



body puts Baby in a corner

HUVUDENTRÉ

Centre for Language and Literature Education (CSL)

SELF-EVALUATION

Periodic Research Review

Annex 1.

Self-evaluation report

2024-11-29

Centre for Language and Literature Education (CSL)

1. Summary

Profile

The *Centre for Language and Literature Education (CSL)* is a multidisciplinary subject-didactic environment where researchers from the academic disciplines Educational Work, Comparative Literature, English, Spanish, and Swedish (including Swedish as a Second Language) collaborate on subject-didactic research, focusing on challenges identified in and related to schools. The practice-oriented perspective is fundamental to CSL. For research to effectively enhance teaching and learning, it must be closely aligned with what is happening in schools. Consequently, our research is conducted in close collaboration with teachers, principals, and municipal education departments, ensuring its relevance to teaching and learning in the classroom and teacher training. Central to CSL is viewing language and literature didactic issues from a societal perspective and exploring how teaching language and literature can equip students with the skills to understand and interact in a changing world. CSL's current research is structured around four main lines of inquiry, which we identified through a targeted strategic process that considered contemporary social issues in Sweden and the specific needs of the field: (i) *Multilingualism and diversity*, (ii) *Digitalisation*, (iii) *Reading as a life-long interest and skill*, and (iv) *Teacher education and professional development*. More information on these four areas is provided below.

Evaluation

CSL is a highly active research environment that significantly contributes to subject-didactic research at Karlstad University (KAU). Characterised by a bottom-up structure featuring transparent and competitive funding processes, one of our key **strengths** is our ability to flexibly and dynamically respond to developments in the field and to support research from its inception and in pilot projects, thus facilitating strong applications to external research funders (see Table 3.3 BD [Background data] for our high success rates). Another significant strength is our contribution to nurturing the next generation of academics by extensively supporting PhD students and early career researchers (Table 2.1 BD), the overwhelming majority of whom have gone on to have successful academic careers. A third strength are our extensive outreach activities (e.g. professional development days, the CSL blog, subject-teacher networks, etc.) and hands-on research collaborations with teachers and schools.

KAU at times encounters some difficulty in recruiting researchers who are interested in didactics within CSL's academic disciplines, thereby contributing to a **vulnerability** in relation to our objective of strengthening subject-didactic competence. Moreover, the varying sizes of the academic disciplines that make up CSL limit our ability to allocate research time as needed, even if funding is approved in good time – staff from smaller environments are less likely to be able to include research time in their work schedule. Finally, a more informative and dynamic centre website could increase CSL's visibility outside of KAU, both in regards to prospective employees as well as our outreach activities.

CSL sees significant **opportunities** to strengthen its activities and develop more research collaborations with in-service teachers. One avenue is the national ULF (*Utbildning – Lärande – Forskning*) research initiative, in which we have already been participating successfully. While a pilot initiative until 2024, ULF will become permanent from 2025 onwards and is thus expected to continue to offer additional opportunities to us. Another avenue is the soon-to-be-implemented national professional training program (*Nationellt professionsprogram*) for teachers, as part of which

teachers are encouraged to participate in collaborative research with higher education institutions. CSL could take on a facilitatory role, thereby further fostering subject-didactics research at KAU.

A major **concern** for CSL are ongoing discussions at national level about requirements and conditions for teacher education, including potential changes to eligibility requirements, which could reduce student enrolments at KAU substantially and result in organisational shifts regarding the placement of programs. This is likely to have flow-on effects for CSL, as we are funded by the KAU Board for Teacher Education (LUN). We also face challenges in relation to our geographical location – our reduced accessibility from outside Sweden impacts on our ability to organise conferences and attract visiting scholars – and in relation to recruitment, where a national shortage of senior expertise is coupled with junior researchers often having extensive teaching duties that stifle the development of strong research portfolios.

2. Organisation and leadership

Context

Research centres at Karlstad University are regulated in the *Arbetsordning för forskningscentra* [‘Rules of Procedure for Research Centres’]. The centres’ role is to coordinate research across various academic disciplines and departments. Research centres neither offer courses nor employ academic staff. All members of CSL are hence employed solely by their respective departments and discipline units, where they also conduct their teaching and research.

CSL is part of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (HS). The university’s other faculty is the Faculty of Health, Science and Technology. CSL, along with the other two didactics-oriented research centres at KAU – the Centre for Social Science Education Research (CSD) and the Centre for Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Education Research (SMEER) – is closely integrated with teacher education and operates under the Board of Teacher Education (LUN). Teacher education is a major program area at KAU, accounting for 25% of the student body. This area encompasses teacher programs for preschool and primary school (including after-school care), lower and upper secondary school, and vocational education. LUN is responsible for convening the teacher programs, as well as for quality assurance of the offered teacher education and the research linked to teacher education. It operates as a matrix organisation, drawing on various departments across the university’s two faculties. LUN’s budget includes base funding for the didactics-oriented research centres, and LUN’s Research Committee is an important forum for strategic discussions that includes representatives of the research centres, thereby providing the centres with up-to-date information and input opportunities on research developments at regional and national levels.

All three research centres were formally established in 2010, in response to an increased demand for subject-didactics research at KAU, to counterbalance the dominance of non-didactic research in academic disciplines such as Contemporary Literature, English, History and Mathematics. As subject-specific didactic expertise is organisationally embedded in the respective disciplines at KAU, the research centres are instrumental in integrating the distributed subject-specific expertise and in facilitating interdisciplinary research and knowledge transfer, with crucial flow-on effects to teacher education and its programs. This rather unique model has proven to be very successful.

Formal organisation and leadership structure

CSL is formally organised around a decision-making Advisory Committee (formerly: Board) and the scientific leadership (directorship) of two professors. The Advisory Committee has an external Chair and consists of representatives from the academic disciplines of Educational Work, Comparative Literature, English, and Swedish. It also includes a doctoral student representative and an external representative from the school sector, and hence in total comprises seven members. The Advisory Committee addresses strategic questions, contributes to the development of networks within and beyond the university, and oversees CSL’s quality assurance and budget processes. It is moreover instrumental in shaping policy and decision-making processes in relation to CSL matters. The Advisory Committee convenes around 7–8 times per year, with the scientific leaders – who participate

in an advisory capacity in the meetings – preparing recommendations on pending decisions. Advisory Committee tasks and responsibilities are distributed among its members, which results in a highly active and involved centre governance.

The Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences appoints CSL's scientific leaders. Based on recommendations of the scientific leaders, the Dean then also appoints the Advisory Committee. The doctoral student representative is selected by KAU's Graduate Student Association. The term of office for all – both scientific leaders and Advisory Committee members – is three years.

The budget is prepared for one year at a time, in consultation with a financial officer assigned to CSL by the faculty. It is regularly reviewed and amended as necessary at the Advisory Committee meetings. As all CSL researchers are employed solely by their respective departments and disciplines, consultations about budgetary matters need to be conducted regularly with the respective heads of department and directors of studies. CSL has an annual base funding from LUN of approximately SEK 5.5 million (about € 430,000). A smaller part of LUN's research budget is additionally distributed to the three didactic research centres based on performance.

CSL allocates funds to

- (i) educate doctoral students (salaries for doctoral students; supervision expenses; conference attendance; funding of doctoral student networking events and writing retreats),
- (ii) support both early career and senior researchers (postdoctoral grants, seed funding for pilot projects, visiting scholars, conference and other research-related travel expenses, research assistance, transcriptions, editing and translations, technical equipment),
- (iii) arrange research seminars as well as outreach events (often in collaboration with the school sector and other stakeholders at KAU), and
- (iv) ensure a smooth governance of the centre (administrative funding for scientific leadership, Advisory Committee membership, events coordinatorship, outreach and dissemination responsibilities).

CSL's budgetary resources are hence primarily used to strengthen the research environment and foster research development and innovation.

CSL reports its activities and performance annually to LUN. The resulting written report (*Verksamhetsberättelse*) comprises a description and assessment of the research environment, publications achieved over the year, an account of the use of funding allocated to CSL, external funding applied for and received by CSL members, CSL's networks both within and beyond academia, its research dissemination activities, and CSL's impact on teacher education. This report forms the foundation for the centre's evaluation by LUN – also in comparison to the corresponding reports submitted by the other two research centres – and the evaluation outcomes impact future budget allocations. Naturally, the report also serves as a key tool in the strategic work of CSL's Advisory Committee, assisting in the setting of the centre's strategic direction for the coming year.

In addition to the annual report, CSL formulates a research strategy (*Forsknings- och verksamhetsprogram*), jointly developed by CSL's scientific leadership and Advisory Committee. It covers a three-year period and delineates CSL's research directions and goals. The current research strategy, covering the period 2023–2025, is the fifth of its kind. Within this strategy, CSL's primary research foci are established for the designated period, influencing CSL's funding decisions – including the selection of projects and activities supported by the centre. For further details, refer to Section 3.

Practices and strategic work

CSL has well-developed structures and processes to assist in and streamline both its daily operations and its strategic work. Some of these are addressed in more detail in the following.

Recruitment, promotion, and succession; gender equality: As outlined in the summary (Section 1), the academic disciplines within CSL operate under varying conditions, not least due to their varying sizes and teaching obligations, which limit staff members' flexibility to engage in research activities. Consequently, it can be challenging to allocate research time to staff, even when the research centre has allocated funds for specific projects. As a mitigation strategy, the centre calls for research project

applications already in the spring, with decisions made early in the autumn, before workload planning for the coming year has started.

Moreover, we strategically link visiting scholars to different academic disciplines for periods of time, to strengthen and develop these disciplines at KAU and to foster collaborations with similar research environments at other higher education institutions. Such initiatives increase the critical mass in individual disciplines and areas of research that are limited in size but of significant didactic importance. For instance, a senior professor in second language research has supported the area of Swedish as a Second Language for a number of years, which supported the creation of a vibrant research culture at KAU in this area, while also providing invaluable mentoring to KAU staff. Similarly, we have hosted and are currently hosting visiting scholars specialising in writing didactics, who are based in the discipline of Swedish. One of these has continued on as CSL's external Chair of the Advisory Committee.

More generally, we have observed challenges in recruiting researchers with an interest in didactics to some of CSL's disciplines, which poses a risk to our mission of strengthening subject-didactic competence. To mitigate this vulnerability, we are also investing strategically in doctoral student positions and support for early career researchers through specific postdoctoral funding. This allows emerging researchers to establish themselves within the research community, thereby also ensuring the sustainability of the research environment. In 2024, three PhD candidates linked to CSL have graduated, in addition to one graduating with a licentiate. Of the three PhD graduates, two will receive postdoctoral funding from CSL in 2025, to propel their research career forward.

CSL's leadership strategically discusses succession plans to ensure continuity of relevant expertise in the centre and its governing bodies. Mentoring to staff at all levels is offered, including support in promotion applications (see below for more information on career support). As Swedish hiring regulations prohibit not already employed staff to be employed in temporary positions beyond one year, challenges for staffing both externally and internally funded research projects occasionally arise. This particularly complicates the process for prospective employees from outside the university sector to join on a temporary basis and gain initial experience. The *Värmlandsmodell* (a formal agreement between Värmland municipalities and KAU) offers to integrate in-service teachers as teaching staff into KAU teacher education courses; such an arrangement, however, is not possible for research tasks.

In terms of gender distribution within the centre, approximately one quarter of staff funded by CSL were men, while women constitute about three quarters. This indicates an uneven gender distribution, where notably female senior researchers have been predominant. CSL is committed to actively work towards balancing this distribution through, e.g., its doctoral student recruitment. However, the current gender imbalance mirrors the broader research area, where more women than men are active.

