Queen's University Belfast
AHRC Impact Acceleration Account
Guidelines 2022-26

Background

Queen's University has been awarded an Impact Acceleration Account (IAA) by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. This award builds on and complements the University's vision for research and impact to support the delivery of an ambitious programme of targeted, responsive and flexible financial support that will help embed a culture of arts and humanities-based impact and knowledge exchange among our researchers and our external impact partners.

Objectives of the AHRC Impact Accelerator Account

The AHRC IAA seeks to:

- foster an inclusive, collaborative, entrepreneurial and supportive research impact community
- facilitate improved understanding of research impact through greater knowledge, confidence and competence among our researchers
- support early career researchers, including postdoctoral fellows, to develop their impact and engagement portfolio by providing relevant opportunities for capacity building and impact activities
- create a fully engaged impact environment that embeds and values the co-production of research, impact and KE activities as essential, integral parts in the research cycle
- lower the barriers that impede activities that generate impact
- develop an agile, flexible range of funding mechanisms that reflect researchers' and individual partners' needs on the impact journey
- build on and diversify our portfolio of external partners by reaching out to new organisations, with particular emphasis on hard-to-reach communities
- realise more meaningful and enduring partnerships, both nationally and globally that are independently sustaining
- involve external partner organisations in the management of the AHRC IAA
- leverage further opportunities for support from partner organisations

Funds dispersed from the IAA must align with one or more of these objectives.

What is impact?

RCUK defines research impact as 'the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy'. According to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) impact is an effect on, change or benefit – beyond academia – to:

- the economy
- society
- culture

- public policy or services
- health
- the environment
- quality of life

Impact

Impact includes, but is not limited to, an effect on, change or benefit:

To:	of:	in any geographic location, whether:
attitude awareness behaviour capacity opportunity performance policy practice process understanding	audience beneficiary community constituency organisation individuals	locally regionally nationally internationally

Impact also includes the reduction or prevention of harm, risk, cost or other negative effects.

Queen's has directed institutional investment to areas of research excellence aligned to major societal challenges across the world which, in turn, help us achieve our aim of being distinguished by our academic strengths and recognised globally for the social, economic and cultural impact we deliver through our research**.**

The research landscape at Queen's has evolved in line with this ambitious vision, and our commitment to research, impact, innovation and internationalisation is reflected in an environment that encourages and accelerates the translation of ideas into validated, robust and impactful solutions, with real-world application and benefit.

Eligibility

The Queen's University AHRC IAA invites applications for funding for projects that will enable academics to generate new, or build on existing, impact-related activity.

Applications are welcomed from staff across the University working on projects that clearly align to arts and humanities-related areas eligible for AHRC funding (p.67). The proposed activity must be based on past or current arts and/or humanities research **but you do not need to have been a previous recipient of AHRC funding in order to be eligible to apply.** Please note that, for the purposes of administering the award, the person named as Principal Investigator should be a permanent member of staff. If you are not a permanent member of staff but wish to apply, please contact iaa@qub.ac.uk for advice.

Applications based on multi-/inter-disciplinary research but with a substantial arts and humanities element are welcome and eligible. If considering an application like this please contact iaa@qub.ac.uk for advice.

All initiatives must be able to demonstrate potential for social, economic, 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.

Eligible Costs

The AHRC IAA can support directly incurred costs. All costs must be clearly justified and may include the following:

- salary costs for Research Assistants, Research Technicians etc. (see policy and rates)*
- consumables such as professional materials
- promotional materials, such as digital toolkits, video content, infographics, blogs, podcasts and briefing papers
- small pieces of equipment directly related to the project**
- venue bookings and catering
- travel and subsistence

*Research assistance should be costed against the appropriate salary scales for the grade required for the work. If the research assistant is not at postdoctoral level the hourly rate will normally be costed at point 24, i.e. £20.85 per hour (£15.39 pay plus on-costs). However, if the level required for the work is postdoctoral, then the appropriate payscale point should be used, i.e. point 30 – £24.87 per hour (£18.36 pay plus on-costs) and the RA must have a doctorate. The research assistance should be proportionate to and appropriate for the RA's career stage and current position; the nature of an RA's role should be aligned with the highest standards of research integrity. In the case of external suppliers, applicants should check whether VAT will be charged and should cost this in if applicable. We recommend that you discuss this rates with your school office in order to identify the most appropriate rate and method of payment.

