leading CSD. It would likely increase international relevance for CSD's publications and results.

The broad and practice oriented research projects and collaboration of CSD is obvious. However, the important strategic question for CSD is to reflect on whether to prioritise a stronger focus and scientific ambition and strategic programs on the one hand, or flexibility, diversity and wide scope of interests? The current role of the three-year research programs in this context is not quite clear.