Competence development and career support for researchers at different stages of their career: We continue to support the advancement of staff at all career levels through targeted career planning, collaboration opportunities with visiting scholar, and the funding of doctoral positions, postdoctoral research projects, or seed funding for larger (externally-funded) projects. As the research centre does not employ staff, CSL does not have a formal mandate to conduct employee appraisals. Rather, we strive to find other less formal forums for career support, e.g. through collegial mentoring, with senior researchers taking on specific responsibility for this. CSL's career support efforts also include enabling 'adjunkter' (staff who have not yet completed postgraduate education) to participate in research projects, in order to provide competence development opportunities for them, awaken and foster their interest in conducting research, encourage team work across career levels, and create an inclusive research environment.

We are proud to report that 11 adjunkter have taken up PhD studies over the years, CSL has seen 17 PhD completions, 6 PhD graduates have received postdoctoral funding, and 6 CSL members have been promoted to full professors over the years, two of which just now in 2024 (they are thus still listed under 'Senior Lecturer' in Table 1.2 BD).

As noted before, CSL funds several doctoral projects across its academic disciplines – directly via budget allocation and indirectly via co-funding or research projects. As the discipline of Swedish is

currently not accredited to educate PhD candidates (which both the department and CSL are working towards, though), we collaborate with Örebro University to include doctoral students in the Swedish discipline: doctoral candidates are enrolled by Örebro University but funded by and an active part of the environment at KAU. A rather recent development is that doctoral students with dissertation projects focused on language and literature didactics – currently approximately ten – regularly meet in both formal and informal settings. With the help of CSL funds, the group has also organised writing retreats that included inspirational talks and roundtable discussions with participating senior CSL researchers. That doctoral students are represented in CSL decision-making and the Advisory Committee further enhances the generally supportive environment for doctoral candidates.

Priority settings/goals for external research funding: Since its inception in 2010, CSL has focused on building up and strengthening the research environment through targeted initiatives. These initiatives have aimed at establishing a cohesive and focused research profile and strengthening research with the potential to be funded by external grants.

For this, CSL annually funds pilot research projects, following a competitive selection process. We take pride in the transparency of our funding processes, with formal calls followed by a robust review and decision-making process. Calls are publicised via CSL's mailing list, which is open to all staff members. To be eligible for funding, applicants must hold a permanent position of at least 50% at Karlstad University. Applications from newly graduated PhD researchers are highly encouraged. Incoming applications are then reviewed and ranked by CSL's scientific leadership, with a written funding recommendation submitted to the Advisory Committee for decision. The evaluation places significant emphasis on scientific quality, feasibility, and alignment with CSL's research foci. Final funding decisions are made by CSL's Advisory Committee.

Recipients of research funding are expected to actively engage in the research centre's activities, including seminars, workshops, and outreach events, and to present their projects on the CSL website and CSL blog (see below for more details), as specified in all calls and funding decisions. Additionally, researchers who receive funding from CSL are required to report on their completed work at a joint CSL seminar at the end of each calendar year.

To foster national and international networking and collaboration, CSL supports researchers' participation in workshops and conferences, as well as their involvement in conference organising and program committees and in participating in international funding applications. Funding for conference participation, research trips, and expenses is announced twice a year. The same review process and reporting requirement as for research funding applications holds.

At CSL, research is pursued within the respective academic disciplines, but importantly also across disciplines and in conjunction with the other subject-didactics centres, CSD and SMEER. *Research on Subject-specific Education* (ROSE) is a cooperation environment for the subject-didactic research centres. Collaboration with these research centres via ROSE generates a critical mass that is highly conducive to external research applications, and hence maintaining regular and close collaboration with ROSE is vital to CSL.

Other contextual aspects of importance for the quality and renewal of research: As mentioned in Section 1, ongoing discussions at national level about requirements and conditions for teacher education have the potential to impact CSL's future. Over the past year, student enrolments in teacher education programs have significantly decreased, a trend seen across universities nationally, not just at KAU. Stricter entry requirements for teacher education, as currently discussed by the Government, could further reduce enrolments, potentially weakening the financial stability of the departments and LUN. This, in turn, could negatively affect CSL's economic stability. Additionally, LUN is currently undergoing a reorganisation, leading to another shift with yet unclear consequences for CSL, which is thus facing an uncertain future. However, at this point we remain optimistic that we will receive continued support from within the university, given our track record.

Another contextual aspect affecting our research that is, however, beyond our control is the increasing difficulty in obtaining informed consent from students invited to participate in our studies (and their parents, if the students are under 15). Even research projects where these students' teachers are active

collaborators face this challenge. We may need to explore the reasons behind this trend and identify what is needed to reverse it.

Regarding other organisational matters, we see the CSL website as one of (if not the) most pressing issues in need of remedy. We have discussed it several times in the Advisory Committee and are aware that it is currently not well structured, that old information has become unavailable and hence the depth of the research centre and its achievements are not well reflected, and that current developments are added in a non-systematic way or not at all. Moreover, the Swedish version of the website is more extensive than its English counterpart (the former includes, for instance, a publications list). International scholars with access to only the English version will not be able to gain a good understanding of the centre's work. In response to this, we are currently planning to move away from the model that a faculty administrator maintains and updates the website to one where an active CSL member – ideally an Advisory Committee member – takes on this responsibility, and where clear procedures and timelines exist to ensure a comprehensive and regular updating.

3. Scientific results and academic impact

In this section, we describe and analyse our scientific results in relation to resources, staff and research infrastructure, as well as the impact these results have attained. The text starts with a general description of the research production, followed by specific examples of research viewed through the lenses of CSL's research strategy, publications, external grants, and impact and visibility.

CSL's research production can be described in terms of research projects and doctoral as well as licentiate theses. The production of dissertations is crucial to consolidating subject didactics as a research field and is central to establishing CSL as a research environment. To date, CSL has produced 6 licentiate theses in addition to the already mentioned 17 doctoral theses across CSL's academic disciplines. Currently, 8 doctoral students are affiliated with the research centre and are actively engaged in the environment.

A substantial portion of CSL's research is conducted in collaboration with municipal education departments and in-service teachers and aligns with the objectives of LUN. Reflecting CSL's focus on language and literature in education, part of the research is directed towards the field of language didactics and part towards the field of literature didactics, with studies more or less oriented towards the broader field of educational sciences. To meet the societal demand for research across various fields as well as contribute innovative research aligned with our research interests and expertise, CSL has strategically chosen to focus on four different areas, as outlined in our research strategy. These four areas – (i) *Multilingualism and diversity*, (ii) *Digitalisation*, (iii) *Reading as a life-long interest and skill*, and (iv) *Teacher education and professional development* – form the scaffold for our report in this section.

The research area *Multilingualism and diversity* is based on the observation that linguistic and cultural diversity is increasing in Swedish schools, which in many ways challenges teaching practices. CSL researchers have addressed these issues in several externally funded projects, such as *Multilingual Spaces* (Swedish Research Council, 2017–2021) and *TELL-ability: Storytelling as Life Skill and Interactional Competence in L2 Education* (Swedish Research Council, 2023–2025). The two Swedish language school subjects – Swedish and Swedish as a Second Language – are in many ways equivalent and provide the same eligibility for higher education, while, for example, all students study English together, regardless of proficiency levels. The question of how teaching can be organised and designed such that all students' needs are met in appropriate ways is studied in the ongoing project *Predictors of English Language Learning Outcomes in Swedish Secondary School* (ULF, 2023–2025). The newly-started project *Swedish or English?* (Swedish Research Council, 2024–2027) focuses on the neurodiverse group of students on the autism spectrum and investigates aspects of multilingualism, equity, and diversity. The research area also addresses research questions on SFI (Swedish for Immigrants) teaching and learning and on students' mother tongues, as highlighted by the project *Literacy Education on Basic Level in Swedish for Immigrants* (The Swedish Institute for Educational Research, 2020–2023). Internal funds from the research centre have been granted for

several collaboration projects with teachers and students that spotlight teachers' and students' attitudes and beliefs in relation to multilingual perspectives.

The research area *Digitalisation* is grounded in the realisation that the digitalisation of schools has fundamentally brought about significant changes and major challenges for students' and teachers' daily school life. These challenges are often described as particularly significant in relation to literacy practices in the classroom, as digitisation challenges the genre conventions that have surrounded both writing in school and notions of what a text is. This has been studied in several externally funded projects, such as *Connected Classrooms* (Swedish Research Council 2016–2020) and the interdisciplinary project *Teaching with Learning Management Systems* (Swedish Research Council, 2020–2022), where issues of how successful teaching in a connected classroom can be designed were on the agenda. CSL researchers have furthermore contributed with studies on digital aspects of language and literature didactics through participation in the *Nordic Centre of Excellence QUINT (Quality in Nordic Teaching)*, Nordforsk 2020–2024) and on the impact of the often digital exposure to English outside the classroom on learning outcomes (*STAGE*, Norwegian Research Council, 2021–2025). ULF funding as well as internal CSL funds have also enabled longitudinal studies on *Challenges in the Connected Classroom* (2019–2023), where teaching in upper secondary schools was studied before, during and after the pandemic. An explanatory workshop highlighted issues of equitable teaching in technology-dense classrooms (*EQUTIE*, Swedish Research Council, 2024).

The research area *Reading as a life-long interest and skill* deals with questions concerning the fact that reading and storytelling have a central significance for our culture and our thinking, and that imagination, bodily expression, and writing have been essential in the evolution of our human consciousness. Stories enable the creation and transmission of shared memories across time and generations. Narrative abilities can therefore be seen as fundamental to language use and to the ability to understand, describe and define events and objects. The *TELL-ability* project mentioned above sheds light on these issues in relation to Swedish as a Second Language and English. CSL researchers have also taken an interest in this area in other interdisciplinary externally funded projects, such as *Local Reading Practices of Working-Class Males from Rural Woodlands: Continuity and Change Across Lives and Generations* (Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, 2023–2025) and *Reading the Region: Place-based Literature and History Teaching for a Sustainable Future* (Wettergrenstiftelsen, 2023). Several internally funded projects have also been granted within this research area. A number of externally funded projects concerning the conditions and design of literature teaching have also been conducted by CSL researchers. These include *Reading between the Lines – Teaching and Developing Advanced Reading Skills in Schools* (Swedish Research Council, 2012–2015), *Linking Instruction and Student Achievement* (Swedish Research Council, 2017–2021), and *UTFORSK* (The Swedish Institute for Educational Research, 2022–2024). Within the Nordic excellence centre *QUINT*, inquiry-based literary teaching has been studied in collaboration with teachers and students, and in the ULF-funded project *LISA-PLOT* (2020–2021) professional learning observations of teaching were in focus, while the current ULF project *Room for Development? School Libraries in Primary Schools* (2023–2025) investigates the establishment of well-functioning school libraries to effectively support the teaching of literature in schools.

Finally, we highlight the research area of *Teacher education and professional development*, as it is of great importance for CSL to contribute to the scientific anchoring of teacher education and to research on teacher education practices. CSL researchers have worked on issues related to this area in several externally funded interdisciplinary projects. These include *Professional Development on Facebook* (Swedish Research Council, 2016–2020), *Teachers in the Borderland between Elementary School, Secondary School, and Comprehensive School* (Swedish Research Council, 2018–2020) and the ongoing project *Teacher and Influencer? Social Media as an Arena for Professional Practice* (Swedish Research Council, 2022–2024). These projects mainly focus on professional development, as do a number of additional projects funded by ULF. Although one ongoing doctoral thesis focuses on teacher education, there is a gap in studies with an explicit focus on teacher education in CSL. Since one of CSL's objectives is to develop ways of supporting language and literature didactic competence in teacher education, this represents a development potential for the research centre. One

potential area that could be targeted is, for example, *Verksamhetsförlagd utbildning* (VFU, work-based training courses) that forms one of the cornerstones of teacher education.

