

HERAS

Higher Education, Research and Applied Science (Kosovo)

Guidelines for the Scholarship Fund (see output 8, activity 8.1 and 8.2)

General Information on the Project and Overall Objective

The project wants to contribute to the well-functioning of Higher Education and Research in Kosovo along the principles of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European Research Area (ERA) with the long-term objective to support the socio-economic development of the country. Kosovo has sustainably and effectively improved its HE and Research policy development and implementation in line with European standards. The intervention contributes to (a) improved effectiveness of the public HE and research system, (b) enhanced quality of higher education and employability of graduates, and (c) improved human capacities and increased internationalization of research.

The funding for the project is provided by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and a co-financing by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) of the Republic of Kosovo.

The intervention focuses on different thematic areas, altogether the project addresses 10 outputs to be reached by corresponding activities. Concerning the scholarship fund these activities will contribute to the improvement of Higher Education and research in Kosovo through developing capacities. The scholarship fund will be implemented to enable PhD students and post-doc researchers to study and do research abroad.

Methodology

For the implementation of the scholarship fund the following methods and approaches will be used:

- Institutional development activities to support the MEST in designing und administrating a scholarship fund ; local staff of MEST will be offered coaching for specific issues of the fund and job shadowing at the OeAD-GmbH.
- capacity development activities through scholarships for PhD students and post-doc researchers

Lessons learnt from Higher Kos

The main findings from Higher Kos to bear in mind for the guidelines of this scholarship fund are:

- Sufficient preparation time between announcement of results and start of the project in Austria
- Supporting PhD students to obtain the admission at the host institution in Austria
- Sandwich programmes proved to be very valuable for the scholars and institutions in both countries

Programme Overview

Students, professionals and post-doc researchers from Kosovo who are staff members at Kosovan public universities are invited to apply for a PhD/Post-doc fellowship for (Austrian) universities with compliance to the strategy document “Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (KESP)”. Especially the strategic priorities “1. Academic staff – student ratio ...” and “10. Increased mobility of academic staff and students of HEIs” are addressed by the scholarship fund.

A total number of 10 PhD and 5 post-doc scholarships will be granted to Kosovan applicants.

Ten PhD scholarships and five post-doc fellowships will be granted for Austrian universities. In case that an appropriate Austrian partner cannot be identified, universities from the region can be considered as partners as well. During their studies the scholars will keep close contact to their home institutions (if possible parts of the studies will be performed at the home institution in the form of a “sandwich programme”) in view to their further professional career at these institutions. After having finished the PhD studies or the post-doc fellowship the scholars are obliged to return back to their home institution and to work at least for 5 years for a Kosovan public university.

The OeAD-GmbH will be in charge of the administration of the scholarship fund.

Specific Objective

The objective is that PhD students and post-doc researchers will contribute to the institutional capacity development of their home institutions in Kosovo by completing their PhD studies and the post-doc research at a university abroad.

Expected result

15 scholars will have finished their studies abroad.

Eligible country

Kosovo

Age limit for applicants

PhD studies:

- not older than 35 or exceptionally max. 40 years in cases of considerable care responsibilities

Post-doc researchers:

- not older than 40 years or maximum 5 years after the award of the PhD degree, whichever applies

Target Group (Eligible)

Students holding a Master Degree, professionals and Post-doc researchers who are staff members of Kosovan public universities; candidates already enrolled at an Austrian or other foreign university are not eligible. Applications from underrepresented/vulnerable groups are particularly welcome.

