Translational Funding

AHRC Impact Accelerator Account Applicant Guidance

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1. Introduction to Exeter's AHRC Impact Acceleration Account

The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) has awarded the University of Exeter a block grant of £450K in the form of an Impact Acceleration Account (IAA). The current AHRC IAA runs until March 2025.

The purpose of the grant is to to support translation of arts and humanities research into real-world impact.

The agreed overall aims and objectives of Exeter's AHRC IAA are to:

- To extend our deployment of inter- and multidisciplinary approaches
- To encourage and enable blue-sky invention and innovation in the application of the Arts & Humanities across the three Priority Areas for Action
- To see the Knowledge Exchange and Impact imperative shape the culture and the structures of our academic and professional service communities
- The extension and enhancement of career and skills training and development provision for our new and next generation Arts & Humanities practitioners.

2. What does the AHRC mean by 'Impact' and what does it expect from the IAA?

Although the IAA is operated by the University, the AHRC has clear expectations regarding impact. The AHRC definition of impact is 'the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy'.

Research impact embraces all the diverse ways that research findings and research-related skills benefit individuals, organisations and nations. These include:

- Fostering global economic performance, and specifically the economic competitiveness of the United Kingdom.
- Increasing the effectiveness of public services and policy.
- Enhancing quality of life, health and creative output.

A key aspect of the ESRC definition of impact is **that it must be possible to demonstrate the impact that research has had**; it is not enough just to focus on activities and outputs that promote research impact. You must be able to provide evidence of research impact, for example, that it has been taken up and used by policymakers and practitioners or has led to improvements in services or business. Some of the core conceptualisations that the AHRC uses to demonstrate the type of outcomes they expect from the IAA are:

- Impact that is instrumental - influencing the development of policy and practice.
- Impact that is conceptual - shifting understanding around issues and changing the way problems are understood.
- Culture change and enduring connectivity - more people working across the academic/ non-academic divide and building lasting relationships.

3. Exeter's AHRC IAA Funding Streams

I. Impact Cultivation Fund

Funding Amount: Up to £5,000
Aims and Objectives: To enable the initiation and development of contacts, networks and engagement between academic researchers, SMEs, third sector organisations and policy makers by supporting the development of detailed feasibility studies for projects that could lead to significant impact.

Indicative Activities: Small-scale activities, such as workshops, meetings, the translation of findings, and development of frameworks to explore how the potential social and economic benefit of existing and on-going research might be realised; or to establish a network of policy officials and academics with policy experience in order to create and develop knowledge exchange opportunities through which the potential social and economic benefit of the research for policy can be explored. This fund supports fast failure and reasonable risk-taking and enables academics to respond quickly to urgent, rare or unforeseen events, or to take advantage of time limited opportunities.

Suggested Length of Project: Up to 6 months.

Faculty Authorisation: Director of Research & Impact.

Notification of outcome: Within 1 week of application being submitted.

II. Creative Invention Fund

Funding Amount: Up to £20,000

Aims and Objectives: To simulate and support new blue-skies applications of Arts and Humanities knowledge, understanding and skill for Creative Industries outputs. Proposals may be for proof-of-concept, a pilot or prototype but must be for an output with a demonstrable commercial context and deliverable within the term of the funding award. They must be founded on a Creative Industries partnership.

Indicative Activities: A co-created project through which impactful outputs (for example, a toolkit, training programme, proof-of-concept, pilot, or prototype, etc.) are produced. This funding can be spent on Research Assistant or Project Assistant salary costs, travel and subsistence, impact events such as symposia, equipment (up to £9,999) or on specialist services (for example a mobile app designer).

Suggested Length of Project: Up to 12 months.

Faculty Authorisation: Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research & Impact, and Director of Research & Impact.

Notification of outcome: Within 5 weeks of application being submitted.

III. Humane Policy Fund

Funding Amount: Up to £20,000

Aims and Objectives: To enable Arts & Humanities researchers to develop or deepen a KE relationship with government, NGOs and/or Third Sector organisations in order to produce an outcome to inform policymaking or support evidence-based policy making. Priority will be given to proposals for interventions aimed at the sustainable and inclusive improvement of living, working and tourist environments of the South West region.

Indicative Activities: Co-created outputs such as a pilot practice, data-driven report, toolkit, training programme, policy framework, intervention project, or the translation of findings. Deepening of existing links between UoE social science researchers and non-academic bodies. Establishment of a network of policy officials and academics with policy experience that are able to directly influence policy decision making.

Suggested Length of Project: Up to 12 months

Faculty Authorisation: Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research & Impact, and Director of Research & Impact.

Notification of outcome: Within 5 weeks of application being submitted.