Publications

CSL works to support its members to publish both in academic and in popular science outlets. Overall, we maintain a high publication rate and actively reach out to reputable journals within academia and publications beyond the academic sphere. Additionally, we utilise a diverse range of publication channels for our research (see Table 6.3 BD).

CSL's publication strategy has radically changed over the years, partly due to a shift in publication traditions in the field. We can see a shift from monographs to journal articles, from national to international publications, and from single-authored to co-authored publications, with the latter testifying to our numerous constructive collaborations. Right now, publications with international co-authors account for around 30% of all CSL publications (see Figure 6.5 BD), which we deem as high given that many publications are about the Swedish school context. In terms of publication outlets, CSL researchers have moved to choosing more international outlets (both from the Nordic countries and from around the world) and prestigious journals. This has advantages for our visibility and reputation in the international research arena, but drawbacks in terms of stakeholder reception from within Sweden. We have a responsibility to continue to publish in Swedish, so that work on Swedish education remains accessible in the Swedish language. We are also mindful that two of the five CSL academic disciplines – Comparative Literature and Swedish – have a focus on the school subjects Swedish and Swedish as a Second Language in regards to their didactics research. We therefore assess our current distribution across the different criteria as healthy. We also note that open-access publications account for the overwhelming majority of our publications nowadays, with all 2022 publications and 92% of the 2023 publications being published open-access (see Figure 6.4 BD). The recent agreements of publishers with the Swedish Bibsam Consortium (which allow Swedish researchers to publish open access free of charge) and external funders' requirements to publish open access have most certainly been conducive in this context.

Overall, there has been a steady increase in publications over the past decade, although there is considerable variation between years, depending on the current phase of the research projects. Results are mainly published after the projects have been finalised. For CSL, 2022 was a very productive year (see Figure 6.1 BD), reflecting that several large externally funded projects were in the publication phase. As the background data show (see 'Publishing output'), 23 researchers (note that this number includes CSL's PhD candidates) have produced 108 publications over a three-year period and hence an average of 1.56 publications per year per person. (These figures exclude doctoral dissertations and licentiate theses as well as presentations, poster, abstracts and anything recorded as "other". Also, the average is calculated as if none of the publications were co-authored, which of course is not the case – in reality researchers have therefore achieved a higher average.) Generally, senior CSL researchers with external funding have been the most prolific writers, potentially as they are more experienced and have prolonged periods of funded research time and hence less teaching commitments. CSL's internal funds are therefore often allocated to less established researchers as well as to doctoral students.

Moreover, it is essential for CSL researchers to engage in societal debates and contribute to activities and publications intended for teachers and aimed at on-the-ground teaching, including the authoring of textbooks. The number of publications in this area is high relative to the number of active researchers in the centre. Additionally, our blog (see below) has served as an excellent platform for sharing of our research in an accessible, popular scientific format.

External grants

CSL researchers are involved in a solid number of external grant applications every year, applying for the funding of research projects, networking events, sabbaticals, or workshops and conferences. If appropriate, they do so in collaboration with scholars from other disciplines and other national and international universities. Moreover, they often include junior researchers in the applications in order to help them establish themselves in the research community.

However, the number of new applications depends on the phase of the ongoing projects – right now, we have many ongoing projects and hence the number of applications has been lower in the past year, 2023. Additionally, special calls and previous approval rates also play a role in application decisions. The proportion of successful grant applications is generally high and externally funded research constitutes a substantial part of the centre’s activities. For example, in 2022, CSL researchers received a total of just over 30 million SEK and in 2023, 5 out of 11 (45%) applications were successful, totalling a funding of 7.6 million SEK for 2023 (see Table 3.3 BD). While the success rate was roughly the same in 2022 and 2023, the number and size of the grant applications was smaller in 2023, as many researchers had already been successful in 2022.

In the background data, there appears to be a discrepancy between the allocated external funding (Table 3.3 BD) and the expended external funds (Tables 3.1 and 3.2 BD). While nearly 30 million and over 30 million SEK were allocated in external funding in 2021 and 2022, respectively, according to Tables 3.1 and 3.2 only 432,000 SEK were expended in 2023. We assume that this discrepancy has to do with where a grant is internally accounted for, i.e. whether it formally sits in the CSL budget or the respective department’s budget. As all staff are officially employed by the departments and as grants overwhelmingly fund staff salaries, they mostly are officially accounted for in the departments and hence do not appear as an income or expenditure for CSL at all, thereby creating unrealistically low numbers in CSL’s budget. Another tangible example of this is the *TELL-ability* project, which was approved by the Swedish Research Council in 2022 with 4.4 million SEK (3.3 million SEK for KAU alone) for a period of three years (see Table 3.2.1 BD), started in 2023, but CSL officially only expended 1,000 SEK from all Swedish Research Council grants in 2023 (and hence 0.003% of the KAU project funding, see Table 3.2 BD). The double affiliation of researchers to both departments and research centre therefore is a double-edged sword for us, as the real contribution of CSL to the external funding success is not visible due to KAU-internal accounting procedures and hence internal infrastructure issues.

Impact and visibility

Research conducted by CSL researchers has had a significant impact on the field of language and literature in education, both nationally and internationally. The scientific findings presented in articles and books are widely cited and utilised not only in academic settings but also in teacher in-service training and media engagements. Notable areas where CSL research has yielded substantial scientific results and academic impact include projects on the digital aspects of classroom literacy (*Connected Classrooms*; *Professional Development on Facebook*), the assessment of oral proficiency in English (*Testing Talk*, Swedish Research Council, 2013–2016), and studies on male readers in rural areas (*Local Reading Practices of Working-Class Males from Rural Woodlands*). Additionally, research results on multilingual perspectives, such as the results from *Multilingual Spaces* and *Literacy Education on Basic Level in Swedish for Immigrants*, have also generated considerable impact.

The scientific impact and visibility of CSL can be further illustrated by invitations to national and international events (such as keynotes), expert assignments, and in participation and more importantly leadership roles in research applications, projects, and networks. In addition, our researchers serve as supervisors for doctoral and licentiate students at other Swedish and international universities. The acceptance of research grants from high-stake funders (see above and Table 3.2.1 BD) also highlights this impact, along with our involvement in several externally funded research schools. Notable examples include the graduate school *Knowledge, Subjects and Quality in Teacher Education* (KÄKK), funded by the Swedish Research Council from 2020 to 2025, and the regionally funded graduate school FUNDIG, which focuses on the digitalisation of teaching.

As shown in Table 5.1 BD, CSL researchers have been actively involved in numerous research activities showing scientific impact and visibility – both nationally and internationally – throughout 2023. The roles listed in Table 5.1 BD – keynote speaker; expert assessor for research councils and research foundations; evaluator for positions and promotions of professor, associate professor (docent), and senior lecturer; opponent and member of PhD thesis examination boards; and editor or editorial board member for journals and book series – are typically assigned to senior researchers. CSL’s achievement in this context are hence an indicator of our expertise as well as our engagement.

Table 5.1 BD also signals that CSL researchers at all levels have undertaken a significant number of assignments as reviewers for international journals. This number could be much higher, as many of us have declined manuscript review offers time and again due to heavy workloads.

A further indicator of our visibility not listed in Table 5.1 BD is our leadership role in international research networks, for instance for the *International Association of Applied Linguistics*. A specific example within the scope of the ROSE partnership is a cooperation with the international network *Knowledge and Quality across School Subjects and Teacher Education* (KOSS), 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 the Institute of Education, UCL, England. The international collaboration within the KOSS-network and its outcomes in form of publications, research applications and organisation of international conferences well exemplifies how subject-specific research at KAU has gained international impact.

The visibility of CSL researchers nationally and within the Nordic countries is thus high and individual staff have a very good international visibility, as further demonstrated by them, for instance, being invited to present outreach events for the Department of Education, Athens, Greece, or the National Library of Singapore.

4. Academic culture

CSL is committed to fostering an inclusive environment that values collegial work. This goal has been realised through various initiatives and mechanisms, some of which are discussed in the following.

First and foremost, our academic culture builds on active participation. CSL does not officially approve members or formally accept researchers into its centre, but maintains a flexible and dynamic membership structure where all researchers participating in CSL activities and initiatives are considered members. As indicated before, CSL funding is allocated through a competitive and highly transparent process open to all researchers meeting the conditions outlined above. In particular, we encourage academics at all career levels, from adjunkter to professors, and at all levels of research experience, to participate in CSL and benefit from the environment.

Internal meeting routines for research: A key activity of CSL is its vibrant seminar series, currently organised by two senior and one junior researcher. We regularly host seminars that are vital to fostering sustainable research practices and strengthening the CSL community. Approximately 10–15 seminars take place per year. CSL researchers present their own research – in talks or through the discussion of text drafts – and PhD candidates present their mid-term (50%) and final (90%) seminars as part of the seminar series. Moreover, visiting scholars contribute to the seminar series, and we host a number of invited talks by scholars from other academic institutions from Sweden, the Nordic countries, and around the world (including countries such as Australia and New Zealand). In most cases, seminars are held in person, the face-to-face interaction fosters a more personal connection, which in turn is conducive for building collaborative relationships. We also offer seminar opportunities in which external grant applications can be discussed, with a focus on constructive collegial feedback that strengthens applications. Finally, one seminar per year is dedicated to reporting outcomes – anyone with funding from CSL is required to report back on the results of their research. CSL seminars thus provide supportive structures for renewal as well as demand accountability and contribute to quality assurance.

Some of the seminars are co-organised with the respective academic disciplines as well as ROSE or other subject didactic centres. Participation in the seminars varies, which can partly be explained by the fact that both doctoral students and researchers belong to more than one environment (including their own academic discipline or specialisation within), each with a seminar tradition of their own.

In terms of renewal, we are currently testing the inclusion of more interactive seminars on topics relevant across all CSL disciplines and research interests. A recent example was a seminar on the topic of ‘collaborative research with teachers and students’, where we compared notes on our experiences in such collaborative research, discussed best practices and formulated desiderata, such as

the setting up of a dedicated infrastructure at the university that would facilitate the project and contract management for such projects. This seminar was very much appreciated by CSL researchers.

In addition to the seminar series, regular meetings of the CSL doctoral student group (see above) and Advisory Committee constitute a part of CSL's meeting routines. The latter are aligned to the different tasks that the Advisory Committee carries out throughout the year, both in terms of quality assurance (e.g., application assessment and funding decisions; annual report) and in terms of renewal and strategy discussions (e.g., CSL's research strategy; recent local and national developments in the field). The two professors leading CSL are in continuous contact on matters concerning CSL, both with each other and the Chair of the Advisory Committee.

Internal work promoting good research practice: CSL's scientific leadership and Advisory Committee members are moreover active in university-wide or LUN-specific committees, including the LUN Research Committee, the LUN Faculty Executive, the university-wide *Committee for the Professional Training of Teachers and School Principals (Professionsråd)*, the Ethics Committee, the ROSE Executive, and others. This allows them to monitor research-related developments both locally and nationally, to ensure CSL can prepare for potential changes. As mentioned above, we see an opportunity in the national professional training program for teachers, while a potential threat lies in the ongoing discussions about teacher education at national level.

On more mundane matters, we ensure good research practice and promote continuous collegial dialogue on ethics in research through requiring that each application to CSL explicitly considers ethical aspects of the research involved. This is essential, as we often work with young research participants and collect data in classrooms. Externally funded projects are also required to have a data management plan in Sweden. This, however, is not implemented for internal applications and CSL projects, so we may want to discuss whether we also need researchers to address this in their applications and reporting. Data management is closely connected to the storing of the data more long term: in Sweden, there are archiving requirements for research data to be met, and we currently do not follow up on whether these are upheld by our internal projects.

