



body puts Baby in a corner

HUVUDENTRÉ

Centre for Child and Childhood Studies in Education and Sport (UBB)

SELF-EVALUATION

Periodic Research Review

UBB – Self evaluation report 2023

Summary

UBB - Centre for Child and Childhood Studies in Education and Sport was established in 2003. The research environment is one of four didactic research centres with internal financial support from the Teacher Education Board (TEB). This means that TEB's education and research strategy also forms the basis for UBB's visions and strategic plans. UBB researchers are currently employed at the Department of Educational Studies (IPS) and are also part of and collaborate with other research environments and research groups at Karlstad University (KAU). The research group's focus is research on children and childhood in educational environments (for example, preschool, primary school and school-age educare centres) and sports environments (for example, organised sports, physical education, Sport for All school Programmes). The overall content of the research relates, in different ways, to aspects of democracy, fundamental values and equity issues. UBB aims to improve opportunities for children and youth to learn and develop in educational and sport contexts that make up childhood arenas in today's society. This is accomplished by conducting studies of children's and youth's perspectives; teachers' and coaches' perspectives; policy and steering and of cultural and societal norms and values (see Fig. 1). Strategies for achieving the goals of UBB include actively taking part in collaboration and research, discussions and spreading of research findings and education of teacher students and sport coaches.

1. Long-term goals and strategies

The long-term goal, in accordance with UBB's research programme, is to contribute new knowledge that directly and indirectly leads to improved opportunities for children and youth to learn and develop in some of the most important institutional contexts that make up childhood arenas in today's society: preschool, school, school-age educare centres and organised sports. Strategies to reach the goals includes continuing collaboration in order to exchange and broaden perspectives, on the one hand between UBB researchers, and with national and international research environments on the other hand. Through collaboration and discussions with preschools/schools and organised sports, UBB's research is based on issues of importance for practice, which we regard as a strength, and also that UBB researchers are actively participating and lecturing in teacher education, principal training, coaching in sports and by presenting and discussing the results of research in these education programmes. Further, results are disseminated to a wider circle of other researchers, politicians, civil servants and teachers in preschool/school and coaches in sports to discuss the meaning of the results with those involved in these arenas.

To increase the impact of the research underlying the contribution of new knowledge, UBB's ambitions are to maintain, and over time increase, both the quality and quantity of publications. UBB's aspiration is to make research results available through publication in journals that apply open access and furthermore, to publish in highly ranked Swedish, Nordic and English-language international journals in order to attract other researchers and practitioners alike.

We see a challenge with the current lack of internal funding for research, which in practice means few opportunities to conduct research and/or time to write applications for external funding. However, UBB's aspiration is to increase external research funding through both Nordic (Nordforsk, Nordplus), national (the Swedish Research Council, the Center for Sports Research, the Swedish Institute for Educational Research, Forte, Riksbankens jubileumsfond, ULF /Education, Learning and Research) and local research funding (KAU-internal applications for funds financed by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, IPS or the TEB). In this regard, UBB's collaboration with colleagues from other universities, public sector partners (for example sport

federations, municipalities, county councils, schools) and continuous seminar activities, are examples of central strategies for developing high-quality research applications.

2. Organisation and management

2.1 Organisation for leadership and research

The group has an advisory committee that is appointed in consultation with the dean of Teacher Education and the dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and finally through a decision by the vice-chancellor. The committee meets four times a year. To enable the participation of external members, meetings take place via a digital platform, sometimes as a hybrid meeting.

The advisory committee consists of five researchers and a doctoral student with a focus from both educational and sports sciences along with two external members with areas of expertise that are adjacent to UBB's research. As of the period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2025, the advisory committee consists of the following members:

Katarina Ribaeus, Chair, Senior Lecturer in Educational Work

Annica Löfdahl Hultman, Director, Professor of Educational Work

Peter Carlman, committee member, Senior Lecturer in Educational Work/Sports Science

Stefan Wagnsson, committee member, Associate Professor of Sports Science

Ebba Hildén, committee member, Senior Lecturer in Educational Work

Martina Jordan, committee member, doctoral student in Educational Work/Sports Science

Gunilla Svantorp, external committee member, member of the Swedish Parliament, teacher and former chairman of the parliament's education committee 2019-2022, currently member of the parliament's traffic committee.

Gunhild Tomter Alstad, external committee member, Vice Dean of Education and Associate Professor of Linguistics at the Faculty of Education, Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences.

Most issues are prepared by the chair and the director. Based on the proposals, the committee decides on issues relating to the budget and distribution of research funds. Minor financial matters are decided by the chair and the director (e.g., funds for conferences and network meetings) which notify the committee at the next meeting. Furthermore, strategies for the dissemination of research findings and branching applications, seminar activities, conference participation, involvement in undergraduate education as well as Master's programmes are discussed by the committee. The discussions aim to inform the advisory committee about how research content forms part of teaching and, for example, what needs to be in place for specific seminar activities and to support such activities. Moreover, overarching issues related to the research group and decisions from the TEB (and its committees for research and education) and possible consequences for research are discussed.

2.2 Improving the conditions for research, recruitment and competence development

To strengthen the conditions for research, UBB mini-conferences are organised at least twice a year, if finances and time permit. These are arranged as one- or two-day occasions for joint activities such as writing, discussions etc., at nearby conference facilities. Doctoral students have also had their own mini-conference. The content of these joint days often consists of some overarching themes that are highlighted and discussed. Examples of content in recent years have varied: getting a research paper published; theoretical starting points; ethical considerations; writing research applications. We have also been editors of a book from Springer about challenges with

democracy in preschool where authors from eight different countries contributed with different perspectives. We have also elaborated on our strategic plan and thereby discussed our common goals and strategic choices in order to reach these goals. The mini-conferences also aim to strengthen cohesion in the group's research and to get to know each other's work.

In addition to UBB mini-conferences, we regularly have seminars that are conducted with the aim of strengthening the quality of our scientific production. These include idea seminars before applications for research funds, working seminars in relation to ongoing research projects, text seminars in various phases of the production of papers, book chapters, theses and other publications. Furthermore, we aim to follow up on previous research support/funding through seminars where receiving researchers present their results. As UBB researchers are part of IPS, several collaborations take place within the department's research seminars, for example, UBB's doctoral students present their ongoing projects. Since 2022, UBB has intensified seminar activities and holds more seminars with time flexibility of 1-2 hours, approximately 1-2 times/month. The strengths we want to highlight are the open nature of the seminars, where all participants and participants' perspectives and points of view are equally valuable. We strive to invite teachers both from academia and from preschools/schools and coaches from organised sports when the content is relevant. The format of the seminars with 1-2 hours of time as well as variation in content (sports, education, varying ages of children/youths) and theoretical and methodological perspectives constitute a strength. We also see a strength in UBB's investments for a continued strong research environment through a focus on doctoral student activities and on post-doctoral funding for new graduates.

One of the challenges we face is that many of UBB researchers have substantial teaching responsibilities, which makes it challenging for them to regularly participate in seminar activities. Some occasions had to be cancelled as no one was able to present.

In addition to internal seminars, the expertise that UBB researchers contribute is developed by participating in activities outside of KAU. Conferences and networking meetings are examples of such activities. Part of the budget, when financial opportunities are given, is set aside for participation in conferences and networks. Doctoral students attend parts of their courses at other universities. Researchers are active in collaborative projects with researchers at other research environments, both nationally and internationally.

Based on internal seminars, we have identified a need to develop so called brainstorming seminars, in which you create new project ideas and take advantage of expertise within the research group at an early stage. We also see a need to develop seminars where the presentation and review of research papers in different stages of the publication process can contribute to raising the quality of papers. Although we strive towards developing further collaboration across subjects about research methods and research theories, and between researchers and partners in schools/organised sports, there are a number of challenges. A weakness is the lack of a clear strategy for collaboration and which we see a need to develop.

One such need can be met through a planned establishment of a profiled sport knowledge hub (Centre for Studies in Children and Youth Sport, CSCYS) specialising in more sports-related research. As a part of UBB, the overarching aim/goal of the centre is to create a research environment that fosters knowledge development in the field of children and youth sports at the international level, thus making it evident to various stakeholders in sports that this arena is available as an opportunity to develop and acquire knowledge in the field. To facilitate this, the centre will, for example, focus on expanding the already established network of researchers working on issues related to children and youth sports and, more than before, seek financial resources in collaboration with these researchers. It will also initiate collaborations with companies

interested in supporting youth sports to generate co-funding for specific research projects (e.g., social entrepreneurship).

Yet another challenge involves navigating within the limits of the financial allocation given in the form of basic funding while addressing expected outcomes. In relation to the other TEB-funded didactic centres, UBB is given a considerably smaller sum in basic funding, but with the same expectation of strengthening and linking research and content in teacher education and in addition to obtain external funds for research.