IV.   Knowledge Exchange Fellowship Fund

Funding Amount: Up to £30,000

Aims and Objectives: To deepen existing links between researchers and non-academic organisations by enabling inbound, outbound and virtual fellowships. This stream will enable a collaborative approach with non-academic partners to the exploration, development, and implementation of findings from UoE research. It aims to generate significant social or economic benefits through cocreated outputs. KE Fellows will act as change agents, enabling the free flow of knowledge and expertise between the University and partner organisations, thus accelerating impact.
Please note that the Fellow cannot also be the PI.

Indicative Activities: The core activity will be co-created projects carried out on placements. Within this mode of collaborative working, activities may include research design, the development of methodology, and interpretation and presentation of findings, as well as data development or the translation of existing research findings. This funding can be spent on academic salary costs, travel and subsistence, and impact events such as symposia. Fellowships are for between 3 and 12 months and can be organised in flexible blocks of time to suit the participants and nature of the project.

Suggested Length of Project: Up to 12 months

Faculty Authorisation: Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research & Impact, and Director of Research & Impact.

Notification of outcome: Within 5 weeks of application being submitted.

4. Eligibility

Anyone employed by the University of Exeter on an academic/research contract seeking to accelerate the non-academic impact from their research is eligible to apply to the AHRC IAA. Your employment contract must last for at least the length of the proposed project.

The project must clearly demonstrate how it will strategically take forward and build on the existing Research and/or relationship to make a significant difference either socially, economically, regionally, nationally or internationally etc.

5. Assessment Criteria

1.   Application details

Successful applications to this scheme will demonstrate:

Collaboration with a committed external, non-academic partner.
  o   Has the external partner provided a letter of support that demonstrates their commitment to and enthusiasm for the project?

o   Are the project partner(s) making a cash and/or in-kind contribution to the project? Partner contributions should be relative to the amount requested from IAA funds, and appropriate to the size and type of organisation.

The benefit to society and/or the economy the project activities aim to achieve.
o   Does the application clearly articulate the overarching non-academic aim of the project?
o   Why is it important that this project is supported?
o   Is the overarching non-academic aim achievable and feasible?
o   If the aim is commercialisation, does the application demonstrate a clear pathway to commercialisation and have they spoken to a member of the IP & Commercialisation Team?

Effective knowledge exchange (KE) activities.
o   Do the proposed KE activities maximise engagement with the partner organisation?
o   Are the KE activities outlined in detail and the intended outcomes clearly identified?

A clear and feasible project delivery and project plan.
o   Does the application detail a specific set of activities (outputs), setting out responsibilities of the applicant(s) and of the project partner(s) for each?
o   Does the application clearly state what the outcomes of the activities undertaken will be?
o   Does the application have a clear and feasible delivery plan with realistic milestones?

Clearly defined key performance indicators (KPI'S). A guide to outputs, outcomes and KPIs can be found on the Internal Funding Opportunities page of the Research Toolkit.
o   Does the application have clear and realistic targets?
o   Does the application detail how the outcomes & KPIs will be recorded and monitored?
o   Does the application detail what method of evidence capture they will use? Successful applicants will be required to provide evidence that they have achieved their stated KPIs.

A well-planned, realistic & clearly defined project budget.
o   Are the activities eligible for IAA funding? See the eligible and ineligible costs lists below.
o   Does the budget demonstrate value for money?
o   Are the funds requested appropriately justified and reasonable?
o   Does the budget provide adequate detail? For example, rather than stating '£1k for workshop', is the workshop cost broken down into to its constituent parts (venue cost, printing costs, travel etc)?

Ethical and Health & Safety consideration.
o   Does the application identify any potential ethical and/or health & safety issues?
o   Does the application propose reasonable mitigating actions for any risks identified?

Appropriate Faculty Approval & support.

Adhesion to the application page limit.

2. Partner contribution and letters of support

It is expected that non-academic partners will make a match funding contribution to AHRC IAA projects, the cash or in time contribution should be appropriate to the size and type of organisation. We request that a letter of support is submitted with the application. Non- academic partners will need to demonstrate their commitment to the project and applications should detail how participants will work collaboratively to achieve the aims and objectives of the project.

Letters of support are not essential when applying for the Impact Cultivation Fund, however, this would strengthen the application where a support letter is appropriate (i.e., where a relationship with the partner has already been established)

3. Faculty contribution

It is expected that the faculty will make an in-kind and/or cash contribution to AHRC IAA projects to show their support for the project and their approval of the PI time spent on the project.

PI and Co-I time, Indirect Costs, and Estates will be considered an in-kind contribution from the faculty and will be calculated on Worktribe.

Match funding from the faculty must be approved by the Director of Research & Impact (applications under £10k) and by the Director of Research & Impact *and* the Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research & Impact (applications £10k and over) prior to the application being submitted.

6. Eligible Costs

If you are considering a cost that does not appear here, please contact the Translational Funding Team for guidance.

Activities that are eligible for IAA funding include:

✔ Travel and subsistence.

✔ Venue hire.