Academic collaborations and networks: As mentioned, the collaboration within the research environment ROSE contributes favourably to the collaboration between the subject didactic centres CSL, SMEER and CSD. This collaboration spans several externally funded research projects involving both senior and junior researchers. Outcomes of this collaboration include joint conference presentations and publications.

Activities within the international network KOSS involve collaboration between senior and junior researchers, as well as PhD students. This is also true for the network EBAN (*Education and Bildung in the Anthropocene*, funded by the Swedish Research Council), where CSL researchers both participate and are part of the management group. Additionally, the graduate school *Knowledge, Subjects and Quality in Teacher Education (KÄKK)*, funded by the Swedish Research Council for the period 2020-2025, exemplifies established collaboration between junior and senior researchers at KAU, University West, and Halmstad University. CSL researchers also actively participate in various Nordic projects and networks, such as the *Nordic Centre of Excellence QUINT*, which includes PhD students and senior and junior researchers. Junior and senior CSL researchers also join forces in the Nordic project *INSPECT (Societal Security after COVID-19 – Inquiring Nordic Strategies, Practices, Educational Consequences, and Trajectories)*, funded by Nordforsk) and the network *ÉQUITÉ (Equal access to knowledge in technology-rich classrooms)*, funded by the Swedish Research Council).

Over the years, CSL researchers have coordinated research networks that invite and include junior researchers and PhD students. Examples of such networks are the *HOLM ReN* ('Research Network') of the *International Association of Applied Linguistics (AILA)*, the *Association suédoise de linguistique appliquée (ASLA)*, *Swedish in Education (SmDi)*, *The Nordic Network for L1 Research (NNMF)*, *Languages in the Multilingual Classroom (LAMUC)*, and the *Linguistic Ethnography Research Network (LESLLA)*. CSL-researchers are furthermore active members in a large number of research networks, such as the newly-founded network on *Educational Linguistics*, and serve on Research Advisory Boards, such as for the *Arctic Research Centre for Children and Youth at Risk*, or as scientific representatives in, for instance, the *Swedish Ethical Review Authority*.

Recent areas of development in the internal academic culture: When considering developments that have had significant impact on our internal academic culture, we would like to highlight a few key aspects: (i) Having external members of the Advisory Committee – in particular having an external Chair who is also an academic – has been contributing a vital ethic perspective to the centre's operations as well as upholding its transparent decision-making processes and accountability. (ii) That two professors share the scientific leadership is beneficial to the centre. They bring complementary perspectives from different disciplines and academic traditions to the table (one professor was recruited internationally). Moreover, not being alone in their role allows them to exchange ideas and concerns related to the centre and discuss actions and solutions. They can also distribute tasks at hand effectively, leading to a centre that is more resilient and less dependent on the availability of a single individual. (iii) Having a very active and collegial, supportive PhD researcher group is invaluable, both in terms of PhD candidates being active in CSL as well as feeling supported by the environment. Overall, we believe that these aspects have contributed to an increase in the number of active CSL researchers over the years. At the same time, this poses the challenge of ensuring everyone is kept informed about current activities and developments within CSL, a task that cannot be accomplished by a web and Facebook presence alone. To do so, we maintain a CSL mailing list where calls, seminars, conferences, and outreach events are regularly announced, and research results are presented in the reporting seminar. Generally, though, we could improve on our communication of other CSL activities and recent centre developments. We have trialled to do so at the start of each seminar, but we have not been as consistent as we could have been. We therefore see this aspect of the centre-internal communication as an area for potential improvement.

5. Collaboration with the surrounding community

CSL primarily engages with the surrounding community through partnerships with teachers and schools, as well as providing expert consultancy to authorities and various organisations. Through collaborative projects with teachers and schools (see above), participation in various outreach activities such as professional development days for teachers, regular contributions to our blog and Facebook group, collaboration with the *Regional Development Centre* at KAU (RUC, see below) and with subject teacher networks and much more, we actively and sustainably foster an ongoing dialogue with the surrounding community.

Table 5.2 BD highlights numerous examples for the period 2021–2023, both regionally and nationally. For instance, CSL regularly engages with *SOL i Värmland*, a regional network of teachers focusing on language and literature in education. CSL also works closely with special education teachers and special needs teachers from the region and participates in a network of 'lead subject teachers' (*förstelärare*) in the English subject. We also provide professional development to upper secondary school teachers. For instance, a cross-disciplinary full-day event is planned to take place at the largest upper secondary school in Karlstad in spring 2025.

Additionally, collaboration with the Regional Development Centre (RUC) is a key aspect of CSL's activities. RUC serves as a hub for teachers, school sector professionals, teacher educators, and researchers from Värmland to connect and collaborate, and it organises events such as the annual *Ämneslärardagen* (a professional development day for subject teachers) in partnership with CSL, CSD and SMEER as well as ROSE. CSL researchers are actively involved in the planning and implementation of this event, which provides a platform for researchers and teachers to discuss shared interests and challenges.

Furthermore, CSL researchers participate in the annual outreach events *Humanistdagarna* and *Grammatikdagen* at KAU as both organisers and presenters. Both events have only recently been established (2023 onwards) but both have been hugely successful. These days do not only involve teachers from the region but also see a substantial participation from upper secondary school students, who are thereby given an opportunity to visit the university campus. Moreover, two recent projects (*TELL-ability* and *Reading the Region*) have trialled student-focused outreach, in order to bridge the

gap between school and the university and to breed an interest in university studies, specifically in languages, literature, and linguistics.

Overall, CSL's regional collaboration is key for much of its research, offering valuable contacts and access to potential research partners among teachers and schools. As an example of recent collaboration, the two funded ULF projects can be highlighted. These projects originated from teachers' ideas and areas of interest that transformed into ongoing research projects (*Predictors of English Language Learning Outcomes in Swedish Secondary School* and *Cooperation between School Library, School, and the Home*) where teachers are collaborating in the project from conception to publication. Similarly, a recent challenge for modern language teachers that was identified during Ämneslärardagen 2024 has evolved into a research project internally funded by CSL for 2025, titled *Step by Step – An Investigation of Mixed-Level Groups in Modern Languages at Upper Secondary School and Their Effects on Teaching*. These are clear examples of a mutual stimulating exchange and impact between CSL and the surrounding community: Research topics and questions are developed based on challenges identified in professional practice (which directly contributes to CSL's renewal of research), while teachers' project participation provides them with excellent professional development opportunities, and resulting findings often result in tools and instruments teachers can and do use in their daily work (hence, CSL work has a direct impact on the surrounding community).

In the public sector beyond schools, our collaboration primarily involves different municipalities and authorities. A recent example includes the commissioned course *Samverkan kring vuxna nyanländas etablering och lärande* ('Collaboration on the Integration and Learning of Adult Newcomers / Immigrants') offered as part of *Yrkesväg Värmland* ('Career Path Värmland'), which was implemented by the Värmland County Administrative Board (*Länsstyrelsen*) in partnership with eight municipalities in Värmland. Several CSL researchers have also been commissioned by the *Swedish National Agency for Education* and have contributed in the private sector, too, e.g., at conferences organised by *Skolporten AB* and *Lärarfortbildning AB* (two companies providing professional development to teachers). Also, the project *Local Reading Practices of Working-Class Males from Rural Woodlands* collaborates with regional libraries and librarians, and a symposium is planned for 2025 where issues regarding reading promotion will be discussed.

Collaboration with the surrounding community also takes place at the national level. A regular activity with a national reach is the CSL blog (sola.kau.se/cslblog), which aims to communicate the research conducted within the centre with the surrounding community. The blog primarily targets teacher students, teachers, and teacher educators, but also appeals to researchers and others interested in language and literature in education. At least one new blog entry is published per month and the posts are contributed both by researchers (including doctoral students) active within CSL as well as invited researchers in language and literature in education from other universities in the Nordic countries and Swedish in-service teachers. Since its inception in 2021, 53 individuals have contributed to the blog. The blog is promoted through our website, Facebook page, and Pedagog Värmland (an online community for professionals across all school forms, teacher educators, teacher students, and researchers), ensuring wide dissemination. A CSL PhD student has been specifically assigned to manage the blog alongside CSL's scientific leadership.

CSL researchers currently have limited industry collaborations, but this is an area with growth potential. Over the past year, we have identified several projects involving regional partners in the cultural sector that could be of interest. Applications for external funding have been submitted, and a doctoral student whose project involves collaboration with a theatre company has been recruited. Furthermore, there is potential to develop projects related to gaming with an international partner based in Karlstad. As a first step, an academic course of 7.5 credits was launched in the autumn of 2024.

Several projects involving CSL researchers and PhD theses written by CSL-funded doctoral students have received significant media attention. For instance, the *Connected Classrooms* project, which investigated changed literacy practices at school in relation to mobile phones and other digital devices, has over the past few years been featured on *Swedish Television* (SVT, the national public broadcaster), as well as national public radio channels and numerous times in the daily press.

Moreover, findings from this project have been discussed in podcasts such as *ForskarFredag* ('Researchers' Friday', the online section of the Swedish European Researchers' Night).

CSL research has also been recognised nationally by the *Swedish Arts Council* (Kulturrådet), including a podcast about boosting reading and school libraries, and internationally at an event hosted by the Singapore National Library. However, as shown in Table 5.2 BD, international collaborations with the public sector are rare. Most of CSL's research projects contribute to the professional development of participating teachers and educators and is hence focused mainly on the Swedish school sector, with the results often being integrated into the respective school's quality assurance work.

The most recent development that constitutes a very significant outcome is that one of CSL's researchers has just been appointed to the national Reading Council (*Läsrådet*) by the Government, as the only member from academia. The Reading Council is an advisory body to the Swedish Arts Council with a specific focus on promoting reading among children and young people. For one of CSL's four priority areas, *Reading as a life-long interest and skill*, CSL research findings will thus directly feed into national policy decisions.

6. Interaction between research and education

Through their departmental affiliation, CSL researchers (including doctoral students) are actively involved in teaching courses across various study programs. This creates a reciprocal interaction between education and research. In our annual report to LUN (*Verksamhetsberättelse*), we reflect and report on the extent to which CSL researchers are involved in undergraduate education. This ensures the topic remains relevant and is highlighted and discussed in the RK.

Most CSL researchers, with their specialised expertise, are involved in various tasks within undergraduate education and administration, which we consider a strength for the research centre. Despite the extensive research activities, the majority of CSL researchers serve as course co-ordinators, teachers, and examiners in both Bachelor (basic level) and Master (advanced level) courses. Their participation spans a wide range of courses and programs, including the diverse primary and secondary teacher education programs, the bridging program for secondary education (*Kompletterande pedagogisk utbildning*, KPU, for students who already hold a degree in specific subjects), special education/special needs programs, the principals' program (*Rektorsprogrammet*), the Master's program in subject-didactics (*Masterprogram i ämnesdidaktik*), and the vocational teacher program (*Yrkeslärarprogrammet*). This ensures the research findings have great relevance for our student teachers and are incorporated into the teaching at Karlstad University. For example, our current visiting scholar has initiated a project where students in the primary teacher education program participate in an existing research project on writing instruction in the Swedish subject. This initiative aims to strengthen the connection between undergraduate education and research. Moreover, some CSL researchers are, for instance, heavily involved in commissioned education (*Uppdragsutbildning*) for the school subject Swedish as a Second Language, undertaking numerous assignments related to teachers and schools at the national level.

For several years, KAU and its teacher education programs have had substantial collaborations with universities and schools in India (Varanasi and Dharamsala), which also included CSL researchers and doctoral students. Student teachers were offered the opportunity to complete their practical placement (*Verksamhetsförlagd utbildning*, VFU) and write their degree theses in India, an option that a solid number of students chose to pursue. For CSL, this collaboration has also resulted in scientific publications. Moreover, CSL members have made significant contributions to education at other universities through Erasmus exchange programs (e.g., at Strasbourg University) and by teaching PhD courses at international universities, allowing us to disseminate our research findings and expertise beyond Karlstad University and Sweden. CSL's research thus reaches many students, not only at Karlstad University but also in a wider context.