2.3. Maintaining and improving the research culture: internationalisation, research integrity, gender equality and multidisciplinary collaborations

UBB's efforts to maintain and improve the research culture takes place mainly through the seminar activities described above. It is a strength that UBB researchers participate in abundant internationalisation activities. Investment in internationalisation takes place to a large extent in collaboration with the investments that IPS and the TEB implement and finance, along with the framework of certain externally financed projects/networks. In practice, this means that UBB researchers carry out internationalisation activities within the framework of their employment as doctoral student/senior lecturer/professor. For example, UBB researchers are invited to be part of the environment and hold seminars, lecturing theoretical parts from both senior and junior researchers' ongoing projects. One of UBB's professors (Margrain) was recruited to IPS, to be part of UBB, from her previous employment in Australia. Since 2018 she has contributed to a large part of internationalisation by inviting and hosting former colleagues and contacts from Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Bulgaria, Poland, Spain, Japan, Norway, Finland and the USA and still holds a position as guest professor at Victoria University, Australia. The collaboration with Norway has resulted, among other things, in one UBB professor (Löfdahl Hultman) being affiliated as a guest professor at Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences. In addition, another professor (Gustafsson) is a guest professor at the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences. Moreover, many UBB researchers within sports science are extensively collaborating with researchers from a range of universities across Europe and the US. Some of UBB's researchers have over a number of years made use of and tried to develop the theoretical basis of an ecological approach to teacher agency. When, through funds from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, we were given the opportunity to invite one of the founders of the theory, professor Mark Priestley (Stirling University, Scotland), to KAU in 2023 - opportunities for collaboration with Stirling University in Scotland have also been brought up to date. Plans at the time of writing are that researchers from UBB will be invited to contribute to discussions with teachers/researchers in Early Childhood Education at the University of Stirling and to hold a webinar on play pedagogy aimed at practitioners in the region around Stirling University. Challenges are that UBB does not have the funds to invest in internationalisation, so it must be done with other means, for example, IPS/ TEB money and external funds, or aligned with teaching such as Erasmus+ credit mobility, and then the activity may not always fit entirely into UBB's strategies. However, by encouraging to seek funds for internationalisation, to participate in seminars and to initiate collaborations, UBB intends to further promote internationalisation activities.

As highlighted above, we strive to maintain research integrity through elements of seminars/UBB mini-conferences, but also through UBB researchers in collaboration with IPS seminars deepening these questions. Ethical issues are of particular importance when doing research with children, given the built-in status difference related to age that exists between children and adults in our culture. For many years, we have worked both internally and externally with ethical issues and have individual researchers who are engaged in teaching, national committees and collaborations around ethical issues and counteracting misconduct in research. In this way, we maintain and share knowledge within the group. UBB does not intend to act as a sole actor in this arena, but believes that ethical considerations, discussions and ethical applications must take place in a larger context

within IPS and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, other universities and within the networks where researchers are active. It is of course, within UBB as within research in general, also a challenge to meet the demand for fast publication routes and to avoid so-called predatory journals/publishers and conferences. We see it as a strength that we reflect on the issue and that it is part of our seminars to shed light on the problem.

The work with gender equality takes place primarily through UBB's research highlighting issues of sex and gender in research. It is not an area that has received much focus specifically within UBB, but takes place as part of the overall work at IPS. The gender distribution is uneven with regard to orientation within UBB, where the men (six in total) who are part of UBB mainly come from sports science and the women dominate with a background in preschool/school. Even if it is a challenge, our endeavor is to involve men and women to an equal extent in the activities financed by UBB.

The multidisciplinary collaborations are mainly organised in joint projects and aim to broaden the methodological, theoretical and substantive knowledge base in these projects. Examples of such collaborations are research schools (the doctoral programme GiftED, on gifted children in education, and the doctoral programme in Physical Education Didactics for teacher educators), research applications and various projects (focusing on, e.g., psychology, child and youth mental health, risk management, public health, religion).

To some extent, UBB is a multidisciplinary environment in itself where pedagogy, special pedagogy, sports and sports psychology are subject backgrounds to which the researchers belong. In spite of this, challenges are that UBB is a relatively small research environment and the researchers are employed within one department (IPS), and most multidisciplinary collaborations are directed outside the department and even outside KAU, which usually means financial investments that are not always available.

3. Expertise profile

The group consists of four professors (one of whom is approaching retirement and currently is less active in UBB) and two associate professors, eight doctoral students, 12 senior lecturers and one assistant professor/ph. lic. There is a future need for expertis regarding senior lecturers in order to meet the need of relevant experience, mostly in undergraduate education, both the teacher education programmes and subject teachers with a focus on PE, but also to conduct research. The number of professors and associate professors needs to be strengthened in the long term to ensure availability of supervisors for doctoral students as well as a high quality of research. In order to distribute a growing teaching assignment and secure our skills supply, we see a need to recruit more senior lecturers. Our ambition is also to involve lecturers in research projects and, thus, contribute to an increased interest in doctoral studies. Moreover, we intend to secure the recruitment of doctoral students with the goal of continuously having (at least) five doctoral students within UBB's research field. When it comes to internal funding, for example from TEB, the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, IPS and from ULF (practice-based research commissioned by the Swedish government, focusing on improving preschool/school practice), we see a strong need for simplified procedures to enable researchers to apply for, obtain and process research funding within the same operating year. We will strive towards such solutions through dialogue in various forums.

Recently, two Master's programmes – in sports science and preschool pedagogy - have been established as part of contributing to enhanced teacher competence within the teacher education programmes, to expand the recruitment base of doctoral students within UBB's area and as co-researchers in preschool/schools and organised sports.

We intend to continue distributing funding from UBB's basic grant, partly to enable new graduates to develop project ideas and partly to enable those who are approaching associate professor/professor to complete their merits/qualifications. To some extent, UBB has financial mandate to decide upon and contribute to the career development of individual researchers, and where mandate is lacking, we consult with those who have the formal mandate (head of department). We strive to enable supervision of doctoral students by having at least one recent PhD graduate/senior lecture as assistant supervisor. We also provide support in the publication process (language review, seminar presentation) and encourage project management, for example, when project funds are announced with internal funds. Since it is UBB researchers who have been active in developing the Master's programmes, we have partially chosen content that relates to and is based on UBB's research. In collaboration with study directors and the head of department, we have discussed possibilities to let recent PhD graduates/senior lectures teach at Master's level.

A challenge is to collaborate and make clearer use of the group and its specific areas of expertise to contribute raising the competence of UBB researchers, facilitate opportunities for external funding and, by extension, the competence within teacher education.

3.1 Academic partners, networks and commitments

UBB researchers collaborate to varying extents with researchers in other academic disciplines within KAU and with researchers in educational science and sport sciences at other universities in Sweden and internationally. Examples worth highlighting in this context are:

The national doctoral programme GiftED (focusing on gifted children in education), funded by the Swedish Research Council, and in which national, international and KAU-internal cooperation is taking place. For example, collaboration with CBU (Centre for research on the mental health and life circumstances of children and youth) forms the basis for both courses and supervision of the doctoral students. Two of the 10 doctoral students are aligned to UBB. KAU also leads a Nordic research network in gifted education (NNGE), funded by the Swedish Research Council, involving international collaboration across all five Nordic countries. A further example on collaboration with CBU is the ongoing development of a research project examining the schooling of pupils diagnosed with or with symptoms of NDD, such as ADHD and ASD. Specifically, the interest is pointed towards how pupils with these disorders are assessed and supported in school over time, what measures are taken to support pupils and how these measures are associated with pupils' knowledge development, social and emotional wellbeing and school adjustment.

In a research project on community and learning in school-age educare centres, UBB collaborates with researchers from the didactic research centre ROSE at KAU. In yet another such collaboration project, UBB researcher are conducting research on the meaning of proven experiences from preschool/school practicum. Several of UBB researchers are also engaged in the research group SOLA, which focuses on school development and leadership, as these areas overlap part of UBB research. We have found it fruitful to discuss overlapping areas in joint seminars between UBB and SOLA. Examples of overlapping projects focus on both managers' and teachers' leadership in preschool, professional development among teachers and development of systematic quality work in preschool settings.

In several research projects, UBB researchers collaborate with partners at other national and international universities. Just to mention some national examples:

In the project 'Teachers on Facebook', funded by the Swedish Research Council, researchers from UBB, Uppsala University and Linköping University collaborate. The project focus on Swedish teachers' voices in teachers' rebellion groups (TRG) on Facebook. The goal is to understand what TRG can tell us about today's Swedish school and its teachers – and the conditions for the children/pupils

In another project, 'Preparing the high school athlete for a sustainable career: A psychoeducational intervention', UBB collaborates with Umeå University and the University of Gothenburg.

In cooperation with Center for Physical Activity, Region Västra Götaland, a study is underway on children who receive physical activity on prescription (Barn-FaR).

With support from CIF (the Swedish Research Council for Sport Science), UBB researchers have received special funds within the framework of the 2022 government mission on the role of sports in the work against segregation. In connection with this assignment, there is an important collaboration with Fritidsbanken Sverige, which is a non-profit organisation from which children and families can borrow equipment for leisure activities for free. Together with their national partners, future research projects are planned and discussed.

In two different projects, which recently received funding from the Swedish Research Council, one project will research the place of religion and worldviews in the programme plans of Swedish preschool teacher education, in cooperation with the University of Borås and Stockholm University. One project will research issues of leadership in preschool, in cooperation UBB with the University of Borås.

International projects are, except the Nordic Network for Gifted Education and the doctoral programme GiftED, foremost within sport sciences, for example, EUROMENTAL, Erasmus+ (Lyon, Humboldt-Universität, Chieti-Pescara, Extremadura, Karlstad and Gdansk) 2021-2024. UBB researchers are active in a comparative project in collaboration with researchers at London Metropolitan University with the aim of studying and comparing the work with sports and migration in Sweden and the USA. In a related project, which focuses on the immigrant parents' perception of barriers and facilitators that impact their involvement in their children's sports clubs, UBB researchers collaborate with researchers at Swansea University in the UK and the Swedish universities in Umeå and Örebro.