**Where funds are transferred to external organisations, a contract and due diligence check may be required. Contact iaa@qub.ac.uk for advice and include 'AHRC IAA' in the subject line.

As per AHRC guidelines, 'Costs built into your application that are going to external organisation for national/international organisations/collaborators must not exceed 30% of the overall budget'.

The AHRC IAA does not prescribe the types of initiatives that can be supported. It is for applicants to put forward proposals that will best support **the realisation of impact** from their research. Activities that are **not** eligible for funding include:

- primary research
- activities that can be supported through other standard routes
- estates and indirect costs

- infrastructure and capital expenditure (other than small pieces of equipment directly related to the project as mentioned above)
- patent filing or similar costs associated with registering intellectual property rights
- training or activities aimed at undergraduate or Masters students
- large AHRC investments such as Centres, Large Grants and Infrastructure Investments during their AHRC grant

For information on internal funding opportunities which may be able to support these activities see: https://www.qub.ac.uk/Research/Support-for-researchers/Funding-information/Funding-opportunities/InternalFundingOpportunities/.

Funding Available

There are four areas of funding available:

1. the AHRC Impact Fund
2. placing people
3. partnership development
4. commercialisation of research

1. The AHRC Impact Fund

The AHRC Impact Fund consists of the following two strands aimed at supporting impact-related activity:

1.1 **Leading Impact Fund**: This is a responsive-mode, call-based scheme with projects being chosen through a competitive process with two calls issued throughout the year. Activities will enable researchers to carry out longer-term pieces of work to accelerate the impact of research and give a clearer understanding of the impact potential of research outputs.

£15k is available per project.

1.2 **Rapid Impact Fund**: This is a responsive-mode scheme that is open all year round with fixed criteria for spontaneous impact-related activity. It will provide short-term, smaller amounts of funding, usually between £500- £1k, and will allow researchers to respond instantly to opportunities for impact

Awards from £500-£1k are typically available, from an annual allocation of £5k.

2. Placing People

Placements are available to enable short-term, flexible people exchanges between external partners and researchers which can provide significant opportunities to share skills and knowledge and to develop longer-term working relationships.

There are two types of placements available through the AHRC IAA:

2.1 **Fellowships:** will enable researchers to apply and validate their research by focusing on related challenges within an external setting in order to accelerate delivery of research impact, (e.g. spending time with cultural partners to help them

understand their collections better). For ECRs, the KTP model will
be used whereby the ECR receives support from a senior academic as well as the external partner. The fellowships will last a maximum of six months on a flexible, part-time basis.

£5k is available per fellowship

2.2 **Practitioner Appointments:** This scheme will allow staff from external organisations to spend time with researchers or teams of researchers within the University. Such appointments allow Queen's researchers to showcase their research and their research environment, and will allow the appointees to be introduced to other key academics and researchers at Queen's to explore further areas of mutual interest. For support in identifying the relevant person, please contact iaa@qub.ac.uk and include 'AHRC IAA' in the subject line.

£5k is available per appointment (VAT inclusive).

Three fellowships/practitioner appointments are available each year.

3. Partnership Development

3.1 **Building Partnerships:** Queen's recognises the importance of partnerships as critical drivers of innovation and as sources of people and ideas that open up new avenues of, and opportunities for, impact and engagement. This funding strand will help academics build partnerships with organisations with whom they have not previously worked or with whom they only have a tentative relationship.

A maximum of £3k is available per proposal, with four awarded each year.

4. Commercialising Research

4.1 **Commercialising Arts, Cultural and Humanities Enterprises (CACHE)** will allow researchers to carry out early-stage commercialisation activities needed to realise the commercial potential of Arts and Humanities research. It will support researchers to develop and strengthen the commercial potential of an identified opportunity. Funding will be available for an individual or a team and will be flexible to support consumables, market validation, product development, training, business model concept development, finding a potential partner or developing a pitch.

A maximum of £10k is available per proposal, with two awarded each year.