Also, CSL researchers are involved in the supervision of Master's theses that fall into the area in their respective academic discipline. In the Master's program in subject-didactics that was jointly

developed with SMEER and CSD, CSL researchers are active as supervisors, examiners, and course co-ordinators. This program is an important part of KAU's teacher education offerings and is aimed at in-service teachers from all forms of schooling. In the program, the exchange between research and education is considerable, as Master's theses can be and are directly linked to ongoing research projects. The program is offered by distance with a 50% study pace. We strive to make this program an integral part of the upcoming national professional training program (*Nationellt professionsprogram*). CSL actively participates in the university-wide *Committee for the Professional Training of Teachers and School Principals* (Professionsråd), which strategically focuses on the professional development and further meriting and accreditation of in-service teachers through additional university studies.

All CSL research projects, whether externally or internally funded, support teacher education through their practice-oriented and subject-specific, didactic focus. A substantial number of in-service teachers participate in these projects, where various collaborative and teaching models are tested and developed. Additionally, CSL funds PhD positions for projects relevant to teacher education, schools, and teachers.

Examples of strong links between research and education include the incorporation of current publications by CSL researchers into the literature lists of various courses. Some of CSL's projects focus on studying the quality aspects of teaching, particularly in relation to digitalisation in schools, which is directly relevant to teacher education and training. There are several instances where CSL research is integrated into undergraduate teaching. In connection with the CSL seminars, open lectures are often held by visiting researchers and the students are given the opportunity to attend CSL's seminars. Furthermore, CSL members have authored textbooks. The research conducted within CSL thus benefits the undergraduate education, and course evaluations indicate that students appreciate the inclusion of research elements in their learning.



The Centre for Language and Literature Education (CSL)

BACKGROUND DATA

Periodic Research Review

INTRODUCTION

Background data covers a three-year period (2021-2023) and contains information about staff, third-cycle education, financial resources and research outputs. Data is collected from the university administrative systems to provide an overview and illustrate preconditions for research at the evaluation unit.

1. STAFF

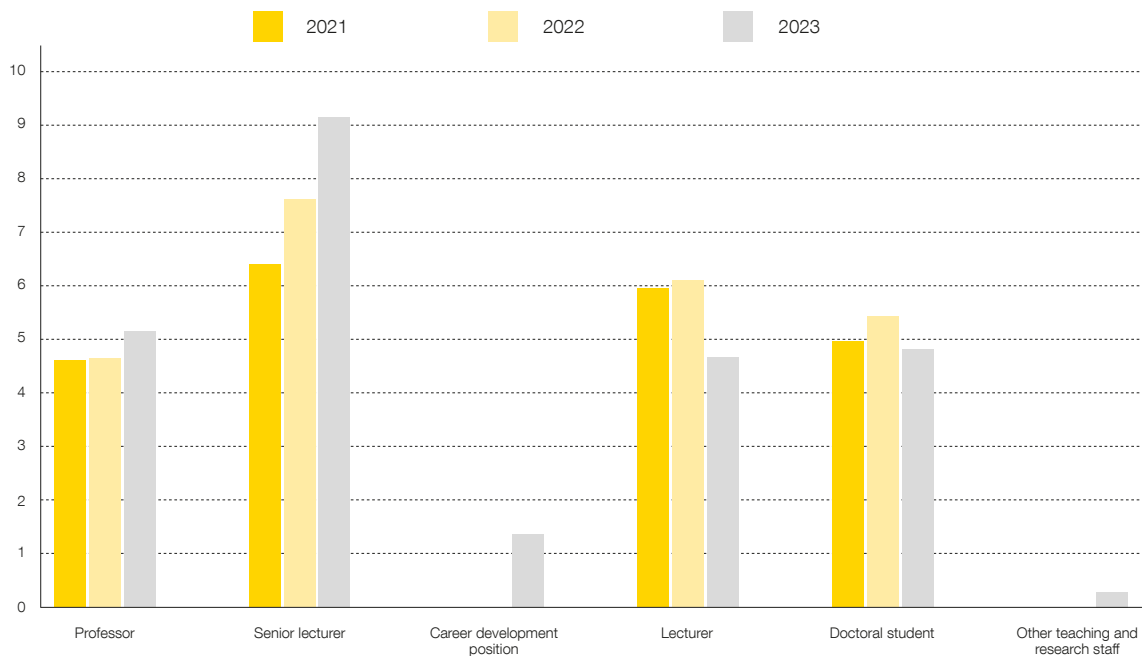


Figure 1.1 Workforce by staff category

The graph shows the workforce, full-time equivalents*, registered for research activity and connected to the evaluation unit over a three-year period. Staff categories are professor, senior lecturer, career-development position, lecturer, doctoral student and other teaching and research staff. See table 1.2 for individuals in each category.

Source: Primula

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

Table 1.2 Staff at the evaluation unit

Staff, based on position, engaged in research at the evaluation unit during 2023.

Position	Subject
Professor	
Olin-Scheller, Christina	Comparative Literature
Sandlund, Erica	English
Schalley, Andrea	English
Tengberg, Michael	Educational Work
Senior lecturer	
Asplund, Stig-Börje	Educational Work
Duek, Susanne	Educational Work
Fredholm, Kent	Educational Work
Kjellén, Marika	English

Lindholm, Anna	Educational Work
Ljung Egeland, Birgitta	Swedish Language
Nilsberth, Marie	Educational Work
Tåqvist, Marie	English
Wijkmark, Sofia	Comparative Literature
Career development position	
Sangfelt, Adrian	Swedish Language
Lecturer	
Byman Friséén, Liliann	Educational Work
Dahlberg, Maria	Swedish Language
Hedelin, Zara	Educational Work
Johansson, Annelie	Swedish Language
Kilman, Joakim	English
Jansson, Denny	Swedish Language
Lindgren, Stina	Swedish Language
Olsson, Pernilla	Swedish Language
Wejrum, Marie	Swedish Language
Doctoral student	
Nilsson, Rickard	English
Nissen, Anna	Educational Work
Other academic staff	
Sturk, Erika	Swedish Language

Source: Primula

Table 1.2.1 Researchers engaged in research at CSL, but not employed at Karlstad University.

Name	Position	Affiliation
Lars Anders Kulbrandstad	Senior Professor	Høgskolan Innlandet, Norway
Carina Hermansson	Professor	University of Borås, Sweden
Jenny Rosén	Senior lecturer	Stockholm University

Table 1.3 Recruitment (Department only)

Table 1.4 Promotion Number of promoted staff, total/women, during 2021-2023. Year of employment certificate.

	2021	2022	2023
Docent promotions	0	0	0
Professor promotions	0	0	1
Total	0	0	1

Source: Varbi/evaluation unit

THIRD CYCLE STUDIES

Table 2.1 Doctoral students

Doctoral students by discipline, year of admission and degree of activity during 2023.

Industry/collaborative/external doctoral students are marked with (I).

Name	Admission subject	Year of admission	Degree of activity 2023	Industry/external/collaboration (I)
Zara Hedelin	Educational Work	2017	25	
Anna Nissen	Educational Work	2019	80	
Jakob Olsson	Comparative Literature	2019	78	
Marie Wejrur	Educational Work	2019	79	
Annelie Johansson	Educational Work	2020	79	
Liliann Byman Frisén	English	2020	79	
Maria Mollstedt	Educational Work	2020	80	(I)
Pernilla Olsson	Educational Work	2020	50	
Sofia Oldin Cederwall	Comparative Literature	2020	82	
Ann-Kristin Hamberg	Educational Work	2022	50	(I)
Rickard Nilsson	English	2022	70	

Source: Ladok

Table 2.2 Completed a Degree of Licentiate or Doctor

Number of students that have completed a Degree of Licentiate and Doctor over the past three years.

Name	Admission subject	Degree	2021	2022	2023
Ann-Kristin Hamberg	Educational Work	Licentiate		1	
Kent Fredholm	Educational Work	Doctor	1		
Stina Gårin	Educational Work	Doctor	1		
Total sum			2	1	0

Source: Ladok

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Table 3.1 Research Funding

Research funds spent at the evaluation unit for the period of 2021-2023. Amounts in SEK 1 000

	2021	2022	2023
Faculty funding ¹	6 356	6 277	6 521
External funding ²	1 481	701	432
Total	7 837	6 978	6 953
Percentage external funding	19 %	10 %	6 %

Source: Raindance, Kuli

¹ Faculty funding includes revenue from governmental funding and other internal incomes that includes, for example, grants and/or compensations from other parts of the University.

² External funding 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.

Table 3.2 External research funding

Distribution of external research funds spent during the period of 2021-2023. Amounts in SEK 1000.

Funding source	2021	2022	2023
EU and Foreign organisations	327	511	423
Swedish Research Councils ¹	1155	190	1
Other Swedish government funders ²	-	-	8
Total	1 481	701	432

Source: Raindance, Kuli / Evaluation unit

¹ Research Councils include the Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet), the Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare (Forte), the Swedish Research Council for Sustainable Development (Formas) and the Swedish Institute for Educational Research (Skolforskningsinstitutet).

² Other Swedish government foundations include the Knowledge Foundation, Vinnova and the Swedish Energy Agency etc.

Table 3.2.1 External research funding – ongoing projects

The table shows research projects during 2021-2023 that CSL are involved in. Amount granted refers to Karlstad University's share. Amounts in SEK 1000. If the project leader is not from CSL, their institution is listed in brackets. (Additional) CSL project members are included in square brackets.

Funding source	Project	Project leader [CLS project member(s)]	Project duration	Amount granted	Coordi- nating	Partici- pating
The Swedish Research Council	TELL-ability: Storytelling as life skill and interactional competence in L2 education	Erica Sandlund [Birgitta Ljung Egeland, Christina Olin-Scheller]	2023-2025	3 297	x	
The Swedish Research Council	Knowledge and Quality across School Subjects and Teacher Education (KOSS network)	Christina Olin-Scheller	2019-2025	1 196	x	
The Swedish Research Council	Knowledge, subjects and quality in teacher training and classrooms. A graduate school for teacher educators (KÄKK)	Johan Samuelsson (KAU) [Christina Olin-Scheller]	2020-2024	20 000		x
The Swedish Research Council	Teaching with Learning Management Systems	Marie Nilsberth [Christina Olin-Scheller]	2020-2024	4 351	x	
The Swedish Research Council	Education and Bildung in the Anthropocene	Kenneth Nordgren (KAU) [Sofia Wijkmark]	2023-2025	1 196		x
The Swedish Research Council	Linking Instruction and Student Achievement (LISA)	Michael Tengberg [Marie Nilsberth, Anna Nissen]	2017-2021	5 802	x	
The Swedish Research Council	Teacher and influencer? Social media as arena for professional practice	Ann-Christin Randahl (Göteborg), [Christina Olin-Scheller, Marie Nilsberth]	2022-2025	2 529		x
The Swedish Research Council	Multilingual Spaces	Marie Källkvist (Lund/Linnaeus) [Erica Sandlund]	2016-2021	7 416		x
The Swedish Institute for Educational Research	Basic Literacy Instruction in Swedish for Immigrants (SFI)	Åsa Wedin (Dalarna) [Birgitta Ljung Egeland]	2020-2023	961		x
The Swedish Institute for Educational Research	Inquiry dialogue to promote comprehension and interpretation (UTFORSK)	Michael Tengberg [Marie Weijrum]	2022-2026	2 361	x	
The Swedish Institute for Educational Research	Approaches to subject-specific teaching for increasing opportunities for learning in vocational education	Stig-Börje Asplund	2023-2025	4 110	x	
The Research Council of Norway	Starting age and Extramural English: Learning English in and outside of school in Norway and Flanders (STAGE)	Pia Sundqvist (Oslo) [Erica Sandlund]	2021-2025	640		x

