



EPSRC Impact Acceleration Account (IAA)

User Engagement:

Strategic Partnership Development Funding,

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 (Maximum duration, 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 2020

1.6 Overarching aim of the fund: to build on the University's existing strategic partnerships with businesses in the EPSRC space, and to increase the number of businesses with whom the University has partnerships.

1.7 Restrictions: Applications can be made by a single individual on behalf of themselves, or a larger group. Applications made by DRC Chairs on behalf of their departments would also

be welcomed. Furthermore, applicants are encouraged to speak to colleagues in other departments and faculties before applying to ascertain interest across the University, which would strengthen their applications.

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 key success factor for large and ambitious translational projects is committed industrial partnership. Highly effective and trusting partnership is built over time. York has a small number of such strategic partnerships with businesses in the EPSRC space e.g. BT, IBM and Croda. Funding is provided to strengthen existing partnerships.

A strategic partnership is defined as one that endures beyond a single project or series of disconnected projects, and may span several research groupings across the University. Similarly, strategic partnerships are likely to involve several types of interaction between the organisations, e.g. contract research, collaboration on externally-funded proposals, use of facilities, placements for undergraduate or graduate students, seats on external advisory boards, mentorship roles, or consultancy work. Simply, a strategic partnership is not one that is for the purpose of supporting a single application by a single individual.

Crucially for a partnership to endure, there must be evidence of benefit to both parties – i.e. both have something that the other wants!

Evidence for all of these features of the partnership you want to support and nurture must be included in your application. That said, you do not have to have evidence of multiple existing interactions to be eligible to apply, **you must however have a clear plan of activities and evidence of mutual need and willingness to engage longer-term.**

Activities for which this fund will provide support include but are not limited to:

- Providing specifically designed workshops and events with partners to understand their 'key challenges';
- Visits and/or short-term exchange of staff;
- Travel between companies and the University;
- Priming funding for small projects.

Success criteria and the selection panel

Applications will be scored against the following five criteria.

1. Evidence of an existing relationship or potential for one to develop

2. Scope of the expected relationship

- New academics or disciplines
- New interaction modes e.g. internships

3. Quality of plan for management of relationship

4. Evidence of mutuality of benefit from the relationship

- Including what are the partners putting into the programme to show their commitment

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 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". 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.

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?

Staff buy-out is not generally funded, except in exceptional circumstances. Buyout is only considered for research-only staff that are fully funded on external contracts. Where it is proposed to fund staff who are already on paid contracts with the University, a detailed explanation must be provided in the application form (provided by the appropriate Head of Department) 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. The same caveats apply to the use of the funds for bridging contracts.

Where this Pump Priming money 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):

- **Background research**

Third-parties could be commissioned to perform background market/sector research? Systematic reviews? Economic evaluations? Freedom to operate searches? Patent searches?

- **Networking/Consortium building meetings (and associated travel/subsistence)**

Funding to bring together partners, including overseas partners, to participate in meetings. Would not usually anticipate funding those who will benefit directly from potential collaborations, but exceptions may be made in this case as the funding spend period is so tight.

- **Capability Demonstration Funding**

Funding to perform experiments to demonstrate your capability to your partner or test the usefulness of pieces of equipment for their purposes. Expenditure types could include consumables, equipment access costs, staff time (inc. existing PDRAs, technical staff)

- **Project Management/Facilitation Support**

External professional assistance to organise and run the proposed project or events, especially useful if there are a number of parties and activities.

- **Secondments**

Opportunity for an extended (3-5m?) secondment or exchange into or out of the University with e.g. industry staff.

- **Stakeholder Engagement Events**

Activities aimed at finding out the needs of the potential recipients of the research e.g. patient focus groups.

- **Travel/conference attendance**

Where there is an explicit need to present to a particular audience or meet particular potential collaborators.

- **Training**

Could fund someone to go on a specific training course, or bring someone in house to offer training directly related to learning new skills for a particular area.

- **Workshops/sandpits**

Assistance could be offered by RDT/BDT to run a workshop or sandpit to help build collaborations and develop project ideas within the framework of the project's overall vision. These may even be grant writing 'hothouses' or retreats.

3.4 What cannot be funded?

- Patent costs and related fees.
- Entire translational projects.
- External/industrial partner costs.
- 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.
- 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 epsrciaa@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 epsrciaa@york.ac.uk.

Your email should be clearly marked as 'EPSRC IAA Strategic Partnership Development'.

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 Research and Enterprise Directorate.

For projects lasting 6 months or more, a brief summary of progress must be submitted to the Research Development 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: ADVICE ON COMPLETING SECTIONS OF THE FORM

5.1 Section 2.1 Background to Proposal

Please explain the history of the relationship to date, including any details of joint activities or projects. Please name previous staff from both organisations who have been involved, or additional staff who will be involved in the future but who are not co-applicants. Please explain the shared research interests of each party.

5.1 Section 2.2 – Proposed Plan and Details

Please outline a plan for the activities you will undertake to build the relationship, including as many details as are known about the nature of projects to be undertaken or staff to be exchanged etc. Please explain how the relationship will be managed and how information about the relationship will be communicated to relevant internal parties. Please give evidence of mutual benefit, explaining what each party will gain from this strategic partnership.

5.1 Section 2.3 – Proposed outcomes and impact of the project

Please explain what changes will happen as a result of the project. These could be policy changes, economic or commercial benefits, social improvements, environmental impacts, or other possible impacts. This section should explain which of these the project will lead to.

5.1 Section 2.4 – Measuring impact

This section should identify how an observer would know that the project had successfully delivered its intended outcomes - what metrics or indicators could one use to evaluate whether or not the project had done what it set out to do?

5.1 Section 2.7 - Sustainability

Please explain how the relationship will be sustained beyond the funding period, including details of any ongoing funding if available.

SECTION 6: 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.