Applications

Applications should be submitted through the appropriate online application form, which can be accessed via here. Pre-submission conversations with the Impact Acceleration Team are strongly encouraged: please contact Kevin Fearon or Lynne Gault at: iaa@qub.ac.uk, and include 'AHRC IAA' in the subject line.

Applications for the **Rapid Impact Fund** operate on a rolling basis until the fund is exhausted. Applications will be assessed by the Chair of the AHRC IAA Steering Committee, normally within five working days of submission.

Applications for other strands are currently on a rolling call basis. These applications will be assessed by members of the AHRC IAA Steering Committee, normally within 2 weeks of submission. The Steering Committee is composed of academic and support staff from Queen's and representatives from external organisations: the list of current members is included as an appendix to this guidance.

A Research Application System (RAS) entry and/or Research Grant Application Summary (RGAS) form are required for awards made under the Leading Impact, Partnerships, Fellowships and CACHE funds.

An Invention Disclosure Form may be required for applications to the Commercialising Arts, Cultural and Humanities Enterprises (CACHE) fund, please visit http://www.qub.ac.uk/Business/Commercialisation/IP-and-innovation/Got-an-idea/ for more information.

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.

Application Review Process

All eligible applications will be considered against the following questions:

- Does the proposed initiative build on past or current arts and humanities research conducted at Queen's?*
- Does the proposed initiative have clearly expressed and achievable aims?

- Does the proposed initiative have clear and appropriate deliverables and clearly anticipated outcomes?**
- Does the proposed initiative demonstrate potential impact beyond academia?**
- Does the proposed initiative have the potential for sustainable impact and/or lead to long-term relationships?**
- Does the proposed initiative demonstrate good project management?
- Is there a good quality plan for collecting evidence of impact?
- Does the proposed initiative demonstrate good value-for-money and is the budget fully justified?
- Will the proposed initiative enhance the culture of engaged research at Queen's?
- Does the proposed initiative demonstrate user demand?
- Where possible/appropriate, does the proposed initiative include cash or in-kind contributions from external partners?

* Or in part at Queen's

**The AHRC IAA Steering Committee 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.

Other support available through the AHRC IAA

The AHRC IAA will also support training for impact and policy, public and community engagement. For more information, or to discuss possible impact activities, please contact iaa@qub.ac.uk and include 'AHRC IAA' in the subject line.

Terms and Conditions of Award

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

- 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.
- Award holders will be required to collate evidence of impact and adhere to reporting procedures outlined with offers of award.
- 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.
- Successful offers are required to consider any ethical issues relating to their application and comply with the University procedures for ethical review processes.
- Successful applicants are required to consider Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) principles when planning and carrying out their project
- The award holder and her/his School are required to manage the approved funds appropriately and to record expenditure.
- 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 AHRC IAA.

- Where there are cash contributions from external organisations, the award holder's School is responsible for managing contributions and liaising over collaboration agreements.
- Awards are non-transferable.
- Any major amendments to budget plans must be agreed with the Impact Acceleration Officer.
- Any amendments to project timescales must be agreed with the Impact Acceleration Officer.
- Details of successful initiatives may be listed on the QUB website and in other publications.
- Details of successful initiatives may be shared with other AHRC award holders and potential applicants.
- Any equipment or materials purchased from the award shall remain the property of the University.
- All activities must adhere to the QUB Safeguarding Policy, available from https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/legal-services-and-employee-relations/

Appendix

AHRC IAA Steering Committee Membership

The current members of the AHRC IAA Steering Committee are:

Committee Membership

Name	Area
Anna Bryson	School of Law QUB
Janice Carruthers	Dean of Research, AHSS, QUB (Chair)
Marilina Cesario	School of Arts, English and Languages, QUB
Hannah Crowdy	National Museums NI
Alice Dubois	Research and Enterprise, QUB
Kevin Fearon	Research and Enterprise, QUB
John Garry	School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics QUB
Kathryn Kavanagh	Research and Enterprise, QUB
Keith Lilley	School of Natural and Built Environment, QUB
Leon Litvack	School of Arts, English and Languages, QUB
Jane Lugea	School of Arts, English and Languages, QUB
Cahal McLaughlin	School of Arts, English and Languages, QUB
Donal Phillips	AHSS Faculty, QUB
Peter Stephenson	Research and Enterprise, QUB