NordForsk	Inspect: Innovative Solutions for Sustainable Arctic Resource Management	Ane Qvortrup (Southern Denmark) [Christina Olin-Scheller]	2023-2025	1 184		x
NordForsk	Quality in Nordic Teaching – QUINT	Kirsti Klette (Oslo) [Michael Tengberg, Christina Olin-Scheller, Marie Nilsberth]	2018-2024	1 821		x
Riksbankens Jubileumsfond	Non-apologies: The reception of public apologies in mediated interaction in the era of #MeToo	Peter Wikström (KAU) [Erica Sandlund]	2020-2023	3 435		x
Riksbankens Jubileumsfond	Local reading practices of working-class males from rural woodlands: Continuity and change across lives and generations	Stig-Börje Asplund [Birgitta Ljung Egeland]	2023-2026	3 429	x	
Riksbankens Jubileumsfond	Nordic basic schools as past, present and future sites for solving the challenges of making diverse inclusive knowledge-based societies	Fritjof Sahlström (Åbo Akademi) [Marie Nilsberth, Stig-Börje Asplund]	2022-2025	3 833		x
Wettergren Foundation	Reading the Region. Place-based literature and history teaching for a sustainable future	Sofia Wijkmark [Christina Olin-Scheller]	2023	566	x	

Table 3.3 External research funding statistics

Number of grant applications submitted to external funding bodies, number of granted applications, amount granted refers to Karlstad University's share. Amounts in SEK 1000.

	2021	2022	2023
Number of grant applications	19	18	11
Number of granted applications	5	8	5
Amount granted	9 387	16 827	7 659
Success rate ¹	26,3 %	44,4 %	45,5 %

Source: Evaluation unit / Raindance

¹ Success rate is calculated on the number of granted applications in relation to those submitted.

5. EXTERNAL COLLABORATION AND ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT

Table 5.1 Engagement in the scientific community.

The table shows the number of individual peer-review assignments within the evaluation unit during 2023.

Assignment	Total numbers
Plenary or keynote talk at international conferences	6
Assignment as expert evaluator i	3
Assignment as expert evaluator for position of professor, associate professor (docent) and/or senior lecturer	6
Assignment as opponent for PhD thesis	4
Assignment as member of examination board for PhD thesis	3
Assignment as editor or member of editorial board for journal	9
Assignment as reviewer for international journal	29
Member of national scientific councils	6
Member of international scientific councils	6

Source: Evaluation unit

Table 5.2 Collaborative partners

Collaborative partners, reported by the name of organization, for the period 2021-2023. Research collaborations given here are limited to those with joint research grants and/or joint publications with the evaluation unit.

	Regional	National	International
Academic	Regionalt Utvecklingscentrum Värmland (RUC)	Dalarna University Gothenburg University Halmstad University Kristianstad University Linköping University Linköping University Linnaeus University Luleå University of Technology Mälardalen University Malmö University Örebro universitet Stockholm University Umeå University University of Borås University West Uppsala University	Aarhus University Åbo Akademi University Acadia University Associació Catalana de Neohel·lenistes Australian Catholic University Australian National University Copenhagen University Frankfurt University Griffith University Hedmark University of Applied Sciences Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences Nanyang Technical University Singapore Norwegian University of Science and Technology Strasbourg University Tokyo University of Foreign Studies Tromsø University University College London University of Agder University of Akureyri University of Bergen University of Cologne University of Helsinki University of Iceland University of Jyväskylä University of Oslo University of Queensland University of Southern Denmark University of Stavanger University of Sussex University of Trier Western Norway University of Applied Sciences York St. John's University
Industry	Västanå Theatre		
Public sector	Administrative Board of the Värmland County Filipstad Municipality Forshaga Municipality Karlstad Municipality SOL i Värmland (Regional Network for Literacy Development) Sunne Municipality	City of Gothenburg City of Stockholm National Centre for Swedish as a Second Language Örebro Municipality Skövde Municipality Swedish Institute for Language and Folklore Swedish Schools Inspectorate	Centro Cultural Sefarad Buenos Aires National Library of Singapore
Other		National Association of Language Teachers	

Source: Evaluation unit

6. SCIENTIFIC PRODUCTION

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 evaluation unit. 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

To get a complete coverage of what is published within the unit, 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. It covers all subject areas and publication types

Publication extraction for the years 2021-2023 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 2021-2023.

The analysis includes all publications where at least one of the authors is affiliated with Karlstad University. The publication types included in the report consist of article in journal, review article, 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 2021-2023, 23 individuals from the evaluation unit published 108 publications.

Figure 6.1 The annual total number of publications during 2021-2023.

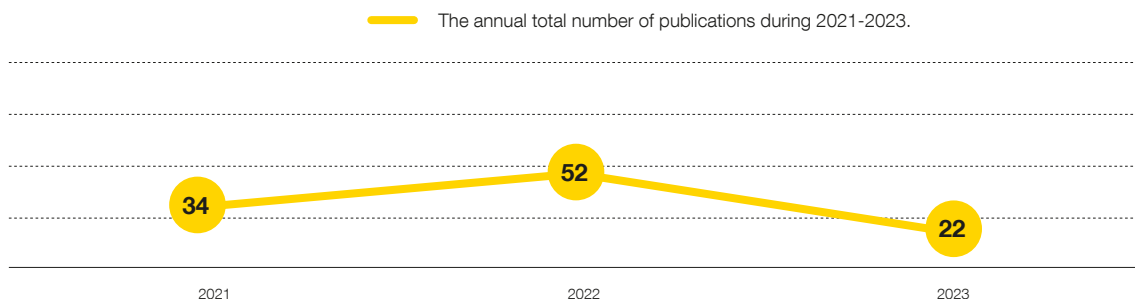


Figure 6.2 Number of peer-reviewed publications per year for the unit (bars). Percentage of peer-reviewed unit publications (line) out of the total annual number of publications.

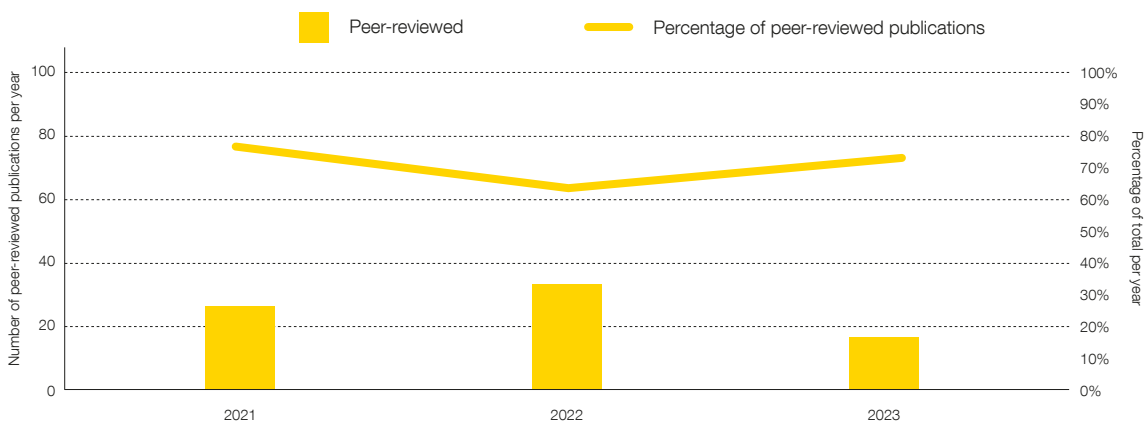
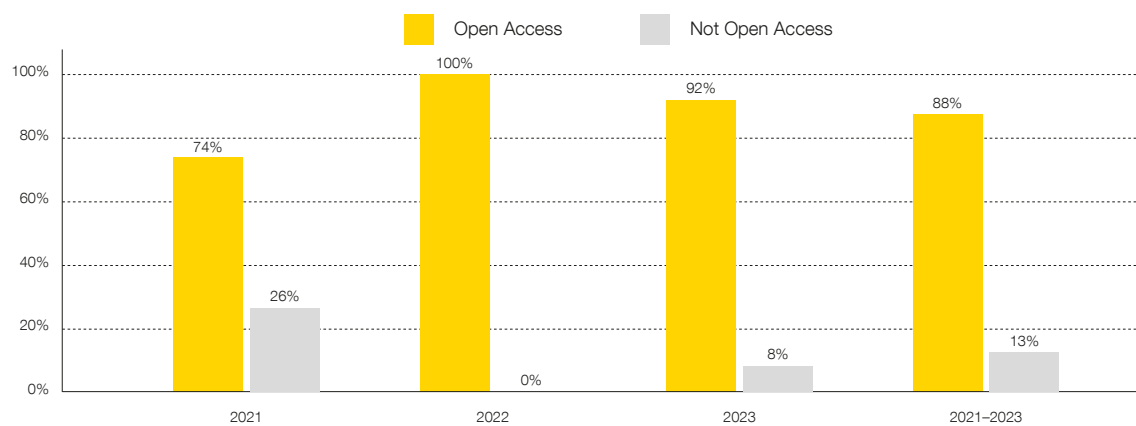
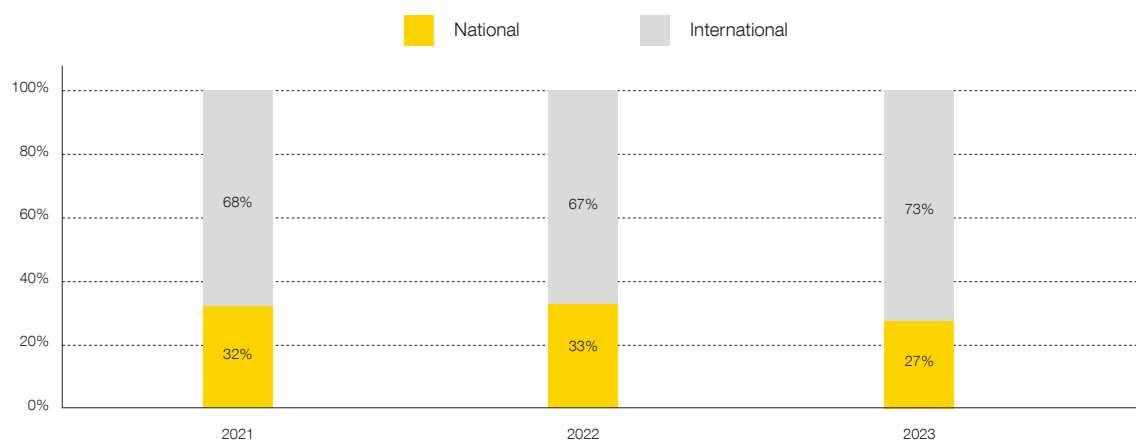


Table 6.3

The unit's publications sorted by publication and content type for the years 2021-2023.

	Peer-reviewed	Scientific but not peer-reviewed	Other (popular scientific, debate)
Article in journal	47	4	2
Article, review/survey	1		
Book		2	
Chapter in book	17	23	
Conference paper*	4		
Report	1	1	
Collection (Editor)	5	1	

*Only published peer-reviewed conference papers are presented. See 'Method' for information on publication types included in this evaluation.

Figure 6.4 Comparison of the percentage of peer-reviewed articles that are open access and the percentage that are not.**Figure 6.5** Proportion of the unit's publications with an international profile and publications where all authors were affiliated to Swedish organizations.

7. RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE

If applicable, specify the most significant research infrastructure available.

