# ESRC Impact Acceleration Account (IAA)

# *Guidance for Applicants*

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. There are a number of ways to access this funding.

Through four different funds, the Impact Acceleration Account supports:

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.

# Impact Fund

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.

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. Bids for testing experimental or innovative approaches are welcome.

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.

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

# Impact Fund Application Process

Please use the ESRC IAA Project Application Form. The grants will be awarded as a result of one round of competitive bids within the University. The closing date for applications is **5pm on 1st June 2018**. 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. The Impact Fund grants can be used to support staff on the project, consumables, travel etc. The funds cannot be used to support students or to cover PI time.

Projects must be completed within 12 months of the award of the grant for that project and by 31st March 2019 latest, though most projects will be expected to be shorter.

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 of 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 Impact Fund Application Form and be submitted to researchstrategy@admin.cam.ac.uk together with any letters of support.

# Follow-on Fund

This fund is designed to support ongoing impact from projects which have previously received ESRC IAA funding. Applicants must be able to demonstrate how the project will continue to deliver impact and add value to external stakeholders. Letters of support and evidence of existing continued impact will help your application. There is an upper limit of £5,000 to this fund, and applicants must have submitted a final report for the original project in order to be eligible. The fund must be spent within six months of the award date.

# Follow-on Fund Application Process

Please use the ESRC IAA Follow-on-Fund Application Form. The grants will be awarded as a result of one round of competitive bids within the University. The closing date for applications for 2017-18 is Monday 5th February 2018. The typical level of award will be no more than £5,000. The award will cover 100% of directly incurred costs but will not cover indirect costs.

# Discretionary Fund

In addition to the calls for funding each year, there is a flexible 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.

# Discretionary Fund Application Process

Please use the ESRC IAA Discretionary Fund Application Form to apply for these awards, and submit these applications to researchstrategy@admin.cam.ac.uk. They are accepted on a rolling basis and decisions will be made within 10 working days. Applicants will be informed of the result via email.

# Knowledge Exchange Workshop and Dialogue Fund

# This fund supports Knowledge Exchange activities, such as workshops and dialogue events.

# Intensive one-day workshops for researchers and non-academic stakeholders enable researchers to develop skills in stakeholder engagement and to identify opportunities for future collaboration. Workshops can be held with business, local government and other public or third sector organisations. The upper limit for workshop applications is £2,000.

# This fund can also be used to support interactive Knowledge Exchange meetings or ‘Dialogue’ events with external stakeholders (such as policymakers, practitioners, professionals and users) that can demonstrate the potential to lead to further collaboration.

# The aim is to engage non-academic partners in two-way exchanges in an area of common interest. These proposals should also demonstrate a commitment to developing productive ongoing partnerships with non-academic partners, and the potential to accelerate impact arising from social science research. The upper limit for KE Dialogue projects is £1,000.

# Applications to this scheme are accepted on a rolling basis and are reviewed within 10 working days.

# Knowledge Exchange Workshop and Dialogue Fund Application Process

Please use the ESRC IAA KE Dialogue Application Form to apply for these awards, and submit your applications to researchstrategy@admin.cam.ac.uk. They are accepted on a rolling basis and decisions will be made within 10 working days. Applicants will be informed of the result via email.

# Eligibility

Applications are invited from any researcher pursuing activity in the social sciences or policy engagement (whether or not they are ESRC grant holders) who holds 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.

# Assessment criteria

Applications to all funds 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 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

Applications to all schemes will be evaluated by a cross departmental Executive Steering Group comprised of senior researchers.

Decisions on Impact Fund and Follow-on-Fund bids will be made within two weeks of the respective closing date. Decisions on applications to the Discretionary Fund and the KE Dialogue Fund will be made within a much shorter timescale, and always within ten days of application.

# Progress and Final Reports

For Impact Fund projects, progress updates from project holders will be required after three months, or half way through the project, whichever is sooner. Updates shall be brief (approximately 250-400 words) 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 after all projects have completed and will be assessed by the Executive Steering Group.

An Update report will also be requested six months after the end of the project. This is designed to record any impact which has developed or continued beyond the completion of the project.

For all other funds, the reporting requirements will be confirmed by the IAA Co-ordinator at the time of award.

# 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/>

<https://esrc.ukri.org/research/impact-toolkit/developing-pathways-to-impact/>

<https://www.research-strategy.admin.cam.ac.uk/pathwaytoimpact/index.html>

