**KESS 2 Factsheet**

**University of South Wales**

**Call 4: MRes-specific call 2017**

The following notes are intended as guidance for potential applicants. This call is a competitive process. Please contact the USW KESS team for any further information or queries: [**kess@southwales.ac.uk**](mailto:kess@southwales.ac.uk).

**What is KESS 2?**

The Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarships (KESS 2) programme supports **Doctoral and Research Masters awards** in Welsh Universities, **jointly sponsored by external partners** based in the Convergence areas of Wales. Students who receive KESS 2 funding must also come from the Convergence areas of Wales. KESS 2 is funded under the European Structural Investment Funds – ESF Programme through the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO). The programme is a collaboration between all Welsh Universities, led by Bangor University – University of South Wales is a partner. The programme is likely to run for 7 years (2015-22).

USW was awarded a discrete number of PhD and MRes scholarships. This is the fourth call for proposals, and our current allocation of PhD projects has already been met.

**Therefore, this KESS call is an MRes-specific call for proposals.**

Some MRes scholarships that commence by October 2017 could transfer to PhD at a later date, subject to securing USW approval to expanding the research to a full PhD, and obtaining additional KESS 2 funding.

If a high volume of proposals are received, the University or the external approval panel may choose to rank and prioritise projects by additional criteria. Such ranking could be based on the following, non-exhaustive, list:

* External partners that are “new” to KESS 2 (due to the overall company targets for KESS 2);
* Whether the external partner is an SME (due to the overall company targets for KESS 2);
* Pan-Wales KESS 2 programme coverage of the WG Grand Challenge areas (see below);
* Overall USW coverage (Faculty/ RI level), within the scope of KESS 2 eligible sectors.

Project applicants should bear this in mind, when developing KESS 2 project ideas.

(*Please ensure you speak to your designated RISe development support team member at the earliest opportunity, to maximise your chances of success).*

**Key Aims of the Programme**

The **key objectives** of Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarships are to:

* Increase the research capacity of SMEs by linking with a PhD / Masters project;
* Encourage SMEs to undertake research and innovation activity and recruit researchers;
* Prepare and train individuals to contribute to research and innovation as professionals;
* Support the development of key technologies in the Convergence area;
* Promote Higher-level Skills development and employability.

**Approval Criteria**

Under KESS 2, all USW applications will go through a three-stage process:

1. Internal assessment and approval to proceed to external review;

2. Approval by KESS 2 central approval panel, made up of a variety of non-HE reps;

3. Approval by WEFO, the funding body.

Individual projects are likely to be selected and approved depending on:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Key Approval / Project Eligibility Criteria** | **Application form reference** | **Stage 1a:**  **KIG** | **Stage 1b:**  **Research Committee** |
| Fit with the Welsh Government (WG) Grand Challenge areas | Section A.5.2 | ✓ |  |
| Fit with WG Economic Prioritisation Framework (EPF) | Section A.5.3 | ✓ |  |
| The potential economic benefit of the project to West Wales and the Valleys (Convergence) | Section A.6.1 | ✓ |  |
| Quality of the research proposal to meet the identified company need (assessed from both the University and Company viewpoint) | Sections A.5.4; 5.6  Section C |  | ✓ |
| Fit with the University’s Research Strategy (Priority will be given to projects which fit with the University’s research strategy and can demonstrate possible contribution to REF2020) \* | Section A.5.7 |  | ✓ |
| Collaborative Track Record of the Academic (Supervisory Arrangements) \* | Section A.7 |  | ✓ |
| Additional benefits to Convergence area (i.e. social, environmental, links to other structural funds projects) | Section A.6 | ✓ |  |
| Relevance of the skills developed to the private sector - potential for the scholar to work in the private sector within Convergence area | Section C | ✓ |  |
| Eligibility of company and student (to be recruited) with KESS 2 funding rules, in line with ESF regulations | Section A.4  Section C | ✓ |  |
| Priority will be given to projects who engage with private sector partners (third and public sector partners will be assessed on a case-by case-basis) | Section C | ✓ |  |

