

## BBSRC Impact Acceleration Account (BBSRC IAA) Funding Guidance Notes

### BACKGROUND

Building on the momentum achieved by existing Queen's impact activities, the BBSRC IAA funding stream aims to deliver much needed investment in a range of activities to accelerate the effective delivery of research impact, drive a change in research culture and realise the opportunities for economic and social good that biotechnology and biological science offers.

The Objectives are

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| 1. <b>To develop an embedded impact, knowledge exchange and technology transfer culture as an integral part of biotechnology and biological science research within Queen's by: Supporting development of researcher engagement and impact; and supporting researcher mobility and flexible people exchanges between organisations and the University, as a way of exchanging skills and knowledge and developing longer-term working relationships;</b> |
| 2. <b>To lower the barriers that impede impact generating activities and to generate external validation through: Supporting innovative translation "fast fail"/preliminary scoping projects in a real environment; and Supporting end user engagement activities;</b>   |
| 3. <b>To build on and diversify our portfolio of external partners (national and global) by engaging with new and existing users in research impact development;</b>   |
| 4. <b>To support the early stages of potential impact via commercialisation of outputs by: Supporting preliminary confidence of concept and early-stage market validation activities as a channel to the larger funding e.g. InvestNI Proof of Concept;</b>  |
| 5. <b>To facilitate improved bids to funding bodies (e.g. BBSRC IPA, LINK), in terms of quality and success, by: Improved competence and understanding of impact; and acquisition of effective preliminary data sets or clearer understanding of end-user requirements.</b>  |

This funding will drive impact through support for commercialisation potential, impact awareness and partnership development.

Applications are invited from members of staff in any School /Faculty within Queen's that can satisfy three essential criteria;

1. The activity must be BBSRC (biotechnology and/or biological science) related;
2. The project must be able to start reasonably quickly; and
3. All work must be completed by end December 2025

## **Applications based on multi-/interdisciplinary research are eligible and encouraged**

There are 3 Funding Themes: 1. Impact through Commercialisation; 2. Impact through Awareness and 3. Impact through Partnership.

## **GENERAL GUIDANCE ON FUNDING THEMES**

### **Theme 1: IMPACT THROUGH COMMERCIALISATION**

#### **Fund: *The Commercial Principle Push Fund***

This Fund allows researchers to carry out early-stage commercialisation activities essential to realising the commercial potential of biotechnology and biological science-related research. Industrial partners are not a requirement but external validation will be sought.

Funding supports an individual/small team develop and strengthen the commercial potential of an identified business opportunity (max. 3 months). A project lead should be identified to monitor progress. Your award can be spent flexibly, including on salary contribution, external validation/business model concept development and training/ develop a pitch for the technology or to find a potential partner. To note any costs relating to Intellectual Property protection including but not limited to registering, maintaining or supporting patents or property rights **are not eligible for funding**. We strongly recommend that an Invention Disclosure Form (IDF) associated with your potential commercialisable activity, be submitted to Commercial Development ahead of the application and the reference number added to the application. Max Award ~ £ 10,000

### **Theme 2: IMPACT THROUGH AWARENESS**

#### **Fund: *The Impact Action Fund***

This Fund will promote dissemination and awareness building for specific projects that require external interest to explore and fulfil their impact potential (includes economic/non-economic (environmental, societal and policy). This can include stakeholder showcase engagement e.g. Academic-Industry Meeting days (AIMdays), public lectures, social media/website campaigns, press/media engagement or coverage, workshops and public event attendance complimenting key areas in the Queen's institutional Engaged Research Action Plan.

Funding will support public engagement where interaction is key to informing the research impact such as user engagement as a critical pathway to achieving societal and/or economic impact. To note, funded activities require pre/post activity stakeholder evaluation methodology (e.g knowledge survey) to inform you as a researcher(s) gain a clearer understanding of the impact potential of your research. Max Award is generally £2,000, but up to £5,000 will be considered in exceptional circumstances.

### **Theme 3: IMPACT THROUGH PARTNERSHIP**

#### **Fund: *The Relationships Incubator Fund***

This Fund is aimed at activities that will support early findings that will help researchers build partnerships with organisations (businesses, academia, international bodies, Governments, NGO's Policy makers) regionally, nationally or globally with which they have not previously worked or where there is an early partnership. There are 2 types of Award within this Fund i) Scoping Projects; and ii) Partnership Projects.

