Staffordshire University KT Chronicle

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships

KEEN

New computing KTP approved

The Faculty of Computing Engineering and Sciences has received approval for a new KTP to create a bespoke and state-of-the-art data analytics and management information I.T. platform at Lister Trade Frames Ltd in Fenton, Stoke-on-Trent. Using the latest in distributed application and data management techniques and technologies, the new system will re-engineer the company's internal processes, driving its growth over the next five years. Lister Trade Frames are a manufacturer and supplier of windows, doors, and conservatories for the building and construction trades, and of a building plastics range sold directly to the general public.

The single 6—36 Month KTP is (finally) on its way…

The 2nd October 2013 closing date will mark the end of the distinction between 'shorter' (formerly 26—51 weeks) and 'Classic' (1 to 3 years) forms of KTP. Thereafter, a single 6 to 36 month programme will be introduced, with applications being made via the TSB's new "_connect" online form process (see below). Further changes to the requirements of what would formerly have been regarded as 'shorter KTPs' will be announced shortly.

… with a new application process

As of the 20th November 2013 closing date, all new KTP proposals must be submitted using a new online application form on the TSB's "_connect" (spoken of as "underscore connect") web portal. This is nothing to be alarmed about —your friendly KTP office will take the pain out of this new application process for you, but all academics involved in KTP (and other TSB knowledge transfer products—SMART, Innovation Vouchers, SBRI, collaborative R&D, etc) will need to create an "_connect" user account ASAP at: http://bit.ly/139sZQ3. Only registered users will be able to view and edit the online form, which is designed to be accessed and co-created by both university and company partner staff.

Current KTPs

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships

Clive Durose Woodturners Ltd

(Computing, Engineering and Sciences) This is SU' (and lead academics—Daves Cheshire and Link's) third KTP with Stoke-on-Trent-based Clive Durose Woodturners Ltd. The new project will consolidate and build upon the previous projects' success in expanding the company's product range by re-engineering and optimising its manufacturing processes.

Neuteq Europe Ltd (Computing, Engineering and Sciences):

This is a dual-associate project (two KTPs in one) with the Tamworth-based microfinishing and automation specialists, Neuteq Europe Ltd. Current associate Diana Nyamugure is managing the microfinishing strand of the KTP, which aims to capture and further develop Neuteq's Formula 1 microfinishing methods, enabling these to be applied more widely to improve the efficiency of mass-produced automotive engines. The second strand of the KTP, due to begin next year, will automate the processes developed by the first and promote the uptake of automation amongst Midlands companies by creating more flexible and reconfigurable robotic systems.

RGL Electronics Ltd (Computing, Engineering and Sciences):

This 18-month KTP, led by FCES's Mark Hanstock and Associate Anjan Nair, is developing an in-house production facility for 'intelligent' wireless power-supplies. This will enable the company to diversify into new markets including intelligent building systems and to maximize profits by owning their intellectual property.

EPIC Housing (Faculty of Arts & Creative Technologies):

EPIC is a social housing provider based in the socially and economically deprived Bentilee estate in Stoke-on-Trent. This project, led by Emeritus Professor Brian Jacobs, will develop and market a new tenant coaching and service improvement framework. The KTP aims to make savings in the sector by reducing the numbers of failed or costly tenancies and to achieve wider social impacts by improving the lives and employment prospects of social housing tenants. An associate has recently been recruited to this partnership, and the project is due to get underway in March.

Shorter KTPs

Stormking Plastics Ltd (Computing, Engineering and Sciences): This shorter, 50-week project is building upon the achievements of a recently-completed 'Classic KTP', which created a new and bespoke management information system at Tamworth-based designers and manufacturers of fibre glass mouldings, Stormking The new project will augment this system with a new 'Automated Optimised Scheduling' (AOS) module to streamline factory processes and work-scheduling. Shorter KTPs are small scale, tactically-focused projects of between 26 and 51 weeks' duration (the full-length 'Classic KTP' is 1-3yrs). However, as of 2nd October 2013, this distinction will be abolished and a single 6-month to 3-year programme introduced instead (see page 1).

KEEN Projects

The Business School's 'KEEN' (Knowledge Exchange and Enterprise Network) partnership with Grenville Engineering Ltd started in March following the appointment of a recent Staffordshire University Marketing Management graduate as the project 'affiliate' (project manager). Grenville are precision sheet metal fabricators for the plant and machinery, construction, petrochemical and general engineering industries. Led by John Ward, the project will develop and implement a strategic marketing plan to complement and achieve company objectives for growth and international expansion. KEEN is a business-improvement programme, launched earlier this year, which aims to help West Midlands-based SMEs to achieve growth and increase productivity by working in partnership with academic experts.

