



Nordic Summer University
Research, Networking, Folkbildning

Call for project proposals 2024-2026

**Deadlines: 15 May 2023 for community review
and/or 27 July 2023 for review during the NSU
Summer Session**

The Nordic Summer University (NSU) calls for project proposals for three-year study circles (2024-2026). We seek proposals for new scholarly networks addressing critical issues in culture, science and society. Founded in 1950, NSU is an independent, non-profit scholarly institution that provides platforms for networks and collaborations across disciplines in the Nordic and Baltic regions. The activities of NSU are based on three concepts:

Research: NSU provides frameworks for critical scholarship with relevance for culture, science and society, where scholars and practitioners explore ideas and develop knowledge on equal footing.

Networking: NSU brings together university scholars, students, artists and other professionals from different disciplines, countries, generations and institutions in activities that transcend institutional hierarchies.

Folkbildning: NSU combines two traditions: the continental ideals of learning and cultivation of the self and the Nordic heritage of *folkbildning* and self-organization, with its investments in open access education and collaboration through participation and active citizenship. All aspects of NSU are democratically organized by the participants, including decisions on the NSU study program.

What is a study circle?

Activities in the NSU are based on thematic study circles, which are forums for participants to present, discuss, and develop their scholarship. The work done in a study circle aims to do new and innovative research in the Nordic and Baltic context and provides a surplus for the Nordic and/or Baltic region. NSU currently consists of eleven study circles in total: seven study circles running for three years each and four ad hoc study circles starting in 2022 and running for one year. Each study circle has two people who function as coordinators, who are responsible for organizing the circle's activities. Each circle meets twice per year, once in the winter (January-April) in a so-called winter symposium in the Nordic-Baltic region, and once in the summer during the annual weeklong NSU summer session, which is typically held the last week of July. The winter symposia are organized by the circles themselves in collaboration with a local partner (another network, a university department, a cultural institution, or similar). The summer session is organized by NSU, where all circles meet in the same location. The circles conduct parallel symposia during the day and partake in joint activities in the evening. For more information about current study circles, visit <http://nordic.university/study-circles/>

What can NSU offer?

NSU offers:

- a platform for collaboration;
- extended networks of people, their in-kind contributions in voluntary work and personal talent; and
- over 70 years of inherited practice and tradition around democratic, grassroots organisation and connections to various institutions and organisations across the Nordic- Baltic regions.

NSU is well-known in the Nordic countries and beyond, and as such offers a good network to attract researchers, scholars, students, artists and professionals to participate in your study circle. NSU will provide you, as circle coordinators, with access to and support from an

established network with a long experience in organizing symposia, often with a highly experimental setup, and with a strong emphasis on democratic characteristics and values.

NSU is currently not able to guarantee funding for the circle activities for a three-year period. At the moment, the funding is secured for 2023 and the funding working group (established by the General Assembly in summer 2021) is working both on project applications to secure funding for 2024 and on securing new, long-term partnerships. Currently funding is secured annually, and requires active input from the coordinators of the study circles. NSU aims to provide financial support for coordinators and participants to attend winter and summer symposia. Other support includes online hosting of events, in case symposia need to be online due to the pandemic situation. The NSU Board also provides support regarding funding applications, financial management and logistics. The Summer Session is hosted and organised by volunteers within NSU, which means study circle coordinators can focus on the content of their summer session program.

Application requirements

NSU gives priority to interdisciplinary applications with an original approach and content, with interested participants from a minimum of three Nordic-Baltic countries, with a plan of the activities of the circle. NSU strives to support topics that are not already established in universities, as well as projects that cross the borders between disciplines and/or academia and society. Early career scholars are especially encouraged to apply.

The proposals for new study circles must include:

1. Aims and goals of the project, including an outline of:
 - A. The scholarly context, central questions, and the methodological points of departure for the prospective study circle.
 - B. Considerations regarding impact and outcomes in the Nordic-Baltic context. Depending on the aims of the circle, the outcomes may vary, but possible outcomes include publications (both academic and directed at the general public), collaborations, and exhibitions.
 - C. Strategies to meet the objectives and values of the Nordic Summer University described in §1 in the [statutes](#), including a short description on how a new circle would fit NSU and relate to the existing study program.
2. Overview of the activities of the circle, including a plan for the six symposia within the three-year cycle – two per year, winter and summer – specifying main themes for all six symposia, together with suggested locations (possibly online) and possible collaborating partners for each winter symposium.
3. List of people and institutions supporting the proposal, including:
 - A. The names and contact information of the two people who will function as the coordinators of the prospective circle.
 - B. A short list of prospective contributors (up to 5), including their names, present positions, nationalities and/or places of residence (at least three Nordic and Baltic countries should be represented) and a short description of outreach plan to engage new participants.

C. A list of prospective partner institutions, networks, NGOs and/or other initiatives in the Nordic-Baltic region, which would be willing to host the circle's winter symposiums.

The length of the application covering the aims and the structure of the circle (1 and 2 above) must not exceed 2000 words.

Procedure

Deadline to submit proposals is 15 May 2023 for the first round of review.

All received proposals will be subjected to an open community review, which aims to support the development of the applications and advise the applicants on how to meet the values and objectives of Nordic Summer University. All applicants will be invited to a public online call on 22 May 2023 to briefly present their proposal and discuss it with the members of the community review group.

The minutes of the open community review call (including questions and suggestions to be taken into account when revising the proposals) will be shared with the applicants in June 2023.

Revised proposals (accompanied with a separate letter indicating the response and changes made to the proposal following the community review session) should be submitted by 27 July 2023.

The proposals will be discussed during the NSU Summer session, which takes place 27 July – 3 August 2023 in Palanga, Lithuania (or online), in an open community review workshop on 28 or 29 or 30 July 2023.

The final decision on the accepted circles is done in and by the General Assembly, during the summer session. The General Assembly consists of delegates chosen from all members of NSU, who are facilitating or participating in the Summer session. The General Assembly will be provided with the following materials upon which to base their decision:

- the revised proposals;
- the letter indicating the response and changes made to the proposal based on the community review session; and
- a summary of the discussions from the community review workshop.

Proposals for new study circles must be presented, in person or via conference call, at the workshop and at the first General Assembly meeting during the NSU Summer session.

The 2024 NSU study program and the study circles which are to be included in the 2024 NSU study program will be decided on by a vote of the NSU General Assembly.

Spontaneous submissions

Spontaneous study circle proposals can be developed during the summer session and presented during the workshop organized before the first General Assembly meeting. Such submissions are possible, but not encouraged, as they would not benefit from the feedback and support from the collaborative community review process outlined above.

Contact information

Proposals, as well as questions, should be sent to board [at] nsuweb.org. Visit our webpage <https://www.nsuweb.org/>