Not applicable (other than making use of data archives and language corpora).





April 3, 2025 (updated version)

Evaluation report

Evaluation unit:

Centre for Language and Literature Education, CSL
Karlstad University, KAU

Evaluation panel members:

Senior Associate Professor Nigel Musk, Linköping University, Sweden
Professor Åsa Palviainen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland (Chair)
Professor Kutlay Yağmur, Tilburg University, Netherlands

1. Summary

CSL has identified societally relevant research themes such as digitalisation, multilingualism and diversity and teacher education as its focal research areas, although the latter is in need of further development. Its publications are mostly peer-reviewed and in proportion to the number of CSL members, with an increasing trend towards international and co-authored output. The Centre has been particularly successful in attracting external research funding from national high-stake funders, facilitated by allocating strategic seed funding. CSL's matrix structure is beneficial to fostering and organising subject-didactic research across traditional subject boundaries, thereby creating a critical mass of researchers and facilitating research on complex topics. The two appointed directors and Advisory Committee provide a solid leadership for CSL's activities, although its decision-making processes could be more inclusive. However, there is a lack of formalised means to ensure the recruitment of subject-didactic expertise and the release of research time when funding is available. There is a consensus that CSL has a welcoming, inclusive and collaborative academic culture, where senior researchers serve as good and supportive role models. This culture is facilitated by a regular and varied seminar series. Both centre-internal and centre-external communication is, however, raised as a development area. The societal engagement of CSL researchers is impressive; their outreach activities and collaborations with a range of stakeholders in the field of education at local, regional and national level make for a valuable and impactful societal contribution. Since CSL's

members are also involved in subject teaching, their research and subject didactic expertise is put to good use.

2. Scientific results

CSL has made a strategic choice to focus their research efforts around four broad themes. The self-evaluation reveals that these are active themes with successful externally funded projects associated with them (indicated in parenthesis in the list below):

- (i) *Multilingualism and diversity* (5 externally funded projects, 3 current),
- (ii) *Digitalisation* (5 externally funded projects, 1 current),
- (iii) *Reading as a life-long interest and skill* (8 externally funded projects, 3 current),
- (iv) *Teacher education and professional development* (3 externally funded projects, 0 current, but there are also ULF projects and 1 ongoing PhD project)

Themes (i) and (iii) are currently particularly active, whereas (iv) is presented as a potential development area. The decision as to which themes to focus on is determined in relation to the CSL Advisory Committee's 3-year research strategy. Thus these are likely to remain stable over the coming three years. Another contributing factor to this stability is that one of the assessment criteria for internal seed funding is alignment with CSL's research foci. Limiting the number of themes seems a wise strategy to focus research efforts and encourage collaboration across subject and discipline boundaries.

CSL has no separate explicit publication policy or strategy besides its three-year research strategy and the maxim to "publish as much as possible". It also transpired from the interviews that since publications are part of the annual report, it would be possible to see whether any imbalance were to arise in publications between the four themes over a longer time period, and presumably take measures to rectify this.

According to CSL's Background Data, the centre produced an average of 36 publications per year from 2021-2023 (cf. Fig. 6.1), which works out at roughly 1.4 publications per year per listed member of research staff (cf. Table 1.2). Considering that different research projects may be at different stages when it comes to the publication process, this is a respectable amount. Of these publications almost 70% have been peer reviewed with the great majority of the non-peer-reviewed publications being book chapters (Table 6.3). Almost 4 out of 5 of all publications are open access (Fig. 6.4) and almost 3 out of 5 have an international profile (Fig. 6.5). Furthermore, the proportion of international publications indicates an increasing trend. The same goes for the documented growth at CSL in journal articles vis-à-vis monographs and co-authored as opposed to single-authored publications. All in all, this seems to reflect a healthy balance and is in line with (inter)national trends.

Moreover, a majority of publications have been understandably authored by senior researchers with external funding. To counterbalance this, a sizable portion of CSL's

internal funds have been allocated to less established researchers and PhD students, which seems a judicious policy to generate publications from a broader base.

At present 10 research projects are externally funded, 5 of which are coordinated by CSL. This is an impressive figure, given that these are funded by high-stake funders, such as the Swedish Research Council (VR), the Swedish Institute for Educational Research and the Bank of Sweden's Tercentenary Foundation (RJ). These figures reflect the high success rate in the number of applications submitted (11 in 2023) with 45% (5) being granted. Given that the approval rate for VR project applications was 10% within the educational sciences in 2024, CSL's record stands up well in the face of competition. Furthermore, CSL's policy of allocating seed funding for pilot projects has thus proved to be a successful strategy to facilitate granted applications as well as an important and appreciated training ground for junior researchers. A "robust review process" for funding applications together with annual seminars for reporting back on progress for funded projects makes for enhanced quality assurance and accountability. CSL's seminars devoted to peer-reviewing research applications also provide a useful training opportunity for early career researchers.

Despite the success of procuring external grants, the proportion of spent external funding seems rather low in relation to internal funding, at 11.7% of the total spent research funding (2021-2023) with a decreasing trend (only 6% in 2023). However, these figures appear misleading, since one of the challenges raised both in the self-evaluation and at the interview with senior researchers relates to the financial reporting of CSL-related grants. The question is how this issue can be resolved to allow for greater transparency and accountability.

Despite a strongly increasing trend of spent funding from EU and other foreign organisations (if the background data is reliable to go by), another challenge raised at the interview concerns the lack of EU funding. The senior researchers experienced that they could get support from KAU's Grants Office in writing applications, but not for hosting research programmes. Thus they currently could only envisage being co-applicants in applications submitted by other universities. The Grants Office should therefore investigate the nature of the problem and offer solutions.

CSL particularly raises four areas of substantial scientific results and scientific impact: digital aspects of classroom literacy, assessment of oral proficiency in English, male readers in rural areas and multilingual perspectives. These are in line with three of CSL's focus themes listed above. The fourth theme, *teacher education and professional development*, is notably absent here, but – as mentioned earlier – this is highlighted as a development area. One potential means to encourage more research within this area is to earmark pilot project funding for this specific purpose.

In terms of impact and visibility within the external scientific community, the self-assessment lists several examples, including plenary/keynote speakers at 6 international

conferences in 2023, collaborations with partners at 32 universities abroad and 25 Swedish universities as well as leadership positions in national and international research networks. CSL's impact and visibility is particularly notable through collaborations with the public sector, including several regional and national municipalities and other national organisations. These examples of collaboration with the external community and the many others not specifically mentioned here testify to CSL's active and significant role.

Despite the efforts of individuals and teams of researchers, CSL members were unsure of whether CSL was known outside KAU. There also seemed to be a lack of displaying affiliation to CSL in conference presentations, etc. Another highlighted area for further development to ensure CSL's greater visibility concerns its webpages, which are underdeveloped at present. For example, CSL's joint publications are not so easy to find and the pages in English do not include a publication list. It appears that the list is automatically generated on a Swedish page (as long as the publications are correctly tagged), but there is a technical issue that needs resolving to provide the equivalent page in English.

3. Organization and leadership

The matrix structure of CSL is beneficial for all the researchers who are affiliated with the Centre. They can break away from a discipline-specific focus that can sometimes be isolating. As indicated by senior and junior researchers, in CSL, the researchers see and hear various approaches to educational research from different angles. CSL brings researchers together to create and shape new research ideas with an interdisciplinary approach. Within the matrix structure, four lines of research focus have been determined and developed in line with their societal and academic relevance. In tune with the overarching priorities of LUN and the educational institutions as well as pressing societal issues, CSL researchers offer their expertise by joining forces from different disciplines. Importantly, as staff members highlighted in the interviews, CSL brings together a critical mass of researchers from different disciplines who share common research interests. This fosters collaboration and can lead to joint projects.

CSL members collectively produce interdisciplinary research by integrating knowledge, methods, and perspectives from multiple academic disciplines to address complex societal and educational problems. Thanks to the collaboration of researchers from various subject disciplines, CSL has conducted research on teacher education and professional development including *Teachers in the Borderland between Elementary School, Secondary School, and Comprehensive School* as well as *Teacher and Influencer? Social Media as an Arena for Professional Practice*. By promoting collaboration among researchers from different disciplines CSL's researchers can generate new insights and solutions. Indeed, working on complex topics like diversity and inclusion requires the collaboration of researchers from multiple disciplines and CSL enables such a platform for interdisciplinary collaboration. CSL is formally organised around a decision-making

Advisory Committee and the directorship of two professors. The Committee consists of representatives from the CSL disciplines, a PhD student representative, and an external member from the school sector. The Committee meets once a month to address strategic and policy issues, contribute to the development of research networks, and oversee the centre's quality assurance and budgeting processes.

The budget is prepared annually, and the SEK 5.5 million funding from LUN is allocated to support doctoral students (e.g. some salaries, funding of conference attendance and networking events), early-career and senior researchers (such as postdoctoral grants, seed funding for pilot projects, to cover costs for transcriptions, translations and technical equipment), research seminars and outreach events, and for effective administration and leadership of CSL. CSL submits an annual written report to LUN detailing its activities and performance, serving as a basis for future budget allocations. However, the interviews with the senior staff revealed that it is unclear to them exactly how annual reports influence funding to the respective research centres, including what percentage is subject to competition. This should be made more transparent.

Given the size of CSL's annual budget, it is put to good and efficient use. By way of example, seed funding provided by CSL researchers for development of pilot projects, greatly facilitates successful project funding from the main national funders. Junior researchers also pointed out that they developed their research skills at CSL thanks to its funding of conference trips and networking events, as well as providing leadership and supervision.

The two directors of CSL appointed by the Dean represent two different disciplines, and are experienced (each of them has been at the post for at least six years). The directors feel that they do not have enough time allocated for the leadership tasks, but they manage to smoothly divide the assignments between them.

CSL formulates a research strategy every three years. In the current research strategy, four lines of research focus (see above) have been determined based on the principles of what members are currently doing and what they are good at (by attracting external funding), but also accounting for pressing societal issues. The interviews emphasized the importance of incorporating PhD students' initiatives and interests into the research strategy. The research strategy is in line with the overarching priorities of LUN as well as of KAU, and links to the strategies are also called for in applications for CSL funding. The renewal of the strategies is discussed at the Advisory Committee's retreat. As CSL is about to renew the current strategy they are currently reflecting on issues such as whether to go for breadth and/or for depth. There is no formal appraisal of research strategies but they are discussed when they are up for renewal, and also when they write their annual reports (*verksamhetsberättelser*) for LUN.

One of the challenges raised in the self-evaluation is the matter of recruiting lecturers and researchers with a subject-didactic profile. Swedish and comparative literature received a particular mention in this regard. KAU's geographical location is one contributory factor, albeit an intractable one. However, it is notable that with a lack of

formalised structures in place to coordinate and facilitate recruitment of subject-didactic expertise, CSL members have to resort to “lobbying” to influence the recruitment process. This may be one drawback of CSL’s matrix organisation, but one that needs resolving, not least because of the importance of teacher education at KAU. In the meantime, this vulnerability is being mitigated by “investing strategically in doctoral student positions” and by providing “support for early career researchers through specific postdoctoral funding” (S-E, p. 4). Nevertheless, relying on this strategy ultimately deprives the research environment of “new blood” and potential renewal, although the current practice of hosting one or two guest professors and researchers at a time may offset this issue in the short term.

Without internal or external research funding, it is difficult for early career researchers to make time for research, since only 10-20% of lecturers’ time is allocated for all professional development. This means that internal funding provided by CSL is an essential conduit for subject-didactic research. The fact that CSL has transparent structures in place for seed funding is commendable. Nevertheless, when funding is made available, it may not be possible to allocate research time because of the subjects’ need for teaching staff. This is despite CSL’s efforts to decide on funding before the workload planning for the coming year has started. This is particularly the case for smaller subjects, such as Spanish and Comparative Literature. Ultimately, this issue comes back to recruitment and ensuring that there are sufficient teaching staff to allow for extended research time, and as such this is a structural problem that is beyond CSL’s control.

