

**Faculty of Natural Sciences Postgraduate Researcher Development and Transferable Skills Training Fund Application Form**

**Applicant Information**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name |  |
| Research Centre  (e.g., Astrophysics, Chemical Sciences, Life Sciences, etc) |  |
| E-mail |  |
| Lead Supervisor |  |
| Supervisor Approval  (Indicate whether approved by supervisor) | Approved |
| Year of Study  (1st, 2nd , 3rd or Continuation) |  |
| Project Funding Source (e.g., Acorn, RCUK, Self-Funded) |  |
| Previous Funding  (Please detail any previous funding from this scheme within the previous 12 months inc, value of award and summary of benefits from training) |  |

**Details of Training Activity** (please read the guidance notes on pages 3, 4 & 5 before completing this section).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Brief Description of the Training Activity |  |
| Please ensure you insert a web link to the training activity |  |
| Full Cost of the Activity |  |
| Amount Requested  (to a maximum of £600 per PGR student) |  |
| Date and Location of Activity |  |
| Justification for Funding |  |
| Engagement with Faculty or School PGR-related activities |  |
| Amount and source of funding already received and/or promised to support the training activity including contribution from supervisor. |  |
| **Risk Assessment:**  *Please note that any projects requiring overseas travel will require a Risk Assessment to be completed at the point of application. If this is the case, please attach your completed risk assessment to the application.*  [https://keeleacuk.sharepoint.com/sites/finance-intranet/SitePages/Travelling-overseas---policy-and-risk-assessment.aspx](https://keeleacuk.sharepoint.com/sites/finance-intranet/SitePages/Travelling-overseas---policy-and-risk-assessment.aspx?xsdata=%3D&sdata=RGRsK0NEblFTNythK3RsOWJGZEY2WnRoeFVYVUNzYWFSZUx4ajZzcU1QRT0%3D&ovuser=2bbbf3ee-b668-4df9-b063-598945c3d466%2Cd.bailey3%40keele.ac.uk) | |

**Once completed, please e-mail pages 1 & 2 of this form to:**

**Lisa Cartlidge FNS PGR Administrator**

**fns.pgr@keele.ac.uk**

**Faculty of Natural Sciences Researcher Development and Transferable Skills Training Fund**

**Guidance Notes**

**The Scope of the Researcher Development and Transferable Skills Training Fund**

**History and Background**: In 2011 the University implemented a funding stream to support PGR students in their on-going career and transferable skills development. This funding is made available to PGR students as part of a dedicated and protected account, within each Faculty and RI, funded by a top-slice of all FT and PT, but not continuation, annual PGR fees. Faculties and RIs are charged with ensuring that their students are treated equitably and with getting the best value for money from this resource, with an emphasis on the pooling of resources to provide or support programmes not viable on an individual basis. Individual Postgraduate Committees advertise, allocate, manage, and monitor the use of these funds in accordance with their own practices and procedures. While this funding can be made available on an individual basis, the targeting of the funds to provide courses and opportunities for multiple PGR students is likely to be of far greater benefit than dissipation of the fund through widespread dedicated individual payments.

**Target Audience:** Funding is available to **postgraduate research students (PGRs)** registered within the Faculty of Natural Sciences. Contract research staff may not apply to this specific fund.

**What can it be used for?** Examples (not exhaustive) might include:

* Funding to attend a *Vitae* or other relevant external training course, workshop or event (including career-related training for 3rd year students) where equivalent Keele Doctoral Academy (KDA) provision does not exist. Costs will cover registration, accommodation, travelling expenses and/or material costs.
* The costs of invited speakers (e.g., from business or industry)
* The design and running of a non-subject specific skills training course or event (inclusive sessions that are open to multiple student cohorts are strongly encouraged)
* Career or interview skills training
* Design, organisation and running of a collaborative colloquium or training event which may be subject specific where equivalent KDA provision does not exist.
* Specific training events delivered during conferences: applications that relate to conference attendance will be evaluated on the basis of them demonstrating specific training benefits, over and above conference attendance. It is expected that students will be taking part in a specific break-out training event which should be clearly described on the application form. Applications for attendance only will not be supported.

**Proposals with faculty-wide potential**: where proposals detail an activity that has clear relevance to the entire faculty PGR community (or a large part thereof), **the Committee reserves the right to explore whether there is potential to offer this as a faculty-level event** (in association with the KDA or otherwise). In this instance, any award will not be assigned to the original applicant (see maximum award in any one year).

The fund is not intended to support direct research costs, equipment, research materials, or conferences (see note above), and it is expected that students will obtain **supplementary funding** for their training activities from additional sources (e.g., research group funds, funding councils, industry, etc).