##### **i) *Scoping Projects***

Scoping Projects could include preliminary fast fail /pilot investigations for the translation of research outcomes or the development of preliminary data sets to support full follow-on

funding applications. Some level of matched funding is expected from partners, this can be cash/in-kind/or a combination of both. Activities under this Award are aimed at significantly de-risking the challenges to accelerate the time between the discovery of knowledge and the point at which it can deliver benefit. **To note - new, fundamental research will not be funded** i.e. projects can be based on the translation of existing research within an industrial setting or existing research can be used in a pilot study with an industrial partner to gain data required for a future collaborative research bid. Max Award ~ £ 20,000. **To note that Due Diligence checks will be undertaken on successful award partners.**

## ii) *Partnership Projects*

Partnership Projects awards support academics to travel to share their research (pandemic regulations permitting) with impact partners and for partners to come to Belfast to learn how the research can help them create impact, leading to future research collaborations, funded projects and long-term alliances and contributing to the University's increasing portfolio of impact partners. Max Award ~ £2,000 but up to £5,000 can be awarded in exceptional circumstances.

## **Fund: Visiting Fellowship Fund (Outgoing/Incoming)**

Funding researcher mobility and flexible people exchanges between organisations and the University is a key way of exchanging skills and knowledge and developing longer-term relationships. This Fund will support increased engagement with external partners at a strategic level through establishing/developing relationships that have potential to lead to enduring collaborations and impact. These Fellowship awards should enable validation of research outcomes, knowledge exchange and technology transfer, information gathering and ideation, in the real world. Max Award ~ £ 5,000, awarded for duration max. 2 weeks, open to all researchers and external practitioners.

## **Permitted & non permitted activities & costs**

IAA funding can enable multidisciplinary working and engagement activities with external partners, including other research organisations, industry and public or third sector organisations that do not hold an IAA.

Any activity or project supported by the BBSRC IAA should be at least 50% within the remit of BBSRC. There will be opportunity for multi-disciplinary activities or projects that are supported from two or more councils' IAA, specific Calls will be made throughout the year. However, if you have a proposed activity that spans more than one IAA please do contact Lynne Gault at [iaa@qub.ac.uk](mailto:iaa@qub.ac.uk) to discuss.

### **Permitted costs/activity:**

Permitted Costs/Activity	Detail
<b>100% direct costs</b>	directly incurred and directly allocated projects costs can be claimed, this includes staff time and travel and subsistence. All applications should be registered on the Research Application System (RAS). Applicants should work with the relevant Faculty Finance Office to calculate project budgets. <b>Please be in contact with your Faculty Finance Office in advance of the call deadline.</b>

Engagement, knowledge exchange, training and culture change activities

#### Non permitted costs/activity

Activity/Cost NOT eligible	Detail
New research	New, fundamental research
Duplication of support	Impact activities that should already have been anticipated and supported through standard routes, e.g. impact activities costed as part of basic research proposals, CDTs Duplicate other sources of funding that can be used more appropriately for the impact activity within remit of Research Council i.e., CLASP/IPS
Public engagement	Non-Specific Public Engagement activities and science communication. However, IAAs will support public engagement where interaction is key to informing the research impact such as user or patient engagement as a critical pathway to achieving societal and/or economic impact
Training	Undergraduate activities, core PhD training including tuition or bench fees, Masters training
IP Management	Any costs relating to Intellectual Property protection including but not limited to registering, maintaining or supporting patents or property rights
Equipment	Equipment with a value of £10,000 or more
Other	Indirect costs or estate costs at the research organisation Contributions to KTPs

### Some guidance on completion of the application forms

There is a separate application form (MS forms) for each of the funding themes. Please use the correct form for your application. The application form should be self-explanatory, but here is some additional guidance on the detail you should include.

**Section: Name Researcher:** ECRs are encouraged to apply and will be named as the PI. PDRAs are encouraged to apply and will be named as Co-I. For the purposes of administering the award, there must also be a person, who should be a permanent member of staff, named as Principal Investigator on the application. PDRAs holding a Fellowship at the University however can be named as the PI.

**Section: Partner involvement:** Where you have/need an external partner please provide details including the type and level of contributions your external partner will make to the project. To note partner contribution (cash/in kind) is **a requirement ONLY** for Scoping Project applications.

