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ELIGIBILITY

Who is eligible to apply for the MRC IAA?

Applications are welcomed from staff across the University working on projects that clearly align with MRC aims and objectives. The proposed activity must be based on past or current research.

Applications based on multi-/inter-disciplinary research are eligible and encouraged. All initiatives must be able to demonstrate potential for social, economic, commercial, political and/or cultural impact.

Applications should reflect school, faculty and institutional research priorities, such as those contained in the Strategy 2030 in reference to Research and Innovation, for example aligning projects with UN Sustainable Development Goals. Innovative and creative approaches to impact are encouraged.

Applications from early career researchers and staff who are new to Queen's or new to impact are welcomed.

Please note that, while ECRs/PDRAs are encouraged to apply and will be named as a Co-I, for the purposes of administering the award, the person named as Principal Investigator should be a permanent member of staff. The PDRA completes the "Named Researcher/Co-I" section of the application form while the PI completes the PI details section.

Previous MRC award – is this a requirement for an application to the MRC IAA?

No: UKRI have removed the requirement that all UKRI IAA funded projects have to be directly related to previous UKRI funding. UKRI still require funded projects to sit within the remit and aims of UKRI and the participating councils.

Why do you require details on previous related funding? If I haven't yet secured external funding will I be excluded from submitting a proposal?

The funding requested must align to the MRC IAA scheme objectives ensuring that fundamental science is translated into new therapies, diagnostics and medical devices. MRC's IAA aims to accelerate the transition from discovery science to the early stages of therapeutic and biomarker development and rapidly de-risk projects across the translational lifecycle, so that they become competitive for substantial translational funding bids from competitions or other sources.

The projects supported should aim to generate sufficient or critical preliminary data to establish the viability of an approach before seeking more substantial funding, for example, from the Developmental Pathway Funding Scheme (DPFS). The MRC IAA scheme is positioned as a stepping stone that can allow early-stage discoveries and technologies to build evidence that can attract larger-scale follow-on funding for development.

Hence a preliminary (Technology Readiness Level) may be more relevant to support initial fundamental research and hence we would encourage you to reach out to discuss your submission and whether earlier stage of funding such as proof of principle monies may be more appropriate.

Is an IDF a prerequisite for MRC IAA submission?

- (i) Confidence in Concept Applications: All applicants must submit an Invention Disclosure Form (IDF) at least 2 weeks prior to application submission. For more information and to access the form please visit <https://www.qub.ac.uk/Business/Commercialisation/IP-and-innovation/Got-an-idea/> or contact Maria Colligan (m.colligan@qub.ac.uk) in the Commercial Development Team. This will allow the Commercial Development Team to assess and discuss the translational/ commercial plan or any other aspect of your MRC IAA project before submission. Failure to submit an IDF in advance will deem your application void.
- (ii) Enterprise Fellowship Applications: While an Invention Disclosure Form is not required when submitting an application, applicants whose submissions are deemed fundable by the panel must submit the appropriate IDF for consideration prior to confirmation of funding award and subsequent project commencement. For more information and to access the form please visit <https://www.qub.ac.uk/Business/Commercialisation/IP-and-innovation/Got-an-idea/> or contact Maria Colligan (m.colligan@qub.ac.uk) in the Commercial Development Team.

Interdisciplinarity – this is encouraged but is it mandatory?

Whilst not mandatory a key objective of the MRC IAA is to expand the interdisciplinary nature of the QUB-CIC Scheme.

In recent years we have seen limited engagement, evidenced by few applications led by or in collaboration with, academics from School or Centres external to FMHLS.

A wealth of healthcare innovation expertise exists in QUB's Faculty of Engineering and Physical Science (EPS). While such inter-disciplinary activities are ongoing, thus far, these have not been channelled into QUB-CIC. Going forward, the MRC IAA is keen to maximise the translational potential afforded by University initiatives focussed on facilitating multi-disciplinary research. Opportunities also exist in relation to Belfast Region City Deal innovation pillars.

COSTS

Maximum award size is indicated in the guidance, can I make an application that exceeds this?

The MRC IAA aims to be supportive of Queen's research colleagues developing their research impact. If your project exceeds the maximum suggested for a particular funding stream, contact the MRC IAA team to discuss iaa@qub.ac.uk and please include 'MRC IAA' in the subject line.

Eligible project costs – what is eligible?