In the project Riding Schools as Future Learning Centers for an Environmentally Just Equine Sector and Broader Society, funded by the Swedish Foundation for Horse Research (Stiftelsen Hästforskning) and the Norwegian Research Council, an UBB researcher is active in collaboration with Malmö University, the riding school Strömsholm and the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences.

Because there are several researchers acting as visiting/guest professors/researchers at international universities, the possibility of collaboration between researchers/research groups at these institutions and UBB researchers has been strengthened. For example:

Henrik Gustafsson - the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, Oslo (supervisor). Research focuses on examination of the coach-athlete relationship, aiming to further develop theory in coach-athlete research using Shared Reality Theory (SRT) and studies shooting performance in biathlon using theory of ironic processes.

Annica Löfdahl Hultman - Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, mainly focusing doctoral students research ethics and ECE professionalism. A book project on ethics in early childhood research is in the planning phase.

Valerie Margrain - Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia (doctoral supervisor), Erasmus+ joint funding for EC student and staff exchange, co-edited an open access special issue of the

journal *World Studies in Education* on the topic of internationalisation in early childhood higher education.

Stefan Wagnsson -Maastricht University, co-supervising a PhD student who is studying the effects of the implementation of Social Emotional Learning, SEL through sports.

Several of UBB researchers are engaged in national and international networks, usually with meetings 1-2 times/year.

- *Network for Preschool Research in Sweden*. Meets annually to discuss current research issues, policy and the political context for preschool and in what ways the network can contribute to development nationally for preschool activities and education (every other year the annual meeting is held online and every other year on-site). In 2024, the network will meet at KAU.
- *Network for Preschool Leadership*. Discusses research and issues concerning leadership in preschool from different perspectives (est. in 2023).
- *The Network for Child and Childhood Research*. A network for interdisciplinary research from the very youngest children up to teenagers. The members come from all universities in Sweden, as well as Oslo, Norway.
- *Equestrian Educational Network (EEN)*. A network for the most prestigious national equestrian centres in Europe.
- *The European Society for Research on Equestrian Cultures (ESREC)*. A network for academic researchers within the humanities and social sciences with an interest in research relating to horses, riding and other horse related activities.
- *The Swedish Network for Action Research; Nordic Action Learning and Action Research (Noralf)*. A network for teachers, school leaders, researchers and other actors who are interested in action research in the field of education. The international counterpart is *PEP (Pedagogy Education and Practice)*.
- *HEI-Network with teacher trainers and researchers in the knowledge area of sports and health (PE); Swedish network for adapted physical activity for children and young people with disabilities (SNAFA); Seminar format on Learning in movement, Movement and Dance* as well as outdoor life in sports science and PE; *Network for Teacher educators from the Swedish HEIs who teach in PE*.
- *International Network for Children's Rights in Education* (financed by the Swedish research council).
- *Research on Children's Education and Learning*. Discusses educational research from different disciplines concerning children under the age of 15 (based at Örebro University).
- *Nordic Network for Gifted Education*. Online meetings to discuss Nordic research activities and share examples of research. The network is supported by funding from the Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet) 2022-24.
- *Cultural Historical Activity Research (CHAR)*. Meets monthly online to discuss new research publications around the world. Supported by the Australian Association for Research in Education but has international membership. The network coordinator, John Cripps Clark, visited KAU in September 2023 and met with colleagues interested in cultural historical activity theory.
- *The International Project: IPC*. Network of around 12 university countries' representatives meets to plan and implement collaborative teaching-research projects. The group aims to meet in person most years depending on grants and support, and manages other meetings online.

- *GLOSS: Global Teaching and Learning for Sustainable Societies*. Network supported by funding from NordPlus with representatives from three Swedish, four Norwegian, two Finnish and three Danish universities. The participants meet 2-3 times per semester online and once in person per semester to discuss issues on intercultural work in teacher education, including physical exchange and digital/virtual internationalisation.

In relation to Nordic and international conferences, several of UBB's researchers participate in conference networks, presenting and discussing UBB's research. Such contexts are important for creating and maintaining contacts with other researchers, etc. Here we provide some examples:

- *The European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction (EARLI), SIG 19 - Religions and Worldviews in Education*. Abstract reviews. Networking also resulted in a UBB researcher receiving funds for a project (see above).
- *NERA - Nordic Educational Research Association, Early Childhood Network (network 3)*. A UBB researcher recently acted as co-coordinator. It resulted in, among other things, that UBB hosted a researcher from Finland during the autumn of 2020, and one UBB professor was invited as keynote speaker at NERA network 3 preconference in March 2023. UBB researchers have been involved in NERA (network 3) abstract reviews.
- *Children's Rights in Education – Network 24 at the ECER -Educational Conference of Educational Research*. The network meets annually at the ECER conference to share and discuss research on children's rights in education.
- *The European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction (EARLI)*. Abstract reviews.
- *TEPE – Teacher Education Policy in Europe*. Conference abstract reviews.

3.2 Editorial committees and journal peer review

Several of UBB researchers are active in editorial committees in national, Nordic and international journals: Swedish Journal of Sport Research (SJSR), Idrottsforskaren, Nordic Early Childhood Educational Research, Scandinavian Journal of Medicine and Science in Sports, Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology, Perceptual and Motor Skills.

Review assignments in journals extend far beyond the journals listed above. Just to mention some of the most common ones:

In education (18):

1. Utbildning & Demokrati
2. Journal of Education Policy
3. Education and Information Technologies
4. Nordicom Review
5. Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy
6. Nordic Early Childhood Educational Research
7. Cambridge Journal of Education
8. Global Studies of Childhood
9. World Studies of Education
10. Children's Rights from International Educational Perspectives: Wicked Problems for Children's Education Rights
11. Education Sciences
12. Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research
13. Early Years: An International Research Journal
14. Nordisk Tidskrift for Ungdomsforskning

15. Journal of Adolescence
16. Education Inquiry
17. Pedagogisk forskning i Sverige
18. Nordisk pedagogik

In sports science (8):

1. Sport in Society, Sport in Society: Cultures, Commerce, Media, and Politics
2. Politic European Journal for Sport and Society
3. BMC Public Health
4. Scandinavian Journal of Medicine and Science in Sports
5. Frontiers in Sports and Active Living - Physical Education and Pedagogy
6. Psychology of Sport and Exercise Psychology
7. Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology
8. Journal of Applied Sport Psychology

As all UBB researchers are part of IPS, we share responsibility for KAPET, Karlstad University's pedagogical journal, and often act as reviewers. At the moment one UBB professor is editor.

Other engagements to be mentioned are board membership (Carlman and Torell-Palmquist) in the Swedish Association for Behavioral and Social Science Sports Research (SVEBI), different assignments for the Swedish Research Council's Educational Sciences Committee (member of the committee 2016-2021, Löfdahl Hultman), part of the review panels Learning and Teaching (Enochsson) and Education Policy, Education System and Organization of Education (Margrain) that review applications, board member of the Swedish Institute for Educational Research, (Hildén, 2015-2017; Löfdahl Hultman, 2021-2023). One of our researchers also participates as a "high level expert" in the field of preschool digitalisation in a project funded by the EU with the aim of updating a European policy for the entire school system (Enochsson).

Several of the researchers are members in national research associations and attend annual meetings. For example: *Swedish Educational Research Association (SWERA)* - a national association with the aim of promoting pedagogical research and practice in Sweden in various ways, in collaboration with other Nordic countries; *Swedish Association for Behavioral and Sociological Sports Research (SVEBI)*, annual sports science conferences with different themes. The themes for 2023 were inclusive and sustainable practices in sports coaching, coaching, physical education as well as physical activity and health.

4. Research domains and results

Within the research group, we mainly focus on the age groups found in preschool and primary school - but remain flexible in being able to study children in their adolescence. According to international standards in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, persons under the age of 18 are included in the category of children. Definitions of children and childhood as concepts are based on socially constructed notions that arose through both historical and cultural understandings of how children are and should be, which contributes to notions of many different childhoods and childhood arenas. We derive these central understandings from the theoretical framework of childhood sociology. Within the research group, we focus on several central childhood arenas in today's society (education and sports) in order to, with different theoretical and analytical approaches, research about, describe, understand and, by extension, improve children' and youth's opportunities for learning and development. The focus on democracy, values and equity has a great significance, both theoretically and empirically. In our research, theories and concepts are used and developed in empirical studies to partly highlight the complexity of different childhood arenas, and partly the conditions and opportunities of actors within the childhood arenas.

UBB's research programme, presented below as a model (see Figure 1), is inspired by childhood sociology. The model shows, in a simplified form, an overview of UBB's research areas based on a common focus where children's and youth's as well as teachers' and coaches' perspectives shape the agentic parts in the left side of the model, while the right side of the model includes structural, historical and policy aspects. In order to study the breadth and complexity of the childhood arenas, we strive to develop different methodological approaches within both qualitative studies of a participatory ethnographic/netnographic nature, observations, interviews, interventions and quantitative studies through surveys as well as policy studies. Furthermore, research reviews are carried out within UBB's research field.

