# Enterprise Project Fund – Guidance Notes

The **Enterprise Project Fund (EPF)** is an internal knowledge exchange funding scheme for our academics, research staff and technicians. It provides three funding strands (Engage, Develop, Commercialise) to support engagement with potential clients and partners, and facilitates the commercial development and application of our research and expertise outside the University.

**What it funds**
Activities which encourage new knowledge exchange collaborations and leverage external funding and commercial development of University of Essex research and expertise. It supports engagement with external organisations, the commercialisation of our research outputs, knowledge and services, including proof of concept work, protecting and exploiting IP and taking innovations to market.

**Funding strands**

1) **Engage -** A maximum of **£2,000** (including VAT) is available under the **Engage** strand.

Funding can be used to support early-stage discussions, engagement and relationship development with potential clients, partners, and research users from external organisations to explore avenues for income and impact-generating knowledge exchange. The funding aims to support knowledge exchange collaborations, the creation of new partnerships and promotion of research expertise and services to new organisations and networks in the private, public and third sectors. A key aim of the fund is to seed and help develop further knowledge exchange and commercialisation activity at the University.

**Example activities**
- Finding a partner organisation/enterprise who may benefit from your expertise.
- Development of new knowledge exchange leads and opportunities via travel, meetings and workshops.
- Attendance at industry events, i.e. industry-led conferences.

2) **Develop -** A maximum of **£12,000** (including VAT) is available under the **Develop** strand.

Funding can be used to help progress activities and projects which will help you access external knowledge exchange funding or help the commercial development and application of Essex research and expertise outside the University. This type of activity can be useful for developing your commercialisation project further and understanding the needs of new and existing markets.

**Example activities**
- Market research/assessing the market for your research expertise as a product or service.
- Developing potential new intellectual property and expertise.
- Technical design, coding, wire-framing and prototyping of a new product or service.
- Developing new, non-accredited CPD, short course or executive education training programmes for external organisations.

3) **Commercialise** - A maximum of **£35,000** (including VAT) is available under the **Commercialise** strand.

   Funding can be used to support the commercialisation of the University's research outputs, expertise and services including proof of concept work, protecting and exploiting IP, and taking new innovations to market.

**Example activities**

- Testing the viability of your idea in practice/product validation
- Protecting and exploiting IP
- Prototype development
- Market testing

All project funding must be spent by **31st May 2027**.

**Eligible costs**

Eligible costs for the Enterprise Project Fund include salaries for Research Assistants and technicians, costs related to engagement with partners and stakeholders, including events and workshops, travel costs, training and development event costs, equipment and consumables costs, and intellectual property development, protection, and exploitation costs.

It does not fund research, buyout of teaching, attendance at academic conferences, the costs associated with publishing a journal article, or the commercialisation of IP not owned by the university.

**Requirements for successful candidates**

Acceptance of the award constitutes an agreement to attend milestone meetings managed by the relevant Knowledge Exchange Officer/Manager (KEO/KEM), as outlined to you before your project start date. Attendance at these milestone meetings is mandatory, and failure to attend may result in your project funding being withheld or withdrawn completely.

The Deputy Director – Enterprise (or their nominee) must first approve any amendments to project budget expenditure before the revised expenditure occurs. Any overspending against the approved budget that is outlined within the circulated award announcement for your project will need to be accounted for from either your Education and Research Incentive Account (ERIA) or your department's specific Departmental Operating Budget.

**How to apply**

Contact your Knowledge Exchange Manager to register your interest by **27th July**. Your KEM will help you scope the project's suitability and knowledge exchange outcomes.

- Ville Karhusaari – Law, Essex Business School, Edge Hotel School, Arts and Humanities
- Paul McNaught – Government, Economics, Sociology and Criminology, Language and Linguistics, Psychosocial and Psychoanalytic Studies, ISER
- Flavia Popescu-Richardson – CSEE, Maths
- Alex Shakspeare – HSC, Life Sciences, Psychology, SRES
- Phil Wilson – T-PIKE Programme Manager, technical staff queries

Your Knowledge Exchange Manager will discuss your application and provide you with project costings. You should submit your application to your Knowledge Exchange Manager for review before **28th August 2026** to receive feedback before the final deadline.

The deadline for applications is **5pm on Friday 11th September 2026** and these should be submitted to keadmin@essex.ac.uk with a copy to your Knowledge Exchange Manager.

Please submit both your application form and a completed GANTT chart (template provided).

The applications will be reviewed by a panel, and outcomes are expected to be communicated by the end of September. All allocated funding must be used by **31st May 2027.**

**Assessment criteria**

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Does the project fall within the scope of Knowledge Exchange?
- Is there a clear and credible route to commercialisation or implementation?
- Is there a strong understanding of the target market and customer need?
- Are the project plan, timeline, and deliverables clear and achievable?
- Does the team have the capability and capacity to deliver?
- Are the requested resources justified and good value for money?
- Is there potential to develop new partnerships and engage external organisations?
- Is there potential to access markets, generate income, or secure follow-on funding?
- Are risks appropriately identified and mitigated?
- What is the potential broader impact (economic, societal, or policy)?
- Is the proposal appropriate to the selected funding strand?

*****Your application form should not exceed 6 pages in total*****