Call for Proposals

SKILLS & TOOLS
ACADEMIC SHORT COURSES 2024

**DEADLINE FOR
SUBMISSIONS:
15 MAY 2024,
12.00 GMT**

Do you have teaching experience in areas related to academic skill development? Do you want to contribute to strengthening capacity and skills among the next generation of scholars in urban transport and mobility?

This Call presents a potential opportunity for you to develop, teach and lead academic "skills & tools" short courses for young scholars in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The Volvo Research and Educational Foundations (VREF) is an independent entity that inspires, initiates and supports research and educational activities that can contribute to new knowledge on broad issues related to urban mobility and access. VREF's mission is to support the development of research on ideas, approaches and solutions that can contribute to equitable access and sustainable urban mobility, as well as to contribute to educational and outreach programs in these areas.

An important goal is also to support dissemination and implementation of research findings among both university researchers, practitioners, decision-makers and other relevant stakeholders, see www.vref.se.

Through this call VREF invites applications for grants to support developing and carrying out new university-based short courses that will be implemented within the VREF program "Mobility and Access in African Cities" (MAC), see below.

The Call is an opportunity for scholars and teachers in Sub-Saharan Africa to make a concrete contribution to strengthening the academic skills of next generation African researchers in fields related to urban transport and mobility.
Deadline for submission of applications is 15 May 2024, 12:00 GMT.

1. BACKGROUND

Since 2019 VREF has funded and coordinated a program for strengthening research and education on "Mobility and Access in African Cities" (MAC) with a specific focus on Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).

The purpose of the MAC program is:

- to increase the knowledge and capacity base on issues related to equitable access and sustainable mobility at universities in SSA;
- to strengthen academic capacity and skills among university researchers and students within the area of urban transport and mobility at universities in SSA;
- to disseminate knowledge and stimulate dialogues among researchers and other stakeholders in urban transport and mobility in SSA.

For more information on the MAC program, see www.vref.se

VREF | VOLVO RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

"SKILLS AND TOOLS" ACADEMIC SHORT COURSES

Strong academic skills are crucial for the ability of young African scholars to successfully carry out their emergent work, develop their careers, and contribute to international knowledge building. The current initiative seeks to strengthen concrete academic skills ("tools of the trade") among students and young researchers at universities in SSA. The Call is directed at senior teachers and other scholars with relevant pedagogic experience who are interested in contributing to shaping and supporting the next generation of SSA scholars in areas related to urban transport and mobility.

More specifically, the work should be guided by the following dimensions:

- By "short courses" is meant intensive academic courses/training sessions of short duration (1 – 15 days, consecutive or non-consecutive) that are carried out during a limited time (e.g. 1 -3 months).
- The target groups for the short courses are first and foremost young scholars based at SSA universities (i.e. advanced master students, Ph.D. candidates, early-career researchers at maximum 5 years after Ph.D. degree).
- The short courses may, however, also be made available to other scholars with interests in improving their skills.
- VREF recognizes that it is often not plausible or advisable to offer courses on a "one course for all" - basis; for this reason, proposed courses should be designed to be appropriate for specific target groups of young scholars.

The accepted courses will be organized under the auspices of VREF (university accreditation or approved course credit will not be required). VREF will be responsible for disseminating course information within the MAC community.

2. CALL FOR PROPOSALS:
GRANTS FOR DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING "SKILLS &TOOLS" SHORT COURSES

The current Call invites applications for grants to support teachers, lecturers and other scholars based at SSA universities to develop, lead and carry out short courses for young scholars in <u>one</u> of the following specific skill areas:

1. Scientific writing – "how to" write scientific papers, conference papers and other materials for publication
   + Examples of areas of skill development that could be included in the course:
   - Skills in writing journal articles, conference papers, literature reviews, policy briefs (note that the proposed course should focus on one or more of these areas);
   - Composition skills, e.g. writing an abstract, developing an argument, focusing/sticking to the topic, referencing correctly;
   - Publication skills and strategies, e.g. choosing a publication, what referees/editors look for, dealing with critique or rejection.

2. Research project management – "how to" write research proposals and lead research projects; financial management of research projects
   + Examples of areas of skill development that could be included in the course:
   - Skills in planning research projects; developing project design
   - Skills in preparing a grant proposal
   - Leading/managing a large research project, e.g. financial management, conflict resolution

3. Communicating research results – "how to" effectively present research results to various target groups + Examples of areas of skill development that could be included in the course:

- Skills in developing clear presentations, e.g. focusing the message, choosing presentation technique, structuring for clarity
- Skills in effectively using visual aids and other tools
- Tailoring presentations for different audiences

PRIORITIZED CRITERIA FOR COURSE PROPOSALS

The Call focuses on developing, organizing, and teaching a "skills & tools" short course which can be offered to students and young scholars at SSA universities on up to three separate occasions.

Successful proposals must fulfill the following criteria:

- the proposed short course must be led by a SSA university-based teacher/scholar with documented, relevant teaching and research experience; the course leader may also enroll other qualified scholars as part of the teaching team;
- the short course must be organized as an online course;
- the short course must be carried out in 2025;
- the short course must include a concrete plan for conducting a course evaluation.

