

## Higher KOS – Promoting Institutional Development in Higher Education and Research in Kosovo

### Guidelines for the Scholarship Fund (see activity 2.3)

#### General Information on the Project

The project „Higher KOS – Promoting Institutional Development in Higher Education and Research in Kosovo“ contributes to the well-functioning of the higher education and research system in Kosovo along European values, practices and standards. Its purpose is to effectively and sustainably implement the principles of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in the public Kosovan Higher Education (HE) institutions and to sustainably enhance Kosovo's integration into the European Research Area (ERA). 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 three thematic areas, leading to three expected results each contributing to the above mentioned objectives:

- (1) Enhancing the quality of education at public HE institutions
- (2) Improvement of the system of research promotion in Kosovo through developing capacities and establishing a national research fund and administration that is functioning according to international standards. A **scholarship fund** will be implemented to enable PhD students and post-doc researchers to study and do research abroad.
- (3) Further development of quality management and governance

The OeAD-GmbH ([www.oead.at](http://www.oead.at)) in cooperation with the national agency for research promotion is in charge of administering the relevant PhD grants and Post-doc fellowships.

#### Overall Objective

The overall objective is to contribute to the well-functioning of the public higher education institutions in Kosovo along European values and standards and to strengthen institutional capacities in higher education and research for development through different methods and approaches. These methods and approaches are in line with the ADC “Kosovo Country Programme 2008-2011”, the “Three-Year Programme on Austrian Development Policy (2010-2012) of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs and with the ADC Strategy “Higher Education and Scientific Cooperation” and its principles.

#### Methodology

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

- institutional development activities to support the establishment of the national agency for research promotion; local staff 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 KAIP**

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

- Intensive information for the applicants on study programmes in Austria, the schedule and contents of PhD studies and contacts to possible future supervisors
- Applications will only be accepted if the applicants can show a confirmation by the future supervisor of the thesis
- Time of residence in Austria: during KAIP some scholars were only available for one or two weeks for staying in Austria. This duration is too short for networking, the regular contact to the scientific supervisor and the attendance of lectures and seminars. For this reason the selection process will pay special attention to applicants with a high availability and flexibility for their stay abroad.

## **Programme Overview**

Students, professionals and post-doc researchers from Kosovo who are staff members of Kosovan public universities are invited to apply for a PhD/Post-doc fellowship for (Austrian) universities with compliance to the strategy document "Higher KOS– Promoting Institutional Development in Higher Education and Research in Kosovo".

A total number of 15 PhD or post-doc scholarships will be granted for Kosovan PhD students and researchers.

Five PhD scholarships will be granted alongside the programmatic partnerships at Austrian institutions, five 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. 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 until the national agency for research promotion is established.

## **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.

## Financed costs

PhD:	940 € per month (maximum duration 36 scholarship months)
Post-doc:	1.040 € per month (maximum duration 6 months)
Travel costs:	500 € (one time)

## Formal Requirements for a PhD/Post-doc application

- Online application form ([www.scholarships.at](http://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 your passport (page with the name and photo)
- Scan of your university graduation certificate of your 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](http://www.scholarships.at).

## Timetable

Activity	Responsible	Deadline
Information workshops in Kosovo	OeAD	Scheduled for 10 + 11 Sept. 2012
Call open	OeAD	July 2012 – 10.10.2012
Formality check of applications, experts review	OeAD, experts	October – mid of November 2012
Selection	Selection Board	November 2012
Information of grant holders	OeAD	December 2012
Start of PhD studies, post-doc research		March 2013

## Information campaign

The main item of the information campaign will be the two information workshops held in Prishtina and Prizren. The Deans of Faculties will be involved to identify potential candidates and it will be tried to reactivate the UP Women's Network which has/had one gender contact person per Faculty.

## Selection procedure

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

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

2) Experts review

All eligible applications will be reviewed by 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
- University of Prishtina

- University of Prizren
- OeAD representative for Higher KOS 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:

- 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 groups
- involvement in an academic partnership
- thematic focus on cross cutting topics as "gender", "peace building and conflict prevention" and "environmental protection"
- balanced overall coverage of thematic priorities
- candidates showing a "confirmation by the (home) institution"
- projects performed as "sandwich programmes"

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  
Ebendorferstraße 7, 1010 Vienna, Austria  
[icm@oead.at](mailto:icm@oead.at)

[www.higherkos.info](http://www.higherkos.info)

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

Criteria	Assessment by experts (in points; comments can be added) based upon
<p><b>Relevance of the thematic focus</b> (max. 20 points)</p>	<p>Is the topic chosen alongside one of the 5 priority fields of the National Research Council (Environment, Energy and Natural Resources, Agricultural Production and Food Safety, Medical Research, Development of a Knowledge Based Society, Linguistic, Historic and Cultural Studies)?</p> <p>Is the topic chosen alongside one of the 3 cross cutting topics of the HE KOS project?</p> <p>Is the application within the framework of one of the programmatic partnerships?</p> <p>Is the thematic focus relevant to the institutional capacity development?</p> <p>Is the thematic focus relevant to the development of Kosovo?</p>
<p><b>Scientific quality of application</b> (max. 20 points)</p>	<p><b>Applicant</b> (max. 10 points) Scientific qualification of the applicant</p> <p><b>Proposal</b> (max. 10 points) Scientific quality of the proposal (innovative approach)</p>
<b>Assessment by Selection Board</b>	
<p><b>Priorities</b></p>	<p>In case of equally scored applicants the following aspects are dealt with priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- gender: to increase the representation of women amongst scholars, women will be selected preferentially in cases of equal qualification of female and male candidates</li> <li>- applicants from underrepresented groups</li> <li>- involvement in an academic partnership</li> <li>- thematic focus on cross cutting themes as "gender", "peace building and conflict prevention" and "environmental protection"</li> <li>- balanced overall coverage of thematic priorities</li> <li>- candidates showing a "confirmation by the (home) institution"</li> <li>- projects performed as "sandwich programmes"</li> </ul>