*\* Please note: Internal assessment will focus on these Key Approval / Project Eligibility Criteria.*

**Eligible Sectors**

KESS 2 will support projects aligned to the four Grand Challenge priority areas, as per the WG document, *‘*[*Science for Wales’*](http://gov.wales/topics/science-and-technology/science/?lang=en):

KESS 2 will also support projects aligned to the Welsh Government Economic Prioritisation Framework (EPF):

**Thematic Economic Opportunities**

1. Energy

2. Food and farming

3. Climate change and resource efficiency

4. Exploitation of ICT assets and opportunities of the digital marketplace

5. Advanced Manufacturing

6. Life Sciences and Health

**Regional Economic Opportunities: South East Wales Regional Opportunities**

(B1) Growth of the Cardiff Capital Region

(B2) Other key sectors and cluster developments creating demand

Briefing Paper on the EPF: <http://gov.wales/docs/wefo/publications/141216epfbriefingpaperen.pdf>

EPF: <http://gov.wales/funding/eu-funds/2014-2020/looking/epf/?lang=en>

**Eligible Project Partners**

**Priority is given to private sector partner organisations:**

* Micro Enterprises; Small to Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs); Large Companies
* Third Sector Organisations (Charities, Not‐for‐profit Organisations and Social Enterprises) and Public Sector will be considered on a case-by-case basis

Partner Organisations must have an operational base in West Wales and the Valleys; please see Convergence Map. Partner organisations are required to make annual cash contributions - costs vary depending on the size and type of organisation.

**What are the benefits for the company in participating?**

• Undertaking a business-focussed research project;

• Attracting and supporting the development of new researchers in the company;

• Establishing on‐going links with the University;

• The supporting research, innovation and business training each KESS scholar receives;

• The low cost of participating

Feedback from previous participants showed that companies greatly valued the link with the University, and this has often led to other beneficial collaborations.

**Student Eligibility Criteria**

For a student to be eligible for a KESS 2 award, they must:

* live at an address in West Wales and the Valleys (See Convergence map);
* have the right to work in the convergence area on completion of the scholarship and be classified by the University as ‘home’ or ‘EU’; and
* satisfy the University of South Wales admissions criteria for Research degree programmes *(n.b. the academic team must comply with University student recruitment procedures, and advertise the KESS scholarship)*

**Financial Model**

Each PhD or MRes studentship will have access to the following funds:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Cost categories** | **MRes (1 year)** |
| Stipend (starting 2016/17) | £11k approx. |
| Student travel | 500 |
| Student conference costs | 200 |
| Equipment (small items) | 800 |
| Consumables | 1,000 |
| Student Support –training/ development  (in addition to the centrally-funded KESS grad school) | 500 |

**Company/ External Partner Cash Match**

Please find below the company **cash contributions** that all partners should be using. There is no scope for in-kind match (e.g. time sheeted partner staff time) under KESS 2. For projects commencing on or after October 2018, the cash match requirements increase, as per the table below:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Organisation Type\*** | **No. of Employees** | **Turnover** | **or** | | **Balance Sheet Total** | **KESS 2 Cash Contribution MRes – pre Oct 2018** | **KESS 2 Cash Contribution MRes – Oct 2018 onwards** |
| **Micro** | <10 | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | ≤ € 2 m | | | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | ≤ € 2 m | | | **£3,500** | **£3,750** |
| **Small** | <50 | ≤ € 10 m | | ≤ € 10 m | | **£3,500** | **£3,750** |
| **Medium** | <250 | |  |  | | --- | --- | | ≤ € 50 m |  | | | ≤ € 43 m | | **£4,000** | **£4,250** |
| **Large** | >250 | |  |  | | --- | --- | | > € 50 m |  | | | > € 43 m | | **£4,500** | **£4,750** |
| **Third Sector/ Social Enterprise/ Public Sector** |  |  | |  | | **Dependent on size** | **Dependent on size** |

\* These ceilings apply to the figures for individual firms only. A firm that is part of larger group may need to include staff headcount/turnover/balance sheet data from that group too. Refer to [EU guidance on the SME definition](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition/).

