

HERAS+

Higher Education, Research and Applied Science Plus (Kosovo)

Guidelines for the Scholarship Fund (see output 3, activity 3.2 and 3.3)

General Information on the Project and Overall Objective

The project **Higher Education Research and Applied Science Plus (HERAS+)** aims at a more competitive and diversified public higher education and research sector in Kosovo in line with the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), European Research Area (ERA) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 4 and 9 related to quality assurance, economy and labour market relevance, international cooperation and the Social Dimension of higher education. It contributes to a higher education and research system in Kosovo that is better governed, more international, coherent, effective and efficient, fostering students' employability and the third mission of universities.

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

The scholarship fund 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

Scholarships for PhD students and post-doc researchers as well as setting up of an alumni system are used as an instrument for capacity development of institutions and long lasting contacts within the international scientific community.

Lessons learnt from Higher Kos / HERAS

The main findings from Higher Kos and HERAS 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

- Sandwich programmes proved to be very valuable for the scholars and institutions in both countries
- Demand for scholarships to PhD students, who are already enrolled in Austria
- PostDocs are considerable multipliers

Programme Overview

Based on the positive experiences from HKOS and HERAS, the project will provide fellowship grants at PhD and PostDoc level (300 months in total) including travel grants and set up an alumni system in order to provide a networking platform for fellows.

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) 2017 - 2021”. Especially the strategic priority Internationalisation of HE and academic mobility is addressed by the scholarship fund.

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 an university abroad.

Expected result

All 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)

Staff members of Kosovan public universities with Kosovan nationality, who are

a) Post-docs, aiming to pursue short-term research activities in Austria

b) Academic staff members holding a Master Degree c) PhD students already enrolled in Austria, Kosovo or another country of the Western Balkans (according to the European Commission: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia)

In any case a strong affiliation and engagement for their home institution in Kosovo must be proven. Applications from underrepresented/vulnerable groups are particularly welcome. The aim is a gender ratio of at least 50:50 and a focus on members of regional universities.

Financed costs

PhD:	1.050 € per month (maximum duration 23 scholarship months)
Post-doc:	1.150 € per month (duration 1 - 3 months)
Travel costs:	500 € (one time)

Formal Requirements for a PhD/Post-doc application

- Online application form (<https://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 virtually	OeAD	End of November
Call open	OeAD	27.11.2020 - 31.01.2021
Formality check of applications, experts review	OeAD, experts	01.02.2021 – 21.03.2021
Selection	Selection Board	End of March / beginning of April 2021
Information of grant holders	OeAD	April 2021
Start of PhD studies, post-doc research		01.07.2021

Information

The main item of the information campaign will be an information session, which is held virtually via Webinar. Each scholarship call will be announced on the project website, the website of the consortium partners and the OeAD-website. The local HERAS+ team will promote the scholarship fund on all meetings and appointments with Kosovar public Universities. The OeAD will offer personal information and counselling for all prospective applicants. The scholarship announcements will explicitly encourage members of marginalized 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
- MES representative for HERAS project
- OeAD representative for HERAS project (without vote)
- 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:

- 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)
- regional universities*: to strengthen the capacities of regional universities
- projects performed as “sandwich programmes” (During the studies the scholars will keep close contact to their home institutions and parts of the studies will be performed at the home institution. There is no regulation which time or which parts of the studies should be performed at the home institution, the decision on this should be taken by the scientific supervisor together with the scholar on an individual basis)

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.

* other public Higher Education Institutions than University of Prishtina

Information and contact

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

MPC - *Mobility Programmes, Bilateral and Multilateral Cooperation*

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mpc@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 thematic focus relevant to the institutional capacity development? (max. 7 points)</p> <p>Is the thematic focus relevant to the development of Kosovo? (max. 6 points)</p> <p>Is the topic chosen alongside one of the cross cutting topics? (gender and HRBA related topics) (max 7 points)</p>
Scientific quality of application (max. 30 points)	<p>Applicant (max. 20 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"> - 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 - applicants from regional universities - projects performed as “sandwich programmes”