In addition, VREF encourages course proposals which also fulfil one or more of the following criteria:

- short courses that engage teachers/scholars from two or more universities in Sub-Saharan Africa;
- short courses that are taught by teachers/scholars working within the broad area of mobility and transport studies (or related areas that are relevant for such studies);
- short courses that reflect gender balance in the teaching team;
- short courses that engage relevant specialized expertise (both within and beyond SSA) to complement the competence of the core teaching team.

Call Budget and Cost Framework for Applications

The total budget for this Call is 800,000 SEK. VREF envisages supporting up to four short courses in 2024-2025, each with a grant up to a maximum of 200,000 SEK (including all overheads), depending on the scope and duration of the proposed course. The grant can be used to cover costs for salaries/renumerations, course materials, travel for teaching team, and other costs directly linked to course development and implementation.

VREF's review and decision-making process – timeframe

All qualifying applications will be reviewed by VREF in May-June 2024. VREF will inform all applicants on the outcome of the process by 30 June 2024.

3. SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

An application for a project grant must be submitted by e-mail to secretariat@vref.se and received no later than **15 May 2024, 12:00 GMT.** VREF will confirm receipt of each application by e-mail to the main applicant.

How to apply?

Please, see the next section "Application guidelines and instructions" for detailed instructions.

Applicants are welcome to contact VREF by e-mail secretariat@vref.se for further information or for clarification regarding the requirements for applications. To ensure maximum transparency in the recruitment process, all questions and VREF's answers to them will be published in a Q&A page on the VREF web site.

Application Guidelines and Instructions

All applications for course development funding within this Call must:

+ be structured and delineated in accordance with the guidelines stated below;
+ be written in English;
+ be delivered according to the following technical specifications:
  - consist of a maximum of 3 single pages, excluding the front page and short CV's (max 3 pgs/cv) for key researchers in the project
  - be saved in PDF file format (of ready-to-print quality)
  - be laid out in European A4 paper format, with a minimum font size of 12 pt and margins of at least 25 mm;

Applications exceeding the specified maximum number of pages will be rejected. Detailed instructions on the content and format of the application are provided below.

4 . 1 . INFORMATION TO BE GIVEN ON THE FRONT PAGE
(NB that the front page and annexes are not included in the 3-page limit)

+ **Name and contact details of main applicant**
The main applicant (project leader) must be an individual, not an organization. Please note that only one person shall be the main applicant. State name, title and function, affiliation and all contact information.

+ **Course title and course summary**
The title should be concise and informative, preferably including keywords characterizing the envisioned content and direction of the course.

+ **Names, affiliations and contact information of lead teacher and core teaching team members**
List the names and affiliations of proposed teaching team members, plus contact information.

4 . 2 . STRUCTURE OF THE APPLICATION
The application should present an overview of the preliminary ideas and goals that will guide the work of developing the course (rather than a detailed course plan or syllabus) and should be structured around the following parts:

- **Objectives**
  Identify the purpose and focus area of the course, as well as envisioned targeted groups. The application should also indicate skill goals for young scholars who successfully complete the course ("upon completion of the course, students will have acquired skills in the following areas…").

- **Preliminary ideas regarding course content and approach**
  Describe the proposed course content, overall course design, proposed teaching approaches (e.g. lectures/seminars/small group discussions/individual practical exercises), preliminary course materials, and preliminary plan for carrying out course evaluations.

- **Preliminary plan for course teachers, organization, budget, timeframe**
  The application should provide an indication of how the course will be organized (e.g. number and timing of sessions; consecutive/non-consecutive); who will be the main teacher responsible for the course; preliminary ideas about proposed teachers/lecturers in the teaching team in specific areas; and how the course will be administrated and coordinated. The VREF accepts that there may be further considerations and recruiting of teachers needed after the funding decision by VREF.

This section should also include a proposed time schedule for when the course syllabus will be finalized (i.e. ready for distribution), as well as when the course will be carried out. NB in order to allow time for VREF to spread information about the course to prospective students, the course syllabus must be finalized <u>at least six weeks prior to the planned start of the course. Based on VREF's experience of the time needed to develop and plan such courses, it is envisaged that courses will be developed, planned and announced in the 2nd half of 2024, and courses carried out in the first half of 2025.</u>

The application should include an estimated budget for the project, see below. NB all overheads, VAT and similar costs must be included. VREF will be responsible for spreading information about the course among its network, but the applicant will be expected to take full responsibility for course registration, logistics in carrying out the course (e.g. virtual and other resources), and course evaluation.

VREF advises applicants to present the estimated project budget according to the structure below.

(Note: all estimated budgets will be Subject to final discussion and negotiation with VREF prior to acceptance and contracting).

Please, state all costs and funding information in SEK (1 SEK = approx. 0,09 Euros)	
Funding	
Requested VREF funding	
Other expected funding (if any)	
Total cost	

Distribution of costs	
Staff costs (main applicant)	
Costs for other engaged staff (teachers,administrative staff, etc)	
Other direct costs (material, travel, licences, logistics, etc)	
University overhead	
Total cost	

+ Annexes: CVs and possible bibliography/course materials
A short CV (maximum 3 pages) for the main applicant should be provided (as well as CVs of other core teachers as identified in the application). Again, CVs and possible bibliography/lists of course materials are not included in the 3-page limitation for the application