# ESRC Impact Acceleration Account (IAA) Impact Fund

# *Guide for Applicants 2016-17*

The ESRC Impact Acceleration Account (IAA) aims to enhance the exploitation of the outputs of social science research in the University whether or not funded by the ESRC.

The aim of the Impact Fund is to support ‘on the ground’ impact/knowledge exchange activities, which enable researchers at all levels to engage with the public, private and third sectors and to establish a sustainable support structure within the University to promote wider and more effective engagement with external organisations that will enhance impact.

The Impact Fund will support:

1. Activities to broaden the experience of engagement with business, NGOs and the public and third sectors. This can cover deepening and strengthening relationships with existing contacts as well as establishing new contacts.
2. Engagement with public, private and third sector organisations through secondments.
3. Developing and promoting new engagement methods to help promote best practice across social science knowledge areas.
4. Short projects to define routes to impact, liaising with partners and finding the resources to enhance impact activities will be eligible. This would include, but is not limited to, holding a workshop to scope interest with a suit of external organisations that would ideally lead to a further impact project.

Awards will be made available to fund work which will significantly increase the probability of the ideas and findings generated by the research having an impact on the private, public and third sectors.

The awards are not the continuation of research. Applications should therefore focus on the development of impact activities and outputs and not on research. Applications which read like research grant proposals re-drafted for IAA purposes are less likely to be successful than projects which clearly comprise development of findings and ideas toward impact.

# Eligibility

Applications are invited from any researcher active in the social sciences (whether or not they are ESRC grant holders) who hold a current contract of employment as an independent researcher – at the point of application – with the University. This includes: all University Teaching Officers externally-funded Research Fellows, Senior Research Associates, Research Associates and those working in research centres or other relevant non-School institutions.

All applications must be submitted support from the Head of Department, this is indicated by a signature on the application form.

Postgraduate students are **not** eligible to apply.

# Application Process

The grants will be awarded as a result of two rounds of competitive bids within the University. The closing dates for applications for 2016-17 are **14th November 2016** and **6th February 2017**. We expect to fund approximately 15 projects per year. The typical level of award will be no more than £20,000. The award will cover 100% of directly incurred costs but will not cover indirect costs.

Projects must be completed within 9 months of the award of the grant for that project, though most projects will be expected to be shorter. Bids for testing experimental or innovative approaches are welcome.

All applications must be submitted with support from the lead applicant’s Head of Department. We encourage cross departmental bids, but in such cases there must still be a designated lead applicant and an expression support from each of the departments involved.

Letters of support from partner organisations, with details of their contribution to the project where appropriate, will help support your case.

Applications must be made on the ESRC IAA Programme 2016-17 Project Application Form and be submitted to researchstrategy@admin.cam.ac.uk together with any letters of support.

# Discretionary Fund

In addition to the 2 calls for funding each year, there is a discretionary fund available for tactical opportunities which come up at a short notice and require a rapid response. Awards for this fund are typically less than £2,000. Please use the ESRC IAA application form to apply for these awards, and submit these applications to researchstrategy@admin.cam.ac.uk.

# Assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

* Quality of the impact development plan: including clear objectives and milestones over the life of the project and criteria against which long-term success could be gauged.
* Evidence of how the project will be managed to ensure that it works toward impact.
* Added value: the application must describe how the IAA grant will be expected to develop or enhance the prospect of impact and be additional to existing Research Council or other funding for impact activities.
* Identification where possible of the likely target audiences for the impact and their potential involvement in the activity to be supported.
* Co-funding of activities to be supported by the Impact Fund is encouraged, but not required. When activities are aimed at developing impacts targeted at specific organisations, then a clear statement of any commitment in kind or in terms of co-funding by those organisations should be provided in a letter of support.

# Evaluation

The bids will be evaluated by a cross departmental Executive Steering Group comprised of senior social science researchers.

Decisions on bids will be made within two weeks of the two respective closing dates. Decisions on applications to the Discretionary Fund will be made within a week of application.

# Progress and Final Reports

Progress updates from funded project holders will be required after 3 months, or half way through the project, whichever is sooner. Updates shall be brief (approximately 250-400 word) and will outline progress against the milestones proposed for the project and agreed by the members of the initial evaluation panel. A Final End of Award Report will be required and will be assessed by the Impact Fund Panel.

# Resources

The following resources might assist you in writing your application.

<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/research/evaluation-and-impact/what-is-impact/>

<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/research/evaluation-and-impact/developing-an-impact-strategy/step-by-step-guide/planning-activities/>

<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/research/evaluation-and-impact/how-to-maximise-impact/>

