MINOR FIELD STUDIES

Minor Field Studies (MFS) is a scholarship programme funded by Sida. The programme is aimed at students at first cycle (Bachelor's level) and second cycle (Master's level: one-year and two-year master's programmes).

MFS offers you the opportunity to collect data or carry out a field study for your degree project or thesis in countries where the Swedish government has active strategies for development cooperation, for a minimum period of eight weeks (56 days). You may apply for MFS regardless of your field of study at Karlstad University. The field study is conducted with supervision in Sweden and with a contact person in the host country.

Through MFS, you will contribute to the dissemination of knowledge about international development cooperation, both within the university and to various actors working with development cooperation in Sweden and abroad. You will also gain international experience and a deeper understanding of yourself and the world around you.

Please note that your field study must be linked to one or more of Sweden's strategies for development cooperation in the country you intend to visit, as well as to current research and international collaboration at your faculty/department.

Please note: MFS scholarships are available to students who are Swedish citizens or who have been registered residents in Sweden for at least one year.

SWEDISH DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Swedish development cooperation focuses on creating conditions for improved living standards for people living in poverty and oppression. Sweden's development cooperation and humanitarian assistance are directed by the Government through strategies that may apply to a country, a region, or a specific thematic area. Authorities such as Sida, which is both an administrative authority and an expert authority, are tasked with implementing the strategies and are responsible for how the work is carried out.

The direction of Swedish aid is determined by the government through the policy framework, which ensures that Swedish development cooperation is at the forefront and is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable and gender-equal. The aid reform agenda, Aid for a New Era – Freedom, Empowerment and Sustainable Growth, was presented on 14 December 2023 and sets seven thematic priorities:

1. Combating poverty through job creation, trade and education.
2. Improving health for the most vulnerable.
3. Promoting freedom and combating oppression.
4. Expanding climate aid and addressing environmental challenges.
5. Strengthening gender equality and empowering women and girls.

6. Linking development aid to migration policy.
7. Providing improved humanitarian support.

Read more about the government's reform agenda:
Aid for a New Era – Freedom, Empowerment and Sustainable Growth - Regeringen.se (in Swedish)

There are two types of aid: development cooperation and humanitarian aid. Development cooperation is long-term support for the development of other countries. Humanitarian aid is emergency support in crisis situations.
Read more: Different kinds of aid - Openaid - Sida

ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION

Application is open to students who:

- are carrying out a degree project or dissertation at first cycle (Bachelor's level) or second cycle (Master's level: one-year and two-year programmes).
- are actively enrolled at Karlstad University at the time of application
- are Swedish citizens or have been registered as residents in Sweden for at least one year at the time of application.
- have never started third cycle education (doctoral level).

Selection of project participants is made based on the following assessment criteria:

- the academic quality of the field study and its relevance to the student's programme or subject,
- that the study is carried out in a country where Sweden conducts development cooperation and is aligned with one or more strategies of relevance within Swedish development cooperation in the host country in question,
- the field study's connection to ongoing research or international work at Karlstad University,
- that the field study period covers at least eight (8) consecutive weeks, corresponding to at least 56 days, and no more than twenty (20) consecutive weeks, counted from the entry date into the host country to the exit date.
- the applicant's personal suitability and maturity to carry out the proposed field study,
- the applicant's ability to practically carry out the planned field study based on visa regulations, necessary permits, vaccinations and restrictions.
- that a contact person in the field is attached to the study and supports the student in the implementation of the study,
- that the student has been assigned an academic supervisor at Karlstad University,
- that the thesis or degree project is written in English,
- that the applicant has not previously been granted an MFS scholarship for the same level of education,

- that the applicant has not been granted another Sida-funded scholarship for the field study period. If a student applies for scholarships from another funder for the same field study period, this must be stated in the student's application.

POSSIBLE HOST COUNTRIES

The MFS scholarship gives students the opportunity to carry out their field studies in countries where Sweden conducts development cooperation. Countries and regions where the Swedish government has active strategies for development cooperation are listed on Openaid under Countries and regions. These strategies describe the countries and thematic areas that Swedish development cooperation prioritizes and the goals to be achieved.

There are two types of strategies:

- **Geographical strategies:** apply to individual countries or regions.
- **Thematic strategies:** deal with specific issues, such as human rights, democracy or development of the justice sector.

Useful resources:

- Explore the active strategies of the Swedish government: Government strategies - Regeringen.se (in Swedish)
- Check strategies by country on the Openaid website: Openaid - Sida
- Read Sida's current bilateral, regional and thematic strategies: Strategies – Sida

If the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs advises against travel

Please note that MFS funding cannot be granted for a country or region to which the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) advises against travel. Security situations in different countries and regions can change rapidly. MFA is responsible for informing the public about risks associated with travelling to particularly dangerous areas.

A useful tip when preparing your MFS application is to carefully investigate the security situation in the area you plan to visit. You are responsible for checking whether the MFA advises against travel to the country you intend to apply for.

Ministry for Foreign Affairs travel advisory under which an MFS study cannot be carried out:

- “advice against non-essential travel throughout the country”
- “advice against all travel throughout the country”
- “urging all Swedes to leave the country/part of the country”

Please note: If the advice against non-essential travel/all travel applies only to a part of a country, students may carry out an MFS study in a safe part of the country, provided they can travel there and back without passing through an area subject to the advisory.

Please note: If an advisory is issued or changed after departure and concerns “non-essential travel”, the university, in consultation with the relevant Swedish mission abroad and the student, must decide whether it is appropriate to remain in the country or to return to Sweden.

