

SOF evaluation criteria 2026

Scope of the SOF call

SOF welcomes applications for clinically oriented projects in all areas of dentistry and are intended for research carried out within the Stockholm County. SOF supports innovative projects that are targeting essential needs in oral healthcare, showing promising potential for societal and oral healthcare impact in Stockholm County. Projects that collaborate with strong research environments projects and support the involvement of doctoral students, postdocs or junior faculty are encouraged.

Scoring

Each application is reviewed according to the following evaluation criteria:

- **Originality and clinical relevance** (see detailed explanation below)
- **Method and scientific quality** (see detailed explanation below)
- **Competence and feasibility** (see detailed explanation below)
- **Patient Involvement** (see detailed explanation below)

A 7-point scale is used to score all these criteria.

- **Score 7:** Outstanding. Exceptionally strong, highest international level.
- **Score 6:** Excellent. Very strong with negligible weaknesses.
- **Score 5:** Very good to excellent. Very strong with minor weaknesses.
- **Score 4:** Very good. Strong with minor weaknesses.
- **Score 3:** Good. Some strengths but also some weaknesses.
- **Score 2:** Weak. Few strengths and one major or several minor weaknesses.
- **Score 1:** Poor. Few strengths and several major weaknesses.
- **Score 0:** Not possible to evaluate – information is lacking.

- The sum of the mean of each evaluation criterion is the number that will be used to rank applications. **All junior applicants receive one additional point** to the sum of the mean of the evaluation criteria. **Junior applicants are considered ones who have attained their PhD degree less than 5 years ago.**

Originality and Clinical Relevance

The extent to which the project, contributes to new and incremental knowledge in dental research, assuming it can be **implemented in an original and clinically innovative and meaningful way,**

Method and Scientific Quality

The extent to which the hypothesis or research question, study design, methods, and analysis are correctly applied, well-integrated, and appropriate for the aim of the project should be explained. All research must be conducted with high quality. Methodological originality is a merit and innovative approaches are prioritized. Statistical methodology should be elaborated.

Competence and Feasibility

The applicant's competence and ability to conduct the research. Evidence of access to relevant patient data, infrastructure, personnel, strong research environment should be demonstrated. Prior funding availability is a merit. Description of patient recruitment strategy and patient number sufficiency should be justified. Ethical and any other necessary approvals granted should be provided or their planning and timeline should be described. For applicants over 67 years old, a contingency plan for the proposed research line should be justified. Motivation of the budget should be provided.

Patient Involvement

Clinical research should lead to patient benefit, contribute to opening opportunities to achieve health, alleviate and cure disease, and/or streamline resource utilization in dental care (or healthcare).

The patient involvement assessment criterion should include:

- **Plan for Implementation:** Description of how the knowledge generated in the project can be implemented in dental care and how it brings novel insights, compared to previous approaches. The planned process for transferring scientific findings to applicable clinical practice should be highlighted. The project timeline should be outlined.
- **Clinical Anchoring:** Description of how the dental care organization (from Region Stockholm) is utilized in the project.
- **Generalizability of Expected Results:** Description of how the results can be interpreted, used, or developed in dental care. The project's design should allow for conclusions that are applicable to a broader patient population, potentially beyond the cohort recruited in the specific project. If the obtained results can be applied to other clinically related areas/diseases, this should be indicated.
- **Patient Involvement:** A description of how patient involvement has been considered either in the planning of the research project and/or in the future implementation of the findings.

The gender equality perspective

Given high quality, the approval rates for women and men should be as equal as possible. In cases of equal scientific merit, gender equality should be decisive.

Reviewer Panel

- Ingegerd Johansson, Umeå University (Panel Chair)
- Daniela Elena Costea, University of Bergen
- Farida Fortune, Queen Mary University of London
- Wim Teughels, KU Leuven
- David Rice, University of Helsinki