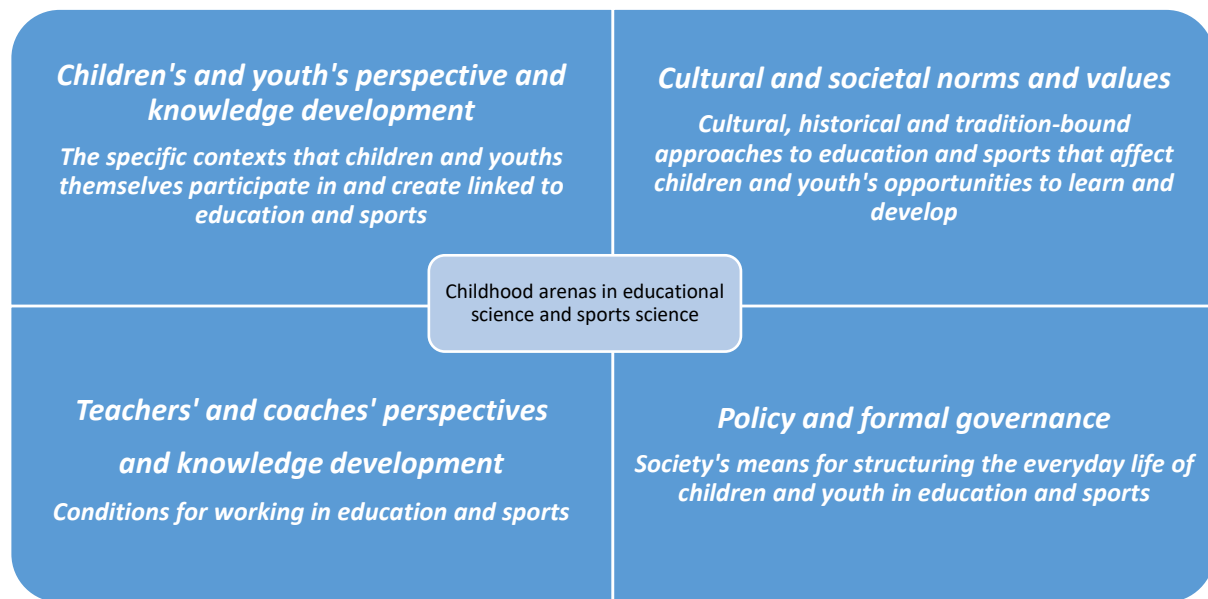


Figure 1. Overview of research areas within UBB.

UBB intends to continue developing internal collaboration between UBB's researchers on the one hand and external collaboration with national and international research environments on the other, in order to expand our main research areas. As stated in UBB's research programme 2023-2026, we will maintain and further develop the overall focus areas that have been relevant since the start, that is: democracy, values and equality in education and sports contexts. We regard our research programme as a strategic expression to develop UBB's research areas in which content, perspective and methods have the potential to contribute knowledge to the field. We strive to develop in-demand knowledge about how socio-economic conditions enable and condition the agency of children and young people, teachers and coaches. We also strive to develop knowledge about equity within the childhood arenas that are studied.

During the autumn of 2022, the question was put to UBB researchers to list recently finished, ongoing and planned projects. In summary and on a comprehensive level, illustrated by a few publications, the focus looks like this:

Children's and youth's perspective and knowledge development

This includes, among other things, studies on children's and youth's physical activities/inactivity, on play and social interaction, on motivation in school and sports, on opportunities to develop into democratic citizens, etc. Here we strive to collaborate on international comparisons.

- **Högman, J., & Augustsson, C. & Carlman, P.** (2022). To deviate from the expected – a collective story of physical activity among inactive rural children. *Sport, Education & Society*. Advance publication online. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2022.2136154>

- Rosén, A., **Thorell, G.**, & Hedenborg, S. (2022). The competent child and (in)competent others. Horse-riding school activities for preschool children. *Sport in Society, Volume 25*, 2022 - Issue 12, pp 2501-2518.
- Walan, S. & **Enochsson, A.-B.** (2022). Affordances and obstacles when integrating digital tools into science teaching in preschools. *Research in Science & Technological Education*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02635143.2022.2116423>

Teachers' and coaches' perspectives and knowledge development

This includes, among other things, studies on teacher education, on the teaching profession, the conditions of teachers and leaders in the context of education and sports, etc. Here we strive to expand cooperation with school principals and the sports movement.

- **Löfdahl Hultman, A.**, & Löfgren, H. (2023). Narratives of Teachers and Teacher Unions in Swedish Facebook Rebellion Groups. *Professions and Professionalism*, 12(3). <https://doi.org/10.7577/pp.5224>
- **Ribaeus, K & Löfdahl Hultman, A.** (2022) Teacher educators' perspectives on shaping a preschool teacher education while dealing with internal and external demands. *Journal of Praxis in Higher Education*, Vol. 4 179-199. <https://doi.org/10.47989/kpdc.vol4.1.2022>
- Hertting, K., Grahn, K., & **Wagnsson, S.** (2022). Supportive Communities: Conceptualizing Supportive Structures for Coaches' Learning and Well-Being in Community Youth Soccer. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19, 8249. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19148249>

Policy and formal governance

This includes, among other things, studies of governing documents/curricula and ongoing reform policies as well as comparative international perspectives, etc. Here we strive to have a dialogue with decision makers.

- Abraham, G., & **Margrain, V.** (2022). "We are Swedish preschool teachers". Student teacher feedback on internationalisation and interculturality in preschool teacher education. *World Studies in Education*, 23(1), 77-95.
- Capalbo, L.S., & **Carlman, P.** (2022) Understanding Participation Experiences in Sport Programs For Peer Review Only for the Acculturation of Refugee Youth: A Comparative Study of Two Different Programs in the US and Sweden. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2022.2044101>
- **Hildén, E & Löfdahl Hultman, A.** (2023): Ledarskap i förändring och behov av ett ansvarsfullt ledarskap som begrepp för framtidens förskola. *KAPET*, Årgång 19, nr 1.

Cultural and societal norms and values

This includes studies on multiculturalism, gender and equality as well as social sustainability, etc. Here we strive to develop forms of dialogue and collaboration with preschool, school and organised sports.

- **Olsson, Åsa** (2023). Social Sustainability in Swedish Multicultural Preschools. *Nordisk barnehageforskning* Vol. 19, No. 3, 185-202.

- **Raivio, M., & Skaremyr, E. (2022).** *Understandings of culture and religion: Renegotiating troublesome concepts in Swedish ECEC policy.* I A. Kuusisto (Red.), The Routledge International Handbook of the Place of Religion in Early Childhood Education. Taylor & Francis.
- **Raivio, M., Skaremyr, E. & Kuusisto, A. (2023).** Discursive Norms and Incentives for Equipping Students with Religion and Worldview Literacy in Swedish Preschool Teacher Education Policy. *Religions.* 14(9), 1194. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14091194>

As stated in the initial part of this evaluation report, UBB's long-term goal is to contribute new knowledge that directly and indirectly leads to improved opportunities for children and youth to learn and develop in some of the most important institutional contexts that make up childhood arenas in today's society. Related to our goals we have also identified research areas where we see a need for continual exploration of previous research issues over time, for example, bullying in childhood arenas and preschool/ primary school as democracy projects, norms and values among teachers as well as children's perspectives (e.g., on worldviews, play, music), and children's rights perspectives. We have identified important research areas to develop where we regard UBB researchers to have the capacity and potential to deepen some less researched areas by combination of educational- and sports science, for example, sport in preschool teacher/primary teacher education and inactive children from a children's rights perspective. Especially children's perspectives have been neglected in recent years compared to the boost that child research contributed from the 1980s and some 30 years after. Challenges to overcome include ethical issues as well as methodological knowledge that must be maintained to conduct child research. The UBB seminars will continue to play an important role in that development.

5. Collaboration and interaction with the surrounding society

Within UBB, the development of collaboration is seen as part of long-term strategic efforts where the specific nature of the research also means that the collaboration revolves around the same characteristic content. This means that for several years, UBB has strived to collaborate with schools, municipalities, sports associations and organisations. Collaborations with municipalities have primarily taken place in Värmland, but also with some municipalities in mid-Sweden. To mention an example of a collaboration project in which UBB researchers have participated, one could highlight the Swedish National Agency for Education's initiative, 'Collaboration for better schools'. In this project, UBB researchers included research that has been developed in UBB projects, for example, digitalisation strategies among preschool principals and principals' way of handling the concept of teaching in preschool. In this way, UBB's research has been included in the development work of these schools to become 'a better school'. Another example is the project aimed at encouraging more girls to continue playing floorball, conducted in partnership with Karlstad's floorball association, the Swedish Floorball Federation, RF SISU Värmland, and Karlstad Municipality. This is an example of how UBB's research is important in the development of floorball for girls. Additional examples of collaboration include the project investigating the significance of Fritidsbanken as an integration arena, conducted on behalf of the government in cooperation with Fritidsbanken. Another collaborative research project led by UBB researchers on behalf of RF (the Swedish Sports Confederation) studied how newly arrived migrant children and youths perceive and experience organised sports in Sweden. The project had societal significance in contributing to new knowledge and continued dialogue about these children's and youth's experiences of participating in organised sports, as well as highlighting the sports movement as an arena for integration in Sweden. The collaboration with Fritidsbanken and RF are examples of how UBB's research has significance in society.