Please note: If an advisory is issued or changed after departure and concerns “all travel”, the student must return home within 30 days.

Please note: If an advisory is issued or changed after departure and “urges Swedes to leave the country/part of the country”, the university must ensure that the student immediately complies with the advisory and leaves the country/part of the country.

If MFA issues an advisory while you are in the host country, you are not required to meet the condition of spending at least eight weeks in the field. This is stated in the general terms and conditions for MFS.

Karlstad University must also ensure that students are not staying in a country/part of a country if it is deemed to pose a significant risk to the student’s personal safety and health, or to that of individuals in the host country, even if no official MFA travel advisory has been issued.

Countries subject to MFA travel advisories (in Swedish)

SCHOLARSHIP AMOUNT AND BUDGET

The MFS scholarship is 35,000 SEK, which you can use for travel, accommodation, vaccinations and visas, among other things. The scholarship is not intended to cover all expenses during your time abroad, but needs to be supplemented with, for example, study grants from CSN.

SUPERVISOR AND CONTACT PERSON

When you are going to do an MFS study, you need both an academic supervisor at Karlstad University and a contact person in the host country. The Swedish supervisor is responsible for the academic supervision, while the contact person in the host country helps on site but is not responsible for the content of the study.

The supervisor at Karlstad University must be familiar with the student's planned study and the method that the student intends to use. During the fieldwork, the supervisor in Sweden must be available to assist with theoretical/methodological problems that may arise during the field study. After the field study has been completed, the supervisor must continue his/her role as supervisor for the thesis writing.

When applying for an MFS, you must upload a certificate from your supervisor at Karlstad University that attests to the academic quality and relevance of the study.

A contact person in the host country can be employed by an authority, organization, company or development project. The contact person helps with practical matters before and during the fieldwork. This can include, for example, finding interviewees and/or giving advice on accommodation and transport. Please note that the contact person does not receive any

compensation from Sida or Karlstad University, so expenses related to this should be included in the project plan.

When applying for MFS, the student must upload a certificate from their contact person in the field showing that they will help with practical arrangements. The certificate must be written in English.

Tips on how to find a contact person in the field:

- Search for organizations that you are interested in and see where they are located in the world. Maybe one of them is located in an MFS country, or has a partner in a partner country? Alternatively, find a host country that you are interested in and investigate which organizations are there.
- Ask your department if they have any networks or collaborations abroad.

THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE APPLYING FOR MFS

- The field study must be relevant to your program or subject and linked to one or more of Sweden's development cooperation strategies in the host country in question.
- An MFS study can only be carried out in a valid host country. It is important to be aware of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' advice against travel to certain countries and regions.
- An MFS study must be at least eight consecutive weeks (56 days) and no more than 20 weeks long.
- The degree project resulting from your MFS study must be written in English.
- It is common, and recommended, for two students to travel together. Keep in mind that all MFS applications are individual, which means that if two students write a thesis together, they must apply individually. Clearly state in the project description who of you will do what during the field studies.
- Reflect on ethical guidelines when collecting data. Check with your supervisor/course coordinator.
- Some countries require research permits for an MFS study, it can take time to apply and get permission granted.

THE APPLICATION FOR MFS

The application for an MFS scholarship must be written in English and include the following:

- Project description (Max. 5 pages)
  - Background of the project
  - Description of the thesis project and how the study relates to one or more of Sweden's strategies for development cooperation in the host country in question.
  - Purpose and research question
  - Method
  - Alternative plan for the study "plan B"
  - Time plan for the field period
  - Budget for the field trip
- Motivation letter
  - Should be written in English and clearly explain why the applicant wishes to carry out an MFS
- Certificate of results from Ladok
  - Can be downloaded from https://www.student.ladok.se
- Letter of recommendation from a supervisor at Karlstad University
- Letter from a contact person in the field
  - The certificate must include the type of support the contact person will provide both in terms of practical issues but also support for the field study itself, for example contact with organizations, finding people to interview, etc.

INTERVIEW WITH MFS OFFICER

A student applying for MFS will be invited to an interview with the MFS officer to present their project orally and demonstrate how it relates to one or more of Sweden’s strategies for development cooperation in the country they intend to visit, as well as to current research and international collaboration at their faculty/department. Applicants will also be asked to describe how they have prepared in practical terms for the field study.

GRANTING OF MFS SCHOLARSHIP

The Scholarship Committee at Karlstad University makes decisions about scholarships and assesses applications based on:

- Academic relevance
- Connection to Sweden's development cooperation strategies in the host country in question
- Quality of the application
- Personal maturity and preparation to complete the MFS

The Scholarship Committee uses the application and interview as assessment data.

AFTER APPROVED MFS APPLICATION

Students who are awarded an MFS scholarship need to attend a mandatory MFS preparation meeting at the International Office at Karlstad University. During the meeting, the student will receive information about the scholarship, insurance, personal safety, health, and practical details before, during, and after the planned field study.

VISA AND TRANSPORT

The student must apply for a visa personally through the host country's embassy, consulate, or, where applicable, via a travel agent. Please note that a tourist visa may be easier to obtain than a student visa. The visa must be valid for at least 56 days to cover the entire field study period; as an MFS fellow, you are not allowed to leave the host country during this period.

Students should book return flights to the destination and include cancellation protection. Flights arriving during the day should be chosen. Once the ticket is booked, a copy of the ticket should be sent to exchange@kau.se. The insurance certificate can only be issued after this has been completed.