Financed costs

PhD:	1.050 € per month (maximum duration 33 scholarship months)
Post-doc:	1.150 € per month (maximum duration 1 - 3 months)
Travel costs:	500 € (one time)

Formal Requirements for a PhD/Post-doc application

- Online application form (www.scholarships.at) including the description of the study or research proposal

The following documents have to be uploaded with the application:

- Tentative schedule and work plan
- Two letters of recommendation by university lecturers (for these letters of recommendation no specific form is required; they must contain the letterhead, date and signature of the person recommending the applicant and the stamp of the university / department and must be no older than six months at the time of application.)
- Confirmation of a professor at the Austrian or foreign target university to supervise the applicant academically
- Scan of passport (page with the name and photo)

- Scan of university graduation certificate of diploma, master, PhD or doctoral studies
- “Confirmation by the (home) institution”: it must be demonstrated that
 - the individual need for academic education serves the specific demands of the institution (e.g. within the development plan of the academic institution) and the development needs of Kosovo and
 - that the applicant will be (re)employed by the (home) institution after having finished the studies.
- Confirmation of the institutional partnership (if applicable)
- Proof of language skills (English and/or German)
- Evidence of previous studies (for PhD studies in Austria)

All required documents have to be submitted via www.scholarships.at.

Timetable

Activity	Responsible	Deadline
Information session in Kosovo during kickoff meeting of HERAS	OeAD	30.3. and 21.4.2017
Call open	OeAD	- 5.6.2017
Formality check of applications, experts review	OeAD, experts	5.6. - 5.7.2017
Selection	Selection Board	12.7.2017
Information of grant holders	OeAD	13.7.2017
Start of PhD studies, post-doc research		1.10.2017

Information

The main item of the information campaign will be an information session during the kick-off meeting of the HERAS project in March 2017 in Prishtina. The scholarship call will be announced on the project website, the website of the consortium partners and the OeAD-website. The OeAD will offer personal information and counselling for all prospective applicants. The scholarship announcements will explicitly encourage members of marginalised groups to apply and there will be an active promotion of the call among underrepresented groups.

Selection procedure

1) The OeAD-GmbH checks the formal eligibility of the applications:

- complete and correct applications and documents
- eligibility of applicant
- meeting of deadlines

2) Experts review

All eligible applications will be reviewed by one to two experts. The expert team should be gender balanced.

3) Final decision by the Selection Board (based on the result of the score)

Members of the Selection Board (it will be tried to have a gender balanced board):

- ADA: Head of Selection Board
- MEST representative for HERAS project
- OeAD representative for HERAS project
- WUS-Austria

The Selection Board will aim at reaching a balanced portfolio of grants, taking into account the objectives of the call, the quality of the applications and the experts review.

Aspects that may be decisive when a choice between equally scored applications needs to be made:

- projects performed as “sandwich programmes”
- gender: to increase the representation of women amongst scholars, women will be selected preferentially in cases of equal qualification of female and male candidates
- applicants from underrepresented, vulnerable groups (such as students with disabilities, minorities, non-traditional students)
- PhD topics dealing with cross cutting themes, balanced overall coverage of themes and different scientific disciplines

The Selection Board will formally approve the decisions and advice the OeAD-GmbH to start the contracting process.

Information and contact

Austrian Agency for International Cooperation in Education and Research (OeAD-GmbH)

ICM - Centre for International Cooperation & Mobility

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icm@oead.at

Selection criteria and scoring matrix – PhD/Post-doc grants

Criteria	Assessment by experts (in points; comments can be added) based upon
Relevance of the thematic focus (max. 20 points)	<p>Is the topic chosen alongside one of the following disciplines?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environment, Energy and Natural Resources - Agricultural Production and Food Safety, - Medical Research - Development of a Knowledge Based Society - Linguistic, Historic and Cultural Studies - IT (as a crosscutting issue) <p>Is the thematic focus relevant to the institutional capacity development?</p> <p>Is the thematic focus relevant to the development of Kosovo?</p>
Scientific quality of application (max. 20 points)	<p>Applicant (max. 10 points) Scientific qualification of the applicant</p> <p>Proposal (max. 10 points) Scientific quality of the proposal (innovative approach)</p>
Assessment by Selection Board	
Priorities	<p>In case of equally scored applicants the following aspects are dealt with priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - projects performed as “sandwich programmes” - gender: to increase the representation of women amongst scholars, women will be selected preferentially in cases of equal qualification of female and male candidates - applicants from underrepresented, vulnerable groups (such as students with disabilities, minorities, non traditional students) - PhD topics dealing with cross cutting themes - balanced overall coverage of themes and different scientific disciplines

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