**Section: Research-related activity that requires BBSRC IAA funding to develop:**

- When outlining previous /current BBSRC research ensure you include relevant reference to your awarded projects (title, funder), these DONOT need to be BBSRC awards but do need to be biotechnology and bioscience related research.
- EDI (equality, diversity and inclusion): Rather than just re-iterating Institutional level EDI (gender, race and disability) policies, when completing the question in the application form relating to EDI, please reflect on all aspects and how they are acknowledged and adequately addressed within your working environment, particularly in relation to decision making. Please consider how you will ensure that project design/development recognises your team's diversity and commonality and also that of your wider stakeholder and project participant landscape. Consider detailing the make up your research team; how the funded activities will be carried out; the societal impact generated by the activities (e.g. are there particular parts of under-represented society that will benefit).
- Responsible Innovation: As detailed on the UKRI [website](#), Responsible Innovation refers to: *'a process that takes the wider impacts of research and innovation into account. It aims to ensure that unintended negative impacts are avoided, that barriers to dissemination, adoption and diffusion of research and innovation are reduced, and that the positive societal and economic benefits of research and innovation are fully realised.'* This is an area of growing emphasis for UKRI, and therefore applicants are asked to consider the principles of Responsible Innovation, namely the wider impacts of their projects, when developing their project design/development, i.e. not just how something is done but whether it should be done.
- Aims and Objectives, Programme of work:
  - *Commercial Push Fund applications* – it is important to provide sufficient detail on what you intend doing in the max 3 month project – e.g. detail what will happen in stakeholder workshops? Who would you be targeting? What data you need to be collect? What will you use the outputs from the workshop for? What will the next steps be – application to Lean Launch programme/lcure/other.
  - *Relationship Incubator Fund Scoping Project applications* - please ensure that you articulate your application to ensure the panel are clear that this is NOT primary research - primary research will not be funded. The activities must be associated with the translation of your existing research - this can be through a pilot study that takes and uses your existing research in a commercial/real-world setting (with your external partner) in order to validate it and provide impact; can be utilising your research in a commercial/real-world setting in order to generate data that can be used for a future collaborative application with your external partner.
- In some cases where you are engaging with external parties e.g. administering questionnaires as part of your BBSRC IAA proposal, you may require ethical approval. You should seek confirmation from your School Ethics Committee around whether this will be required. As this additional school-level ethical approval step may take some additional time, this should be reflected in the proposed project duration in your application.

**Section: Impact:** This is a very important section, we strongly recommend that you give full consideration of how receipt of BBSRC IAA funding would benefit you and your research; who would be the beneficiaries from this activity?; how will this funding accelerate /drive the impact ( economic, societal (including policy making)) from your research to your research team/Queen's, your external partner (if appropriate), your stakeholders ( the people who would use the outcomes from your research). What steps will you take to ensure maximum impact is achieved? What is the time scale for achievement?



Measurement of potential impact is important and needed for your BBSRC award reporting. Detail what measures you will use – further development of relationships; publications; applications for external funding

**Section: Detail of costs:** Ensure you complete and register a RAS for your project costs, in advance of the submission of your application.

Justification of Resources should justify why you need this level of funding from the BBSRC IAA; The level/type (cash/ in kind) of external partner contributions (where appropriate) and how these contributions will be used.

**Section: Related Invention Disclosure:** All applicants should consider if there is any potential for commercialisation from their research before engaging with stakeholders/external partners. If you are not sure then please contact please contact Maria Colligan (m.colligan@qub.ac.uk) in the Commercial Development Team who will advise. If you are applying for Commercial Principle Push Fund you MUST submit an Invention Disclosure Form ahead of applying and include the IDF reference number in your application.

## Assessment of applications

The BBSRC IAA Assessment Panel (Appendix A) will consider all eligible applications against the following:

1. Does the proposed activity build on past or current biotechnology and biological science-related research conducted at Queen's?
2. Does the proposed activity have clearly expressed and achievable Aims and Objectives? <sup>1</sup>
3. Does the proposed activity demonstrate good value-for-money and is the budget fully justified?
4. Is there a good quality plan for collecting evidence of impact, that indicates how impact will be measured and that the funded work will demonstrate that impact is being generated?
5. Does the proposed activity have the potential to demonstrate accelerated impact generation?
6. Does the proposed initiative have the potential for longer-term impact?
7. Does the proposed activity have the potential for long-term relationships beyond academia?
8. Will the proposed initiative enhance the culture of engaged research at Queen's?
9. Has the application considered EDI and Responsible Innovation?
10. Where possible/appropriate, does the proposed initiative include cash or in-kind contributions from external partners?

