

Four year fully funded PhD Scholarships - Intellectual Property, Entrepreneurship and Innovation in SMEs

Company:

University of Liverpool, Management School

Location:

United Kingdom / Liverpool

Discipline:

Intellectual Property, Entrepreneurship and Innovation in SMEs

Employment Type:

Four year fully funded PhD Scholarships

Posted:

23/04/2025

Contact Person:

If you wish to apply for this position, please specify that you saw it on AKADEUS.

Four year fully funded PhD scholarships - Intellectual property (IP), entrepreneurship and innovation in SMEs

Become part of an impactful research project that looks at the intersection between intellectual property, entrepreneurship and innovation in SMEs, with full funding from one of our 4-year PhD studentships.

The [Management School](#) is welcoming applications for **two fully funded PhD scholarships** based within the [Brett Centre for Entrepreneurship](#) (BCfE).

This PhD studentship will give you the opportunity to undertake timely and high-impact research on how startups and SMEs navigate the increasingly complex landscape of IP, innovation and value capture.

You can apply for two different projects under the overarching theme of 'Rethinking IP and Entrepreneurship', which brings together core questions around entrepreneurship, knowledge protection and business model innovation, with relevance across a range of sectors.

The projects will be jointly supervised by [Professor Nikolaos Papageorgiadis](#), [Professor Wolfgang Sofka](#) and [Professor Robert Blackburn](#), combining expertise in IP, international business, innovation strategy and entrepreneurship.

If you are successful in your application, you will work together to co-develop the precise focus and methodological approach for the project.

You will also become part of the School's [Strategy, International Business and Entrepreneurship Group](#), where you will enjoy plenty of interaction with other students and leading researchers.

Project 1 - Strategic IP management and business model innovation in SMEs

The aim of this project is to study how entrepreneurial firms engage with IP strategy in the context of dynamic technological disruption and within their ecosystems.

A potential area for exploration is how innovative startups and SMEs, make strategic decisions around knowledge protection - including patents, trade secrets and informal mechanisms -, interact with others in their ecosystem (eg other businesses, IP advisors and legal service providers) and adapt their business strategies and models as a result.

Another area of interest is the development of IP-related capabilities in startups and how new types of services - shaped by technological change (eg AI) - are influencing conventional IP advisory models.

The project could also examine the emergence of new ecosystems of knowledge protection and their impact on entrepreneurial decision-making and innovation strategies, including how these dynamics vary across different industries, as well as institutional and legal environments.

Project 2 - Entrepreneurship and IP strategy in the creative industries: navigating value capture for SMEs in the age of AI

The aim of this project is to explore entrepreneurial innovation in the cultural and creative industries.

Startups and SMEs in sectors, such as music, arts and media, face growing challenges in protecting and monetising their creative output, particularly as digitalisation and emerging technologies, such as AI, reshape established value capture models.

A potential area for examination is how entrepreneurs understand and use IP (eg copyright, trademarks) and make decisions about what to protect, as well as how their business models evolve in response to an increasingly complex and shifting technological and legal environment domestically and across international markets.

Another relevant area for investigation is how entrepreneurs assess risks and manage uncertainty around the future of content ownership and value generation, often without formal legal expertise or appropriate IP frameworks.

The project may involve interviews with key informants in the creative industries as well as business owners and managers in creative ventures, to explore their thinking around IP, creativity and commercialisation.

For example, looking into how their approaches differ when they operate in countries with stronger or weaker IP enforcement regimes.

Instead of a research proposal, you need to submit a **two-page research interest statement**, which:

- Engages with one (or both) of the proposed project areas
- Identifies relevant themes and research questions for up to three potential studies
- Synthesises key academic literature **with references to at least five papers** published in leading journals, such as:

1. [Strategic Management Journal](#)
2. [Research Policy](#)
3. [Journal of Management](#)
4. [Organization Studies](#)
5. [Academy of Management Journal](#)
6. [Journal of International Business Studies](#)
7. [Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice](#)
8. [Journal of Business Venturing](#)
9. [Journal of World Business](#).

- Briefly outlines possible methodological approaches you may consider.
- University transcripts and degree certificates to date
- Passport details (international applicants only)
- English language certificates (international applicants only)
- A personal statement - Outline your motivations, academic background and fit with the project(s)
- A curriculum vitae (CV)
- Names and contact details of two referees (on institutional letterhead and signed).

To apply for this studentship, you'll need a UK master's degree, or international equivalent, in a business and management (or other relevant) discipline, preferably at distinction or merit.

If you have any questions about requirements for this funding opportunity, please contact the ulmsphdteam@liverpool.ac.uk

If you would like to apply for this PhD studentship, please complete your online application before **Monday 26 May 2025 at 12:00 UK time**, and make sure you follow these steps:

- Select the **'Management Studies - Doctor in Philosophy (PhD)'** option as your programme of study
- In the **'Finance'** section, select funding source 'Sponsor' and insert **'PHD-BRETT-ULMS-2025'** in the box below
- Also include 'PHD-BRETT-ULMS-2025' as the first line of your personal statement.

Once we have reviewed your application, we will get in touch to let you know whether you have the potential to receive one of the PhD studentships. If so, we will invite you for an interview in the second week of June and let you know whether you have been successful in your application by the end of the month.

Availability

Open to EU/UK and international applicants

Funding information

Funded studentship

If you are successful in your application, you'll receive the following support:

- Full coverage of PhD programme fees
- £20,780 annual tax-free maintenance grant*
- A £1000 per year research allowance available from Year 2
- No teaching required - Opportunities to gain paid teaching experience available from Year 2

As a PhD student, you will also have access to further support offered to doctoral students (eg conference support scheme, teacher training programme, etc) at the Management School.

As a member of the BCfE, you'll be expected to assist in with occasional research assistance tasks and supporting events.

*Stipend amount of £20,780 for 2025/26 is for guidance purposes only and is subject to change.

Supervisors

- [Professor Nikolaos Papageorgiadis](#)
- [Professor Wolfgang Sofka](#)
- [Professor Robert Blackburn](#)

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