

The Knowledge Exchange and Enterprise Network (KEEN) – Your questions answered.

What is KEEN?

The Knowledge Exchange and Enterprise Network (KEEN) is a new business improvement programme, part-funded by ERDF, designed to help West Midlands based SMEs increase their profitability and achieve growth through working with a regional university.

What are the benefits for business?

By working with a university your business will gain:

- a graduate (known as an Affiliate) working full-time on a bespoke project within your business
- continuing support from a nominated university liaison officer
- ongoing mentoring and support from university experts for the Affiliate, ensuring that project objectives are met
- access to the university's resources, including facilities and expertise
- access to an equipment and travel budget (worth on average £4,000).

How does KEEN work?

KEEN offers a level of flexibility to companies who are yet to realise their full potential. This is made possible through the transfer of knowledge into the business via a recent graduate who is recruited to work full-time on a growth project, developed in association with the university, for six to 24 months.

The university supports the company from application stage, during recruitment and for the lifetime of the project.

Meetings are held at the start, mid-way point and at the end of the project with all parties, to ensure the project is on track and delivering results for the business.

How much will KEEN cost my company?

Average company cost is £23,750 per annum. There is flexibility within the Affiliate salary range, allowing the company to appoint at various points on a generous scale.

What makes KEEN special?

- KEEN is highly responsive. Turnaround from application to approval is typically three weeks, meaning that recruitment periods are minimised and projects can start quickly, helping businesses to move forward and remain competitive.
- Unique to the West Midlands, KEEN is available to SMEs in the region who are at pre-innovation level. Graduates can come from outside of the West Midlands, ensuring that the best talent and skills are recruited to the project.
- Unlike many knowledge transfer schemes, business process and marketing programmes may be eligible for funding. Micro businesses may also be considered if they are able to demonstrate a commitment to the management of the Affiliate.

Contact us

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