UBB researchers' expertise is in demand in society. Several municipalities in mid-Sweden cooperate with UBB to carry out commissioned training and courses (for example, on gifted

education) for its employees in terms of school development and professional development or to develop a digitisation policy. Within the ULF-funding, there are practise-based research projects on topics like leadership and democracy in preschool practice. With mixed funding from UBB and the researchers' allocated time for continuing professional development, projects have been focusing on language development in preschool and on guiding childminders in teaching processes in preschool. Some municipalities in the region of Värmland cooperate with UBB researchers on the topic of children's problematic absence from school in a project funded by the European Union. In most collaboration projects, UBB researchers are involved both as researchers with specific expertise who conduct research in the current environment, and as advisors when content is developed in the collaborating municipalities. A strength is that we are good at collaboration and that our knowledge is in demand among those who are already familiar with UBB's research.

In order to make our research more known, we currently strive to spread our research through UBB's Facebook page. UBB researchers have also been in the media (local and national press, health magazines, radio and TV) in relation to issues such as children's physical activity and teaching in preschool. The Swedish National Agency for Education and several other authorities (e.g., Region Värmland, Stockholm, Västra Götaland) have engaged UBB researchers in connection with revised curricula and comments on curricula, lectures and educational materials, etc. However, a major challenge is to keep the surrounding community informed about what expertise UBB has and what content UBB's research can contribute. In order to spread our research results we need to become more efficient in letting different societal stakeholders/ public authorities for children and childhood arenas gain knowledge about UBB's research. UBB's web page needs to be more informative and we need to communicate more clearly about what knowledge UBB possesses and how it can contribute to develop various organisations' and authorities' activities. We need to ask for help from KAU's communications officers to present UBB's various areas of expertise and be more precise in profiling what skills we have and what we are particularly good at and who to contact in relation to the various areas of expertise.

6. Interaction between research and education

UBB researchers contribute to education as course coordinators, examiners, teachers and supervisors. Experiences from UBB research are also used in these roles. An example of how UBB's research supports education is through course literature where UBB's research is presented. Concrete examples are research on motivational interviewing where student teachers are strengthened in their knowledge of method and scientific theory, research on conversation methodology, research on preschool teachers' leadership can be connected directly to student teachers via research/teaching within the preschool teacher education programme. Through lectures, students and teachers are presented with current research on, for example, values and democracy, special pedagogy, digitisation, gifted children, children and young people in sports, children's and young people's health, norm-critical perspectives, etc. Through supervision of student teachers, UBB's researchers contribute knowledge of research methods and scientific theoretical approaches.

The ongoing projects as well as publications from previous years are presented in different teaching contexts. This includes, for example, issues of democracy and core values, leadership, integration and multiculturalism, children's play and didactic issues for teachers in school-age educare centers. Through the doctoral programme GiftED, doctoral students as well as project managers who are part of UBB's research group have contributed to teaching with content related to gifted children/pupils in various teaching programmes.

In the project Pilot-STEP, 2017-2022, student teachers were invited to discuss their views on professional development in relation to issues of democracy together with UBB researchers throughout the entire teacher education period (including approximately 70 occasions over the course of seven semesters). Results from the project were presented to the student teachers who

got the opportunity to discuss the research they were part of. Another example is students in physical education who are given opportunities to participate in seminars where UBB researchers present their own research and the students then use it in various exercises both in terms of method and content. Yet another example is courses in special education within the preschool teacher education programme, in which research is integrated in education seminars and lectures to connect the teacher students' learning and education with research.

UBB researchers are variously active in teacher education. Their teaching is mainly centred around preschool teacher education both on campus, campus learning centres as well as work-integrated, primary teachers for school-age educare centers, teachers in physical education, special teacher education and principal training. These experiences provide valuable insights when education supports research, thus making it possible for researchers to bring educational experiences into ongoing research and as well as into the planning of new projects. An example of this is an ongoing project about how proven experience is expressed in practicum, based on teachers' experiences of difficulties to express what is meant with proven experience. The PilotSTEP-project (see above) was based exclusively on experiences from students' learning and teachers' teaching. These results were then implemented in various teacher education programmes at KAU, and parts of the project have been implemented at other higher education institutions in Sweden.

On some occasions, UBB researchers who acted as supervisors have written papers/reports together with students:

- Lindeman, S., Svensson, M., & Enochsson, A. B. (2021). Digitalisation in early childhood education: a domestication theoretical perspective on teachers' experiences. *Education and Information Technologies*, 26(4), 4879-4903.
- Högman, J., Wagnsson, S., & Bellander, S. (2023). På lånad tid. *Idrott och segregation*, 47.

A strength that we particularly want to emphasise is UBB's multidisciplinary approach, where educational science and sports science meet in common questions about children's and youth's opportunities to receive a good education and have meaningful leisure time and, thus, a good childhood. We would like to argue that UBB's research separately is of great importance for teacher education courses with these different orientations. The fact that many of UBB researchers teach large parts in teacher education is of importance for the reciprocal interactions between education and research. In addition to the important connection to teacher education, we would like to emphasise that UBB's research is important in the supervision of doctoral students in local, national and international doctoral programmes. Our Master's programmes continue to be an important recruitment base in order to meet the need for lecturers, senior lecturers, associate professors and professors in both undergraduate education and research. It is important that there is a long-term strategic plan for developing research connections. For UBB, it is primarily about pre-school teacher education, basic teacher education for school-age educare centres, sports and health within teacher education as well as other content within the educational science core. Here, a long-term strategy is required with the aim of both building on the ongoing activities on a larger scale and at the same time creating merit-based opportunities for UBB's researchers.

At last, we have identified a need to have a clearer dialogue with the TEB and make the board and its management aware of the importance of using the knowledge available within UBB in collaboration with other actors when internal funds are distributed to the teacher education programmes. This could lead to goals being achieved to a greater extent and funds being used as efficiently as possible.

22 November, 2023. Annica Löfdahl Hultman, Katarina Ribaeus and Stefan Wagnsson – with support from all UBB researchers.



body puts Baby in a corner

HUVUDENTRÉ

Centre for Child and Childhood Studies in Education and Sport (UBB)

BACKGROUND DATA

Periodic Research Review

INTRODUCTION

Background data covers a three year period (2020-2022) and contains information about staff, third cycle studies, financial resources and publishing output.

Data was collected from university administrative systems to provide an overview and illustrate conditions for research at the Centre for Child and Childhood Studies in Education and Sport (UBB).

STAFF

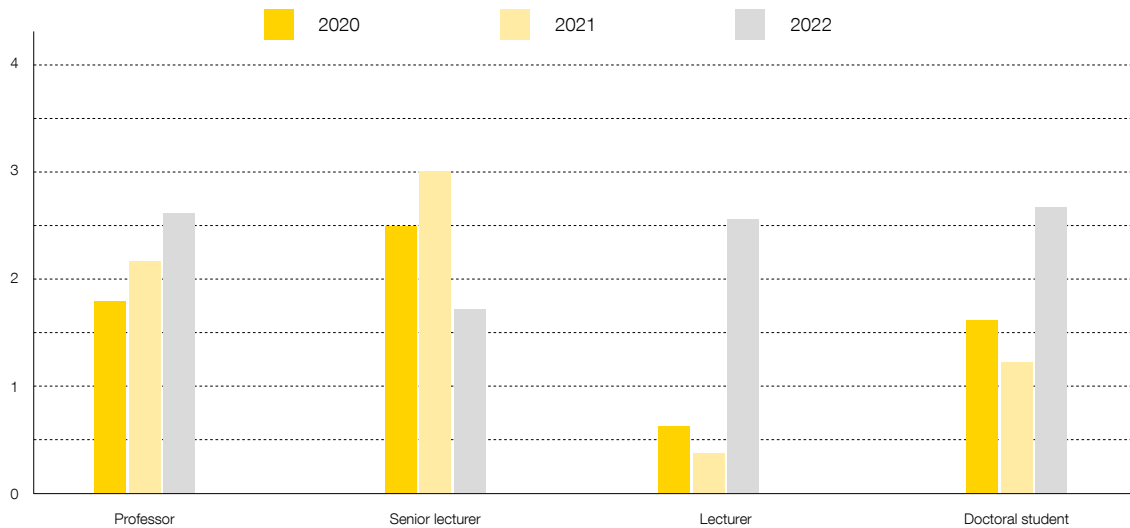


Figure 1.1 Workforce by staff category

Workforce (full-time equivalents*) engaged in research at the Centre for Child and Childhood Studies in Education and Sport, UBB, over a three-year period. Staff categories included in the graph are professor, senior lecturer, lecturer and doctoral student. See table 1.2 for individuals in each category.

Source: KULI

* Full-time equivalent (FTE) is a unit of measurement to illustrate the number of full-time hours spent on research activities for employees at Karlstad University connected to the evaluation unit. 'Research activity' includes internal funding, external research funding and commissioned research funding.

Table 1.2 Staff at the evaluation unit

Staff connected to UBB. The table shows position, and research subject for staff engaged in research at UBB the year 2022.