To find out more about the KEEN programme, contact the KTI team or visit the KEEN programme website: http://bit.ly/15iZnAW

The KTP/KEEN Qualifying Tool

What to look for when considering a project and partner for KTP/KEEN
(Note: KEEN will only fund partnerships with West Midlands-based SMEs)

Finances

- Is the company profitable and can it provide 2 years' audited accounts plus recent period management accounts?
- Can it afford the direct costs of the KTP / KEEN (KTP: SMEs £17,300 p.a., large companies £25,950; KEEN: Approx £18,673 p.a.)?
- Can the company afford to make the further investments required to reap the benefits of the project?

Company Management

- Does the company have the management personnel (min. 5 full-time employees) to ensure that the Associate / Affiliate is properly supervised and not drawn into the day-to-day operation of the company?
- Does the company actually want knowledge transfer (i.e. academic input) from the university partner or is it really only looking for a graduate? (if the latter - refer to the Careers Centre)
- Is the submission and recruitment time-frame too long for the company? Are its needs more urgent? (the average development time for a KTP, including associate recruitment, is 4-5 months. KEEN is slightly quicker)

University Input

- Can the University provide the knowledge and expertise the company is looking for?
- Are there clear benefits and challenges for the academics / University? E.g. published papers, student projects, case studies, etc.

The Project

- Is the proposed project innovative?
- Will the project have a high impact in terms of wealth creation and economic growth (see the TSB's current KTP Criteria)?
- Would the project outcomes be better delivered by independent consultants or an 'off-the-shelf' solution?
- Is the proposed project of strategic importance to the company?
- If the company is large (over 250 employees), will the project be able to demonstrate benefit to the supply chain, especially SMEs?

FUNDING FOCUS

Call for shorter KTPs in multi-disciplinary software development

The Technology Strategy Board is to invest up to £500,000 to establish new shorter KTPs in multi-disciplinary software design (MDSD), bringing software developers together with professionals from non-computer-science disciplines, in small-scale software development. In addition, the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) will consider co-funding projects if they involve arts and humanities academic disciplines.

The aim of this initiative is to enable industry to access the MDSD expertise that is available within the UK research base. Although there have been many initiatives to involve external expertise (i.e. expertise from outside computer science) in the software production process after the code has been developed, this initiative focuses on helping businesses access that expertise at the initial stages of the software development process, such as the capture of user requirements and understanding of user culture, and the translation of these into effective business methodologies that are suitable for small projects and budgets. It is hoped that this will cut down on the creation of software that ultimately fails to meet users' requirements, because it is developed without a real understanding of their cultures and behaviours, and the of the contexts the software will be used in.

This targeted call for KTPS runs in parallel with the TSB & AHRC-funded competition for feasibility studies -funding, which encourages software companies to experiment with MDSD and to try out new formats and methodologies in this area.

The full briefing document is available at: http://bit.ly/17AQMN9.

Deadline for receipt of applications: 2nd October, 2013

Contact the KTI team for further info, advice re. project eligibility, the application process, etc.

Submission Dates for Classic & Shorter KTP 2013

'Classic' KTP	Shorter KTP*
13/2/2013	25/02/2013
24/4/2013	24/04/2013
19/6/2013	19/06/2013
21/8/2013	21/08/2013
2/10/2013	02/10/2013*
20/11/2013	*After this date the two programmes will merge.

Technology Strategy Board
Driving Innovation

Solutions for Business
Funded by government

National KTP Proposal Approval Stats July 2013

Proposals Submitted	62
Proposals Supported Of which, number supported without amendments	52 6
Withdrawn by Adviser prior to consideration	0
Proposals not supported Of which, number that can be revised for resubmission	10 6
Success rate	84%

Enterprise & Commercial Development Knowledge Transfer & Innovation Team

If you have any queries re anything mentioned in this quarter's issue, please contact:

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(New KTP Manager/ Business Development Officer to be announced shortly!)

Research • Innovate • Transform

If you've any queries regarding KTP & KEEN please contact us. We offer a wide variety of advice and assistance, including:

- Advice regarding the suitability or eligibility of a project proposal as a KTP
- Support with drafting, shaping and submitting Expressions of Interest and project proposals
- Knowledge and experience of interpreting KTP criteria
- Information and guidance re. KTP budgets and finance
- Case studies of previous KTPs
- Links to alternative knowledge transfer and funding where KTP is not appropriate