EPSRC Impact Acceleration Account (IAA) Researcher Mobility:
Funding for exchanges and placements, April 2020

GUIDANCE NOTES

SECTION 1: OVERVIEW

1.1 Source of fund: EPSRC IAA

1.2 Total funding available: The EPSRC IAA Steering Committee will make decisions on the allocation of funding between streams based on the quality of proposals received

1.3 Maximum size of award: indicative max £10,000

1.4 Duration: April 2020 – end March 2021 (Projects can be shorter however no extension to funding will be possible due to EPSRC funding rules)

1.5 Deadline for applications: 12noon, Friday 15th May 2021

1.6 Main aims of this call:
- to promote the exchange of academic and industrial research collaborators, including post-doctoral researchers,
- to provide academic researchers (especially early-career researchers) with new experience working with, and in, industry or equivalent, on challenge-led research,
- to develop academic researchers' abilities to build mutually beneficial partnerships with business/industry.

1.7 Restrictions:

Note that the following costs are not eligible:

- costs of cover for teaching time;
- the commercial exploitation of work already being undertaken, or intellectual property protection;
- research activity;
- capital equipment;
- studentships or fee waivers for students;
- start-up funds for new staff.

Funds will be allocated to specific projects, and not devolved to departments for internal distribution.

1.8 Contact for guidance:

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SECTION 2: BACKGROUND

About provider

The Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) is a United Kingdom Research and Innovation (UKRI) funder.

The EPSRC's mission is to:
- Promote and support research and training in the field of engineering and physical sciences;
- Advance and disseminate knowledge and produce scientists to improve the quality of life and the economic competitiveness of the UK;
- To promote public awareness and engagement with the research that the EPSRC supports.

EPSRC funding is divided among research areas aligning to 12 themes:

- Digital economy
- Energy
- Engineering
- Global uncertainties
- Healthcare technologies
- Information and communication technologies (ICT)
- Living with Environmental Change (LWEC)
- Manufacturing the future

- Mathematical sciences
- Physical sciences
- Quantum technologies
- Research infrastructure

The EPSRC allocates awards of Impact Acceleration Account (IAA) funding to universities to support knowledge exchange and translational activity arising from EPSRC-funded research.

About purpose

A package of activity has been built into the 2017-2021 EPSRC IAA Business Plan to focus support on, and enhance opportunities for, researcher mobility between academia and business/industry.

Allocations in the previous IAA included support for a highly productive joint lectureship with an industrial partner, which was strategically very valuable in allowing the University to enhance this relationship.

For this round we wish to support a wider secondment/exchange scheme, via which a higher number of less costly projects would be funded, with the aim to spread the benefit more widely across our EPSRC-facing departments and build a more systematic approach to this type of interaction.

To support this field of activity, we will be offering structured training for researchers in communicating and engaging with industry, and specific coaching to ensure that early engagements progress and develop in a mutually beneficial way where possible.

It is proposed that a new member of our Research Excellence Training Team – Knowledge Exchange Training & Placement Co-ordinator – will facilitate and support both the training activity and the organisation of placements and exchanges for individual researchers.

Applications are invited for business-led projects involving a substantial presence of (in particular early career) academic researchers at the partner workplace. Funding will support buy-out time, travel and subsistence costs. **Applications for funding from this strand should therefore be made with an industrial partner confirmed.**

Success criteria and the selection panel

Applications will be scored against the following five criteria.

1. **Evidence of an existing relationship and potential for it to develop**

2. **Evidence of mutuality of benefit from the relationship and expectations for how that will develop for both the applicant (and co-applicant if relevant – see 3.1 below) and the industrial partner**

3. **Quality of project and potential for impact**

4. **Personal development plan for the researcher/academic including intended learning outcomes**

5. **Fit to EPSRC remit and the interests of the applicants**

Each of the five criteria will be scored on a 0-5 scale, leading to an overall score which corresponds to one of the following descriptors. Feedback on applications will be informed by these descriptors, and short qualitative feedback statements (but not numerical scores) will be shared with applicants.

0-4 This proposal is scientifically or technically flawed
5-8 This proposal does not meet one or more of the assessment criteria, or is a request for funding outside of the remit of the various research priming schemes
9-12 This proposal meets all assessment criteria but with clear weaknesses
13-17 This is a good proposal that meets all assessment criteria but with minor weaknesses
18-21 This is a strong proposal that broadly meets all assessment criteria
22-25 This is a very strong proposal that fully meets all assessment criteria

The selection panel will be drawn from relevant members of the academic community and colleagues in Research & Enterprise; details will be published shortly. Additional external participants will be drawn from industry and the investment community to supplement the panel.

SECTION 3: APPLICATION CRITERIA

3.1 Am I eligible to apply?

The scheme is available to support mobility of University staff in the following categories:
(1) those on Research contracts who are not considered as "independent researchers" (e.g. postdoctoral researchers employed on one or more research grants);
(2) those considered as "early career" by EPSRC, which extends to include some of those on a Teaching & Research Contract within the ART category, or on a specific Research contract and considered to be an "independent researcher";
(3) those on ART or Research contracts who are not necessarily "early career", who have suitable projects which fit to this call.

In all cases, the Internal Main Applicant must be a current member of University staff either on a Teaching & Research Contract within the ART category, or on a specific Research contract and considered to be an "independent researcher"[1].

