



Lord Kelvin-Adam Smith PhD Scholarship – 2017/18

Project title: The Governance of Skills Supply and Demand in the Middle-Income Countries

LKAS PhD Scholarships

The *Lord Kelvin Adam Smith (LKAS)* PhD Scholarships are the University of Glasgow's flagship interdisciplinary scholarships. To date 100 fully funded interdisciplinary PhD projects have been created. The LKAS PhD Scholarships offer the opportunity for outstanding research students to participate in some of the most exciting areas of interdisciplinary research carried out at the University.

Eligibility: Prospective Home/EU and International PhD students (start date between October 2017 and January 2018) are eligible to apply.

Value: Each scholarship will run for up to 4 years and will provide the successful students with an annual stipend of in the region of £14,510 in 2017/18, a full fee waiver, as well as access to an annual research consumables budget of £3000.

Deadline: The deadline for submitting applications to the lead supervisor of the project is **12 noon Friday 13 January 2017**.

Project Description

Skills have gained a prominent role in the post-2015 agenda for international development thanks to the emphasis placed by international organizations (e.g. ILO, UNESCO) on youth employment and decent work for sustainable development. The project aims to generate a better understanding of the political economy of skills formation and utilisation at national and local level in the Global South, which can contribute to the design and implementation of more effective and equitable skills policies for young adults. Specifically, the project will investigate how authorities in two middle-income countries (Chile and Mexico) govern the relationship between the supply and demand of skills at national and local level and how these different policy arrangements impact on the quality and relevance (match/mismatch) of the skills demanded and used by young adults in the workplace.

Latin America is a paradigmatic case of the difficulties experienced by middle-income countries in generating qualified job opportunities for an increasingly highly-educated young workforce; this is why the project considers two of its largest economies, Chile and Mexico,

for a comparative study. The main objectives of this comparative study are: to identify the key actors involved in the governance of the supply and demand of skills in the two countries; to understand to what extent and how these actors coordinate their activities; and to analyse the impact of these governance activities on the educational and employment opportunities available to young adults. Given that these processes are highly influenced by the economic and social specificities and the complex relations between public and private actors at the local and regional levels, the project is designed as a mixed-methods multi-level comparative study between two subnational regions of great economic significance for the two countries.

The analytical framework of the study intersects with several disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches in the social sciences, mainly: political economy, comparative education and development studies. The political economy of education and skills has emerged to overcome some of the deficits of orthodox approaches to skills policy, which rest upon human capital assumptions. Political economists accept the importance of education and skills for economic development, but they question the human capital orthodoxy because it overestimates the extent to which nations within the global economy can create mass high-skilled employment, in particular for young adults. Comparative education adds fundamental value to policy studies in the age of globalisation due to its analytical capacity to integrate the global scale in multi-level analyses of policy formation and implementation. The approach recognizes that policy variations across regions and countries should not only be understood as the result of different political agendas and coalitions, but also as a result of the different social, economic and cultural contextual conditions in which skills formation and utilisation are embedded. Finally, development studies provide theoretical tools to critically examine the economic and societal goals of skills policies. This approach questions the productivist assumptions of education and labour market agendas, taking a more holistic view to also address the social justice and environmental challenges faced by countries in the Global South.

Keywords: Political Economy - Comparative Education - International Development

Project Team

The candidate will be jointly supervised by Dr Oscar Valiente and Prof Andy Furlong, from the Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change; and by Dr Scott Hurrell, from the Adam Smith Business School of the University of Glasgow. The candidate will be based in the Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change, where he/she will benefit from the vibrant and international research climate of the Centre, which includes (among others) large ESRC and European research projects in the areas of Technical and Vocational Education and Training, Lifelong learning and International development. Additionally, whilst carrying out research visits and fieldwork in Latin America, the candidate will receive supervisory support from our partners in the School of Education of Universidad Alberto Hurtado in Chile and the Business School of Instituto Tecnológico de Monterrey in Mexico.

Person Specification

Applicants should demonstrate the following:

- A BA degree in the Social Sciences (e.g. Economics, Sociology, Political Science, Education, Development Studies, etc.) and a Master degree in a relevant subject area.
- Experience of both qualitative and quantitative research techniques.
- High motivation and excellent communication skills in English.
- Evidence of ability to engage in team-work and meeting project deadlines.
- Willingness and availability to travel overseas as part of research project duties.

Desirable:

- Proficient language skills in Spanish.
- Knowledge of debates regarding education and training policies, TVET and skills, international development.
- Experience of working with diverse groups in international projects.
- An interest in working across cultures and languages.
- Experience/interest in engaging with research users in national governments and international organizations.
- Confident oral communication skills.

Application Process

In the first instance, potential candidates can contact Dr Oscar Valiente for an informal discussion about their eligibility for the scholarship and the project, as well as any queries they may have. This is an option, not a requirement.

Applications must be made by email to Dr Oscar Valiente (Oscar.valiente@glasgow.ac.uk) by **12 noon, Friday 13 January 2017**. This must include the following:

- A statement expressing your attributes, achievements and suitability to undertake the proposed project (applicants should pay particular attention to Appendix 1 of the Lord [Kelvin Adam Smith Guidance Notes](#))
- Curriculum vitae
- An example of your written work either in English or Spanish (word processed document)
- 2 references in support of your application.
- Degree transcripts in English (Undergraduate and Masters, if relevant. Please only include relevant pages of transcripts and preferably only the English language translations of overseas transcripts)
- Candidates whose first language is not English must show evidence of appropriate competence in English in the form of a IELTS certificate or similar.