Name	Position	Research subject
AnnBritt Enochsson	Professor	Educational work
Annica Löfdahl Hultman	Professor	Educational work
Henrik Gustafsson	Professor	Sports science
Valerie Margrain	Professor	Educational work
Christian Augustsson	Senior lecturer	Sports science
Johan Högman	Senior lecturer	Sports science
Katarina Ribaeus	Senior lecturer	Educational work
Kristin Ungerberg	Senior lecturer	Educational work
Lovisa Skånfors	Senior lecturer	Educational work
Madeleine Wiker	Senior lecturer	Sports science
Magdalena Raivio	Senior lecturer	Educational work
Peter Carlman	Senior lecturer	Educational work
Stefan Wagnsson	Senior lecturer	Sports science

Name	Position	Research subject
Åsa Olsson	Senior lecturer	Educational work
Alexandra Guseva	Lecturer	Educational work
Ami Cooper	Lecturer	Educational work
Claes Nyberg	Lecturer	Sports science
Ebba Hilden	Lecturer	Educational work
Emelie Johansson	Lecturer	Educational work
Emma Nilsson	Lecturer	Educational work
Gabriella Thorell Palmqvist	Lecturer	Sports science
Mona Persson Aronsson	Lecturer	Educational work
Sophie Rudström-Fernqvist	Lecturer	Educational work
Annika Nilsson	Doctoral student	Educational work
Felicia Augustsson	Doctoral student	Educational work
Maria Lennartsdotter	Doctoral student	Educational work
Martina Jordan	Doctoral student	Educational work

Source: Primula

THIRD-CYCLE STUDIES

Table 2.1 Doctoral students engaged in research at UBB

Doctoral students by discipline, year of admission, degree of activity during year 2022.

Name	Admission Subject	Degree of activity 2022	Year of admission
Annika Nilsson	Educational Work	61	2022
Claes Nyberg	Educational Work	65	2018
Emelie Johansson	Educational Work	77	2020
Felicia Augustsson	Educational Work	60	2022
Maria Lennartsdotter	Educational Work	57	2019
Martina Svensson Jordan	Educational Work	33	2019
Sophie Rudström-Fernqvist	Educational Work	44	2022
Mona Persson Aronsson*	Educational Work		

Source: Ladok

* Mona Persson Aronsson, admitted at Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences.

Table 2.2 Graduate licentiate and doctoral students engaged in research at UBB

Number of students who have completed a Degree of Licentiate or Doctor over the past three years.

Name	Subject	Degree	2020	2021	2022
Ebba Hildén	Educational Work	Degree of Doctor		1	
Johan Högman	Educational Work	Degree of Doctor		1	
Mona Persson Aronsson*	Educational Work	Degree of Doctor			1
Total			0	2	1

Source: Ladok

* Mona Persson Aronsson, admitted at Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Table 3.1 Research funding

The table shows research funds spent at UBB for the period of 2020–2022. Amounts in SEK 1000.

Funding	2020	2021	2022
Faculty funding (governmental funding)	2 120	2 430	3 570
Internal income ¹		63	191
Total	2 120	2 493	3 761

Source: KULI/Raindance

¹ Internal transactions includes, for example, grants and/or compensations from other parts of the university or from the evaluation unit as well.

Table 3.2 External research funding

Distribution of external research funds during the period of 2020–2022. Project titles below. Amounts in SEK 1000.

Funding source	2020	2021	2022
The Swedish Research Council ¹	4 452		
The Swedish Research Council ²		39 999	
The Swedish Research Council ³		1 200	
The Swedish Research Council for Sport Science ⁴		379	
The Swedish Research Council for Sport Science ⁵		267	
The Swedish-Norwegian Foundation for Equine Research ⁶		985	
The Swedish Research Council for Sport Science ⁷			344
The Swedish Research Council for Sport Science ⁸			500
The Swedish Research Council for Sport Science ⁹			324
NordPlus Network ¹⁰			27
Total	4 452	42 830	1 195

Source: UBB annual reports 2020-2022

¹ Lärarna och professionen i ett virtuellt och expanderande lärarrum - sociala medier som plats för en ny professionsberättelse.

² Forskarskola om pedagogik och särskild begåvning för lärarutbildare (GiftED)

³ Nordic Network on Gifted Education

⁴ Idrottens betydelse för rurala ungdomars mobilitet

⁵ Dubbla karriärer hos världselitidrottare

⁶ Riding Schools as Future Learning Centers for an Environmentally Just Equine Sector and Broader Society

⁷ Burnout, immune function, and illness incidence in athletes

⁸ Fritidsbankens betydelse för barn och ungas fritidsvanor

⁹ Barriärer och facilitatorer som påverkar utrikesfödda föräldrars engagemang i ungas föreningsidrott.

¹⁰ Global Teaching for Sustainable Societies

Table 3.3 External research funding statistics for UBB

Number of grant applications submitted to external funding bodies, number of granted applications, amount applied for and granted, and success rate.

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

Funding source	2020	2021	2022
Number of applications	15	10	18
Number of granted applications	1	5	4
Amount applied	36 600	57 000	40 100
Amount granted	4 452	42 830	1 195
Success rate*	7 %	50 %	22 %

Source: UBB annual reports 2020–2022

* Success rate is calculated on the number of granted applications in relation to those submitted.

BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS AND REFERENCE LIST

Summary

In total, 30 individual researchers have published 76 publications between 2020–2022 (full publication list see appendix 1). Data is based on registered publications in DiVA (Digital Scientific Archive), the local publication repository where researchers, teachers and students register their research publications and essays. It covers all subject areas and publication types.

Publication extraction for the years 2020–2022 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 UBB and includes also researchers that are no longer part of the unit but were employed during 2020–2022.

The analysis includes all publications where at least one of the authors is affiliated with Karlstad University. The publication types included in report consist of article in journal, article review, book review, book, chapter in book, conference paper, collection (editor), proceedings (editor), and report. 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

Counting the total number of publications is the simplest bibliometric measure for reporting publications over a period of time for a research-producing unit. During 2020–2023, 80 individuals from the Department of Environmental and Life Sciences published 167 publications.

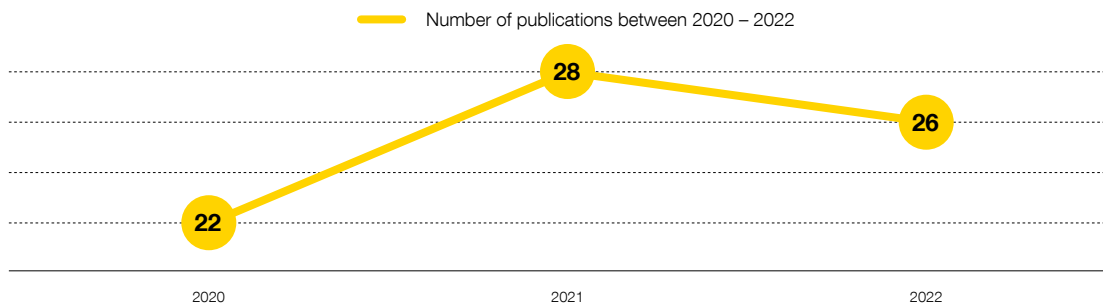


Figure 5.1 The annual total number of publications from UBB during 2020–2022

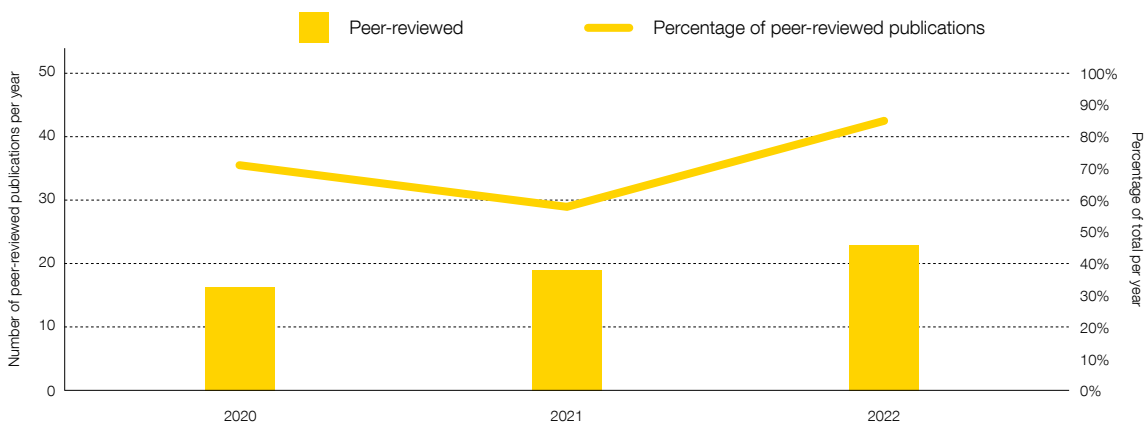


Figure 5.2 Refereed/peer reviewed publications per year

Number of peer-reviewed publications per year for UBB (bars). Percentage of peer-reviewed publications of the total annual number of publications (line).

Table 5.2.2 Number of publications for each publication type

The unit's publications sorted by publication and content type for the years 2020–2022.