If you are considering an application and wish to seek some advice or a discussion before submission, please contact Lynne Gault at [iaa@qub.ac.uk](mailto:iaa@qub.ac.uk) and include 'BBSRC IAA' in the subject line.

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<sup>1</sup> The BBSRC IAA Assessment Group will adopt an open attitude to risk and innovation, balanced with a need to deliver value-for-money. This approach is designed to encourage applications that are novel in design and whose success is consequently more uncertain than conventional impact projects

Please note that the panel's decision is final and this may include part-funding a project or requesting reasonable adjustments to costings, project time-lines etc.

## **Appendix A BBSRC IAA Working Group and Assessment Panel Membership**

### **BBSRC IAA Working Group**

- Jose Bengoechea, WWIEM (Chair)
- Chris Scott, Interim Dean of Research, MHLS
- Alan Stitt, Dean of Innovation and Impact, MHLS
- Sharon Huws, Director of Research, IGFS
- Ryan Donnelly, Director of Research, Pharmacy
- Gosia Swadźba-Kwaśny, Director of Research, Chemistry and Chemical Engineering
- Charuhas Thakar, Director, WWIEM
- Jayne Woodside, Director, CPH
- Dan Longley, Director, PJCCR
- Rodger Woods, Dean of Research, EPS
- Joana Sa Pessoa, Early Career Researcher, MDBS
- Stakeholder Representative: TBA
- Andrew Baxter, BBSRC IAA Operational Lead, R&E
- Maeolisa McCrudden, Research Impact & Engagement, R&E
- Eimear Barrett, Commercial Development, R&E
- Mani Narayanan, Research Development, R&E
- Lynne Gault, Cross-IAA Officer, R&E

### **BBSRC IAA Assessment Panel**

- Jose Bengoechea, WWIEM (Chair)
- Sharon Huws, Director of Research, IGFS
- Ryan Donnelly, Director of Research Pharmacy
- Gosia Swadźba-Kwaśny, Director of Research, Research Chemistry and Chemical Engineering
- Charuhas Thakar, Director, WWIEM
- Jayne Woodside, Director, CPH
- Dan Longley, Director, PJCCR
- Eimear Barrett, Commercial Development, R&E
- Maeolisa McCrudden, Research Impact & Engagement, R&E
- Mani Narayanan, Research Development, R&E

## **Appendix C Terms & Conditions of Award**

By accepting an BBSRC IAA award, successful applicants accept and agree to the following terms and conditions:

1. Award holders must engage with the Impact Acceleration Officer to monitor progress both during the life of the initiative and post-initiative, to allow for learning and reporting of potential impact.
2. Award holders will be required to collate evidence of impact and adhere to reporting procedures outlined with offers of award.
3. Successful applicants are expected to start impact activities as soon as possible. In most cases, it is expected that activities will be completed within 3 to 12 months of the start date.

4. Successful offers are required to consider any ethical issues relating to their application and comply with the University procedures for ethical review processes.
5. The award holder and her/his School are required to manage the approved funds appropriately and to record expenditure.
6. For awards administered through an R account: after completion of the initiative, the account should be reconciled and closed with any unspent funds returned to the BBSRC IAA. Please only use the R Code linked to the project for all costings.
7. Where there are cash contributions from external organisations, the award holder's School is responsible for managing contributions and liaising over collaboration agreements.
8. Awards are non-transferable.
9. Any major amendments to budget plans must be agreed with the Impact Acceleration Officer.
10. Any amendments to project timescales must be agreed with the Impact Acceleration Officer.
11. Details of successful initiatives may be listed on the QUB website and in other publications.
12. Details of successful initiatives may be shared with other BBSRC award holders and potential applicants.
13. Any equipment or materials purchased from the award shall remain the property of the University.
14. All activities must adhere to the QUB Safeguarding Policy, available from [Policies & Procedures to Comply With | People and Culture | Queen's University Belfast \(qub.ac.uk\)](https://www.qub.ac.uk/Research/Our-impact/impact-acceleration-accounts/)
15. All applicants must adhere to both regulations from Queen's and from the NI Executive regarding additional measures to control the spread of Covid-19.
16. It is expected that applicants will have anticipated any delays that could result due to Covid-19 and to have made alternative arrangements.