MRC IAA can support directly incurred and directly allocated costs. All costs must be clearly justified and may include the following

- salary costs for Research Assistants, Research Technicians etc.
- consumables such as professional materials
- small pieces of equipment directly related to the project (<£10k)
- venue bookings and catering

- travel and subsistence
- promotional materials, such as digital toolkits, video content, infographics, blogs, podcasts and briefing papers
- Other engagement, knowledge exchange, training and culture change activities can also be supported
- For the EF the majority of the funding should cover the ECR, PDRAs salary, minimal IAA funding should be utilised for project running costs, travel etc.

What costs are not eligible?

- New, fundamental research
- Duplication of support: impact activities that are already supported through a grant associated with the research.
- **Non-specific** public engagement and science communication e.g. a general event that is not related to your specific existing research.
- Undergraduate activities, core PhD training, Masters training
- IP management costs relating to IP protection e.g. registering, maintaining, supporting patent applications or Property Rights.
- Equipment > £10k
- Infrastructure and capital expenditure
- Indirect costs, estate costs
- Contributions to KTPs

Is the development of data sets based on existing research an eligible activity for funding?

Yes. Ensure that your applications clearly indicates what the proposed work is and that it is based on existing Queen's research, and that the proposed activities will accelerate the impact of this existing research; drive the research culture agenda within Queen's through knowledge exchange and technology transfer; and the new results/data gathered within such a pilot study has the potential to be used in future collaborative research bids or could potentially be used as a case study for the translation of Queen's research in an industry setting.

MRC IAA funding spend profile – when must my awarded funding be spent by?

MRC IAA CiC projects and all spend must be completed within 12 months of the start date and MRC EF projects within 6 months of the start date.

WORKING WITH EXTERNAL/INDUSTRIAL PARTNERS

Is it essential to have an industry partner involvement in a CiC project?

No, but you should ensure your project team have the necessary skills, access to equipment and material to complete the project within the given timeframe.

What organisations are eligible to participate in the MRC IAA as a project partner?

Eligible partner organisations can be;

- UK companies of any size
- multinational companies which have a significant manufacturing or research base in the UK
- Charitable, NGOs, public sector bodies

However, if the only/appropriate industry partner that could be justified (scientifically, commercially) is a non-UK industrial partner, may also be acceptable. An explanation should be given within the application.

External partner contributions – what form can this take?

External partners can provide funding including matched commitments e.g. as an in-kind contribution, cash or a combination of both.

Is a Collaboration Agreement required with external partner contributing to an awarded project?

Yes a Collaboration Agreement will be required where an external partner provides cash contribution or in-kind contribution to your project. QUB will provide a template for consideration by the partner organisation should the application be awarded funding.

Who owns the Arising IP (Results) in MRC IAA projects with an external partner?

Arising IP will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis by the Commercial Development and Business Alliance teams. Your project context in terms of previous funding obligations, past or current collaborations etc. will be considered during this process to help determine IP ownership.

If I have previously worked with an external partner or organisation on this idea and/or technology am I precluded from working with a new partner?

This would depend on the terms and conditions of any previous agreement/project. Please email iaa@qub.ac.uk and include 'MRC IAA' in the subject line to discuss further.

Can a Queen's researcher apply for an IAA award if they have an equity state in the proposed external partner organisation?

A Queen's researcher can still apply for a MRC IAA award even if they have an equity state in the proposed external partner organisation, however, this association should be made clear in the application.

Who can I talk to about finding an external partner to collaborate and submit to the MRC IAA?

Please contact Maeve Murphy (Business Alliance Team) to get assistance with finding an external partner to collaborate with on a MRC IAA project. Please email iaa@qub.ac.uk and include 'MRC IAA' in the subject line.

Who can I talk to about commercial or translational potential of my idea or technology?

Please contact iaa@qub.ac.uk and we will arrange an appointment for you with the Commercial Development Team to discuss the commercial or translation potential of your idea or technology.

OTHER QUESTIONS

What Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) principles should I be considering with regard to the design/development of my project?

This relates to a question that all applicants are required to answer in both the CiC and EF application forms. Rather than re-iterating Institutional level EDI (gender, race and disability) policies, when completing this question please reflect on all aspects of EDI and how they are acknowledged and adequately addressed within your working environment, particularly in relation to decision making. How you will ensure that project design/development recognises your team's diversity and commonality and also that of your wider stakeholder 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). If you would like to discuss this further, please contact the IAA Team at iaa@qub.ac.uk

What is 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.