	Peer-reviewed	Scientific but not peer-reviewed	Other (popular scientific, debate)
Article in journal	48	3	2
Article, review/survey	1		
Article, book review		3	
Book		1	
Chapter in book	7	7	
Conference paper	1		
Collection (Editor)		1	
Report		2	

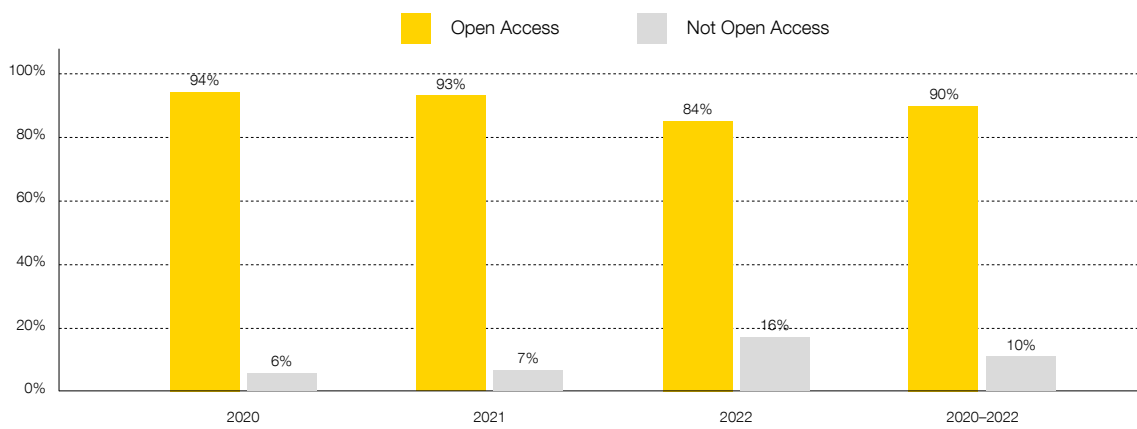


Figure 5.3 Percentage of peer-reviewed articles that are open access vs. articles behind paywalls

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

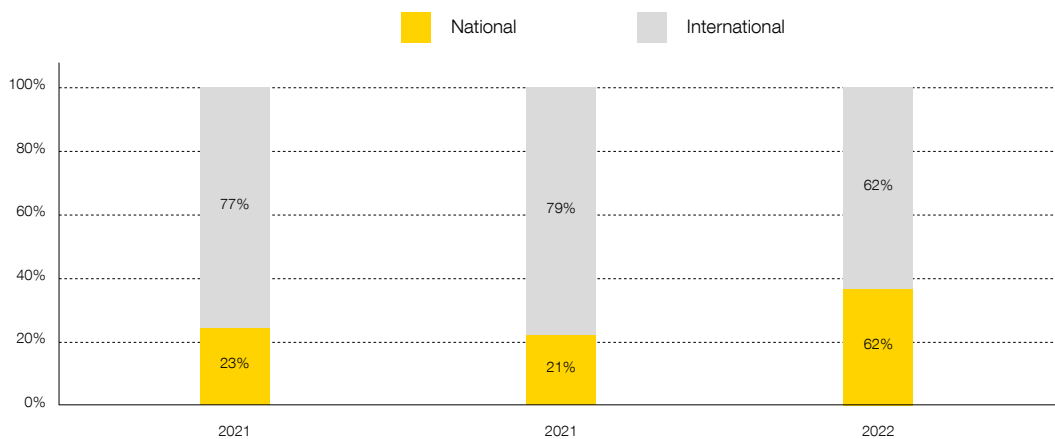


Figure 6.1 National and international co-authorship 2020–2022

Proportion of the UBBs publications with an international profile and publications where all authors were affiliated to Swedish organizations.

PUBLICATION LIST

Article in journal

1. Asplund, S.-B., & Ljung Egeland, B. (2020). Maskulina läspraktiker genom tid och rum : Platsens betydelse för arbetarmäns relation till läsning. *Educare*, 4, 33-59. <https://doi.org/10.24834/educare.2020.4.2>
2. Back, J., Josefsson, T., Ivarsson, A., & Gustafsson, H. (2021). Psychological risk factors for exercise dependence. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 19(4), 461-472. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1612197X.2019.1674902>
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4. Begovic, E., Gustafsson, J., & Enochsson, A.-B. (2022). Redo för digitalisering? : En studie om hur blivande förskollärare uppfattar sina möjligheter att arbeta med digitaliseringsuppdraget. *Kapet (elektronisk)*, 18(1), 1-25. <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:kau:diva-93575>, https://www.kau.se/files/2023-01/KAPET%20%C3%85rg%C3%A5ng%2018%20Nummer%201%202022_0.pdf
5. Capalbo, L. S., & Carlman, P. (2022). Understanding Participation Experiences in Sport Programs for the Acculturation of Refugee Youth : A Comparative Study of Two Different Programs in the US and Sweden. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2022.2044101>
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10. Cooper, A. (2022). Internationalisation and Diversity in Preschool Teacher Education : Representations in Preschool Student Teachers' Projects. *World Studies in Education*, 23(1), 37-57. <https://doi.org/10.7459/wse/23.1.04>
11. Cseplö, E., Wagnsson, S., Luguetti, C., & Spaaij, R. (2022). 'The teacher makes us feel like we are a family' : Students from refugee backgrounds' perceptions of physical education in Swedish schools. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 27(5), 531-544. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17408989.2021.1911980>
12. Davis, L., Brown, D. J., Arnold, R., & Gustafsson, H. (2021). Thriving Through Relationships in Sport : The Role of the Parent-Athlete and Coach-Athlete Attachment Relationship. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.694599>
13. DeFreese, J. D., Madigan, D. J., & Gustafsson, H. (2022). An Introduction to the Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology Special Issue on Burnout in Sport and Performance. *Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology*, 16(1), 1-2. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jcsp.2021-0100>
14. Duek, S., Hjalmarsson, M., & Ljung Egeland, B. (2021). Lärarstudenters möte med uppfattningar om språklig mångfald under den verksamhetsförlagda utbildningen. *NOA. Norsk som andrespråk*, 2(22), 21-42. <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:kau:diva-82582>
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16. Ekman, E., Hiltunen, A., & Gustafsson, H. (2021). Do athletes have more of a cognitive profile with ADHD criteria than non-athletes? *Sports*, 9(5). <https://doi.org/10.3390/sports9050061>

17. Enochsson, A.-B., Kilbrink, N., Andersén, A., & Ådefors, A. (2020). Connecting school and workplace with digital technology : Teachers' experiences of gaps that can be bridged. *Nordic Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, 10(1), 43-64. <https://doi.org/10.3384/njvet.2242-458X.2010143>
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Prefatory comment

The background data for this periodic research review covers the period 2020-2022. This period includes the emergence of the COVID 19 virus and various lockdown episodes in countries around the world, causing considerable tragedy and disruption to everyday life. We therefore wish to preface our report with an acknowledgement of the adverse effects of the Pandemic on all facets of the work of universities, and that in the 2023-24 academic year the residual effects of the Pandemic remain active and influential. We consider that these effects should be borne in mind in relation to issues raised in this report.

Brief summary (250 words)

This report is the outcome of an evaluation of the performance of UBB during the period 2020-22. We read UBB's self-evaluation report, background data, and conducted online interviews with key members of UBB staff, including early career researchers and university management, to write this report. We discovered that, while comprising a single research unit, UBB is multidisciplinary, with a group of educational researchers and another of sport scientists, who share a common interest (a 'touchstone') in children and childhood. UBB staff told us they are comfortable with this multidisciplinary, and we witnessed a strong sense of democracy and inclusion. We learned about various strategies enacted to enhance collaboration both within KU and externally, including extensive international networks. UBB nevertheless face a number of challenges to maintain and improve their research productivity. Not least of these is that teaching takes the majority of time of many staff, and that securing external research funds to 'buy-out' teaching is challenging, particularly for staff who are time poor. We note that these are structural issues that are beyond the direct influence of UBB staff. While we recognise this context is challenging both for the unity of UBB and for increasing research activity, we also report that within these conditions UBB has maintained a good level of research outputs in terms of peer-reviewed journal articles, and the submission of applications for research funding. We make a number of recommendations about how productivity, unity and collaboration, and grant success might be improved.

Research and scientific development (1 page)

UBB comprises two main groups of researchers, in educational work and sport science, with a focus on children and childhood as a shared interest of each group. This interest might be considered as their 'touchstone' (Walker, 1985¹). The self-evaluation document identifies children's and youth's perspectives, teachers' and coaches' perspectives, cultural and societal norms and values, and policy and formal governance, as the main research topics constituting this shared interest. While this focus is clearly set out, it was less evident in the documentation and meetings the extent to which the intersections between the two groups are exploited for collaboration and critical mass purposes, a point we return to in a later section. While there were examples of projects, where individual scholars from the two different research groups collaborated, and the staff also told the panel that there are a lot of such examples, institutional framed/enhanced collaboration of the two groups appeared as scarce. A very concrete (and material) expression of this is that the two groups have offices on different floors of their building.

Individuals are employed, in the first instance, to service teaching programs, and so it is not an easy task to match teaching expertise to research activity, particularly in areas that may be perceived to be topical and likely to be funded externally. Teaching workloads were reported to be high, though this appears to vary across staff. Notwithstanding the priority given to teaching, UBB researchers have been successful in publishing a range of scholarly outputs. Outputs are, by and large, published in good quality journals, and many are in English. There was a slight increase in numbers of outputs published over the period 2020-2022.