Following guidance from the funding body, these match-funded bursaries are considered to be outside the scope of VAT, as per HMRC guidance in VAT Notice 701/30: education and vocational training.  Therefore, the invoices that University will raise to the external partner should not include VAT.

**Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)**

Project IPR results and any Intellectual Property arising from a KESS 2 project will be owned by the relevant University, in order to demonstrate compliance with EU State Aid rules. Background Information used in connection with the KESS 2 project will remain the property of the party introducing it and will be subject to confidentiality obligations. The relevant University will grant the company partner the first option for either an exclusive or non-exclusive licence to use the Intellectual Property or other Project IPR Results as negotiated between the parties involved.

**Submission Timeline**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Call Opens** | Early January 2017 |
| **EFAS Part A deadline** | 12 noon on Wednesday 25th January 2017 |
| **Deadline for Submission of Proposals** | 12 noon on Wednesday 15th February  [kess@southwales.ac.uk](mailto:kess@southwales.ac.uk) |
| **Evaluation of proposals** | Late Feb – end April 2017 (including external assessment) |
| **Feedback to Applicants** | w/c 26th April 2017 |
| **Scholarship adverts** | Open early May; closing end July 2017 |
| **Scholarship interviews** | To take place by early August 2017 |
| **Contracting** | August - September 2017 |
| **Projects to commence** | October 2017; January 2018; April 2018; October 2018; January 2019  *(subject to academic teams stringently following USW’s approved student recruitment timeframes)* |

**Further information**

For more information, please contact:

***USW KESS Programme Team***

Research & Innovation Services (RISe)

Research & Business Engagement

8 Forest Grove, Treforest

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**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*University Guidance Only\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

**Internal Approval and Support**

Applicants are encouraged to discuss the suitability of potential projects with the USW KESS team, who can advise on programme-level and eligibility queries.

For detailed funding development support, once EFAS Part A has been completed, you will be allocated support from the RISe team, who will be able to review draft proposals in advance of the deadline, and assist with completion of the fEC and project budget.

Please also discuss with your RI Director for support.

**Internal approval requirements:**

1. **EFAS Part A deadline: 12 noon on Wednesday 25th January 2017**. This is to ensure that you receive support from the RISe funding development team before the submission deadline. We strongly advise you to complete EFAS Part A ASAP, to benefit from as much development support as possible. This Part A deadline is in place to ensure the minimum level of funding development support, such as obtaining the fEC.
2. **EFAS Part B must be signed off before submission of the application to the KESS 2 team:** [kess@southwales.ac.uk](mailto:kess@southwales.ac.uk) **by the deadline: 12 noon on Wednesday 15th February**

**It is the lead academic’s responsibility to ensure both EFAS Part A and Part B are signed off, by the respective deadlines.**

**Failure to complete EFAS Part B and submit the full application by the deadline of 12 noon on Wednesday 15th February 2017 will result in your proposal being automatically declined. There will be another MRes call later in 2017.**

*Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarships (KESS) is a pan-Wales higher level skills initiative led by Bangor University on behalf of the HE sector in Wales. It is part funded by the Welsh Government’s European Social Fund (ESF) convergence programme for West Wales and the Valleys.*

*Ysgoloriaeth Sgiliau Economi Gwybodaeth (KESS) yn Gymru gyfan sgiliau lefel uwch yn fenter a arweinir gan Brifysgol Bangor ar ran y sector AU yng Nghymru. Fe’i cyllidir yn rhannol gan Gronfeydd Cymdeithasol Ewropeaidd (ESF) cydgyfeirio ar gyfer Gorllewin Cymru a’r Cymoedd.*