Those "mobile researchers" in category (1), therefore, should give their line manager as the Internal Main Applicant (to confirm formal support for the application and to confirm that implications for existing research projects have been considered) and themselves as the co-applicant.

If the main applicant is on a fixed-term contract, with a contract end date before the end of the project or very shortly afterwards, a further project supervisor who will take over and oversee completion of the project should also be named.

Staff on support contracts may act as co-investigators, but this would normally be an exception.

There is no formal limit on the number of applications an individual can submit, either as lead or as co-applicant. Submissions must be approved by the DRC Chair (see 4.3).

3.2 Can costs for current employees be covered by this grant?

Unlike many priming grants, costs for existing staff time **can** be included. However, estates and indirect costs **cannot** be included, to ensure as much of the money as possible is spent directly on relevant activity. All costs will be paid at 100%. A brief explanation of staff costs should be included in the Justification of Resources.

Where it is proposed to fund staff who are already on paid contracts with the University, a detailed explanation must be provided as to how it is possible for the individual to devote time to this project while also delivering on the commitments of the contract they have been engaged on. We encourage applicants to consider innovative approaches to placements and exchanges including day release (e.g. 4 days per week at the University with 1 day per week on placement) as well as more tried and tested methods.

Where this IAA funding is requested to provide salary to extend the contract of, or employ for a short period, a fixed-term member of staff, the potential employment law implications of such a contract should be fully appreciated by the Head of Department. Advice can be sought from the relevant HR Manager.

3.3 What can be funded?

Areas for expenditure within a project may include (non-exhaustive list):

- **Secondments: staff time**

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[1] This is usually defined as being grade 8 and above; exceptionally, a colleague employed at grade 7 would be considered independent if they have been named as PI or equivalent on a research grant or significant piece of work. Instances that are not clear cut should be considered on a case-by-case basis by the relevant DRC Chair in conjunction with the member of staff's line manager. Information about the member of staff's ability to act in this capacity should be included in the DRC Chair comments, where relevant.

Opportunity for short or more extended secondment or exchange into or out of the University with e.g. industry staff.

- **Travel and subsistence**

For a York researcher on secondment or placement, or for visits by the industry collaborator to York.

- **Training or conference costs**

Funding for a specific training course, or event attendance directly related to learning new skills, or presenting to a particular audience / building collaborator networks for the project.

- **Small consumables or materials budget**

For project-related expenditure.

Requests for travel, accommodation and subsistence costs should be guided by the [University's travel and expenses policy](#).

3.4 What cannot be funded?

- Patent costs and related fees.
- Entire translational projects.
- External/industrial partner costs other than for visits by the industry collaborator to York.
- Support for students directly via the waiver of fees or the provision of studentships. Students may be employed as technical support on projects, but this must not form part of their studies.
- Start-up funds for new staff.
- Teaching buy-out.
- Honorarium payments to visitors or fees for undertaking teaching.
- Items of equipment costing over £10k, or groups of items that could be construed as a single item if purchased together.
- Standard computing equipment.

3.5 What are the limits of the scale and expenditure for my project?

An indicative project budget of max £10K is set at this stage. Please email if your project idea requires substantial additional funding.

3.6 Is this grant being awarded at 80% FEC or 100% FEC?

All direct costs will be paid at 100%. No estates or indirect costs can be included.

3.7 What should the duration of my project be?

The financing period for this round ends on 31 March 2021.

SECTION 4: PRACTICALITIES

4.1 How will the call be disseminated?

The call will be issued by the EPSRC IAA Team (via epsrc-iaa@york.ac.uk) to Heads of Department, Departmental Research Committee Chairs, PVC Research, Associate Deans for Research, Research Champions and YRAF, for information and further dissemination.

4.2 How do I submit my application form?

Applications should be sent, ahead of the deadline, AS A SINGLE PDF FILE, with ALL necessary sign-off requirements completed to **epsrc-iaa@york.ac.uk**

Your email should be clearly marked as "Researcher Mobility Funding Application".

4.3 Whom do I approach for a permission to apply / "sign-off" requirements?

Applications require approval and comments from the DRC Chair of the principal applicant, and may require HoD approval if departmental resources are being committed.

4.4 How will I access the awarded funds?

Funds will be assigned to project-specific workorders shortly after the award is made. Project costs may be drawn against the workorder once you have been notified that it is ready to use. Funds may NOT be transferred to another Agresso code.

4.5 How will my funding be monitored and are there any practicalities I need to know about after the project finishes?

Expenditure will be monitored by the EPSRC IAA Team.

For projects lasting 6 months or more, a brief summary of progress must be submitted to the EPSRC IAA Team when half of the scheduled project duration has elapsed. Recipients must provide a summary upon completion and report on follow-on activity that derives directly from having undertaken the project.

Reporting requirements are subject to change and new requirements from the Funder (EPSRC). Applicants may be required to compile data for ResearchFish submission.

SECTION 5: TIMELINE

Timescales / deadlines	Activity
20th April	The call opens.
12 noon, Friday 15th May	Application submission deadline.
w/c 25th May	Selection panel video conference.
w/c 25th May	Outcomes to be announced.
w/c 25th May	Feedback sent out to applicants.
1st June	Start date for funding to be spent.
31st October 2020	Interim reporting deadline for projects over 6 months in duration. (NB flexible to reflect current challenges)
Varies according to project length, but no later than 31st March 2021	Funding to be spent by this date.
TBC	Final report date.