Internal research income has increased over this period. In the evaluation-period, an extended amount of the budget has been assigned for funding PhD-candidates. This strategy appears to be supported. Next year there is the possibility to change strategy, and the senior researchers mentioned the need to involve members to decide what to be strategic about. With the exception of one large grant in 2021, external income has decreased, despite a steady increase in numbers of applications made. As making research proposals is time consuming, the success rate is a critical point of attention, both from an individual and an institutional perspective. Moreover, external funding success would appear to be important given that this is one of the main strategies deployed by UBB to gain additional time for research, by 'buying-out' teaching. At the same time, it was not clear that this is a sustainable strategy, particularly for more senior (and more expensive) members of staff. There is also a planning issue, with teaching assignments decided a year in advance, when the outcome of a grant application may not be known.

¹ JC Walker (1985) The Philosopher's Touchstone: towards pragmatic unity in educational studies, *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 181-198.

Academic qualifications and ensuring competence maintenance in the short and long term (1 page)

UBB runs regular seminars as one strategy for competence maintenance and also for supporting, more explicitly, research productivity, both in terms of publications and research proposals. However, it seems that some recent seminars have been used for preparation for this evaluation. While evaluations can be regarded as a mean to competence maintenance, they can't stand alone.

Through the meetings, we got the impression that the UBB researchers value seminars which bring together the two research groups for academic discussions, inspiration and development of research ideas. However, we did not gain a sense of whether these seminars are well-attended, though the self-evaluation does mention that they are occasionally cancelled due to pressure on staff time.

In the meeting with the researchers, we had a sense of a will towards democracy, collaboration and to be inclusive and sharing, which enhances competence maintenance. We also identified a competitive culture, however, that drives in the direction of individualization and may counter inclusion, sharing and collaboration. This was also visible when we asked about quality in research. Thus, quality in research was reflected as quality for me/in my position (eg. buying myself out of teaching), rather than providing funding for a group, including early career researchers, and collective achievement. At the same time, as we noted, institutional funding is directed towards supporting doctoral students.

A future need to recruit more senior lectures, as well as professors and associate professors, was raised. There is also an ambition to involve lecturers in research projects and thus contribute to an increased interest in doctoral studies; an ambition that calls for external funding. They intend to secure recruitment by continuously having at least five doctoral students within UBB's research field.

The ECRs said they felt well-supported informally by their doctoral supervisors and by senior UBB researchers. It was evident that this support took different forms depending on the individuals concerned. There does not appear to be a more formal process of annual review of research and teaching performance for staff and students. Systematic review processes don't need to contribute to competition and individualisation, nor do they need to be narrow and based on a standardized definition of quality. They can be useful for enhancing collective reflections in the groups from the ground up. In terms of competence maintenance, there may be some benefits in setting up a more formal process of supporting career development of UBB staff.

Organisation, leadership and management (1 page)

It appears to us that the leadership of UBB takes place in a collegial and supportive environment, with a will to democracy. ECRs were keen to tell us that their voices are heard in formal meetings and that they feel well-represented. We heard from others that they are comfortable in the multi-disciplinary context of UBB.

Organizationally, however, UBB researchers are faced with numerous challenges due to the way in which teaching activity is organized separately from research. We understand the priority that is given to teaching and that this is organized separately from research activity based on a 'matrix' design. The consequences of this organizational structure are significant for growing and developing research activity. We see at least two issues.

In the first place, the Senior Lecturers who form the majority of UBB researchers are time poor, with only 20% of their time available for competence maintenance, including research, unless they are able to buy themselves out of teaching using external funding. Other positions, such as postdoctoral researchers, have considerably more time for research, but these posts are for the most part occupied by the least experienced researchers and are, by their very nature, temporary appointments. While the postdoctoral researchers clearly benefit from this arrangement in terms of their career development, the overall quality of research may be reduced if more experienced researchers have little time to carry out projects.

In the second place, with limited control over the deployment of the human resources available to UBB, serious limitations are placed on strategizing. The maintenance of the UBB seminar program is a good case in point, as we mentioned earlier. It is well-known within the leadership in higher education research literature that effective strategizing is compromised without a reasonable degree of control over resources.

Collaboration, utilization and impact of research (1 page)

The development of a seminar program with various purposes (such as idea and text seminars) is viewed by UBB as a main strategy for also fostering collaboration. As we noted earlier, staff spoke to us about feeling comfortable in the multi-disciplinary space of UBB. There appeared to us to be a willingness to collaborate with colleagues, and to draw on the potential for synergy between educational work and sport science. We also learned that UBB were keen to be seen as a unified research centre rather than a unit comprised of two broad fields of scholarship.

Notwithstanding these avowals, we were told by staff that the intersections between, for example, educational work and sport science, in other words, the touchstones, could be made more explicit and better exploited. An examination of research outputs for the period under review shows that while there is some collaboration among colleagues *within* each of the two groups, there appears to be less collaboration across these groups. It might be proposed, then, that multi-disciplinary collaboration among colleagues in UBB remains to be more fully developed and that there is space for such development.

The self-evaluation shows that considerable efforts have been made to collaborate with bodies outside of the university, with evident success. This has involved local and national organizations, and also international collaborators. The self-evaluation reveals that UBB staff are members of a wide range of research networks, many of them international. While this is a positive, we note, at the same time, that such networks require time to maintain the relationships with constitute them, which is a challenge when UBB has many time poor members. During the period of Covid, the numbers of online networks and seminars and conference greatly increased, perhaps at the expense of personal connections, and with the cost of time. A thoroughly discussed future-focused strategy of whom to network with, how and why, seems to be missing and could better focus strategic collaborations.

Internationalisation, gender equality, research integrity and multidisciplinary collaboration (1 page)

Evidence presented in the self-evaluation and in meetings shows that internationalization is important to UBB, and various strategies have been employed to boost this, such as visiting scholars, conferences and networks. The establishment of the national doctoral programme GiftED forms an interesting output from international and national collaboration.

Equality can be questioned due to the importance to do “moon-light” work to build a career. Such a demand is hard to reach for young female employees, in particular, or persons of any gender who are responsible for young children.

Employees at UBB appreciate that they can keep up their research interests and integrity, through their wide mandate to build relations, collaborations, research projects and apply for funding. However, as they have to attract funding from external sources, there is a risk of adapting their research to fit the calls, rather than focusing on core UBB research interests, including the intersection of educational work and sport science. This was also raised as an issue by staff members. Moreover, being heavily dependent on external funding may include a risk of compromising principles of research integrity, however, we didn't identify any signs of this.

Most multidisciplinary collaborations are directed outside the department (IPS) and even outside KAU. These collaborations often involve overarching issues like democracy, place or students/children's voices, and are recognised as both time-consuming and as fostering possibilities for establishing wider perspectives and expanding insight/knowledge.

Connection between education and research (1 page)

The connection between education and research can also be interpreted as a contradiction. Education is the main responsibility and is thereby prioritised, above research. This is evident in the reported problem to find time, due to teaching responsibilities, to attend the seminars where research is at the forefront, and to conduct research projects. The strong need for simplified procedures to enable researchers to apply for, obtain and process research funding within the same operating year, is reported. The need to have information about research funding within the same operative year is to secure enough qualified staff for teaching. Lack of control over available resources and tasks even for the coming year, within a small community of educators and researchers, as we noted, makes strategizing challenging. We suggest that several ways to meet this challenge should be investigated, e.g. if the procedures cannot be changed, maybe the allocation of staff can be changed, or when to start a research project can be postponed. Another contradiction is traced from utterances that indicate that one must choose whether to teach or to do research.

A positive part of keeping education at the forefront is evident in the research publications. Quality in publications is also considering the need of transmission to the practice field and student education. Therefore, journals that reach the field are prioritised for publication, along with high impact journals.

We spot an agreement among the stakeholders that there is more to gain from strengthen the synergy between education and research. As some examples, what about research projects that investigate the ongoing educational practices? Or investigating student learning based on their assignments? Or performing action research when trying new ways to teach? Or involving master-students to do some tasks in research projects, tasks as assignments in courses or even as their master-thesis?

Concluding assessment and recommendations for continued development (1 page)

The overall conclusion from the panels review is that UBB is doing very well within the conditions in which they must operate, some of which are very challenging. Having said this, we also have identified some structural issues that make their achievement of research productivity quite a struggle. These structural issues include limited resources, limited time for research, limited possibilities of hiring staff and teaching-driven decisions. Some of these structural issues appear to be induced partly by the matrix organisation. An overall recommendation therefore is to reconsider the appropriateness of this organisational arrangement. Within the structure, we suggest considering:

- 1) If the teaching could be organized in a way which would leave 'teaching-free' periods, e.g. a week a month. Such an arrangement would enhance the possibility for doing research, as research and dissemination in terms of papers in scientific journals demands continuous time. Moreover, it would enhance the possibility for participation in seminars (if all staff members had teaching-free periods at the same time)
- 2) Creative thinking around ways to organize teaching to enhance synergy between teaching and research, including at the intersection between sport science and educational work. For example: Perhaps students as a collective (relating to a course) could be co-researchers on a joint project with their teachers
- 3) Smart teaching, by means of using new technologies, which may free time for research activity
- 4) The development of an infrastructure to support grant writing, such as training workshops and an internal review process. Appropriate resourcing would be required to support such an infrastructure
- 5) Better highlighting and strengthening the common ground ('touchstones') between educational work and sport science in order to promote collaboration and unity, but also to minimise the risk of disintegration of UBB
- 6) Formalise annual reviews of staff and PhD student performance in order to better support career expectations and development.