BELMAS DOCTORAL BURSARY- 2026/27

Introduction

Four annual BELMAS doctoral research bursaries of £2,000 each will be made available to support full and part-time research students from the UK and overseas.

Applicants will be members of BELMAS, have identified an appropriate and viable research project, and have registered for a research degree in educational leadership, management and administration, as defined below, in a UK University or International University.

The bursaries will be awarded annually for £2,000 for a maximum of two years. There are two opportunities to apply for the bursaries, November 2026 and March 2027. Two bursaries will be awarded at each opportunity.

Purpose of the Bursaries

To advance the production of theoretical and professional knowledge and understanding in the UK and internationally, through promoting advanced study and research in educational leadership, management and administration.

Eligibility

Applications for BELMAS bursaries may be made by research students who:

- are members of BELMAS and remain members for the duration of the bursary support
- are registered on a doctoral programme (e.g., PhD or EdD) at a United Kingdom University or International University
- have commenced, or are about to commence, the thesis stage of their studies and have received ethical approval for their research proposal from their university, and
- are undertaking studies which are focused in the area of educational leadership, management and administration, including work on policy or governance which has clear implications for leadership and management in education.

Selection Criteria

Each application will be judged solely in terms of the proposal's merit as a research study, e.g. the potential to make an original and significant contribution to knowledge, policy and/or practice in the field of educational leadership, management and administration.

In judging applications, attention will be paid to:

- The quality of aims and research questions.
- Demonstrated understanding of the body of existing knowledge on which the research builds.

- The design of the research and the methods proposed.
- The likely contribution to knowledge, policy and/or practice.
- The likelihood that the work will be completed in a timely manner.

The decision of the ABG committee will be verified and approved by the BELMAS Trustee Board, and all decisions will be final.

Applications

Applicants will be asked to submit:

- A research proposal of no more than 2,000 words outlining the focus, aims, research questions, a summary of key literature, research design and expected contribution to knowledge.
- Letter confirming their enrolment in UK or international University as stated above. If necessary, an English translation of this letter will need to be attached.
- Confirmation of Ethics approval.
- A summary of their research in progress, supported by details concerning the project's focus, research questions, methodology, and supporting research literature.
- A short account of the anticipated educational and social benefits of the project.
- Two references from your referees will be requested by the BELMAS office if your application moves forward after the review process, including one from your first or principal supervisor.

Award holders would be required to:

- Submit to BELMAS a short report of the research project's progress each year (this will be in line with your bursary award date as specified by your award confirmation letter).
- Submit a blog post of 800 words to the BELMAS blog about the progress of your project within the first year of receiving the award. This will be subject to review by the BELMAS Blog Editorial Board.
- Present your project via a BELMAS RIG event within two years of being awarded the bursary**.**
- Acknowledge BELMAS in any other future presentations, and publications regarding the project by including the BELMAS logo, and informing the BELMAS office of how your work will be disseminated.
- You will also be encouraged to contribute a seminar paper to a BELMAS research event and to submit papers for possible publication in MiE and/or EMAL, please follow the link for more details: Manuscript Submission Guidelines: Management in Education: Sage Journals (sagepub.com)

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Management in Education: Sage Journals (sagepub.com). Draft submissions are subject to the BELMAS peer review process.

- You will need to provide an executive summary and a link to your thesis, to enable BELMAS members access to the document after successful thesis completion and defence of your thesis.

Applicants may be nominated by their supervisor(s) for the annual BELMAS Doctoral Thesis Award.

The decision to award the bursary would be made by the Awards, Bursaries and Grants (ABG) Committee formed by members of the Trustee Board, appointed by BELMAS Trustees, who oversee these awards and monitor research progress (see below).

Awards will be made solely on the basis of the quality of the submission received and will not take into consideration issues related to financial or other circumstances of the applicant. The decision of the ABG committee will be verified and approved by the Board of Trustees, and all decisions will be final.

Please note, BELMAS Trustees are not permitted to apply for BELMAS Grants and Bursaries in line with the Charity Commission's Guidance.

Costs and Administration

The awards would be for £2,000 for a maximum of two years, payable as twice annual payments of a £1,000. Each payment will be subject to satisfactory report of progress.

Applications must be submitted on our website by Monday 30th November 2026 for the first round and Monday 29th March 2027 for the second round.