4. Academic culture

CSL has an inclusive and dynamic membership structure, and does not formally accept researchers into its centre. Rather, it builds on members being active. Junior as well as senior researchers were asked in the interviews whether they found this fluid membership structure challenging, and apart from one voice that said that you might sometimes wonder “who are the CSL researchers”, the interviewees were overwhelmingly positive about this. The academic culture and the research environment were described as welcoming, inclusive, and collaborative. The egalitarian and flexible structure promotes cooperation among researchers in an inclusive manner. The junior researchers in particular liked the support from senior researchers, found them to be good role models, and the thresholds in contacting them to be low. When asked whether their dual affiliation - to both their departments and CSL - caused identity or sense-of-belonging issues, junior as well as senior researchers indicated that this was not a concern. Junior researchers described it as it is not about representing either/or, but rather both.

CSL has its own seminar series alongside more discipline-oriented seminar series. These are important in bringing together researchers with common interests. One junior researcher remarked about this complementary arrangement: “the seminar series is

good when there are only a few members from the subject disciplines interested in the same things". The senior researchers reported that there are around four seminars per semester with around 15-20 participants according to the junior researchers. This seems a manageable number given that it can be a challenge to participate regularly in different seminar series. Those who are funded by CSL are expected to attend, and one seminar per year is devoted to reporting back on outcomes to ensure accountability and quality assurance. Besides providing opportunities for collegial feedback on work-in-progress, seminars are also scheduled to discuss and receive constructive feedback on external grant applications. The latter would be an invaluable forum for junior researchers for learning how to write successful applications, although these seem to have been cancelled in recent semesters (according to the published schedule on the CSL website).

CSL and its members are very active in engaging in national as well as international research networks and in organizing networking events. Many of them serve to support junior researchers and their careers and to help them to connect with other local as well as international researchers. The PhD students and postdoctoral researchers mentioned in the interviews that the financial support that is available to go to conferences, to buy books, to participate in courses, organize writing retreats, hire research assistants, release research time, and to facilitate engagement with and outreach to teachers in the field, is very valuable and important. They stated that it is fairly easy to get money when applying for it, but they also asked for clearer instructions about what can be applied for and for how much.

The self-evaluation report points out three areas of recent development in CSL's internal academic culture (p. 12): having external members of the Advisory Committee, that two professors - from different disciplines - share the scientific leadership (albeit not so recent), and having an active and supportive PhD researcher group. The CSL doctoral student group has regular meetings and the interviewed junior researchers confirmed that this peer group activity is very beneficial to them and their work. It was further mentioned that there is a well-functioning system of mentoring post doctoral researchers. Whereas post doctoral researchers felt they were supported in their career planning, PhD students wished for greater transparency and more information about what funding is available after their PhD. Could the mentoring of PhD students be implemented in a similar way as for post doctoral researchers?

The self-evaluation identifies the centre-internal communication as an area for potential development to ensure that everyone is kept informed about current activities and developments within CSL. There is an ambition to inform and report in relation to seminars and CSL maintains a mailing list to inform about calls, seminars, conferences etc., but it seems as if it is only partly working. By way of example, in the interviews, it appeared that not everyone felt informed about the activities in and decisions made by the Advisory Committee. Moreover, it seems as though CSL is better at informing of what is to come (seminars, conferences) via the mailing list, than reporting back on what has been done. A regular newsletter might be a partial remedy, but it should be noted

that mailing lists and newsletters are static and one-directional. Virtual meeting places, where members can post, share information, and engage in discussions, would more likely enhance communication, stimulate interaction, and make exchanges more dynamic. Whereas software like Microsoft Teams is available, it appears that no such platform is currently integrated into the KAU infrastructure. Another possible two-way forum for disseminating information and discussing matters of joint concern would be to have regular information and planning seminars within CSL's seminar series, say once per semester. This could also contribute to a greater sense of involvement and co-responsibility.

5. Collaboration and societal impact of research

The valorisation and societal engagement of CSL researchers is impressive. CSL researchers engage in societal debates and contribute to educational activities to inform and empower various stakeholders in education. Indeed, there is a rich array of activities that support and encourage collaboration with society, and CSL is thereby able to exert a tangible impact, particularly at the local and regional level. However, when asked whether CSL is generally known outside Sweden in the interviews, members expressed some doubt, which suggests the need to market CSL's activities better to enhance its visibility.

There are several concrete examples of collaboration at both local and national level, which can serve to illustrate CSL's impact. At local/regional level, there are partnerships with schools through externally funded research projects (e.g. Tellability) and ULF projects that are initiated by school teachers "on the ground", which entail practical collaboration between researchers and school teachers. At both regional and national level, CSL members are also commissioned to provide expert consultancy to authorities and other organisations (e.g. through Regional Development Centre at KAU). Examples include consultative collaborations with the Värmland County Administrative Board (*Länsstyrelsen*), the Swedish Arts Council (*Kulturrådet*) and the National Reading Council (*Läsrådet*). One area, which is raised in the self-evaluation as limited at present and therefore a potential growth area, is collaboration with industry. Although the self-evaluation does mention some current and future concrete plans for rectifying this situation, since the research focus is on education, the skewed attention to schools and the public sector is to be expected.

CSL has well-oiled routines and practices to disseminate research findings to the surrounding society. For example, KAU opens its doors to subject teachers in the annually organised *Ämneslärardagen* (a professional development day for subject teachers) in collaboration with the other two educational research centres, *Grammatikdagen* (Grammar day) and *Humanistdagarna*. (Days of the arts), the latter two being open to school pupils too. As part of CSL's outreach efforts outside KAU, CSL members participate in Researchers' Friday (*ForskarFredag*) and in the production of

podcasts (e.g. on boosting reading and school libraries), as well as collaborate with regional libraries and librarians to promote reading.

When it comes to the media, CSL makes its presence felt through social media channels as well as more traditional print media. For example, there is a CSL blog, which is managed by a CSL PhD student (with 53 contributors so far) and promoted through e.g. CSL's webpage and Facebook account. The self-evaluation raises a challenge for its outreach through its publications arising from a general trend towards more international publications in English, which may also reduce the visibility and accessibility of educational research in Sweden. This is a matter of balance, but other forms of outreach delivered in Swedish, including those mentioned above, may have a greater societal impact than academic publications that tend to primarily address the research community.

One important part of successful outreach - with the academic as well as the surrounding community - is to have updated and informative web pages. The self-evaluation report identifies several challenges with the CSL website and this was also elaborated on in the interviews. At the moment there is a faculty administrator who updates the pages and not a researcher. The Swedish version of the website is also more extensive than its English counterparts (see above regarding the lack of a publication list in English), and the information is not always up to date or complete. There was also a frustration expressed in the interviews that the construction of webpages relies on a centralized infrastructure - "it gets stuck in the University system" - and that support from the KAU IT service is needed to make it work. There thus seem to be technical and practical issues, as well as a lack of time and who should be in charge. In the self-evaluation report, it states that "we are currently planning to move away from the model that a faculty administrator maintains and updates the website to one where an active CSL member - ideally an Advisory Committee member - takes on this responsibility, and where clear procedures and timelines exist to ensure a comprehensive and regular updating" (p. 6). It is a wise idea to have a member who is actively engaged in research and in CSL activities take on this task. However, as senior staff generally have limited resources of time, it may be a better solution to have an early career researcher responsible for this and integrate this into their work plan. This means that there would be this one person who is in charge of gathering information, keeping the web pages updated and vibrant, be the appointed contact person with the University administration, IT staff and the KAU communications department, and who may also need to attend an in-service course in e.g. the use of social media, relevant IT and AI tools/apps, etc. In addition to this solution, where it is clear to everyone whom to turn to and who is responsible for the updates, this would foster technical and other skills that are good for professional life for that young researcher.

According to the self-evaluation: "it is essential for CSL researchers to engage in societal debates and contribute to activities and publications intended for teachers and aimed at on-the-ground teaching" (p. 8). As has emerged from the above, CSL is particularly successful in this regard.

6. Relationship between education and research

CSL is primarily oriented towards research rather than education, as set out by the *Rules of Procedure for Research Centres*: “As a general rule, research centres should not conduct teaching” (6.1.1). The same generally applies to PhD education, even though doctoral students can be funded by CSL and supervised by senior members. Nevertheless, since members of CSL are employed by the subject disciplines, most conduct teaching and supervision as well as research. Therefore, there is an indirect relationship and responsibility for education among CSL’s researchers. Member’s involvement in both teaching and supervision in undergraduate, postgraduate and PhD education as well as administration includes a range of teacher education programmes, where practice-oriented and subject-didactic knowledge and research findings are of particular relevance. In the interviews, two of the junior researchers highlighted how they were able to integrate knowledge and findings from their own research in their teaching and one particularly mentioned that their director of studies discussed how to make use of their specialist knowledge and “was good at putting us in courses”.

The self-evaluation raises some specific examples of how CSL’s researchers contribute to educational output at KAU and beyond. One such case is how a current visiting scholar has initiated a project on writing instruction in the subject Swedish within the primary teacher education programme. Digitalisation within schools is mentioned as one of CSL’s research themes that has been integrated into undergraduate teaching. Besides incorporating CSL publications in course reading lists, CSL’s members have also authored textbooks that are used within various courses. Involvement in commissioned education in the school subject Swedish as a Second Language is also given a mention. Furthermore, teaching through an Erasmus exchange programme with Strasbourg University and collaboration with universities and schools in Varanasi and Dharamsala in India by CSL researchers and doctoral students are offered as concrete examples of international educational contributions.

All in all, the links between education and research are deemed to be strong among CSL’s members, despite education not being the direct remit of the Centre. Finally, CSL’s annual report to LUN also reflects and reports on “the extent to which CSL researchers are involved in undergraduate education” (S-E, p. 14), which ensures regular attention to this reciprocal relationship.

7. Recommendations for further development

- KAU and its Grants Office should investigate how the leadership, environment and infrastructure could be improved to make it possible for centres such as CSL to apply for EU funding as main applicants and to host EU research programmes.
- LUN could improve the transparency in how annual reports influence funding to the respective research centres, including what percentage is subject to competition.
- More formalised structures could be in place to facilitate and plan the recruitment of lecturers with subject-didactic expertise, for example by creating departmental or subject-specific councils (*bemanningsråd*), which include a representative from CSL.
- The Advisory Committee could earmark pilot project funding for *teacher education and professional development* in order to strengthen this strategic research theme, which is currently under-developed.
- The marketing and visibility of CSL should increase, making CSL better known outside KAU, in national as well as international research communities. CSL should consistently and explicitly be mentioned in, e.g., conference presentations, funding applications, and scientific articles.
- The CSL website (in Swedish as well as in English) should be improved and updated. It is strongly recommended that one person - who is an active researcher - be appointed who is in charge of and maintains the website. An early career researcher who has the task as part of their paid institutional duties would benefit professionally from having this task.
- As a complement to physical or online meetings, consider virtual platforms, such as Teams, Sharepoint or other technical platforms, for disseminating news and other information and facilitating two-way written communication and discussion.
- Be sure that the decisions and activities of the Advisory Committee are consistently mediated to all members.
- Invite and engage all members of CSL in discussing and contributing to the renewal of its research strategy and planning of CSL's activities. Setting aside a seminar slot on a regular basis could be a possible forum for this.
- Implement a mentoring system also for PhD students to support them in their career planning.
- Provide junior researchers with clearer guidelines about what funding they can apply for and for how much.