All postgraduate research students (individually or collectively) are encouraged to discuss ideas with their supervisors first, then make proposals to the FNS PGR Committee via the application form. The amount of applied funds **should be not more than £600 per year per individual postgraduate research student, and students/supervisors are encouraged to explore other sources of funding (matched funding)**. It is expected that the supervisor of the student or the School of the student will contribute around 20% of the required funds. In exceptional cases, a lower contribution may also be considered.

The FNS PGR Committee will assess each application and approval will be based on the merits and relevance of the training activity only, not the research topic or individual cost. **Assessment of the application will also be based on how actively the student has engaged with Faculty/School PGR-related activities** (e.g., participation in Faculty/School research symposiums and training workshops).

Please note that the level of funding awarded via this scheme may not be the full amount requested. The decision of the approving authority will be final. **Proposals will be routinely considered at scheduled meetings of the FNS PGR Committee which take place each month.** Where exceptional circumstances require a more immediate decision (applicants should document this in the ‘Date and Location of Activity’ field above), or where the committee is not scheduled to meet, applications *may* be considered through an e-mail consensus of Committee members.

**IMPORTANT:** It is vital that you, as students, **discuss the cost and nature of the training activity with your supervisors BEFORE submitting the application form**. By submitting the form to the FNS PGR Committee you are confirming that the training activity and cost evaluation has been approved by your supervisor(s). If funding is awarded and it subsequently becomes apparent that supervisory approval has not be granted, the PGR Director has the right to withdraw some, or all, of the funding support awarded.

**Final Reporting and Claiming Expenditure**

Once the training activity has been completed, students should provide a brief report to the PGR Office by email ([fns.pgr@keele.ac.uk](mailto:fns.pgr@keele.ac.uk)), detailing the benefit gained from the training. Students should include this report in their Annual Progress Review (APR).

The agreed level of funding can then be claimed back by the student. Please liaise with your School Operations Officer and the FNS Research Office [Ms Michelle Dawson - [m.dawson@keele.ac.uk](mailto:m.dawson@keele.ac.uk)) regarding this. **It is important to note that expenditure can only be reimbursed if validated by receipts. Please keep all receipts.** If the activity requires the use of external trainers, then please speak to your School Operations Officer to arrange a contract.

**Guidance for Completing the Application Form**

These notes are intended to provide students with practical guidance on how to fill in the application form properly. However, each individual case is different, and it is important that the merits and relevance of the training activity are described fully. It is these criteria that determine whether the funding is, or is not, approved.

* **Brief Description of the Training Activity:**  Keep this concise yet informative. Avoid unfamiliar technical terminology.
* **Full Cost of the Activity:** Indicate the full cost of the activity, even if only approximately, so that the true value of the training can be determined. For example, if the full cost of attending an external training course is approximately £900 including travel, accommodation, registration, materials, etc., put this down as the ‘Full Cost’.
* **Amount Requested:** Specify the total amount of funding support you are requesting from the fund in pounds sterling. This will be the maximum amount you will receive from the fund.
* **Justification for Funding:**  Under this item you should a) itemise and describe the individual costs associated with the training activity (for the total amount requested) and b) explain, briefly, the merits and relevance of the training with respect to your own research studies. Be concise yet detailed enough to make the ‘worth’ of the training clear.
* **Engagement with Faculty or School PGR-related activities:** Briefly describe how you have engaged with any relevant activities (e.g., presented at FNS or School PGR Symposium, etc.)
* **Amount and source of funding already received and/or promised to support the training activity including contribution from your supervisor or School:** You should briefly list the amount and source of any additional funds that you have gained (or been promised) to support the training activity. This may include research group funding, research council awards or industry sponsorship, registration fee waiver by conference organisers, etc.

If the requested amount is less than the full cost, you must indicate how the shortfall will be met. This may simply be a case of listing additional sources, as described, or indicating that you are paying for the additional amount yourself. Either way, it is important that the assessors can clearly see that the full cost of the activity is being met before approval is granted.

If additional funds have been promised, yet not received, by the time that the training activity takes place it is the responsibility of the Student and Supervisor to secure an alternative source of funding in order to cover the full cost of the training activity. FNS will not act as guarantor and, therefore, it is imperative that you indicate on the application form how the loss of any “promised funds” will be covered in full (e.g., by stating, for example, that the research group will underwrite the full cost of the activity).

If you have any queries about the eligibility of your training activity, or other questions related to the training support fund, please contact your School PGR Lead in the first instance or the FNS PGR Director Dr Daniel P Tonge (<mailto:>[d.p.tonge@](mailto:n.r.wright@keele.ac.uk)keele.ac.uk).