✔ Research Assistant or Administration assistant salary costs.

✔ Participant payments (a small sum to cover out of pocket expenses and as compensation for inconvenience).

✔ External contractors for specialist tasks (e.g., design work).

✔ Equipment up to the value of £9,999.

✔ Costs associated with secondary analysis of primary data (the use of data that was collected by someone else for some other purpose).

Activities that are ineligible for IAA funding include:

❌ PI and Co-I salary costs.

❌ Partner costs.

❌ Undergraduate activities, core PhD training, Masters. Postgraduate research students cannot apply for funding.

❌ Direct funding for staff and funds to support IP protection and patent costs.

❌ Attendance at academic conferences or other initiatives with a primarily academic audience.

❌ Preparation of research grant applications.

❌ Contributions to KTPs.

❌ Equipment with a value of £10,000 or more.

❌ Indirect costs or estate costs (these will be part of your faculty contribution).

❌ Impact activities which have already been included within an AHRC IAA funded project.

❌ Primary/Basic research activities.

❌ AHRC IAA funds cannot be used to support a private company, as they are a public funder and have to adhere to [Subsidy Control measures](#) . If you are unsure whether your cost would be considered to be a subsidy for a private company please contact the Translational Funding Team.

7. How to Apply (including Costings)

1. In all cases, please contact the Translational Funding team to notify them of your interest in the AHRC IAA and to discuss your proposal.

2. Download the application form for the appropriate funding stream from the Internal Funding Opportunities page of the Research Toolkit on the University of Exeter intranet.

3. Create a new Project cost your application using the Worktribe system. Full instructions for using the Worktribe system to log and cost your proposal can be found on the Research Toolkit. 100% directly incurred and directly allocated projects costs can be applied for. All costs must be stated with the inclusion of VAT.

4. Complete the application form. Please ensure type size is no smaller than 11pt. If applications exceed the permitted length, they will be returned to you to be edited down, proximity to deadline permitting. If time does not permit, only the first five pages will be sent to reviewers.

5. Obtain a Letter of Support from external collaborators outlining their agreement to participate and details of any match funding or in-kind contribution.

6. For applications under £10k, obtain Faculty approval for your application from your Director of Research and Impact. For applications of £10k and over, obtain Faculty approval from your Director of Research and Impact *and* the APVC for Research and Impact. **Your application will not be accepted without this.**

7. Email your word application form and your Letter of Support to the Translational Funding Team AHRC-IAA@exeter.ac.uk

8. Assessment Process

Applications to the Impact Cultivation Fund and the Policy Impact Imagination Fund will be reviewed by the Translational Funding Team and relevant Exeter Innovation Sector leads. We aim to notify you of the outcome of your application within two weeks of your submission.

Applications to the Impact Co-Creation Fund, the Knowledge Exchange Fellowship fund, and the Strategic Initiative Fund will receive two reviews from our AHRC IAA Review Panel which consists of academics, professional services colleagues, and industry partners from a range of disciplines and sectors. All applications and reviews will be considered, and final funding decisions made at the Review Panel meeting. To ensure segregation of responsibilities the meeting is chaired by the Translational Funding Manager, funding decisions are approved by the AHRC IAA Principal Investigator (PI), and minutes are taken by the Translational Funding Officer. We aim to notify you of the outcome of your application will be delivered within five weeks of the application submission deadline.

9. Reporting Requirements for Funded Projects

The Principal Applicant (Principal Investigator - PI) of each funded project will be required submit a mid-term project update and an end of project report on the activities carried out, outcomes and impacts (or expected future impacts), specifically:

•   A report of the tangible benefits and successes achieved or likely to be realised after the project, by both the user (and their potential beneficiaries) and the University. This includes indicators of success, such as number of new connections and partnerships (defined as involving an exchange of resources – e.g., co-funding, leverage, and contributions in kind), projects started and numbers participating in events etc.

•   A member of the translational funding team may also follow up several months after the project to find out about longer-term impacts.

•   The PI must comply with requests for information about the project for publicity and for the Translational Funding website to enable us to share good practice and news about impact within the University and beyond.

Successful applicants will be sent a guide to research impact evidence capture.

10.   Frequently asked questions

What is considered an Early Career Researcher (ECR)?

UKRI defines an ECR as someone who is either:

- Within eight years of their PhD award (this is from the time of the PhD 'viva' oral test), or equivalent professional training.
- Within six years of their first academic appointment (the first full or part time paid employment contract that lists research or teaching as the primary function).

These periods exclude any career break, for example due to:

- Family care.
- Health reasons.
- Reasons related to COVID-19 such as home schooling or increased teaching load.

Is it compulsory for my project to have a CO-I?

No, having a Co-I is not a condition of funding.

11. Further Information

If you have any questions about the AHRC Impact Acceleration Account, please contact the translational funding team at AHRC-IAA@exeter.ac.uk